'Piteous overthrows': pity and identity in early modern English literature

Toria Anne Johnson

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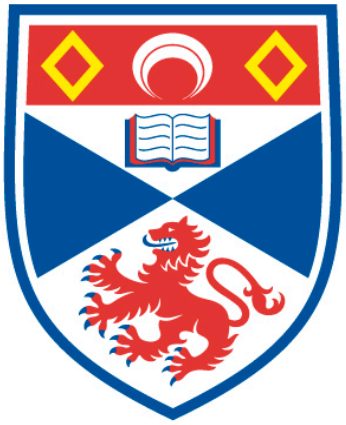

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Abstract

This thesis traces the use of pity in early modern English literature, highlighting in particular the ways in which the emotion prompted personal anxieties and threatened Burckhardtian notions of the self-contained, autonomous individual, even as it acted as a central, crucial component of personal identity. The first chapter considers pity in medieval drama, and ultimately argues that the institutional changes that took place during the Reformation ushered in a new era, in which people felt themselves to be subjected to interpersonal emotions – pity especially – in new, overwhelming, and difficult ways. The remaining three chapters examine how pity complicates questions of personal identity in Renaissance literature. Chapter Two discusses the masculine bid for pity in courtly lyric poetry, including Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* and Barnabe Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, and considers the undercurrents of vulnerability and violation that emerge in the wake of unanswered emotional appeals. This chapter also examines these themes in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* and Sidney's *Arcadia*. Chapter Three also picks up the element of violation, extending it to the pitiable presentation of sexual aggression in Lucrece narratives. Chapter Four explores the recognition of suffering and vulnerability across species boundaries, highlighting the use of pity to define humanity against the rest of the animal kingdom, and focusing in particular on how these questions are handled by Shakespeare in *The Tempest* and Ben Jonson, in *Bartholomew Fair*.

This work represents the first extended study of pity in early modern English literature, and suggests that the emotion had a constitutive role in personal subjectivity, in addition to structuring various forms of social relation. Ultimately, the thesis contends that the early modern English interest in pity indicates a central worry about vulnerability, but also, crucially, a belief in the necessity of recognising shared, human weakness.

1. Candidate's declarations:

I, Toria Anne Johnson, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 77,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in September 2009 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in July 2010; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2009 and 2013.

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For the Dalstons and the Johnsons, and my two in particular

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*

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*

My family has been the one constant, not just in the past four years but in all the years that came before it. They have given me my foundation, believed in the project even when I did not, and in general have been behind me every step of the way. I dedicate this work to them.

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CONTENTS

Notes on transcription and referencing

I have silently regularised early modern textual conventions such as long -*s* and consonantal *i* and *u* in accordance with modern usage.

Initial citations will be accompanied by a full bibliographic footnote, with subsequent references provided parenthetically.

Unless otherwise noted, all references to the works of William Shakespeare are from the Arden Shakespeare *Complete Works*, ed. by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, David Scott Kastan and H.R. Woudhuysen (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1998).

INTRODUCTION

I.
The Weakest Creature God Hath Made

Man is the weakest creature God hath made,
For where all else, by heav'nly *Providence,*
Have bodyes arm'd 'gainst Foes that them invade,
And rage of Times by Natures muniments,
Man onely *Vertue* hath for his defence,
This gentle vertue, sweet humanity,
With loving kind and tender heart, from whence
Flow *Pitie, Mercy, Love, Benignity,*
Whereby we mutuall helpes to others heere supply.[1]

This thesis scrutinises the early modern relationship with pity, examining the ways in which pity complicated notions of selfhood in England's Renaissance, even as it came to define early modern subjectivity.[2] It is an attempt to understand how one emotion, so wholly dependent upon notions of community and interpersonal relationships, shaped early modern ideas of individuality. In his 1622 work entitled *Peace With Her Four Garders*, lawyer and poet Robert Aylett places pity amongst the most central features of humanity, pointing to the 'loving kind

[1] Robert Aylett, *Peace with her foure garders* (London, 1622), sig. C6^{r}.

[2] The problems surrounding pity – concerns about what the feeling is, from whence it comes, in what context it should arise, and if there are consequences connected to its receipt or dispensation – are the driving concerns of the present study. However, disagreement over what pity is, or means, has created a secondary issue related to terminology: it is not just that the word 'pity' may signify vastly different things; also problematic is the tendency to use other words, such as sympathy, empathy or compassion as interchangeable terms. I have no specific objections to the use of 'compassion' in relation to pity. Indeed, the 1637 edition of Aristotle clearly positions the terms as synonymous. However, in my view, the use of other synonyms complicates an already muddy discourse on pity. This is particularly true in the case of 'sympathy', which classically has been viewed as less potentially unsettling than pity: a shared experience without the complications of hierarchy. In researching pity in the early modern period, and in selecting examples of its depiction for this work, I have been strict in my pursuit of explicit contemporary references to pity. The texts presented here are united by their open and direct engagement with pity; I have left aside documents dealing with sympathy in particular, believing these to be concerned with a related, but nonetheless *distinct* set of issues. 'Sympathy', as we know it – as the 'quality or state of being affected by the condition of another with a feeling similar or corresponding to that of the other; the fact or capacity of entering into or sharing the feelings of another or others; fellow-feeling' – is an anachronism for the Renaissance. This particular understanding of sympathy does not emerge in English until the Restoration, with the *OED* placing its first use in 1660, when Richard Mathews writes of the desire to share his medical knowledge 'Out of faithful and true simpathy and fellow-feeling with you'. A study of Renaissance sympathy would therefore necessarily required focus on the connection between *things* rather than people, as further noted in the *OED*: 'A (real or supposed) affinity between certain things, by virtue of which they are similarly or correspondingly affected by the same influence, affect or influence one another (esp. in some occult way), or attract or tend towards each other'. 'sympathy, n.'. *OED* Online. December 2012. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/196271?rskey=Ot08r6&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed February 25, 2013); Richard Mathews, *The Unlearned Alchymist* (London, 1660), at sig. A7^{v}.

and tender heart, from whence flow *Pitie*, Mercy, Love, Benignity' (my emphasis). Whereas all other creatures 'Have bodyes arm'd 'gainst Foes that them invade', Aylett's vision of the human is one of a compassionate, vulnerable creature, whose only 'defence' against personal weakness is belonging to a group naturally inclined towards 'mutuall helpes'. By this conception, people were defined by, and dependent upon, their own capacity for pity, and made unique by the community of humanity.

Inasmuch as it envisions a direct tie between pity and humanity, Aylett's comment speaks to the heart of this thesis: my aim is to demonstrate the extent to which pity influenced the Renaissance sense of what it was to be human.[3] I wish to highlight pity's overwhelming presence in the period, in part because it is a component of early modern culture that has been more or less neglected by its scholars.[4] The full consequences of pity are easy to overlook, as Aylett himself demonstrates: in this short meditation on pity's centrality, and the brief but direct insight into humankind's bodily vulnerability, the vulnerability *created* by pity is entirely ignored. Aylett paints pity as a virtue, the crowning jewel in a person's humanity and, perhaps most importantly, a type of defence. What he does not consider, and what I demonstrate in the course of this work, is the extent to which a person's vulnerability is also intensified by their capacity for pity, even as they are defined by and dependent upon that capability. This is a vulnerability of which, I will argue, people in the Renaissance were acutely aware, and it shaped

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[3] In describing the period, I have used both 'early modern' and 'Renaissance'. However, given my interest in engaging with historiography and construction of the term, I have given some preference to 'Renaissance'.

[4] While this is particularly true of literary studies, the same holds in a variety of other disciplines: even in cases where pity is mentioned, it is rarely (if ever) the central focus of study. See for example Simon Clare, Paul Hoggett and Simon Thompson (eds.), *Emotions, Politics and Society* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), which features only a glancing consideration of pity; Aaron Ben-Ze'ev offers a slightly longer discussion, as part of a much larger project, in *The Subtlety of Emotions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), as does Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). The only discipline that has, to date, offered extensive research on pity is classical studies, which boasts the only monograph-length studies of the emotion. See David Konstan, *Pity Transformed* (London: Duckworth, 2001). See also Dana LaCourse Munteanu, *Tragic Pathos: Pity and Fear in Greek Philosophy and Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and Rachel Hall Sternberg (ed.), *Pity and Power in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

the early modern identity as significantly as any other physical weakness. To that end, this work is built upon three central premises: first, that following the English Reformation, individual identity was inextricably bound to notions of emotional community and interpersonal connection; second, that the exchanges that demonstrate this bond with particular clarity are those which feature the call for, the receipt, and the offer of pity; and third, that the literary depiction of violence, aggression, discomfort, and worry – all connected to pity and the lack of control it entails – suggests that pity in Renaissance England was unleashed in ways that people found simultaneously objectionable, inescapable and, ultimately, vital to their understanding of their own humanity. This is a study of the early modern subject's difficulty in regulating personal emotion, an exploration of the extent to which people genuinely wanted (or were able) to regulate it, and a consideration of how this should affect a modern understanding of what it meant to be human in the Renaissance.

What is Pity?

In terms of my own definition of pity, the most relevant source is Aristotle, who famously aligned tragedy with the cultivation of pity and fear, and whose works exerted a great influence over the early moderns.[5] *On Rhetoric* defines pity as 'a certain pain at an apparently destructive or painful event happening to one who does not deserve it and which a person might *expect* himself or one of his own to suffer'.[6] Aristotle's definition is basic, but sufficiently precise to serve as a good working model. The description contains all of the crucial elements: the witnessing of some pain or suffering, which in turn prompts pain in another; the notion of undeserved suffering; the witness's capacity to imagine themselves the victim of a similar fate. It is an interpersonal exchange with an individual, introspective component. Importantly,

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[5] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. D.W. Lucas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. ix.
[6] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse,* trans. George A. Kennedy, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.8.2, my emphasis.

Aristotle calls pity 'a certain pain', but does not identify that pain as the same that provokes the reaction; it is a separate sensation from that felt by the sufferer. Also implied in Aristotle's view is a community characterised by a shared recognition of vulnerability, the feeling produced by the awareness that another's suffering could easily be ours. A 1637 edition of Aristotle, intended to condense his discussion of rhetoric, engages with this notion of pity in some detail. Here, the emotion is described as 'a perturbation of the mind, arising from the apprehension of hurt, or trouble to another that doth not deserve it, and which [one] thinkes may happen to himselfe or his'.[7] And because 'it appertaines to *Pitty* to thinke that he, or his may fall into the misery he pitties in others', the text goes on to consider the types of people who are most (and least) pitying – notably these types are identified by their feelings about humanity, their tendency to 'thinke there bee honeste men' – as well as the sorts of people we ought most to pity, including 'such as are like us in manners […] and our equalls in dignity' (sigs. D12^{r}-E1^{r}, see also Figs. 1 and 2). These questions of applying theories about pity to everyday life were central to the men and women of early modern England; they are the same questions at work in the literary texts featured in the chapters to follow. Aristotle's description of pity forms the basis of my own understanding of the emotion: for the purposes of this work, I define pity as a form of emotional distress, stemming from the recognition of another's suffering, that is largely dependent on an imaginative capacity. This imaginative component, in large part, has driven my investigation of the emotion in literature: here, as I will go on to discuss, pity is also fictional, always tied to some imagined wound. In this way, the relationship between reader and text closely mirrors the exchange between pitier and pitied.[8] Aristotle's conception also

[7] Aristotle, *A briefe of the art of rhetorique*, unnamed translator (London, 1637), sig. D12^{r}.
[8] This connection between readers, texts, and emotions is pursued in detail by Katharine Craik, who tracks the early modern conception of 'literary experience as a resourceful, dynamic exchange between readers and writers in which emotional and physiological feelings […] played an important part'. See Katharine Craik, *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 7.

places a noteworthy emphasis on community: pity, for him, is an emotion built on notions of common ground. There is an intimacy of relation, and of recognition, that emerges quite clearly in the literature I discuss – starting, in this case, with Aylett.

Returning then, to Aylett's commentary, I want to begin this work by acknowledging just how unusual this vision of humankind (and pity's place within it) may look to one familiar with the traditional – though now largely disputed – notion of the Renaissance subject as the first example of autonomous individuality. Aylett's comments are a sharp contrast, for example, to the depiction offered by Jacob Burckhardt in his seminal study of Renaissance individuality in Italy. Burckhardt's Renaissance man is a true individual, for him a marked improvement on the Middle Ages, in which:

> [B]oth sides of human consciousness – that which was turned within as that which was turned without – lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil […] Man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation – only through some general category.[9]

Largely positioned as the antithesis of this medieval model, Burckhardt depicts the Renaissance as the time in which 'man became a spirited individual' (p. 99); he later tracks how 'this impulse to the highest individual development' created 'the "all-sided man" – *l'uomo universale*' (p. 101).[10] Burckhardt's influence is acknowledged, even as it is contested; Lorna Hutson refers to 'the […] identification of the period as "the Renaissance", with its implicit homage to the myth of essential and universal Man coming to stand (in all his sovereign individuality) at the centre of

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[9] Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S.G.C. Middlemore (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 98.

[10] For Burckhardt, man's turn away from this community-centred mentality towards an inward, bounded individual is largely indebted to the political climate in Italy at the time. Following on from Aristotle's observation that 'man is by nature a political animal', Burckhardt points to 'the character of these [Italian] states, whether republics or despotisms' as 'the chief reason for the early development of the Italian' (p. 98). Since Burckhardt, the political influence on individual identity has been a dominant theme in a number of important critical studies of self, particularly in the context of early modern England: an obvious example of these is Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, which suggests that 'family, state, and religious institutions impose a more rigid and far-reaching discipline upon their middle-class and aristocratic subjects'. See Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Peter L. Phillips Simpson (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), here at I.1253a2, and Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 1.

a new world picture'.[11] It is true that studies that take as their premise the inherent 'specialness' of the Renaissance individual are increasingly unfashionable; yet even those who seek to challenge Burckhardt's analysis tend to do so within his terms of reference. The title of Stephen Greenblatt's classic *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, for instance, clearly announces its Burckhardtian affiliations, even as his argument pushes against them: 'Autonomy is an issue,' Greenblatt writes, 'but not the sole or even the central issue: the power to impose a shape upon oneself is an aspect of the more general power to control identity – that of others at least as often as one's own' (p. 1). Nonetheless, Greenblatt's idea that 'there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process' (p. 2) during the Renaissance still remains attractive. There is certainly every indication that questions of identity were prevalent in the early modern era, and questions of subjectivity remain central to scholarly accounts of the period. Even those studies that avoid romanticising Renaissance humanity have tended to emphasise interiority, focusing on the Cartesian 'I' that creates itself through rational thought: Charles Taylor has identified this as 'the sense of ourselves as beings with inner depths'.[12] Jerrod Seigel, whose three-part theory of the self – bodily, relational, and reflective – prioritises this last facet as that which makes people capable of 'putting ourselves at a distance from our own being so as to examine, judge, and sometimes regulate or revise it', similarly imagines the formulation of the self through focused attention.[13] More recently, Katharine Eisamann Maus has argued for the pervading sense of 'inwardness'

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[11] Lorna Hutson, 'Series Editor's Preface' in James Kuzner, *Open Subjects: English Renaissance Republicans, Modern Selfhoods, and the Virtue of Vulnerability* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. xiii. Where possible, I have neutralised both Aylett and Burckhardt: this thesis is interested in the relationship between pity and humanity in the early modern period, and scrutinises, at various points, masculine and feminine identity, as well as human/animal identities more generally. For this reason, I have attempted to keep my terminology gender-neutral, where it is not directly implicated in the argument of a given chapter. I have handled questions of class in a similar way.

[12] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. x.

[13] Jerrod Seigel, The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 6.

amongst Renaissance subjects.[14] Even a collection such as Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass's *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, which openly seeks to displace the subject from the centre of Renaissance studies, arguably perpetuates the historiography it hopes to challenge: here, as in Burckhardt, questions of subjectivity seem entirely post-medieval.[15] All of these views contribute, in some way, to an overarching picture of people in the early modern period standing (and self-identifying) on their own: contemporary scholarship still works within the Burckhardtian model of Renaissance individuality, perhaps most of all where it seeks to challenge it.

There is, of course, some evidence to support the Renaissance ideal of autonomy, though many critics have begun to question this portrait. James Kuzner's recent work, for example, attempts to reconcile notions of vulnerability with the republican ideals of self-containment and self-reliance that served as the basis of Renaissance identity.[16] Though Kuzner's focus is heavily political, and mine is not, it is important to this study insofar as it recognises, and then pushes against, a rigid interpretation of the period's emphasis on republican ideals: the pre-eminence of self-control, and the inwardness of which scholars like

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[14] Katharine Eisamann Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[15] Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (eds.), *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). In their introduction, the editors announce their desire to 'reconfigure' this 'obsessive teleological history' that, starting with Burckhardt, advances the 'sovereignty of the subject'. Nonetheless, their stated intention 'not to efface the subject but to offset it by insisting that the object be taken into account' presupposes a 'subject' to work against – bringing us back, in some sense, to Burckhardt. Although the entire volume contributes to this line of critical thought, the introduction in particular discusses this desire for a shift in scholarly focus. 'Introduction', pp. 1-13, here at pp. 4-5.

[16] James Kuzner, Open Subjects: English Renaissance Republicans, Modern Selfhoods, and the Virtue of Vulnerability (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011). For more on the republican identity, see Timothy Reiss, Mirages of the Selfe: Patterns of Personhood in Ancient and Early Modern Europe (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003). For more on the influence of classical republican thought, see Reid Barbour, 'Recent Studies in Seventeenth-Century Literary Republicanism', English Literary Renaissance, 34 (2004), pp. 387-417. See also David Norbrook, Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), and Andrew Hadfield, Shakespeare and Republicanism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For an historical take on the relationship between emotion and politics, see Norbert Elias's The Civilising Process. In it, Elias considers the social effect of a growing emphasis on emotional temperance; he argues that controlling the emotions is a method for controlling men, a political tool – for Elias, it was a tool certainly employed during the Renaissance, and beyond. Norbert Elias, The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

Taylor, Seigel and Maus write. Kuzner calls for a move away from this understanding of the early modern self and a step towards a notion of man as open to, and benefitting from, vulnerability. It is a significant development towards our understanding of Renaissance man as somehow compromised emotionally. However, Kuzner's study sees vulnerability as ultimately beneficial; it is productive in a way that effectively sanitises the potentially unsettling elements of the weakness. To this extent, republican subjectivity remains a way of controlling vulnerability. Here, I seek to rework Kuzner's premise – the still fundamentally stable, bounded self placed alongside the possibility of emotional compromise – by raising the stakes attached to questions of pity and vulnerability. I want to move still further away from a historiography of 'control' and autonomy. This thesis is about the moments of emotional exchange that complicate the subject's sense of self rather than obviously bolstering it; it is about the response to the moment of crisis produced by that sense of complexity. My work is also an attempt to return to Burckhardt's original emphasis upon what evolved from medieval culture: I wish to foreground this sense of historical transition without replicating its problematic historiography.

In spite of the overwhelming influence of Burckhardt's articulation of the early modern self as an always-autonomous subject, with an inward, self-defined sense of identity, there is little suggestion of this vision in Aylett, who instead shows a clear focus on group affiliation. For Aylett, the subject is made remarkable by the way (s)he interacts with those around him (or her) – the way (s)he *must* interact, because of his (or her) own inclinations and vulnerabilities. Of the available narratives of the Renaissance self, my work belongs to that group of scholars who have sought to understand the early modern subject as a self within a community, an individual still dependent on and defined by social interactions. Natalie Zemon Davis in particular has argued for the mutually beneficial relationship between individual and

community, noting that 'embeddedness did not preclude self-discovery, but rather prompted it'.[17] As Timothy Reiss observes: 'Person and community, one cannot repeat too often, are in a mutually creative dialectic'.[18]

This seems the more logical way to approach things, especially given the frequency with which pity appears in Renaissance texts. A cursory examination of Shakespeare's work – to use the obvious canonical example – illustrates the emotion's prevalence. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare opens with a reference to the 'piteous overthrows' of the lovers (Prologue, l. 7): the comment, helpfully, sets the emotional tone of the play (and provides this thesis with its title). It also implies a sense of intensity: the events to come are big, and carry a significant weight; these 'piteous overthrows' are what finally supersede the strife between the Montagues and the Capulets. Elsewhere the emotion is more obviously positive. Alcibiades, for example marries the emotion with friendship: 'I am thy friend and pity thee, dear Timon'; Mecaenas' comment to Octavia is similarly themed: 'Each heart in Rome does love and pity you'.[19] Remarkably, even Julia feels compelled to offer her pity to her own lover, in his failed attempt to win another woman: 'Because I love him I must pity him'.[20] And Othello credits the emotion for his successful courtship of Desdemona:

> My story being done,
> She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
> She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
> 'Twas *pitiful*, 'twas wondrous *pitiful*:
> She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
> That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me
> And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,

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[17] Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Boundaries and the Sense of Self in Sixteenth-Century France', in *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. by Thomas C. Heller, Morton Sosna and David E. Wellbery (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 53-63, p. 63; For more on the influence of community on selfhood, see also Kay Stockholder, who notes that 'one's place in the world was identical to one's self-definition'; 'Yet Can he Write: Reading the Silences in *The Spanish Tragedy*', *American Imago*, 47 (1990), pp. 93-124.

[18] Reiss, Mirages of the Selfe, p. 24.

[19] Timon of Athens, IV.iii.98; Antony and Cleopatra, III.vi.94.

[20] Two Gentlemen of Verona, IV.iv.95.

> I should by teach him how to tell my story.
> And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
> She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
> And I loved her that she did *pity* them.[21]

In this particular instance, pity is working on multiple levels: it affords a reason for the interaction between Othello and Desdemona, but also fosters the bond between them. Desdemona's pity both propels her towards Othello, and commends her to him. For all that this relationship later fails, it begins as an emotional community created by pity. Pity also facilitates the connection between Orlando and Duke Senior in *As You Like It*, as, when attempting to assess the men he encounters in the forest, Orlando remarks:

> Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you:
> I thought that all things had been savage here;
> […] But whate'er you are
> […]
> If ever you have look'd on better days,
> If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church,
> If ever sat at any good man's feast,
> If ever from your eyelids wiped a tear
> *And know what 'tis to pity and be pitied*,
> Let gentleness my strong enforcement be:
> In the which hope I blush, and hide my sword.[22]

The Duke confirms these traits, and the two understand one another as belonging to the same community. This phenomenon appears frequently on the Renaissance stage: connection is created through pity, in part because through feeling pity we are then motivated to act in the interest of others. Through pity we become bound to one another, both emotionally and through our actions. Simonides, for example, professes pity for Pericles, but what is perhaps more interesting is that that pity leads him to vow to 'awake [Pericles] from his melancholy'.[23] This initial feeling of pity prompts their future interactions; each participates in a pity-fuelled community, seeing himself as bound to others by virtue of this emotion.

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[21] *Othello*, I.iii.159-69, my emphasis.
[22] *As You Like It*, II.vii.106-19, my emphasis.
[23] *Pericles*, II.iii.90-91.

Yet there are also a number of Shakespearean references to pity that counsel against the emotion, specifically referencing the extent to which it compromises those who prove susceptible. There is York's reminder to Bolingbroke: 'Forget to pity him, lest thy pity prove | a serpent that will sting thee to thy heart'.[24] Think too of Dionyza's warning: 'Nor let pity, which even women have cast off, melt thee, but be a soldier to thy purpose'.[25] Or the First Stranger's observation in *Timon of Athens*: 'Men must learn now with pity to dispense, for policy sits above conscience' (III.ii.90-91). In these contexts pity is a nuisance, a distraction, or a hindrance, but it is also, seemingly, a constant threat: something that should be forgotten or cast off. These characters suggest a certain anxiety about pity's effect on an individual's identity, goals, or relationships. If anything, these references do more to confirm pity's prevalence in Renaissance England: it posed a sufficient threat to require frequent warning. Moreover, this phenomenon extends well beyond Shakespeare's work, and the literary sphere more generally. William Baldwin counsels man to 'Be gentle and lovynge to every bodye [...] be indifferent and equall towardes every man, be slowe to wrathe, [and] *swyfte to mercye and pitie*'; James Harrison's 1547 argument in favour of the union between Scotland and England relies on the invocation of pity to prompt action, first detailing the 'murder of men, ravishment of women, slaughter of olde folke and infantes, burnyng of houses and corne, with hunger and pestilence' evident in Scotland, and then wondering 'Who is so blynd that doth not see it, or who so harde harted, that doth not pitie it?'.[26] Author and merchant William Fulwood also ties pity to the cultivation of community, advising fellow writers that 'Commiseracion must be made of swete, pitiful, & humble language'.[27] These represent only a handful of the available

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[24] *Richard II*, V.iii.55-6.
[25] *Pericles*, IV.i.6-8.
[26] William Baldwin, A treatise of morall phylosophie (London, 1547), sig. M1^{v}-M2^{r}; James Harrison, An exhortacion to the Scottes to conforme them selfes to the honorable, expedie[n]t, and godly vnion, betwene the twoo realmes of Englande and Scotlande (London, 1547), sigs. A2^{v}-A3^{r}, my emphasis.
[27] William Fulwood, *The enimie of idlenesse* (London, 1568), sig. C3^{v}.

references: as I will show, there are many, many more. All of these examples contribute to a system of social interaction characterised by pity-fuelled exchanges; even in the cases that view pity as potentially destructive, these comments rely on the premise that pity exists as part of a person's nature, and that the emotion binds people together in one way or another. Let us therefore begin with this premise: for all the early modern anxieties about pity – its alignment with a weak constitution, its ability to compromise the person who feels it, its capacity to derail one from one's purpose – the dispensation and receipt of pity was also acknowledged as a prevalent feature of human relationships in the early modern period.

Studying the Emotions

As a larger field of interest, the emotions have been attracting scholarly attention at a steady rate for some time now: thirty years ago, ethnographer Benedicte Grima observed with pleasing simplicity that 'emotion *is* culture'; more recently, William Reddy opened his influential work on the history of the emotions by noting that 'the emotions are the most immediate, the most self-evident, and the most relevant of our orientations toward life'.[28] Though my particular interest is in pity, and the way it functions in the Renaissance, in a larger sense mine is a contribution to a much bigger field – spanning historical eras, working across disciplines like psychology, anthropology, philosophy and literary studies – that is devoted to the identification and understanding of the emotions.[29] At the core of all of this work is a belief

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[28] Benedicte Grima, *The Performance of Emotion Among Paxtun Women* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1992), p. 6; William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of the Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 3.

[29] Given the ever-growing nature of the field, and the number of disciplines involved, it would be impossible to offer an exhaustive list of relevant research. Some key contributions include: Jennifer Harding and Deirdre Pribram (eds.), *Emotions: A Cultural Studies Reader* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009); Jerome Kagan, *What is Emotion?: History, Measures, and Meanings* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Helena Wulff (ed.), *The Emotions: A Cultural Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), Daniel M. Gross, *The Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle's Rhetoric to Modern Brain Science* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), Keith Oatley, *Emotions: A Brief History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), and *The Psychology of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). See also Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson, 'Introduction: Reading the Early Modern Passions', in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, ed. by Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 1-20;

that the emotions play a central role in the life of the individual, that the feeling and expression of emotion can tell us something important about how humans function, both within themselves and within society. To a certain extent, this is the only obvious common ground between disciplines within emotions studies: from this point, individual disciplines have developed disparate methods of questioning the emotions. The dominating concerns for the scientific community, for psychological studies and research carried out by cognitive and behavioural neuroscientists, for example, relate to the development of our emotions, and whether these are acquired through society or pre-determined at birth. Scientific experimentation attempts to measure physiological and neurological response to emotional stimuli.[30] Historians, to give another example, have long recognised the importance of emotions scholarship, even as they have struggled with its completion. In 1973, Lucien Febvre called for a greater focus on the history of the emotions, insisting that until histories of love, pity, death, and cruelty were written, '*there [would] be no real history possible*'.[31] Whilst the present work represents only one piece of what was imagined – indeed, what is required – it is nonetheless an attempt to address part of the gap that Febvre identified.

Of course, the ever-present problem in emotions studies is the seductive opportunity

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Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Peter Goldie, (ed.), *Understanding Emotions: Minds and Morals* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002); William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*; Paul Ekman and Richard J. Davidson (eds.), *The Nature of Emotion: Fundamental Questions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Robert Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1993); and Ronald De Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987).

[30] There is some debate about the resulting data from these types of studies, which has been attacked on the grounds that it is impossible to separate the influence of society, or to isolate human emotion sufficiently in order to study it scientifically For more on this, see Paul O'Rorke and Andrew Ortony, 'Explaining Emotions', *Cognitive Science*, 18 (1994), pp. 283-323.

[31] Lucien Febvre, 'Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past', in *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Febvre*, ed. by Peter Burke, trans. K. Folca (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 12-26, p. 24, emphasis in original. Johan Huizinga's well-known book, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, perhaps stands as a notable exception to Febvre's observation about the dearth of emotional histories: Huizinga argues that the medieval period was marked by a clarity of emotional expression that would be unrecognisable in the modern era. See Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, trans. by F. Hopman (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976).

to universalise – to talk about 'sadness', 'happiness', or 'anger' as if these feelings *feel* the same to everyone who experiences them.[32] The constant risk is that the emotion should cease to represent a ground of enquiry, and become a form of explanation – that we should assume its legibility on the basis of our own emotional responses. Johan Huizinga and Norbert Elias, both significant figures within the field, have been criticised on these grounds of overgeneralisation.[33] Emotions scholarship is thus anxious to keep in view the fact that its concepts are slippery: without question, this is why we see the emotions approached from so many angles, by so many different types of researchers. Peter Burke has argued that this lack of clarity, structure, and precision has been the major obstacle to the field, and that although 'the idea that emotions have a history is not a new one', these histories are so potentially complex that 'a relatively modest, viable cultural history of emotions or cultures of emotion [becomes] a history of nuances' because 'any given nuance might be brushed aside as relatively trivial, but taken together these nuances matter a great deal'.[34] Peter and Carol Stearns, both prominent figures in this area, have importantly argued that the problems associated with the study of emotion respond to the impossibility of studying the *experience* of emotion itself.[35] Instead, they propose 'emotionology', which takes as its focus the way a given culture talks about emotion. The Stearnses' interest in the 'emotionological filters' at work in conduct manuals, letters, sermons, diaries, and other forms of literature has greatly influenced my own approach, which

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[32] For a more extended discussion of this, see Andrew Ortony and Terence J. Turner, 'What's Basic About Basic Emotions?', *Psychological Review*, 97 (1990), pp. 315-31.

[33] For more on this, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *The American Historical Review*, 107 (2002), pp. 821-45.

[34] Peter Burke, 'Is there a Cultural History of the Emotions?' in *Representing Emotions: New Connections in the Histories of Art, Music and Medicine*, ed. by Penelope Gouk and Helen Hills (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 35-48, here at p. 36, and pp. 43-44.

[35] For a helpful review of the problems of representation inherent in the historical study of social experience, see Stuart Airlie, 'The History of Emotions and Emotional History', *Early Medieval Europe*, 10 (2001), pp. 235-41.

looks to early modern literature in order to explore the period's attitude towards pity.[36]

The overarching problem that the Stearns' have identified – that is, the seeming impossibility of understanding another's experience – was clearly at work in Renaissance England as well, where various physiological theories were developed in order to explain what we today would call the emotions. Cautions against falling victim to one's feelings were fairly commonplace in the period, as were recommendations for maintaining the order of one's temperament. Among his pithy commendations of bodily temperance, for example, English physician Humphrey Brooke notes that 'It moderates our Passions and Affections, and renders them easily commendable'.[37] On the subject of intemperance, meanwhile, Brooke objects on the grounds that it 'subjects us to our Passions, and makes them irresistible' (sig. E8^{r}). Brooke's text, which is primarily concerned with medical knowledge, nevertheless places the passions under the domain of physical health. This is how the early moderns understood their emotions – as bodily functions, the indication of physical balance or imbalance. Perhaps for this reason, the bulk of recent early modern scholarship pertaining to 'the emotions' has been grounded in theories of the bodily humours, which understood the feelings that we today would classify as 'emotions' in the context of an imbalance in these bodily humours (black bile, or melancholy; blood; yellow bile, or choler; and phlegm).[38] According to this theory, the emotions are not only implicated in the physical body, but are also, perhaps more importantly, in fact produced by it. This allows for the control of temperament through the body, and through the regulation

[36] Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', *The American Historical Review*, 90 (1985), pp. 813-836, p. 824, p. 830.
[37] Humphrey Brooke, *Ugieine or A conservatory of health* (London, 1650), sig. E7^{v}.
[38] Peter Lowe, who served as the surgeon to the King of France, describes the four humours in the following way: blood, 'an humor hot, aerious, of good consistance, red coloured, swete tasted, most necessarie for the nourishment of the parts of our body, which are hot and humide, ingendered in the lyuer, retayned in the veines, and is compared to the aire'; phlegm, 'an humor cold and humide, thyn in consistance, white coloured, [which] when it is in the veines, it nourisheth the parts cold and humide, it lubrifieth the moving of the joynts & is compared to the water'; choler, 'hot and drie, of thyn and subtill consistence, black coloured, bitter tasted, proper to nourish the parts hot and dry, it is comparrd to the fire'; and melancholy, 'cold and drie, thick in consistence, sower tasted proper to nourish the parts that are cold and dry and is compared to the earth or winter'. Peter Lowe, *The whole course of chirurgerie* (London, 1597), sig. C3^{v}.

of what goes into it, as Thomas Walkington describes, for example, in the case of the choleric man:

> A cholericke man therefore [...] knowing himselfe to be overpoizd with its predominancy, but even foreseeing his corporall nature to have a propension or inclination to this humour, hee must wisely defeate, and waine his appetite of all such honey flowing meates and hote wines as are poison to his distemperature, and which in tract of time will aggravate this humour soe much, til it generate and breede either a hecticke fever mortall consumption, yellow jaundice, or any the like disease incident to this complexion; and so concerning all the rest.[39]

What Walkington (and the theory of the humoural body more generally) suggest is that the emotions are located within the body, that there are physical reasons for them, and that they can, in theory, be managed. This theory is crucial to the pervasive idea, clearly at work in this period, that certain types of people are naturally susceptible to certain types of temperament. Gail Kern Paster points to this way of thinking as a foundational premise of the early modern approach to gender: she argues that the Renaissance belief that women were humourally inclined towards excessive feeling, on the grounds of their physicality, shaped that period's conception of the 'soft', susceptible female temperament.[40] This understanding especially depicts pity as the domain of women, a predominantly *female* exercise: the ramifications are significant, particularly in connection with male subjects' desire to distance, distinguish, and elevate themselves with respect to the feminine. The alignment of pity with the female, in the view of humoural theory, problematises the emotion (especially for males, who are expected to exert more control over their humoural balance): it calls into question the relationship between human identity and an emotion like pity, viewing an emotional outburst as a physical malady, the product of a humoural imbalance. We can see this concept of the humours as governing the human emotional experience at work in Renaissance drama: Marlowe makes clear

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[39] Thomas Walkington, *The Opticke Glasse of Humors* (London, 1607), sigs. B7^{r}-B7^{v}.

[40] Gail Kern Paster, The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993). See also Humoring the Body: Emotions and Shakespeare's Stage (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

reference to it in *Tamburlaine the Great*, in the comment that 'Nature that framed us of *four elements*, | Warring within our breasts for regiment'; Shakespeare's Don Adriano de Armado references it, in his letter in *Love's Labour's Lost*, admitting that, 'besieged with sable-coloured *melancholy*, I did commend the *black-oppressing humour* to the most wholesome physic of thy health-giving air'; Guildenstern informs Hamlet that the king is 'marvellous distempered' not, as Hamlet suggests 'with drink' but rather 'with choler'.[41] This theory does more than reveal an early modern preoccupation with feeling and its origin: the emphasis on physicality suggests that people in this period felt especially susceptible to emotion, conceiving of it as something all-encompassing, experienced by both the mind and the body. It should be clear, from this, that feeling was of paramount importance in Renaissance England, a preoccupation that requires much more academic scrutiny. However, scholarship based on humoural theory also tends to produce a certain *kind* of Renaissance subjectivity. As James Kuzner has noted, 'humoural theory', which understood the self as 'being fundamentally open, psychologically and corporeally porous, permeable, unstable and volatile' produced concerns about bounded selfhood – specifically the worry that it might unravel (*Open Subjects*, p. 86). This accounts for the prevalence in early modern scholarship of leaky selves, or anxious selves, or phobic or armoured ones.[42] Given this, the insertion of pity into this dialogue about subjectivity is particularly fruitful. As I will show, pity is peculiar precisely because it is understood as deeply compromising: the pitiful exchange is often described in terms of emotional overrun and excess. At the same time, this study traces an underlying desire to preserve pity as a central component of the human experience – which, I suggest, indicates a more positive conception

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[41] Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine* (parts 1 and 2), ed. by Anthony B. Dawson (London: AC & Black, 2005), II.vii.18-19; *Love's Labour's Lost*, I.i.226-8, my emphasis; also *Hamlet*, III.ii.302-5.

[42] See, for example, Gail Kern Paster on women as 'leaky vessels', in *The Body Embarrassed*, esp. pp. 23-63; Mark Breitenberg on anxious masculinity, in *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Stephen Greenblatt, in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, on the armoured, phobic self.

of open subjectivity that is unacknowledged by Gail Kern Paster and others.

The significance of the emotions, therefore, cannot be understated. As Katharine Craik has noted, 'The passions were *as central* to early modern selfhood as the humours' and 'Emotions such as sadness, love, courage, and compassion contributed in important ways to early modern systems of ethics, morals and religious belief'.[43] Recent Renaissance scholarship seems to echo this opinion: there has been a significant increase in studies focusing on particular emotions (such as shame or sadness), or attempting to access what Paul Harris has called the 'emotional universe' of the period.[44] The advantage of this shift is in many ways clear, especially given the comments of scholars like Febvre about the necessity of compiling newly focused histories. Nonetheless, and as Neil Rhodes has recently pointed out, it is important, when speaking about Renaissance emotions, to remember that these were understood in physiological terms: explicit formulations of the emotional subject were only developed later, in the eighteenth century.[45] We cannot, therefore, assume their legibility in modern form, although studies investigating single emotions are both attractive and important insofar as they offer greater specificity. My aim here is to use pity in order to move beyond the narrow context of humoural theory, whilst still recognising that it would have been interpreted in physiological terms. I wish to pursue this one emotion specifically, tracking the ways in which it was discussed, and employed in a literary sense, without assuming its stability in a transhistorical

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[43] Craik, *Reading Sensations*, pp. 12-13.

[44] Harris, quoted in Anna Wierzbicka, *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 32. For emotion-specific studies, see for example Ewan Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2002), or Erin Sullivan, *Secret Contagions: Sadness and the Self in Early Modern England* (unpublished doctoral thesis, UCL, London, 2010). Other relevant studies do not emphasise emotion exclusively, but engage with it in a central way. Abjection, for example, is a central theme of Catherine Bates, *Masculinity, Gender and Identity in the English Renaissance Lyric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Lynn Enterline emphasises emotion in her recent book *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[45] In his recent work, Neil Rhodes works to bridge the gap between scholarship on the emotions and the pre-existing research on the humoural body. See Neil Rhodes, 'The Science of the Heart: Shakespeare, Kames and the Eighteenth-Century Invention of the Human', in *Posthumanist Shakespeares*, ed. by Stefan Herbrechter and Ivan Callus (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 23-40.

sense. Indeed, one of my overarching goals is to present pity as an evolving concept, with the Renaissance as a crucial point of this evolution. Pity in particular lends itself to a study of this type, both because it is so evidently unstable, and because it enters the conversation about Renaissance subjectivity at its point of origin, with Burckhardt.

Much of the most recent work on emotion has been in the pursuit of a viable framework for its study, and the already-established research on the emotions provides an important basis for what follows here. In exploring early modern pity, my aim is to paint a picture of an emotional culture with pity at its centre; I wish to understand how people in early modern England understood their personal relationships with pity, and how they reacted to its influence on their own self-understanding. Of equal importance is the way the personal relationship with pity affects one's behaviour within society – how pity comes to shape the public understanding of what one owes and is owed. Given these interests, I have sought wherever possible to use texts that represent either an exploration of pity's significance, or an attempt to offer instruction in pity to a wider audience. Invariably, this has brought me again and again to literary works, as it is in these texts we can see the creation of characters and societies. Here, emotions are set loose on social communities, but in a controlled setting; the action and reaction is closely monitored and highly structured. It is here, I would argue, that we see the business of negotiating the emotions. Of course, a reliance on literary texts creates its own special set of concerns: the use of imaginative material has been viewed by a number of critics with a certain degree of scepticism.[46] These critics believe that artistic texts, insofar as they are designed to elicit readerly emotion, pose a specific threat to a researcher already

[46] In particular, I am thinking of Burke's comments that Burckhardt's and Huizinga's use of artistic material contributed to their 'impressionistic rather than systematic' studies; even so, Burke acknowledges the value of literature in studies of this type. See 'Cultural History', p. 39. For more on this theme see Daniel Wickberg, 'What is the History of Sensibilities?: On Cultural Histories, Old and New', *The American History Review*, 112 (2007), pp. 661-84, and Adela Pinch, 'Emotion and History: A Review Article', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37 (1995), pp. 100-9.

sensitive to the presence of feeling in a given text. Nonetheless, I would argue that the open engagement with emotion typically found in these works – the intended elicitation and representation of genuine feeling – makes them particularly important source texts. In the Renaissance, much was made of the connection between word and emotion, particularly in a literary context.[47] George Puttenham wrote of 'all maner of conceites that stirre up any vehement passion in a man', offering as examples that 'to make a man angry there must be some injury or contempt offered, to make him envy there must proceede some undeserved prosperitie of his egall or inferiour, to make him pitie some miserable fortune or spectakle to behold'; in a similar vein, Philip Sidney argued that in poetry we might find 'all vertues, vices, and passions, so in their own naturall seates layd to the viewe'.[48] The early moderns understood literature as a place to explore, to express, and to cultivate emotion: numerous contemporary works outline the importance of rhetoric, with its ability to persuade through the provocation of feeling. Given this, I cannot see how it would be possible to present a convincing exploration of any early modern emotion without significant consultation with these types of texts. Nonetheless, as a manner of anticipating these concerns, I have shaped this investigation according to a carefully selected range of situations and environments: I have placed these questions of pity in a variety of contexts, and I have pursued them in canonical as well as obscure texts.

Pity

I return now, again, to pity specifically, a concept that (as I have already noted) has a particularly complicated, unstable history. In the already murky field of 'the emotions', pity

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[47] Katharine Craik in particular has argued that literature has a profound impact on early modern selfhood, noting that 'when reading stirs up anger, grief, shame, embarrassment, fear or pleasure in men's imaginations, then, it also impacts upon their physical selves with corollary sensations, for books transform not only the immaterial mind and soul but also the material body' (*Reading Sensations*, p. 135).

[48] George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London, 1589), sig. Ii3^{v}; Philip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetry* (London, 1595), sig. D4^{r}.

seems one of the most complex and least-understood of sensations, and it has proved a source of frustration, worry and suspicion in virtually every era in which it has been discussed. My aim is not to resolve the ambiguity and instability surrounding pity, but rather to better understand both the early modern response to it, and how that response might fit within a larger, longer history of this particular emotion. So while I have provided a fairly general working definition of pity – for it seems necessary in order to preserve any sense of agreement amongst the relevant thinkers – I will take a moment here to give an overview of the most significant stances on pity, in order to highlight the variety of perspectives from which it has been viewed.

The research I present in this thesis repeatedly indicates that pity, for all its problems, had an important and positive role in early modern English culture. My concern is with literary and imaginative texts: with what people felt about feeling. Notably, however, this positive valuation is less apparent in the philosophical discourses of the time, which were largely dominated by Stoic thought. A prominent example of this sort of thinking is Seneca, who describes pity as 'a kind of moral sickness, contracted from other people's misfortune'.[49] Michel de Montaigne picked this up, identifying pity as a 'vicious' emotion, even as he admitted his own susceptibility to it: he acknowledged 'a marvellous weakness towards mercy and clemency – so much that I would be more naturally moved by compassion than by respect'.[50] Nevertheless, Montaigne is ultimately sceptical about pity's value to men specifically, but he recognises the potential attraction even as he undermines it, noting that:

> It could be said that for one's mind to yield to pity is an effect of *affability, gentleness* – and softness (that is why weaker natures such as those of women, children and the common-people are more subject to them) – whereas, disdaining tears and supplications and then yielding only out of respect for the holy image of valour is the action of a strong, unbending soul reserving its good-will and honour for stubborn,

[49] Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Seneca's Morals*, trans. Sir Roger L'Estrange (Philadelphia, PA: Gregg and Elliot, 1834), p. 314.
[50] Michel de Montaigne, 'We reach the same end by discrepant means', in *The Complete Essays*, trans. M.A. Screech (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 4.

masculine vigour (p. 4, my emphasis).

This presents pity as somewhat seductive, for Montaigne, though the comments about its being the domain of 'weaker natures' is indicative of contemporary worries about pity overrunning male temperance (as I discuss, at length, in Chapter Two). This concern about the individual becoming compromised by pity emerges in Baruch Spinoza's writing as well, as when he comments that 'He who is easily touched by the emotion of pity and is moved by another's distress or tears often does something which he later regrets, both because from emotion we do nothing that we certainly know to be good and because we are easily deceived by false tears'.[51] Philosophical anxiety about the threat of pity is prevalent during this period, although the literature of the period largely suggests that in practice, more and more people found themselves softening to the seductive appeal that Montaigne himself notes.

In the eighteenth century, Rousseau strongly advocated this emotion in *Emile*, writing that, 'A man who knew nothing of suffering would be incapable of tenderness towards his fellow-creatures and ignorant of the joys of pity; he would be hard-hearted, unsocial, a very monster among men'.[52] Like Aylett long before him, Rousseau aligned pity with humanity, classifying the absence of the emotion as a sort of defect. Most important perhaps is Rousseau's assertion that 'whether we will or not, we pity the unfortunate'; this presents the emotion as being beyond a person's control, powerfully felt even against our own judgement, and present even in the worst specimens of humanity. 'Even the most depraved are not wholly without this instinct', he notes (pp. 236-7). Rousseau identifies many of the same characteristics cited in opposition to the emotion – its prevalence across humanity, humankind's apparent inability to suppress it – but nonetheless champions the emotion as

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[51] Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*, ed. by Michael L. Morgan, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2002), pp. 346-7.
[52] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (Middlesex: Echo Library, 2007), p. 49.

evidence of human goodness, rather than a potentially damaging weakness. Adam Smith, Rousseau's contemporary, spoke at some length about the universality of pity:

> How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner. That we often derive sorrow from the sorrow of others, is a matter of fact too obvious to require any instances to prove it; for this sentiment, like all the other original passions of human nature, is by no means confined to the virtuous and humane, though they perhaps may feel it with the most exquisite sensibility. The greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it.[53]

Arguments such as these move away from considerations of pity's personal effect, and only acknowledge the emotion as a fundamental characteristic of humanity. The problem of pity, therefore, only emerges in its absence: no pity, no humanity. Arthur Schopenhauer picks up on this notion of shared humanity, bound together by pity, in his own writings, arguing that whilst 'Envy reinforces the wall between Thou and I […] pity makes it thin and transparent; indeed, it sometimes tears the wall down altogether, whereupon the distinction between I and Not-I disappears'.[54] This all suggests pity as a positive, common ground between people: something universal, reliable, and ultimately benevolent.

Yet pity also had its detractors. From the Romantic period onward, in tandem with the likes of Rousseau, one begins to hear voices such as that of William Blake, who gave vivid illustration to Shakespeare's line in *Macbeth* imagining pity as a 'naked new-born babe'. Blake also imagined pity creating distinct groups of haves and have-nots: 'Pity would be no more | If we did not make somebody Poor'.[55] Later still, notions of benevolence are explicitly struck down by Nietzsche, who is perhaps the most memorably outspoken opponent of pity.

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[53] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. by D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 9.
[54] Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995), p. 134.
[55] William Blake, 'The Human Abstract', in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. by David V. Erdman (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982), p. 27, ll. 1-2.

