

‘DRESS AND UNDRRESS THY SOUL’:
NAKEDNESS AND THEOLOGY IN EARLY MODERN LITERATURE AND CULTURE
by
AMY ELIZABETH ROUTLEDGE

A thesis submitted to the
University of Birmingham
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The Shakespeare Institute
Department of English
College of Arts and Law
University of Birmingham
August 2014

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how concepts and images of nakedness are used to shape literary and theological meaning and experience within the literature and culture of early modern England. It considers how nakedness functions within a number of key literary and spiritual forms, including theological treatises, the spiritual allegory, religious lyrics, and drama. The first three chapters establish the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of nakedness, through an examination of the Bible, the works of Martin Luther and John Calvin, Anglican Church practice and debate, and anatomical texts and practices. The final three chapters offer a close analysis of the meaning and affect of nakedness within three distinct literary forms. This thesis contends that nakedness has a spiritual potency: a spiritual charge recognised and utilised by early modern theologians, preachers and writers, as they debated, defined and expressed their faith. It considers how far the meaning of nakedness is shaped by gender, and how early modern society negotiated the tensions between bodily sanctity and obscenity, naked praise and pornography. The thesis concludes by reflecting how far tropes and experiences of nakedness in our time remain obscurely charged, albeit in non-theological contexts, with something like theological meaning.

DEDICATION

To my parents,
Michelle and Damian Routledge,
with love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has benefited from the support of family and friends, and the generosity and expertise of many members of the Department of English at the University of Birmingham. My supervisor, Ewan Fernie, has inspired and guided me throughout this journey. His insight and encouragement have been invaluable. Martin Wiggins has offered kind advice and support, from the early days of drafting my research proposal, to the final stages of writing up and submission. I am truly grateful to both. Thanks are due to Hugh Adlington for detailed feedback and guidance on an early version of Chapter 2. I am grateful to Tara Hamling for her expert supervision of my MA dissertation – it was this which first encouraged me to think about doctoral study. The Shakespeare Institute and the Department of English have provided a supportive environment in which to complete the thesis. In particular, I thank Michael Dobson, Anne McDermott, Tom Lockwood, and Erin Sullivan, for their interest, encouragement and advice along the way.

I owe a huge debt of thanks to my family and friends. First and foremost, I thank my parents and sister. I would have been lost without their love, patience, generosity and good humour over the last three years. My mum, in particular, has spent many hours listening to my ideas and offering valuable feedback and advice. Cathleen McKague has been a wonderful friend throughout, and generously took on the pain-staking process of proof-reading much of my final draft. I am immensely grateful for her comments, support, and ruthless eye for detail! Matthew Haines, Francesca Teoh and Alison Woodward have been there for me with friendship and humour, and Elmyra has been there through it all. Thanks are due to many of the students of the Shakespeare Institute for sharing their advice and expertise. In particular, I thank Paul Hamilton, Joy Leslie Gibson, Victoria Jackson, Harry

Newman, Emily Oliver, David Paxton and Mohamed Salim Said. Their suggestions are reflected within the final thesis.

I am grateful to the Graduate School Research Support Fund and the Lizz Ketterer Trust for their financial awards. These have helped to support some of the research trips and conferences that have informed the thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REFERENCES, ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS	i
INTRODUCTION	1
Sources and Methodology	15
The Current Field	18
The Chapters	22
CHAPTER 1: NAKEDNESS AND THE BIBLE	25
I: ‘And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed’	27
II: ‘[A]nd they sewed figge tree leaues together, and made themselues breeches’	37
III: Naked Shame Beyond Eden.....	45
IV: Nakedness and Prophecy	52
V: Divine Nakedness.....	55
VI Conclusion	60
CHAPTER 2: DISROBING AND NAKEDNESS IN REFORMATION THEOLOGY	63
I: ‘Clothed’ with ‘the form of sin’	64
II: Christ’s Covering	76
III: The English Reformation	92
Conclusion	115
CHAPTER 3: ANATOMY, THEOLOGY, AND NAKEDNESS	119
Conclusion	152
CHAPTER 4: DISROBING IN <i>THE FAERIE QUEENE</i> BOOK I	154
Conclusion	196
CHAPTER 5: NAKEDNESS, DISROBING, AND CONCEALMENT IN THE RELIGIOUS LYRICS OF DONNE AND HERBERT	199
I: The Religious Lyric – Questions of Form	200
II: ‘Dress and undress thy soul’	204
III Conclusion.....	236
CHAPTER 6: NAKEDNESS AND THEOLOGY IN <i>MEASURE FOR MEASURE</i>	238
Conclusion	275
FINAL CONCLUSION	277
Part I.....	277
Part II.....	288
WORKS CITED	293
Primary Sources	293
Secondary Sources	301

REFERENCES, ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Wherever possible, I have retained the original spellings and punctuation of my primary sources. Due to typographical constraints, I have silently emended the long ‘s’.

Unless otherwise stated, all biblical references are taken from *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, 3rd edn (Pleasant Hope: L. L. Brown, 1993).

I have strived to employ gender neutral terms such as ‘humankind’ and ‘humanity’. However, for matters of simplicity and conciseness, I occasionally use ‘man’ in its generic sense.

The following abbreviations are used:

EEBO *Early English Books Online*

OED *Oxford English Dictionary*

ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

KJB *The Authorised King James Bible*

INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to investigate how and why concepts and images of nakedness and disrobing are used to convey and stimulate spiritual thoughts and feelings, and to express Protestant belief, within the literature and culture of early modern England. Kenneth Clark, and in more recent years, Michael Gill and Philip Carr-Gomm, have outlined the complex cultural history of nakedness. Their respective books, *The Nude* (1956), *Image of the Body* (1989), and *A Brief History of Nakedness* (2010) establish the provocative nature of the undressed body, and the curious ambivalence with which it has been treated throughout social history.¹ Nakedness, Clark asserts, ‘provides a vivid reminder’ of various ‘branches’ of the ‘human experience’: ‘harmony, energy, ecstasy, humility, pathos’.² Gill reflects upon the potential of nakedness to disrupt and to disturb, its ‘ability to arouse fear and discomfort and other emotions that many would prefer to suppress’.³ These observations confirm the curious centrality of nakedness to humankind’s sense of self. They signal the capacity of the naked body to express and uncover a diverse range of extreme and deep-seated feelings. This thesis is interested in the affective potential of early modern nakedness and undressing, and its capacity to prompt profound questions about spiritual identity. It questions how concepts and images of nakedness are used by preachers and writers to provoke and express spiritual thoughts, sensations, and states. Above all, it seeks to establish how these concepts and images shape early modern literary meaning and experience. My thesis will be the first to

¹ Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art* (London: Penguin Books, 1960 [1956]).
Michael Gill, *Image of the Body: Aspects of the Nude* (New York: Doubleday, 1989).
Philip Carr-Gomm, *A Brief History of Nakedness* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010).

² Clark, pp. 6-7.

³ Gill, p. 4.

conduct an extensive examination of the theological significance of nakedness across a range of early modern literary and spiritual forms.

What do we mean when we speak of nakedness? Within their monographs, Clark, Gill, and Carr-Gomm approach nakedness as the literal, bodily condition of being unclothed. However, this definition is complicated by the co-existent concept of ‘the nude’: ‘the naked or undraped human figure conceived of as an aesthetic object’.⁴ ‘The nude’, Clark argues, is the undressed body made ‘complete’. Unlike nakedness, which Clark describes as unpolished and raw, the nude presents the human form in an idealised and finalised state.⁵ Clark’s seminal differentiation of the naked and the nude has prompted a number of interesting commentaries. Margaret R. Miles, for instance, reflects that Clark’s naked body ‘becomes “a nude” by having its feelings (“embarrassment”) removed along with the visible symbols of its individuality and personality’.⁶ Thus, Miles points to nakedness as a condition which has as much to do with the exposure of the individual’s psychology, social identity, and emotional state as it has with the exposure of the physical body. Or rather, the undressing of the body stimulates a corresponding revelation of ‘individuality’, ‘personality’ and ‘feelings’, which are somehow inscribed upon or expressed through the uncovered flesh. ‘The nude’, in contrast, is stripped of these individual traits. Within this context, nakedness is anonymous and abstracted: the focus has shifted from the undressed figure as subject to the undressed figure as a mere object of contemplation (‘an aesthetic object’). John Berger expresses this distinction even more strongly by asserting, ‘To be naked is to be oneself. To be nude is to be seen by others and yet not recognised for oneself’.⁷ Thus, nakedness is aligned with self-assertion, with individual subjectivity. To be nude, in contrast, is to be

⁴ "nude, adj. (and adv.) and n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2014. Web. 1 May 2014.