Although in *The Anti-Christ*, Nietzsche admits pity as a fairly common sensation, acknowledging an implicit connection between the pitier and the object of pity, he views any resulting connections to be damaging, completely void of benefit to either party: 'Pity is the opposite of the tonic affects that heighten the energy of vital feelings', he writes, and 'it has a depressive effect. You lose strength when you pity […] pity makes suffering into something infectious.[56] This suggests a connection facilitated through pity, though for Nietzsche it is a diseased, contagious one. For the purposes of this study, perhaps Nietzsche's greatest contribution on pity is his identification of pity as a potentially destructive influence on identity, in *Daybreak*: he classifies the emotion as an 'extreme state' which unlike other degrees that 'weave the web of our character and our destiny', instead only 'rend[s] the web apart'.[57]

The philosophical history of pity – a history of reasoned argument – thus oscillates between positive and negative responses. My precise intention, in looking at the Renaissance engagement with pity from a literary angle, is to locate a time in which the concerns about pity were balanced with an understanding – sometimes barely articulated – of the emotion's utility: I want to show the ways in which people in early modern England preserved the ever-problematic pity, exactly because it worked to keep people (both as communities and as individuals) together in various ways.

Division of Chapters

This thesis contends that in Renaissance England, pity was unleashed on humankind in new and unsettling ways. It is interested in the emotion's repeated emergence, in the work of

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[56] Friedrich Nietzsche, The Anti-Christ, in The Anti-Christ, Ecco Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings, ed. by
Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 6.

[57] *Daybreak*, in *The Nietzsche Reader,* ed. by Keith Ansell Pearson and Duncan Large (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 197-98. The consequences of Nietzsche's negative legacy vis-à-vis pity are evident in the modern reticence to even engage with the term. Philosopher Martha Nussbaum, for example, has openly acknowledge her reluctance to use the term 'pity', noting that the emotion 'has recently come to have nuances of condescension and superiority to the sufferer that it did not have when Rousseau invoked "*pitié*", and still does not have when "pity" is used to translate the Greek tragic terms *eleos* and *oiktos*'. Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, p. 301.

Shakespeare and his contemporaries, as a natural by-product of interaction, something that binds people together even as it compromises them as individuals. In part, my aim is to demonstrate, in detail, the relationship between early modern subjects and pity, and the complexity of that relationship: I want to explore more fully an emotion that was understood as somehow central to Renaissance humanity, but simultaneously damaging, undermining, unreliable, often ineffective, and all told, wholly problematic. However, the more important goal of this work is to establish that this understanding of man's relationship with pity was unique to the early modern period. I will argue that the Renaissance emphasis on pity highlighted individual vulnerability with an intensity unknown to the medieval period. At the same time, the frequency with which pity is portrayed as a vital part of being human clearly distinguishes this era from those that follow, in which pity is largely understood as entirely negative.

Ultimately, I point to the Reformation as the major cause of this emotional overflow, the institutional overhaul that put pity centre-stage in the Renaissance. My first chapter examines this premise in detail, considering how certain types of interaction were mediated by the medieval Church, under the auspices of charity. As these institutional superstructures faded during and after the Reformation, pity was understood as an increasingly important motivator for these forms of relation – something of inherent, humane value. Nonetheless, the dissolution of these structures also increased the intimacy of suffering, making the suffering of others seem closer and less manageable. This chapter compares medieval moralities like *Hickscorner* and *Everyman* – noting the ways in which notions of pity and charity are facilitated under the auspices of the Church – with *King Lear*. My reading of *Lear* places it in the aftermath of the Reformation, and contends that Shakespeare's tragedy is a reworking of the medieval morality model, stripped of its overarching religious structures. *Lear*'s emotional

landscape clearly demonstrates the effects of unregulated relation, portraying the necessity of pity as well as its instability, and the vulnerability it produces. My intention in this chapter is to illustrate a clear and significant distinction from the medieval period, focusing on the emotional consequences that arose as a result of the transition into the Renaissance. Although the rest of the thesis focuses on forms of human interaction that are predominantly independent of religious contexts, I believe the place of pity in the Renaissance is largely produced by the Reformation. This chapter's analysis, therefore, forms the foundation of the thesis: it calls into question the early modern ability to regulate or structure emotional exchanges, and signals a clear break between this era and the one immediately preceding it. Moreover, with the tragic emotional consequences of *King Lear*, the chapter begins to suggest the overwhelming importance of pity, and the potential consequences of its absence.

From this point, the thesis focuses its attention firmly in the Renaissance, scrutinising the idea of pity as a fundamental trait of humanity that also produces a problematic vulnerability. My second chapter juxtaposes this notion with the seemingly contradictory emphasis on temperance that is evident in sixteenth-century conduct manuals, particularly those directed towards men at court. I argue that although there is an articulated desire in this period for pity to be permissible, and even positive for men, there remains a concern about reconciling the emotion with other important aspects of masculine identity. I examine this tension against the backdrop of courtly literature, beginning with the lyric poetry of Philip Sidney and Barnabe Barnes. These poems are united by the presence of an abject male figure, who is cast at the feet of a cold, idealised female, and begging for her pity. The pursuit of pity is a theme that runs throughout this type of literature, and in this chapter, I trace the correlation between these unanswered emotional appeals and the violent outbursts that follow. This undercurrent of violence, I argue, is a direct result of the vulnerability produced by the

engagement with pity. Nonetheless, even these obviously troubled exchanges demonstrate the connective quality of pity, demonstrating its potential, when functional, to form a connection between the pitier and the pitied. These more successful forms of pitiful exchange are examined in Sidney's *Arcadia* and Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, where I highlight a flow of pity that appears more compatible with masculine, courtly identity. These episodes, I argue, demonstrate the potential community-building qualities of pity, and offer some evidence for the apparent early modern interest in preserving it, even in the face of its obviously problematic aspects.

My third chapter further develops this notion of pity as a community-builder, whilst at the same time exploring the violence of pity in another context. Here, I move away from the rhetorical appeal for pity and focus on the visual presentation of pitiability. The study begins with the printer's note preceding *Gorboduc*, written by John Daye. In it, Daye imagines the text as a woman who has been violated, and discusses his attempts to restore 'her', in order to prevent her from becoming a type of Lucrece. He conceives of the problem in distinctively visual terms, invoking pity on the grounds that the visible evidence of the lady's violation prompts a set of uncomfortable feelings that demand relief. I track this attitude in a number of early modern Lucrece narratives, considering Renaissance translations of the story's classical sources, as well as Shakespearean Lucrece figures in both *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. In particular, I identify a troubling dimension to the pity offered in response to the spectacle of female violation, motivated, in an outrageous reversal of roles, by a desire to correct a visual trauma to which the violated woman exposes those around her.

Ultimately, I argue that Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* pushes these notions of female pitiability in order to explore the possibility of a mutilated female character who harnesses the male corrective desire. The result, I contend, is a form of pity that fosters connection, shaping

and encouraging a community on the basis of the pitiful exchange. The critical response to both *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Titus Andronicus* has focused on the violence acted out upon these female figures, with the majority scrutinising the consuming male gaze, and the rendering of these women into mere symbols. Here, I wish to shift the focus to consider the effect of the (mutilated) female gaze, and to explore the ways in which that gaze seems to be interpreted, by those who meet it, as itself an act of violence. This chapter, perhaps more than any other, scrutinises the apparent pain induced by the forceful elicitation of pity, showcasing the emotion as dangerously unsettling to the individual. And yet again, in the Shakespearean rendering of this story, pity emerges as something powerful, worth preserving – a central element of community identity.

My fourth and final chapter is a return to the hermeneutics of the historiography of Renaissance 'man'. Here, I consider how pity informs the on-going discussion of what it means to be human, particularly as this identity is constructed in relation to animal kind. The early modern period is typically viewed as a watershed era for animal studies, in large part due to the arguments advanced by Descartes and Montaigne during the time. The Renaissance project of defining humanity was in part dependent on the possibility of creating distinction between man and beast, and here again, pity figures as a complicating factor. This chapter addresses questions of the animal capacity for pity, as well as exploring how considerations of *kind* informed the dispensation of pity across species barriers. I explore the ways in which pity complicates, and indeed often breaks down boundaries between man and animal. This examination focuses primarily on two texts: Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare seems to engage deliberately with pity as a way of further complicating the already-ambiguous boundaries between human and animal. Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, on the other hand, appears resolute in its desire to offer clearly defined

characters: Jonson responds to pity's uncontrollability by restricting his characters' engagement with the emotion, but in so doing he renders them animalistic, barely human; my reading sees this as a clear response to the muddy waters of Shakespeare's play. Both plays, however, portray a delicate relationship between people, animals and pity, with the notion of humanity hanging in the balance. These texts demonstrate the extent to which the early moderns engaged with emotions generally, and pity specifically, in order to sanction certain social exchanges, making assertions on the basis of *kind* as a way of justifying the dispensation – or refusal – of kindness to beings who might, in other contexts, have some claim to it. This analysis confirms the extent to which pity shapes human identity, as well as its involvement in the formation of groups. Here, I want to build on the obvious discomfort that indistinct humanity prompts, tracing that displeasure to a more fundamental concern about *kind*, and an interest in how a person's interactions, both within and outwith his or her own kind, defines him (or her). I will also point to this fluid boundary, in closing, as evidence that Renaissance identity was undergoing constant change: it was under relentless scrutiny, and was both susceptible to – and dependent upon, as Jonson demonstrates – unstable, and uncomfortable influences, such as pity.

It is my hope that these chapters, put together, will not only demonstrate the extent to which pity was woven into English Renaissance culture, but will also more broadly highlight the necessity of investigating interpersonal emotions as an important influence on individual identity. It is my contention that pity, even where it is not explicitly discussed, is always at work as a general principle in social interaction: people worry about it, negotiate it improperly, try – and fail – to evade it, or excise it from their lives, and still it presents itself as a recurring issue. Central to this is the English Reformation, which I wish to examine not just in religious, political, or social terms, but in affective terms as well. The Reformation, I will argue, shaped

the emotional lives of people in Renaissance, making them feel especially vulnerable to *feeling*. Equally crucial to this thesis is the idea that people in the early modern period felt there was such a thing as emotional obligation, even as they objected to it, and fought against it. What is most important, however, is that this discomfort should not be taken as evidence of unimportance: quite the contrary. The emotional vulnerability evident in early modern depictions of pity demonstrates just how challenging – and vital – it was, at this time, to feel for others.

CHAPTER ONE

'MY NAME IS PITY, THAT EVER YET HATH BEEN MAN'S FRIEND':

PITY IN PRE- AND POST-REFORMATION ENGLAND

I.

Compared with other medieval English morality plays, we know relatively little about *Hickscorner*, a play that portrays characters called Pity, Contemplation, and Perseverance, working to redeem wayward characters called Free Will, Imagination, and the eponymous Hickscorner.[1] The play was likely composed between 1497 and 1512, and was put into print by the London publisher Wynkyn de Worde in 1515. Structurally and thematically, *Hickscorner* could be classified as medieval drama. The play is heavily allegorical, and clearly aligned to pre-Reformation Church doctrine; it is a staged representation of Christian values, an exploration of the sins that might derail those values, and a prescription for salvation. Nonetheless, in a thesis about the Renaissance engagement with pity, I begin with the preceding tradition of dramatic representation. *Hickscorner* is unique in its explicit staging of the emotion as a character, but that character's opening lines are also noteworthy: 'My name is pity, that ever yet hath been man's friend'.[2] My focus throughout this work is precisely this notion of pity's intimate connection with mankind, its continued emergence in the context of human interaction. The early modern relationship with pity in England, I will argue, was particularly important because the emotion was understood as a central guiding principle around which human communities were formed. However, this positive conception is only half of the story:

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[1] For more on *Hickscorner*'s possible origins, as well as the play's potential use as political propaganda for Charles Brandon, see Greg Walker, *Plays of Persuasion: Drama and Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). See also Eleanor Rycroft, '*The Interlude of Youth* and *Hick scorner*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, ed. by Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 465-481.

[2] *Hickscorner*, from *Two Tudor Interludes*, ed. by Ian Lancashire (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), pp. 153-238, ll. 5-6.

at the same time, Renaissance literature constantly presents pity as a complicating factor, the impulse that weakens both those who offer and receive it, and threatens to compromise and destabilise notions of personal identity. For the early moderns, pity felt very much like something that brought people together as humans, even as it confirmed and emphasised their individual weakness. Much has been said of the Renaissance awareness of, and anxiety about, personal vulnerability, and my intention here is to use pity as a method of exploring the emotional dimensions of that awareness/anxiety. In this reading, Renaissance pity generates human communities, but it is also problematically self-sustaining insofar as it cultivates the vulnerability that necessitates community. However, it is only by turning back, to the medieval traditions that shaped early modern culture (even as they themselves were reshaped) that we can see how and why this problematic emotional climate came into existence.

Early modern English texts suggest a pervasive belief that human pity relies on a core principle of what we owe one another as *humans*. This notion of mutual obligation presupposes a certain quality of relation even in the absence of explicit laws or regulations. This emphasis on humane pity in Renaissance England very clearly follows from the medieval conceptions of charity that so directly influenced social relationships in the period preceding the Reformation. To this end, I begin not with pity in the Renaissance but with the medieval charity from which it emerged and developed.[3] This chapter will begin by considering the medieval doctrine of charity, examining the ways in which these teachings were institutionalised in a way that structured earthly interaction. I will pair this with an examination of the accompanying doctrinal drama, plays like *Hickscorner* or *Everyman*, which emphasise the human social element of these institutions, imagining the juxtaposition of doctrine and its practical application. In

[3] Chaucer of course represents an important medieval depiction of pity: his frequently deployed adage that 'pitie renneth soone in gentil herte' is both relevant and significant to the work of this thesis. I discuss the Chaucerian contribution in detail in Chapter Two. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn., ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

these plays, pity features, but only ever alongside charity or charitable structures. In these medieval plays, the problems of pity that emerge more clearly in the Renaissance, after the medieval institutions for practicing charity have been abolished, are less obvious, less unsettling. Even when pity fails in these medieval moralities (as it does, repeatedly), the potential threat is stabilised by the existence of charity: in these texts, the structure of charity always promises satisfying resolution through salvation.

From this point, I consider the changes to charitable doctrine that take effect during and after the Reformation, with a specific interest in the way that the thinking about compassionate interaction on earth becomes differently connected to the promise of eternal reward. My intention here is not to recreate an old opposition between the 'religious' Middle Ages and a 'secular' Renaissance. Rather, it is to examine the changing ways in which pity features in questions of the 'goodness' of humanity. The loss of the institutional structures of the pre-Reformation church were celebrated by many as a liberation, but in practice, there is some question about how it *felt* to those experiencing the change, left without the means to channel and structure sympathetic emotion. My reading of Shakespeare's *King Lear* sees the play as a consideration of the consequences of this shift in thinking. In many ways, *Lear* resembles a morality play, without the overarching structure of Church doctrine: stripped of these regulating principles, Shakespeare's play suggests a growing reliance on pity, but this dependence only highlights the instability of the emotion, intensifying the vulnerability of the characters, making their tragedy all the more extreme. In this chapter I wish to track the development that pity enjoys in the aftermath of the Reformation, and thereby demonstrate that Renaissance pity was something distinct and central to the period. However, I also wish to highlight the problems that arise alongside this growing prominence: the dissatisfaction, the destructiveness, and the instability that accompany the emotion in all of the contexts that I

examine in the chapters that follow.

II.
Medieval Charity in Context

'omnes enim nos manifestari oportet ante tribunal Christi ut referat
unusquisque propria corporis prout gessit sive bonum sive malum'

[For we must all appere before the judgement seate of Christ, that every man
maye receave the workes of his body accordynge to that he hath done, whether
it be good or bad][4]

In my introductory chapter, I characterised pity as an emotional response to another human's suffering, identifying it as a reaction that is inherently linked to the recognition of humankind's shared vulnerability. Although it was the rhetoric of pity that emerged as the dominant language for this particular type of fellow-feeling in Renaissance England, in pre-Reformation England (a culture that was equally invested in addressing the suffering of others) these types of interactions were predominantly understood in the context of charity, what John Colet called 'the roote of all spirituall lyfe'.[5] Perhaps understandably, theological writings portray this virtue first in relation to God: the role of humanity itself is relatively downplayed. And yet, it cannot be wholly excluded from discussions of charity. Thomas Aquinas's initial definition of this virtue models it upon human interaction: he describes it as 'a friendship *of man and God*', something which was 'not a creaturely reality in the soul, but is *God himself*'.[6] As the discussion continues, he contradicts the opening claim, stressing that 'man's charity is with God and the angels whose dwelling, as Daniel puts it, is not with creatures of flesh' (II-II, q. 23, a. 1). 'Therefore', he writes, 'charity *is not friendship*' (Ibid., emphasis mine). It is easy to see how this

[4] 2 Corinthians 5:10 (Vulgate); translation from William Tyndale, *The Newe Testament dylygently corrected and compared with the Greke* (London, 1534), sig. K5[r].
[5] John Colet, *The sermon of doctor Colete, made to the convocacion at Paulis* (London, 1530), sig. B3[r]. Colet was the Dean of St Paul's and Henry VIII's chaplain. This pre-Reformation sermon, originally delivered in 1511, criticised the English clergy heavily on the grounds of secularism and encouraged immediate reform from within.
[6] St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. by Thomas Gilby and Thomas C. O'Brien (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964-76), at II-II, q. 23, a. 1, ad 1, and II-II, q. 23, a. 2, respectively, with my emphasis.

kind of thinking may have affected human interaction, and this is especially evident in the social structures that supported articulations like these. Although doctrinal notions of charity incorporate love for fellow man, it was not expressed as the central priority, instead following only *after* the love of God. 'It would be wrong', Aquinas writes, 'for a man to love his neighbour *as if he were his principal end in life*, but not if he loves him *for God's sake*, which is charity's way' (II-II, q. 25, a. 1, ad 3, my emphasis).[7] The passage cited above, 2 Corinthians 5:10, echoes these sentiments, and usefully summarises the attitude of formal theology in the era: the expectation of death, the anticipation of judgement, and the conviction that that judgement would be heavily influenced by one's earthly action, one's 'works'. In this conception, earthly interactions are fuelled by divine interest: the purpose is to foster a relationship with God.

The obvious practical application of charitable doctrine is a certain form of giving, directed towards the poor, specifically: this is perhaps the easiest type of charity to quantify. Nonetheless, at its core, charity is love: a virtue in and of itself, considered the best of the virtues because of the assumed connection to God. This virtue (described as *caritas* and *agape* in Latin and Greek, respectively) is typically depicted as having inherent value, independent of considerations of salvation. This sort of thinking, which viewed charity as something beyond humanity, stretching towards the divine (and therefore higher, and better) was clearly applicable in the medieval period. Nonetheless, in practice, the more pressing motivations for practicing charity (salvation chief among them) seem to have taken cultural precedence. The importance of cultivating a relationship with God (rather than emulating His own love for humanity) is more typically stressed, as is the notion of God's surveillance over earthy action. These themes appear repeatedly in pre-Reformation death manuals (an extremely popular

[7] C.S. Lewis makes a similar distinction, identifying charity as 'that Love which is God itself', something quite different from 'the human activities called "loves"'. C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: Fount, 1960), p. 115.

genre, at the time), and always in connection to the undertaking of charitable work. Men and women were repeatedly reminded to 'do almesse so þat it mowe torne to profiȝt and to þe likyng of God', as this was considered a key component of 'lern[ing] to dye'.[8] Thomas Lupset reminds readers that 'faithe can not be perfect, onles there be good workes', and reminds that this is a directive from Christ himself, who 'so streytly commaundeth almes dedes, sayinge, that who so ever helpeth not a pore man in his nede, he wil not helpe him not yet knowe him at the fearefull day of dome'.[9] William Caxton ends his own *ars moriendi* with 'The xv degrees of charyte', which include the reminders that one ought 'Lete not by thy crokydnesse good werkes to multyplye', and that 'To that y^{e} chirche techith y^{e} put ful credulyte'.[10] The latter point's inclusion becomes all the more significant in light of the closing notation, that all these things are done 'In hope abydyng *his reward* and everlastyng glorie' (sig. A8^{v}, my emphasis). This type of advice takes as its premise the connection between earthly behaviour and the health of a person's immortal soul: the realms of heaven and earth, in this conception, are intimately connected, with the latter under the direct supervision of the former.

This emphasis on the inevitability of judgement had a significant effect on medieval England, and especially influenced attitudes towards charitable giving. Connected to this was an overarching concern for the soul after death, which a number of scholars have identified as paramount. Johan Huizinga has noted that 'no other epoch has laid so much stress as the expiring Middle Ages on the thought of death', whereas another critic has called this preoccupation with 'dying well' an 'obsession'; yet another views the preparation for death as

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[8] *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. by W. Nelson Francis (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 212, p. 68.
[9] Thomas Lupset, *A compendious and a very fruteful treatyse, teachynge the waye of dyenge well* (London, 1534), at sig. B4^{v} and sig. C2^{v}, respectively. Lupset, a Catholic, was a friend of Thomas More and was a part of John Colet's household, died in 1530.
[10] William Caxton, ars moriendi, that is to says the craft for to deye for the helthe of mannes sowle (London, 1491), sig. A8^{v}.

'the key to medieval religion'.[11] Various Church practices, such as the expectation of confession, penance, and repentance, stemmed from the belief that these practices would guide people into heaven, as Eamon Duffy has noted:

> It was the religious complex of these last things, death, judgement, Hell, and Heaven, that formed the essential focus of late medieval reflection on mortality, coupling anxiety over the brevity and uncertainty of life to *the practical need for good works*, to ensure a blissful hereafter.[12]

The most commonly mentioned form of 'good works' was almsgiving, the provision of material goods for the poor. The belief that good works had extra-earthly personal value profoundly influenced channels of human interaction, particularly with those in need. One thirteenth-century writer's observation that 'the poor […] in alms they receive the sins of men' clearly links the earthly act of charity to self-service, imaging the poor as particular targets for those in need of atonement.[13] People were encouraged to give throughout their lives, undertaking small, essentially anonymous acts.[14] Given this culture of giving, today the most reliable form of evidence about charitable practice in the period, and the spirit in which it was performed, is found in medieval wills. These documents reliably give instruction for donations to the poor, generally in the form of food, money, or clothing.[15] This type of charity

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[11] Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, trans. by F. Hopman (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 134; Susan Bridgen, 'Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London', *Past and Present*, 103 (1984), pp. 67-112, at p. 84; Christopher Daniel, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066-1550* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 1.

[12] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 308, my emphasis.

[13] 'Pauperes […] sciant se peccata hominum in elemosinis accipere', from Honorius Augustodunensis, 'Speculum ecclesiae', in *Patrologiae cursus completus…series latina*, vol. 172, ed. by J.P. Migne (Paris, 1844-64), col. 864. Miri Rubin in particular stresses the social function of the poor in the Middle Ages, and writes that in this period, 'The conservative view prevailed which valued the existence of poor people as an opportunity for the practice of soul-saving charity' (p. 85). Rubin also argues that the practice of medieval charity had more immediate earthly benefit, inasmuch as 'the ability to contribute to the general welfare […] became a test of status and prosperity as well as a reflection of moral health and virtue' (p. 289). Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[14] This makes the work of piecing together a complete image of medieval charity considerably more difficult. Historians working on the subject consistently reference this problem. For a more detailed discussion of the problem (and some proposals for working around it) see Joel T. Rosenthal, *The Purchase of Paradise* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972) and Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge*.

[15] For more information on provision for the poor in medieval wills, see Michael M. Sheehan, *The Will in Medieval England* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), esp. pp. 258-9.

functioned as only one element in a wider culture of intercessionary prayer, and the provisions always carried some sort of expected return, even beyond the creation of a document registering the practice of good works. The beneficiaries, for example, typically attended the deceased's funeral and offered prayers for his soul. This is a form of giving that minimises direct earthly contact, but very clearly prioritises the promise of eternal benefit: the funereal setting acts as the ultimate reminder of the certainty of death, and the uncertainty that follows it. In particular, the provision of funds in exchange for prayer is what Joel Rosenthal calls 'the purchase of paradise': it is acting on earth on the premise (or promise) of divine reward. Evidence of this attitude can be found in the popular contemporary poem, *How the Wise Man Taught His Sonne* (c. 1430):

> By ryches here sette thou no price;
> For this werld is full of deseyt;
> Therfor *purchasse paradyce*.[16]

This follows the reminder, 'Son, unto thi God pay welle thi tythe, | And pore men of thy gode thou dele' (ll. 61-2). The accompanying text, *How the Good Wijf Taughte Hir Doughtir*, stresses that the relationship with God is inseparable from the relationship with Church: 'Serve God and *kepe thy chyrche*'.[17] What in another context might be classified as an act of pity – the will to help the poor – therefore necessarily becomes implicated in larger notions of charity, of commitment to the Church, and of the investment in the soul's health. However, many of these practices represent forms of relation that minimise or entirely avoid direct human interaction: anonymous donations are encouraged and those that are not are commonly linked to intercessionary prayer, conducted post-mortem. There is something impersonal in these exchanges, even though the 'love of fellow men' is often invoked alongside them.

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[16] *How the Wise Man Taught His Son*, ed. by George Shuffleton (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008), ll. 90-2, my emphasis.
[17] *How the Good Wijf Taughte Hir Doughtir*, ed. by George Shuffleton (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008), l. 7, my emphasis.

Of course, none of these charitable practices preclude the possibility of genuine emotional response to suffering, as this model of charity – in comparison to the centralised structure envisioned by Protestant reformers – in fact could be seen as encouraging 'face-to-face giving'.[18] This, I think, is perhaps only clearly the case when considered in relation to the post-Reformation model that follows, and this is an argument that I will address in due course. For now, it is important to note that though the central priority of medieval charity perhaps remains on the individual's cultivation of a relationship with God, in another way we might interpret the mandate to perform good works on earth as a sort of protected space in which to exercise the human impulse to alleviate the suffering of others. The very clear benefit of practicing charity erases any possible objection to the individual cost of extending oneself in the interest of another's vulnerability: there is arguably no greater incentive than eternal salvation.[19] However, what is perhaps more significant is that the possibility of shared vulnerability or weakness (the problem that seems always to emerge for the pitier in the context of pity's dispensation) is effectively erased by the structure imagined by the medieval Church, and the presence of supervisorial clergy who facilitate the process of redemption. The individual can harbour feelings of pity, but these are entirely implicated in the institutional superstructures in place during the period. In this way, the culture of the Church validates and sanctions this type of emotional response, and it also, in a sense, regulates feelings that might otherwise feel uncontainable.

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[18] Ian W. Archer, 'The Charity of Early Modern Londoners', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 12 (2002), pp. 223-44, p. 244.

[19] R.N. Swanson, for example, cites Matthew 19.19 ['Love thy neighbour as thyself'] and Luke 6.13 ['Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'] as evidence of medieval Catholicism's emphasis on 'the mutual support necessary between Christians' (p. 350). Nonetheless, Swanson goes on to acknowledge that the expression of doctrine suggests that 'carrots were needed' to encourage behaviour by making it 'beneficial to both sides, even if the gain for one came only in the afterlife' (p. 351). R.N. Swanson, *Indulgences in Late Medieval England: Passports to Paradise?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

III.
Charitable Doctrine in Medieval Morality Plays

The structure provided by charity doctrine is particularly apparent in the medieval morality plays that were used to supplement Church teachings, and perhaps no better example exists than *Everyman*.[20] An 1518-19 English reworking of the Dutch play *Elckerlijc*, *Everyman* tracks the progress of the eponymous character towards the grave (and judgement), and from the beginning we are given a clear sense of an organised process.[21] The sense of inevitability and procedure is implied in the play's *incipit*: 'Here beginneth a treatise how the High Father of heaven sendeth Death to summon every creature to come and give account of their lives in this world…'.[22] The High Father sends Death; every creature is summoned; each must 'give account of their [earthly] lives'. This, it seems, is the inevitable consequence of human behaviour, as God's complaint against humankind is not just about their way of life, but the attitude it implies: 'They fear not my righteousness […] My law […] They forget clean' (ll. 28-30). These complaints are clearly implicated in Everyman's later announcement:

> Of all my works I must show
> How I have lived and my days spent;
> Also of ill deeds that I have used
> In my time, sith life was me lent,
> And of all virtues that I have refused (ll. 338-42)

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[20] The relationship between the medieval Church and medieval drama is widely acknowledged. Specifically, the use of medieval drama as an extension of the pulpit is a popular critical theme: Eamon Duffy considers these plays 'a fundamental means of transmitting religious instruction and stirring devotion' (p. 67). This is essentially an echo of David Bevington's perspective in his influential volume on medieval drama. Even those critics who move away from this idea – Claire Sponsler's reading of medieval theatricality as a form of resistance to disciplining discourses is a good example - use the obvious representation of Church doctrine in the plays as a starting point. See: Sarah Beckwith, *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Cycles* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001); David Bevington, *Medieval Drama* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1975); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*; Claire Sponsler, *Drama and Resistance: Bodies, Goods and Theatricality in Late Medieval England* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[21] As Andrew Hadfield has noted, the English reworking of the original Dutch text expands the dialogue between Everyman and Good Deeds, suggesting that 'the English author was eager to explore the relationship between good deeds and salvation' (p. 93). See Andrew Hadfield, 'The Summoning of *Everyman*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, ed. by Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 93-108.

[22] *Everyman*, from *Everyman and Mankind*, ed. by Douglas Bruster and Eric Rasmussen. (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2009), Incipit.

Specifically, Everyman's comment here looks to be directly connected to God's objection that, 'Charity they do all clean forget' (l. 51). The correlation between a contented God and the undertaking of charitable works is further represented by the character Good Deeds, who, as Everyman himself notes – in a speech that neatly summarises the action of the first half of the play – is simultaneously the only one able to accompany him to the grave, and yet the only one with insufficient strength to make the journey:

> Oh, to whom shall I make my moan
> For to go with me in that heavy journey?
> First Fellowship said he would with me go –
> His words were very pleasant and gay –
> But afterward he left me alone.
> Then spake I to my kinsmen, all in despair,
> And also they gave me words fair.
> They lacked no fair speaking,
> But all forsook me in the ending.
> Then went I to my Goods, that I loved best,
> In hope to have comfort, but there had I least;
> For my Goods sharply did me tell
> That he bringeth many into hell.
> Then of myself I was ashamed,
> And so I am worthy to be blamed.
> Thus may I well myself hate.
> Of whom shall I now counsel take?
> I think that I shall never speed
> Till that I go to my Good Deed.
> But, alas, she is so weak
> That she can neither go ne speak. (ll. 463-83)

Both the speech itself and the action that precedes it emphasise the significance of earthly behaviour, while simultaneously downplaying the long-term value of earthly living. We see Everyman abandoned by the trappings of his earthly life – human fellowship, material goods – and his only hope of redemption is the record of the action done in God's service. The absence of this account is a pressing issue, as is Everyman's apparent failure to direct the proper kind of love, in the proper ways. These shortcomings threaten to leave Everyman truly alone in his journey towards judgement:

EVERYMAN: Therefore I come to you, my moan to make.
I pray you that ye will go with me.

GOOD DEEDS: I would full fain, but I cannot stand, verily.

EVERYMAN: Why, is there anything on you fall?

GOOD DEEDS: Yea, sir, I may thank *you* of all!
If ye had perfectly cheered me,
Your book of account now full ready had be.
Look, *the books of your works and deeds eke*:
Ah, see how they lie here under the feet
To your soul's heaviness.

EVERYMAN: Our Lord Jesus help me,
For one letter herein can I not see. (ll. 496-507, my emphasis)

That it is quite specifically charity that Good Deeds represents is suggested by her central presence in Everyman's reckoning: God's objection is that charity has been forgot, and Good Deeds is the one character that accompanies Everyman to his judgement, to demonstrate that this is not the case. The very idea that the fate of Everyman's soul is tied to his involvement in a certain type of charitable work, and that this type of work is somehow recorded in a personal register, further suggests an underlying personal motivation for charity: the construction of this charitable account is a vital step in the preparation for death. There is a strong sense of being held, quite literally, to account. The accounting rhetoric strongly implies that salvation can, in fact, be regulated, that it is possible to ensure one's own fate after death. The notion of accountancy applies to the regulation of emotional life as well, clarifying earthly obligation as well as providing the methods of fulfilling it. In this way, an emotion like pity becomes less raw and less threatening, simply because there are clear channels for managing it under the institution of charitable work.

This medieval drama on the one hand installs pitiful feeling for others as the foundation of all good deeds, whilst on the other hand suggesting that this should be done primarily to serve God (rather than humankind, for its own sake). That this is the case is

further suggested by *Everyman* in the regeneration of the character Good Deeds. While both her name and the supposed cause of her weakness, Everyman's lack of charitable activity, demonstrate the importance of attending one's suffering fellows, the prescribed course of action to 'rebuild' her (and in so doing, to redeem Everyman) relies heavily on the institution of the Church, and on religious practice. Rather than going back to tend the poor (for it is too late for that, in the moment of the play), Everyman is now obliged to seek 'Knowledge', whom Good Deeds describes as 'a sister' (l. 519). The depiction of Good Deeds and Knowledge as sisters underlines the idea that earthly works are intertwined with religious practice, and Knowledge's doctrinal role is confirmed with the announcement that she will lead Everyman to 'Confession'. Confession, an obvious priest figure who 'is in good conceit with God almighty' (l. 544) oversees Everyman's penance. This follows a standard format: hoping that Confession will 'Wash from *me* the spots and vices clean, | That on *me* no sin may be seen' (ll. 546-7, my emphasis), Everyman announces that he 'come[s] with Knowledge for [his] redemption, | [and] Repent[s] with heart and full contrition' (ll. 548-9). Although Everyman represents mankind collectively, he is equally each of us individually: as the quotation above indicates, Everyman's interaction with Confession uses deeply personal rhetoric, 'me – me', and is focused entirely on the health of his individual soul. Confession, in turn, and again fulfilling the role of priest, behaves as the earthly link to paradise, assuring that 'a precious jewel I will give thee, | Called penance, voider of adversity' (ll. 557-8). It is also only through the interaction with Confession and completion of the penance that Everyman restores Good Deeds, reiterating the point that one's 'good deeds' ultimately fall under the jurisdiction and supervision of the Church. Even the provisions that Everyman does finally make, in his will and testament – 'In alms, half my good I will give with my hands twain | In the way of charity with good intent' (ll. 699-700) – falls in line with the expectations of the Church, calling to

mind William Lyndwood's reminder in the *Provinciale* that 'Those who do not relieve the needy kill spiritually, *as do those who withhold [from the poor]*'.[23] What *Everyman* offers is a picture of medieval culture in which human interaction, particularly as it pertains to the suffering, is imagined as being regulated by the Church under the name of charity. That charity, however, greatly emphasises the ways in which this type of work, and these kinds of earthly interactions, ultimately benefit the individual by fostering a relationship with God. The focus, therefore, is not so much on the suffering of the poor and vulnerable themselves: it is on one's response to these people, and how that reaction affects that person's relationship with God, and in turn, the health of his or her immortal soul. In this way, earthly action comes under the regulatory umbrella of religion.

Charity's significance is an idea that arises again and again in the medieval morality play, but typically it appears as a large, multi-faceted undertaking, for which conceivable acts of fellowship play only a small part. The wayward king featured in *The Pride of Life*, for instance – a play that imagines a king with no fear of death – is instructed that he must 'do dedis of charite' in order 'To savy thi soul fre sor', but these 'dedis' must accompany the commitment to 'lernen Cristis lor'.[24] Here again, charitable structure organises this type of human interaction, making one man's response to the pitiful part of a larger campaign to establish his own Christian identity and protect his soul after death. *The Interlude of Youth*, to give another example, also imagines its youthful protagonist's ignorance of divine judgement, staging Charity as a distinct character who announces that 'There may no man saved be | Without the

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[23] 'Spirtualiter enim occidunt qui non reficiunt indigentes' (compiled c. 1420), in William Lyndwood, *Provinciale seu constitutiones Angliae* (Oxford, 1679, repr., Farnborough, 1968), Lib I.tit.I I.c.I, pp. 57-8, my emphasis.

[24] *The Pride of Life*, in *The Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, ed. by Osborn Waterhouse (London: Kegan Paul, 1909), pp. 88-104, here at lines 403, 406 and 404, respectively. *The Pride of Life* is the earliest known morality play in English (now only in fragment), dating from the fourteenth century. For more on the date and origin of this play, see Pamela M. King, 'Morality Plays', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, ed. by Richard Beadle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 240-64, esp. at pp. 258-64.

help of me'.[25] Youth's successful indoctrination into charity is signalled by his vow that

> For my sin I will mourn,
> All creatures I will turn,
> And when I see misdoing men
> Good counsel I shall give them
> And exhort them to amend. (ll. 776-80)

This is more or less the exact function of the allegorical characters who represent religious virtue, and are clearly not human. While allegorical, Youth is, of course, a representation of humanity. Nonetheless, he is separate from humanity – those 'misdoing men' in need of enlightenment. This is unorthodox, as what he imagines pushes against the notions of fellowship implied in *agape* and *caritas*. As Youth imagines it, his newly acquired knowledge of Christ distinguishes him from those around him; he conceives of himself as more like the other priest figures charged with mediating the charitable practice of others. In this sense, both *The Pride of Life* and *The Interlude of Youth* portray charity as far more concerned with creating clear, structured channels for undertaking God's work, than cultivating strong bonds between men.

Hickscorner, the text with which I opened the chapter, also echoes the notion of earthly attendance to fellow men as a key element, but again only one component, of the charitable profile. Charity's significance is first referenced by the character Pity, conceived of as the latter's equal partner: 'Charity and I of true love leads the double rein; | Whoso me loveth damned never shall be' (ll. 25-6). There are oddities here: Charity in fact never takes the stage, and the character's authority is otherwise undermined, as Pity's immediate transition from partner to individual agent – 'Charity *and* I'/'Whoso *me* loveth' – suggests; we will return to some of these dissonances presently. For the moment, though, it can be noted that *Hickscorner* is ultimately about the salvation of the wayward characters, and the process for achieving this

[25] *The Interlude of Youth*, in *Two Tudor Interludes*, ed. by Ian Lancashire (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), pp. 98-152, at ll. 8-9.

is virtually identical to the very clear doctrinal tasks undertaken by Everyman in his own quest for redemption. *Hickscorner* sees *Everyman*'s Knowledge and Confession replaced by two characters equally implicated in the Church: Contemplation, the 'brother to holy church' (l. 43), and Perseverance, Contemplation's 'kinsman' who 'doth continue | Still going upward the ladder of grace' (ll. 82-3). Pity's complaint about the world's rich men is linked to their behaviour towards their fellow man, as he notes that 'For their neighbours they will nought do' (l. 108). Ultimately, this problem falls to Contemplation and Perseverance. The representations of this type of errant person – Freewill, Imagination, and later Hickscorner himself – are only vaguely characterised as objectionable, and yet each is marked by a lack of regard for mankind: Freewill, for example, openly acknowledges his tendency to alienate others, admitting that, 'Full soon of my company ye would be weary' (l. 164), Imagination reports having recently been 'sat gyved in a pair of stocks' (l. 198) after gleefully taking advantage of everyone he encounters. Hickscorner – like Everyman, the only human character in his play – introduces himself onstage with a joyous proclamation that the 'great' people he encountered on his worldly journey, the 'true religious and holy women' the 'alms-deed doers', and the 'piteous people, that be of sin destroyers […] all in the sea were drowned' (ll. 338-355 *passim*). This is not just a roundabout endorsement of the 'thieves, and whores, [and] other good company' (l. 369); it also demonstrates Hickscorner's lack of interest in those committed to helping one another, the 'true monks that keep their religion' (l. 345) and the 'good rich men that helpeth folk out of prison' (l. 350). These are the people that Hickscorner labels 'such unhappy company' (l. 353), and this is a community of which he clearly wants no part.

As in *Everyman*, the motivating factor for earthly action is the threat of God's wrath. The redemptive efforts of Perseverance and Contemplation only begin to work on Freewill after they bid him to 'forsake thy miss for His love, | And then mayst thou *come to the bliss also*'

(ll. 848-9), for theirs is the path 'for to go toward heaven' (l. 851). Eventually, Freewill willingly engages with Perseverance on the premise of attaining salvation: 'Sir, if ye will undertake that I saved shall be, | I will do all the penance that you will set me' (ll. 863-4). The procedure is heavily abbreviated, but there is still an obvious progression: Freewill renounces sin and asks God 'To forgive all that I have offend' (l. 870); he is instructed to 'hereafter live devoutly' (l. 877). Imagination similarly publicly asks for God's mercy, again acknowledging that 'No thing dread I so sore as death' (l. 996), and Perseverance responds as the intermediary and would-be guarantor of smooth passage from death to eternal life: '[…] I beseech God Almighty | To bring [to heaven] your souls that here be present' (ll. 1023-4). Once again, the process of redemption is portrayed as something clearly delineated, explicitly structured and controlled by figures whose actions make them look like priests. Moreover, these characters also *sound* like priests, as in the case of Contemplation's Latin invocation of Job: '*qui est in inferno nulla est redemptio* [for him who is in hell there is no redemption]' (l. 787). Therefore, the penitential experience is presented as crucial – both *Everyman* and *Hickscorner* move towards this inevitable conclusion – but it is also portrayed as a process requiring assistance – always from a priest-like figure with doctrinal knowledge, someone made in some ways extra-human by the apparently direct connection to God, and the ability to anticipate the surety of another's salvation. The inclusion of, and reliance on, the priest figures in these plays represents yet another instance of the mediation of the bonds between men, through the institutional structures of the Church.

Hickscorner's presentation of charitable doctrine is further indicated by the complaint Pity offers after being bound by Freewill, Imagination, and Hickscorner: the rhetoric is virtually identical to the complaint God offers at the beginning of *Everyman*, the complaint that references charity specifically as the practice which determines the health of the relationship between man and God. If anything, *Hickscorner* appears more vehement in its stance on

charity's importance, and man's failure to acknowledge it. Consider Pity's lines, from *Hickscorner*:

> We have plenty of great oaths,
> And cloth enough in our clothes,
> But charity many men *loathes*. (ll. 554-6, my emphasis)

By comparison, God's observation in *Everyman* that 'Charity they do all clean *forget'* (my emphasis) looks less troubling, more accidentally ignorant of God's will than actively hostile towards it. And there is a certain amount of aggression in this play that remains unresolved: in spite of Contemplation and Perseverance's redemptive successes with Freewill and Imagination, Hickscorner (again, the only human character, and unquestionably the most staunch adversary of living in God's image) disappears without mention, unsaved and therefore unresolved.[26] In spite of Perseverance's words to Freewill, 'Fro us thou shalt not escape' (l. 717), the disappearance of the title character is a troubling suggestion that some will manage to evade this cycle of sin-repentance-redemption.

Hickscorner's disappearance is not the only problem of the play, and indeed not the only disappearance: Pity vanishes as well.[27] This exit in particular is troubling in light of that character's opening proclamation (and later reminders) of his own importance. Let us revisit that opening introduction:

> Charity and I of true love leads the double rein;
> Whoso me loveth damned never shall be.
> Of some virtuous company I would be fain;
> For all that will to heaven needs must come by me,

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[26] Hickscorner's disappearance is perhaps one of the strangest features of a play that, as Thomas Percy amusingly noted, contains a number of oddities: 'It would be needless to point out the absurdities in the plan and conduct of [Hickscorner]: they are evidently great' (p. 130). See Thomas Percy, *Relics of Ancient English Poetry,* vol. I (London: Bickers, 1876-7), p. 130.

[27] The issue of Pity's disappearance is specifically, and more seriously taken up by the likes of David Bevington, who notes that 'the play ends, rather lamely no doubt, lacking its title role and its hero [Pity]'. Bevington ultimately attributes this to staging limitations presented by actors doubling roles. Given the actual utility of Pity in the play, one might disagree with Bevington's classification of him as the play's 'hero'; the only convincing evidence for this is the character's self-proclaimed significance. For more see David Bevington, *From Mankind to Marlowe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 139.

> Chief porter I am in that heavenly city. (ll. 25-29)

This is unambiguous language that clearly outlines the impossibility of getting into Heaven independently of Pity and Charity. Charity's failure to ever appear, following this commendation of importance, clearly suggests the possibility of Pity as a standalone entity. Pity's individualistic rhetoric seemingly confirms it: 'whoso *me* loveth'; '*I* would be fain'; 'needs must come by *me*'; 'Chief porter *I* am'. Pity's ability to double for Charity suggests the inextricable presence of fellow feeling in the medieval practice of charity, which so often presents as if the only relationship at stake were that between sinner and God. At the same time, Pity's individualism seems suspicious. These proclamations of self-sufficiency are immediately undermined by Pity's interactions with the other characters, in particular those in apparent need of salvation. Of all the characters in *Hickscorner*, Pity is the least in control. His absence gives him the impression of being completely removed from the redemptive process and therefore the important work of the play. Moreover, he commands no respect from the problematic characters, who ignore him, bind him in chains and then abandon him. Even when released by his supporters, Pity's last act is one of subservience: Contemplation instructs him to leave the stage in pursuit of his assailants (both of whom wander back later, of their own volition). Perseverance echoes the order: 'Brother Pity, do as he hath said' (l. 631). Pity obeys and leaves the stage, never to return. Put together, the play suggests a deep scepticism about Pity's dependability and efficacy, weaknesses that are made all the more apparent by the supporting character of Charity: we might wonder if part of the problem here is, as Pity notes, that 'true love' requires a *double* rein. Pity is left without his partner, and the consequences are potentially disastrous. Given his disappearance, as well as his general lack of authority even when onstage, we might reasonably question whether any salvation would have occurred at all, without the work of Perseverance and Contemplation – and these characters, as I have already

noted, are themselves heavily reliant on an established redemptive procedure that is clearly implicated under the umbrella of charity. In *Hickscorner* especially, the audience is confronted by the weaknesses of pity, whilst at the same time reminded of the comparative strengths of doctrinal process.

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The problems of pity are depicted with equal force in *Everyman*, which, as I have already noted, offers a clear representation of charitable doctrine. Although the play only directly mentions pity five times, it remains a significant text both for its explicit reference to the emotion, and its implicit reliance on cultivating pity in its audience. Unlike *Hickscorner*, which seems, problematically, to conflate pity and charity, in *Everyman* pity is distinct from charity, a particularly human practice. The emotion first appears in conjunction with Fellowship, who offers it as the initial response upon encountering Everyman: 'Everyman, good morrow, by this day! Sir why lookest thou so *piteously*? If anything be amiss, I pray thee me say, that I may help to remedy' (ll. 206-9, my emphasis). This is the precise interaction that concerns this thesis: the recognition of human suffering, followed by the desire to see (and contribute to) its relief. 'Sir, I *must* needs know your heaviness', Fellowship argues, claiming he has 'pity to see you in any distress' (ll. 216-7, my emphasis). This demonstrates nicely the apparent appeal of pity, the production of a bond through the invocation of the emotion: Fellowship's pity is presented as an involuntary reaction; he responds without apparent deliberation. This exchange initially looks very intimate, motivated entirely by Fellowship's participation in Everyman's emotional state: he sees Everyman's distress, pleads to hear more about it, pledges his physical presence at Everyman's side, and in the interest of his friend's relief, vows to avenge him even in the face of violence, or death. More importantly, the relationship is demonstrably tunnel-visioned: it is focused on the mutual bond between the characters and

does not look beyond it, to God. Fellowship's irrelevance to Everyman's religious plight is, in fact, precisely the point. Compared to the overarching tone of the play – the importance of acknowledging God's impending judgement – this is an interaction notably distinct in its interest in entirely earthly bonds.[28]

The apparent strength and conviction of Fellowship's compassionate reaction is seductive, as is his vow that

> If any have you wronged, ye shall revenged be,
> Though I on the ground be slain for thee.
> Though that I know before that I should die. (ll. 218-20)

The response clearly suggests the hope of comfort and salvation in human community. However, this possibility quickly evaporates in the face of real trouble, for Fellowship flees just as Everyman reveals the nature of his torment:

> That is matter indeed! Promise is duty,
> But, an I should take such a voyage on me,
> I know it well, it should be to my pain;
> Also it maketh me afeard, certain. (ll. 248-51)

It is not entirely clear where the deceit of Fellowship's promises lies: he may be lying to Everyman about his commitment, or he could be fooling himself about his own mettle. Either way, this abandonment damages the once-clear appeal of earthly Fellowship, and it also undermines the pity that accompanies it, making the emotion look unreliable and insubstantial. Moreover, there is an element of cruelty in Fellowship's pity, as Everyman's flourishing hope at the promise of an ally is quickly dashed when it evaporates. This model of pity offered and withdrawn is adopted by every other earthly comrade Everyman petitions: before the

[28] The OED defines 'fellowship' as 'partnership or the membership in a society', and also references sharing and communities of 'interest, sentiment or nature'. Therefore, in envisioning a partnership with Everyman, Fellowship – an allegorical representation – is only living up to his name. See 'fellowship, n.'. *OED* Online. September 2011. Oxford University Press.

appearance and restoration of Good Deeds, the play is a relentless gauntlet of abandonment.[29] It is a progression specifically designed to cultivate audience pity for Everyman, whose character is only useful insofar as he is able to present as piteous and in need of assistance. Because he is in fact all of us, the only way to assist Everyman – the logical fulfilment of our pity – is to redirect our own behaviour in accordance with charitable doctrine.