⁵ Clark, pp. 4, 10.

⁶ Margaret R. Miles, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Tunbridge Wells: Burn & Oates, 1992), p. 14.

⁷ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC; Penguin, 1972), p. 54.

captured within an external gaze, and to be defined by others: it is a state of self-estrangement.

Of course, the concept of ‘the nude’, as opposed to the ‘naked’, did not emerge until the latter half of the eighteenth century.⁸ And yet, the chapters which follow establish the corresponding complexity of early modern treatments of the undressed body. I will go on to demonstrate that nakedness is perceived, at turns, as deeply personal *and* anonymous, subjective *and* objective, glorious *and* obscene. My thesis puts pressure on the relationships of these ‘ways of seeing’, experiencing, and representing disrobing. Indeed, the texts and cultural practices examined throughout this thesis reveal that early modern writers, theologians, anatomists, and worshippers both struggled with and utilised the contradictions of the naked state: the conception and experience of nakedness as a state of both ‘being oneself’, and being divided or alienated from oneself and others. This thesis argues that these tensions were used as a means of exploring and evoking matters of faith, sin, mortality, and salvation. It investigates how the language and imagery of nakedness were utilised in order to examine and convey the spiritual state of humankind: to represent the condition of the soul before God.

Although the language and imagery of *bodily* nakedness form the primary area of investigation within this study, my thesis adopts an inclusive approach to the term. In fact, throughout this thesis I demonstrate that physical, social, psychological, and spiritual forms of exposure are richly intertwined. At times, this necessitates a broader and more receptive approach, which is open to the interplay of literal and less literal forms of nakedness. The definitions of ‘nakedness’ supplied by the *OED* range from ‘having no clothing on the body, stripped to the skin, or wearing only an undergarment’, ‘bare, destitute, or devoid of

⁸ The first *OED* entry for ‘nude’ dates from 1760: "nude, adj. (and adv.) and n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2014. Web. 1 May 2014.

something’, ‘uncovered’ and ‘openness to attack or injury’, to ‘freedom from ostentation or unnecessary ornament’, ‘absence of disguise or concealment’ and ‘unembodied, unencumbered, free’.⁹ Drawing upon Jean-Luc Marion’s theological concept of the ‘saturated phenomenon’, this thesis considers how far nakedness performs as a phenomenon: that which ‘cannot be wholly contained within concepts that can be grasped by our understanding. It gives so much in intuition that there is always an excess left over’, as Marion theorises. It has a ‘radical independence’ and is ‘ungraspable and incomprehensible by definition’.¹⁰ Certainly, the effects of nakedness are wide-ranging and potent: it produces an excess of affect, which intellect struggles to rationalise and contain.

Miles captures the dizzying semantic potential of the undressed body within *Carnal Knowing* (1992). Here, she speaks of ‘the bewildering array of meanings associated with naked bodies embedded in the recorded practices, texts, and visual images of communities in the Christian West’.¹¹ The *OED*’s definitions for ‘nakedness’ gesture towards this ‘bewildering array of meanings’. The first definitions, as listed above, align nakedness with exposure and a sense of ‘lack’ (‘no clothing’, ‘stripped’, ‘bare’, ‘devoid’, ‘destitute’). Nakedness is framed here as a state of weakness, rawness, and vulnerability. However, the definitions which follow challenge this equation of the naked state with deficiency and frailty: ‘Freedom from ostentation or unnecessary ornament’, ‘absence of disguise or concealment’, and ‘unembodied, unencumbered, free’. These interpretations express the absence or lack surrounding the condition of ‘nakedness’ as an asset. Nakedness is linked here to notions of purity, authenticity, and liberation. This conception of nakedness as a symbol of empowerment and honesty stands in dramatic contrast to its association with

⁹ "nakedness, n.". *OED Online*. March 2013. Oxford University Press. 14 March 2013
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/124895?redirectedFrom=nakedness>>.

¹⁰ Shane Mackinlay, *Interpreting Excess: Jean-Luc Marion, Saturated Phenomena and Hermeneutics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), pp. 1-4.

¹¹ Miles, p. xi.

shameful human infirmity, as captured within Clark's image of the 'huddled and defenceless body'.¹²

William Shakespeare's *King Lear* (c.1605-06) offers a potent illustration of the rich and often contradictory connotations surrounding nakedness.¹³ Observing the naked 'Poor Tom' within the midst of the storm, Lear declares:

Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou
 ow'st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep
 no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha? Here's three on's
 us are sophisticated; thou art the thing itself.
 Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor,
 bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings:
 come, unbutton here.

(III. 4. 101-107)

To be naked, Lear suggests, is to be honest, even to the point of brutality. It is to abandon one's delusions of human grandeur, and to embrace the base corporeality and frailty masked by earthly 'lendings': 'unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, | bare, forked animal as thou art'. Edgar's nakedness reflects the humbling condition of his fellow men. As such, it has the potential to disrupt and to embarrass. The Fool, for instance, expresses his relief that Poor Tom's genitals, at least, remain concealed: 'he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed' (III. 4. 64-65). While nakedness is framed in terms of debasement, it is likewise attended by a sense of transcendence and tranquillity, a notion that 'To be worst, | The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune, | stands still in esperance, lives not in fear' (IV. 1. 2-4).

¹² Clark, p. 1.

¹³ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (London: Arden, 2007 [c.1605-06]).

In Lear's eyes, Poor Tom's state of undress symbolises and stimulates a deeper understanding and acceptance of what it is to be human: 'Thou art the thing itself'. There is a nobility within this admission of humanity's essential lowliness. And yet, Lear addresses the naked Edgar, one who paradoxically uses nudity as a disguise. Edgar adopts nakedness as part of the costume of madness, which he uses precisely to evade detection. While physically at his most vulnerable and exposed, he is socially concealed by his undressed state. Meanwhile, Lear projects his own history upon Poor Tom's naked body. He questions, 'Have his daughters brought him to this pass? | Couldst thou save nothing?' (III. 4. 62-63). In this sense, the naked Edgar both is and is not 'the thing itself'. Thus, Shakespeare plays with the conception and experience of nakedness as that which can both reveal and conceal the individual. To use Berger's terms, to be naked, here, is both 'to be oneself' and 'to be seen by others and not recognised for oneself'.¹⁴

Within Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* (c.1612) the imagery of nakedness and dress serves a slightly different purpose.¹⁵ It evokes human and divine relationships and priorities. Of course, the Christian climate of this play contrasts with the emphatically pre-Christian setting of *King Lear*. Speaking to Cromwell, Cardinal Wolsey states:

There take an inventory of all I have:
To the last penny: 'tis the king's. My robe,
And my integrity to heaven, is all
I dare now call mine own. O Cromwell, Cromwell,
Had I but served my God with half the zeal

¹⁴ Berger, p. 54.

¹⁵ William Shakespeare, *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth*, in *The RSC Shakespeare: William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: The Royal Shakespeare Company and Macmillan, 2007 [c.1612]), pp. 1382-1455.

I served my king, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

(III. 2. 524-530)

Wolsey speaks of nakedness as powerlessness and vulnerability, and yet he attributes this exposure to his loss of spiritual, rather than earthly favour and authority. There is an echo of humankind's fall from Eden within his lamentation of his lost grace. Within the following chapters I argue that such exchanges of spiritual and earthly experiences and concerns play a central role within early modern literary and cultural representations of nakedness and undressing. Shakespeare's scenes of disrobing gain additional meaning from their theatrical contexts. Indeed, Michael Witmore captures one of the fundamental characteristics of the theatrical mode when he refers to theatre as an 'embodied medium'.¹⁶ Chapter 6, which examines *Measure for Measure* (c.1603), considers the impact of the theatrical setting upon the representation and reception of undressing.¹⁷ I revisit the relationship of nakedness and the theatre later within this Introduction.