The depiction of pity in this context confirms the practice as a human impulse that has no real place beyond the earthly world. This stance is further suggested by Goods – in fact the only earthly character to deviate from the pattern of pity and abandonment – who refuses to offer pity, and instead takes the opportunity to remind Everyman of the impossibility of replacing the eternal love of charity with earthly love:

> My love is contrary to the love everlasting.
> But, if thou had me loved moderately during,
> As *to the poor give part of me*,
> Then shouldest thou not in this dolour be. (ll. 430-33, my emphasis)

Everyman's portrayal of pity, therefore, only confirms the play's interest in advancing the adherence of charitable doctrine. Nonetheless, the play also isolates some of the most interesting and unsettling facets of pity, showcasing, with flashy protestations of support and community, the comforting and attractive appearance of the emotion. The play equally demonstrates the human susceptibility to pity: even as we are confronted with a vision of pity as fleeting, unstable, and ultimately of no use, we are compelled to pity the ever-abandoned Everyman. This is the clear intention of the play: its didactic qualities require audience pity to communicate that Everyman's plight is a shared one. Additionally, even after the play takes a firm stance on pity, after Everyman has learned an excruciatingly thorough lesson about its

[29] James Simpson points to this cycle of abandonment as the source of the play's emotional/didactic strength, noting that 'as each "friend" in turn abandons Everyman on the point of death, the dialogue gains its poignancy from the way in which everyday affirmations of solidarity break in the presence of death'. James Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution: 1350-1547* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 556.

questionable value, the emotion manages to creep back in. Everyman, after reaching his penitent, enlightened state, retains a desire for pity. As he seeks last-minute comfort, he asks that Discretion 'Look in my grave once *piteously*' (l. 839, my emphasis). He is saved – protected ultimately by the structured redemption in which charity plays a central role – but it seems his desire for pity cannot be extinguished while he remains on earth.

IV.
'In the same house of the world': R*eformed Charity*

When, in the introduction to *Burning to Read*, James Simpson offers a rapid overview of the fundamental differences between Catholics and Protestants in the Reformation, the analysis begins and ends on the point of charity and its significance: Protestants 'believed that God's reward was a pure gift', which was 'wholly a matter of God's impenetrable decision, made without regard to the efforts of humans'; Catholics, by comparison, 'believed that, in one way or another, God did reward the human effort of works in the world'.[30] The interconnectivity of values like charity, pity and fellowship, united as they were under the umbrella of God's will in the medieval conception, changed significantly during and after the Reformation. Many scholars have identified the period between 1400 and 1700 as one of 'fundamental redefinition' for ideas about charity and its purpose, evolving from medieval notions of securing salvation through charity, and moving towards the Protestant emphasis on 'the new relationship between faith and works.[31] The Protestant denial of a link between earthly works and salvation effectively removed the obvious motivation for undertaking charitable work, and it also

[30] James Simpson, Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and Its Reformation Opponents (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 2.

[31] Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (London: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 122. For more on the transition between medieval and Renaissance thoughts on charity, see also John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Susan Bridgen, 'Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London'; W.K. Jordan, *The Charities of London: 1480-1660* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960) and W.K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660: A study of the changing pattern of English social aspirations* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978).

represented a major critique of a primary method for performing and cultivating one's Christian identity. This became a major pressure point, as one critic has noted: 'The framers of an official Protestant ideology and church', she writes, 'were acutely aware of the need to demonstrate that their faith and social vision could be put into practice, creating a more truly Christian community'.[32]

The Protestant response was an increased emphasis on the plight of the poor, the intensity and cause of their suffering, and the need for alleviation. Poverty, in this way, became politicised: the continued suffering of the poor was displayed as evidence of the ineffectuality of Church-sponsored charity, and of the need to dismantle it. Simon Fish offers a compelling (if lengthy) example of this type of Protestant rhetoric in his 1528 work, *A Supplication for Beggars*:

> Pituously complaineth the pore commons of this your majesties realme greatly lamentyng their owne miserable povertie […] Not many yeres fore, your highnes poore subjectes the lame, and impotente creatures of this realme, presented your highnes with a piteful and lamentable complaint imputyng the head and chiefe cause of their penury and lacke of reliefe, unto the great & infinite nombre of valiant and sturdy beggers, which had by their subtyll and crafty demaner in begging, gotten into their handes more then the third part of the yearely reut newse and possessions of this your highnes realme. Wher upon (as it semed) your hyghnes (sekynge a redresse and reformation of thys greate and intollerable enormitie: as a merciful father over this your natural country, moved wyth pitie towardes the miserable and pittiful nombre of blind, lame, lazar & other the impotent creatures of this your realme) hath wyth most ernest diligence, supplanted, and as it were weeded out a greate numbre of valiaunt and sturdye Monckes. Fryers, Chanons, Heremites, and Nunnes which disguised ypocrites, under the name of the contempt of this world, wallowed in the sea in the worldes wealth.[33]

Fish pits suffering of the poor against the 'disguised ypocrites' of the Church who commandeer wealth under the guise of charity. Nonetheless, it was not the case that Protestant thinkers objected to charity itself, as worshippers were still often reminded that 'God is

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[32] Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehavior in England, 1370-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 203. On the subject of the Protestant interest in creating an association between Protestantism and charity, see also Ian W. Archer, 'The Charity of Early Modern Londoners'.

[33] Simon Fish, *A supplication of beggers* (London, 1546), sig. A2^{r}-A2^{v}.

charitie, & he that dwelleth in charitie dwelleth in God, and God in hym'.[34] Reforms were made apparently with the concerns of humanity in mind; obligations were formed on the basis of the shared connection between one person and another. On the subject of the poor, for example, Samuel Bird wondered, 'Why shoulde wee thinke scorne to receive them into our houses, whom God has placed with us *in the same house of the world*?'.[35] Stephen Batman's exhortation appears equally interested in mutual consideration, even while bizarrely invoking pre-Reformation terminology of 'good works': 'Let us be rooted in charitie, that is *let us consider one another*, to provoke unto love, & to do good workes' (sig. D3^{v}, my emphasis). Although this shift in vision removes the immediate 'carrot' of salvation earned through works, in other ways it increases the importance of earthly action, making the actions more specifically an exchange between humans. The individual, as a result, is more directly connected to his or her own behaviour, acting as part of a unified community. As in other aspects of Protestantism, the space between God and individual worshipper is much smaller; the connection is more direct. These principles imagine humanity as one Christian community, operating without the watchful, guiding presence of clergy who are presented as having a special connection to God.

The Protestant assault on a charity that imagines the clergy as intermediaries between the people and God is evident, for example, in The Ten Articles, issued in 1536 as guide for religious practice. The Articles acknowledge the fundamental importance of existing works of charity, noting that, 'it is a very good and charitable deed to pray for souls departed, and […] also to cause other[s] to pray for them in masses and exequies, and to give alms to other[s] to pray for them', but they criticise the apparent Catholic manipulation of worshippers that led to the belief that the location or practitioner of an intercessionary prayer might provided some

[34] Stephen Batman, *A Christall Glass for Christian Reformation* (London, 1569), sig. D1^{v}.
[35] Samuel Bird, Three Sermons, or Homelies to Moove Compassion towards the Poore (London, 1596), no folio, my emphasis.

added eternal benefit.[36] The document goes on to instruct that these 'abuses', which 'make men believe that through the bishop of Rome's pardons souls might clearly be delivered out of Purgatory', must 'clearly be put away'.[37] The attack on the exploitation of charitable practice continued with The Chantries Act of 1547, under Edward VI, which disassembled 'trentals, chantries, and other provisions' on the grounds that they cultivated 'superstition and errors' about the possibility of investing in one's own immortal soul. The Act declares that this money will instead be distributed by the Crown, for 'good and godly uses', which included 'the education of youth in virtue and godliness' and 'better provision for the poor and needy'.[38] While this retains the crucial deference to God – these things are done in His name – it also represents a major realignment in priorities, moving away from the allocation of resources towards the dead, and directing funds instead to the living.

Post-Reformation, the social function that the poor served in the past – necessary as they were to 'purchase paradise' – virtually evaporated, and caused an increased interest in solving the problem of poverty. This more positive perspective on the Protestant approach to charity has been taken up most notably and most thoroughly, by historian W.K. Jordan, who criticises the medieval model for ignoring the plight of the recipient of the charity. Jordan claims that 'the occasional, the eccentric, alms so typical of medieval charity quite clearly tended to worsen the social conditions they were designed to assuage' because these types of gifts are 'immediate' and have 'only a momentary impact'.[39] The overarching philosophy of Protestant giving, by contrast, makes charitable work more public, and has a specific eye for the general good of society. As Jordan puts it, 'Men's aspirations underwent a notable metamorphosis in the century following the English Reformation, an almost complete

[36] C.H. Williams (ed.), *English Historical Documents*, V (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967), pp. 804-5.
[37] Williams, p. 805.
[38] Williams, p. 775.
[39] Jordan, *The Charities of London*, p. 26.

absorption with secular needs and a stalwart concern for the visible needs of the society marking this transformation' (p. 9). This, however, should not be taken as an indication that God became somehow less significant: improving upon the existing charitable model provided an opportunity for reformers to demonstrate religious legitimacy and a genuine commitment to God. Nonetheless, the Protestant revision of charitable practice has significant behavioural and emotional ramifications: the increased emphasis on earthly suffering and the demand for its address closed the distance between the dispenser and the recipient of charity, making the suffering of a few the problem of society as a united whole.

In spite of reformers' claims about refining and enhancing the structures of charitable giving, critics like Ian Archer and Felicity Heal have argued that these changes in fact removed the former intimacy of this type of work. Both Archer and Heal interpret post-Reformation organisational changes as a cold, institutional, more *anonymous* approach to helping the needy. It is in this context that Archer notes that Protestant charity 'was increasingly discriminating, channelled through institutional forms like the parish and the hospital, and subject to lay control' (p. 224). He dismisses the "'dark figure" of face-to-face charity', noting only that 'We know that in the long run it declined, but we have little sense of the chronology of decline or its significance' (p. 242). The interpretation nonetheless suggests that reforms were perceived as removing the 'human' element of charity, and that the centralised efforts invariably separated the charitable individual from those requiring assistance. Archer and Heal offer persuasive evidence from the sixteenth century to support the idea that post-Reformation changes did not feel unequivocally positive to the general population. However, neither Archer nor Heal emphasises the increased awareness of suffering, present in many of the texts from this era. The material marks the perceived erasure of a pre-existing culture of pity and charity, and gives a clear sense that individuals felt themselves being confronted, in very intimate ways,

with the suffering of others. Read in this light, sixteenth-century comments indicate anything but bureaucratic distance, and anything but anonymity. Stephen Gardiner, for instance, levelled the following accusation at Protestant minister Thomas Mowntayne: 'Ser, you have made a greate speke; for wheras yow have set upe one begarlye howse, yow have pulde down an [hundred] prynsly howses for yt; puttynge owte godly, lernyd, and devoyte men that sarvyd god daye and nyghte, and thruste yn ther plase a sort of scurvye and lowsye boyes'.[40] The sense of reduction is plain, as is the feeling of forced interaction with something worse: the 'scurvye and lowsye' replacements are 'thruste' into place. This perspective is perhaps predictable, coming from someone like Gardiner (a Catholic bishop who served as Lord Chancellor under Mary I). Nonetheless, the sense of loss is pervasive: Charity 'waxes cold', and the wistful note that 'the dead doe give more then those that are alive' clearly looks backwards, to a supposedly better time.[41] Two prominent post-Reformation voices in particular support this interpretation. John Stow's *Survey of London*, for example – the same location that serves as the basis for Jordan's study – critiques the changes to the city, instead praising the charity of London's 'ancient citizens':

> […] but now wee see the thing in worse case then ever […] as in other places of the Suburbes, some of them like Midsommer Pageants, with Towers, Turrets and Chimney tops, not so much for use, or profites, as for shew and pleasure, bewraying the vanitie of many mens mindes, *much vnlike to ye disposition of the ancient Citizens, who delighted in the building of Hospitalles, and Almes houses for the poore* and therein both imployed their wits, and spent their wealthes *in preferment of the common commoditie of this our Citie*.[42]

The nostalgia for the older ways is clear, as is the poor opinion of human behaviour in Stow's time. However, the implication is the absence, rather than the transformation, of charitable behaviour. Thomas Nashe's estimation of the city in *Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem* is perhaps even

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[40] *Narratives of the Days of the Reformation*, ed. by J.G. Nichols (Camden Society, O.S., LXXVII, 1859), pp. 182.
[41] Thomas Drant, *Two Sermons Preached the One at S Maries Spittle…the Other at Windsor* (London, 1570), and Thomas White, *A Sermon Preached at Pauls Cross the 17 November 1589* (London, 1589), sig. F2^{v}. The signature of the Drant quotation is unclear, but both Drant and White are quoted in Archer, 'The Charity of Early Modern Londoners', p. 227.
[42] John Stow, *A survay of London* (London, 1598), sig. Aa1^{r}, my emphasis.

more damning. Nashe sets Jerusalem during the siege against modern London, positioning the oration of Miriam – the starving mother who cannibalises her son to survive – at the heart of the text. The episode provides a suitably lurid counterpoint to sixteenth-century heartlessness. '*London*,' Nashe writes, 'thy heart is the hart of covetousnes, all charitie and compassion is cleane banished out of thee'.[43]

The comments of both Stow and Nashe in particular suggest that the experience of post-Reformation England was significantly different from what was envisioned both by sixteenth-century reformers, and modern critics of this period. In particular, the early modern voices indicate an emotional unrest stemming from these alterations; a population unsettled by the changing terms of human interaction. There is, in each of these quotations, an undercurrent of suffering: we get the clear sense that people are being confronted by suffering in new, and more intimate ways.[44] The emotional rawness of this climate is reflected clearly in Nashe's *Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem*, a horrifying and extreme depiction of blood, death, and suffering: there is no mediation of it; it is both amplified, and close. It is a more direct, forced confrontation of the pitiable, with no obvious protective structure in place.

V.
King Lear

Thus far, I have argued that the Protestant thinking of the Reformation revised entirely the English conception of charity, and that in so doing, it altered cultural understandings of the obligations of human fellowship. This change in perspective, I have suggested, had significant effects on the way pity was perceived and practiced, as removing the possibility of attaining salvation through earthly works also removed the institutions through which feelings of pity

[43] Thomas Nashe, *Christs Teares over Jerusalem* (London, 1613), sig. O3^{v}.
[44] On the social 'crisis' that occurred in the 1590s (which both Nashe and Stow lived through) see Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 9-14.

and compassion were channelled. In this way, works of fellowship – in which pity and its notions of mutual bonds, shared suffering, and human vulnerability feature prominently – become almost unbearably intimate, no longer clearly motivated by the possibility of self-service, and no longer explicitly overseen by a regulating superstructure. However, the increased focus on pity reveals the slippery characteristics of the emotion, and to that end I have also traced the scepticism about pity that emerges in medieval morality plays. This perspective acknowledges the desire for a guiding principle for human interaction (a wish clearly fulfilled by the regulatory effects of charitable doctrine) but it also highlights a legitimate concern about the fleeting and unreliable human bonds produced by the impulse to pity. With that in mind, I turn now to Shakespeare's *King Lear*: a post-Reformation play, about a pre-Christian world.

There are many reasons to think about *King Lear* in the context of the medieval morality play. Consider, for example, the relatively minor, but visually striking use of the stocks. This physical binding of a 'virtue' character is a common element of the morality play, what Helen Cooper calls 'an episode already proverbial' in her own discussion of *Lear*'s depiction of Kent in the stocks.[45] In *The Interlude of Youth*, Charity is put in the stocks; in *Hickscorner*, Pity is set in a pair of gyves. In *Lear* it is arguably 'loyalty' (surely the defining characteristic of Kent), set in the stocks. This in itself is a signal that things in *Lear* resemble, but do not quite meet, a pre-existing format. As T.W. Craik has noted, *Lear* preserves other elements of the moral interlude as well, including Edgar's discussion of his own temptation, and his suggestion that Gloucester has been similarly tempted by a devil figure.[46] A consideration of the structural elements of the play reveals still more similarities, in particular

[45] Helen Cooper, *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* (London: Methuen, 2010), p. 123. For more on Shakespeare's use of the stocks as referencing a medieval tradition, see also T.W. Craik, *The Tudor Interlude* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1958), esp. at pp. 93-6.
[46] T.W. Craik, pp. 95-6.

the pessimistic view of man's earthly relationships. The play tracks Lear's progression towards his death, and he is the point around which all of the play's action turns; it is his learning process, and his growth as a character, that serves as the play's centre. With the arguable exception of Gloucester, Lear is also the only character that has any real development, the only character that changes significantly (for the better) over the course of the play. In spite of the one glaring difference – that morality plays are unequivocally religious, and concerned with man's eternal salvation, whereas the presence of a deity in *King Lear* is tenuous, at best – the argument for the association between *King Lear* and a number of the morality plays is compelling.[47] Like Everyman, Lear finds himself abandoned by those who have been most vocal in their support and affection, and his ultimate salvation comes from the character whom he initially rejects. As in *Everyman*, the focus in *Lear* is on amending wayward earthly behaviour before death: Shakespeare's play relies on the moment of reconciliation between Lear and Cordelia.[48] Finally, both plays conclude with the death of the title character, a fate that arrives just as each man has recognised his transgressions and expressed remorse. Both *Everyman* and *Lear* take a strong stance on the value and stability of human relationships, but Shakespeare's play represents an explicit reworking and extension of these themes as they appear in medieval

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[47] Critics have long disagreed about the presence of the gods in *Lear*, typically choosing to read the play as either strictly atheist or overtly Christian. A.C. Bradley noted an unusually high number of religious references in the play; for more see *Shakespearean Tragedy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992). Jan Kott argued that *Lear* 'makes a tragic mockery of all eschatologies: of the heaven promised on earth, and the Heaven promised after death' (p. 157); see Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, trans. Boleslaw Taborski, 2nd ed. rev. (London: Methuen, 1967). Séan Lawrence details this debate thoroughly in his article, 'The Divine in King Lear', *Renascence*, 56 (2004), pp. 143-159. Lawrence Rosinger argues that both Lear and Gloucester are punished precisely because they try to act like gods themselves. For more on this, see Lawrence Rosinger, 'Gloucester and Lear: Men Who Act Like Gods', *English Literary History*, 35 (1968), pp. 491-504. Notable critics who have argued against the Christian view include Clifford Leech, *Shakespeare's Tragedies and Other Studies in Seventeenth Century Drama* (London: Chatto, 1950); Barbara Everett, 'The New King Lear', *Critical Quarterly*, 2 (1960), pp. 325-339; and William R. Elton, *King Lear and the Gods* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1968). Recently, Alison Shell has argued that the play 'resists a "totalizing explanation" of religious stance' (p. 186), and that the determination to identify that stance as either atheist or Christian, when both explanations are feasible, should not distract in a way that 'cheapens' the play's 'irresolvable sadness' (p. 194). See Alison Shell, *The Arden Critical Companion to Shakespeare and Religion* (London: Methuen, 2010).

[48] The structural similarities between *King Lear* and *Everyman* are outlined in more detail in Michael O'Connell, '*King Lear* and the Summons of Death', in *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages*, ed. by Curtis Perry and John Watkins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 199-216, especially at p. 210.

morality plays. For these and other reasons, critics have viewed *King Lear* as the strongest example of a reworked morality, a work that Michael O'Connell has described as being 'as conscious of [the] morality tradition as *Hamlet* is of the contemporary theatre world' (p. 203).[49] At the same time, *Lear* is also notable in the extent to which it pursues notions of obligation, in the context of social interaction. This exploration of human interaction, I will argue, is most apparent in the way Shakespeare portrays pity – something which is desperately valued, but within the context of the play, devastatingly unregulated and unreliable.

As one critic has noted, *King Lear* is a play that takes as its premise 'the desperate need which human beings have for each other'.[50] The play also seems determined to ensure that that need remains unfulfilled. Notions of human obligation (and their subsequent denial) are intensified by the family dynamics at work in the play, and the expectation of and desire for certain types of community (father and daughter, master and servant, king and subject) emerges early in the opening scene. The exchange between Cordelia and her father ultimately expels Cordelia from the family community, as Lear disowns her:

> Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
> Propinquity and property of blood,
> And as a stranger to my heart and me
> Hold thee, from this, for ever. The barbarous Scythian,
> Or he that makes his generation messes
> To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
> Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and relieved,

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[49] A number of critics have already made associations between Shakespeare's work and the medieval morality play. John Wasson references the similarities generally, asking, 'Where among medieval plays can one find any which more closely resemble Renaissance drama than the moralities?' (p. 210); Robert Potter identifies the seminal works of Renaissance drama as 'the apotheosis of the morality play' (p. 123). In their introduction to *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages*, Curtis Perry and John Watkins explicitly reference a trajectory from the character Everyman to King Lear (p. 5); *King Lear*'s connection to the morality plays is also thoroughly outlined in Maynard Mack's *King Lear in Our Time*, esp. at pp. 55-63. See John Wasson, 'The Morality Play: Ancestor of Elizabethan Drama?', *Comparative Drama*, 13 (1979), pp. 210-221; Robert Potter, *The English Morality Play: Origins, History and Influence of a Dramatic Tradition* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975); Curtis Perry and John Watkins, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages*, pp. 1-20; and Maynard Mack, *King Lear in Our Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965). For a larger survey of the connection between morality plays and early modern drama, see John Watkins, 'Moralities, Interludes, and Protestant Drama', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Literature*, ed. by David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 767-92.

[50] Sears Jayne, 'Charity in *King Lear*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 15 (1964), pp. 277-88, p. 277.

As thou my sometime daughter. (I.i.114-21)

Lear's invocation of pity alongside neighbourly behaviour and relief suggests, on some level, the doctrinal practice of almsgiving, of 'loving thy neighbour' as commanded by Matthew. Nonetheless, Lear creates a more human context for the comment, referencing the paternal blood bond he shares with Cordelia and severing it on the grounds that her actions place her alongside another 'barbarous' race. The accusation relies heavily on violation of *kind*: for Lear, Cordelia's actions reveal her as not of the same 'kind' as the rest of the family, not capable (or worthy) of participating in the family community, and in a more general sense, potentially not even human. She loses her status within the family community, and to Lear's mind can no longer claim any special obligation from him. Lear's apparent disbelief and upset at this turn – his bewildered, 'So young and *untender*?' (I.i.107, my emphasis) – suggests that the objection is based on emotional grounds and punning considerations of kind: *Lear*'s is the first documented use of 'untender' in English, a word also defined as 'unkind'.[51] There is an underlying expectation here that tenderness is a condition of *kind*ness. Moreover, Lear's immediate move to distance himself from his daughter suggests her immediate expulsion from her community: her perceived emotional misstep has rendered her unfit, among other things, for the pity of others. This, of course, is an early indication that pity is not functioning well in the play: Cordelia is arguably the hero, the most virtuous and loving. Her almost immediate emotional alienation, therefore, seemingly confirms the characters' inability to dispense pity in a reliable and reasonable way.

The fundamental problem posed by human unwillingness (or incapability) to give pity is further illuminated by the storm scenes, in which the marooned Lear is subjected to the unpitying forces of nature. In this context, the absence of pity from the storm itself is

[51] 'Not tender in dealing with others; ungentle, unkind'. 'Untender, adj.' *OED* Online. May 2013, Oxford University Press.

accepted, expected, and again tied to notions of *kind*: the Fool observes that 'here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools' (III.ii.12-13), just as Lear admits 'I tax not you, you elements, with *unkindness*' (III.ii.16, my emphasis). The storm is cruel, but cannot, as a non-human entity, be expected to recognise human vulnerability, or to offer pity in the face of it: in this way it demonstrates the characteristics of its own kind. Nonetheless, it is clear from Gloucester's reaction that the storm produces a pitiable situation, as the king's expulsion onto the heath prompts conflict over the dispensation of the emotion. Gloucester complains,

> Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing. When I desired their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house; charged me on pain of their perpetual displeasure neither to speak of him, entreat for him, or any way sustain him. (III.iii.1-6)

This is more than a personal failure to offer pity, on the part of Regan and Goneril; it also represents a structured attempt to curtail *any* pity for Lear whatsoever. Gloucester calls this reaction 'unnatural', again implying that the failure to offer pity signals a sort of deviant humanity, an unwillingness to answer an instinctive call. Moreover, while it is clear that pity is *desired* in the play – Lear's remark that 'I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity, |To see another thus' (IV.vii.53-4) is an explicit appeal – Gloucester's comment to Edmund confirms a desire to *offer* pity as well. It is clear from this that Gloucester's natural inclination is to offer pity; he is implicated by what he sees of Lear and wishes to create the bond (of speech, entreaty, and sustenance) that Regan and Goneril would deny.

In many ways, the storm distils the play's exploration of pity, isolating the emotion as a practice dependent on kindness, and pushing Lear's suffering to an extreme that propels him towards madness, and those around him towards compassion. Moreover, this is the moment of Lear's awakening to pity, and to his place within an earthly community. His immediate care for Kent and the Fool, the will to secure their shelter, represents Lear's first demonstrated consideration for others. It is also his first recognition of suffering on a larger level, his first

acknowledgement of own obligation to act in the interest of others:

> Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these? *O, I have ta'en*
> *Too little care of this*. Take physic, pomp,
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
> And show the heavens more just. (III.iv.28-36, my emphasis)

Debora Shuger has argued that this passage is an epiphany of Christian *caritas* for Lear, calling it an expression of 'the social teachings of the medieval church'.[52] Without question, Lear touches upon almost all of the major elements of Christian charity: the need to provide shelter and food to the poor speaks to the practice of alms-giving, as does the suggestion of offering up the 'superflux' – the surplus wealth; the invocation of the heavens in this instance is also a clear reference to the motivations underpinning charitable doctrine. This argument might be more persuasive if the play cultivated any sort of social structure, but in fact, there is not much society in *Lear* beyond the community of Lear's family and followers: there is no mention of a wider populace, or of neighbouring kingdoms (save, perhaps for the remote presence of France). Even the king's retinue is reduced to nothing, without ever making a physical appearance on stage. Perhaps for this reason, Jonathan Dollimore has identified pity in the play as 'precious yet ineffectual', that thing that stands, rather uselessly, in the absence of the pre-existing structures that I have identified elsewhere.[53] If this is the moment in which Lear

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[52] Debora K. Shugar, 'Subversive fathers and suffering subjects: Shakespeare and Christianity', in *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540-1688*, ed. by Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 46-69, esp. p. 53. Paul Siegel, however, attributes Lear's epiphany to his physical and emotional ordeal on the heath, rather than a religious revelation, noting that 'Lear in his suffering awakens to a new felling of sympathy for his fellow man' (p. 330). Paul N. Siegel, 'Adversity and the Miracle of Love in *King Lear*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 6 (1955), pp. 325-336.

[53] For this treatment of *King Lear*, see Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy*, 2nd edn (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), esp. pp. 189-203, here at p. 193. Philip Brockbank similarly identifies pity as an important feature of the play, but has a more positive reading of it, arguing that the 'access of pity' is depicted as 'a condition

recognises the importance of pity, of acting in the interest of men, it is perhaps unsurprising that it comes too late to be of any use. At this point Lear is weak, old, impoverished – one in need of help rather than one able to offer it. The ineffectuality of Lear's pity here, combined with the improbability that a king would ever, under normal circumstances, be reduced to this level, leads Dollimore to conclude that the play's message is that 'in a world where pity is the prerequisite for compassionate action, where a king has to share the suffering of his subjects in order to "care", the majority will remain poor, naked and wretched' (p. 191). Lear's vision of compassionate action, therefore, is exactly what the play lacks in practice; it is the absence of this behaviour that has created the opportunity for the suffering Lear imagines (and endures himself). However, the charitable works that Lear references here have no obvious place in his world: there is demonstrably no culture of their practice, and there is no clear articulation of an overarching structure in charge of them. Instead, this world has only vague notions of pity, of suggested bonds tied to the principle of human community (which in practice are revealed as unstable and unreliable).

In spite of the apparently pity-hostile environment in *Lear*, the emotion is seemingly impervious to complete suppression. It emerges in Gloucester, and though he is almost immediately punished for indulging in that reaction, the emotion continues to crop up. When Cordelia returns to assist her father, she reports being granted permission because her husband 'My mourning and important tears hath pitied' (IV.iv.26). Edgar, as Poor Tom, offers Gloucester anonymous assistance after describing himself as

> A most poor man, made tame to fortune's blows;
> Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
> Am pregnant to good pity. (IV.vi.217-9)

Edgar's comment suggests that his susceptibility to pity stems from his exposure to earthly life:

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for the renewal of human life' (p. 133). See Philip Brockbank, 'Upon Such Sacrifices', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 62 (1976), pp. 109-34.

in this way he has acquired the necessary appreciation of his own vulnerability, the desire to assist those falling victim to their own vulnerability. In these instances, pity exists, but floats around untethered: the resulting impression is that the emotion is ineffectual without the accompanying support of an institutional structure. Still, the characters seem unaware of this, or unwilling to accept it, constantly expecting pity on the more elemental grounds of family, and, failing that, humanity. Cordelia's assessment of her father, and the accompanying condemnation of the behaviour of her sisters, relies on the assumption that pity applies to bonds even more fundamental than the bonds of kinship:

> Had you not been their father, these white flakes
> Did challenge pity of them. Was this a face
> To be opposed against the warring winds? (IV.vii.30-32)

Pity in this regard seems something that ought to operate independently of considerations like filial obligation: the response should, Cordelia hints, be more elemental than this, and it should emerge from the experience of being a human. However, the function of both Cordelia and Gloucester is to demonstrate a crucial difference between what pity *should* be – what we want to believe it can be – and what it is in practice. *King Lear* juxtaposes the hope and impulse for pity with the emotion's capacity to fail (or the human capacity to mismanage it). Moreover, as pity in *Lear* is the only guiding principle at work, in the context of human interaction and the relief of human anguish, the play perhaps serves as a reminder of the crucial social function fulfilled by charitable structure in the morality plays that precede *Lear*. The play takes a dim view of a society wholly reliant on the human engagement with pity, by recognising the various factors that can compromise its proper dispensation. *Lear* demonstrates the essential fallibility of an emotion dependent on shared human goodness, but the play pulls in different directions, also acknowledging the persistent attractiveness of pity. It shows how the emotion speaks, perhaps, to the way we feel things *ought* to be, the desire that there should be an inherent

guiding principle for human interaction. *Lear* effectively questions the possibility of organising earthly action without the dominant motivation of divine salvation, or the threat of damnation. More than anything, though, it is a poignant showcase of the intolerability of pity. *Lear* scrutinises the force of an emotion that exceeds mankind's ability to act in reaction to it. In this way, the play shows pity as ravaging, tormenting both the characters and the audience that watches them. This is perhaps the root of Johnson's famous reaction to Cordelia's death: 'I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor'.[54] Johnson's unwillingness to endure the pitiable scenes of Cordelia's demise suggests the discomfort of pity without the accompanying relief of positive action, and this evasion of the pitiable spectacle in particular speaks to the theme of my third chapter. However, the raw, intolerable experience of overwhelming pity is a common thread throughout this thesis. Each of the chapters that follow demonstrate, in varying ways, the manner in which the experience of pity made obvious the problems of emotional regulation: the lack of structure in place for channelling certain types of feelings (pity chief among them); the inability to neutralise the apparent threat of succumbing to pity; the twin worry about humankind's inability to do without pity altogether. This is a vision of early modern humanity as emotionally untethered – just as we see in *King Lear*: desperately in need of pity, desperately wanting to offer it, and nevertheless wholly unsure how to manage it, or how to make it efficacious.

VI.
Conclusion

In many respects, John Gower's tomb in London is a compelling representation of the themes I have examined in this chapter. Recent critics have noted that 'the religious symbolism of the

[54] Samuel Johnson, *Samuel Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed. by H.R. Woudhuysen (London: Penguin, 1989), p. 223.

tomb is rich but unremarkable', and indeed in every sense Gower – who seems to have played the central role in the planning and preparation for his death – focuses on what will follow his earthly end.[55] The centre panel provides a strong example:

> Armiger scutum nihil a modo fut tibi tutum
> Reddidit immolutum morti generali tributum
> Spiritus exutum se gaudeat esse solutum
> Est ubi virtutum regnum sive labe statutum.
>
> [No squire's shield defending will guard you from this way of ending
> he has paid the unbending Death's tax over all men impending
> Glad be the soul's wending, no more with the flesh interblending
> 'Tis where, God amending, the Virtues reign free from offending].[56]

This sums the medieval viewpoint nicely, touching upon both the certainty of death and the endurance of the soul after the demise of the earthly body, and the prioritisation of the eternal soul over the physical body. Gower lies under the watchful eyes of three ladies – Charity, Mercy, and Pity (pictured below), who evoke the Trinity.[57] None of these figures is developed in any detail, nor are they given substantive consideration in scholarly interpretations of Gower's tomb: in both contexts the presence of these figures is taken for granted, the assumption being that they together they will contribute to the safe passage of Gower's soul into Heaven.[58] The presence of Pity here, therefore, is far less problematic than it has been elsewhere: she is supported by both Charity and Mercy, not the sole provider of earthly salvation but a seemingly unworrying contributor to a larger picture. Indeed, the thoroughness with which Gower prepared for his death supports the notion of a 'big picture' approach,

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[55] John Hines, Nathalie Cohen, and Simon Roffey, '*Iohannes Gower, Armiger, Poeta*: Records and Memorials of his Life and Death', in *A Companion to Gower*, ed. by Siân Echard (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 23-42, at p. 39.
[56] Translation from William Thompson, Southwark Cathedral: The History and Antiquities of the Cathedral Church of St. Saviour (St. Marie Overie) (London, 1906), p. 206.
[57] The significance of charity was particularly emphasised (with chastity) on epitaph on the tomb of Gower's wife, which at one stage was placed alongside Gower's. See Hines, Cohen, and Roffey, p. 27.
[58] For further discussion of the tomb, see also Siân Echard, 'Last Words: Latin and the End of the *Confessio Amantis*' in *Interstices: Studies in Late Middle English and Anglo-Latin in Honour of A.G. Rigg*, ed. by Richard Firth Green and Linne Mooney (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 99-121, esp. at pp. 99-100, and Siân Echard, *Printing the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennslyvania Press, 2008), esp. at pp. 100-106.

structured by the principles of charity, in which pity might play only a supporting role. A recent study of Gower's will notes the extensive charitable provisions made in addition to the tomb:

> Bequests were made for funeral prayers to be said in the priory church and the conjoined parochial chapel of St Mary Magdalene – that of which Gower and his wife were parishioners – as well as in Southwark's three other parish churches. Further bequests specified are of a more charitable nature, to hospitals and leper houses in and around Southwark and London, although it is made explicit that these too were made in return for the prayers of those establishments. There are also material bequests to the church: vestments and a chalice are provided for the chapel of St John the Baptist, as well as a missal and a *martilogium* – a calendar recording the days for celebrating saints and other pious benefactors, provided on the condition that the donor (Gower) be remembered in the prayers every day. A chalice and vestments were also left for the separate oratory of his lodgings.[59]

Given this obvious commitment to charity, the depiction of the three elements over Gower's tomb reiterates the notion that the medieval period saw these concepts intermingled, all roughly contributing to the same principles of Christian life. In this depiction, Pity is not forced into a central, self-sustaining role, but works as part of a larger system. Pity, Mercy, and Charity are presented as the watchful guides, the companions in death, and there is no sense of Gower's lady Pity being earthly, or abandoning him in his hour of need.

I have argued here that the restructuring of charity that occurred in the Reformation forever changed the understanding of pity, if only because it made the emotion far more prominent. That prominence, I have claimed, threw into sharp relief pity's difficulty in regulating human action: it is far too unreliable, too fleeting, too distracted by other considerations. If *King Lear* is any guide, these considerations include personal vulnerability and the instinct to defend against it, wounded love, pride, and greed. Moreover, if the instinct to pity is what guides people, then they are brought impossibly close to those around them: they rely more, their investments are more intimate, and the disappointment is more raw. Without

[59] Hines, Cohen, and Roffey, p. 27.

the structure of charity – guidelines telling who deserves it, how to 'practice' it – people clearly felt more vulnerable, both to the whims of others, and to their emotions, their suffering. *King Lear* clearly shows the risk of that vulnerability; it suggests the cost of raw intimacy. In this way, the volatile depiction of pity in *King Lear* can be read as a direct, negative response to the altered structure for interaction that happened during and after the Reformation, what one critic has seen elsewhere in Shakespeare's work as '[the use of] the medieval inheritance to challenge contemporary Protestant political theology'.[60] It is a response to the emotional void that was left in the wake of the reform, a void hinted at by both Stow and Nashe.

Nonetheless, for all of *Lear*'s depiction of pity as hazardous, as effectively useless and unreliable, its characters remain somehow addicted to it: they want to feel pity, and they want to receive it. At the very least, they want to feel they will receive it if it is needed. Although this increased dependence is, I believe, a direct consequence of the dissolution of medieval charitable structure, the pity impulse is one with much earlier roots than *Lear*: it is the same instinct that Everyman feels. Moreover, it is the same drive that affects each subject of this thesis. From here, my aim is to trace the various contexts in which pity emerge in the Renaissance, and to show how people crave it, even as it undermines and complicates their methods for interacting with one another. This destructive craving was a particular concern for the men of the early modern court, and a force that directly contradicted the Renaissance interest in emotional temperance. It is to these men that I will now turn.

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[60] Thomas Fulton, 'Shakespeare's *Everyman*: *Measure for Measure* and English Fundamentalism', *The Journal for Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 40 (2010), pp. 119-147. Other notable proponents of this view include James Simpson and Sarah Beckwith. See Sarah Beckwith, 'Medieval Penance, Reformation Repentance, and *Measure for Measure*, in *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, ed. by Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 193-204; and James Simpson, *Burning to Read.*

CHAPTER TWO
'THIS PASSION IS NO FICTION': PITY AND EARLY MODERN MASCULINE COURTLY IDENTITY

I.

> Pittie ought alwaies to be before the eyes of al men, as a thing natural to them, and without which they are unworthy the name of humanitie: yet must not this pittie extend so farre for any particular compassion, as thereby to confound the universall order of things. The pittie which *Hecuba* had of *Paris* (as Poets have taught us) was the cause that *Troy* was burnt, and *Priamus* with all his worthy family destroyed.[1]

This chapter of the thesis is the first to focus entirely on the Renaissance, and for that reason I begin with Lodowick Bryskett, Irish official and friend of Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser (both of whom feature in this chapter).[2] Bryskett's thoughts on pity (provided above) nicely summarise the overarching opinion of this work, that pity in early modern England was, in practice, simultaneously central (the absence of it making one 'unworthy the name of humanitie') and potentially destructive (as Bryskett reminds us that the overextension of pity can upset the natural order and invite tragedy, as in the case of Troy).

Bryskett's commentary is strange in a number of ways: over-dramatic and extreme in the imagined connection between the impulse towards pity and total destruction.[3] Nonetheless,

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[1] Lodowick Bryskett, A discourse of civill life containing the ethike part of morall philosophie. Fit for the instructing of a gentleman in the course of a vertuous life (London, 1606), sig. F2^{r}.

[2] Bryskett is notably referenced in Sonnet XXXIII of Spenser's *Amoretti*:

> But lodwick, this of grace to me aread:
> doe ye not thinck th'accomplishment of it,
> sufficient worke for one mans simple head,
> all were it as the rest but rudely writ (ll. 5-8).

Spenser's *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* also references Thestylis (l. 156), clearly invoking Bryskett's *The Mourning Muse of Thestylis*, and Spenser is represented in Bryskett's *Discourse of Civill Life* (1606). Edmund Spenser, *The Shorter Poems*, ed. by Richard A. McCabe (London: Penguin, 1999).

[3] Also peculiar is Bryskett's depiction of filial pity. Assuming that the name is not a simple misprint for 'Helen', the passage imagines that it is Hecuba's pity for her son that eventually destroys the family (via the burning of Troy). And yet, the pity of a mother for her son seems the most instinctive formulation of the pity impulse, with

Bryskett remains pity's advocate, calling it something that 'ought alwaies to be before the eyes of al men, as a thing natural to them'. This, in spite of the emotion's apparent incendiary qualities. Bryskett's characterisation of the emotion nicely crystallises an important concern about pity. For Bryskett, the danger of pity is the possibility that it will 'extend so farre': this is a worry about losing control, about becoming emotionally compromised. Compare this association, between pity and the possibility of losing control, with the treatment of emotional stability in conduct manuals, in which emotional regulation is consistently praised under the name of temperance, a central gentlemanly virtue. In *The Courtyer*, for example, Castiglione remarks that 'of *temperance* arrise manie other vertues: for whan a minde is in tune with this harmonie, by the meane of reason he easely receiveth afterward *true manlinesse*, which maketh him boulde and safe from all daunger, and (in a maner) *above wordly passions*'.[4] This draws a direct line between masculinity and temperance, suggesting temperance as a means of accessing masculine identity, and further imagining temperance as a sort of shield against the passions. Henry Peacham continues with this line of thought in *The Compleat Gentleman*, again tying the preservation of masculine identity with 'Temperance, and that Moderation of the minde, wherewith as a bridle wee curbe and breake our ranke and unruly Passions, keeping as the Caspian Sea, our selves ever at one height without ebbe or refluxe'.[5] Here again there is an

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Mary's pity for the crucified Jesus an obvious and enduring example of this type of emotional response. Consider Pity's comment, in *Hickscorner*:

In the bosom of the second person in Trinity
I sprang as a plant, man's miss to amend;
You for to help I put to my hand.
Record I take of Mary, that wept tears of blood;
I, Pity, within her heart did stand,
When she saw her son on the rood.
The sword of sorrow gave that lady wound,
When a spear clave her son's heart asunder.
She cried out and fell to the ground. (ll. 7-15).

[4] Baldassarre Castiglione, *The Courtyer*, trans. Thomas Hoby (London, 1561), sig. Do3^{v}, my emphasis.
[5] Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman* (London, 1622), sig. Bb1^{v}.

emphasis on control, the suggestion that a man should 'curbe and breake' his 'unruly' emotions. Peacham's reference to the bridle reinforces the notions of restraint and mastery that underpin his commentary, as does the more puzzling comparison to the Caspian Sea: he imagines that both the sea and the passions can (and should) be regulated, kept 'ever at one height without ebbe or refluxe'.[6] We might wonder at the attainability of either suggestion.

The prioritisation of temperance has negative implications for an emotion like pity, which are occasionally made explicit, as in Thomas Elyot's *The Governour*:

> And if ye aske me what mercye is, it is *a temperaunce of the mynde* of hym, that hath power to be avenged, and it is called in latine Clementia, and is alway joyned with reason. For he that for every lyttel occasion is meved with compassion, and beholdynge a man punysshed condygnely for his offence, lamenteth or waylethe, is called *pitiouse, which is a syckenesse of the mynde*, wherewith at this daye the more parte of menne be diseased.[7]

This is a very clear indictment of pity, the 'syckenesse of the mynde' that interferes with the reason-filled temperance that characterises mercy. Nonetheless, pity persists, even in tracts that warn against it. Leonard Cox's *The art or crafte of rhetoryke*, for example, recounts Caesar's insistence that 'All men my lordis Senatours which syt concellynge upon any douvtfull mater must be voyde of hatred, frendshyp, anger, pitye, or mercye. For where any of these thynges bere a rule mannes mynde can nat lightely perceyue the truthe'.[8] Yet only a few pages later,

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[6] This juxtaposition of emotional mastery and 'sea' language calls to mind a speech that appears in Shakespeare's *Othello*:

IAGO. Patience, I say, your mind perhaps may change.

OTHELLO. Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er keeps retiring ebb but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont:
Even so my bloody thoughts with violent pace
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up. Now by yond marble heaven
In the due reverence of a sacred vow
I here engage my words. (III.iii.455-65)

[7] Thomas Elyot, *The boke named the Governour* (London, 1537), sig. P5^{v}, my emphasis.
[8] Leonard Cox, *The art or crafte of rhetoryke* (London, 1532), sig. D2^{v} and sig. D5^{v}.

Cox groups pity with the best virtues (temperance included): 'In honesty are comprehended all vertues as wysdom, justice, due love to god & to our parentes, liberality, pity, constance, temperance' (sig. D5^{v}). Clearly, there is some confusion over pity's position, with the objections seemingly unable to overcome the appeal of the emotion. Curiously, this tension is noticeably absent in the context of feminine identity, where pity is presented as unambiguously positive, and expected. Richard Brathwaite's 1631 manual entitled *The English Gentlewoman* offers a ready example, describing the 'Lady of honour' as one who 'holds it an unbeseeming state, to entertaine a sowre looke, where *noble pitty* should beget in her a compassionate love'.[9] Distilling this issue in the hopes of understanding the problem of masculine pity inevitably brings us back to temperance, to the belief in the masculine prioritisation of measured and reasonable response. Nonetheless, this perspective contradicts the literary portrayal of masculine pity: the male figures of early modern courtly literature unashamedly pursue the pity of others, and feel it themselves. The literary reliance on the emotion is not new to the period: in some respects, this seems a clear continuation of Chaucer's repeated adage that 'pity renneth soone in gentil herte', which is applied to masculine as well as feminine characters.[10] Chaucer's articulation of the emotion embraces the very characteristics that prompt the objections of sixteenth-century conduct manuals: the vulnerable 'gentil herte' from which pitie 'renneth soone', flowing and unmeasured, unregulated and open. For Chaucer, this type of feeling is specifically tied to identities of privilege, the synecdoche suggesting pity as a trait of the 'gentil' man or woman. If, then, the conduct manuals are to be believed, the Renaissance revises the stance on this type of emotional vulnerability, particularly with regard to masculine courtly identity, presenting an unregulated emotion like pity as insurmountably corrosive, something

[9] Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentlewoman* (London, 1631), sig. Dd1^{v}, my emphasis.
[10] This exact line is used in three separate tales of *The Canterbury Tales*: The Knight's Tale (I.1761), The Merchant's Tale (IV.1986), and The Squire's Tale (V.479). See Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*.

from which one ought to protect oneself.[11]

In this chapter, I wish to consider the extent to which men in the early modern period could ask for, receive, or feel pity, and the resulting worries of negotiating these processes properly. I will examine in particular the literature of courtly love, given the overwhelming emphasis in these texts on *asking* for pity (a distinctly and importantly different practice from feeling it, or somehow embodying pitiability). There is a clearly articulated interest, in these works, on reciprocity; it is pursued even to great extremes, in spite of appearing, at every turn, to be little more than a fantasy. What follows will show Renaissance pity's anxiety-inducing capacity for destruction, the moments that legitimise the pity-suspicion running rampant in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century conduct manuals, while at the same time highlighting the way that pity plays out in courtly literature, where it features prominently in fantasies of community, connection, and response. By examining a range of literature from the period, I will argue that this type of literary exploration ultimately extends contemporary thought on masculine pity, offering a defense with the portrayal of positive masculine negotiations of the emotion, even as it simultaneously suggests that the negative, violent dimensions of pity stem from a very specific, unregulated and unreciprocated emotional context – what I will call open or unresolved 'circuits of emotion'.[12] This chapter focuses on the key fantasy underpinning this

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[11] The development of masculine identity is an area of interest for scholars of virtually every era, each of whom attribute the 'crisis' of masculinity to their own time period. Scholars working on early modern England are no exception. The transition between the chivalric culture of medieval England and the court-based system of the Renaissance has been scrutinised particularly in the context of the consequent effects on masculine identity. Notable contributions on this subject include: Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England*; Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Andrew P. Williams, *The Image of Manhood in Early Modern Literature* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999); Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honor, Sex, and Marriage* (London: Longman, 1999); Bruce R. Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Jennifer Low, *Manhood and the Duel* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2003); Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Todd W. Reeser, *Moderating Masculinity in Early Modern Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); and Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent (eds.), *Governing Masculinities in the Early Modern Period: Regulating Selves and Others* (Farnham: Ashgate Press, 2011).

[12] Much of psychoanalytical literature deploys comparable language, of 'circuitry': Lacan in particular conceived circuits as elusive, always circling around a 'Real' that is not (and should not be) realisable. Slavoj Žižek engages

type of literature: the idea of a reciprocative response, rooted in the emotion of pity.

II.
'A desperate and sad Spectacle of Frailty': George Rodney and the 'pyramis of pity'

> This Lady was one of the greatest both for *Birth*, and *Beauty* [...] upon whom Sir *George Rodney* a Gentleman in the *West* (suitable to her for person and fortune) fixing his love, had good hopes from her to reap the fruits of it; But *Edward Earl* of *Hertford* being intangled with her fair *Eyes*, and she having a tang of her *Grand-Fathers Ambition*, left *Rodney*, and married the *Earl; Rodney* having drunk in too much affection, and not being able with his *Reason* to digest it, summoned up his scattered *Spirits* to a most desperate attempt; and coming to *Amesbury* in *Wiltshire* (where the *Earl* and his Lady were then *Resident*) to act it, he retired to an Inn in the Town, shut himself up in a Chamber, and wrote a large paper of well-composed *Verses*, to the *Countess* in his own blood (strange kind of *Composedness*) wherein he bewailes and laments his own unhappiness; and when he had sent them to her, as a sad *Catastrophe* to all his *Miseries*, he ran himself upon his *Sword*, and so ended that life which he thought death to injoy; leaving the *Countess* to a strict remembrance of her inconstancy, and himself a desperate and sad Spectacle of *Frailty*.[13]

I began with Brysket's suggestion that pity is central to human identity, but also a conduit through which tragedy, injustice, and destruction arrive. This is perhaps a stark way to put it, but it is the belief that underpins the anxiety about pity that emerges during the Renaissance; it is also the starting premise for this thesis. In the previous chapter, I examined the emergence of pity that occurred during and after the Reformation, arguing that this created a social crisis in which the early moderns, stripped of the superstructures of the medieval Church, felt increasingly unsupported, increasingly vulnerable to their own feelings, and without sufficient means to channel and organise them in a dependable and consistently productive way. My

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with similar concepts of circuitry and the Lacanian Real throughout *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008). Although this chapter is not intended as an application of psychoanalytical theory, it does share this sense that the emotional circuit is more often an aspiration than a reality. See Jacques Lacan, 'The Circuit', in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, Bk II, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York, NY: Norton and Co., 1991), pp. 77-90.

[13] Arthur Wilson, *The History of Great Britain* (London, 1653), sig. L1^{v}.

intention from this point on is to scrutinise this fraught emotional landscape, to examine ways in which the early moderns attempted to order their feelings – in particular their feelings of pity for others, and their desire for pity from others – while at the same time grasping for a sense of personal stability.

To that end, in this chapter I will focus on how pity functions work in the context of courtly, masculine identity, examining the ways in which the emotion establishes that identity even as it threatens it. With that in mind, Sir George Rodney makes a compelling first example of openly destructive pity, as Rodney, whose history is outlined above, follows a series of heavy-handed poetic appeals for the pity of Frances Howard by rapidly deteriorating into a parody of the Petrarchan courtly lover. Cast at the unpitying feet of his lady, Rodney, 'having drunk in too much affection' expresses his love and emotional torment in a series of poems written, rather dramatically, in his own blood.[14] He asks for her pity, begs her to offer him some relief. She responds, very clearly, but in verse, not with the affection Rodney seeks. Finding no success (as his lady was already married, by the time of the poetic outpouring), Rodney takes his own life, in effect making good on the promises made in his poetry, and demonstrating just how true a lover he was.

Rodney's literary interaction with Frances Howard nicely showcases what has become the central scholarly debate over the abject male figure of lyric poetry. There is a long critical tradition of preserving the pitiful male as a strong, empowered figure in control, whose use of 'strategic' professions of abjection plays upon the sentimentality of the female, securing the

[14] For many, the name 'Frances Howard' will call to mind the infamous beauty implicated in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury; the object of George Rodney's passion was an older cousin of that same woman, notable in her own right for rising from humble means to a position of immense wealth and power; she did this through a series of incredibly successful marriages – perhaps the best evidence that she was more skilled at courtship than poor Rodney, and that her advice in *The Answer* should have been heeded.

desired sexual conquest, and establishing dominance and masculine prowess.[15] More recently, scholars like Lorna Hutson have argued that the female figures in these works do not, in fact, represent the target audience: Hutson contends that the portrayal of the tormented, overwrought male in this type of poetry was in fact a rhetorical performance of intellectual prowess, directed not at the female but rather at the men to whom the poem would have been circulated. This reading sees the artful expression of abjection as a way of gaining social status, as 'appearing in print before other men's eyes became the new place in which men displayed the cerebral equivalent of chivalric prowess'.[16] Other critics resist these 'recuperative narratives', insisting that the traditional view of 'the weaker, the stronger' precludes the possibility (and probability) of lyric poetry as an outlet for genuine sadness and a willing, masochistic embrace of abjection.[17] The exchange between Howard and Rodney hints at the 'game' of courtship, particularly in terms of her answer: Rodney writes a poem, and Howard

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[15] One of the earliest articulations of this stance is C.S. Lewis's analysis of medieval courtly love in *The Allegory of Love*: though Lewis notes that the men of this tradition 'seem to be always weeping and always on their knees before ladies of inflexible cruelty' (p. 1), he reads in these texts an exploration of 'worlds of new, subtle, and noble feeling, *under the guidance of clear and masculine thought*' (p. 255, my emphasis). Many others have followed this legacy of what Catherine Bates calls 'recuperative narratives': Patricia Parker argues that the vulnerability of the male subject is negated by the 'mastery of the poet' (p. 62); Nancy Vickers takes a similar stance. Mary Villeponteaux, for comparable reasons, calls 'the abject position of the lover' a 'fiction' (p. 38) Lauro Martines removes the source of vulnerability by reading the praiseworthy female of the poem as a stand-in for the poet himself, a creation fashioned for the purpose of self-aggrandising. For more, see C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936); Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London: Methuen, 1987); Nancy J. Vickers, 'Vital Signs: Petrarch and Popular Culture', *Romantic Review*, 77 (1988), pp. 184-95; Mary Villeponteaux, '*Semper Eadem*: Belphoebe's Denial of Desire', in *Renaissance Discourses of Desire*, ed. by Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1993), pp. 29-45; Lauro Martines, 'The Politics of Love Poetry in Renaissance Italy', in *Historical Criticism and the Challenge of Theory*, ed. by Janet Levarie Smarr (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 129-44.

[16] Lorna Hutson, The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 99.

[17] Catherine Bates, Masculinity, Gender and Identity in the English Renaissance Lyric, p. 7. See also Anne Ferry, The 'Inward' Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983), which argues that Renaissance lyric poets reclaim the clichéd rhetoric of courtship by infusing it with genuine feeling; and Jonathan Crewe, Trials of Authorship: Anterior Forms and Poetic Reconstruction from Wyatt to Shakespeare (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), which calls into question the idea that any 'palpably crafted/crafty simulation of weakness, emasculation, or abjection must "logically" imply its opposite' (p. 28).

responds in kind.[18] Her critique of his attempt – placing it as she does in the greater context of what 'wanton' men promise to (and elicit from) 'weak women' – clearly indicates a larger culture of using emotion primarily as a rhetorical bid.[19] At the same time, the severity of Rodney's reaction is compelling evidence of the sincerity of his emotion: it would be difficult to efface entirely the force of his feeling.

It would be even more challenging to argue that Rodney's rhetorical efforts yield any sort of social gain: seventeenth-century commentators on the Rodney saga are far from sympathetic. Arthur Wilson, for example, criticises Rodney for 'not being able with his *Reason* to digest [his affection]', and calls his behaviour 'a desperate and sad Spectacle of *Frailty*'. John Chamberlain, in a letter dated July 8, 1601 (just a few weeks after Rodney took his own life), reports that Rodney '*went out of his witts* about Christmas for Mistris Parnell (lately maried to the earle of Hartford) [and] comming by the place where she dwells cut his owne throat as an earnest of his love'.[20] These responses are of course an indication that Rodney's behaviour was deviant, that it somehow violated the cultural norms of courtship, and that he mismanaged a social interaction with a clearly defined set of rules. In many regards, this analysis is more than fair. Especially when compared to the measured and practical poetic response of Frances Howard, Rodney appears quite determined to take a drastic departure from reason, to ignore

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[18] The undertones of jest present in the exchange between Howard and Rodney call to mind Žižek's assessment of courtly love, specifically his classification of this type of interaction as 'a strictly codified fiction, a social game of "as if"' (p. 97). See Slavoj Žižek 'From Courtly Love to *The Crying Game*', *New Left Review*, 202 (1993), pp. 95-108.

[19] Rodney's *Elegia* no longer exists in its original manuscript form: the strongest copy comes from Tobias Alston's 1639 commonplace book, held at Beinecke Library MS Osborn b197; it is also available at the Bodleian Library at MS Rawlinson poetry 160, which also contains a fragment of Howard's *The Answer* (where Alston omits it); the remainder of *The Answer* can be found, also at the Bodleian, at MS Ashmole 38. My references to Rodney or Howard come from the complete copytext composed by Donald Foster, in '"Against the perjured falsehood of your tongues": Frances Howard on the Course of Love', *English Literary Renaissance*, 24 (1994), pp. 72-103, here at *The Answer*: ll. 49-50.

[20] John Chamberlain, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. by Norman E. McMclure, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1939), here at vol. I, p. 126, my emphasis. Earlier in the letter, Chamberlain identifies 'Radney', who is without question our same Rodney; 'Mistris Parnell' is one of many names used by Frances Howard, who was married a number of times and recognised as something of a social climber. For the sake of clarity, in my analysis I use 'George Rodney' and 'Frances Howard'.

sound advice, and to submit fully to intemperate emotion. Rodney's tragic end is directly linked to the management of pity. His *Elegia*, the first in the exchange, suggests his earlier interaction with Howard, and further indicates that there was a clear appeal for Howard's pity: 'Commend that pity I could never find' (l. 140). The tone of the *Elegia* is of a man accepting defeat: 'But O, the time is passed and all too late' (l. 103). Rodney's appeal for pity represents an emotional circuit that, following Howard's denial, remains open: it is the request for a specific type of community, directed at an unwilling recipient. This apparently misinformed expectation of how pity works in this type of exchange is precisely Rodney's trouble: he believes that the call should be answered. Howard, however, points out that these types of appeal are all part of the courtly game, in which the proper participation demands that the woman remain unmoved by the advances:

> Success and custom (to weak women, foes)
> Have made men wanton in our overthrows –
> Because the worser of our sex have granted.
> What is't in their attempts men have not vaunted?
> To weep, to threaten, flatter, beg, protest
> Is but in earnest, lust – and love in jest.
> Myself have heard it now and then avowed
> By some whom use of folly hath made proud
> That if by oaths one may his purpose win,
> No perjury in such a case is sin –
> And can we then be blamed (if, being harmed
> By sad experience) we be strongly armed
> With resolution to defend our wrongs
> Against the perjured falsehood of your tongues? (*The Answer* ll. 49-62)

By this conception, men make these claims of abjection – they 'weep, threaten, flatter, beg [and] protest' – and in so doing they meet sexual 'success', and establish the 'custom'. Howard clearly disapproves of women who yield to the lusty rhetorical efforts of men, positioning herself as a voice of experience, capable of seeing, in a way that Rodney cannot, that traditionally these types of exchanges are all part of a game, for those who 'love in jest'. While she seems to recognise that his approach is different, 'But whither range I in this vain dispute?

| (Since what you seek is of a different suit)' (ll. 63-4), her overarching stance is dismissive, still rooted to the idea of poetry as play. Countering Rodney's suggestion that the wisest clerks value true love above all else in men, she argues that poets 'Hold flattery and lying the best grace' (l. 122), and she counsels her suitor to 'die as poets do, in sighs (false fees | To corrupt trust!), in sonneting *ay-mes*' (ll. 135-6), since she 'never yet could hear one prove | That there was ever any died for love. | Nor would I have you be the man begin' (ll. 139-41).[21] This, really, is a conclusion that refuses to acknowledge (in fact, specifically calls into question) the presence of genuine, uncomfortable emotion in this context: she clearly finds his behaviour unreasonable. The reports from both Wilson and Chamberlain similarly indicate that Rodney has merely missed the point, that his use of emotion is different from what is expected, if only because his suicide indicates a noteworthy genuineness. Evidently Rodney is not adhering to the rules of this particular community.

Rodney's case is unusual in its extremity, but it nicely illustrates the dangers of pity for the masculine courtly persona. He demonstrates, conclusively, the importance of a functioning circuit of pity, of providing proper, manageable channels for otherwise unwieldy feelings: in the absence of a stable circuit, these emotions leak out in unpredictable ways that are often aggressive and always somehow destructive. Pity serves no obvious social function in this exchange; Rodney only suffers from a lack of appropriate channels for his emotion. The attempts to contain these feelings are false, unsatisfying, and prove both violent and desperate. Moreover, Rodney becomes compromised in a way that entirely undermines his position within courtly culture. Earlier interpretations of the model of lyric poetry rely on closing these

[21] Howard's words call to mind those of Rosalind, in *As You Like It*: 'The poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all this time there was not any man died in his own person, videlicit, in a love-cause […] men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love' (IV.i.86-99). Generally dated at 1599, the not-inconceivable reference to Shakespeare's play further suggests Howard's interpretation of her 'literary' interaction with Rodney.

emotional circuits: the performance of pity becomes compatible with the courtly male's persona because it leads to sexual conquest, or facilitates posturing within an established masculine community (as in Hutson). This, however, is too tidy an explanation for the repeated suggestion of genuine emotion in this type of literature – as Rodney's messy end clearly indicates. The literature written for, by, and about courtly men frequently stages these incomplete emotional circuits, revelling in the disruption they produce.

Rodney's fate is unusual, even though what his *Elegia* depicts – the call for pity and its subsequent denial – is not: this exchange in many ways resembles the 'norms' of English Renaissance courtship, as it is portrayed in lyric poetry. Read independently of the historical account of his demise, Rodney's *Elegia* looks very much like a standard exercise in Petrarchanism. Rodney writes himself as the abject male, cast at the feet of an unyielding mistress, announcing that the poem comes 'From one that languisheth in discontent' (l. 1). The stakes are familiar, as Rodney promises that 'if, in shedding tears, thou dost not feign, | With drops of blood I'll pay thy tears again' (ll. 9-10), and then describes his 'fair and cruel' lady as a 'Sweet poison, precious woe, infectious jewel' (ll. 33-34). This rhetoric is standard, as is Rodney's subsequent pursuit of Howard's pity, which here and elsewhere is imagined as the physical surrender that will alleviate the poet's torment. Rodney not only asks for pity, but ties it specifically to idealised female identity, suggesting that in pitying him, Howard would reaffirm her own femininity: 'The wisest clerks in learning best approve | *In women, pity*, and in men true love' (ll. 37-8, my emphasis). The suggestion, therefore, being that his lady (if indeed the model of perfection he claims) *should* by her very nature offer up the pity he requests: she is compelled in this way to participate in the proposed exchange. As we already know, the absence of pity in this relationship – Rodney's failure to elicit it, and the lady's failure to produce it – has disastrous consequences, foretold by the manner in which he describes his

impending fate: 'Thus to thine angry beauty, precious dear' he writes, '*A pyramis of pity* will I rear', for 'I am too deeply wounded to live long' (ll. 115-6; 124, my emphasis).[22] Finally, in the closing sequence, Rodney's wallowing and self-loathing reaches its pinnacle:

> Fair, do not fret, nor yet at all be moved
> That I have thus unfortunately loved,
> Nor think herein report disgraceful for thee.
> Heaven knows I ever thought myself unworthy,
> Yet, if you have a thought to cast away,
> Cast it on me, and so you shall repay
> My service with some ease; and I, in mind,
> *Commend that pity I could never find.* (ll. 133-140, my emphasis)

Rodney's rather desperate pursuit of Howard's pity, up to this point, calls into question the sincerity of his request here that she should 'not fret, nor yet at all be moved', and similarly the suggestion of his imminent undoing carries with it an undercurrent of hope that she will yet relent. What remains consistent is the notion that this question of dispensing pity is directly tied to the dark and looming cloud cast over Rodney: it is the deciding factor, that which determines if he lives or dies. Although Rodney's title, *Elegia,* might suggest his death as a foregone conclusion, in reality he does wait for her response: this is a question that remains open, and remains in the control of the lady to whom the appeal has been made. Rodney expects an answer, and acts against himself only *after* the confirmation that his bid for Howard's pity will remain unanswered. The closure Rodney seeks evades him, and so he is forced to seek an alternate ending.

Rodney's suicide, however, is hardly the expected reaction. Frances Howard's *Answer* to Rodney's *Elegia* certainly supports the scholarly position that reads male abjection in lyric poetry as a rhetorical gambit, in which strength is derived from the projection of weakness. Aside from dashing the young man's hopes, Howard's piece also serves as a shrewd

[22] Rodney's use of 'pyramis' here is somewhat ambiguous, potentially meaning 'pyramid' or (more generally) 'monument'. Equally, this could be a punning reference to Pyramus (of Ovidian fame), who kills himself after supposing Thisbe dead.

assessment of Petrarchan courtship models, which suggests some validity to the notion that these poems are more the product of a social convention than the artefacts of genuine emotion. Under the traditional Petrarchan model, of course, Howard would be unable to respond to Rodney's advances, even if she were so inclined. The idealised female figure of courtly poetry can not relent to the poet's appeals, nor can she 'pity' and thereby agree to the male's physical desires: that act of surrender would render her no longer the model of perfection that originally prompts poetic tribute. In this way again this exchange defies the standard structure: Howard is not an object in this game but a player; by submitting a poetic reply she occupies a similar role to Rodney, though her position is stronger, more controlled. Howard's first move, in her reply to Rodney, is to refuse the expected response; she begins by declining to engage. Howard's lack of participation in the emotional exchange is efficiently deflating:

> Divided in your sorrows have I strove
> To pity that attempt I must not love;
> For which, the health you sent me, sith in vain,
> Because I could not keep, return again. (ll. 1-4)

Howard's refusal to feel the pity that Rodney has so assiduously pursued is also an attack on the Petrarchan premise, a disassociation from allegations of emotional torment incited by the female's physical beauty and virtue:

> Small cause have I, the owner, to rejoice,
> That cannot take free passage in my choice
> But, for the fruitless painting of my cheeks,
> Must even become a slave to what it likes
> Or be termed 'cruel,' or (which is much worse)
> Of death and bloodshed undergo the curse!
> So if one desperate in madness do it,
> (Not yielding) are we accessory to it? (ll. 11-18)

Howard's description indicates a culture of one-sided courtship, a practice of male emotional relationships that implicate the female without concern for her consent: all she can do is

'return again' what has been directed at her. More importantly (and specifically), Howard's answer conveys her desire to avoid any sort of emotional community with Rodney: her language is precise, a practical and measured perspective on the situation, unhampered by the unwieldy sentiment that marks Rodney's efforts. She is only willing to engage with him on an intellectual level, where clearly, she is the stronger player. Thus far, the academic response to Howard's writing has been to praise it for highlighting the objectification of women in this courtly model, and undermining the alleged intimacy between the poet and his lady: Howard presents an image of the female as passive and only marginally involved, only a decorative object within the male's self-created, insular emotional environment. However, she refuses this identity for herself.[23]

By all accounts, Howard's is an accurate portrayal of early modern English courtship, but the exchange also opens up important questions about the employment of pity in the period, about the contexts in which pity becomes destructive. Howard objects to a method of courtship in which the male operates independently of the female, without her participation or consent. Nonetheless, her response effectively creates a comparable situation, forcibly isolating Rodney in an insular model of courtship in which he cannot possibly find satisfactory resolution. In so doing, she demonstrates the potentially destructive nature of the courtly model for men: what is interesting about the Rodney exchange is that while it suggests that the call for pity is a common (typically insincere) bid for sex, it also demonstrates (in Rodney's suicidal response) evidence of a genuine appeal, the threat and reality of real damage. Following her advice that he 'Hope for no favor' (l. 160), Rodney makes good on the 'empty' threats his lady has referenced, finding violent release in self-slaughter. Rodney's reaction to

[23] Foster, p. 74. See also Eric Langley, *Narcissism and Suicide in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): '[Howard] frees herself [from the structure imposed by Rodney] precisely by throwing back the stock motifs, returning the "cheek" he gazed upon, repudiating his conception of her' (p. 12).

Howard's refusal is a clear wish for solace from the intensity and discomfort of his emotional fate, a desire to liberate himself from the isolated emotional environment into which she has placed him by refusing the pitying response. His desperate sense of hopelessness is clear in his final piece, *Sir George Rodney before he killed himself*: 'What shall I do that am undone? | Where shall I fly, myself to shun' (ll. 1-2). He feels compelled: '[Ay] me, myself my self must kill – | and yet I die against my will' (ll. 3-4). '[Ay] me', he writes, 'that love such woe procures! – | For without her, no love endures' (ll.13-14). Howard is notably removed from this piece; her absence is pronounced, unsatisfactorily replaced by the 'self' that will act upon 'myself'.[24] It is significant that the situation reaches breaking point just as Howard's engagement is refused, when she comes to be replaced by Rodney's will for self-destruction. However, Rodney's failed chase for pity has dire consequences, not because pity is inherently destructive, but because it absolutely requires support: it cannot be sustained by a single person alone, and as such, it works directly against the idealised notions of independent, temperate masculinity common to the era. This social element of pity is a theme that is constantly pursued in Renaissance literature, and is especially evident in lyric poetry from the period. More important, however, is how the absence of necessary partnership is resolved, the ways in which response is invented even by aggressive means. In the case of Rodney, we see both these violent tendencies and the social factors, in a real-life context. Rodney wants to engage with pity, but on apparently incompatible terms. The strength of response – from both his intended partner and those who offer an historical account of the exchange – clearly suggests the violation of some code, an unspoken understanding of the manner in which pity is employed in the context of courtly love.

[24] For more on this model, in which the self is imagined as acting against itself, see Langley, pp. 17-24.

III.
'Her cruell loves in me such heate have kindled': Emotional and Physical Extremes in Parthenophil and Parthenophe

I turn now to purely literary examples of these connections between vulnerability and violence. Notions of pity and aggression are pushed to an absolute extreme in my first example, the rather obscure but remarkable *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, by Barnabe Barnes (first published in 1593). In many respects, *Parthenophil* looks like a self-conscious addition to an already established tradition of lyric sequences: Barnes relies heavily on Petrarchan tropes, writing that Parthenophe is a 'matchlesse beauty' (I:10, sig. A3^{r}), with 'lillye forhead smooth' and 'soft cheekes rosie redde' (11:5; 8, sig. E8^{v}).[25] In her own description of the courtly poet, Frances Howard suggests ulterior motives, keying in specifically on a drive for sexual conquest; scholars have gone on to suggest homosocial benefits to this type of literary expression as well. It is clear that Barnes is working to this latter model: the poet's conspicuous references to Petrarch's Laura and Philip Sidney's Stella indicate the intended insertion in a literary lineage, as well as the woman's utility as the artefact of the male-dominated intellectual genealogy.[26] Nonetheless, from an early stage it seems that the poems only barely contain the emotions expressed within them. Everything is unbridled, and Parthenophil is only tenuously in control: the sequence is plagued by emotional desperation. This is especially evident in the context of pity. The reliance on and pursuit of the emotion is overwhelming, and relentless: the sequence features no fewer than 47 explicit calls for pity. For example: 'But read (Sweete Mistrisse)' Parthenophil begins, 'and behold it neerer | Pondring my sorrowes outrage with some pitty'

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[25] Barnabe Barnes, *Parthenophil and Parthenophe, Sonnettes, Madrigals, Elegies and Odes* (London, 1593). This sequence contains madrigals, sonnets, elegies, odes and sestines: sonnet citations are listed by sonnet number (in Roman numeral), line, and signature (e.g. X:1-2, sig. D3^{v}); madrigal citations follow the same format, but are numbered traditionally (e.g. 1:9-10, sig. D2^{r}). Elegy, ode, and sestine citations are distinguished by prefixes *Ele.*, *Ode*, and *Sest.*, respectively.

[26] Thou scorn'st my lynes, a saint which make of thee
Where true desiers of thine hard hart complaine:
There thou bove Stella plac'de
Bove laura with ten thousand *more* install'd. (14:5-8, sig. F4^{r}).

(1:5-6, sig. A3^{v}); in the next sonnet he laments that 'Nor nature reason love nor faith can wake thee | To pitty me my prisoned hart to pitie' (2: 8-9, sig. B2^{r}); and then observes that 'That thou my sorrowes cause should vewe throughout, | Thou wilt not pitie me: but this was it' (XIV: 13-14, sig. C1^{r}). The repetition of 'pity' suggests an obsessive pursuit, but at the same time the impending denial seems inevitable: Parthenophil expects disappointment even as he struggles against it. This attempt to salvage hope in the face of certain failure is especially persistent, as Parthenophil reminds his lady that his torment will continue 'Unlesse her pittie make my greefe asswage' (XXXV:8, sig. D1^{v}):

> My sences never shall in quiet rest
> Till though be pitifull, and love alike:
> And if thou never pitie my distresses
> Thy crueltie with endlesse force shall strike
> Upon my witts, to ceaselesse writs addrest. (XVIII:9-13, sig. C1^{r})

Later, he appeals to her on the grounds of humanity: 'Then if thou bee but humaine grant some pitie' (XXVIII:10, sig. C3^{r}). In the face of the apparently futile bid for pity, the search for it becomes uncontained, and Parthenophil seeks pity from anyone and everyone, appealing on any conceivable grounds: 'Then scorne me not alasse sweet frends but rew me | Ah *pitie pitie* me for if you knew me [...] You would lament with me' (XXV: 4-8, sig. C3^{r}, my emphasis). The dogged pursuit of pity in this sequence suggests a desperate need, on the part of the male, to close the emotional circuit and cover the wound that has been left exposed. The receipt of pity in this instance becomes less about sexual gratification, upon which many other scholars have focused in the wider context of lyric poetry, and more about the fantasy of securing a response, *any* response, to the open call. This literature seems predicated on the *idea* that such a call cannot remain unanswered, that the absence of closure is inconceivable, intolerable. Of course, it is precisely the case that the fantasy of response is just that – a fantasy. In the Barnes sequence, here again (as in Rodney), there is a clear violation of the unspoken rules of this type

of poetry, and this type of social exchange, but this time it is a different sort of deviation. By addressing these 'friends', and appealing for their pity, Barnes acknowledges the presence of another community (this time, undoubtedly male, and without question beyond the sphere of courtship and conquest).[27]

Parthenophil's frantic rhetoric demonstrates an unsettling lack of control, which invariably bleeds out into the rest of the text: the demonstrated vulnerability of the speaker must somehow be contained. The practical functions of pity – the creation of a community between pitier and pitied, the request and its fulfilment – when handled correctly create a structure of support, a type of regulated channel for the management of intense emotion. The absence of this, as we see here, cultivates a striking bitterness:

> Why should I weepe in vayne, poore and remedilesse?
> Why should I make complainte, to the deafe wildernesse?
> Why should I sigh for ease, *sighes they breede maladie*?
> Why should I grone in hart, *grones they bring miserie*?
> Why should teares, plaintes, & sighes mingled with heavy
> Practise their crueltie, whiles I complaine to stones?
> […]
> Oh but Parthenophe turne and be pittifull!
> (*Ode* 19:1-6; 11, sig. T3^{r}, my emphasis)

The resentment is obvious; so too is the complaint that pain is the only discernible outcome of

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[27] Thomas Nashe's appraisal of Barnes is relevant here, insofar as it both acknowledges the existence of a literary community *and* confirms that Barnes was not a natural fit within it. Speaking of both Barnes and another poet, Anthony Chute, Nashe writes:

> Neither of these princockesses (*Barnes* or *Chute*) once cast up their noses towards *Powles Church-yard,* or so much as knew how to knock at a Printing-house dore, till they consorted themselves with [Gabriel] *Harvey,* who infected them within one fortnight with his owne spirit of Bragganisme; which after so increased and multiplied in them, as no man was able to endure them. The first of them (which is *Barnes*) presently uppon it, because hee would bee noted, getting him a strange payre of *Babilonian* britches, with a codpisse as big as a *Bolognian* sawcedge, and so went up and downe Towne, and shewd himself in the Presence at Court, where he was generally laught out by the Noble-men and Ladies.

Nashe's description of the 'infected' Barnes depicts a man desirous of, but lacking the response he seeks: wanting to 'bee noted', he finds himself instead 'laught out by the Noble-men and Ladies'. The passage also calls to mind the Barnes's open discussion of contracted malady in Ode 19. See Thomas Nashe, *Have With you to Saffron-Walden* (London, 1596), sig. R1^{v}-R2^{r}.

this emotional indulgence: 'why' participate, Parthenophil wonders, when 'sighes they breed maladie' and 'grones they bring miseries'? In the absence of the desired outcome, this emotion seeks alternative outlets, other methods of dissipation; it turns to violence. Whereas the other lyric poems I examine here address these (typically aggressive) means of outlet more subtly, Barnes chooses a drastic, shocking route: the concluding episode of the sequence imagines that Parthenophil uses black magic, 'enchaunting sawes and magicke spell' (CV:13, sig. T3^{v}), to summon the nude Parthenophe, whose 'hardned hart […] pittied not my teares' (*Sest.* 5:55 sig. T4^{v}). Because 'Her cruell loves in me such heate have kindled' (*Sest.* 5: 11, sig. T4^{r}), he then rapes her, seemingly in an effort to forge the connection he has been denied:

> *Joyne joyne* Parthenophe thy selfe unbare,
> None can perceive us in the silent night,
> *Now I will cease from sighes, lamentes, and teares,*
> And cease Parthenophe sweet *cease thy teares*
> […] for we conjoyne this heavenly night. (*Sest.* 5:88-93, sig. U1^{v}, my emphasis)

Although it seems to be the real Parthenophe that Parthenophil conjures (rather than a magical replica), she is quite clearly something other than what she was, a newly refashioned product of the black magic that is invoked. Parthenophil (rather disturbingly) finds peace at the bodily expense of that which he has invented, and in so doing he addresses the vulnerability tied to the pity he seeks. Moreover, this shocking conclusion, this aggression, is a forced closing of the emotional circuit left open for the rest of Barnes's work. Jeffery Nelson has notably identified this moment as that which serves as 'a secure narrative and psychological conclusion to the sequence as a whole'.[28] It is true enough that this is an attempt at some sort of a conclusion: 'If all the fierie element I bare' Barnes writes,

> Tis now acquitted: cease your former teares,
> For as one with rage my bodie kindled,
> So in hers am I buried this night. (*Sest.* 5:109-12, sig. U1^{r})

[28] Jeffrey N. Nelson, 'Lust and Black Magic in Barnabe Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 25 (1994), pp. 595-608, at p. 595.

This blunt, explicit ending scene is certainly the defining element of Barnes's sequence, but is it hardly a 'secure' narrative. In this poem, for example, the rapid pronoun shift indicates instability: he addresses Parthenophe directly, as 'you', then references 'her'. As a result, the addressee of the poem remains unclear. This portion of the sequence also represents a drastic departure from the traditional Petrarchan model, imagined as a shocking and unsettling violation of *both* Parthenophe *and* Parthenophil: the former sustains an unthinkable and unforgivable violence, the expression of which compromises and undermines the courtly identity of the latter, who is 'buried'. This episode is clearly prompted by the refusal of pity. Both the denial of the shared emotional burden, and the exclusion from the emotional community – both key benefits of the successful pitiful exchange – are moves that intensify the emotions to an extent that is unsustainable. Already unwieldy emotions bubble over, driving the subject to incredible, unreasonable acts of aggression. Self-control seems unthinkable. This is intemperance, the inability to control one's emotions, at its worst, and the consequences are inexcusable. It also, when read alongside Rodney's deluded efforts with Frances Howard, contributes to an emerging pattern of courtly male figures who *invent*, problematically, the objects/respondents required to close their emotional loops.

Nelson interprets Parthenophil's rape of Parthenophe as realising 'the threat posed by courtiers who are given no satisfaction for the desire defined and created by the Elizabethan court and the Petrarchan conventions' (p. 595), and this is a reasonable conclusion given the specific *type* of aggression enacted upon Parthenophe. I would suggest, however, that this is too reductive an explanation, both in this specific sequence, and more generally in other sequences like this, which imagine some type of aggression acted out upon the object of devotion. The overwhelming emphasis on pity in Barnes's piece is compelling evidence that the torment extends beyond the physical: the prioritisation of emotional agony is evident in

Parthenophil's apparently desperate attempt to garner pity from any available source. The rape that Barnes imagines is uniquely graphic, the only example, in texts of this type, of the forcible fulfilment of unsatisfied desire. This suggests a more basic reaction to unrelieved vulnerability, rather than the specific address of unbridled lust. Parthenophil's demand, however, that the tears cease (both his, and hers) connects the earlier bids for pity directly to sexual release: his 'acquittal' is in fact requital. In this case, the violence is pronounced, fuelled by a logic that seemingly demands that tears be answered in kind, and that the pitiless subject becomes the pitiful object. Nonetheless, this obsession with balance cannot resolve the obvious problem of the encounter: there can be no satisfactory result, no relief for the emotional rawness, and no genuine sense of *response* when closure is sought through rape. Parthenophil matches his intolerable state with an intolerable action, an approach that only further emphasises that the prospect of resolution, of fulfilling response, is pure fantasy.

Sir Philip Sidney offers a good example of a more neutral (if such a thing can be said) aggression in his *Astrophil and Stella*. One of the archetypal early modern sonnet sequences, *Astrophil and Stella* shares the same thread of violence in the face of pity denied, but it is far less overtly distasteful, featuring sexual undertones that are much less drastic than the bald attack of *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*. While Thomas Roche has called the final scene of Barnes's sequence 'the inevitable conclusion of the physical demands posited by the tradition', the more canonical offering by Sidney shows evidence of violence as well, suggesting that these aggressive undercurrents are present within the tradition, rather than deviating from it.[29] By this reading, Barnes's offering is not unique in its sexual aggression, only in the extremity of it, and the clarity with which he articulates the courtly male, obsessively leaving no exchange left unresolved. In many respects, this is just another way in which Barnes inserts himself into the

[29] Thomas Roche, *Petrarch and the English Sonnet Sequences* (New York, NY: AMS Press, 1989), p. 246.

lyric tradition.

IV.
The 'skill to pity my disgrace': Astrophil and Stella

Although the portrayal of violence in Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* is far more sanitised than the concluding scene offered by Barnes, the correlation between violence and the refusal of pity is equally evident in Astrophil's pursuit of his lady. Here again we see little evidence of controlled masculine emotion: Astrophil asks that Stella 'give my passions leave to *run* their race', denoting unbridled movement and rapid change, but also suggesting through the metaphor of the race that there will be a culmination, a completion of the interaction.[30] This suggestion of courtship as a loop to be completed is made at the very start of the sequence:

> Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
> That the dear she might take some pleasure of my pain,
> Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
> *Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain*:
> I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of my woe.
> (1:1-5, my emphasis)

The movement in this sonnet conveys the idea that courtship is a process: the man feels love and writes the agony of it in verse; the woman reads, understands and *pities*; that pity carries the 'grace' (the emotional and sexual release) needed to provide relief and close the circuit that begins with the first pang of love. On the most cynical reading – one that would surely be offered by the likes of Frances Howard – Sidney offers us a formula for conquest, and describes what was to become a common courtly practice. We could read Astrophil's comment, 'I sought fit words to *paint* the blackest face of my woe' as an indication that the sonnet only presents a surface image of sadness, something for another to view and subsequently respond to. However, one might equally interpret the comment as a complaint about the possibility of suitably expressing emotion. There is evidence that Astrophil is

[30] Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella*, in *Complete Poems*, ed. by Catherine Bates (London: Penguin, 1994), 64:2, my emphasis. All subsequent references to *Astrophil and Stella* will be cited in text as (sonnet number: line number).

suffering from poetic performance anxiety: later in the opening sonnet he admits to 'studying inventions fine, her wits to entertaine', and, lamenting the lack of artistic flow, invokes 'some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburnt brain'. Still, the 'words [come] halting forth'; Astrophil is 'great with child to speak', and the victim of a 'truant pen' (1: *passim*). Far more than cool calculation, this poem suggests the growing pressure of emotion without the hope of release.

The emotional intensity tormenting Astrophil grows steadily over the sequence, and as it does, we see an increasingly clear connection between the lover's unyielding abjection and the call for pity. This correlation is particularly stressed in Sonnet 45:

> Stella oft sees the very face of woe
> Painted in my beclouded stormy face,
> *But cannot skill to pity my disgrace*,
> Not though thereof the cause herself she know.
> Yet hearing late a fable which did show,
> Of lovers never known, a grievous case,
> Pity thereof gat in her breast such place
> That, from that sea derived, tears' did flow.
> Alas, if fancy, drawn by imaged things,
> Though false, yet with free scope more grace doth breed
> Than servant's wrack, where new doubts honor brings,
> Then think, my dear, that you in me do read
> Of lover's ruin some sad tragedy:
> I am not I; *pity the tale of me*. (45, my emphasis)

This is a poem entirely focused on pity and its dispensation: Stella sees Astrophil, 'the very face of woe', and yet refuses to provide the response he seeks. This denial is made all the more devastating when she later demonstrates an ample susceptibility to the emotion, indulging in great outpouring of pity after hearing the 'grievous' fable of the lovers. Stella's reaction doubles as an exposition of the free-flowing pity that worries conduct manualists. Here again, the sea imagery used by the likes of Peacham is employed, as Stella's pity forces a reaction: 'from that sea derived, tears' did flow'. For Stella, pity is emotionally overwhelming and invasive: 'pity thereof gat in her breast'. Her response to the intellectual, literary narrative is, ultimately, a

physical one, and yet the reaction is not reliably prompted. The subjectivity of pity is an issue here: Astrophil's torment is augmented by the realisation that his 'real' anguish is somehow less pitiable than the tale that elicits Stella's compassionate response. At the same time, Astrophil's reaction to the perceived unfairness of all this manifests in a form of reflexive violence, seen in Astrophil's wilful sloughing off of his own identity: 'I am not I', he objects, and immediately wills himself to be transformed into something entirely different, something fictive: 'pity *the tale* of me'. Astrophil's emotional stability wavers, just as the expected call for relief via pity is left unanswered, importantly on the grounds of unwillingness, rather than inability. The potential denial of relief prompts Astrophil's emotion to bleed out in unanticipated ways. Here, it becomes a desperation that destabilises his identity as a man (or indeed, a human): Astrophil imagines he would be better served as one of those 'imaged things | though *false*' that 'more grace doth breed' and reduces himself accordingly.

The perspective of sonnet 45 is an escalation from the sonnet that precedes it:

> My words I know do well set forth my mind;
> My mind bemoans his sense of inward smart;
> Such smart may pity claim of any heart;
> Her heart, sweet heart, is of no tiger's kind:
> And yet she hears, yet I no pity find;
> But more I cry, less grace she doth impart.
> Alas, what cause is there so overthwart
> That nobleness itself makes thus unkind?
> I much do guess, yet find no truth save this:
> That when the breath of my complaints doth touch
> Those dainty doors unto the court of bliss,
> The heav'nly nature of that place is such
> That once come there, the sobs of mine annoys
> Are metamorphosed straight to tunes of joys. (44)

Here, Astrophil's identity is still more or less intact; he is confident that his poetry does 'well set forth my mind'; and the bid for pity to him seems more than legitimate, as he claims that 'such smart may pity claim of any heart'. Astrophil is equally confident in his lady's theoretical capacity for pity, and as her heart 'is of no tiger's kind', her lack of pity can only mystify him:

'Alas, what cause is there so overthwart | That nobleness itself makes thus unkind?'. The reference to Stella's nobleness is of particular interest: remembering Brathwaite's account of the noble lady for whom pity is a core trait, and indeed Chaucer's notion of the 'gentil herte' that 'renneth soone' with pity, this is yet another piece of evidence that implies Stella's obligation to pity Astrophil. As the poem draws to a close, we can see the beginning of the unravelling that characterises sonnet 45: the language becomes increasingly ambiguous, and arguably hypersexualised, in the last five lines, as he references 'the breath of my complaints' on 'those dainty doors unto the court of bliss'; he imagines 'the sobs of mine annoys' transformed 'straight to tunes of joys'. Of course, we know from first two-thirds of the poem (as well as the others sonnets that precede in the sequence), that the sexual encounter Astrophil imagines, the physical release about which he fantasises, remains inaccessible to him. In the strictest sense of the term, this rhetoric represents a type of violence against Stella, a violation that Frances Howard references in her own objection to George Rodney's appropriation of her image in his poetry:

> Small cause have I, the owner, to rejoice,
> *That cannot take free passage in my choice*
> But, for the fruitless painting of my cheeks,
> Must even become a slave to what it likes'.[31]

Stella has no agency in sonnet 44, but she is intimately implicated in Astrophil's imaginings, simultaneously helpless to control the narrative, and held responsible for the emotions it prompts.

In sonnet 73, overcome with emotion, Astrophil more blatantly violates Petrarchan boundaries by forcing a sort of physical release:

> And yet my star, because a sugared kiss
> In sport I sucked, while she asleep did lie,
> Doth lour, nay chide; nay, threat for only this:

[31] Howard, *The Answer*, ll. 11-14, in Foster, p. 95, my emphasis.

> Sweet, it was saucy Love, not humble I.
> But no 'scuse serves, she makes her wrath appear
> In beauty's throne; see now who dares come near
> Those scarlet judges, threat'ning bloody pain?
> O heav'nly fool, thy most kiss-worthy face
> Anger invests with such a lovely grace
> That anger's self I needs must kiss again. (73:5-14)

Unquestionably a form of aggression, Astrophil's amorous advances on the sleeping Stella happen without her consent: this much is evident from the 'wrath' that follows. There is something obviously and deeply troubling about this behaviour, made worse by the manner in which Astrophil displaces all culpability. He blames 'saucy Love', and 'thy most kiss-worthy face', implying that he is the helpless victim of his emotions, driven to act by inchoate forces, and by Stella herself. The poem ends with the lingering threat of future emotional overrun, and future physical violence: 'Anger invests with such a lovely grace | That anger's self I needs must kiss again'. Astrophil has already spoken of his call for pity as a bid for 'grace' from the agony of intense emotion, and it is apparent here that he benefits from the stolen kiss, even if it represents a gross misconduct and invokes Stella's anger: relief is his only priority. Additionally, the factors at play here – primarily, the fact that the sleeping Stella is somehow removed from this interaction, her agency compromised by her slumber – cast Astrophil's actions in a certain light. It is not, perhaps, precisely the *invention* of the means to close the emotional circuit, but it is clearly a manipulation of circumstance: in approaching Stella when she is unconscious, arguably more object than agent, Astrophil chooses a time when he can close the loop himself.

The threat to Stella continues through to the conclusion of the sonnet sequence, from the ambiguous references to the damage Astrophil causes – 'Through me, wretch me, e'en Stella vexed is | […] | I have (live I and know this?) harmed thee' (93: 4, 10) – to the more explicit imagining of Stella fallen ill. In sonnets 101 and 102, Astrophil imagines that 'Stella is

sick' (101: 1), and her beauty is destroyed: 'Where be those roses gone, which sweetened so our eyes? | Where those red cheeks, which oft with fair increase did frame | The height of honour in the kindly badge of shame? (102: 1-3). Admittedly, these are more petty types of violence, not comparable to the rape that Barnes imagines at the close of his sequence. Nonetheless, Astrophil directs several kinds of aggression towards Stella: the forced advance, the unnamed harm, the sickness and finally the detailed loss of her beauty all constitute moves towards closure. The outright violence creates relationship-ending wrath, whereas both the illness and the loss of physical allure similarly signal the possibility of an end to the relationship. In each case, Astrophil stands to gain from this aggression, if not in successfully wooing Stella, then in severing the tie to her, and thus providing relief from the emotional torment that drives the poems.

V.
'A hart of more manlie pity': Pity and Prowess in Sidney's Arcadia

Thus far I have argued that the unanswered call for pity in lyric poetry breeds an intolerable vulnerability, and (although there can be no response, in this model) the refusal to offer any relief for this type of emotional torment creates the opportunity for violent outlet. This is closely connected to intolerability of fellow-feeling that I have identified in *Lear*: there again, the vulnerability produced in the wake of unanswered pity prompts problematic social interactions. In the courtly poetry I have examined here, I have argued that this aggression is, in effect, an imagined way of closing circuits of feeling that otherwise would remain open. Arguably, these outbursts also represent a reassertion of the masculinity that is compromised by the unsatisfactory resolution of the pity exchange. In exploring these exchanges in lyric sequences, my emphasis has necessarily been on male characters who *ask* for pity – quite evidently a position that compromises the traditional notions of a temperate courtly masculine

identity, which stresses in particular the capacity for emotional regulation. This tension is further complicated by the recurring appearance of pity in the courtly context; we have seen the extent to which pity flows freely in the lyric poetry of the English court. And yet, sixteenth-century conduct books are clearly wary of the Chaucerian notion that 'pitie renneth soone in gentil herte': for the Elizabethans, involving oneself with pity is far more complicated, more potentially destructive.

The concern of this chapter so far has been the consequence of asking for pity. The poetry I have examined has prioritised the appeal for, rather than the dispensation of, pity. The conduct manuals, by way of contrast, object to pity on the grounds that it interferes with temperate action: these are worries about offering pity to others. Perhaps unsurprisingly, very little is said in conduct manuals about the advisability of requesting pity for oneself – in part, one might imagine, because this was considered so obviously undesirable. Giovanni della Casa, for example, only references pity once in his popular etiquette book, *Galateo*, placing it alongside other grating behaviours which 'offend the senses': 'to grynde the teethe, to whistle, *to make pitifull cryes*, to rub sharpe stones together, and to fyle upon Iron'.[32] These behaviours, he notes, 'do much offend the Eares and would be lefte in any case' (sig. B3^{v}). In a more colourful turn, della Casa likens the witnessing of this conduct to having 'a lothesome thing, that will make a man to cast his stomacke […] thrust unto [one's] nose': 'Foh, feele I pray you, how this doth stink' (sig. B3^{v}). Pitiful lamentations, by this conception, are too obviously objectionable to warrant discussion.

Before moving on to representations of pity and the courtly masculine identity – this time in narrative – it is important to consider this distinction between *asking* for pity and *feeling* it for another. The post-Nietzschean reader may see in the dispensation of pity a hierarchical

[32] Giovanni della Casa, *Galateo*, trans. Robert Peterson (London, 1576), sig. B3^{v}, my emphasis.

element, a belief that the person who offers his pity does so from a position of power. Even the earliest thought on pity believed that it was impossible to feel the emotion from a certain depth of despair, as in Aristotle's comment that pity is 'not felt by those completely ruined, who suppose that no further evil can befall them, since the worst has befallen them already'.[33] This is some indication that the exchange of pity is something different from a more straightforward sympathetic bond: not a *shared* experience per se, but rather something which is grounded in the recognition of one person's experienced vulnerability (the pitied), and the concomitant imagining of the possibility of one's own vulnerability (the pitier).[34] The crucial point, therefore, is that the pitier is not simultaneously suffering the consequences of his own vulnerability: he is in some way removed from it, a spectator. There are hints of this thinking in the lyric poetry I have examined thus far. In particular, the Petrarchan abjection evident in Rodney, Barnes and Sidney relies heavily on the premise of the weakness and vulnerability of the person to be pitied, and stresses the elevated position of the female to whom he appeals. The male characters that I have discussed are united in their pursuit of pity, and seemingly compromised by the emotional turbulence that leads them to seek it. This position is obviously problematic in the context of conduct manuals' advice, even if it is not explicitly discussed in those texts. The undercurrent of violence in lyric poetry further suggests the untenable reality of the pitiful male: this level of vulnerability is, it seems, both unsettling and unsustainable. Each of these figures responds to an untenable situation by inventing a way to resolve it, attacking their own vulnerability in what might be read as an attempt to restore the masculinity that has been compromised.