Carr-Gomm observes that 'it is religion that, before the advent of psychology, articulated and built upon humanity's concern with itself and its bodily form'.¹⁸ This is certainly true of Christianity. Within the Bible, images of nakedness are used to articulate the fall of humanity and the subsequent estrangement of God from his people, as Chapter 1 will establish. Nakedness evokes human sin, shame, and sexual temptation. And yet, to render the Christian body 'a disgraceful object, the repository of evil lusts, which is destined to rot away while the soul, released from its mortal prison, lives eternally', as D. M. Field does, is

¹⁶ Michael Witmore, *Shakespearean Metaphysics* (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 23.

¹⁷ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. by J. W. Lever (London: Arden, 2004 [c.1603]).

¹⁸ Carr-Gomm, p. 9.

to simplify biblical and ecclesiastical treatments of the flesh.¹⁹ Field overlooks some key biblical episodes in which the naked body is set forth as a symbol of spiritual triumph. What of the sacred beauty and potency of Christ's incarnation? What of the nakedness of the prophets? And what of naked baptism? Chapters 1 and 2 not only consider the relationship of nakedness and sin, but also examine how the exposed body is reconceived, within the Christian faith, in terms of spiritual purity. The life of St Francis of Assisi serves as an exemplar of this spiritualised embrace of naked vulnerability. Hagiographers recall how a defiant Francis stripped naked before his father in order to signal his resignation of earthly concerns. Francis is likewise reported to have spouted St Jerome's dictum, '*Nudus Nudum Christum Sequi*', that is, 'naked to follow the naked Christ'.²⁰

Despite the presence of such positive representations of Christian nakedness, the literal re-enactment of undress for purposes of prophecy or spiritual protest proved highly contentious within early modern cultural practice. In 1652, for instance, a woman undressed at Whitehall Chapel during a sermon upon the resurrection.²¹ Her motivation for disrobing remains a mystery. Might she have intended to signal solidarity with the risen Christ – to offer a visual symbol of the resurrection to come, when all would be laid bare before God? Or to gesture towards her Christian rejection of all material trappings? Whether her intent was spiritual or otherwise, the woman's public act of disrobing prompted outrage. A letter from one David Brown demands redress from the minister who presided over the act. Brown condemns the disrobing in extreme and morally charged terms, as 'shamefull', 'impudent',

¹⁹ D. M. Field, *The Nude in Art* (London: The Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1981), p. 36.

²⁰ Kenneth Clark, *Civilization: A Personal View* (London: BBC Books, 1991 [1969]), p. 74.

²¹ David Brown, 'Naked woman, or a rare epistle sent to Mr. Peter Sterry minister at Whitehall' (London: 1652), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99865902> [accessed 20 March 2011].

‘vile’, and ‘barbarous’. Silence on the matter, he argues, would encourage wickedness to breed within the community.²²

Early modern representations of the so-called ‘Adamites’ also evoked contempt for adult nakedness within the spiritual sphere. A number of books and pamphlets stated that members of this group gathered naked to worship God, in what they claimed was a reconstruction of the innocent, Edenic state of Adam and Eve.²³ The authors of these texts treated the Adamites with suspicion, fear and ridicule.²⁴ Chapter 1 examines how their nakedness was coloured with perverse sexual meaning. Richard Rambuss explores the relationship between spiritual devotion and eroticism in his monograph *Closet Devotions* (1998).²⁵ My thesis contributes to Rambuss’ work through its consideration of how the sexual and obscene connotations of nakedness are utilised for spiritual effect within a number of distinct literary and cultural forms. For instance, Chapter 2 demonstrates that Martin Luther employed sexually charged images within his theological redefinition of the relationship of Christ and humanity, while Chapter 4 investigates the relationship of sexual nakedness and spiritual meaning and experience within Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*.²⁶ Chapter 5, which examines nakedness within the religious lyric, engages particularly deeply with Rambuss’ study. Closely linked to this consideration of sexual meaning is the question of how far the treatment and reception of nakedness is shaped by gender.

Gender is known to have governed social treatments of nakedness as far back as the Classical period. Clark informs us that young Greek men ‘stripped naked for exercise and

²² Ibid.

²³ David Cressy, ‘The Adamites Exposed: Naked Radicals in the English Revolution’, in *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England: Tales of Discord and Dissension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 251-280.

²⁴ Cressy, p. 251.

²⁵ Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998).

²⁶ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene’: Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]).

habitually wore no more than a short cloak'. Their naked muscularity was a sign of athleticism and heroism, an emblem of masculine valour and beauty. In contrast, Greek women 'went about heavily draped from head to foot, and were confined by tradition to their domestic duties'.²⁷ Carr-Gomm concludes that the female body has been, and continues to be, socially defined by its biological vulnerability to rape.²⁸

Within early modern literature and culture, the female body was not only understood as open (and in this sense, vulnerable) but likewise, leaking. Gail Kern Paster emphasises the sense of obscenity surrounding the female anatomy within *The Body Embarrassed* (1993).²⁹ Paster's analysis echoes that of Mary Douglas, who in her influential study, *Purity and Danger* (1966), determines that 'the orifices of the body' have been deemed, historically, 'its specifically vulnerable points'.³⁰ She states, 'spittle, blood, milk, urine, faeces or tears by simply issuing forth have traversed the boundary of the body'.³¹ Such overflowing of the bodily boundaries was perceived as fearful and grotesque. As Lynda Nead reflects, 'The obscene body is the body without borders and containment'.³² Biologically, of course, the processes of menstruation and gestation render the female body less enclosed or 'contained' than its male counterpart. The vaginal orifice was the source of heightened anxiety and disgust.

This thesis examines how these social and biological distinctions played out within the context of early modern spiritual devotion. It argues that images of exposed male and female bodies were used to convey distinct spiritual messages within the literature and culture of the early modern period. Miles states that '[i]n depictions of the naked female

²⁷ Clark, pp. 65-67.

²⁸ Carr-Gomm, p. 101.

²⁹ Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

³⁰ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: 1966, Routledge and Kegan Paul), p. 122.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (Oxon: Routledge, 1992), p. 2.

body, interest in active religious engagement, exercise and struggle is often subordinated to, or in tension with, the female body as spectacle'.³³ My thesis not only explores this 'tension', but questions whether this perception of the body as 'spectacle' necessarily undermines spiritual purpose. Can titillation, in fact, lend spiritual potency to devotional nakedness?

As Miles, Berger and Clark highlight, the interactions which take place between naked subjects and their spectators shape interpretations of nakedness. The awareness of an external gaze may serve to exacerbate the naked subject's sense of exposure. Discomforting feelings of objectification, of being captured and consumed within the vision of the onlooker, commonly arise. What is more, spectator and subject may perceive, and as such, frame the instance of nakedness in different terms. What is shameful or sexual to the onlooker, for instance, could be interpreted as triumphant and chaste by the undressed.

Such semantic struggles were particularly acute within the context of early modern torture and execution. Elizabeth Hanson, for instance, examines the spiritual meanings invested in the blood and exposed organs of the tortured.³⁴ Chapter 3 of this thesis investigates how the naked body was utilised as a spiritual battleground by opposing Catholic and Protestant factions. The Protestant *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (1563) emphasises the political and theological significance which was ascribed to the body, and bodily conduct, of the condemned.³⁵ This thesis investigates how bodily disrobing contributed to the spiritual combat of Catholics and Protestants within the aftermath of the Reformation. What is the relationship of martyrdom to undressing? And did the penetration or flaying of the skin represent a deeper level of nakedness?

³³ Miles, p. 81.

³⁴ Elizabeth Hanson, *Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

³⁵ John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives* (1563), ed. by John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

The processes of early modern torture and execution, and their representation within textual and pictorial accounts, raise questions about the agency and integrity of the body. To what extent is the naked body receptive merely to the dominant semantic framework (whether Protestant or Catholic)? How far, then, is one's nakedness one's own? This thesis considers the treatment and experience of nakedness as something both deeply personal, and yet, curiously susceptible to semantic inscription and abstraction, which makes it a much more objective thing.