I turn now to literary portrayals of men dispensing pity – that 'syckenesse of the

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[33] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, VIII.

[34] On this point, Aristotle notes that 'in order to feel pity, *we must obviously be capable of supposing* that some evil may happen to us or some friend of ours' (VIII, my emphasis).

mynde' that Elyot places in opposition with merciful 'temperaunce of the mynde'. It seems helpful to begin with Sidney's depiction of these types of men, given that he presents a vision of corrosive pity in *Astrophil and Stella*, and because Pyrocles and Musidorus, of the *Arcadia*, are themselves a product of the Chaucerian vision of free-flowing, gentle pity. If they are, however, versions of Chaucer's pitying knights, they are equally a product of the culture in which the likes of Elyot, Cox, and Bryskett also operate. This much is evident in Musidorus's proclamation that 'this bastarde Love […] it workes upon nothing but a certaine base weakenes which some *gentle fooles call a gentle hart*'.[35] The critique is a clear reworking of Chaucer's line, a direct contradiction of the former's idea that pity makes a legitimate contribution to the courtly masculine identity: Musidorus speaks of pity as an impulse that debases men, making them fools.[36] However, this is not a perspective that endures, and elsewhere the juxtaposition of pity and masculinity seems relatively unproblematic, as in Kalander's passing comment that Palladius's son, 'seemed to have a hart of more *manlie pity* then the rest' (sig. B2^{v}). Like Astrophil, for Pyrocles and Musidorus pity presents as a naturally emerging facet of gentlemanly life. Astrophil, however, chases the emotion without commenting on the irregularity of doing so, expecting that it will come to him, and noticeably losing his composure when it does not. Both Pyrocles and Musidorus, however, are marked by their ability to give and receive pity: they are sensitive to the potential damage, and (also unlike Astrophil) their engagement with pity seems not have the same destabilising effect on their masculine identities. Although the use of masculine pity in *Arcadia* is still peculiar, still problematic in various ways, both Pyrocles and Musidorus remain strong, socially elevated chivalric figures – just like Chaucer's pitying knight – here placed explicitly in a sort of

[35] Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembrokes Arcadia* (London, 1593), sig. D5^{v}, my emphasis.
[36] Chaucer's influence on Sidney is later made clear in *An apologie for poetrie*, in which Sidney famously remarks, 'truly I know not, whether to mervaile more, either that he in that mistie time, could see so clearely, or that wee in this cleare age, walke so stumblingly after him'. Sidney, *Apology*, sig. I4^{r}.

courtship model similar to that which Astrophil finds unworkable.

At first, Musidorus appears an unlikely supporter of pity in any context, as he establishes an early familiarity with the traditional objections to unwieldy emotion. His contempt for love, expressed before he himself falls victim to the 'basest and fruitlessest of all passions', is a central point of an extended discourse on love and its accessory vices, which ultimately ends with his conclusion that 'endless it runes to infinite evils' (sig. D5^{v}). Reading Musidorus's comments alone, we might reasonably interpret this as a bald challenge to a more positive perspective on pity. This suspicion would be confirmed by Musidorus's description of masculine identity, which reads very much like a conduct manual, and stresses the importance of reason's rule over 'sensual weakness':

> Remember (*for I know you know it*) that if we will be men, the reasonable parte of our soule, is to have absolute commaundement; against which if any sensuall weaknes arise, wee are to yeelde all our sounde forces to the overthrowing of so unnaturall a rebellion, wherein howe can we wante courage, since wee are to deale against so weake an adversary, that in it selfe is nothinge but weakenesse? Nay wee are to resolve, that if reason direct it, we must doo it, and if we must doo it, we will doo it; for to say I cannot, is childish, and I will not, womanish. And see how extremely every way you endaunger your minde. (sig. D5^{v})

This, he suggests, is an identity distinct from that of a woman or a child, and a vision of masculinity common to all men: 'for I know you know it', he reminds Pyrocles. Significantly, Musidorus's conception of masculinity defines itself specifically against femininity, as he warns Pyrocles that 'whatsoever peevish imperfections are in that sex, *to soften your heart* to receive them [is] the *very first down-step to all wickedness*' (sig. D5^{v}, my emphasis).[37] To 'soften' emotionally is to become womanish, to become less than a man (rather than, importantly, merely *different* to a man).[38]

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[37] Rodney also references the disgrace of having yielded 'To female softness and unfruitful love' (*Elegia*, l. 26).
[38] In spite of Musidorus's clear stance against softening, there is some oddity in his choice of words, his insistence that, 'if any sensuall weaknes arise, wee are *to yeelde* all our sounde forces to the overthrowing of so unnaturall a rebellion' (my emphasis).

Nonetheless, this aversion to emotional softening seemingly evaporates when Musidorus falls in love with Pamela.[39] More compelling evidence, however, in regards to notions of masculinity and pity, comes in the exchange between Musidorus and Pyrocles, prompted by the latter's torment over Philoclea. In many respects, Pyrocles reaches an emotional state that is virtually identical to that of Astrophil, to whom 'Love gave the wound which while I breathe will bleed' (2:2). Calling to mind Barnes's suggestion of a homosocial community in *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, Musidorus becomes immediately and wholly implicated in Pyrocles's anguish, until both present a most unusual vision of emotional overrun:

> And herewith the deepe wound of his love being rubbed a fresh with this new unkindnes, began as it were to bleed againe, in such sort that he was unable to beare it any longer, but gushing out aboundance of teares, and crossing his armes over his woefull hart, he suncke downe to the ground which sodaine trance went so to the hart of *Musidorus*, that falling downe by him and kissing the weping eyes of his friend, he besought him not to make account of his speach; which if it had beene over vehement, yet was it to be borne withall, because it came out of a love much more vehement; that he had not thought fancie could have received so deep a wound: but now finding in him the force of it, hee woulde no further contrary it; but imploy all his service to medicine it, in such sorte, as the nature of it required. But even this kindnes made *Pyrocles* the more melte in the former unkindenes, which his manlike teares well shewed. (sig. E1^{r}, my emphasis)

For Pyrocles it is the same wound, the same cause, the same unending bleeding that we have seen elsewhere. We are reminded specifically of Rodney, who offers 'drops of blood' as currency (*Elegia* l. 10), who is 'Willing to seal my meaning with my blood' (l. 132), and who is alleged to have composed his verses to Frances Howard in his own blood. Pyrocles's behaviour here is by no means the measured, reasonable conduct that Musidorus champions

[39] Sidney pursues the connection between pity and masculinity elsewhere in the *Arcadia*, in the figure of Euarchus. In spite of an early hint that pity and masculinity are not mutually dependent – Euarchus is urged to 'look upon this yong Pyrocles with a *manlike* eie; *if not with a pitifull*' (sig. Ss2^{r}, my emphasis) – the pervading description of Euarchus focuses on his deficiency in this area. He is described as '*not being rightly conceived* […] an obstinate hearted man, and such a one, *who being pitilesse*, his dominion must needes be insupportable' (sig. Ss2^{v}, my emphasis). Contradicting Musidorus's initial outlook (as above), Euarchus's lack of pitiful impulse in fact *negatively* affects his reputation amongst others, and furthermore affects his ability to execute his social role.

earlier in the text: it is the embodiment of the very traits he has just railed against.

Read against Musidorus's earlier account, Pyrocles's actions look like an open contradiction of idealised masculinity. By crossing his arms and sinking to the ground, Pyrocles physically reduces his stature, and he further emasculates himself with the production of bodily fluids (blood and tears).[40] Nonetheless, there are some redemptive features. Although Pyrocles becomes a type of pitiful spectacle, he is almost immediately matched by Musidorus in response. Musidorus promptly responds in kind, 'falling downe by him', and implicitly suggesting that his pity is involuntary, instinctual. Both men, in this moment, are entirely at the mercy of their emotions, and wholly driven by them. Moreover, Pyrocles openly recognises the role of pity in this compromise, noting that 'when with pittie once my harte was made *tender, according to the aptnesse of the humour*, it receaved quickly a cruell impression of that wonderfull passion which to be definde is impossible, because no wordes reach to the strange nature of it: they onely know it, which inwardly feele it, it is called love' (sig. E1^{v}, my emphasis). Binding pity to the notion of love, he acknowledges that this is the cause of his tender heart and this display of abjection, while simultaneously asking his friend to compromise himself in the same way. This call, it seems, is answered: compromised by his affection for his friend, Musidorus immediately offers his assistance in Pyrocles's bid for his lady. This is not just a question of ignoring a previously stated philosophy of masculinity; in offering his help, Musidorus aligns himself with a type of behaviour he has already spoken against: he too falls to the ground, he connects himself to his friend both physically and emotionally. And yet, in this scene of utter vulnerability, masculinity is still, somehow, preserved: though Pyrocles 'melte[s]' at his friend's compassion, they are '*manlike* teares' that he sheds. This scene is a clear emotional circuit, and in particular the response – the closing of that loop, symbolised by Musidorus's participation –

[40] The relationship between leaky, productive women is notably taken up in Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, esp. pp. 23-63.

is a crucial moment, although still a problematic way to deal with the masculine challenge of being weakened by pitiability. The addition of the pitying male friend (Musidorus) and his immediate response to Pyrocles's abjection ensures that the call for pity is promptly answered – even before his lady is won (or introduced). However, we might still question the legitimacy of the loop: it appears closed, but is it really? Pyrocles is transferring the model into another context, from romantic love to the love shared between friends. If the emotion is genuine, and prompted by the agony of unrequited romantic love, then the circuit cannot really be properly closed within the structure of a homosocial community. This model, therefore – though positive, in some respects – cannot address all of the problems created by pity.

The portrayal of pity's overwhelming effect, and the response in the face of it, looks forward to another scene, which is also significant in the context of the Petrarchan model. This episode features Musidorus as he surveys the sleeping Pamela, and considers what follows. In many ways, the set-up looks familiar: the lady's beauty overwhelms him, as 'He thought her faire forehead was a fielde where all his fancies fought; and every haire of her heade semed a strong chain that tied him' (sig. Gg8^{v}). This in turn produces a familiar struggle, a call for response that cannot be answered by the lady, asleep. For Musidorus, this does not lessen the force of imagined interaction. As it is described, Pamela, although unconscious, 'did so tyrannize over Musidorus affectes that hee was compelled' towards her: he draws closer to her, inhaling her breath, 'with such joye, that he did determine in himselfe, there had ben no life to a Camaeleons if he might be suffered to enjoye that foode' (sig. Gg8^{v}). Again, the incorporation of a *sleeping* 'participant' further suggests that it is a fantasy of response: there is only one respondent in this exchange, and it is clearly the male. The scene, up to this point, is identical in both the old and new versions of the *Arcadia*. However, the old version progresses further before the arrival of the 'company of clownish vilaines' (sig. Gg8^{v}) disrupts the scene.

Describing Musidorus as 'overmastered with the fury of delight, having all his senses partial against himself' Sidney indicates quite clearly that Musidorus is considering (or in fact, about to commit) rape: '[he] was bent to take the advantage of the weakness of the watch, and see whether at that season he could win the bulwark before timely help might come'.[41] But for the realisation of intent, this scene mirrors the conclusion of *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*. It also suggests that in spite of the more positive pitiful interactions between Musidorus and Pyrocles, there is still something sinister, potentially exploitative about the emotion. This perhaps accounts for the revision of the scene, between the *Old* and *New Arcadia*: the moment is reimagined in order to more effectively isolate considerations of pity from the courtship scenarios, a move that allows the text to consider potentially productive facets of the emotion, instead.

Returning, then, to the positive. In addition to answering Pyrocles's call for pity, Musidorus's willing interaction with the emotion is significant precisely because he has spoken against emotional vulnerability at the outset: Musidorus's decision to engage with his friend therefore becomes all the more meaningful because it appears conscientiously done, with full knowledge of the potential personal dangers. Additionally, it demonstrates the strength of the impulse to pity, and clearly indicates a growing awareness of the tensions between practicing pity and assuming the courtly identity. In spite of the apparent threat to masculinity articulated by Musidorus, the position of these men is never really undermined in the same way that we see in lyric poetry. Musidorus is established as a paragon of masculinity, even before he speaks: he is 'a man of so goodly shape' that even 'nakedness was to him an apparrell' (sig. A2^{r}), and he speaks of Pyrocles's 'victorious hands' and laments, in the face of his possible death, that he

[41] References to the *Old Arcadia* come from the following volume: Philip Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), here at p. 177. References to the *New Arcadia* I have taken from the sixteenth-century edition, as it (unlike the other, which was not widely available until 1907) was published and available at the time.

was robbed the opportunity to '[end] nobly thy noble daies' (sig. A3ᵛ). Notations such as these take for granted the masculinity of their subjects: these are men who obviously inhabit their identities. Nonetheless, the type of structures emphasised in the *New Arcadia* appear, at least in part, to relieve some of the issues at work in lyric poetry, even if they cannot totally resolve them. This is, perhaps, at least partially attributable to the absence of the trappings of court: *Arcadia* is resolutely pastoral. The male figures in question, moreover, are clearly identified as knights, and as such given appropriate opportunity to demonstrate masculine strength. Between them, Pyrocles and Musidorus form a mutually supportive community: as such, there is no need in this structure to invent an aggressive method of closing an emotional loop. The necessity of the support system may even be called into question, as both men are successful in courtship. Nonetheless, in a story in which one of the principal male characters spends a large passage of time dressed as a woman, it is clear that these provisions for emotional interaction are not entirely sufficient to preserve a vision of masculinity as stable and impermeable as the conduct books may wish. Even so, in the *Arcadia*, Sidney marries the emotional intensity of the lyric poetry with a vision of pity as, in places, both compatible with and vital to 'gentle' masculine identity.

VI.
'*Or die with you in sorrow, and partake your griefe*': *Temperate Pity and Knighthood in the Faerie Queene'*

This attempted reconciliation between pity and masculine courtly identity is also apparent is certain scenes of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, which, like Sidney's *Arcadia*, represents an intentional contribution to the Chaucerian legacy. Here again, there is evidence of pity emerging from the 'gentil herte' of the knight figure.[42] Sir Guyon, of the second book, is the

[42] Chaucer's influence on the author is unquestionable: for more on Spenser's engagement with Chaucer, including his reworking of 'The Squire's Tale' in Book IV of *The Faerie Queene*, see Reed Way Dasenbrock, 'Escaping the Squires' Double Bind in Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene*', *Studies in English Literature*, 26 (1986),

ready example, the knight of temperance who is also (paradoxically, it seems at times) quick to offer his pity. Spenser, however, portrays temperance as crucially linked to the proper negotiation of the impulse to pity, and Gerald Morgan in particular has noted that, 'The perfecting of Guyon in temperance is largely a *perfecting of him in pity*'.[43] And indeed it is pity, rather than temperance, that serves as the initial focus of Book II. This is Guyon's first impulse, upon encountering Duessa (disguised as a dishevelled and violated woman), and his first offering to her: 'Great pitty is to see you thus dismayd | And marre the blossom of your beauty bright'.[44] In terms of the mechanics of the pity function, Guyon is clearly well-informed, realising in this instance that the dispensation of pity carries with it a burden of response, and that in giving his pity he is also obliged to act: 'Tell the cause of your conceived payne | For if he live, that hath you doen despight | He shall you doe dew recompence agayne' (II.i.14.6-8). By inviting the lady's tale of woe, he willingly enters into a sort of community with her; the union is only strengthened with the suggestion that Guyon will somehow ensure the resolution of the wrong. Taken without context, this looks positive – the application of pity with the intent to build a community. However, in this instance, we know that Guyon's pity creates a problem: Guyon is emotionally compromised by Duessa, and as a result he acts against the Redcrosse Knight, the hero of Book I. Book II's opening episode therefore provides an apt demonstration of all of the fears about pity underpinning conduct tracts: in the place of measured and reasoned behaviour, Guyon's misguided pity compromises his identity; he unwittingly strays from the path he is expected to take.

Both the potential ramifications and the paradoxical nature of pity are further

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pp. 25-45; and Anne Higgins, 'Spenser Reading Chaucer: Another Look at the "Faerie Queene" Allusions', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 89 (1990), pp. 17-36.

[43] Gerald Morgan, 'The Idea of Temperance in the Second Book of *The Faerie Queene*', *Review of English Studies*, 37 (1986), pp. 11-39, p. 33, my emphasis.

[44] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by A.C. Hamilton (Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 2001), II.i.14.3-4.

illustrated later in the first canto, when Guyon encounters another grieving and dying lady and is rendered immobile:

> […] when the good Sir Guyon did behold,
> His hart gan wexe as starke, as marble stone,
> And his fresh blood did frieze with fearefull cold
> That all his sences seemd berefte attone. (II.i.42.1-4)

Once again, we are struck by the remarkable effect of Guyon's pity: his impulse is sufficiently forceful to seize his senses, and to change his physical state and mobility. However, this is not the same vision of leaking overflow imagined in other texts, but a revised portrayal of pity's effect: Guyon 'freezes' over with a 'fearefull cold'; he is incapacitated by the spectacle of suffering that confronts him. Again, Guyon's first and only impulse is to indulge in this pity, evidenced by his offer to 'cast to compas your reliefe | or *die with you in sorrow, and partake your griefe*' (II.i.28.8-9, my emphasis). This is pity at its most overwhelming: it implicates Guyon to such an extent that he reaches stasis, but simultaneously, paradoxically, he is contaminated by the suffering he encounters; he is permeable, changeable, vulnerable. This connection between strength and vulnerability is further explored when Guyon is compared to a lion, later in the stanza:

> At last his mighty ghost gane deepe to grone,
> As Lion grudging in his great disdaine,
> Mournes inwardly, and makes to him selfe mone,
> Til ruth and fraile affection did constraine,
> His stout courage to stoupe, and shew his inward paine. (II.i.42.5-9)

With this, Spenser allies more overtly masculine traits (strength and power included) with the capacity for pity. This imagined lion, who is 'great', possesses 'stout courage', and perhaps is the very same animal that takes pity on Una in Book I (at I.iii.8), is moved to pity. This is an important juxtaposition, between dominance, and the capacity to 'mourn inwardly' and publicise 'his inward paine'. This relationship pervades Book II of *The Faerie Queene*, and is crucial to Guyon's development as a knight: it suggests quite clearly that there is something

worthwhile and necessary about pity, and moreover that the pity function is a natural masculine impulse. By the conclusion of Sir Guyon's tale, we are led to believe that the masculine ideal of temperance is vitally linked to the proper negotiation of the drive to pity, and that these qualities are not at odds, but somehow directly linked. Even so, there remains some ambivalence about the emotion. The description of the Lion, we might note, suggests a sort of defect in pity: he 'stoupe[s]', he is 'constrain[ed]', paradoxically, by a '*fraile* affection' (my emphasis). The emotion is never fully redeemed, even as it appears increasingly necessary and useful.

In his exploration of pity in *The Faerie Queene*, Gerald Morgan argues for the emotion's utility, positing that it derives its significance from its relationship with other elements. Morgan notes that pity is 'itself no more than a passion, and its goodness (like that of any passion) depends upon its union with reason. Pity becomes a virtue when it is *linked*' (p. 32). The problem, of course, is that pity is not dependably reasonable: Guyon himself is a testament to the ways in which pity is predominantly compulsive. This instinctiveness works both ways, because while Guyon is perhaps too impulsive, elsewhere we see the pity instinct fail. If Sir Guyon demonstrates the pitfalls of over-productive pity, then the knight Marinell, of Book IV, represents the mirror image: the inability to dispense pity under warranted circumstances. Spenser's narrator opens Book IV with an unequivocal evaluation of the tales to follow:

> Of lovers sad calamities of old,
> Full many piteous stories doe remaine,
> But none more piteous ever was ytold,
> Then that of Amorets hart-binding chaine,
> And this of Florimels unworthie paine:
> The deare compassion of whose bitter fit
> My softened heart so sorely doth constraine,
> That I with teares full oft doe pittie it,
> And oftentimes doe wish it never had been writ. (IV.i.1)

Here again, there is a connection between pity and constraint. In spite of the ever-lingering

sense of pity as somehow compromising, if Guyon has taught us of the potential dangers of imprudent pity, then in some respects Book IV offers us the safest of emotional spaces. The narrator begins with the assurance that these tales represent a pinnacle of pitiability, and moreover he sets a responsive precedent with the admission that 'I with teares full oft doe pittie it'. The comment wills the tales out of existence – 'oftentimes [I] doe wish it never had been writ' – reminding us of the emotional implications of encountering the pitiful; these characters create the 'softened heart' and the 'sore' physical and emotional constraint of those who encounter them. Nonetheless, we are immediately ushered into a community with the narrator: we feel at his prompting, and are bound together in shared response.

The early construction of an emotional community between reader, narrator, and the pitiful characters to be encountered, throws into sharp relief Sir Marinell's failure to join in. Marinell's hardness in the face of the tormented, lovesick Florimell distances him from those allied with the narrator's tears and his soft heart. It is a stoniness that significantly compromises Marinell's identity: through his interactions with Florimell, he fashions himself as heartless, stunted, and alienated. Even in those rare moments in which Marinell's pity function emerges, it is always somehow defective. When he laments 'But ah for pittie that I have thus long | Left a fayre Ladie languishing in payne' (IV.xi.1.1-2) the emphasis is placed firmly on *his* (in)action, rather than *her* suffering: '*I* have thus long left'; '*I* have doen such wrong' (IV.xi.1.1-3, my emphasis); 'That even to thinke thereof, it inly pitties *mee*' (IV.xi.1.9, my emphasis). Aside from being untimely – coming only after he has neglected to respond to Florimell's repeated demonstrations of suffering – this pity is tainted with self-concern. This is not an impulse to connect, only a desire to reflect on the inward pain of the self. This pity is broken in other ways, especially insofar as the exchange ought to consist of *recognition* and then *action*. Marinell offers no solution for Florimell's plight, only commenting that

> […] unlesse some heavenly powre her free
> By miracle, not yet appearing playne
> She lenger yet is like captiv'd to bee (IV.xi.1.6-8)

Marinell's involvement is superficial at best, and self-interested. Moreover, he is demonstrably unwilling (or perhaps unable) to assist, and therefore he accepts Florimell's fate, a clear indication that he remains untouched by the suffering he sees, and that he fails to make any connection beyond himself.

Our awareness of Marinell's defective pity intensifies as Book IV continues, and Florimell's suffering along with it. Marinell's alienation from the community of feeling reaches near-absurd proportions as even Florimell's environment strains to pity her, as 'So feelingly her case she did complaine | That ruth it moved in the rocky stone' (IV.xii.5.6-7). Even the most unyielding things in nature are permeable to Florimell's plight: she squeezes pity from a stone, and yet she seems unable to prise it from Marinell. She finds him harder, less susceptible than rock:

> Yet loe the seas I see by often beating
> Doe pearce the rockes, and hardest marble weares;
> But his hard rocky hart for no entreating
> Will yeeld, but when my piteous plaints he heares
> Is hardned more with my aboundant teares. (IV.xii.7.1-5)

The flowing water of the seas 'pearce the rockes' it encounters, and 'hardest marble' is equally vulnerable. However, Florimell's overflowing suffering and her 'aboundant teares' harden rather than erode Marinell's defences. His eventual relenting, when finally his 'stubborne heart, that never felt misfare | Was toucht with soft remorse and pitty rare' (IV.xii.12.4-5) seems hollow after the effort it takes to procure. This is further supported by Marinell's failure to follow pity with action: Florimell is only saved from imprisonment when Marinell's mother intervenes. Florimell represents, therefore, a spectacular failure for Marinell, the mark by which he becomes unfeeling and ineffectual, unable to engage in the emotional community formed

by those around him.

Though Guyon and Marinell embody vastly different approaches to pity – one incapable of dispensing wisely, the other seemingly incapable of dispensing it at all – each character demonstrates pity's significance in the context of courtly masculine identity. For Guyon, the process of harnessing his impulse to pity importantly redefines his manner of making connections insofar as he begins engaging with the right people. This, in turn, refines his temperance, whilst also importantly underscoring his humanity, and demonstrating his fulfilment of his chivalric role as protector and upholder of justice. And while Guyon's process in Book II is unwieldy and problematic in various ways, it shows the value of closing pity-driven emotional circuits. Marinell's behaviour in Book IV, by contrast, shows the danger of refusing these types of exchanges, and quite clearly demonstrates that the full eradication of pity is both impossible and unsatisfactory for the masculine courtly identity. The result is a depiction of pity not only as potentially useful, but also central to this specific identity, and social membership on a more general level: Spenser's conception shows the proper negotiation of pity as a vital component of individual virtue (temperance) but also that which inserts the individual meaningfully into a community: it is, as Bryskett postulates, that which defines humanity – and therefore it rightfully belongs as a masculine priority.

VII.
Conclusion

In part, the aim of this chapter has been to explore, within the context of the Renaissance, what I suggested in the first chapter – that practicing pity breeds a certain type of intolerable vulnerability that plays out in ways that are significant, particularly in terms of social interaction and personal identity. I began by exploring these worries in the realm of courtly masculine identity, in part because it is towards this group that anxieties about engaging with pity are

most explicitly directed. And with good reason: the undercurrents of violence present in lyric poetry reveal the psychological consequences of pity expected but not delivered, as well as the desperate actions that follow from the fantasy of closing the emotional openings. There is no denying from these depictions that pity is in many respects a danger, encompassing a brand of vulnerability that seems at times virtually impossible to reconcile with the masculine identity: it weakens, and it greatly reduces the emotional (and often, physical) control of the subject it 'constrains'. At the same time, we can see in these texts the emergence of something positive, an inclination that pity might be a productive way of fostering connection. This represents an important refinement from the more general anti-pity stances taken up by sixteenth-century conduct manuals. I want to suggest that what creates the problem in this type of literature – the unanswered call, and the fantasy of response – also shows the appeal of pity, its utility. If the courtly poets depict the anguish of pity failing to make connections, they also suggest at least the possibility of forming bonds in this way. This opportunity, facilitated by pity, is more clearly presented in *The Faerie Queene* and the *Arcadia*, where Bryskett's notion of pity's significance to humanity is more positively articulated. These narrative examples, both of which rework the positive juxtaposition of pity and gentlemanly identity outlined by Chaucer, use this emotional capacity as the standard by which one measures oneself and forms, joins, or participates in communities. They show the negative aspects of the emotion balanced, in some sense, with the good. This redeems, in some fashion, the human impulse to ask for pity and to offer it. The value of pity, therefore – positive or negative – is dependent upon the sharing of the experience: the call answered, or the community formed. It is to this notion of community that I will turn in my next chapter, exploring the positive manipulations of pity that bind people together.

CHAPTER THREE

PITY, LIKE A LUCRECE KNIFE:

SHAKESPEARE AND THE FORCE OF FEMALE SPECTACLE

I.

THE P[RINTER]. TO THE READER.

When the second edition of *Gorboduc* was released in 1570, under the guidance of publisher John Daye, it was presented to a consumer audience that had had printed access to the play for a full five years. How, then, to distinguish the second printing from the 'exceedingly corrupted' first? In his note preceding the text, Daye writes:

> [...] Yet one W.G. getting a copie thereof at some yongmans hand that lacked a little money and much discretion, in the last great plage, an[no]. 1565, about five yeares past, while the said Lord[1] was out of England, and T. Norton farre out of London, and neither of them both made privie, put it forth excedingly corrupted: even as if by meanes of a broker for hire, he should have entised into his house a faire maide and done her villainie, and after all to bescratched her face, torne her apparell, berayed and disfigured her, and then thrust her out of dores dishonested. In such plight after long wandring she came at length home to the sight of her frendes, who scant knew her but by a few tokens and markes remayning. They, the authors I meane, though they were very much displeased that she so ranne abroad without leave, whereby she caught her shame, as many wantons do, yet seeing the case as it is remedilesse, have for common honestie and shamefastnesse new apparelled, trimmed, and attired her in such forme as she was before. In which better forme since she hath come to me, I have harboured her for her frendes sake and her owne, and I do not dout her parentes the authors will not now be discontent that she goe abroad among you good readers, so it be in honest companie. For she is by my encouragement and others somewhat lesse ashamed of the dishonestie done to her because it was by fraude and force. If she be welcome among you and gently entertained, in favour of the house from whense she is descended, and of her own nature courteously disposed to offend no man, her frendes will thanke you for it. If not, but that she shall be still reproached with her former missehap, or quarrelled at by envious persons, she poor gentlewoman will surely play Lucreces part, and of herself die for shame, and I shall wishe that she had taried still at home with me, where she was welcome [...].[2]

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[1] This 'said Lord' is certainly Thomas Sackville, who wrote *Gorboduc* alongside Thomas Norton, and more specifically penned the play's last two acts.

[2] John Daye, 'The P[rinter]. To the Reader', in Thomas Norton, *The Tragidie of Ferrex and Porrex* (London, 1570). sig. A2^{r}.

Daye's obvious hope is that the appearance of a better text – cleaner, more complete, acknowledged and authorised by the right people – will motivate purchase. The appeal of textual integrity may be sufficient in and of itself, although Daye's note seems predicated on the worry that it is not. This is a forceful argument, directed at the buyer: reimagining the original publisher as a man who has 'entised into his house a faire maide and done her villainy, and after all to bescratched her face, torne her apparell, berayed and disfigured her, and then thrust her out of dores dishonested', Daye likens the earlier text to the victim of a rape, thereby involving any owners of that copy in that injustice. This raises the stakes considerably from the opening allegation of textual corruption, making the proposal of re-purchase also a bid for justice and moral call to arms. Importantly, Daye imagines the buying audience as heavily implicated: he is not suggesting a passive restoration of social harmony, but an intimate, unsettling interaction in which the buyer is somehow bound to the text in complex ways. Therefore, the errant 'W.G.' creates a victim whose presence both produces pity and invites judgement. As a result, she requires immediate attention and action. Whilst Daye's story cultivates pitiable undertones (the revisions are all done in the name of justice, 'for common honestie and shamefastnesse') there is a strong emphasis on the spectatorial distress caused by the visible violation of the woman/text: the authors, 'very much displeased' with their openly ruined work, set about restoring her to 'such forme as she was before'. As a result, 'she' becomes, once again, fit to 'goe abroad among you good readers'. By purchasing the revised text, the readers recognise the initial damage, endorse the rehabilitation, and willingly enter into a sort of community, formed around this corrected error.

Daye's rich, pathos-heavy rhetoric calls up ideas of fraud and transgression, intense bodily ruin and potentially fatal shame. While on the one hand the reader is encouraged (or expected) to feel pity for this battered but recently restored 'female', that pity is complicated by

something else, something that is at worst a revulsion, and at best a compulsion to ease one's own discomfort by forcibly correcting the visual signs of violation in another. Daye's motivation is mercenary, and yet he conspicuously ignores any consideration of financial gain: the appeal functions almost entirely on an emotional level. The feeling of the piece is intensified by the invocation of Lucrece, the classical figure of violated purity: her presence confirms that this is simply a question of righting a wrong, and it instantly conjures a strong visual association. This is an opportunity for the buyer to demonstrate humanity; to deny emotional callousness; and to join a community of others who have responded similarly. However, the call also promises personal relief from something that is a challenge to the eye. Consider Daye's defence of his 'new apparelled' lady: she is 'of her own nature courteously disposed to *offend* no man' (my emphasis). This implies that she is (or was, at an earlier stage) indeed likely to cause offense (howsoever unintentional), and all because of acts she has sustained rather than committed. Daye goes on, noting that, 'If she be welcome among you and gently entertained [...] her frendes will thank you for it' – implying that this text/woman is already supported and endorsed by a group united by this common cause – and then he reminds the reader that if pity is denied, if 'she shall be still reproached with her former missehap, or quarrelled at by envious persons, she poor gentlewoman will surely play Lucreces part, and of herself die for shame'. Daye suggests that the Lucrece figure is made not just through violation, but also through the subsequent reception she endures; the reader/buyer is directly responsible for this 'woman's' fate, and also the recreated spectacle she presents to the larger community.

Daye's personification of the book, while arguably an effective way to cultivate compassion, is made all the more complex by the meandering meditation on female culpability in rape. It suggests, beneath the more straightforward emotional appeal, the possibility of a

difficult and less attractive response to the spectacle of female violation. In what must be the most challenging section of the text for modern readers, Daye postpones his eventual call for a pitying audience in order to chastise the 'bescratched', 'berayed', 'disfigured', 'dishonested' woman/text. 'She' is blamed for '[running] abroad without leave', compared to other 'wantons', and accused of '[catching] her shame'. The scolding is obviously problematic, not least because in reality, Daye is writing about an inanimate object that cannot wander anywhere: in this case, it is unquestionable that something has been done *to* the text, and (as opposed to Lucrece herself, who, as we shall see, suffers from questions of complicity) no case can be made for shared culpability.[3] Although this specific attribution of blame might be overlooked on grounds of inanimation, Daye's comments remain troubling insofar as they imply a perspective on the violated woman, the victim of rape who was 'enticed' into a house by an insalubrious character. The initial reaction is, in fact, not pity, sadness, or empathy. In fact, the first response is not really about the violated woman/text at all: it is about the men who view her, and how *they* are affected by that encounter. Moreover, the response is to usher her into yet another house, to undergo another transformation at the hands of a man: Daye reports that he has 'harboured her', and imagines that he will 'wishe that she had taried still *at home with me*' (my emphasis) if the restoration is not well received.

Daye's note, which works from the premise that the violated woman demands an emotional (though in Daye's conception, also largely misogynistic) reaction, engages the same principle of forced response that Stephanie Jed uses to begin her own analysis of the Lucrece

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[3] For an example of the critical suggestion of Lucrece's complicity in her rape, see Roy Battenhouse, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Its Art and Its Christian Premises* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1969), pp. 3-41; another critic notes that Lucrece 'insists on killing herself because although her mind is innocent, *her body is guilty*' (p. 31, my emphasis), see Arthur L. Little, *Shakespeare Jungle Fever: National-Imperial Re-visions of Race, Rape, and Sacrifice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000). Coppélia Kahn gives a survey of this type of critical interpretation in 'The Rape in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*', *Shakespeare Studies*, 9 (1976), pp. 45-72, at p. 69. Catherine Belsey further explores notions of consent in Shakespeare's Lucrece story in 'Tarquin Dispossessed: Expropriation and Consent in *The Rape of Lucrece*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 53 (2001), pp. 315-335.

figure. Consider Jed's opening (clearly rhetorical) question, in *Chaste Thinking*:

> Questions to the Jurors: A woman will testify that on a particular night, in or around the year 510 BC, the son of the tyrant came to her home and forcibly raped her. She will describe the experience of things a man did to her body. Do you think you can be totally unemotional and impartial in deciding the facts of this case?[4]

In some ways, this is just an explicit articulation of an idea that Daye exploits in his note, and the attitude that Jed approaches from a feminist perspective. Both begin with the assumption that one cannot encounter the female victims of violent crime and remain 'unemotional and impartial'. Jed's suggestion, that the idea of female ruin acted as a sanctioned catalyst for (typically violent) male action, in the name of restored justice, is evident in Daye's use of female violation as the building blocks of a male buying audience: their purchase is dependent on 'her' ruin, now sanitised. In this exchange, pity becomes compromised by a host of other worrying considerations.

Jed's analysis focuses on the *figure* of the unchaste woman, and is less concerned with the visual presentation of her ruin. Nonetheless, the emphasis on Lucrece's visuality is highlighted as early as Augustine's *City of God*, the 1610 translation of which notes that she feels compelled to kill herself because, 'she thought good to *shew* this punishment *to the eies of men*, as a testimony of hir mind, unto whome shee could not shew her minde indeed'.[5] This assumes that the message Lucrece must communicate, the integrity of her chastity, can only be presented in visual terms. Daye's note is equally explicit in its emphasis on the effect of the visual. The (presumptively male) viewers he references are undeniably affected by the sight of

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[4] Stephanie Jed, *Chaste Thinking*: *The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 1.

[5] St. Augustine, *The Citie of God*, trans. I.H. (London, 1610), sig. D4^{r}. Where possible, I have used early modern translations of classical texts, to provide additional evidence of the Renaissance interpretations of Lucrece. The original Latin (with modern translation) will be provided in footnotes. This passage from Augustine, in the Latin, reads as follows: 'Unde ad oculos hominem testem mentis suae illam poenam adhibendam putavit, quibus conscientiam demonstrare non potuit' [For this reason she thought that she must present evidence before men's eyes to show what was in her heart – the evidence of that self-punishment, since she could not exhibit her conscience to them] (I:XIX). See Saint Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. George E. McCracken (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 88-9.

the 'disfigured' woman/text with 'torn […] apparel': the emotions subsequently produced are, therefore, problematically selfish. The spectators, the lady's 'friends', respond first to her changed appearance. She returns 'to the *sight* of her friends, who scant knew her but by a few tokens and marks remaining' (my emphasis). This clearly implies that the lady's identity is bound to her appearance: following her rape, she becomes virtually, visually, unrecognisable, and is only acknowledged, finally, via the visual cues that remain. This reaction creates an immediate distance between the lady and her friends, as she is castigated for her wayward behaviour, identified as one who has 'caught her shame'. The comment carries with it the implication that vulnerability translates cleanly to culpability. She therefore becomes vulnerable again, this time to the others' need to erase her visual offense with new clothing: she is 'new apparelled, trimmed, and attired […] *in such form as she was before'* (my emphasis). Regardless of how the exchange ends, the first moment is one in which the spectator supplants the victim. This instinct to forcibly erase the visible signs of violation is itself another type of aggression, which has more to do with the feelings of others than the lady herself: she cannot remain in the community as she is, once she is noticeably damaged.

As Daye imagines it, the visual problem here is remedied – it is implied that it must be – but there is little mention of attending the ruined lady in any more substantive way. Her personal feelings are only briefly acknowledged much later, when he notes that she is 'by my encouragement and others *somewhat less ashamed* of the dishonestly done to her' (my emphasis). The problem for the woman, therefore, remains resolutely visual. Even the rape has less to do with the act itself, as there is no question of seeking retribution on the man responsible for this damage. This is about addressing the visual markers that the act leaves behind, the emotions that these markers prompt in others, and the assumed inability to control the evocation of pity. The real question at hand, therefore, becomes how to once again render the pitiful female

palatable *for* men, after she has been made pitiful *by* men; it is a problem of reinserting her into a community that cannot absorb her unrestored. In this chapter, which considers early modern representations of Lucrece alongside Shakespeare's own depiction in *The Rape of Lucrece*, I will argue that Shakespeare's Lucrece significantly departs from contemporary narratives, considering the female gaze in a way that produces, through the production of pity and the cultivation of emotional connection, alternate modes of communication that extend beyond the more traditional understandings of republicanism and misogyny that typically accompany the figure of ruined female chastity. This chapter responds to the most recent scholarship on Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, focusing on the lady's rhetorical strength.[6] However, here I claim that the invocation of pity in the poem demonstrates a clear emphasis on visual agency, something that is more powerful than alternative early modern depictions of Lucrece imagine, and more positive than the critical interpretations of Shakespeare's Lucrece as mere visual object permit. In this way, I believe, Shakespeare's *Lucrece* flips the same notions of pity and community that Daye and others exploit, and in so doing creates space for alternative channels of meaning that extend beyond traditional interpretations of Lucrece as either a political tool, or an objectified symbol of ruin.

II.
The Extreme Lucrece: Titus Andronicus

For this examination of Shakespeare's Lucrece, I will begin not with the explicit formulation of the lady in *The Rape of Lucrece*, but another Shakespearean working of the figure: Lavinia, of *Titus Andronicus*. *Titus* is without question the most extreme of Shakespeare's plays, but also, particularly in the case of Lavinia, the most visually and emotionally challenging. Given the

[6] Here, I am thinking primarily of William Weaver, '"O, teach me how to make mine excuse": Forensic Performance in *Lucrece*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 59 (2008), pp. 421-449, and Lorna Hutson, '"Imaginary Work": Lucrece's Circumstances', keynote address, *Bonds, Lies, and Circumstances: Discourses of Truth-Telling in the Renaissance* (University of St Andrews, March 22nd, 2013).

intense, striking visuality of Lavinia (a continual topic of conversation both before and after her rape and mutilation) she is the next logical step of this chapter, embodying many of the same concerns that Daye references, while at the same time representing a development of them. Through Lavinia, we experience the emotional implications of viewing the signs of female bodily harm, and the problematic presence of the 'ruined' woman whose very image seems to demand pity. The connections in *Titus*, between the vision of ruined femininity, pity, and the formation of human bonds, also importantly inform my reading of *The Rape of Lucrece*, particularly as that poem builds on the same premises of emotional vulnerability and connection.

The famed Peacham illustration speaks volumes about the emotional landscape of *Titus Andronicus*:[7] Peacham's representation isolates an early moment in the play, in which Tamora is cast at the mercy of Titus, in the interest of protecting her son's life. Scenes of supplication such as this are common in *Titus*, which is perhaps unsurprising given the overwhelming violence of the play, and the number of characters left vulnerable to the cruelty to others. *Titus* opens with the eponymous character's 'cruel, irreligious piety' (I.i.133), which denies pity and claims the sacrifice of Tamora's eldest son, a war prisoner; Titus then kills his own son, Mutius, after a minor moment of disobedience; Bassianus is viciously killed, then Martius and Quintus; Titus cuts off his own hand, and later he bakes Tamora's remaining sons, Chiron and Demetrius, into a pie and serves it to her.[8] However, the violence of these acts pales in comparison to the aggression directed at Lavinia, who enters the stage during the

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[7] This image has been removed from the original document, out of copyright considerations.

[8] S. Clark Hulse notes, that 'Even among revenge tragedies *Titus Andronicus* is especially brutal,' and calculates that the play features, '14 killings, 9 of them on stage, 6 severed members, 1 rape (or two or three, depending on how you count), 1 live burial, 1 case of insanity, and 1 of cannibalism – an average of 5.2 atrocities per act, or one for every 97 lines' (p. 106). A.C. Hamilton famously praised the play for this precise reason, arguing that we should appreciate the play's excess as a test of 'how much reality a tragedy can contain' (p. 204). See S. Clark Hulse, 'Wresting the Alphabet: Oratory and Action in *Titus Andronicus*', *Criticism*, 21 (1979), pp. 106-118; A.C. Hamilton, '*Titus Andronicus*: The Form of Shakespearian Tragedy', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 14 (1963), pp. 201-13.

second act, 'her hands cut off and her tongue cut out, and ravished' (SD II.iii).[9] This bloodlust is impossible to ignore, and the subject of much critical scrutiny: Dover Wilson's comment that the play is 'some broken-down cart, laden with bleeding corpses' is now famous, and in his oft-quoted article on the play, Eugene Waith notes that this violence, matched with the play's preoccupation with descriptive language, has 'served to damn the play utterly'.[10] Coleridge's claim that *Titus* was 'obviously intended to excite vulgar audiences by its *scenes* of blood and horror – to our *ears* shocking and disgusting' underscores the problematic distress the play causes, while implicitly acknowledging the connection between vision and rhetoric I will examine especially in the context of *The Rape of Lucrece*.[11] For Shakespeare, it seems, the language creates the scene. The case against *Titus* therefore appears to be that while staging graphic violence is problematic enough, it is simply unforgivable to force the audience to experience the gore *again* by pairing the spectacle with a detailed description. One critic has argued this point specifically in the context of Marcus's first encounter with the ravished Lavinia at II.iv, commenting that his language in this scene 'forces us to see, detail by descriptive detail, the spectacle we are already beholding'.[12] The implication here, both in this example and others, is that while we might accept the words of violence, *or* an image of it, we cannot be expected to tolerate both. Nonetheless, *Titus* repeatedly requires that its audience encounter language alongside image (ironic, perhaps, given the specific nature of Lavinia's wounds). Arguments that object to *Titus* on the grounds of reasonable limits tend to focus on physical violence: they are a response to that which the characters inflict on others, what they

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[9] The stage direction appears in the first printed edition of the play in 1594, and is preserved in the second quarto (London, 1600), sig. E1^{r}; the third quarto (London, 1611), sig. E1^{r}; and of course, the First Folio (London, 1623), sig. Dd2^{r}.

[10] Dover Wilson, 'Introduction', in *Titus Andronicus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), pp. i-lxxii, here at p. xii. Eugene Waith, 'The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus Andronicus*', *Shakespeare Survey*, 10 (1957), pp. 39-49, p. 39.

[11] Samuel Coleridge, *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. by T.M. Raysor (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930), II, p. 31, my emphasis.

[12] Albert Tricomi, 'The Aesthetics of Mutilation in *Titus Andronicus*', *Shakespeare Survey*, 27 (1974), pp. 11-19, p. 17.

sustain themselves, and how much of this the audience can bear to watch.[13] However, the play is about more than severed hands and tongues, and its focus extends beyond the physical. *Titus* is a play about emotional boundaries, a piece that relentlessly explores human limits and the consequences of exceeding them.

The backlash against *Titus* responds to what is perceived as gratuitous violence, but I think it is equally an issue with the emotional trauma the play inflicts, particularly the force with which our pity is prompted. We may crave distance from Lavinia's gruesome violation, but her frequent appearance onstage produces recurring confrontation; just like the characters onstage, we have no choice but to react to her presence. It seems that there is some indication in the critical response, to *Titus Andronicus* generally, and the mutilated Lavinia in particular, of an underlying, barely-expressed unwillingness to engage with the spectacle of horror, and this reticence appears directly tied to notions of the personal, emotional torment caused by looking. The suggestion of anything but a sympathetic, selfless reaction to a character like Lavinia, who has been so unfairly and extremely tormented, is of course a difficult one. For that reason, it is perhaps unsurprising that there are no open condemnations, no explicitly stated critical efforts to ignore or escape her. One could suggest that the negative subtext of the scholarship on Lavinia is unintentional; a subconscious attempt to avoid what is so unsettling. Still, there are many critical attempts to read the character as somehow something other than a raped and mutilated woman. This tendency has been remarked upon by Carolyn

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[13] This issue of the play's effect on an audience is a constant worry, and many attribute this to the relatively limited performance history. Peter Brook's 1955 Stratford production – which has been credited as the first step in redeeming the play's reputation in popular opinion – made a number of revisions that Richard Findlater called 'formaliz[ing] the horror'. Richard Findlater, 'Shakespearean Atrocities', *The Twentieth Century* (October 1955), pp. 364-72, p. 369. One notable example of Brook's revisions was evident in Lavinia, whose wounds were represented by scarlet ribbons, rather than staged explicitly. Even in performances where the violence is presented as written, it is unusual to find a production that makes no concession to the audience: the 2006 production of *Titus* at Shakespeare's New Globe in London published a warning of the risk of fainting, and provided first-aid attendants and users with wheelchairs as a precaution. Stephanie Condron, 'Not for the Fainthearted', *The Telegraph*, 03 June 2006 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1520196/Not-for-the-fainthearted.html> [10 December 2011].