Such negotiations not only characterised the processes of torture and execution, but likewise, the encounters of colonists and explorers with the customary nakedness of communities within the 'New World'. As Scott Manning Stevens emphasises, Europeans perceived the naked bodies of the New World natives as both curiously other, and yet disturbingly reflective of the shared 'materiality' of humanity.³⁶ This tension between cultural and moral detachment on the one hand, and recognition on the other, likewise emerged within the growing practice of medical and anatomical enquiry throughout early modern Europe. Within the Renaissance anatomy theatre, the living confronted human bodies devoid not only of clothing, but of skin, and most notably, of life. Chapter 3 of my thesis questions how the treatment of the nakedness of the dead and fragmented body compared to that of the living body. Was the dead body considered more naked or shameful? How did this developing intimacy with the bodily interior engage with the culture of heightened spiritual inquiry? And how were religious and medical investments in the detailed exploration of the body reconciled with voyeuristic desire, and pornographic interest? Textual and visual records of anatomisation indicate that these queries were very much in the air and that they played a significant role in shaping the process of anatomisation and its

³⁶ Scott Manning Stevens, 'New World Contacts and the Trope of the "Naked Savage"', in *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth Harvey (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 123-140.

surrounding framework. This section of the thesis engages notably with Jonathan Sawday's *The Body Emblazoned* (1995), Thomas Laqueur's *Making Sex* (1992), and Sarah Toulalan's *Imagining Sex* (2007).³⁷

The final chapter of the thesis considers the treatment and affect of nakedness within a further theatrical setting. Nead reflects that '[t]he live performance of theatre is perhaps the most risky situation for the display of the body, straining the "sacred frontier" between high culture and vulgarity to its limit'.³⁸ Chapter 6, which examines Shakespeare's *Measure*, considers this claim, and does so by combining detailed textual analysis with an exploration of modern productions of the play. It is interesting to note that the Royal Shakespeare Company's archival footage signals a continuing anxiety regarding nakedness, 'vulgarity' and the gaze of the audience, even within today's increasingly secular society. The sense of 'risk' described by Nead, however, attends certain filmic records of the company's productions more so than its live productions. The archival video footage of Sean Holmes' *Measure for Measure* (2003), for instance, omits the full nudity of Bill Nash which had featured within the live performances.³⁹ Instead, Nash adopts partial nudity (namely, a long white shirt). This deliberate costume change suggests that nakedness continues to be perceived as something which is particularly vulnerable to semantic re-inscription by spectators. While nakedness is used within Holmes' production as an artistic expression of Barnardine's spiritual and emotional state, there is an implied fear here that viewers outside

³⁷ Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (London: Harvard University Press, 1992).

Sarah Toulalan, *Imagining Sex: Pornography and Bodies in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

³⁸ Nead, p. 85.

³⁹ *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Sean Holmes (The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 2003) [DVD recording, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive].

the theatre might detach it from its intellectual and theatrical contexts. Within the theatrical setting, one could argue that Nash is clothed with the character of Barnardine. His nakedness is performative – a theatrical ‘costume’. Framed by the domestic television set, and re-played at will by the spectator, however, this interpretation is less stable. Beyond the reassuring cultural framework of the theatre, the fear of pornographic intent lingers perilously over the naked body.

Eric Bogosian reflects upon the contrasting dynamic between live, theatrical performance and recorded performance. Live theatre, he states, ‘is ritual. It is something we make together every time it happens. Theater is holy. Instead of being bombarded with a cathode ray tube we are speaking to ourselves’.⁴⁰ Bogosian attributes a spirituality to live theatre which he feels the medium of film lacks. The immediate and communal nature of theatre (‘It is something we make together’, ‘we are speaking to ourselves’) is aligned with a sense of holiness. Throughout this thesis, I consider how form impacts upon the treatment and experience of nakedness. Chapter 6 questions how the corporeal nature of theatrical performance, with its potential for displaying literal bodily nakedness before a group of spectators, shapes textual and theatrical meaning. The communal and immanent qualities of theatre were shared by the public dissection and execution processes, and indeed, church worship. Is there a spiritual potency to be found within communal mediums, as Bogosian hints? If so, why, and how does it manifest itself? More pertinently, how does it shape the meaning and reception of nakedness?

This thesis examines how and why early modern writers utilise concepts and images of nakedness as a means of examining, defining and expressing spiritual meaning, within this deeply religious period. It questions how they respond to the rich spiritual and

⁴⁰ Eric Bogosian, *Pounding Nails in the Floor with my Forehead* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1994), p. xii.

psychological heritage of nakedness. How do they negotiate its conflicting meanings and affects – its potential to evoke the sacred *and* the profane, its capacity to arouse humility and spiritual fervour, to shock and to titillate? What meanings and experiences do their treatments of nakedness create, and how far are these elements shaped by literary form, audience and gender? The thesis closes by considering the theological heritage of nakedness, and by reflecting upon the extent to which its spiritual resonance remains active within modern society and experience.

Sources and Methodology

The primary texts I employ through this examination include a selection of key literary and spiritual forms: the spiritual allegory/narrative poem, the religious lyric, and drama. My chosen texts are Book I of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590), John Donne's 'Divine Poems' (1633), George Herbert's *The Temple* (1633) and Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*.⁴¹ While I draw briefly upon comparative Catholic texts and traditions, my major focus in this thesis is the treatment and impact of nakedness within the reformed, Protestant culture of early modern England. The definition of the 'early modern period' is, of course, debatable. In *Writing Early Modern History*, Garthine Walker sketches the period as that which 'extended from c.1500 to c.1800'.⁴² This thesis focuses upon a more concentrated period of time, from the writings of Luther in the 1520s, until the 1660s: a time span which captures the works of the continental Reformation theologians, and literature and culture within the wake of the English Reformation.

⁴¹ Edmund Spenser, *'The Faerie Queene': Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]).

George Herbert, *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (1633), in *George Herbert: The Complete English Poems*, ed. by John Tobin (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 2-187.

John Donne: *The Complete English Poems*, ed. by A. J. Smith (London: Penguin, 1996 [first collected edition of verse published in 1633]).

William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. by J. W. Lever (London: Arden, 2004 [c.1603]).

⁴² Garthine Walker, *Writing Early Modern History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005), p. xvi.

My analysis takes the form of close and subtle readings of the primary texts. Cross-comparisons are made throughout the chapters in order to stimulate reflections upon the relationship of nakedness with different literary and cultural forms. My close readings of these primary texts are preceded by three chapters which examine and establish the key theological meanings and tensions ascribed to and aroused by nakedness within early modern Western Europe. Within these opening chapters, I analyse a selection of major theological materials, namely, The Bible (the *Geneva* and *King James* editions) and translations of several of Martin Luther and John Calvin's theological treatises.⁴³ Studies of selected sermons, conduct manuals, devotional poems, pieces of religious artwork, and records of ecclesiastical rituals also inform my examinations of these texts. I employ these wider sources in order to illuminate popular spiritual responses to theological treatments of nakedness and undressing, and to reinforce (and where necessary, challenge) arguments raised by my close readings. Several of these sources post-date the texts that I have selected for my detailed literary case studies. However, they serve to create a valuable, contextualising sense of the early modern mentality regarding nakedness and spiritual meaning and experience. These first chapters also draw upon a number of historical studies of early modern belief and worship, most notably, those of David Cressy, Patrick Collinson and Horton Davies.⁴⁴ The studies of Roland Herbert Bainton, V. H. H. Green, Bernhard Lohse and Wilhelm Niesel inform my analysis of Luther and Calvin's work.⁴⁵

⁴³ *The Bible: Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha*, ed. by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997 [1611]).

The 1599 Geneva Bible, 3rd edn (Pleasant Hope: L. L. Brown, 1993), with an introduction by Michael H. Brown.

⁴⁴ Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England 1603 – 1690* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

⁴⁵ Roland Herbert Bainton, *Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1950).

V. H. H. Green, *Luther and the Reformation* (London: Methuen, 1964).

Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, trans. by Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999).

Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. by Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956).