Williams, who emphasises the audience reaction to the 'uncomfortable spectacle' of Lavinia's death, arguing that, 'Rather than contemplating Lavinia herself, critics and directors prefer to make her a symbol of "the destruction of the Roman political order"'.[14] There is evidence of this habit of recasting Lavinia elsewhere in the scholarship on *Titus*. Douglas Green, for example, concedes that the 'utter victim' Lavinia occasionally 'threaten[s] to usurp Titus's centrality', but then immediately retreats from this position, arguing that this 'notorious female' is 'made to serve the construction of Titus', and that her suffering is not her own, but rather an 'articulat[ion] of Titus' own suffering and victimization'.[15] The immediate transfer of Lavinia's ordeal onto Titus suggests, in this instance, a reluctance to engage directly with Lavinia herself. This tendency is echoed by another critic, who suggests the critical impossibility of properly reading a character of whom we are 'offer[ed] only glimpses […] except as dismembered and silent'.[16] Still another has viewed Lavinia as the best example of a number of Shakespearean women 'under erasure […] marginalized by their gender, by their putative or real madness, or by their violation'.[17] Still others imply their unwillingness to dwell on Lavinia by directing disapproval towards those who do linger on her, as in the case of Harold Bloom's extraordinary (but also flippant, blunt, and graphic) assessment: 'If sadomasochism is your preferred mode, then *Titus Andronicus* is your meat, and you can join Tamora in her cannibal feast with the same gusto that you experience in raping Lavinia, slicing out her tongue, and chopping off her hands'.[18] Even where critics are not openly dismissive of Lavinia and her ordeal, these types of readings show a recurring desire to redefine her in a more manageable,

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[14] Carolyn D. Williams, '"Silence, like a Lucrece knife": Shakespeare and the Meanings of Rape', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 23 (1993), pp. 93-110, p. 93.
[15] Douglas E. Green, '"Her Martyr'd Signs": Gender and Tragedy in Titus Andronicus', *Shakespeare Quarterly,* 40 (1989), pp. 317-26, p. 319 and p. 322, respectively.
[16] Katherine Rowe, 'Dismembering and Forgetting in Titus Andronicus', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 45 (1994), pp. 279-303, here at p. 300.
[17] Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality* (New York and London: Methuen, 1987), p. 25.
[18] Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), p. 79.

distanced, sanitised way, or to find a good reason to ignore her in favour of other concerns: she becomes a symbol of something else, for example, rather than a bald, relentlessly unavoidable depiction of something truly horrifying, something that demands direct engagement. This suggests that the negative reaction to *Titus* has perhaps less to do with the violence itself than the emotional violence that accompanies it: perhaps critics of the play have – even if it is on a unacknowledged level – difficulty directly engaging (or interacting for too long a time) with a character so visually and emotionally provocative. As such, we might wonder if the elicitation of pity feels like another *type* of violence, done to those who *view* brutality. Bloom's remarkable comment, noted above, hinges on the recognition of the audience's sadistic response to *Titus*; it equally identifies a masochistic thread. In this sense, Lavinia becomes an instrument by which Shakespeare explores spectacle as a type of emotional aggression. Hers is the suffering that causes the most anguish onstage and off, because her wounds commandeer her agency: for those who share the stage, her presence is impossible to ignore, but she herself has no way of controlling these confrontations. In many ways, this strong visual presence aligns Lavinia with Lucrece – indeed, she is repeatedly likened to Lucrece, as when Aaron notes that 'Lucrece was not more chaste | Than this Lavinia' (I.i.608-9). However, true to the tenor of *Titus*, Lavinia is Lucrece pushed to the extreme: whereas Lucrece's *greatest* tool (as we shall see) is her visuality, Lavinia's visuality is her *only* tool. While Titus's daughter (without hands, or a tongue) is far more restricted in her expression than is Lucrece, these stark restrictions make Lavinia a focused depiction of the relationship between female visuality and communication: she has no option but to exploit her own visuality.

From the beginning of the play, Lavinia seems little more than a derivative character:

she is Lucrece; she is Philomel (II.ii.43); she is even Rome (I.i.55).[19] We might criticise Lavinia for having no distinct identity, but at the same time these persistent allusions to other women offer useful points of reference. Like Lucrece, Lavinia is a chaste married woman; like Philomel, 'some Tereus hath deflowered [her]' (II.iii.26).[20] In a play in which the men are singularly incapable of reading the women, it is arguably helpful that Lavinia is categorised with women whose histories are already written, and that are therefore both stable and firmly established in the culture of the educated male. However, placing Lavinia in the company of these women does more than confirm her status as a symbol of violated female chastity: it puts her in a tradition of ruined women who go on to communicate their distress. It is in the negotiation of this task, the resulting pity she elicits, that she establishes her individuality as a character. Lucrece, as I will suggest later in this chapter, uses vision in a very particular way, actively directing her gaze in a way that stimulates pity, and crucially, binds people to her. Lucrece is heavily reliant on her visual presence, but she does not forfeit speech altogether, instead using herself as a spectacle in conjunction with her words. Philomel engages with vision in some sense too, inasmuch as she creates an image that communicates her message when her voice cannot. However, her preference for language is clear: she only forfeits it because she is forced to do so. In Ovid's rendering, Philomel loses her tongue precisely because she demonstrates rhetorical prowess, and reveals her intention to use it:

> Yea I my selfe rejecting shame thy doings will bewray.
> And if I may have power to come abrode, them blase I will
> In open face of all the world. Or if thou keepe me still
> As prisoner in these woods, my voyce the verie woods shall fill,
> And make the stones to understand. Let Heaven to this give eare

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[19] On Lavinia as an extension of Rome, see David Willbern, 'Rape and Revenge in *Titus Andronicus*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 8 (1978), pp. 159-82, esp. pp. 161-3.

[20] The influence of Philomel's story on Shakespeare is further explored by Jane Newman in 'And Let Mild Women to Him Lose Their Mildness: Philomela, Female Violence, and Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 45 (1994), pp. 304-26.

> And all the Gods and powers therein if any God be there.[21]

It is only at this point that Philomel loses her tongue, which seems to have an agency all its own, remaining active even after it has been severed:

> The tip fell downe and quivering on the ground
> As though that it had murmured it made a certaine sound.
> [...]
> The tip of *Philomelas* tongue did wriggle to and fro,
> And nearer to hir mistresseward in dying still did go. (sig. L4^{v})[22]

There is a clear bias here towards language, and oral communication: Philomel only takes to the tapestry out of necessity; it is clear where her expressive preferences lie. We could easily apply this same principle of necessity to Lavinia: she is also stripped of most methods of communication, and so her options are limited. However, the restriction Lavinia suffers – clearly influenced by the ways Lucrece and Philomel communicate after their violations – prompts a response that differentiates Lavinia from her literary predecessors.

Both Lucrece and Philomel are restricted in ways that strike at the cores of their identities: for Lucrece, Tarquin threatens to destroy her husband's honour, something with which she strongly identifies. Philomel is silenced after demonstrating her predilection for words. Lavinia, however, loses the power of speech and (it is thought) the ability to write – though of course with Marcus's assistance she is able to scratch the names of her tormentors in the dirt. This moment, in which Lavinia 'takes the staff in her mouth, and guides it with her

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[21] William Golding, *The xv bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis* (London, 1567), sig. L4^{v}. In the original Latin: 'ipsa pudore proiecto tua facta loquar: si copia detur, in populos veniam; si silvis clausa tenebor, inplebo silvas et conscia saxa movebo; audiet haec aether et si deus ullus in illo est! [I will myself cast shame aside and proclaim what you have done. If I should have the chance, I would go where people throng and tell it; if I am kept shut up in these woods, I will fill the woods with my story and move the very rocks to pity]' (Book VI, p. 327). All Latin quotations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and modern translations, come from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller (London: William Heinemann, 1977). According to Lynn Enterline, Philomela represents a 'violated bod[y]' that 'provide[s] Ovid with the occasion to reflect on the power and limitations of language'. Lynn Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 3.

[22] 'radix micat ultima linguae, ipsa iacet terraeque tremens inmurmurat atrae, utque salire solet mutilatae cauda colubrae, palpitat et moriens dominae vestigia quaerit [The mangled root quivers, while the severed tongue lies palpitating on the dark earth, faintly murmuring; and, as the severed tail of a mangled snake is wont to writhe, it twitches convulsively, and with its last dying movement it seeks its mistress's feet]' (Book VI, Miller p. 327).

stumps, and writes' (IV.i.76, stage direction) strongly evokes Io, who, having been transformed into a white heifer, uses her hoof to scratch out her name and to reveal her identity to her father. Indeed, we can also see Io's influence in Lavinia's loss of hands and tongue as well, for after Io is transformed into the cow, and

> […] did devise,
> To *Argus* for to lift hir handes in méeke and humble wise,
> She sawe she had no handes at all: and when she did assay
> To make complaint, she lowed out. (Golding, sig. C3ᵛ)[23]

Visually, these two characters are very different, but they are fundamentally the same: both lose crucial capacities, and for both, communication is virtually impossible. Before she regains her ability to write, Lavinia's inability to communicate is a glaring issue: we as an audience can clearly understand her attempts to explain her situation, but her family remains unable (in spite of Titus's claims to the contrary) to 'interpret all her martyred signs' (III.ii.36).

By destroying her communicative powers, Lavinia's wounds reduce her to an entirely visual presence. Even her scrawled writing is a visual cue, a sign of someone else's guilt. However, Lavinia's writing is relatively unimportant to the reaction she elicits: the revelation of her tormentors moves the play along, but it is to the *sight* of Lavinia that people respond. Given that her visual appeal is established almost as soon as she appears onstage – for she is 'Rome's rich ornament' (I.i.55) – this can only be seen as a miscalculation on the part of Chiron and Demetrius: they believe they have restricted her ability to communicate, but in reality they have only succeeded in bolstering her visual (and by extension, emotional) impact. As she faces her tormentors, Lavinia shows some recognition that Rome (particularly male Rome) has a habit of looking at her. She appears relatively unconcerned by the prospect of

[23] 'illa etiam supplex Argo cum bracchia vellet tendere, non habuit, quae bracchia tenderet Argo, et conata queri mugitus edidit ore pertimuitque sonos propriaque exterrita voce est [When she strove to stretch out suppliant arms to Argus, she had no arms to stretch; and when she attempted to voice her complaints, she only mooed]' (Book I, Miller, p. 47).

bodily harm, in fact begging that Tamora 'keep me from their worse-than-killing lust | And tumble me into some loathsome pit', all so she can ensure that she ends up in a place 'Where never man's eye may behold my body' (II.ii.175-7). She asks to be spared from Chiron and Demetrius's lust, *and* (via the pit) spared from the male gaze (though surely, if Tamora granted a reprieve from her sons, Lavinia would have no need to fear male inspection).

Still, the more important issue in this scene is Lavinia's utter failure to elicit the pity of the Goths, in spite of her repeated, explicit calls for it. 'Do thou entreat [Tamora] to show a woman's pity', she begs of Chiron (II.ii.147). When he refuses, she pleads again: 'O be to me, though thy hard heart say no, | Nothing so kind, but something pitiful' (II.ii.155-6). Pity is the only thing Lavinia needs at this moment: she is single-minded in her pursuit of it. Considering the muddled communication to come in Act III, Tamora's response is rather ironic: 'I know not what it means; away with her!' (II.ii.157). Lavinia has all of her faculties here, and there can be no doubt about her message. Still, her pleas for pity fall on deaf ears. However, Lavinia is not alone in this defeat: her failure here echoes Tamora's earlier pleas for her son's life (also futile): 'Victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed' (I.i.108).[24] In the context of this play, Shakespeare does not offer a female character who wins pity through articulation. David Willbern has argued that this dearth of human pity in Rome is an integral part of *Titus*'s cultural landscape, that there simply is 'no natural sympathy in Rome'.[25] Nonetheless, Lavinia seems an obvious exception to this rule: after she endures her violation, a number of characters become desperate in their desire to give her their pity. However, this pity is tinged with violence, predicated on blood and brutality, and almost forced, by the extremity of the damage, from the characters (and perhaps, indeed, from the audience as well). Lavinia's mere presence becomes provocative to those around her, who respond with great emotional force

[24] This moment was depicted in the Peacham illustration.
[25] Willbern, p. 173.

well before they are able to understand her situation fully.

The scenes in which the characters respond to the violated Lavinia are, for critics, among the most problematic in the play: the excruciatingly drawn-out efforts of Lavinia's family to understand her suffering are, in many respects, deeply disturbing. Perhaps the most controversial of these scenes is that in which Marcus discovers his mutilated niece: it takes him forty lines to come to grips with what he sees. The common critical response finds fault in this reaction, calling Marcus's meandering descriptions of the spectacle of Lavinia a cold, distant approach to a clearly ravaged woman.[26] This is, I think, the wrong way to think about Marcus's reaction: this is a moment fraught with emotion, a moment in which the mere sight of Lavinia renders Marcus incapable of a cogent response. He begins unable to believe the reality of the situation:

> If I do dream, would all my wealth would wake me;
> If I do wake, some planet strike me down
> That I may slumber an eternal sleep. (II.iii.13-15)

From there, he describes each injury in agonizing detail:

> Speak, gentle niece, what stern ungentle hands
> Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare
> Of her two branches
> […]
> Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,
> Like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind,
> Doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips
> […]
> But sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee
> And, lest thou shouldst detect him, cut thy tongue.
> Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame,
> […]
> Fair Philomela, why she but lost her tongue,
> And in a tedious sampler sewed her mind;

[26] There are a few notable exceptions: Lorna Hutson, for example, calls Marcus's speech 'extraordinarily humane and humanizing'. 'Rethinking the "Spectacle of the Scaffold": Juridical Epistemologies and English Revenge Tragedy', *Representations*, 89 (2005), pp. 30-58, p. 48. See also Hutson in *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. pp. 90-103, and Heather James, 'Cultural Disintegration in *Titus Andronicus*: Mutilating Titus, Virgil, Rome', in *Violence in Drama*, ed. by James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 123-40.

> But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee.
> A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,
> And he hath cut those pretty fingers off. (II.iii.16-42)

It may be the case that Marcus's speech lacks tact, but it certainly does not lack emotion: these are the words of someone too overwhelmed to address the reality of what he sees with diplomacy. What we see from Marcus is an excruciating attempt to comprehend the reality before him by analysing every detail, but he is not unfeeling: in reality, the problem is that he feels before he understands. 'Do not draw back', he begs Lavinia, 'for we will mourn with thee; | O, could our mourning ease thy misery!' (II.iii.56-7). Marcus is emotionally distraught, and also bound to Lavinia long before she finds a way to communicate what has happened.

For Lavinia, this scene with Marcus begins a pattern of display and response, and we see in each case how quickly the sight of this woman elicits an overflow of distress and pity. Moreover, Marcus expects that this will be the case, telling Lavinia to 'Come, let us go and make thy father blind, | For such a sight will blind a father's eye' (II.iii.52-3). Marcus is not wrong in thinking that Lavinia's presence will demand a strong reaction from her father, though in many ways Titus's is the most measured response. When Marcus introduces Lavinia with, 'This *was* thy daughter,' Titus quickly corrects him: 'Why, Marcus, so she *is*' (III.i.63-4, my emphasis). Lucius gives the more predictable reaction, falling to his knees and proclaiming, 'Ay me, *this object kills me*' (III.i.65, my emphasis). Titus, by contrast, almost relishes the discomfort Lavinia's spectacle provokes; he dwells on it, and forces Lucius to do the same: 'Faint-hearted boy, arise and look upon her' (III.i.66). Later he reiterates the demand, crying, '*Look*, Marcus, ah son Lucius, *look on her*!' (III.i.111). The common theme amongst the Andronicii is pity: Marcus, Titus and Lucius are all eager to dispense their pity, even before they fully understand what has happened to Lavinia. This is without question the result of the visual spectacle she presents; the reality of Lavinia is striking, as Titus notes:

> Had I but seen thy picture in this plight
> It would have matted me; what shall I do
> Now I behold thy lively body so? (III.i.104-6)

Perhaps what is most interesting about Lavinia's narrative, however, is how it ends. Titus, for all that he consistently demands that other people look at his ruined daughter, eventually kills her. Is this because he can no longer stand her presence, and the overflow of emotion it prompts? Consider Saturninus's response, when Titus asks for his opinion on Virginius: Saturninus replies that he was right to have killed his daughter, Virginia, after she was 'enforced, stained and deflowered' (V.iii.38), 'Because the girl should not survive her shame, | *And by her presence still renew* [her father's] *sorrows*' (V.iii.40-1, my emphasis). The discussion openly addresses the possibility that the sight of Lavinia will create distress for those who view her, and the scene acknowledges the negative audience reaction to her mutilated body. Titus reveals the formerly veiled Lavinia – publishing the work of Chiron and Demetrius – and decrees, 'Die, die Lavinia, and thy shame with thee, | *And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die*' (V.iii.45-6). Titus can avenge his daughter, but he cannot repair her: by cutting out her tongue, and chopping off her hands, Shakespeare ensures that Lavinia can never be, as Daye proposes, 'new apparelled, trimmed, and attired her in such form as she was before'. Therefore, even once her rape and mutilation is revenged, there is no way to assuage the emotional distress she causes. This is a discomfort that cannot be endured for long, and so, in a turn that is both shocking and relieving, she dies. Lavinia's death is noteworthy especially because it is necessitated more by emotion, than the traditional Augustinian objections about shame and dishonour: although Marcus initially expresses the worry that Lavinia feels that way – 'Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame!' (II.iii.28) – this is the first time that Titus makes any suggestion of shame. From the first moment of confrontation with the vision of his mutilated daughter, Titus goes out of his way to preserve her identity as an Andronicii: he

corrects Lucius's identification of Lavinia as an 'object', in one sentence protecting her position as a woman and as his daughter with his insistent 'so she is'. Moreover, the severity of Lavinia's wounds creates a certain amount of ambiguity over her death: she is physically unable, both to follow the Lucretian example and take her own life and to command another to assist her, and while the Folio edition of the play attributes the action entirely to Titus – 'He kils her' (sig. Ee2^{r}) – the 1594 quarto makes no explicit reference. Lavinia is apparently also quite willing to die, seeming not to resist at all; it is not impossible to imagine that Titus is, in this moment, merely facilitating his daughter's death.

The most salient point about Lavinia, I think, is the extent to which she creates problems, both for the other characters onstage, and for critics. I want to argue that ignoring the emotional dynamics of Lavinia in the interest of her physical wounds in fact neglects a major component of the violence done to her. She is a clear Lucrece figure, but arguably even more complicated by her context: she lacks the obvious political utility of Lucrece, while at the same time preserving the demanding presence that seems to forcibly extort pity from those around her. What is evident is that Lavinia creates discomfort: she is too big a spectacle to be ignored, clearly standing as an unresolved problem. She elicits reaction, but in so doing she facilitates connection with and between those who try desperately to parse out her messages. Nonetheless, her agency is questionable: even while still alive, she does not present herself to others, perhaps aware that others may interpret her presence as an emotional confrontation, and unwilling to force it. The 'publication' of her ruin is left, again as in Daye, to men: she is discovered by a man; returned to her (entirely male) family by that man. And it is that man, Titus, who displays her ruin to the others. What we see here, then, is something comparable but at the same time quite different from the more deliberate actions of Shakespeare's Lucrece. Nonetheless, what *Titus Andronicus* offers is a version of the Lucrece story with a redirected

focus, different from other early modern Lucrece narratives: Lavinia is not about politics, she is about pity, about the connections formed and the torment caused by it.

III.
Early Modern Lucreces

Both the unnamed woman of Daye's note and *Titus Andronicus*'s Lavinia depend, for their effect, upon the larger cultural significance of Lucrece. In both instances, the invocation of Lucrece, whose story was deeply familiar in the sixteenth century, immediately accesses a common set of emotions, exploiting the pitiful elements present in a more famous tale. In Daye's note, for example, the invocation of Lucrece aligns that Roman paragon with the 'lady' he creates earlier in the passage, one who is characterised as visually arresting, unsettling, and ultimately at fault for the loss of her chastity. Nonetheless, it is important to note that traditionally, Lucrece's emotional value was not the central focus. The majority of Lucrece narratives preserve, in some fashion, the concept of female violation as a visual concern, and I have suggested in certain instances – in Daye and Shakespeare, specifically – that this notion is intimately bound to considerations of pity's dispensation. In the source texts for the Lucrece tale, considerations of pity are inextricably bound to the heavier emphasis on Lucrece's value as an object and as a political tool. The ubiquity of the story, which inspired a number of retellings, particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is particularly reliant on the Latinate Lucreces, as found in Ovid's *Fasti* and Livy's *Roman History*.[27] Both were translated

[27] Beyond those covered in this chapter, notable period references to Lucrece included more sustained considerations, such as Thomas Middleton's *The Ghost of Lucrece* (London, 1600), and more passing mentions. She appears in three more of Shakespeare's plays: *As You Like It* ('Lucretia's sad modesty' forms a portion of 'Rosalind of many parts' [III.ii.145-6]); *Twelfth Night* (Malvolio identifies the seal, 'the impressure her Lucrece' and reads of 'Silence, like a Lucrece knife' [II.v.92, 104]); and *The Taming of the Shrew*, where Petruchio imagines that 'For patience [Kate] will prove a second Grissel | And Roman Lucrece for her chastity' (II.i.289-90). Lucrece's chastity, which significantly is only confirmed by the conviction suggested by her suicide, forms a major part of her reputation, as is evident in Quintilian:

into English during the Renaissance, and the Latin texts themselves were a staple of English grammar school curricula.[28] Daye's juxtaposition of his actions and the (feminised) spectacle that prompts them certainly appears reminiscent of elements of Ovid's version, and John Gower's translation further amplifies Ovidian suggestions about Lucrece's visual effect.[29] Ovid's description of Lucrece before the rape is translated as follows: 'Her lilie skin, her gold-

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> Shall I mind you of the Story of Lucretia, who ran a Sword into her own bowels, and took Vengeance on her self, thô the Act was forc'd? That her chast Soul might soon be severed from her defiled Body, she slew her self, because she could not kill her Ravisher. (sig. F1^{v}).

Lucrece's chastity is a feature that John Webster binds to her political significance in the conclusion of *Appius and Virginia* (written with Middleton):

> Two fair, but Ladies most infortunate,
> have in their ruins rais'd declining Rome,
> Lucretia and Virginia, both renown'd
> for chastity. Souldiers and noble Romans
> to grace her death, whose life hath freed great Rome,
> march with her Course to her sad Funeral Tomb. (sig. I3^{r})

The medieval period was equally fascinated, as Lucrece is discussed at length in Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women*, Book VII of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, at II. 1058-99, and Augustine's famous discussion of chastity and self-slaughter in *The City of God*. See also Quintilian, *The Declamations of Quintilian*, trans. John Warr (London, 1686); John Webster, *Appius and Virginia* (London, 1654); Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Legend of Good Women*, ed. by the Rev. Walter W. Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889); John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, ed. by Russell A. Peck, trans. Andrew Galloway (Kalamazoo, MI: Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages, 2006-); John Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, ed. by Henry Bergen, vol. 1 (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by Oxford University Press, 1924); and Saint Augustine, *The Citie of God*. In early modern art, representations of Lucrece have been rendered, for example, by Raphael (1483-1520); Titian (1488-90); Botticelli (1496-1504); Dürer (1518); and Lucas Cranach the Elder (1532).

[28] In *Ovid Recalled*, L.P. Wilkinson outlines 'the grammar-school grounding in Ovid that we may expect an Elizabethan poet to have had': the *Fasti* figures prominently (p. 407). Wolsey required it for Ipswich School in 1529; Thomas Elyot included the text in the program outlined in *The Governour* (1531); Sturm recommended it for class work in 1538. See L.P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), p. 407. See also T.W. Baldwin, *William Shakspere's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1944), and also *On the Literary Genetics of Shakespeare's Poems and Sonnets* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1950), pp. 97-153. Andrew Hadfield notes that the Renaissance was marked by a 'keen interest in histories of the Roman republic and enthusiasm for Livy', which was especially facilitated by Philemon Holland's translation of *The Romaine Historie*, published in London in 1600. See Andrew Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Renaissance Politics* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2004), p. 10.

[29] In spite of the liberties Gower takes with Ovid's text, Ovid's is still the obvious source for classical interpretations of Lucrece as a visual figure. Livy, by comparison, avoids consideration of Lucrece's image until she is dead, at which point he simply describes her mutilated body as a source of wonder: it is '*so strange a sight*' (sig. E3^{r}, my emphasis). Livy, *The Romane Historie*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1600). Even this concession is perhaps more attributable to Holland's translation of Livy, which overemphasises the visual elements beyond the original text. Compare to the original, which offers no explicit mention of 'sight': 'Elatum domo Lucretiae corpus in forum deferunt concientque miraculo, ut fit, rei novae atque indignitate homines [They carried out Lucretia's corpse from the house and bore it to the market-place, where men crowded about them, attracted, as they were bound to be, by the amazing character of the strange event and its heinousness]' (Book I: LIX, 3). *Livy*, vol. I, trans. B.O. Foster (London: William Heinemann, 1919).

deluding tresses, | Her native splendour slight *art* him pleases'.[30] As 'His mazing fansie on her *picture* roves', Lucrece's fate is sealed by her every movement and attribute (sig. E6^{v}, my emphasis). Gower's translation, published posthumously in 1640, takes some liberty with the original Latin, in places exaggerating the existing references to the visual.[31] Gower's use of 'art' and 'picture' here in particular suggests that Lucrece is an object to be viewed, in this moment causing unquestionable pleasure: she is an equal embodiment of Freudian *scopophilia* and Mulveyan '*to-be-looked-at-ness*'.[32] Gower's presentation of Ovid's narrative also implies that the culpability for visual effect belongs to the female, as is explicitly clear in Daye's note, and suggested in *Titus Andronicus*.[33] Tarquin's description of the lady suggests her control over her projected image:

> His mazing fansie on her picture roves;
> The more he muses still the more he loves:
> Thus did she sit, thus drest, thus did she spin,
> Thus plaid her hair upon her necks white skin;
> These looks she had, these rosie words still'd from her;
> This eye, this cheek, these blushes did become her. (sig. E6^{v})

By this conception, Lucrece sits a certain way, and arranges her hair to her great benefit: these are choices consciously made (it is imagined) for optimal visual presentation. This makes her

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[30] *Ovid's Festivalls, or Romane Calendar*, trans. John Gower (Cambridge, 1640), sig. E6^{r}, my emphasis. I have used the English translation, though evidently – as the translation was not published in his lifetime – Shakespeare would have worked from the Latin text. The original Latin (with modern translation) will be provided in footnotes: these reveal some liberties in Gower's text, all of which match the prevailing occupation about visuality in the other early modern Lucrece narratives considered in this chapter. For more on Shakespeare's familiarity with Ovid, see Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 13.

[31] 'forma placet niveusque color flavique capilli, quique aderat nulla factus ab arte decor [Her figure pleased him, and that snowy hue, that yellow hair, and artless grace]' (*Fasti* II, ll.763-4); '"sic sedit, sic culta fuit, sic stamina nevit, neglectae collo sic iacuere comae, hos habuit voltus haec facies, hic décor oris erat" ['Twas thus she sat, 'twas thus she dressed, 'twas thus she spun the yarn, 'twas thus her tresses careless lay upon her neck; that was her look, these were her words, that was her colour, that her form, and that her lovely face]' (II, ll.771-4). Ovid, *Fasti*, trans. Sir James George Frazer (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1931).

[32] Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16 (1975), pp. 6-18, p. 11. For more on Freud's theories of *scopophilia* (pleasure in looking), and its associated practices of objectification and subjectification, see Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality*, ed. by Angela Richards, trans. James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), esp. at pp. 69-70.

[33] This is notion of a harmful vision of femininity is present in the original Latin in a striking way as well: 'carpitur adtonitos absentis imagine sensus ille [Meantime the image of his absent love preyed on his senses crazed]' (*Fasti* II, ll.769-70).

visually provocative, arguably a hazard to any who view her, and therefore vulnerable to blame after the rape. The language is both confused and deeply misogynistic, suggesting that Lucrece is more object than human, a 'picture', but also blaming her for presenting herself in an intentionally provocative way.[34] Tarquin is, after all, afflicted by 'the love *her person bred*' (sig. E6^{v}, my emphasis).[35] Gower's treatment of Ovid suggests that Daye's note – though it does not detail the moments before the imagined rape of the woman/text, or consider this Lucrece figure before her ruination – can be read as a continuation, a more explicit articulation of the suggested blame that can be read in the source text.

Notably, in the context of visual presence and its potential emotional effect, what is emphasised only *before* the violation in Gower's version of Ovid is only considered *after* the fact in Daye. However, it is not just that Ovid ignores the spectacle of the abused Lucrece: he explicitly restricts it. The *Fasti* sees Lucrece call for her husband and her father, after the rape, but upon their arrival,

> She *veils* her modest face, nor any thing
> would utter […]
> Thrice she assay'd to speak, thrice stopt; yet tries
> once more, but shamed to lift up her eyes (sig. E7^{r}, my emphasis).[36]

It would be possible to view Lucrece here as *more* of a spectacle, simply because she so conspicuously attempts to conceal herself, but the presence of the veil importantly adds a

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[34] This type of thinking is certainly related to one critic's insistence that the more significant rape in *The Rape of Lucrece* happens to Tarquin, that 'the attack on Tarquin's soul comes from within […] the attackers are his own passions'. The argument prioritises Tarquin's emotional torment – what the sight of Lucrece *drives him to* – over the more obvious crime. See Sam Hynes, 'The Rape of Tarquin', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 10 (1959), pp. 451-53, here at p. 452.

[35] 'ut solet a magno fluctus languescere flatu, sed tamen a vento, qui fuit, unda tumet, sic, quamvis aberat placitae praesentia formae, quem dederat praesens forma, manebat amor ardet et iniusti stimulis agitatus amoris comparat indigno vimque dolumque toro [as after a great gale the surge subsides, and yet the billow heaves, lashed by the wind now fallen, so, though absent now that winsome form and far away, the love which by its presence it had struck into his heart remained. He burned, and, goaded by the pricks of an unrighteous love, he plotted violence and guile against an innocent bed]' (*Fasti* II, ll.775-80).

[36] 'ter conata loqui ter destitit, ausaque quarto non oculos ideo sustulit illa suos [Thrice she essayed to speak, and thric gave o'er, and when the fourth time she summoned up courage she did not for that lift up her eyes]' (*Fasti* II, ll. 823-4). Her covering is mentioned earlier: 'illa diu reticet pudibundaque celat amictu ora [She was long silent, and for shame hid her face in her robe]' (ll. 819-20).

containing element, directed at the visual access that has recently caused such harm. Read this way, the Ovidian Lucrece seems to anticipate and seeks to avoid the critical response to which Daye's violated woman is subjected. The classical Lucrece, however, still enjoys a far more sympathetic audience: there is no displeasure directed at the lady herself, and both Collatine and Lucretius (her father) immediately 'forgive her forc'd adultery' (sig. E7[r]).[37] Lucrece is her own most severe critic, stabbing herself as she cries, 'That pardon you give, I deny' (sig. E7[r]).[38] Nonetheless, this new reference to veiling, and Lucrece's consistent unwillingness to lift her eyes to meet the gaze of her family, are important decisions that distance Lucrece from the community around her. As Gower's translation of the *Fasti* clearly links Lucrece's rape with open visual access, the apparent conclusion is that rape creates something that ought not be viewed. In both versions of the *Fasti* narrative, Lucrece recognises her easy identification as a ruined woman:

> Shall we ow Tarquine this too? ah! shall I,
> Shall I here publish my own infamie? (sig. E7[r])

However, the notion of shame and corruption as things that are *published*, put out before an audience, is new; the Latin speaks only of *reporting* shame, "'hoc quoque Tarquinio debebimus? eloquar," inquit, "eloquar infelix dedecus ipsa meum?" ["Must I owe this too to Tarquin? Must I utter," quoth she, "must I utter, woe's me, with my own lips my own disgrace?"]' (*Fasti* II, ll. 825-6). Gower preserves Lucrece's refusal to accept complete culpability, noting that she 'ow[es]' this further torment to Tarquin as well, but he emphasises the assumption that she would be held responsible – 'shall *I*, shall *I*' – if she did 'publish' her 'own infamie'. Read alongside Daye, Gower's interpretation gives a clear impression of the cultural response, in this

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[37] 'dant veniam facto genitor coniunxque coacto [Her husband and her sire pardoned the deed enforced]' (*Fasti* II, l. 829).

[38] "'quam" dixit "veniam vos datis, ipsa nego" [She said, "The pardon that you give, I do refuse myself"]' (*Fasti* II, l. 830).

period, to the visibly ruined woman, especially in terms of her responsibility for the reaction she produces in others.

In spite of the apparent tendency towards victim blaming, and the underlying discomfort about Lucrece's visual effect, as a general figure Lucrece is consistently praised for the high standard to which she holds herself: she is redeemed for the crucial political value of her ruination. Renaissance England in particular praised Lucrece for her part in the formation of the Roman republic, and this position is only achieved through her self-sacrifice: it is Lucrece's mutilated body that creates the symbol that spurs the political overthrow of the Tarquins.[39] Her presentation to an audience is a crucial component of her story, sanctioned in part because she does not present herself, but rather is presented, and because her suicide 'solves', in many respects, the visual/emotional problem she represents. This political emphasis is particularly evident in William Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure*, where the focus, as in Livy, is the revolution that Lucrece's rape prompts.[40] More than half of Painter's telling deals with the events following Lucrece's death, the bringing of her body to the marketplace, and the response: 'the people wondered at the vilenesse of that facte, every man complaining uppon the mischiefe of that facinorous rape, committed by Tarquinius' (sig. B2^{v}). However, by the time Brutus's mob reaches Rome, Lucrece's rape is just one item in a list of complaints, including 'the pride and insolent behaviour of the king,' and 'the miserie and drudgerie of the people' (sig. B3^{r}).

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Thomas Heywood's play, *The Rape of Lucrece*, printed in 1608, offers an especially strong

[39] Both Andrew Hadfield and Stephanie Jed speak of the early modern significance of Lucrece in conjunction with republican ideals; Annabel Patterson specifically attributes the popularity of the Lucrece tale to republican culture. See Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Renaissance Politics*, Jed, *Chaste Thinking*, and Annabel Patterson, *Reading Between the Lines* (London: Routledge, 1993), esp. at pp. 297-312.

[40] William Painter, 'The Rape of Lucrece', in *The Palace of Pleasure*, vol. 2 (London, 1566), sig. B1^{r}-B3^{v}. Painter was, of course, a major source for many of Shakespeare's plays – making his interpretation particularly noteworthy in the context of Shakespeare's own rendering of the Lucrece tale.

example of the politicisation of Lucrece.[41] A cursory glance at that play's title page indicates that the tone of Heywood's offering is much different: it reads, '*The Rape of Lucrece: A True Roman Tragedie with the Severall Songes in their apt places*'.[42] Aside from the periodic musical intervals, Heywood's contribution to Lucrece's story shows a return to the shared focus of Livy, Ovid and Painter: here again, Lucrece's importance is derived from her political value, her role as a figure of reform, and the pitiable elements that emerge elsewhere are de-emphasised. Consider, for example, Heywood's note, 'To the Reader,' which precedes the 1608 edition of the text: it shares the corrective theme of the *Gorboduc* note, arguing that 'some of my plaies have (unknown to me, and without any of my direction) accidentally come into the Printers handes, and therfore so corrupt and mangled […] that I have be as unable to known them, as ashamde to chalenge them' (sig. A2^{r}). The allegation of inaccurate printing reflects the still-relevant concern over corrupted texts at this time, and given the dates and the widespread popularity of *Gorboduc*, it is not impossible to think that Heywood was familiar with Daye's note. However, considering the possibility of familiarity, Heywood's description of his own text's corruption is especially noteworthy for its ungendered neutrality. There is no mention of the text as a ruined woman, and no allegations against the individuals who brought forth the corrupted texts; the only possible allusion to provocative visuality is Heywood's (still plausibly gender-neutral) comment that he has agreed to publish a corrected copy of the work because the plays themselves 'have beene so wronged in beeing publisht in such savadge and ragged *ornaments*' (sig. A2^{r}, my emphasis). There is, of course, no need to gender a book, but read alongside Heywood's play – specifically, its relative lack of interest in Lucrece as a

[41] Paulina Kewes has described Heywood's *Lucrece* not as a history of its title character, but as a play that 'anatomizes the rise of royal tyranny and the people's resistance to it'. See Paulina Kewes, 'Roman History and Early Stuart Drama: Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 32 (2002), pp. 239-267, p. 242.

[42] Thomas Heywood, *The Rape of Lucrece* (London, 1608), sig. A1^{r}.

character – the move may well be read as an intentional attempt to shift attention away from the pitiable female. The play bears almost no reference to emotion at all, and only one relevant reference to pity, in which Lucrece begs her tormentor, before the rape, to 'pitie, oh pitie | The vertues of a woman' (sig. G2^{v}). Heywood devotes far more dramatic energy to the events preceding and following the rape than he does on the act itself: the main focus is on the rise and fall of the Tarquins.[43] The discussion of Lucrece and the rape, by contrast, is comparatively restricted: this is something of a surprise given the play's title. Heywood's offering is, at its core, a play about politics: it opens with King Servius's daughter, Tullia (who is also Tarquin Superbus's wife), who, in a series of moves highly evocative of Lady Macbeth, bullies her husband into killing her father and seizing the throne.[44] From there, after a lengthy discussion of what to do with the former king's body, there is a trip to the Oracle, to determine the political fate of Rome. The play continues in this fashion, offering meandering dialogues about the value of justice, and the necessity of providing an heir to the throne.

Lucrece, for her part, does not appear onstage until the second half of the play. However, her first appearance is noteworthy as it deviates from the source texts in order to show the lady's character and her manner of relating to others. The emphasis on the gaze is prominent in this moment, as Lucrece chastises her clown and her gentlewoman for 'looking' in specific ways:

> Sirra, I ha seene you oft familiar
> With this my Maid and waiting gentlewoman.
> As casting *amorous glances, wanton lookes*,
> And pretty beckes favouring incontinence.
> I let you know you are not for my service
> Unlesse you grow more civill. (sig. D4^{r}, my emphasis)

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[43] In this respect, Heywood remains truer to the source texts, particularly Livy's *History of Rome*. For more on Livy's influence on Heywood, see Peter Culhane, 'Livy in Early Jacobean Drama', *Translation and Literature*, 14 (2005), pp. 21-44.

[44] See Kewes, p. 241.

With this, Lucrece recognises the existence of a loaded, sexualised sight, but she also suggests the possibility of forming bonds through the eye; here, sight fosters emotion, and Lucrece is concerned about the action that emotion might prompt. This is especially true as her gentlewoman is said to be a willing participant in this visual exchange. Lucrece confirms her own moral stance while chastising her maid:

> Nay mistres I ha seene you answere him
> With gracious lookes and some uncivill smiles
> Retorting eies, and giving his demeanure
> Such welcoming as becomes not modesty. (sig. D4^{v})

Lucrece refuses to associate with those who *look* in this fashion, because

> […] my reputation
> Which is held pretious in the eies of Rome,
> Shall be no shelter to the least intent
> Of loosenes (sig. D4^{v}).

This indicates that the act of looking is significant to Heywood and to his Lucrece, but it is directed specifically towards the creation (or destruction) of reputation: the visual elements here are less concerned with emotion than with the construction of a respectable identity. By establishing Lucrece's unimpeachable character, this moment addresses Lucrece's wider significance to Rome – a factor that later bolsters her political utility in death. Lucrece regards the unsanctioned, familiar gaze shared by two servants, and worries that this will define the reputation of her female servant. This concern is intimately bound to Lucrece's awareness that her own identity is crafted by what 'Rome' sees of her. However, the exchange with the servant is not developed to its full potential, as the clown's denial of the allegation is interrupted by more political news – this time of a military victory won by Sextus Tarquin (hereafter Tarquin), on behalf of his father, the King. Female identity construction is therefore subsumed by more pressing political concerns, a tendency that continues throughout the play. Lucrece exits the stage shortly after this news is delivered, allowing for a more concentrated

focus on the political developments; she does not return until eight pages later (an absence that constitutes around fifteen per cent of the play), when Collatine encourages Tarquin to evaluate her merits in a contest of the wives.

For all that Heywood seems to value Lucrece's rape only as a conduit to the more interesting subject of Rome's political development, he still appears to acknowledge hers as a primarily visual existence: there are a number of instances in which Lucrece is affiliated with vision. However, the capacity for emotion is predominantly ignored, as Lucrece typically offers a hollow presence: she is more spectacle than substance. This is most clearly illustrated by the events leading up to the rape, beginning with the wife competition initiated between Brutus, Collatine and the other men. In every Lucrece tale, Collatine encourages the spontaneous viewing of the wives as part of the wager. Heywood, however, makes this point more explicit, having his Collatine ask Tarquin to visually assess his wife: 'I commit my Lucrece wholly to the censure of Sextus [Tarquin]' (sig. F2^{v}). It is Collatine who authorises Tarquin's 'judging eies' (sig. F2^{v}). Tarquin 'cannot feed, but on [Lucrece's] face' (sig. H3^{v}); she becomes, 'That bright enchantresse that hath daz'd my eies' (sig. G1^{v}). As in the other Lucrece narratives, it is through the sense of sight that her importance is determined, and the way in which her fate is sealed. Heywood's characters respond to the sight of Lucrece, but Lucrece has no real ownership over the image she projects: she is constructed by 'the eies of Rome'; she is a spectacle that her husband controls and places before the male gaze. Lucrece's inability to take control of her own visuality continues after the rape. Following the Ovidian model, Lucrece covers herself, causing Collatine's immediate objection:

> Why doost thou hide thy face? & with thy hand
> Darken those eies that were my Sunnes of joy. (sig. H2^{r})

After a brief explanation she kills herself, leaving her father, husband, and the other men once again responsible for controlling public access to her. From there, Lucrece is instantly

transformed into a political tool: they decide to

> […] beare that chaste body
> Into the market place, [where] that horrid *object*
> Shall kindle them with a most just revenge. (sig. H3^{v}, my emphasis)

The display of Lucrece's body is only really significant insofar as it justifies the last quarter of the play: Lucrece, though referenced several times during the systematic destruction of the Tarquins, becomes little more than an object cast aside in the wake of political change. Read as it came, after Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*, this removal of any visual agency for Lucrece looks like a deliberate reaction to that earlier poem's more exploratory efforts. Pity gains no real purchase in Heywood's account, perhaps because for him, Lucrece cannot distance herself from her own political utility; her visuality contributes to her objectification, and as such she fails to achieve the humanity required to subsist as an emotional presence.

IV.
Shakespeare's Lucrece

Most representations of the Lucrece figure offer the prevailing sense that the female is something to be *looked at*. Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, however, departs from this position, turning it on its head to consider a Lucrece who actively *looks* herself: there is a gaze in the poem that is distinctively female. Specifically suggesting the capacity of the female gaze to foster emotional, pity-based connections, Shakespeare's poem explores a type of communication, and a reading of Lucrece herself, that extends beyond considerations of victim-blaming or political value. Shakespeare's poem is unique in the way it fully explores the potential of Lucrece's spectacle, identifying her vision as something active and, importantly, more than political grist. With this shift, Shakespeare harnesses the emotional unrest that writers like Daye suggest in their depictions, probing the possibilities of compromised visuality, and reclaiming, in some respects, the personal agency that is overwritten by blame rhetoric in other portrayals of

Lucrece. This examination of the emotional culture surrounding Lucrece's gaze, I will argue, represents a significant progression beyond the inherent misogyny of other versions of the story, one which opens new possibilities for interaction, over which the violated female has predominant control.

Traditionally, the critical interest in Shakespeare's *Lucrece* has focused on the aggressive, sexualised male eye represented by Tarquin and also, some have argued, by the men who present the self-slaughtered Lucrece to a male viewing public.[45] It is clear from Shakespeare's inclusion of aggressive male vision that he preserves some of the visual emphasis from the other sources. Tarquin offers the best example: his are 'greedy eyeballs' (l. 368), and Shakespeare later uses *anadiplosis* and *anaphora* to emphasize the consumptive nature of Tarquin's 'wanton sight' (l. 104):

> What could he *see* but mightily he noted?
> What did he note but strongly he desired?
> What he beheld, on that he firmly doted,
> And in his will his wilful eye he tired. (ll. 414-7)[46]

It is Tarquin's vision that leads him down this path; his 'lustful eye' somehow attacks Lucrece before the physical assault takes place (l. 179). And although Tarquin later accuses Lucrece of complicity ('The fault is thine | For those eyes betray thee unto mine'), the visual experience leading up to the rape is only significant, and only sexualised, for him (ll. 482-3). Much is made of Lucrece's visual effect here, but in reality her participation is minimal: she is either unable to

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[45] In particular, see Coppélia Kahn's commentary on the patriarchy's dominant presence in the poem, in 'The Rape in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*', and also *Roman Shakespeares* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[46] I have already mentioned Laura Mulvey, whose work defined the concept of an aggressive, consuming male vision, and developed the notion of 'the male gaze' as inherently predatory and damaging to women. In her ground-breaking article, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', Mulvey identifies male and female roles in viewing as active and passive (respectively), arguing that 'In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*' (p. 11). For Mulvey, this tradition of looking at women (particularly with pleasure) strips the female of any meaningful significance or agency. However, Mulvey's analysis of the *male* gaze is heavily reliant on the more general work done by Jean-Paul Sartre and Jacques Lacan. For more on this, see Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 252-302, and Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1978).

interpret his glance – 'she that never coped with stranger eyes | Could pick no meaning from their parling looks' – or asleep (ll. 99-100). While the description of Tarquin's individual experience plays on the contemporary cultural willingness (clearly demonstrated by Daye) to see a woman as culpable in her own rape, Tarquin's comments also reflect an already-established literary model of erotic, extramissive vision that uses the shared gaze as a method of binding characters together.[47] Nonetheless, our knowledge of Lucrece's non-participation challenges the idea of her complicity: in this instance vision fails to produce a consensual connection. Instead, it is insular, predatory, violent, and destructive.

If Shakespeare's emphasis on Lucrece's lack of awareness during Tarquin's visual assault challenges literary conventions surrounding extramissive vision, then her later development as a viewing subject, able to cultivate pity and foster connection, is even more notable. This capacity clearly does not exist before her violation, and perhaps this is because she has not yet harnessed the power of her vision. Instead, she prefers to rely on rhetoric, which remains important for Lucrece throughout the poem.[48] She offers, for example, a lengthy plea to Tarquin just before the rape:

> She conjures him by high almighty Jove,
> By knighthood, gentry and sweet friendship's oath,
> By her untimely tears, her husband's love
> By holy human law and common troth,
> By heaven and earth, and all the power of both,
> That to his borrowed bed he make retire,

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[47] The Galenic model of vision – or extramission – understands sight as probing, or speculative: it imagined that sight was produced by the meeting of eyebeams emitted both by the viewer and the person or object viewed. In the scientific world, this notion was replaced by Kepler's model of intramissive (receptive) vision around 1604, but Eric Langley convincingly argues that contemporary literature suggests there was 'some slippage, where the supposedly discredited theory remains in circulation' (p. 55), because it allows for 'a kind of mutual accord between viewer and viewed, who both, through eye contact, participate in the emission and merging in an act of "sympathetic" ocular coupling' (p. 60). For Langley's exploration of the literary significance of extramissive vision, see *Narcissism and Suicide*, pp. 53-107. See also Marcus Nordlund, *The Dark Lantern: A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare, Webster, and Middleton* (Goteburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 2006).

[48] For more on the significance of Lucrece's rhetoric, see Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare*, and also Joel Fineman, 'Shakespeare's Will: The Temporality of Rape', *Representations*, 20 (1987), pp. 25-76. For an exploration of the reciprocal relationship between vision and rhetoric in *Lucrece*, see Richard Meek, *Narrating the Visual in Shakespeare* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 55-80.

> And stoop to honour, not to foul desire. (ll. 568-74)

She is described as having both 'eloquence' and 'grace' as an orator, and her arguments are sound (ll. 563-4). Nevertheless, her rhetorical appeal (which continues) fails to save her, as

> His ear her prayers admits, but his heart granteth
> No penetrable entrance to her plaining (ll. 559-60)

As Nancy Vickers points out, rhetoric has a significant role in the poem: her argument – that it is Collatine's *description* of his wife, rather than her actual image, that prompts Tarquin to rape her – works from this premise of dominant rhetoric.[49] William Weaver has redeemed Lucrece's rhetoric significantly by relabeling what most critics viewed as her lengthy 'complaint', as a defense that anticipates any accusations against her chastity.[50] Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to ignore vision's impact in the proceedings, the frequency with which the language of the poem emphasises *visual* experience, and the contribution that the visual makes to the emotional landscape of the play. Consider, for example, Collatine's language, when describing Lucrece:

> Collatine unwisely did not let
> To praise the clear unmatched red and white
> Which triumphed in that sky of his delight,
> Where mortal stars as bright as heaven's beauties
> With pure aspects did him peculiar duties. (ll. 10-14)

'Clear'; 'red and white'; 'bright'; 'beauties'; and 'aspects' (which here refers to looks or glances): this is the rhetoric of sight. Later, Collatine refers to Lucrece as 'his beauteous mate' (l. 18). The brief description is wholly concerned with her visual properties. Language, here and elsewhere, facilitates the characters' discussion about what they see, and how it affects them: the poem's descriptions, its observations, are constantly grounded in highly visual, ekphrastic

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[49] Nancy Vickers, 'This Heraldry in Lucrece's Face', *Poetics Today*, 6 (1985), pp. 171-84, and 'The Blazon of Sweet Beauty's Best: Shakespeare's *Lucrece*', in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. by Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York, NY: Methuen, 1985), pp. 95-116.
[50] William Weaver, '"O, teach me how to make mine excuse": Forensic Performance in *Lucrece*'.

terms. Tarquin may be inspired by Collatine's language, but he never, in the course of a considerable meditation on his motivation and justification to act against Lucrece, attributes his actions to Collatine's words. Instead, he stresses her visual impact, informing Lucrece that

> Thy *beauty* hath ensnared thee to this night
> Where thou with patience must my will abide (ll. 485-6, my emphasis).

In other moments, the poem seems to explicitly set image and language at odds, as when Tarquin tells himself that 'All orators are dumb when beauty pleadeth' (l. 268), and vows that 'My heart shall never countermand mine eye' (l. 276). This is of course, a poem: a work of rhetoric, and visual language is still *language*. Nonetheless, the significance of the visual is undeniable: crucial, as the poem itself makes clear in the context of the cultivation of emotion.

To return briefly to Lucrece's exchange with Tarquin, in which she relies on rhetoric to elicit pity from her tormentor, it is striking that she demonstrates such a preference for language when so much of what precedes this moment focuses on her visual impact. Her purpose, after all, is to have an effect on Tarquin: she wishes to secure his pity. If the later interactions with Collatine are an indication of her visual agency, we might expect her to rely on that capacity here. That she does not is some indication that she is either unaware of her own gaze, or that Tarquin is unwilling to engage with it. Lucrece seems sceptical that Tarquin's sight is functioning properly: 'wipe the dim mist from thy doting eyne,' she pleads, confident that if he does, he 'shalt see thy state, and pity mine' (ll. 643-4). Her language is the same visually loaded rhetoric that pervades the rest of the poem, and in many respects she is more heavy-handed with it than any of the male characters. With 'pity-pleading eyes […] sadly fixed | In the remorseless wrinkles of his face' (ll. 561-2), she begs:

> My sighs like whirlwinds labour hence to heave thee.
> If ever man were moved with woman's moans,
> Be moved with my tears, my sighs, my groans:
> All which together, like a troubled ocean,
> Beat at thy rocky and wrack-threat-ning heart,

> To soften it with their continual motion;
> For stones dissolved to water do convert.
> O, if no harder than a stone thou art,
> Melt at my tears, and be compassionate!
> Soft pity enters at an iron gate. (ll. 586-595)

Lucrece has suffered some scrutiny for the fervour with which she expresses her suffering, with critics such as F.T. Prince arguing that she exceeds the reasonable rhetorical limits of expressed abjection, and in so doing alienates her audience and loses the pity she might reasonably expect. Arguing that Tarquin is the more interesting character of the poem, Prince claims that Lucrece 'is forced to express herself in a way which dissipates the real pathos of her situation […] Lucrece loses our sympathy exactly in proportion as she gives tongue'.[51] This reads very much like a modern expression of Daye's 1570 stance: it turns Lucrece's appeal for pity inside out, confirming her culpability and reducing her significance as a victim. Here again, the violated female is eclipsed by those around her: for Prince, most notably by the very man responsible for the violation. This passage only confirms the importance of the visual, especially insofar as Prince's objections to Lucrece focus on her over-long rhetorical lamentations: the poem presumably imagines that the emotional effect of the complaint will be bolstered by an accompanying physical presence, an image that the reader can only assume/imagine. Lucrece's 'tears' feature prominently – 'be moved at my tears', 'melt at my tears' – but description cannot match the pitiful force of watching someone weep.

The latter half of the poem, after the rape, deals almost exclusively with Lucrece's gaze: what she sees, how she uses her gaze to connect to others, and the emotional bond (facilitated by pity) between those who look at one another. This notion of the pitiable female's gaze is new, distinct from the passive visual properties of other Lucreces, and a far cry from the clearly aggressive, insular way of seeing demonstrated by Tarquin. This new type of sight is

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[51] F.T. Prince, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare's Poems* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), at p. xxxvi.

also indefinite, evolving constantly as the poem progresses. With varying degrees of success, Lucrece's manipulation of vision is about forming bonds and prompting the emotional response from those around her. Perhaps the strongest example of this – the one in which Lucrece looks and is looked at with the greatest effect – comes at the moment when Lucrece reveals her torment to her husband and father. At this point, she understands the crucial role of spectacle, and actively manipulates the spectacle she represents. Moreover, her actions prior to this scene suggest a growing belief in sight as an integral sense for the project of cultivating emotion. She calls her family to her side, rather than immediately sending a written account of her rape, because

> To see sad sights moves more than hear them told,
> For then the eye interprets to the ear
> The heavy motion that it doth behold,
> When every part a part of woe doth bear.
> 'Tis but a part of sorrow that we hear:
> Deep sounds make lesser noise than shallow fords,
> And sorrow ebbs, being blown with wind of words (ll. 1324-30).

Beyond confirming Lucrece's own awareness of the image of torment she represents, her insistence that her family physically witness her suffering suggests a rhetorical belief that emotional appeals are augmented by an accompanying visual component.

The culminating moment for Lucrece's gaze comes when Collatine and Lucretius (her father) arrive home, and here we see both emotional communication and interpersonal connection facilitated by Lucrece, the now-active viewer. Unlike her Ovidian predecessor, Shakespeare's Lucrece embraces fully her visual markers: she is 'clad in mourning black' (l. 1585), and openly displays her face, rather than veiling it:

> And round her tear-distained eye
> blue circles streamed, like rainbows in the sky (ll. 1586-7).

Moreover, her connection with Collatine is, at least initially, entirely based on their shared looks:

> […] when her sad-beholding husband saw,
> Amazedly in her sad face he stares:
> Her eyes, though sod in tears, looked red and raw,
> Her lively colour killed with deadly cares.
> He hath no power to ask her how she fares.
> Both stood like old acquaintance in a *trance*,
> Met far from home, wond'ring each other's chance. (ll. 1590-6, my emphasis)

This is a compelling moment, in which husband and wife are bound together by what she offers and he receives. It is little wonder that though Lucrece has her tongue, she barely uses it, claiming that

> Few words […] shall fit the trespass best
> […]
> In me moe woes than words are now depending
> And my laments would be drawn out too long
> To tell them all with one poor tired tongue. (ll. 1613-17)

This notion of grief defeating the powers of speech is also echoed in the frontispiece of the 1644 edition of the poem, which reads, 'The Fates decree that it is mighty wrong | To Women kinde to have more Griefe than Tongue'. The implication, both in the text and the accompanying image, is that the strength of Lucrece's emotion surpasses mere description. The image necessarily confirms Lucrece's reliance on visual communication, and further emphasises the surveillance motif: Collatine regards Lucrece; she returns the gaze directly; both remain under the silent, watchful eye of their author. The poem's description of this moment is equally visual. Even before Lucrece speaks, Collatine receives the bulk of the information – including, significantly, the appropriate emotional reaction – by parsing the visual cues: 'What uncouth event,' he asks, 'Hath thee befall'n, that thou dost trembling stand? | Sweet love, what spite hath thy fair colour spent? | Why art thou *thus attired in discontent*?' (ll. 1598-1601, my emphasis). Of course, Lucrece does eventually describe the assault, but the emotional response of her audience has already been determined: she has, and keeps, their pity from the moment they lay eyes on her.

Lucrece's is a gaze that sidesteps some of the problems with pity that emerge in Daye's note, without compromising the affective content of the scene. The power of this connection, though obviously formidable, still remains ambiguous: we are secure only in the knowledge that whatever the quality of the exchange, it is enough to put those involved in a 'trance'; the connection occurs beyond the grasp of the reader. In this way, Shakespeare's depiction intensifies Livy's singular comment about Lucrece's visual presence. The assembly of revolutionaries, Livy notes, stems from the '*wondring* (as the manner is) at *so strange a sight*' (sig. 3^{r}).

Though this moment is unquestionably about gaze and spectacle, it is important to note that all this ultimately, and crucially, contributes to Lucrece's presence: an already visually striking female, someone accustomed to being regarded, is transformed from something pleasing to an unsettling, demanding presence. In this way, Shakespeare's expression of Lucrece echoes other traditional responses, and certainly mirrors the crucial elements of *Titus*'s Lavinia. However, like so many of Shakespeare's works, it is not so much the subject matter of *Lucrece*, but the way it is handled that renders the contribution so noteworthy. What distinguishes Shakespeare's *Lucrece* is the particular interest in the sight of the ruined woman, and its utility: he not only emphasises Lucrece as a viewing agent, but he also depicts both her gaze and her appearance as productive, crucial to her ability to elicit sympathetic emotional response. Moreover, she is not only a visually and emotionally striking presence, she is, as a character, fully present in the poem. Although we have seen in Daye's reference, for example, hints of a more pervasive early modern understanding of the raped female as a distressing object to be viewed (rather than a viewing agent), Shakespeare's portrayal attributes far more agency to Lucrece, emphasising in particularly a certain productivity in her pitiability. Whilst this tendency of characterising Lucrece as an image (rather than a character capable of

directing a gaze herself) is consistent with the source texts, particularly in terms of the lack of interest in Lucrece's own vision and the heightened focus on Lucrece's political utility after her suicide, Shakespeare shows little interest in continuing the story beyond Lucrece's death. Indeed, for a poem that has been criticised for being indulgently long, Shakespeare sees Lucrece displayed to the Roman people and the Tarquins overthrown in only seven lines:

> When they had sworn to this advised doom
> They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence,
> To show her bleeding body through Rome,
> And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence;
> Which being done, with speedy diligence,
> The Romans plausibly did give consent
> To Tarquins' everlasting banishment. (ll. 1849-1855)

Speedy diligence, indeed. Of course, Shakespeare's haste here only confirms Lucrece's place as the undeniable star of the poem: she has the most development, and the greatest consideration. As readers, we are most familiar with her feelings, and her experiences. Moreover, the poem seems unable to survive without her: she appears within 50 lines of the poem's opening (and is referenced much earlier, in line 7); the poem only continues 125 lines after her suicide. This is certainly a revision of the earlier source texts, which tend to present the story as an historical narrative, an event whose significance is dependent on its relationship to the founding of the Roman republic. Shakespeare, however, seems less interested in Lucrece as an historical symbol, and more intrigued by the possibilities she offers as a woman and a pitiable subject; his is a far more intimate portrayal of the events, made more personal by the emotional connections in which Lucrece participates, and those she fosters along the lines of pity. Additionally, Lucrece's visual value is, for Shakespeare, inherently bound to emotion: she is able to provoke response in a way that other visual characters (such as Tarquin, with his penetrating male gaze) cannot. Lucrece's ability to create, in the members of her family, a trance-like state prompted by emotional intimacy, suggests that Shakespeare acknowledges the

commonplace image of the unsettling, provocatively pitiable violated woman, but then moves beyond it to explore the potential of embodying that image and directing the pity of it with purpose. In this way, Shakespeare's Lucrece becomes more than a political symbol or tool, more than just an object to be fixed, and therefore, something different from other early modern Lucreces.

V.
Conclusion

To finish, I would like first to fast-forward to a present-day exploration of the relationship between the female gaze and emotional response. In 2010, as part of the New York Museum of Modern Art's major retrospective on her work, Marina Abramović performed a piece called 'The Artist is Present'. Over two and a half months, during the 736 hours and 30 minutes that the museum was open, Abramović sat in silence opposite a simple wooden chair. Any visitor to the museum – anyone willing to remain silent and motionless – was invited to sit with Abramović and share her gaze for as long as they wished, or as long as they were able. The implication, of course, was that the experience may be so moving, so emotionally overwhelming, that prolonged exposure would be difficult to sustain. Response to the piece was massive, with visitors queuing for hours, often only to be ushered out at closing time without having locked eyes with the artist. Perhaps the most striking thing about the phenomenon of the piece, certainly the most important in the context of this chapter, was the emotional response that Abramović so consistently elicited using only visual connection and her presence. A vast number of participants wept – some almost immediately after sitting down. Not long after the exhibit opened and the performance began, unaffiliated artists began passing out buttons to those who succumbed to Abramović's gaze. They read, 'Marina

Abramović Made Me Cry'.

Aside from the sheer endurance required of the piece, 'The Artist is Present' is noteworthy for its demonstration of the power of vision; this is a clear case in which emotion is prompted by visual connection. Abramović presents the gaze as a tool used to communicate emotion, to transfer emotion, and to receive emotion. Consider Abramović's comment on the experience: 'I gazed into the eyes of many people who were carrying such pain inside that I could immediately see it and feel it. I [became] a mirror for them in their own emotions'.[52] This idea of sight as a conduit of emotion is an important one, particularly for Shakespeare's Lucrece, who renders herself a spectacle of suffering in order to convey the depth of her despair. Nonetheless, each of the Lucrece figures I have examined in this chapter is associated with sight and spectacle in some way: these characters become distinguishable either by their ability to harness that visuality (as in the case of Shakespeare), or the way in which that visuality is used against them. Pity in this respect becomes a tool by which we can read the positivity or negativity of the portrayal. In Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*, the visibly ruined female actively forms and shares emotional bonds on the basis of her pitiable spectacle, and the exchange of pity draws people towards the violated woman, binding them to her. Elsewhere, as in Daye specifically, the cultivation of pity creates distance from the woman. She becomes an object or a tool herself, something which creates a community of men that is provoked by her presence but separate from her: she remains isolated from that group until (or unless) she can be restored to a previous, more acceptable state.

While Abramović's piece focuses primarily on the effect of the gaze itself as emotionally penetrative, the title of the piece, 'The Artist is Present', reminds us of what makes

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[52] Sean O'Hagan, 'Interview: Marina Abramović' *The Observer*, 03 October 2010 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2010/oct/03/interview-marina-abramovic-performance-artist> [28 September 2011].

these Lucrece figures so compelling: it is their presence that we find so jarring, their proximity that elicits emotional response, even against our will. These figures demonstrate the binding component of pity, creating either inclusive communities that incorporate the woman (as in Shakespeare) or communities that form against her and the visual challenge she represents. In particular, the Lucrece figure reveals the more invasive nature of pity: there are some sights that force us to respond. With both Lucrece and Lavinia, Shakespeare offers a physically assaulted woman whose presence feels, to others, like an assault itself, and in this respect these characters correspond to an established lineage of Lucrece figures. Although both of Shakespeare's creations retain the clear political value of the others – his Lucrece remains the catalyst to the overthrow of the Tarquins, Lavinia prompts the assassination of Saturninus – there is something more active and emotional about these characters, related to the severity of the image they present. The focus on grisly spectacle affords the opportunity to explore the full emotional effect of these women, an effect primarily shaped by the flow of pity. Shakespeare's emphasis on the agency of the violated female characters in the case of Lucrece is, I would argue, a deliberate attempt to move beyond the notion of the ruined woman as only a tool for prompting action, an object that would have to be repackaged for reinsertion into an already-established male community, even if such a thing were possible. Both Lucrece and Lavinia rely on the emotion of their situation, their pitiability and their presence, to form new bonds. In their violation, they find new ways to exploit their visuality and connect with those around them. In this way, their greater significance is the ability to create interpersonal, emotional connections.

CHAPTER FOUR

'NO BEAST SO FIERCE BUT KNOWS SOME TOUCH OF PITY':

PITIFUL HUMANITY, PASSIONLESS BESTIALITY

I.

'*Animal* is a word that men have given themselves the right to give'.[1]

In one of the more memorable moments in *Richard III*, the newly widowed Lady Anne confronts Richard (then the Duke of Gloucester) over the corpse of Henry VI. Believing (correctly) that Richard has been involved in the murder of both her husband and her father-in-law, Anne calls his behaviour 'inhuman and unnatural' (I.ii.60) and then damns him: 'Villain, thou know'st no law of God nor man' (I.ii.70). Anne's attack relies on the premise that life is governed by a set of fundamental principles, 'laws' set down either by God or humanity, or both. She then introduces animals, condemning Richard on the grounds that, 'No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity' (I.ii.71). From here, the fundamental dispute becomes blurry. Anne's comment clearly intends to exclude Richard from all available communities: he is not human, but also, when measured against an emotional criterion (in this case, the standards of pity) he fails even to achieve a beastly classification. This is an extreme assessment, especially of the man who will later become king: one might assume that such a figure should be placed above beasts, and even above humans, as God's representative on earth. Richard's exclusion from the community of beasts in this moment also contradicts the play's tendency elsewhere to label him in animal terms. Richard self-identifies as the 'pack-horse' (I.iii.122) of the late Henry VI; Queen Elizabeth calls him a 'bottled spider, that foul bunch-backed toad' (IV.iv.81); Queen Margaret describes him as 'dog' (I.iii.216) and later, an

[1] Jacques Derrida, 'The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)', trans. David Wills, *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2002), pp. 369–417, p. 400.

'elvish-marked, abortive, rooting hog' (I.iii.228) – a nod to Richard's heraldic emblem, the boar. Margaret's description of him in Act IV, to give another example, relies heavily on animal language, though in a number of ways she ignores the boundaries that Anne seems determined to set:

> From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
> A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:
> That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,
> To worry lambs and lap their gentle blood;
> […]
> That foul defacer of God's handiwork. (IV.iv.47-53)

There is ample room for confusion here. The human womb is reimagined as a 'kennel', again blurring the lines between animals and humans. The vagueness of identification is additionally confirmed by the assignment of animal identities for everyone in the passage: Richard is now 'a dog […] to worry lambs'. The invocation of 'God's handiwork' and the 'hell-hound' only further complicates matters, bringing in an extra-earthly component. These elements – earthly and divine, human and animal – are all placed in conversation with one another. Margaret's evaluation lacks the clear definition of Anne's early attempt to exclude Richard entirely, but it echoes her desire (indeed, an overarching desire of the play) to understand Richard by finding an appropriate classification for him. Margaret imagines Richard as still somehow a part of the human community, although his presence is clearly violent. Is a lack of pity, therefore, somehow a bigger problem than outwardly destructive behaviour? Anne's claim hints at this sort of stance, the perhaps-unfounded belief identified elsewhere throughout this thesis, that the instinct to pity is, given the right set of circumstances, in fact something with which humans are naturally equipped.

By attributing pity even to beasts, Anne's comment takes this idea a step further, making the capacity for pity a central, non-negotiable consideration of classification: no pity, no humanity. Anne implies that the absence of pity is so inhumane, even beasts are above it;

even they can achieve what Richard cannot. Richard's emotional deficiency becomes another of his deformities, another way in which the he is marked as an aberration. The exchange between Richard and Anne is remarkable, particularly in the way in which its language plays with notions of emotion, classification, and kind. Richard openly acknowledges Anne's disgust and revels in it, twisting her words, and playing with her accusation. Freely admitting his lack of pity, he points to this as evidence that he is no animal: 'But I know [no pity], and therefore am no beast' (I.ii.72). She remains steadfast in her desire to label him as an other, and to exclude him from all natural communities. She makes him otherworldly instead: 'O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!' (I.ii.73).

At its core, the debate between Anne and Richard reflects the early modern interest in considerations of kind. In modern scholarship, the emerging field of animal studies – prompted in part by Lévi-Strauss's now-famous and contentious comment that 'animals are good to think [with]' – has produced a large body of work questioning the human-animal divide.[2] This critical debate, which at its core questions the ways in which we understand the relationship between humans and other mammals, almost invariably identifies the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a watershed era, pointing to the apparent dichotomy set up between Cartesian thought and the philosophy of Montaigne's essays.[3] This tension pits Descartes's assertion of humans as vessels of pure reasoning, separated from the mindless

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[2] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, trans. Rodney Needham (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1963), p. 89.

[3] A discussion of the type I am proposing here necessarily uses terms that are in and of themselves heavily laden, and which are implicated in the argument. For the purposes of this chapter, and in the interest of moving the examination along, I will conceive of these terms in the simplest way possible: 'man' or 'human' as a person, or one recognisably belonging to the human race; 'beast' or 'animal' (in spite of the latter term's apparent lack of popularity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) as any living creature not recognisably belonging to the human race, but another species. This admittedly does not engage with Renaissance distinctions between livestock (typically 'beasts'), fish, and birds. The term 'creature' I take as a general (arguably ambiguous) term referring to any living being, including both humans and animals. As the chapter progresses, it will become clear that these terms are being used heuristically; my purpose here is to locate the moments in which these terms come under pressure. A more extensive discussion of distinctions of terminology, and the ways in which the terminology has become critically loaded, is available in Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), esp. pp. 1-18.

existence of animals, against Montaigne's classification of animals as 'the fellow-brethren and compeers' of humans.[4] For Descartes specifically, the capacity for rational thought is at the heart of this debate; Bruce Boehrer has recently noted this impact of this thinking, identifying an early modern habit of viewing reason as 'the definitive feature of humanity'.[5] Anne, however, does not attack Richard on the grounds of irrationality, and perhaps she could not successfully challenge a character with such demonstrably sharp rhetoric and manipulative prowess in this way. Her focus on his emotional capabilities approaches the debate from a different angle, claiming pity as a defining characteristic that determines a person's place on a sliding scale between humanity and bestiality; in her estimation, Richard slides off the scale

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[4] Réne Descartes, *Discourse on Method* and *The Meditations*, trans. F.E. Sutcliffe (London: Penguin, 1968); 'Fellow brethren and compeers' is John Florio's translation: see Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, trans. John Florio (London, 1613), sig. Y5^{v}. Lévi-Strauss and Derrida are key figures in the philosophical treatment of the animal question, but more recent contributors to this field include: Timothy Morton, who interprets the question of how '*we* coexist with nonhumans' as a central concern (p. 73); Cary Wolfe, who has labelled the animal-human divide 'not just any difference among others' but 'the most different difference, and therefore the most instructive' (p. 23); and Dimitris Vardoulakis and Chris Danta, who have scrutinised 'the social fantasies that create and sustain a collective "we" in the name of whom violence is exercised' (p. 4). See Timothy Morton, 'Ecologocentrism: Unworking Animals', *SubStance*, 117 (2008), pp. 73-96; Cary Wolfe, 'In the Shadow of Wittgenstein's Lion: Language, Ethics, and the Question of the Animal', in *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, ed. by Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), pp. 1-58; and Dimitris Vardoulakis and Chris Danta, 'The Political Animal', *SubStance*, 117 (2008), pp. 3-6. See also Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago, IL: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), and *When Species Meet: Adventures in Dogland* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 2007); Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert, 'Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: An Introduction', in *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human–Animal Relations*, ed. by Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000) pp. 1–34. Steven Connor offers a useful review of the field in 'Thinking Perhaps Begins There: The Question of the Animal', *Textual Practice*, 21 (2007), pp. 577-584.

[5] Bruce Boehrer, *Shakespeare Among the Animals: Nature and Society in Early Modern England* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2002), p. 9. The early modern preoccupation with man's position within the animal kingdom – the unquestionable affiliation, paired with the apparent desire to create distance from that community – has been picked up by a number of modern scholars, such as Boehrer, who have argued that the Renaissance impulse to draw distinctions between man and beast played a central role in identity construction during the period, that it 'help[ed] human beings to define and conceive of themselves, both as groups and as individuals' (p. 3) and that it provided 'a means of sorting out the world' (p. 4). For more on this theme, see William M. Carroll, *Animal Conventions in English Renaissance Non-Religious Prose (1550-1600)* (New York, NY: Bookman, 1954); Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984); Jeanne Addison Roberts, *The Shakespearean Wild: Geography, Genus, and Gender* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991); Alan Stewart, 'Humanity at a Price: Erasmus, Budé, and the Poverty of Philology', in *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies and Natural Philosophy*, ed. by Erica Fudge, Ruth Gilbert and Susan Wiseman (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 9-25; Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (London: Macmillan, 2000), and her *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006). A discussion of the animal-human debate in the medieval period is available in Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York NY: Routledge, 1994).

entirely.[6] Richard's response, though it approaches the question from another direction, supports a similar view: he also indicates that the relationship with pity determines one's identity as a man rather than a beast. Both characters use pity, rather than reason, as a means of shaping identity; both imagine a definitive triangulation between pity, humanity, and bestiality.

In many respects, the insertion of pity into this debate about *kind* both anticipates and casts a different light upon the later argument about animals, put forward by Jeremy Bentham: 'The question is not, can they reason? nor can they talk? but, can they *suffer*?'.[7] Bentham's query suggests that perhaps animals can *feel* pain, and implies that if they do, their pain should make us suffer. But what of their recognising and responding to it in others? To extend Bentham's idea, can animals suffer for another? Derrida, who agreed with Bentham's emphasis on the capacity to suffer, calling this 'the *first* and *decisive* question', famously considered the animal as a seeing entity, again citing Descartes as the first within the 'quasi-epochal category' that views the animal as 'something seen and not seeing'.[8] Derrida's meditation on the meaning of his cat's gaze speaks to the early modern belief that Gail Kern Paster has identified, that the emotions were 'shared by humans and animals, thanks to their common possession of a sensitive soul'.[9] It is to these issues of sensitivity, suffering and pity, and the possibility of their employment even across species barriers, that I now turn.

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that pity directly challenged concepts of early

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[6] Rebecca Ann Bach calls this scale 'the animal continuum'; for more see 'The Animal Continuum in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Textual Practice*, 24 (2010), pp. 123-147.

[7] Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1781), p. 311, my emphasis.

[8] Derrida, p. 396, p. 383. On this issue of suffering see also Julian Murphet, 'Pitiable or Political Animals', *SubStance*, 117 (2008), pp. 97-116.

[9] Gail Kern Paster, 'Melancholy Cats, Lugged Bears, and Early Modern Cosmology: Reading Shakespeare's Psychological Materialism Across the Species Barrier', in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, ed. by Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 113-29, here at p. 115.

modern English personal identity, invariably rendering social exchanges more complicated, more dangerous and undermining. At the same time, I have traced the ways in which pity in this period speaks to an overarching human impulse to bind together in recognition of shared vulnerability; I have suggested that pity in Renaissance England was a crucial community-building tool, a central component of human nature that fostered connection even as it threatened to attack the appearance of a distinct and stable individual identity. This tension, I have posited, accounts both for the rhetoric of vulnerability that seeps into so much of early modern English literature, and the repeated reliance on pity in texts that consider and depict the meaning of humanity in the period. Thus far, I have considered pity as it affects specific types of early modern English identity: Christian identity, following the changes to charitable doctrine occurring during the Reformation; masculine identity, in the pity-heavy language of lyric poetry; and feminine identity, in the presentation of physical violation and the forward-looking exploration of pity as a relationship-builder. In my final chapter, I wish to examine how pity in the Renaissance shaped a much broader community – humanity – alongside (and sometimes against) animals. To put it another way, I want to scrutinise how understandings of pity affected early modern debates about *kind*, and how these theories fed into the related debate about the boundaries between humans and animals. In this chapter, I will consider pitiful, pitying, and pitiless creatures in early modern culture generally, and then in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, focusing in particular on each playwright's response to issues of boundary setting and self-definition. The episode in *Richard III* introduces these themes, touching upon this question of the difference between a human and a beast in a very explicit way, and wondering at the place of pity in that distinction. In what way does the negotiation of pity shape one's identity? Can a passion like pity be used as a marker of advanced development, another way in which mankind excels beyond bestial nature?

Or, does it form a common bond between man and animal? Richard and Anne are certainly not the only ones to disagree on these points.

II.

In her recent work on early modern animals, Laurie Shannon speaks of a tradition of classification, noting that her central concern is

> […] when and why it became conventional to speak using the radically departicularizing and inevitably grandiose nominalized adjectives "*the* human" and "*the* animal", where humanity refers to some positive attributes, however slippery (language, a soul, existential possibility, tool use, shame, and so forth) and animality to some corresponding deficit or privation that sets its signature feature.[10]

Though Shannon is quick to point out that the term 'animal' itself was not widely used until after the sixteenth century, the life forms that we would now identify as animals (at that time more commonly 'beasts', or 'creatures') were an integral part of the early modern landscape.[11] Shannon's assertion that the early moderns 'experienced the same material and humoral conditions of life as animals did' (p. 10), supports Gail Kern Paster's argument that 'identification across the species barrier' was in fact quite common.[12] In particular, these observations complicate the notion of distinct classification reflected, for example, in *Rhetorica Christiana*'s depiction of 'The Great Chain of Being'.

Nonetheless, there is significant evidence that attempts were made to separate humankind from the rest of the animal kingdom. Descartes' discussion of animals as

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[10] Shannon, The Accommodated Animal, p. 9.

[11] More than this, in another article Shannon notes a Renaissance engagement with a veritable spectrum of distinctly classified creatures:

> There were creatures. There were brutes, and there were beasts. There were fish and fowl. There were living things. There were humans, who participated in animal nature […] None of these classifications line up with the fundamentally modern sense of the animal or animals as humanity's persistent, solitary opposite.

Laurie Shannon, 'The Eight Animals in Shakespeare: or, Before the Human', *PMLA*, 124 (2009), pp. 472-9, p. 474.

[12] Paster, 'Melancholy Cats', p. 150.

'machine[s] made by the hands of God' is a notable example: he argues that the functions of the living (common to humans and animals, and incorporating things like breathing, eating, mating, and fighting) are controlled by mechanical systems (*Meditations*, p. 44). For Descartes, the capacity for rational thought becomes the means for humankind to distinguish itself beyond this level.[13] This emphasis on reason is evident in other early modern texts. Consider, for example, William Adlington's translation of Apuleius, which speaks of times:

> When as we suffer our mindes so to be drowned in the sensuall lustes of the fleshe, and the *beastly* pleasure therof […] we léese wholy the *vse of reason and vertue (which proprely should be in man)* & play the partes of bruite and savage beastes.[14]

The passage clearly pits reason against the 'beastly', advancing rational thought as the defining property of humankind. These distinctions are made more clearly by Scipion Dupleix, Lord of Clarens:

> If the beasts had beene also infirme as men in their birth, the greatest part of them had beene lost, *neither having judgement, nor conduct, nor the commodities of men*, and being subject to be taken, and surprized by one another, as also by man; but in mans behalfe it was very expedient that he should be borne so weake, to the end that he should acknowledge his basenesse and his infirmity, and that he should be lesse proud.[15]

Again, we see animals not only placed *below* humans in an imagined ranking, but we see it done on the grounds of rational faculties: Dupleix isolates judgement amongst the 'commodities of men' and moreover the 'greatest part of them'. The subject of the passage is ostensibly the 'infirmity' of humanity: it is the recognition of this weakness, Dupleix argues, that tempers the pride of humankind in an important way. Nonetheless, the passage is obviously slanted

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[13] Descartes writes that '[even] if there were machines which had a likeness to our bodies, and imitated our actions, inasmuch as this were morally possible, we would still have two very certain means of recognising that they were *not*, for all that, *real men*'. He cites the first reason as the capacity for language and the ability to 'declare our *thoughts*', and names the second as the ability to 'act through *knowledge*', rather than from the 'disposition of their organs' (*Meditations*, pp. 73-4). This emphasis on reason calls to mind Hamlet's observation on the wonder of man: 'What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty!'. Nonetheless, Hamlet also pushes against the Cartesian notion of total separation, as he imagines reason as a means of distinction *within* the animal kingdom, ultimately concluding that the faculties of man make him 'the paragon of animals!' (II.ii.305-10).

[14] Apuleius, The. xi. bookes of the Golden asse […] Translated out of Latine into Englishe by William Adlington (London, 1566), sig. A2^{v}-A3^{r}, my emphasis.

[15] Scipion Dupleix, *The resolver; or Curiosities of nature* (London, 1635), sig. C7r, my emphasis.

towards humanity. It is a false position of deference, in which animals are praised for their strength, but it is their *one* attribute, measured against the many other strengths of man.

It is clear enough that the period had a vested interest in defining humankind against other animals, and that animals often fared poorly in meditations on difference. However, this perspective was not universally held. I have already noted the contradiction inherent in Montaigne's comment on 'compeers', and John Rowland's evaluation that 'Man hath no preeminence above the Beasts' clearly rejects the Cartesian perspective in a very fundamental way.[16] Yet early modern writers differ amongst themselves on the significance of these observations: do they make a fundamental distinction of kind, as in Descartes, or do they place humans and beasts on distinct planes within a wider spectrum of creaturely life? It can be hard to tell. Of course, the very use of terms like 'beast' and 'man' carries with it a concept of *difference*, even if the association between difference and superiority is less clear. Notions of experience frequently emerge as being at stake here: for some, experience is channelled through reason, and the human experience is made meaningful through rationality. Others, like Bentham, Shannon, and Paster (and even Anne and Richard, as characters) seem to associate experience with sensation: beings are defined in accordance with exposure to things like environment, pain, and pleasure. In this context, questions of emotional faculties derive a growing significance: the capacity for pity in particular emerges as a fundamental standard for classification. This, I would argue, is a field of evaluation that appears to be semi-independent of the Cartesian interest in reason; it is still of clear interest to the early moderns.

With this developing interest in pity in mind, let us return briefly to the fundamental disagreement that emerges in the aforementioned exchange from *Richard III*: Anne suggests that pity is a faculty common and accessible to all living things, absolutely fundamental and

[16] Topsell, sig. A4ʳ.

central. Richard, however, disassociates himself from pity quite happily, content to leave it as the sole exercise of animals. There is some question here about whose stance more accurately reflects the sentiments of the time: if it is right to assign pity to either man or beast, to which group did it belong? Thomas Wright, in his 1604 work *The Passions of the Mind in General*, seemingly echoes Anne's stance when he observes that what 'we call Passions, and Affections, or perturbations of the mind' are 'common with us, and beasts'; this supports Paster's identification of a shared sensitive soul, susceptible to pity, and common to both animal and humankind.[17] There is, as I have already noted in my opening discussion of *Richard III*, and as I will go on to discuss at greater length in sections on *The Tempest* and *Bartholomew Fair*, a clear dramatic tradition, in this period, of engaging with concepts of beastly pity. However, the idea is also problematic. In more than four hundred pages detailing the physical characteristics, habitats, and behavioural patterns of a veritable ark's worth of animals, Edward Topsell only gives one specific example of the animal capacity for pity, when discussing sheep:

> Concerning the simplicity of sheep, I must say more, and also of their innocency, yet the simplicity thereof is such, and so much, that it may well be termed folly, […] Without cause it wandereth into desert places, and in the winter time when the aire is filled with cold windes, and the earth hardened with hoare frostes, then it forsaketh and goeth out of his warme coate or stable, and being in the cold Snow, there it will tarry and perish, were it not for the care of the sheapheard, for he taketh one of the Rams by the hornes, and draweth him in a doores, then do all the residue follow after. […] and no lesse is their love one toward another, every way commendable, for one of them pittieth and sorroweth for the harme of another, and when the heate of Sunne offendeth them, *Albertus* writeth, that one of them interposeth his body to shaddow the other.[18]

Topsell's vision of sheep pity is largely positive, though it is not obviously beneficial to the animal. On the one hand, he identifies the sheep's fellowship as in 'every way commendable, for one of them *pittieth and sorroweth for the harme of another*' (my emphasis). Topsell's evidence of this – the image of one sheep using his body to shelter another from the sun – is touching, and

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[17] Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in General* (London, 1604), sig. I2^{v}.
[18] Topsell, Sig. Lll3^{r}.

the author evidently finds the behaviour a positive indication. That said, this compassionate drive seems a practice unique to the sheep, an animal otherwise notable for a simplicity that borders on stupidity. Significantly, the commendable, pitying sheep requires the protection of a rational being (the human shepherd) in order to avoid even the most obvious threats (in Topsell's example, inclement weather).

Of course, there is no necessary correlation between the pity of the sheep and its apparent helplessness; perhaps Topsell's description is valuable enough, insofar as it creates a clear portrayal of the emotion in an animal context. However, Topsell only speaks of pity once, and only in his description of one animal. Elsewhere in the work, there is little evidence of the sensitive animal soul: the great majority of his animals are in fact either characterised by their ferocity and cruelty, or their innocuousness. Topsell even goes so far as to highlight this pervasive cruelty as the reason many animals do not breed in large numbers:

> The cruell and malignant creatures which live only upon the devouring of their inferiours, as the Lyons, Wolves, Foxes, and Beares, conceive but verie seldome, because there is lesse use for them in the world, and God in his creatures keepeth downe the cruell and ravenous, but advanceth the simple, weake, and despised. (sig. Aa2^{r})

Topsell's account, here and elsewhere, suggests that rather than being universally marked by pity, beasts can be identified either as ferocious or harmless; the latter description certainly applies to the sheep, and indeed the more important observation in Topsell's examination of the sheep is arguably that they pose no threat to anyone, except perhaps themselves. What pervades Topsell's work is the implicit suggestion that animals derive their identity by their relation to humans, classified either by their utility, or the threat they may or may not pose. The suggestion that the ferocious beasts breed less because 'there is lesse use for them in the world' is clearly informed by a human perspective: the mild sheep is of far more use (to humans) than the wolves that eat them.

Moving back to the dramatic appreciation of beastly pity, perhaps it is more likely that the concept is popular not because it offers an accurate reflection of animal behaviour, but because the idea can be used to encourage (perhaps via guilt) pity in human beings. Essayist Sir William Cornwallis, for example, observes that 'nature hath made her creatures more loving, and assisting to one another' immediately before arguing specifically that 'Pitty and *humanity*, where benefits binde not, must binde'.[19] Although this recognises some degree of compassionate exchange amongst all creatures, the thrust of Cornwallis's argument is that it ought to be a priority of humankind, protected under the umbrella of what it is to be humane. This focus is not all that surprising, in spite of reason's significance to the human-animal debate. Whilst the possession of rational faculties was central to the project of ranking mankind, and although it was perhaps the best (certainly the most obvious) justification for placing humans above all other creatures, meditations on human nature almost invariably explore a more general, inchoate concept of 'humanity' as a way to establish man as somehow more than beast. Adlington's translation of Apuleius is a clear example, as is Dupleix's treatise. The full picture of humanity, therefore seems to incorporate biological, rational, *and* emotional considerations. Thomas Elyot comments at length on the importance of this all-inclusive vision of humanity, and its assumption of sympathetic action. He notes that:

> The nature & condition of man, wherin he is lesse than god almyghty, and excellynge not withstanding al other creatures in erth, is called humanitie: whiche is a generall name to those vertues, in whom semeth to be a mutuall concorde and love, in the nature of man. And al thoughe there be many of the sayde vertues, yet be there thre pryncipall, by whom humanitie is chiefely compact, Benevolence, Beneficence, and Liberalitie, which maketh up the saide principall vertue called Benignitie or gentylnes'.[20]

Elyot identifies 'love', and 'gentylnes' as vitally connected to man's virtue. For Elyot, this is the

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[19] William Cornwallis, *Essayes By Sir William Corne-Waleys the younger, Knight* (London, 1601), here at sig. Mm1^{v}, my emphasis.
[20] Elyot, The boke named the Gouernour, sig. O3^{r}-3^{v}.

point at which humankind can be seen to be '*excellynge not withstanding al other creatures in erth*'; there is no mention in the passage of rational capability. The significance of man's sympathetic regard is taken up by Thomas Rogers as well, in his essay, 'Of Humanitie', in which he notes that 'Humanitie is a vertue which ought to be observed of all such as will be called humane or curteous. *For nothing is either so agreeable to mans nature, as to hurt none, or so contrarie as to offer iniurie to any*'.[21] To be human(e), by these interpretations, is to be emotionally receptive and therefore connected to other humans. Pity, by implication, sits at the heart of what it means to be human.

III.
A 'kindlier moved' kind of being: The Tempest

The idea of a direct connection between pity and humanity is more fully realised in another of Shakespeare's plays, *The Tempest*, when Ariel reports on the success of Prospero's schemes against the Italians in Act 5:

> Your charm so strongly works 'em
> That, if you now beheld them, your affections
> Would become tender...
> Mine would, sir, *were I human*. (V.1.17-20, my emphasis)

There are a few possible ways to interpret this passage. From one angle, Ariel seems to understand the susceptibility to pity as an essentially *human* feature, something to which he, as 'an airy spirit', is not subject at all.[22] Another reading might see this conflict of kind another way: perhaps Ariel cannot feel pity for the tormented Italians, because he is something fundamentally different to them in an Aristotelian sense. This interpretation suggests that pity

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[21] Thomas Rogers, *The anatomie of the minde* (London, 1576), sig. Cb7^{r}.

[22] Ariel is identified as 'an airy spirit' in the dramatis personae, My references to the dramatis personae follow the text of *The Tempest* printed in the 1623 copy of the First Folio. William Shakespeare, *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (London: Jaggard and Blount, 1623), Sig. B4^{r}. References to Ariel as a spirit occur throughout the play: see for example I.2.193; I.2.206; and I.2.215.

relies on a principle of 'like for like': humans feeling pity for humans, spirits feeling pity for other spirits, and so on. Either way, the presence of pity on the island (and Ariel's ability to recognise when it might reasonably be felt) is significant insofar as it demonstrates its relevance to the play, even in a society that is not entirely (or not strictly) human. Ariel's comment also indicates that pity is not openly accessible to all of the characters on the island: there are obviously factors impinging on its dispensation.

Whatever the reason, it is clear in this instance that Ariel can assess a situation for pitiability, without succumbing to the emotion. However, he argues that if Prospero, a human, bore witness to the suffering of his enemies, the exiled Duke's feeling would move towards pity. Prospero agrees:

> And mine shall.
> Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
> Of their afflictions, and shall not myself
> (*One of their kind*, that relish all as sharply,
> Passion as they) be kindlier moved than thou art?
> (V.i.20-4, my emphasis)

Prospero's response highlights the play's significant punning on the word *kind*: it is, as he points out here, simultaneously related to the formation of clear boundaries (the determination of one's kind) and a moment of emotion that reaches across classification boundaries – the *kindlier* moments. Although there is a certain amount of posturing here, in the reminder that Prospero belongs to a community that Ariel can only observe, and also in the assumption that Prospero is naturally inclined to do what Ariel cannot, the exchange does suggest that the impulse towards pity is, at least, a natural characteristic of humanity.[23] However, the relative

[23] Erica Fudge, Ruth Gilbert, and Susan Wiseman also engage with this exchange between Prospero and Ariel in the introduction to their volume on early modern humanity, where they note that within the exchange, 'The distinguishing quality of the humans discussed is their suffering and, noticeably, neither of the speakers claim to actually *experience* compassion – they imagine circumstances in which they would'. They go on to note that the passage 'articulates the desired qualities associated with the human, but in their absence: full humanity is highly artificial, potentially unattainable for some, and significantly absent from the world of political influence'. See *At the Borders of the Human*, pp. 4-5.

clarity of this relationship is not as obvious elsewhere in the play, where the exchanges involving pity reflect a more confused understanding of the emotion's connection to humanity. The play depicts both the circumstances in which pity is offered, and the natures of those engaging with the emotion as constantly shifting. Ultimately, we are left with no clearly articulated stance on the emotion's relationship to humanity: it floats in and out of the interactions on stage, susceptible to so many other factors that it conforms to no apparent overarching pattern. Again, we find pity at the centre of a slippery emotional landscape.

One of the better examples of the muddy connection between pity and humanity is that offered by Prospero's own daughter, Miranda. Miranda is without question the most pitying person in the play, and while Julia Reinhard Lupton is correct in her observation that 'It is an established determinant of her character that she is a *human* creature', Miranda's philosophy on pity (unlike that of her father) clearly does not rely on considerations of kind.[24] This might be explained by the circumstances of her isolated upbringing: on several occasions she seems unable to recognise her fellow man, and she repeatedly reveals a total unfamiliarity with the inner workings of the human community. Moreover, she conceives of most (including herself) in exceptionally general terms, avoiding even broad classifications like 'human', or 'animal' for the purposes of establishing difference. This apparent reluctance to place life on a hierarchy seems to expand her willingness to pity: one of the ways in which Miranda differs from the other human characters is that her pity is free-flowing and, in comparison, unfettered by a strict set of rules. For Miranda, one need not meet the requirements of humanity in order to be a candidate for pity. Consider our introduction to her, in the first act: the spectacle of the

[24] Julia Reinhard Lupton, 'Creature Caliban', *Shakespeare Quarterly,* 51 (2000), pp. 1-23, here at p. 13. Lupton notes that although both Caliban and Miranda are marked by their 'wonder' at various points in the play, Miranda's 'links her to the brave new world of both a universal and a particular humanity reconstituted in the wake of Prospero's tempest. Caliban's humanity, on the other hand, remains a question rather than a given in the play' (p. 13).

shipwreck causes her significant, immediate distress, which she expresses without understanding fully what has happened, or who (or what) is on board. She cries, 'O, I have suffered | With those that I saw suffer' (I.ii.5-6). Although Prospero does not discourage her response in theory, referring to 'The direful spectacle of the wreck which touched | The very *virtue* of compassion in thee' (I.ii.26-7, my emphasis), there is no instance in the play in which Prospero explicitly encourages his daughter to succumb to her pity. This, arguably, is a surprise, for if pity is in fact an important indicator of humanity (as he will later suggest to Ariel), then we might reasonably expect Prospero to cultivate the response in his daughter. In this case, however, Prospero is quick to dismiss her emotion on the grounds that it is irrational, and advises her to 'Be collected; | No more amazement. Tell your *piteous* heart | There's no harm done' (I.ii.13-15, my emphasis). This is just the first of a number of instances in which Miranda is more inclined than her father to feel pity: seeing Ferdinand under Prospero's control, she begs for his release, crying 'Sir, have pity; | I'll be his surety' (I.ii.475-6). Later, when confronted with the image of her lover's physical labour – labour that Prospero has commanded – her response again evokes pity:

> Alas now, pray you,
> Work not so hard. I would the lightning had
> Burnt up those logs that you are enjoined to pile!
> Pray set it down and rest you. When this burns,
> 'Twill weep for having wearied you.
> […]
> If you'll sit down,
> I'll bear your logs the while. Pray give me that;
> I'll carry it to the pile.
> (III.i.15-24)

Undoubtedly, Miranda's reaction to Ferdinand is at least partially motivated by her affection for him. As her father observes, 'Poor worm, thou art infected' (III.i.31). The remark suggests a tacit objection to pity: she is associated with an animal (and an unsavoury one, at that) in this time of emotional, passionate compromise, and she is described as 'infected'. The language

conveys that she is both altered physically and naturally, and diseased: she is compromised in every significant way. What is all the more bizarre is that Prospero reimagines his daughter as a worm at the same time as feeling what looks suspiciously like pity for her emotional vulnerability: he takes away her humanity before offering his pity. To return to Miranda's pity impulse, however, this passage in particular reaffirms that for her, pity is prompted via the senses – in this case, her sight motivates her feeling – rather than her reason. Miranda pities Ferdinand's physical burden without considering his motivation, just as she pities those on board the ship without fully understanding their fate.

Even if these are examples of an oversensitive pity reflex (an assessment which in itself is questionable), in the context of the play they are portrayed as being relatively harmless. These instances serve only to make Miranda look appealingly compassionate, kind, a civilised match for Ferdinand in spite of her unorthodox upbringing. These moments construct an impression of inherent goodness, as Ferdinand notes in his appraisal of her:

> Full many a *lady*
> I have eyed with best regard, and many a time
> Th' harmony of their tongues hath into bondage
> Brought my too diligent ear. For several virtues
> Have I liked several women; never any
> With so full soul but some defect in her
> Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed
> And put it to the foil. *But you, O you,*
> *So perfect and so peerless, are created*
> *Of every creature's best.* (III.i.39-48)

On first appraisal, Ferdinand's rhetoric seems fairly standard, bearing a strong resemblance to the hyperbolic courtier language I examined in my second chapter. However, the blurry lines of humanity operating in *The Tempest*'s landscape have an interesting effect on Ferdinand's commentary here: in this context, his comments seem to collapse Miranda's humanness. What

does it mean, that she is pieced together, the sum of every *creature's* best parts?[25] This might further hint that Miranda is composed of fragments, rather than a genuine, 'whole' entity. Or perhaps instead, Ferdinand is implying that Miranda is something more distinct, more elevated, something that is too perfect to be merely human.[26] Either way, Ferdinand's appraisal follows directly the demonstration of her pitying nature: Miranda's nature is defined by her emotional faculties.