Chapter 3 adopts a more somatic approach to the investigation of early modern treatments of nakedness. Engaging with a range of anatomical sketches and texts, and with the studies of early modern anatomy conducted by Sawday, Richard Sugg, and Paster, this chapter explores how medical and penal treatments of the body informed, reflected, and challenged the spiritual status of nakedness within early modern culture.⁴⁶

The final chapter's close textual reading of *Measure* is supplemented by the examination of some modern performances of the play, creating a more contemporary approach. This chapter balances Andrew Gurr's cautious stance that '[t]here are simply no forms of record even for modern playgoing that are adequate to create more than a minimal identification of how a play in performance affected its audience', with that of Lucy Munro, who states that 'the "meaning" of a play is located not only in the circumstances of its first production, but also in later performances and appropriations'.⁴⁷ I consult several modern productions of *Measure* from the RSC and National Theatre archives in order to highlight the rich spiritual and theatrical potential of nakedness and undress in performance. I also consult local and national reviews of these performances, where available and pertinent.

A number of theoretical and philosophical studies pertaining to the body and the gaze inform my analysis throughout this thesis. These include Jonathan Dollimore's *Sexual Dissidence* and Georges Bataille's *Eroticism, Death and Sensuality*.⁴⁸ Prominent studies of visual culture, including Berger's *Ways of Seeing* and Clark's *The Nude* likewise offer a valuable framework for approaching the treatment and reception of nakedness. Surveys of the role of nakedness throughout social history, most notably, Carr-Gomm's *A Brief History*

⁴⁶ Richard Sugg, *Murder After Death: Literature and Anatomy in Early Modern England* (London: Cornell University Press, 2007).

⁴⁷ Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 4.

⁴⁸ Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
Georges Bataille, *Eroticism, Death and Sensuality*, trans. by Mary Dalwood (San Francisco: City Lights, 1986).

of *Nakedness*, provide a useful and thought-provoking overview of treatments of nakedness throughout social and religious history.

The Current Field

This thesis responds especially to current academic interest in the fields of literature and spiritual and bodily experience. It emerges against the rich literary and historic backdrop of what Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Marotti term ‘[t]he Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Studies’: ‘the re-emergence of religious cultural studies as a lively practice’.⁴⁹ *Spiritual Shakespeares* (2005), edited by Ewan Fernie, explores the spiritual potential of Shakespeare’s plays, rendering his drama that of challenging spiritual ‘possibility’.⁵⁰ ‘Spirituality’, Fernie states, ‘is (or purports to be) the experience or knowledge of what is other and is ultimate, and the sense of identity and “mission” that may arise from or be vested in that experience’.⁵¹ My thesis is likewise concerned with transcendental or ‘ultimate’ meanings and experiences. I focus specifically on early modern literary and cultural treatments of the spiritual meanings and tensions of nakedness.

Fernie’s *Shame in Shakespeare* (2002) offers some important reflections upon the subject of nakedness and exposure within literature and history.⁵² Brian Cummings and Manning Stevens explore the significance of ‘Shame, Blushing and Nakedness in Early Modern Europe and the New World’ (2002), and the early modern ‘trope of the “naked savage”’ (2003) respectively.⁵³ Cummings’ work, in particular, offers some valuable

⁴⁹ Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Marotti, ‘The Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Studies’, *Criticism*, 46.1 (2004), 167-190 (p. 169), in *Project MUSE* <<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/criticism/v046/46.1jackson.html>> [accessed 04 March 2014].

⁵⁰ *Spiritual Shakespeares*, ed. by Ewan Fernie (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁵¹ Fernie, p. 8.

⁵² Ewan Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2002).

⁵³ Manning Stevens, pp. 125-140.

Brian Cummings, ‘Animal Passions and Human Sciences: Shame, Blushing and Nakedness in Early Modern Europe and the New World’, in *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Erica Fudge, Susan Wiseman and Ruth Gilbert (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 26-50.

examinations of the relationship of nakedness and humility. My thesis takes a wider approach to nakedness, exploring its diverse and complex range of connotations. The most notable existing work on this subject is that of Miles, author of *Carnal Knowing* (1992). Within this text, Miles examines the meanings ascribed to and evoked by female nakedness within pre-seventeenth century Western Europe. Miles utilises visual art and theological texts as her major sources. My thesis extends her consideration of the relationship of nakedness and theological meaning into the literary sphere. A key question posed here, in distinction to Miles' study, is how far the meanings and experiences surrounding nakedness are shaped by literary and cultural form. My work also takes on the broader focus of male and female nakedness. Indeed, one of the major points of interest within this thesis is the relationship between male and female nakedness: how far do male and female bodies serve distinct spiritual purposes, and how do these gendered notions of undress interact? My thesis moves beyond the earlier historical scope of Miles' study, with major emphasis upon nakedness within the spiritually-anxious period following the Reformation. In this respect, I take issue with Miles' assertion that from around the start of the seventeenth century 'religious meaning no longer provided the primary interpretative framework for depictions of nakedness'.⁵⁴

In its interest in the subtleties and tensions of nakedness – its social, psychological and spiritual complexities – this thesis echoes the interdisciplinary approaches of Fernie's *Shame in Shakespeare*, Michael C. Schoenfeldt's *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* (2000), and Sawday's *The Body Emblazoned*.⁵⁵ It approaches the medical, philosophical, artistic, and spiritual not as separate fields, but as part of one rich and organic dialogue which shaped early modern life and literary meaning. The thesis extends

⁵⁴ Miles, p. xv.

⁵⁵ Ewan Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2002).

Schoenfeldt's investigation into the intimate, intertwining relationship of 'bodily condition, subjective state, and psychological character'.⁵⁶ For instance, it considers how this relationship functions within the context of theatre, a medium which draws, as noted earlier, upon the live, bodily presence of actors and spectators.

Chapter 3, on anatomy and theology, engages deeply with Sawday's detailed investigation of the early modern process of dissection, and the religious attitudes and tensions which surrounded the flaying and penetration of the body. Paster's *The Body Embarrassed* (1993) likewise offers invaluable reflections upon the social attitudes and practices surrounding the interior and exterior of male and female bodies. The work of Paster and Frances Dolan contributes to this thesis' interpretation and argumentation regarding nakedness and gender. Dolan's *Whores of Babylon* (1999) is especially insightful in its examination of the use of sexualized biblical imagery as a means of representing and condemning Catholicism.⁵⁷

Rambuss' study of sexualized imagery and spirituality, as noted earlier, also contributes significantly to the field of literature, theology and the body. Rambuss' examination, in contrast to my own, is concerned primarily with the devotional potential of the sexual and erotic body. Indeed, his study displays a particular interest in the homo-erotic resonances of the religious lyric. My thesis departs most notably from Rambuss' work through its broader approach to bodily representation, sensation and affect, and likewise, through its consideration of the meaning and affect of nakedness within a number of distinct literary and theological forms. Of course, the capacity of sexual and 'perverse' nakedness to represent and provoke spiritual feeling forms an area of consideration within this thesis. This

⁵⁶ Schoenfeldt, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Frances Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth-century Print Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

aspect of my investigation is likewise informed by Merry E. Wiesner's *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World* (2000).⁵⁸

In its consideration of the spiritual, psychological and somatic affect of literary treatments of nakedness, this thesis draws upon the work of Katharine A. Craik and Tanya Pollard. Craik and Pollard emphasise the complex overlap of physical and mental experience and sensation within early modern responses to literary and theatrical forms.⁵⁹ Craik's examination of early modern beliefs and experiences regarding pornographic reading, in particular, informs my exploration of Spenser's teasing representations of nakedness within *The Faerie Queene*.⁶⁰ Chapter 4 considers how Spenser's vivid and sexually charged images of bodily exposure function on a spiritual level, in their provocation of psychological and bodily sensations. John Craig's chapter on 'Audience Reception' within *The Oxford Handbook to the Early Modern Sermon*, meanwhile, offers a valuable sense of how the early modern public interacted with spiritual texts and performances. Craig's observation of the theatrical characteristics of the early modern sermon stimulates some interesting cross-comparisons between my chapters on the religious lyric/sermon and *Measure*. Certainly, these chapters are concerned with the ways in which the meaning and reception of nakedness are shaped by the anticipation or presence of an audience. My thesis also questions how far experiences of nakedness are shaped by, and indeed, how far concepts and images of nakedness serve to create, sensations of intimacy and communality. In this respect, I draw upon Ramie Targoff's *Common Prayer* (2001).⁶¹ Targoff's monograph examines the attitudes surrounding the spiritual efficacy of public and private devotional forms within the

⁵⁸ Merry E. Wiesner, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (London: Routledge, 2000).