Even so, Ferdinand's analysis of Miranda is unequivocally positive: she is clearly not adversely affected by the possible compromise of her humanity. Even Prospero, who is quick to highlight his daughter's innocence, her not-yet-attained assimilation into the civilised human community, does so without endangering her human status. From this, we might assume that even if free-flowing pity is more generally conceived of as a characteristic of creaturehood, it is also a compatible trait for humans: for all that it is arguably irrational, Miranda's pity does her no harm, and it certainly does not make her inhumane.[27] However, it is perhaps relevant that in most instances Miranda manages (through no obvious intent of her own) to direct her pity towards unquestionably human candidates, and so she is, however unknowingly, adhering to her father's later practice of feeling pity for her own kind. There is only one example in which she arguably veers from this philosophy, pitying Caliban, whose humanity is a constant point of debate. Notably, this is the only instance in which Miranda's pity proves problematic. As she recounts their earlier relationship:

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[25] Such a suggestion calls to mind the story of Zeuxis painting Helen, composing the famed beauty as a compilation of five separate models. In recounting this tale, Robert Albott reports that 'Zeuxis made choise of the five daughters of Croton, of all these to make one figure most excellent in beauty'. Robert Albott, *Wits Theatre of the Little World* (London, 1599), sig. L4^{r}.

[26] For more on the use of hyperbole in describing female excellence, with particular reference to Ferdinand's conception of Miranda as a goddess, see Madeleine Doran, 'The Idea of Excellence in Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 27 (1976), pp. 133-49.

[27] In fact, if we look to early modern definitions of 'humane', we see the opposite is true: *The Oxford English Dictionary* entry on the word *humane* notes that it originally described one who was 'civil, courteous, or *obliging towards others*' (my emphasis), and has since evolved to reference one 'characterised by sympathy with and considerations for others; *feeling or showing compassion towards humans or animals*' (my emphasis). Notions of benevolence and kindness are similarly referenced. 'humane, *adj.*' *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

> Abhorred slave,
> Which any print of goodness wilt not take,
> Being capable of all ill; *I pitied thee*,
> Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
> One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage
> Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
> A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes
> With words that made them known. (I.ii.352-8, my emphasis)

This speech has an uncharacteristically severe tone – an oddity that inspired many editions, starting with Dryden and Davenant's *Tempest*, of 1667 (published 1670), and continuing until the mid-twentieth-century, to attribute this part of the dialogue to Prospero instead.[28] The modern fashion, however, follows the First Folio, which gives the speech to Miranda. Assuming that it is Miranda's speech, and ignoring for the moment the deterioration of the relationship between Miranda and Caliban, the passage confirms Miranda's impulse to feel pity, and moreover suggests, given the 'inchoate muddiness at the heart of Caliban's oddly faceless and featureless being', that Miranda does not conceive of pity as an exchange occurring strictly between human beings.[29] In the course of one speech she describes him both as 'savage' and 'a thing', each of which might imply something different, in terms of classification. We cannot guess with what language Miranda described Caliban, at the point in their relationship when she felt inclined to pity him; we can only gather, from the near-constant discussion of what Caliban is, that he is not immediately, irrefutably identifiable as human. In spite of this, Miranda apparently saw no reason to withhold her pity. This may be related to Miranda's underdeveloped sense of any distinction between man- and animal-kind, and in this instance the consequences, Caliban's attempted rape, are dire. But it is only after Caliban's attempted violation that she may learn to conceive of him as a separate kind of creature: 'But thy vile race

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[28] John Dryden, *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island, A Comedy* (London, 1670), sig. C2^{v}. As late as 1926, modern editions of *The Tempest* still attributed this speech to Prospero. See *The Tempest*, ed. by Morton Luce (London: Methuen, 1926).

[29] Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 166.

(Though thou didst learn) had that in't which good natures could not abide to be with' (I.ii.359-60). In the Arden edition, 'vile race' is glossed as a reference to a group with a shared nature; the emphasis is on Caliban's natural characteristics, rather than a specific moment of biological classification. [30] Nevertheless, Miranda obviously believes that Caliban is fundamentally other in a way that renders him unfit for her society: there is a suggestion of categorical difference in kind, one that contradicts Caliban's apparent belief that it is possible for them to have children.

Perhaps Miranda's history with Caliban encourages her interest, in the play, in correctly identifying the new arrivals to the island. Miranda's initial encounters with Ferdinand confirm that she still has trouble recognising humanity, but her behaviour reveals an obvious interest in getting it right. When she first sees Ferdinand, she looks immediately to her father, and asks, 'What is't, a spirit?' (I.ii.410). She invites his subsequent instruction: 'No, wench, it eats and sleeps and hath such senses | as we have' (I.ii.413-4), all indications that 'thou mightst call him | A goodly person' (I.ii.416-7). However, it is not that Miranda is completely unaware of man, as a concept; she uses the term when her father tells her of Gonzalo's charity in protecting them at the moment of their exile: 'Would I might | But ever see that man!' (I.ii.168-9). Nonetheless, she admits her own inexperience, in practice: 'This | is *the third man that e'er I saw*, the first that e'er I sighed for' (I.ii.445-7, my emphasis).[31] It is not until Ferdinand appears that

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[30] *The Tempest*, ed. by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, 3rd edn (London: Thomson Learning, 2006).

[31] Later, Miranda reiterates much the same point to Ferdinand:

> I do not know |
> One of my sex, no woman's face remember –
> Save, from my glass, mine own. *Nor have I seen*
> More that I may call men than you, good friend,
> And my dear father. How features are abroad
> I am skilless of […] (III.i.48-53, my emphasis)

Miranda is able to unite the idea of a man with the reality of it, and begin using the term 'man' specifically. Before this moment, her language when describing mankind is wholly non-specific: when bemoaning the men she imagines as perished in the shipwreck, she refers only to '*those* that I saw suffer'; she imagines the ship contains 'some noble creature'; she mourns for the 'poor souls'; she never explicitly identifies them as men. Nevertheless, there is some slippage at the end of the play, in spite of her growing awareness of a human community that exists beyond the scope of the island. It is a scene frequently referenced as evidence of Miranda's sheltered innocence, in which she is finally confronted with the full assembly of Italians:

> O wonder!
> How many goodly *creatures* are there here!
> How beauteous *mankind* is! O brave new world
> That has such *people* in't. (V.i.182-5, my emphasis)

Prospero is quick to point out that the wonder Miranda feels is merely the result of her lack of exposure to it – 'T'is new to *thee*' (V.i.185) – and it is a fair point: Miranda's initial move to identify the humans as creatures may well be explained by her relative ignorance about the world beyond the island, the full range of creatures populating it, and the methods of separating those creatures into distinct categories. This exchange is crucial: Miranda's choice of words here, her conflation of 'creatures', 'mankind', and 'people', may be interpreted as undermining any firm distinction between these categories. Even if Miranda's use of 'creatures' does not refer outright to 'animals' in this instance – if is just a generic catchall – it certainly does not suggest a beastly hierarchy with man at the top, either. The constant reference to Miranda's ignorance of the world in some ways compromises her affiliation with the other humans in the play: she is undereducated, undeveloped, and most importantly, relatively

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Her comment further cultivates the ambiguity that I highlight on this page, as she suggests here that Ferdinand is the second (rather than the third) man she has encountered. This report contradicts the one she gives in the first act, and implies continued uncertainty about distinctions of kind.

unaware of her participation in the larger human community. Moreover, she is frequently reminded of her own lack of awareness, as when she expresses her preference for Ferdinand. Her father answers

> Hush.
> Thou think'st there is no more such shapes as he,
> Having seen but him and Caliban. Foolish wench,
> To th' most of men, this is a Caliban,
> And they to him are angels. (I.ii.478-482)

Miranda's lack of interest (or lack of training) in distinguishing humankind from animals has implications for her dispensation of pity: whereas Prospero, in his exchange with Ariel, suggests that his compassion results from his active affiliation with humankind, and while he indicates kindness as a consequence of interaction with one's own *kind*, Miranda is not as-yet fully able to recognise her own tribe. Her pity, therefore, assumes a different quality: it is purer, perhaps, because she cannot consciously use it as an instrument by which she defines her own identity, but as a result her emotion is also less focused, farther-reaching, and less explicitly connected to her status as a human being. However, this shifting between terms is exactly the point, as *The Tempest* is at least partially concerned with the events that bring about Miranda's integration into a human community more recognisable than the one we find on the island. Her language here, her use of the term 'creature', is possibly a slip back to her early innocence, or an indication that her assimilation is not yet complete, that unlike some of the others, she is not yet evaluating creatures (men and beasts alike) in hierarchical terms. There is no evidence that 'creature' carries any significantly negative association when Miranda employs it.[32]

We see a very different attitude if we examine Prospero's use of creature language, which by contrast is more heavily loaded, given his obvious aim to set himself apart not only

[32] Though Miranda's use of the term 'creature', I think, does point to her ignorance of mankind as a separate, elevated sub-section of the animal kingdom, it is important to note that the term was often used in the early modern period to reference humans and animals alike. William Cornwallis, for example, frequently uses the term to describe mankind, in one instance noting that 'no creature is so good and so bad as man' (sig. S5^{v}).

from base animals but also, in his bid to regain his former position, from the other men in the play. Unlike his daughter, Prospero is clearly able to recognise another human, but the language he uses to reassure her after the shipwreck is just as general as that favoured by his daughter:

> I have with such provision in mine art
> So safely ordered, that there is no soul -
> No, not so much perdition as an hair,
> Betid to any *creature* in the vessel. (I.ii.28-31, my emphasis)

Prospero classifies the men on the ship as creatures, but unlike Miranda, whose language is the result of her ignorance of the world beyond the island, Prospero's use of the term here and elsewhere represents just one way in which he establishes his superiority over the others. Consider his choice of words when describing to Miranda his former life in Milan:

> Being once perfected how to grant suits,
> How to deny them, who t'advance and who
> To trash for overtopping, new created
> The *creatures* that were mine, I say, or changed 'em,
> Or else formed 'em. (I.ii.79-83, my emphasis)

By Prospero's conception, the creatures – the human subjects – of which he speaks are clearly positioned below him; moreover, he imagines himself as their creator: they belong to him; he shapes and alters them as he sees fit.[33] This preoccupation with status has a significant influence on his dispensation of pity, for while he eventually decides to offer the Italians a reprieve from their torture, he has worthy motivation: the restoration of status, the union of his daughter and the king's son. These are his equals – in some instances, his betters.[34]

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[33] Lupton's examination of the word 'creature' is particularly interesting in the context of this speech: 'The creature is actively passive or, better, passionate, perpetually becoming created, subject to transformation at the behest of the arbitrary commands of an Other' (p. 1, my emphasis). This is the clear undertone of Prospero's reference – control, manipulation, and power.

[34] Prospero's stance here seems to align with a very specific Renaissance conception of the criteria for humanity, as Boehrer notes: 'In late Elizabethan England, one had to be white, English, Anglican, male, mature, mentally sound, and prosperous, at the very least' (p. 18). Given that, it is quite possible that the conception of 'humanity' that Prospero possesses – clearly assimilated into an elite subset of human society, in spite of being temporarily exiled from it – is far more restrictive than we might imagine now.

However, there is a shift in Prospero's outlook when the candidate for pity has no social status, and questionable humanity. When Caliban comes before him, a conspirator but also, in many respects, a pitiable creature, Prospero only offers resigned acceptance: 'this thing of darkness I acknowledge mine' (V.i.276-7). While there is evidence that Prospero recognises Caliban as a man, of sorts – he reminds his infatuated daughter that she's seen no man *other* than Caliban – this is clearly not enough to justify his pity. There are many reasons why Prospero might not pity Caliban, but at least one of these is that the exiled Duke and the 'freckled whelp, hag-born, not honoured with | a human shape' (I.ii.283-4) are not really the same kind: for Prospero, Caliban is simply a creature he 'Must know and own' (V.i.276).

IV.
Blurry Humanity: Caliban

Both Miranda and Prospero are useful to this examination of the human-animal divide – and pity's role within it – insofar as these characters are obviously human. Each represents a separate approach to the human community, which in turn informs their attitudes towards pity. However, for another, more obvious reason, *The Tempest* is a natural choice for an exploration of Renaissance depictions of human-animal boundaries: Caliban remains one of the most problematic of all of Shakespeare's characters, precisely because his humanity is so persistently ambiguous.[35] He may be a deceptively articulate animal, or an undeveloped human, or indeed he may occupy some indefinite middle ground that defies strict, clear categorisation.[36] Perhaps Caliban is more suited to the sliding scale of humanity that Anne

[35] Mark Thorton Burnett also references this identity problem, noting that within *The Tempest* 'Each character moulds Caliban in a different image, and the sum total of those imagined representations can never cohere'. *Constructing 'Monsters' in Shakespearean Drama and Early Modern Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 133-4.

[36] The on-going question about categorisation is further suggested by *The Tempest*'s performance history: as all of the figures accompanying this section demonstrate, interpretations of the character vary wildly. Some stress the

imagines in *Richard III*: Prospero's slave is in constant motion towards or away from humanity, always evading a satisfactory label. The lack of clarity associated with Caliban's character is emphasised all the more by Ariel, another non-human character who is explicitly identified, in the dramatis personae, as a spirit. It is an advantage withheld from Caliban, who is comparably described as a 'salvage and deformed slave', suggesting – but not confirming – his humanity.[37] This humanity seems only to diminish as the play progresses: Caliban is questioned by almost all of the characters who encounter him, each of whom attempts to place him within a pre-existing category, human or animal.[38] Though Miranda and Prospero typically address him simply as 'slave', others are far more creative in their classification: Stephano calls him 'monster' (II.ii.65) and 'mooncalf' (II.ii.106); Alonso comments that Caliban is 'a strange *thing* as e'er I looked on' (V.i.291, my emphasis).[39] Trinculo offers the longest meditation on

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character's animal qualities, whereas others are unequivocally human. Still others emphasise the ambiguity of the character, but incorporate some sort of physical abnormality, such as uneven skin pigmentation, scales, or warts.

[37] Shakespeare, Comedies, Histories & Tragedies, sig. B4^{r}.

[38] This problem of defining Caliban's identity is reflected in *The Tempest*'s performance history, as documented by Virginia Mason Vaughan, and Alden T. Vaughan, who note in their introduction to the Arden edition that the character has 'been burdened with a wide variety of physical aberrations, sometimes in eclectic combination, including fins, fish scales, tortoise shells, fur, skin diseases, floppy puppy ears and apelike brows, to name just a few' (p. 34).

[39] The *OED* lists Shakespeare's use of 'mooncalf' under 'A deformed *animal*; a monster' (my emphasis). See 'mooncalf, n.', definition 3. Other contemporary uses of the term prove enlightening: an anonymous 1694 translation of Aristotle's *The Secrets of Generation*, for example, notes that:

> Having already treated of true Conceptions, the next thing note worthy is, what relates to false Conceptions, and in this case Women are sometimes deluded, thinking themselves with Child, when their Belly only swell with the retention of their Natural Purgations, that fall not according to their usual times: Or else by a lump of indigested Flesh, for the most part like the Gizard of a Fowl, greater or lesser according to the time of its continuance there, which is frequently four Months, and is called a Moon Calf.

This imagines the moon-calf as a lump of indigested animal flesh; this belief is reiterated, almost verbatim, by Jacques Guillemeau in *Child-birth, Or The Happy Deliverie of Women*. The occurrence of the 'depraved and vicious' conception of the moon-calf is discussed at some length, in Helkiah Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia*, which notes that:

> […] Nature rather endeavoureth an *imperfect and depraved* conception then none at all, because she is greedy of propagation and diligent to maintaine the perpetuity of [t]he kindes of things: wherefore rather then she will do nothing, she will endevour any thing how imperfect soever. So when Nature maketh wormes in the stomacke and guts, she doth better then if she should generate nothing at al, because of a thing immooveable she maketh a thing moveable by itselfe and of it selfe, & of a putrid and rotten humour an animated creature.

Caliban's identity:

> What have we here, a man or a fish? Dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish, a very ancient and fish-like smell, a kind of – not of the newest – poor-John. A strange fish! Were I in England now (as once I was) and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver. There would this monster make a man; any strange beast there makes a man. (II.ii.24-31)

The variety of classifications pertaining to Caliban indicates the lack of clarity regarding the character's place between humanity and animality, a continuation of the ambiguity inherent in the dramatis personae.

The vagueness that surrounds Caliban's identity has interesting consequences for his bid for pity, if indeed we can say that he openly seeks it. Quite possibly the character that endures the most torment on the island, Caliban is certainly in no position to give pity. We might, however, argue that he deserves some. His lamentation to Prospero and Miranda is, in places, emotionally raw and heart-wrenching:

> When thou cam'st first
> Thou strok'st me and made much of me; wouldst give me
> Water with berries in't, and teach me how
> To name the bigger light and how the less
> That burn by day and night. *And then I loved thee*
> And showed thee all the qualities o'th' isle:
> The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and fertile.
> Cursed be I that did so! (I.ii.333-340, my emphasis)

By these descriptions, if Caliban is, in fact, correctly labelled a moon-calf (though this may be just another false attribution), he is likely something other than human. To that end, Thomas Bancroft's book of epigrams offers the following advice, within his thoughts on 'The New World':

> Some in the *Moone* another World have found,
> Whose brighter parts are Seas, the darker, Ground:
> Which were it true, we should have Moone-calves tost
> From those sharpe whirling Hornes to every Coast:
> And a wild World it were, and full of tricks,
> Where all Inhabitants were Lunaticks.

This again presents the mooncalf as something both disposable and decidedly not human, but if this is the way of dealing with moon-calves, Caliban fares comparatively well. See Aristotle, *The Secrets of Generation* (London, 1694), sigs. F2^{v}-F3^{r}; Jacques Guillemeau, *Child-birth, Or The Happy Deliverie of Women*, unnamed translator (London, 1612), sig. B3^{r}; Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia, Or a Description of the Body of Man* (London, 1615), sig. Cc5^{r}. Thomas Bancroft, *Two Books of Epigrammes* (London, 1639), sig. C4^{r}.

The rage here and elsewhere in the speech is obvious, but equally poignant is the reference to love sustained and lost. Caliban's need for fellowship of any sort manifests elsewhere in the play as well, when he binds himself to the drunken Stephano:

> I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;
> I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.
> A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!
> I'll bear him no more sticks but follow thee,
> Thou wondrous man. (II.ii.158-62).

The passage bears the trace of the relationship with Prospero, and both speeches are underpinned by the desperate desire for human connection that seemingly motivates most of Caliban's actions. For all the evidence that he may be human – Miranda reflects that Ferdinand is the *third* man she's seen, a comment that presumably points to Caliban as the second, after her father; and of course Caliban claims his own humanity, in his troubling admission of his attempted rape of Miranda: 'O ho, O ho! Would't had been done; | Thou didst prevent me, I had *peopled* else | This isle with Calibans' (I.ii.350-2, my emphasis) – this is a character without a community, without a mother and entirely unlike anyone around him.

Whatever Caliban is, and howsoever he is received by audiences, he garners no pity from anyone within the play: the closest he comes to receiving pity is the mention of its earlier dispensation from Miranda: 'Abhorred slave, Which any print of goodness wilt not take, | Being capable of all ill; *I pitied thee*'.[40] However, this reference to Miranda's pity only serves to

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[40] Caliban's ability to inspire audience pity, even when depicted with more animal than human characteristics is arguably demonstrated by the response to Sir Frank Benson's ape-like portrayal of the slave. Benson's rendering prompted some viewers to offer a pity-based defence of Prospero's slave. One such viewer noted that

> There *are* better things even in the vile and hateful slave Caliban, as Shakespeare gives him to us, than Mr Benson ever hinted at. It is possible from time to time to feel pity mix with our loathing for the ill-used, down-trodden wretch, who, having had his peaceful island wrested from him, is wantonly tortured and tormented for not obeying the despot, who has despoiled him of all his possessions with alacrity and cheerfulness….

This reaction indicates a tendency for audiences to react negatively to a Caliban whose animality prevents his demonstration of behavioural humanity: with regard to this character, audiences seem eager to see an engagement with pity. Quoted in Trevor R. Griffiths, '"This Island's Mine": Caliban and Colonialism', in *Critical Essays on*

elevate her (as the innocent victim) and damn him, as an example of a 'vile race'. Caliban's major contribution to the play – indeed, the point of the character – is that he evades clear definition. In this respect, he is an articulation of the various exceptions to the definitions of humanity in the play: the loopholes, the ambiguities of the theories of humanity themselves. Caliban is the unfinished mess of *The Tempest*, lacking, to the very end, a clear identity or an emotional resolution.

V.

'Keepe it for your companions in beastlinesse'
Passionless Animalism in Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair

What emerges from *The Tempest* is a sense of fluid boundaries of classification, in which humans and animals interact with one another, and borrow each other's characteristics. The play is marked by a constant worry about identifying kind, and an equally pervasive aversion to outlining clear guidelines for identification. The play's use of pity demonstrates this climate nicely: there are moments that suggest the emotion as being tied to concerns of kind, in spite of Miranda's unregulated use of it. Certain characters are unquestionably human: we do not question Prospero, Miranda, or the Italians. Yet, when presented with someone like Caliban, the criteria for humanity seem vague and unsatisfactory. All of this contributes to the ambiguity of the play: this is a piece that asks questions without answering them. Having examined in particular the peculiarities of Caliban's case – his inchoate humanity, his place in the larger context of *The Tempest*'s fuzzy boundaries – I want now to consider Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*. A swift appraisal of Jonson's depiction of the early seventeenth-century entertainment landscape might cast the play as an ill-suited companion to Shakespeare's

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Shakespeare's The Tempest, ed. by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (New York, NY: G.K. Hall & Co., 1998), pp. 130-151, p. 138.

romance; indeed, the feeling of Jonson's play is a sharp contrast. That sensation is set early, in the contract set-up of the Induction:

> I am sent out to you here, with a *Scrivener*, and certaine Articles drawne out in hast betweene our *Author*, and you; which if you please to heare, and as they appeare reasonable, to approve of; the *Play* will follow presently.[41]

The induction speaks boldly, and directly to the audience. It also carries a sort of threat: an emissary is sent out to negotiate with the viewers, and the stakes (the commencement of the play) are apparently high. There is a clear sense that the Book-Holder (and the author, by proxy) is the person in control. The terms of progression are explicitly stated, and it is clear that this is a contract:

> It is further agreed that every person here, have his or their free-will of censure, to like or dislike at their owne charge, the *Author* having now departed with his right: It shall be lawfull for any man to judge his six pen'orth, so to his eighteene pence, 2. shillings, halfe a crowne, to the value of his place: Provided alwaies his place get not above his wit. And if he pay for halfe a dozen, hee may censure for all them too, so that he will undertake that they shall bee silent. Hee shall put in for *Censures* here, as they doe for *lots* at the *lottery*: mary, if he drop but sixe pence at the doore, and will censure a crownes worth, it is thought there is no conscience, or justice in that (Ind. 85-96).

This is a rhetoric of regulation, starting from the premise that the beginning of the play assumes the agreement of the audience to the quasi-legal contract forwarded on the playwright's behalf. The very existence of the contract implies that there is something here that needs regulating, some unspoken worry about a loss of order. Amongst other stipulations, the terms control individual response on the basis of financial investment, suggesting a belief that the audience, left unchecked, will attempt to move beyond their rights if presented with an opportunity. Embracing clear boundaries – a Jonsonian trademark – with this opening, the play takes a firm stance against a fluid, forgiving relationship between play and audience: it seeks to protect itself from unstructured interpretation. It is an index of the emotional tenor of

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[41] Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*, in *Ben Jonson*, vol. VI, ed. by C.H. Herford and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), Ind. 59-62.

the play that its first thought is of audience censure: unregulated pity would also presumably be disruptive, but that type of reaction is not even considered a possibility. Already, this looks much different than the relationship that Shakespeare imagines with his audience in *The Tempest*, via Prospero, in the play's epilogue:

> Let me not,
> Since I have my dukedom got
> And pardoned the deceiver, dwell
> In this bare island by your spell;
> But release me from my bands
> With the help of your good hands.
> […]
> As you from crimes would pardoned be,
> *Let your indulgence set me free.* (Epi. 5-20, my emphasis)

Prospero asks for 'indulgence', with an implied parallel to his own pardoning of his brother, placing himself in the hands of the audience, and leaving himself at the mercy of their reception. There is a clear sense that the audience 'permits' the story to end, accepting the offering 'as-is' by giving their applause. The move suggests a certain amount of faith in viewers: Prospero (and Shakespeare, by extension) assumes the audience's imaginative energy will work to his benefit. If there are issues left unresolved, he implicitly encourages the audience to fill in the gaps of the play by resolving any ambiguities themselves. This is precisely the scenario Jonson seeks to avoid in his Induction: Jonson cultivates an environment in which response must be measured, and controlled, and he offers a clearly defined, and regulated (if somewhat unforgiving) landscape in return.

The bid to eradicate emotional, responsive ambiguity significantly influences Jonson's cast of characters, a reality we face early in the Induction. Though we are left, even at *The Tempest*'s conclusion, unsure of precisely what types of creatures we have encountered, Jonson is very specific in his offering, outlining a cast that includes 'a strutting Horse-courser with a leere-Drunkard', as well as 'a fine oyly *Pig-woman* with her *Tapster* to bid you welcome'; 'A wise

Justice of Peace'; 'A civill Cutpurse' and 'A sweete Singer of new Ballads' (Ind. 119-25).[42] We are explicitly told what is to come, repeatedly reminded of what is reasonable and in-line with the author's intentions. Jonson reminds that 'how great soever the expectation bee, no person here is to expect more than hee knowes, or better ware than a *Fayre* will affoord' and above all he insists that each man 'content himselfe with the present' (Ind. 113-17). The prose, both in the Induction and in the play, more generally, is dense: it offers little or no room for off-piste interpretation, or ambiguity, and suggests Jonson's desire to guide his audience down a narrowly defined path. The Induction demonstrates this quite clearly, anticipating what the audience *might* do, and insisting that they recalibrate their attitudes in accordance with the author's wishes and intentions. It is, in many ways, a pre-emptive strike against the unguided response that may follow.

This type of manipulation of the relationship between the playwright and his audience is more than enough to distinguish *Bartholomew Fair* from *The Tempest*, but there is clearly a connection between the two plays. The engagement with Shakespeare's 'salvage, deformed slave' is direct, when in the Induction, the Stage Manager muses

> If there bee neuer a *Servant-monster* i'the Fayre; who can helpe it? he sayes; nor a nest of Antiques? Hee is loth to make Nature afraid in his Playes, like those that beget Tales, *Tempests*, and such like Drolleries. (Ind. 127-30, my emphasis)

This is more than just a general attack on what Jonson identifies as the 'drolleries' of *The Tempest*: there can be no doubt that the 'servant-monster' of that 'Tempest tale' is Caliban.[43] This particular comment is notable in its rather swift resolution of *The Tempest*'s central issue: it

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[42] Neil Rhodes has commented specifically on Ursula's animal qualities, noting that she is 'inseparable from the pigs which are her trade'. Rhodes' analysis of *Bartholomew Fair* examines Jonson's use of the grotesque, and argues that Jonson 'reach[es] a moral statement about human nature' that differs from that of Shakespeare. See *Elizabethan Grotesque* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 146 and p. 144.

[43] Of course, Jonson does offer us a Caliban of sorts, in Ursula's tapster Mooncalf. This is an explicit reference to Shakespeare's creature, who is called 'moon-calf' repeatedly by both Stephano and Trinculo (see II.ii.106; II.ii.110; II.ii.134). Significantly – though not surprisingly – the human/animal identity of Jonson's Mooncalf is never a source of debate.

is the matter-of-fact classification of the very character who, in Shakespeare's text, eludes concrete identification. Jonson seems determined to correct this ambiguity, classifying Caliban as a 'servant-*monster*', and effectively (and decisively) removing the question of his humanity. Not a man, but a monster: this is the first and final word on the matter, and in this respect *Bartholomew Fair* answers what for another playwright is the unanswerable question. Jonson succeeds in 'monstering' Caliban – something Stephano and Trinculo attempt, but are unable to fully achieve in the world of *The Tempest*, where the principal characters are less inclined to define each other in terms of 'human' and 'animal'.

Jonson's bleak, reductive monstering of a character who, for Shakespeare, is a candidate for both pity and humanity, speaks volumes about the world of *Bartholomew Fair*: this is a harsh emotional landscape, an environment seemingly incapable of supporting pity. The absence of pity has interesting implications for the community in the play, inasmuch as it seems to dismantle any sense of the human characters as fully distinct from (or evolved beyond) the larger animal community. There is no apparent distance between the 'human' and the 'animal' in Jonson's text: human characters are named as animals, marked by animals traits, and surrounded by animated objects. The principal characters, especially those of the fair, are all affiliated with animals in some way: Ursula is the 'mother o' the Pigs' (II.v.75), the 'walking Sow of tallow' (II.v.79); Mooncalf, her tapster, is marked by his 'grasshopper's thighs' (II.ii.67); Humphrey Wasp, is dubbed a 'pretty insect!' (I.iv.47); the singer is called *Nightingale*; Littlewit calls himself 'a Silke-worme' (I.i.2-3). Quarlous envisions Winwife as the stag when he asks 'O sir, ha' you tane soyle, here? (I.iii.1), and later Quarlous imagines a time when Winwife might 'walke as if thou had'st borrow'd legges of a *Spinner* and voyce of a *Cricket*' (I.ii.82-3). Bartholomew Cokes is labelled 'one that were made to catch flies, with his Sir *Cranion* [crane-fly] legs' (I.v.99-100); Ursula assures Knockem that he 'shall not fright me with [his] Lyon-

chap, sir, nor [his] tuskes' (II.iii.50-1). Edgworth relies on Nightingale's animal traits: 'You must use your *hawk's eye* nimbly, and *flye* the purse to the marke, still, where 'tis worne, and o' which side, that you may gi' me the signe with your *beake*, or hang your head that way i' the tune' (II.iv.42-5, my emphasis). These represent only a handful of the available examples; these types of references are so commonplace that the invocation of the animal within the play begins to feel wholly unremarkable. Nonetheless, there is no question that these are human characters – there is no hint of the genuine ambiguity that underpins Shakespeare's play. Whereas in *The Tempest*, animal characteristics open up questions of classification and kind, for Jonson the presentation of humans in animal terms is a satirical technique, the means by which he hints at a mutual rapacity. As Leatherhead suggests, humans are viewed as commodities, alongside animals:

> What do you lack? what do you buy, pretty Mistris! a fine Hobby-Horse, to make your son a Tilter? a Drum to make him a Souldier? a Fiddle, to make him a Reveller? What is't you lack? Little Dogs for your Daughters? *Or Babies, male, or female*? (III.ii.34-8, my emphasis).

Leatherhead's comment stresses the idea that everything in the world of the Fair is evaluated in terms of its material value, and in this way human children become things to be sold, a product similar to a dog or a toy. Consider this alongside Knockem's description of Win:

> is't not pitty, my delicate darke chestnut here, with the fine leane head, large fore-head, round eyes, even mouth, sharpe ears, long necke, thinne crest, close withers, plaine backe, deepe sides, short fillets, and full flankes: with a round belly, a plumpe buttocke, large thighes, knit knees, streight legges, short pasternes, smooth hoofes, and short heeles; should lead a dull honest womans life, that might live the life of a Lady? (IV.v.21-8).

This explicit, animalistic description of Win is not unusual in the context of the play's repeated use of animal language to describe human characters, and it is a practice that contributes to *Bartholomew Fair*'s overarching sense that these humans are conceived of in animal terms. Importantly, 'pitty' is reduced to a figure of speech; there is no engagement with the concept

of pity, no real sense that Knockem is seeking to cultivate it. The emotion seems not exist in any meaningful way.

In other ways, we are made aware that we are in an animal environment. The Induction's Book-Holder speaks of 'sweeping the stage […] Or gathering up the broken Apples for the beares within' (Ind. 51-3). This clearly characterises the space as one inhabited by animals; there is no effort to disassociate from the theatre's animal background.[44] Whereas others (Shakespeare included) were known to use their prologues to encourage their audiences to ignore the evidence of the playhouses' alternative function, Jonson draws attention to it, presumably on the theory that by directing the audience's focus in this way, he will also influence their interpretation of what they see.[45] Jonson even suggests the evidence of animality as a specific advantage for this play, another sensorial contribution to the play's authentic representation of the Fair:

> And though the *Fayre* be not kept in the same Region, that some here, perhaps, would have it, yet thinke, that therein the *Author* hath observ'd a speciall *Decorum*, the place being as durty as *Smithfield*, and as stinking every whit (Ind. 156-60).

This realism – however unsavoury – seems to suit the characters of *Bartholomew Fair*. Neither their behaviour nor their priorities match the commonplace early modern view of humanity; there is no apparent desire to 'elevate' mankind on the grounds of reason, cleanliness, or moderation. These characters are, by majority, pitiless, and uninterested in behaving 'humanely': theft is rampant; people are indistinct goods to be traded, sold, or stolen. They are biological humans, but behavioural beasts. Nonetheless, their identities are stable, and clearly

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[44] For more on the use of the theatres as spaces for both human and animal-dominated events (plays and bear-baiting, to name the obvious examples), see Andreas Höfele, *Stage, Stake, and Scaffold: Humans and Animals in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[45] Shakespeare, by contrast, shows comparatively little interest in acknowledging the physical realities of the playhouse. The notable exception to this – the prologue to Henry V – only admits the limitations as part of a larger project to encourage the audience to overlook them: the prologue speaks of what occurs 'On this unworthy scaffold', and wonders if it is possible for the audience to imagine that 'this cockpit hold[s] | The vasty fields of France'. He questions the likelihood of confining the history 'Within this wooden O', and hopes that viewers will employ their 'imaginary forces' during the course of the play (Prologue, *passim*).

defined: these characters do not share the ambiguity that marks, for example, the questionably human Caliban. There is obviously some comfort in this clarity and the stability it offers, though the resulting picture is rather bleak.

The pervasive absence of pity in *Bartholomew Fair* is made all the more evident by Adam Overdo's misguided efforts to be the sole practitioner of the emotion: he is connected to every instance in which pity is staged in the play – always as the would-be dispenser of unjustified pity. The most striking instance of this occurs as the disguised Overdo is put in the stocks (having been falsely accused of being a cut-purse). Observing Quarlous (himself disguised, as Trouble-All) in a fabricated demonstration of deference, Overdo 'learns' that Trouble-All was 'put out on his place by Justice Overdo' and subsequently became consumed with obtaining Overdo's warrant before undertaking any action: 'he will not eat a crust, nor drink a little, nor make him in his apparel: ready. His wife, Sirreverence, cannot get him make his water or shift his shirt without his warrant' (IV.i.60-2). This, of course, is not an accurate report, but Overdo does not know it, and the resulting connection he perceives – 'How I am bound to satisfie this poore man' – relies on the pity he feels for someone 'that is of so good a nature to mee, out of his wits, where there is no room left for dissembling' (IV.i.63-5). Overdo's subsequent commitment to pity is apparent in his resolution to 'be more tender', and his later comment suggests that he imagines it as a necessary part of his identity, a trait central to the person he wishes to be: 'compassion may become a *Justice*, though it be a weaknesse, I confesse, and neerer a vice then a vertue' (IV.i.82-4). Overdo's pity is importantly tied to his feeling that he is different from (in fact, better than) the others: his dispensation of pity towards Trouble-All is connected to his own supposed importance. The episode looks like nothing so much as a parodic re-staging of the key moment between Ariel and Prospero in *The Tempest*, in which Prospero responds to the spirit's suggestion that his 'affections […] become tender'.

Nonetheless, in practice, Overdo disproves any suggestion that the capacity for pity is the mark of a more desirable form of being: his attempts to practice pity throughout the play are consistently misguided, and in fact typically contribute to worsening the suffering of others. Another notable application of pity involves Edgworth, the cutpurse, whom Overdo takes for an innocent, civilised man:

> What pitty 'tis, so civill a young man should haunt this debaucht company? here's the bane of the youth of our time apparant. A proper penman, I see't in his countenance; he has a good Clerks looke with him. (II.iv.30-3)

Edgworth does not belong to the community of 'civil young men' – that type of community does not exist in *Bartholomew Fair*. Overdo's impulse to pity almost immediately backfires: this liaison with Edgworth is how he ends up in the stocks. Similarly, the pity Overdo feels for Trouble-All facilitates the theft of the marriage license, and the subsequent undoing of the arranged union of his ward with Cokes. As a result, the impulse to pity – far from prompting questions of humanity, as in *The Tempest* – here looks like mere plot device. The connection between Overdo's missteps and the progression of the play is quite publicly outlined at the play's conclusion, by Quarlous:

> Sir, why do you not goe on with the enormity? Are you opprest with it? I'le helpe you: harke you Sir, i' your eare, your *Innocent young man*, you have tane such care of, all this day, is a *Cutpurse*; that hath got all your brother *Cokes* his things, and help'd you to your beating, and the stocks; if you have a minde to hang him now, and shew him your *Magistrates* wit, you may: but I should think it were better, recovering the goods, and to save your estimation in him.[46] I thank you, S^{r}. for the gift of your *Ward*, M^{rs}. *Grace*: look you, here is your hand & seale, by the way. (V.vi.73-83)

This has all been made possible by Overdo's overzealous pity. This moment – the final assembly of characters, the resolution of the action – should be a moment of triumph for Overdo: it would be an obvious moment to re-establish his authority, and to reveal his control

[46] The Oxford Edition alters this line slightly: 'but I should think it were better, recovering the goods, and to save your estimation in *pardoning* him'; this only supports the notion of Overdo as a reworked Prospero, given that the latter's pardoning of Caliban is a significant moment in that play's conclusion. See Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*, in *The Alchemist and Other Plays*, ed. by Gordon Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), V.vi.78.

over this community. Of course this is impossible, in part because he is so consistently exploited in the play: the final moments only confirm the extent to which he lacks authority.

The concluding moments of *Bartholomew Fair* are perhaps even more striking when considered alongside *The Tempest*. Despite his evident relationship to a 'tender' Prospero, Overdo's tendency to pity aligns him, in other respects, most closely with Miranda: both act on impulse. For Miranda, this trait is relatively unproblematic: it suits her position within the play, and moreover the feeling is compatible within the emotional landscape. In spite of some moments of ambiguity, pity is largely depicted as a positive attribute, something worth preserving. Things are more complex for Overdo, not least because he *acts* like Miranda, but styles himself as a Prospero figure. Overdo's final scene of summation clearly evokes one of the final scenes in *The Tempest*, although there is a strikingly different tone to the proceedings. Perhaps most significantly, Prospero is quite obviously in command, the person propelling the action, as opposed to the instrument by which it continues:

> Sir, I invite your highness and your train
> To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest
> For this one night, which (part of it) I'll waste
> With such discourse as, I not doubt, shall make it
> Go quick away – the story of my life,
> And the particular accidents gone by
> Since I came to this isle – and in the morn
> I'll bring you to your ship, and so to Naples,
> Where I have hope to see the nuptial
> Of these our dear-beloved solemnized;
> And thence retire me to my Milan, where
> Every third thought shall be my grave. (V.i.302-13)

Because he has actively manipulated the interactions of the other characters, he enjoys the most complete understanding of what has passed on the island: it is Prospero who can explain what has happened. He has also secured his restoration and re-established his power by presenting the already-united Ferdinand and Miranda; he enters the final scene with evidence of his success. Moreover, the invitation Prospero extends is unprompted, the natural

conclusion of the already-triumphant efforts to control the actions of the others; the offer, and the implied comfort and control it implies, resolutely establishes his position vis-à-vis the others. By contrast, Overdo's invitation is solicited – in fact, virtually forced – and the feast becomes a celebration of the failure of his controlling efforts. Prospero, therefore, ends *The Tempest* the benevolent victor, in a position of sufficient advantage that he can afford to pity those remorseful characters who have wronged him in the past. Overdo's reality is considerably less attractive: for him, this final moment is one of humiliation, the confirmation of his lack of control, and everyone else's lack of remorse about their behaviour. So while Prospero ends in a position to mete out pity along carefully measured considerations of kind, Overdo does not: his pity makes him the fool of *Bartholomew Fair*, the supposedly 'wise Justice of Peace' offered in lieu of 'a Jugler, with an Ape' (Ind. 123-4).

Nonetheless, it is not clear from the disaster of Adam Overdo that pity is uniformly problematic. If Prospero is a type of paragon – at the very least, he is plausibly the victor of *The Tempest*, human *and* humane – then his open embrace of kind-for-kind pity is both crucial and complicating. This complication, I want to argue, is precisely where pity finds its significance. The frequency with which pity emerges in the context of human-animal interaction, and the recurring, implicit worry over properly identifying *kinds* of creatures towards whom pity ought to be applied, suggests pity naturally relates to the boundaries between the human and the animal, and the subsequent deconstruction of these boundaries. In both *The Tempest* and *Bartholomew Fair*, the emotion has an important stake in humanity, and its negotiation bears a significant role in the wider animal community. Shakespeare imagines a world in which pity (for the most part) flows freely across the boundary between the human and the animal. *The Tempest* imagines pity as something which is present but difficult to pin down, a factor that threatens (or indeed collapses) any clear distinction between kinds:

characters might be human, animal, or might occupy some middle ground between these two poles, and these problems of classification arise when we are asked to consider relating through pity. Perhaps predictably, the lack of clarity in this area necessarily affects the play's emotional landscape, which lacks the control and clear delineation that Jonson clearly seeks in *Bartholomew Fair*. Jonson's characters are seemingly unable to feel pity for their fellows, and as a result they are easier to define (though in this way, they become animalistic). In the moments where Jonson explores the impulse to pity as a human trait – placing it, as he does, in the archetypal 'Adam' Overdo, he portrays the emotion as inherently compromising, the means by which people are exploited. By mounting this two-pronged attack – eradicating pity in most of the characters, lampooning it in one, focused depiction – Jonson effectively abolishes the ambiguity that Shakespeare cultivates, but, significantly, he does so at the cost of his characters' 'humanity'. Common to both playwrights is the instinct to implicate pity somehow in the project of classifying humankind apart from animal kind. Jonson reworks Shakespeare's rather messy emotional landscape in the interest of clarity and control, but in so doing seems only to confirm pity as a central consideration in the human-animal divide.

CONCLUSION

'War is waged over the matter of pity'.[1]

I began this work with Burckhardt's notion of the 'Renaissance man': self-contained, and autonomous. With this is mind, it seems fitting to close with Nietzsche, whose extensive objections to pity were clearly influenced by the work of Burckhardt, his friend and colleague. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche writes that

> We modern men, very vulnerable, very sensitive, giving and taking hundreds of things into consideration, we actually imagine that the sensitive humanity we represent, the achieved unanimity in caring, in helpfulness, in mutual trust, is a sign of positive progress that puts us far ahead of men of the Renaissance. But this is what every age thinks, what it has to think. What is certain is that we cannot place ourselves in Renaissance conditions, not even in our imaginations: *our nerves could not stand that reality*.[2]

Nietzsche specifically references pity as a crucial component of this thesis of acquired weakness, calling the emotion that which 'makes suffering into something infectious' by 'preserv[ing] things that are ripe for decline' and 'keeping alive an abundance of failures of every type'.[3] He notes that 'Strong ages, *noble* cultures see pity, "neighbour love", and the lack of self and self-feeling as something contemptible', and he identifies this as what made the Renaissance 'the last *great* age' (*Twilight*, p. 212, emphasis in original). The passage offers yet another reason for surveying pity in the Renaissance. For Nietzsche, the Renaissance attitude towards to pity is appealing, because (in his estimation) the approach was to eradicate it altogether. For him, this makes the Renaissance the last period in which the emotion was handled 'correctly'. In this respect, it is worth looking at the early modern treatment of pity in the hopes of discovering where we 'went wrong'. There are clear Burckhardtian undertones in

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[1] Derrida, 'The Animal That Therefore I Am', p. 397.
[2] Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, in The Anti-Christ, Ecco Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings, p. 211, my emphasis.
[3] Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, p. 6.

Nietzsche's analysis, which identifies the policies of 'mutual trust', vulnerability and sensitivity of his own age as an obvious, but negative evolution from the attitudes at work in the Renaissance. For him, people in the Renaissance were stronger and more emotionally resilient, and he constantly refers back to this period as the last in which humanity was unencumbered and uncompromised by a pervading sense of pity as a valuable trait.

Of course, my own analysis of pity in the Renaissance demonstrates quite clearly that Nietzsche's perception of the period is untrue. I have sought to identify the early modern obsession with (and anxiety about) pity, whilst at the same time suggesting that, for all its complications, pity facilitated forms of relation and helped the early moderns define themselves in important, positive ways. My hope is that these pages present Renaissance pity as a prominent source of struggle, doubt, and vulnerability, *but also* something that prompted mutual connection, and shared community. There is something vital and constructive in this type of fellow-feeling, in spite of it seeming, again and again, so fundamentally problematic. Nietzsche was correct in identifying the Renaissance as an important period in the history of pity, but for a different reason: people in this era were acutely aware of the challenges posed by pity, even as they conceived of the emotion as a vital component of their identities. An open attack like Nietzsche's suggests that we have lost this sense of pity's contribution to human experience. Perhaps the value of studying Renaissance pity, therefore, is to rediscover some of these positive elements.

The work of this thesis shows the importance of pity, its centrality: it appears over and over, and in many different types of community in Renaissance England. Even when it fails to materialise, its absence is heavily discussed. Returning, briefly, to Aylett, with whom I opened the thesis, humanity is described as 'Man['s] onely Vertue', and pity within that humanity as the means by which 'we mutuall helpes to others heere supply'. Pity is clearly a good thing, by this

conception, because it protects people, 'the weakest creature[s] that God hath made' (sig. C6ᵛ). However, it seems that even this benefit of pity is not enough to make the emotion unequivocally advisable. For example, an unintended theme that has emerged in the course of this work is that of sexual violence: it crops up as the result of refused pity in Chapter Two, and the evidence of it prompts pity in the third chapter. Even in the final chapter, Miranda's willingness to pity Caliban seems to open her up to the threat of rape. This perhaps speaks, again, to the considerations of vulnerability that emerge alongside pity, for in spite of Aylett's assertion that pity protects against *physical* weakness, it also produces a significant emotional vulnerability. The intimacy of the emotion – evident particularly in the notions of intolerable feeling that I explored in Chapter One – makes people feel compromised, or in danger of becoming so. In this way, then, perhaps what this exploration of pity also reveals is the set-up for the dominant, negative associations that characterise the emotion in subsequent eras.

In reality, however, Nietzsche did not prompt this research: it is inspired by the consistently sceptical reaction I face whenever I discuss my work in a non-academic context. Imagine the following sentence, said today: 'I pity you'. What springs to mind, more than likely, is a scene of high drama; we picture the sentence thrown down at the feet of someone pathetic and unworthy. It is a way of establishing distance. The belief that pity is somehow rooted in contempt constantly emerges, when I report my research topic without additional explanation. The sense, always, is that pity is something vicious, something offered as an insult: people often ask me if I find the research 'depressing'. To me, this strongly suggests a perception that situations involving pity are somehow fundamentally 'bad', or unsavoury. Linguistic convention is at least partially to blame for this: it is simply no longer fashionable to use the word 'pity' when we mean something like 'compassion', 'sympathy' or 'fellow-feeling'. The term is no longer used, I would argue, precisely because we have developed this notion

that pity is a negative emotion, something from which we should naturally attempt to gain distance. In many respects, this goes back to the Nietzschean ideal, and is a development of it: it seems to be the distaste that the philosopher articulates, put into practice. People do seem to want to remove themselves from any engagement with pity – even when that engagement is hypothetical, a discussion of a research topic.

There are, I think, some connections to be made in light of the evolving interpretation of what is 'bad' about pity, as it is not necessarily obvious how we may have progressed from one point to another. As I have already noted, the objections that I have identified, in Renaissance England, for the most part emphasise problems of vulnerability and individual compromise. In this context, pity is bad because it produces emotional vulnerability in the person who offers it: he is weakened by what he encounters, susceptible to and overrun by the suffering of others. In the modern interpretation, I would argue, pity has become the problem of the recipient: we do not want pity now, because it indicates that someone else has identified something objectionable in us – something unsavoury, and potentially something unresolvable. There is no connection in this exchange, and in fact it produces a clean break between two separate entities: the pitied, now isolated in his own objectionability, and the pitier, who severs ties following the pronouncement. These two models of exchange look very different, and in fact, they are polar opposites: one is entirely about connection, the other about separation. If the modern interpretation has, in fact, lost this sense of forming connection, it is easy to see how the emotion lost its appeal: this, I have argued, is the very thing that redeems pity in the Renaissance. It is the thing we seem to forget, when we talk about the emotion today, and the very reason that I have never found pity 'depressing'.

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