⁵⁹ *Shakespearian Sensations: Experiencing Literature in Early Modern England*, ed. by Katharine A. Craik and Tanya Pollard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁶⁰ Katharine A. Craik, *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁶¹ Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

Reformed Church. Her findings inform this thesis' examination of nakedness, form and spiritual and literary experience, and Chapter 6 engages directly with her claim that 'liturgical' and 'theatrical' performances can be distinguished by the 'nature' of their 'ethical charge'.⁶²

The Chapters

Chapter 1 explores the role of nakedness as a rich and ambiguous biblical metaphor, charged with a range of intertwining and conflicting connotations, including sin, humiliation, sacrifice, truth, and prophecy. It draws out these tensions, considering, for instance, whether the treatment of nakedness is ever free from a sense of the sexual, scandalous or shameful – connotations evoked explicitly, for instance, within the Bible's depictions of Jerusalem and the Whore of Babylon. Centrally, this chapter examines the early modern Protestant reception of the complex biblical heritage of nakedness. It explores how biblical treatments of undress are reflected within the literature, art, and rituals of early modern Protestant England.

Chapter 2 goes on to examine how the biblical connotations of nakedness were coloured and redeployed with specific reference to the spiritual and political concerns of the Reformation. It considers how the theological works of Luther and Calvin employ concepts and images of nakedness and undressing as a means of expressing and redefining the relationship between God and humanity. The chapter moves on to explore how these concepts and images were utilised within the devotional texts, debates, and practices of the English Reformation.

Chapter 3 explores the treatment and reception of the exposed, dead, and fragmented body within early modern European culture. It examines how torture, dissection

⁶² Targoff, p. 60.

and anatomical discourse reflected the period's theological beliefs and anxieties. In particular, it questions how early modern society negotiated the complex relationships of nakedness and intimacy, nakedness and anonymity, and anatomisation and faith. It also examines how far male and female bodies were perceived and treated differently.

Chapter 4 explores how Spenser uses concepts and images of nakedness and undressing to shape spiritual and literary meaning within Book I of his Protestant allegory, *The Faerie Queene*. It considers how nakedness functions within the form of the allegorical narrative poem, and questions how Spenser uses male and female nakedness to reflect and to stimulate distinct spiritual meanings and experiences.

Chapter 5 examines the role played by concepts and images of nakedness, undressing and concealment within the early modern religious lyric. Drawing upon the poetry and selected sermons and treatises of Donne and Herbert, it considers how these images operate within the writers' expressions of sin, despondency, fear and hope, and in their prescriptions regarding worship. The chapter also questions how these poets and preachers negotiated the sense of public edification and private confession within their seemingly raw and immediate poetic conversations with God and self.

Chapter 6 explores the relationship of nakedness, spiritual meaning and the theatrical form, through a detailed reading of Shakespeare's *Measure*. It considers how the live, corporeal and communal conditions of the theatre contribute to the meaning of nakedness, creating experiences which resonate beyond the fictional world of the play, implicating audience members within the present moment. I consult a number of modern performances of the play alongside Shakespeare's text. This final chapter pushes the thesis toward its concluding consideration of the spiritual charge which might linger within today's experiences of nakedness.

Together, these chapters offer a detailed sense of the spiritual potency of concepts, images and acts of nakedness within early modern literature and culture. This thesis serves to broaden the existing critical understanding of the role and operation of the body within Christian theology and literature, and of how that specific cultural heritage continues to influence intimate experience today.

CHAPTER 1: NAKEDNESS AND THE BIBLE

My introduction established the complexity of nakedness: its defiance of fixed meanings, its potential to provoke semantic tensions – to be one thing, and another, simultaneously. This chapter examines the treatment of nakedness and undressing at the very centre of Christian belief and practice. It focuses on the meanings ascribed to nakedness within the Bible, and early modern responses to these biblical representations of the undressed body. This analysis provides a firm foundation for the close readings which take place later within the thesis.

As David Norton and Naomi Tadmor have emphasised, the relationship between the lay populace and the Scriptures had grown increasingly intimate following the production of the first English printed Bible (1535) and subsequent major vernacular editions.¹ Within Protestant England, the word of the Bible was accessed not only from the church pulpit, but with growing frequency, within the home. Tadmor states:

In Shakespeare's lifetime alone [...] it is estimated, 211 editions of the Bible appeared and about 422,000 copies were sold. The English population around 1600 still numbered around 4,000,000, which meant that most ordinary households could have had a copy and most individuals could have had one within reach.²

This background of increasingly direct and private access to the Scriptures informs this chapter's exploration of early modern treatments and experiences of biblical nakedness.

I use *The 1559 Geneva Bible* as my primary biblical source, but comparative references to

¹ David Norton, *The King James Bible: A Short History from Tyndale to Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Naomi Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society, and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

² Tadmor, p. 9.

The King James Bible (1611) are made where differences in wording merit consideration.³ Although *The Geneva* ‘was never officially appointed or authorised in England’, as Norton reminds us, it was ‘by far the most successful English Bible for at least eighty years’, and ‘the English version most of the clergy used’. In Norton’s words, *The Geneva* was ‘the people’s Bible’.⁴ As Naseeb Shaheen and Steven Marx illustrate, *The Geneva* was Shakespeare’s Bible.⁵ Dale Walden Johnson emphasises that it was also the Bible of John Milton.⁶ *The Geneva*’s distinctive annotations, or ‘Reformed commentary’ give a valuable sense of how early modern Protestants experienced and responded to biblical nakedness and undressing.⁷ Throughout this chapter I also consult a number of early modern sermons, handbooks, biblical commentaries, images and poems. My analysis of these wider commentaries provides a fuller sense of how biblical nakedness was received within the early modern period, and especially, within Protestant England. John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667) offers a particularly vivid and extensive exploration of the significance of nakedness to the fall. Thus, I draw upon Milton’s Christian epic frequently within the earlier sections of this chapter.⁸

³ *The Bible: Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha*, ed. by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997 [1611]). I adopt the abbreviation ‘*KJB*’ within parenthetical references.

⁴ Norton, p. 19.

The 1599 Geneva Bible, 3rd edn (Pleasant Hope: L. L. Brown, 1993), with an introduction by Michael H. Brown.

⁵ Steven Marx, *Shakespeare and the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Naseeb Shaheen, *Biblical References in Shakespeare’s Plays* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1999).

⁶ Dale Walden Johnson, ‘Marginal at Best: John Knox’s Contribution to the Geneva Bible, 1560’, in *Adaptations of Calvinism in Reformation Europe*, ed. by Mack P. Holt (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 241-48 (p. 242).

⁷ Walden Johnson, p. 243.

⁸ John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London: Penguin, 2000 [1667]).

**I: ‘And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed’
(Genesis 2. 25)**

This first biblical reference to nakedness establishes the spiritual and emotive potency of the body. Within Genesis’ relation of the creation and fall, the experience of the naked body becomes the central means of exploring and evoking humankind’s changed relationship with God and with the world: the lapse of humankind from the state of absolute innocence to that of spiritual corruption. The verse above labours to reclaim nakedness from its fallen inheritance. The qualifying ‘not ashamed’, speaks of the self-consciousness, mortality, and sexual indignity which colour the fallen perception of the unclothed body. This, Genesis emphasises, is nakedness before nakedness: a nakedness that is not defined by a sense of deficiency or ‘lack’, nor by a sense of revelatory excess. This nakedness evokes wholeness – a liberation and fullness experienced *without* the knowledge of repression or inhibition. Clothing, and all that it represents (as explored later within this chapter) is not yet part of humanity’s perception and experience of the body. Yet its presence is certainly felt within this biblical description. By drawing attention to the ‘naked’ state of Adam and Eve, the Bible reflects its audience’s own relationship to clothing. It draws attention to humankind’s perception of the clothed state as the bodily norm. The assertion that Adam and Eve were ‘not ashamed’ highlights the fallen lens through which the biblical audience must peer at innocence. Framed in this manner, the nakedness of the pre-fall Adam and Eve intensifies the audience’s awareness of its own sinful condition.

This sense of moral polarisation is heightened by *The Geneva*’s annotation of Genesis 2. 25: ‘For before sinne entred, all things were honest and comely’.⁹ The terms ‘honest’ and ‘comely’ suggest that the fallen response to the body differs to the Edenic

⁹ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 1.

response both *morally and aesthetically*. ‘Comely’, of course, can refer to both physical and moral beauty, although the latter sense is more prominent.¹⁰ The theologian and Church of England clergyman, William Perkins, echoes this annotation in his treatise, *Cases of Conscience* (1606).¹¹ He declares that ‘nakednesse then was no shame vnto man, but a glorious comeliness’.¹² The clergyman Andrew Willet also mirrors these terms in his biblical commentary, when he refers to ‘those parts, which were comelie before’.¹³

This celebration of pre-fall nakedness, tinged with an implied distaste for nakedness beyond the boundaries of Eden, was reflected within a number of early modern texts. In his handbook for women, *The English Gentlewoman* (1631), Richard Brathwait refers to the ‘excellent beauty’ of the pre-fall body.¹⁴ And some time later, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* hailed prelapsarian nakedness as ‘that first naked glory’ (IX. 1115). The modifier ‘first’ distinguishes the pre-fall experience of nakedness distinctly from its post-fall forms. These early modern responses to Genesis’ account treat the original state of nakedness with awe and spiritual nostalgia. The pre-fall body is praised as triumphant and divine. Within these commentaries, humanity’s ‘first’ nakedness not only evokes a ‘paradise lost’, but a paradise which is vulnerable to the depraved perspectives of a fallen audience. Yet how, and why, did nakedness lose its glory?

The Geneva states, ‘Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed figge tree leaues together, and made themselues breeches’ (Genesis 3. 7). The naked body, once the source of innocent joy, is masked. This act of

¹⁰ "comely, adj.". *OED Online*. March 2013. Oxford University Press. 28 May 2013
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/36857?rskey=hQvxiM&result=1&isAdvanced=false>>.

¹¹ William Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience* (Cambridge: 1606), p. 572, in *EEBO*
<http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:14434:311> [accessed on 15 April 2014] [image 311].

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Genesin, A Sixfold Commentarie upon Genesis* (London: 1632), chpt. 3, p. 40 (STC 25687) [Microform].

¹⁴ Richard Brathwait, *The English Gentlewoman* (Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1970 [London: 1631]), p. 5.

concealment announces humankind's changed relationship to its body, and to God. Adam and Eve's perception of their exposure follows their transgression of God's command; namely, the plucking and tasting of fruit from 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' (Genesis 2. 17). As such, their experience of nakedness is entwined with the concepts of knowledge and sin – or more specifically – sin committed covertly. The attainment of knowledge alters Adam and Eve's perception of both self and world.

Significantly, their vision extends from that of subjects alone to subjects who are uncomfortably aware of their own objectivity ('they knew that they were naked'). To Hegel, writing, of course, centuries later, such abstraction of thought is morally charged; indeed, it represents the conscience's 'withdrawal into itself'. 'Evil', he asserts, 'appears as the primary existence of the inwardly turned consciousness'.¹⁵ Adam and Eve's decision to self-conceal rather than to self-disclose ('they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves breeches') certainly fits Hegel's later description of a 'withdrawal' or 'inward turn'. To the editor of this passage in *The Geneva*, this attempt at suppressing guilt and shame marked the couple's fractured relationship with God. The annotation reads, 'They began to feele their misery, but they sought not to God for remedy'.¹⁶ As I demonstrate within the following chapter, Protestant theology placed great emphasis upon spiritual openness. The Reformation theologians asserted the centrality of exposing one's sins to God, and this became a key theme within the religious lyrics of Donne and Herbert, as I discuss in Chapter 5. Adam and Eve's self-preserving behaviour represents the very antithesis of the self-willed confession urged by these preachers and writers.

In accordance with both Reformed theology and Hegel's later spiritual phenomenology, which drew upon his German Protestant heritage, the couple's 'inward'

¹⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977 [1807]), p. 468.

¹⁶ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 2.

turn, conveyed in bodily terms, generates a spiral of deceit. Genesis reads, ‘the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden’ (Genesis 3. 8). When confronted by God, Adam explains, ‘I was afraid: because I was naked, therefore I hid myself’ (Genesis 3. 10). A gloss in *The Geneva* reflects: ‘[Adam’s] hypocrisie appeareth in that he hid the cause of his nakednesse, which was the transgression of Gods commandment’.¹⁷ As *The Geneva* highlights, nakedness is framed by Adam as the consequence, rather than the source, of sin, shame and fear. In fact, the sensation of nakedness is exploited by Adam as a means of deflecting God’s detection of spiritual guilt, *The Geneva* suggests. Within this verse, then, nakedness functions as both exposure *and* disguise. *The Geneva* draws attention to Adam’s hypocritical employment of his bodily condition. In this sense, its annotation supports Jim C. Cunningham’s designation of the body as spiritual ‘scapegoat’.¹⁸ Cunningham asserts: ‘Throughout history sinners have continued the attempt to shift blame from where it really belongs to some concocted scapegoat or other. The flesh has always been conveniently a hand to absorb much, if not most, of the unjust blame’.¹⁹ Adam and Eve certainly close in upon the body as the site of offence. Yet I would argue that their bodily concealment cannot be dismissed as a simple case of substituting flesh for spirit.

While Adam and Eve appear to wield physical discomfort as a shield for their spiritual degeneracy, their physical anguish also speaks of their spiritual plight. Milton illustrates this beautifully within *Paradise Lost*. Describing Adam and Eve’s condition of innocence, he evokes the complex relationship of nakedness and spiritual guilt:

¹⁷ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 2.

¹⁸ *Nudity & Christianity*, ed. by Jim C. Cunningham (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2006), p. xxxv.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed;
 Then was not guilty shame, dishonest shame
 Of nature's works, honour dishonourable,
 Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
 With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure.
 (IV. 312-316)

This verse asserts the innate purity of nakedness. In line with *The Geneva*'s reference to Adam and Eve's hypocrisy, it is *the shame* of the body, rather than the body itself, which is rendered 'guilty' and 'dishonest'. 'Sin-bred' in nature, this '[h]onour dishonourable': an 'honour' which turns mind against body, is portrayed by Milton as the compulsive response to spiritual transgression. His Adam declares:

O might I here
 In solitude live savage, in some glade
 Obscured, where highest woods impenetrable
 To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad
 And brown as evening: cover me ye pines,
 Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
 Hide me, where I may never see them more.
 (IX. 1084-1090)

He continues:

But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
 What best may for the present serve to hide
 The parts of each from other, that seem most
 To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen[.]
 (IX. 1091-1094)

Within these verses, Milton explores the relationship of nakedness, disgust, and fear. His Adam conveys intense bodily anguish – an anguish experienced not only before the scrutiny of others, but additionally, and perhaps, most extremely, at the mere thought of his own material presence. Within the lines above, Milton’s Adam attempts to veil himself into effective non-existence. The ‘pines’ and ‘cedars’ serve as a natural counterpoint to humanity’s unnatural grotesqueness.

Ewan Fernie describes the psychological abstraction of the fall as that which ‘involves a divorce not only between self and world but also between the self that reflects and the self it reflects upon’. It is, he states, a ‘tearing away’ from creation into ‘the realm of non-being and death’.²⁰ This sense of psychological ‘divorce’ is expressed poignantly through Milton’s portrayal of the dilemma of embodiment. The ‘reflecting’ Adam wishes to annihilate his body – the source and signifier of human lust. He perceives, for instance, ‘in our faces evident the signs | of foul concupiscence’ (IX. 1077-1078). Yet Adam must likewise recognise the body, home to these biological promptings, as the corresponding home of this reflecting and objecting self. Here, concealment of the body is performed not only as an attempted means of masking humanity’s newly realised depravity *from God*, but perhaps most urgently, *from himself*.

In *Examen de Ingenious* (1575), Juan Huarte describes the horror of embodiment as that which stems from humanity’s acute awareness of the contrasting, divine condition.²¹ A painful disparity exists, he declares, between humankind’s physical and spiritual identities.

He states, ‘for [the human consciousness] partaketh of the same generall nature with the

²⁰ Ewan Fernie, *The Demonic: Literature and Experience* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 171.

²¹ Juan Huarte, *Examen de Ingenious*, p. 266, quoted by Brian Cummings, in ‘Animal Passions and Human Sciences: Shame, Blushing and Nakedness in Early Modern Europe and the New World’, *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Erica Fudge, Ruth Gilbert, Susan Wiseman (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 26-50 (p. 32).

Angels, it shameth to behold it selfe placed in a body which hath fellowship with brute beasts'.²² In other words, humankind's corporeal form serves to humiliate its higher faculties and desires. Jonathan Sawday captures this discomfoting perception and experience of the body when he states that it became 'the close prison which perpetually sought to constrain the expansionary desire of the soul'. Its 'gross physicality', he continues 'could ensure the endless enslavement of the soul to corporeal existence, defined, in the soul's terms, as punishment'.²³

Within *Paradise Lost*, Adam's agonizing consciousness of the contrast between the human and divine states is cast by Milton as the locus of his distress. He reflects:

How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld? those Heav'nly shapes
Will dazzle now this earthly, with their blaze
Insufferably bright.

(IX. 1080-1084)

Milton describes the angels as beings which exist in a sublimely liberated state:

For Spirits when they please
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure;
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh [.]

(I. 423-428)

²² Ibid.

²³ Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (Routledge: London, 1995), p. 16.

The human body is ‘brittle’, ‘manacled’, ‘cumbrous’, and sexually fixed – how different to the ‘uncompounded’ nature of the angels. These angelic forms exacerbate Adam’s sense of shame for what he terms his ‘earthly shape’. The material, or perhaps, more fittingly, ‘immaterial’ freedom of the spirits, serves as the standard by which humanity judges itself and is shamed. Milton’s Adam speaks of more than shame, however. He regards the heavenly ‘blaze’ of God and the spirits with fear – this blaze intensifies Adam’s sense of nakedness. The perfection of God is deemed ‘insufferable’ to fallen humanity. Here, Milton draws upon the Bible’s representations of the sublime and terrible nature of divine revelation. I examine this subject in greater detail within my discussion of God’s exposure and concealment, later within this chapter.

Within the early modern mind, David Cressy reflects, ‘Bodies became sites of shame and loathing, associated with the perceptions of deformity. It is as if the body itself became monstrous, not just that mankind acquired knowledge’.²⁴ This sense of monstrosity is countered, to a degree, within *Paradise Lost*. Indeed, Milton’s lamentation of humanity’s ‘guilty’ and ‘dishonest’ ‘shame’ of the naked form creates a distinction between the moral neutrality of the human body, and the corrupting moral framework imposed upon this body by the human mind (IV. 312-316). Yet Milton’s later critique of the body as ‘brittle’, ‘manacled’ and ‘cumbrous’ betrays a sense of shame for the body’s corporeality. The human form, he suggests, is undignified. It is frail and vulnerable: a distasteful composition of muscle, bone and fluid. In this sense, Milton highlights a tension within Genesis: how is it that the human body, God’s ‘perfect’ creation, is perceived and experienced by humanity as

²⁴ David Cressy, ‘The Adamites Exposed: Naked Radicals in the English Revolution’, in *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England: Tales of Discord and Dissension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 251-280 (p. 254).

a deeply mortifying and undignified form? *The Geneva* manages this tension by supplying a commentary to Genesis 2. 7, ‘The Lord God also made the man of the dust of the ground, and breathed in his face breath of life, and the man was a liuing soule’. The annotation reads, ‘Hee sheweth whereof man’s body was created, to the intent that man should not glorie in the excellencie of his own nature’.²⁵ This gloss implies that humanity was created physically humble as part of a divine strategy to curb physical pride and arrogance. The suggestion here is that the body was never heavenly in nature. Rather, the purity of the Edenic perspective rendered these latent ‘imperfections’ inconsequential. However, by the same token, this annotation suggests that the body was designed with humanity’s future sin and division from God in mind. From the moment of creation, then, the body signalled humanity’s potential to fall.

This interpretation is disrupted, however, by the presence of a further annotation suggesting that humanity’s material state was altered as a result of the first transgression. The verse in which God informs Eve, ‘I will greatly increase thy sorowes, and thy conceptions’ (Genesis 3. 16) is glossed in *The Geneva* with the explanation, ‘The Lord [...] punisheth the body for the sinne which the soule should have been punished for, that the spirit having conceived hope of forgiveness, might liue by faith’.²⁶ In this respect, the body is established as the victim of humankind’s spiritual sin: that which bears the burden or suffering of the transgressive spirit, in order that the spirit is free to strive for redemption. While this annotation might smack of Cunningham’s designation of the flesh as scapegoat, the role of the body here is deemed, rather, *sacrificial*.

²⁵ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 1.

²⁶ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 2.

This representation of humanity's bodily pain and indignity as the punishment for sin is reflected within Hans Holbein's woodcut, *The Consequences of the Fall* (c. 1525).²⁷ However, the redemptive framework of bodily sacrifice is absent within this artistic evocation of humanity's fallen condition. The tone of this image, rather, is that of shame and pity. Holbein depicts Adam clad in animal skin, toiling alongside Death, his body working in parallel to the skeletal figure. The image conveys death's undressing of humanity: the stripping away of flesh and reduction to a mere framework of bones that is humanity's certain fate. Death stands for a sure and certain symbol of humankind's frail composition. Within Chapter 3, I revisit this early modern conception of death as a humbling process of disrobing. While Adam toils in the foreground of Holbein's woodcut, Eve suckles a baby in the background. Both the subject and title of Holbein's image, then, link humanity's transgression against God to its humbling dependency upon biological functions. Adam's tilling of the Earth, alongside Death, speaks of humanity's mortal essence – its base subservience to natural urges (for food, for sexual companionship) and processes (ageing, illness, death). Meanwhile, Eve's nursing of the child signals childbirth, and thus points to humankind's dependency upon the process of sexual reproduction. Holbein's image reflects a heightened awareness of humanity's corporeal and sexual condition. But what role does sexuality play within Genesis' narrative of nakedness, concealment, sin, and shame? The following section, which considers the first biblical act of clothing, discusses the sexual implications of Adam and Eve's nakedness.

²⁷ *The Consequences of the Fall* (c. 1525), in Hans Holbein, *The Dance of Death* (Boston: The Heintzeman Press, 1903 [1538]), in *Project Gutenberg* <<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jbh2yr/21790-h.htm>> [accessed 20 July 2011] [Woodcut].

II: '[A]nd they sewed figge tree leaues together, and made themselues breeches' (Genesis 3.7)

The Geneva's employment of the term 'breeches', in reference to Adam and Eve's bodily concealment, links their sense of nakedness, and attendant shame, to the sexual areas of the body (the thighs, buttocks and genitals). 'Breeches', of course, cover 'the buttocks, posteriors, rump, seat'.²⁸ The *King James Bible*, in contrast, employs the term 'aprons'. Defined by the *OED* as 'an article of dress [...] worn in front of the body, to protect the clothes from dirt or injury, or simply as a covering', this term creates a general sense of bodily concealment, thus avoiding the *Geneva*'s more sexually pointed interpretation.²⁹ Early modern devotional artwork commonly portrayed Adam and Eve's covering as a mere cluster of fig-leaves about the genitals (in some cases, fig-leaves were painted over the genitals at a later stage, to heighten the modesty of certain artistic depictions of the fallen couple).³⁰ Set against this backdrop, the substantial coverage implied by both 'breeches' and 'aprons' injects the narrative with a greater sense of sexual modesty.

Beyond Genesis' narration of the fall, a number of biblical accounts associate nakedness more explicitly with the genitals, buttocks, and thighs. Exodus 28. 42 (*KJB*) serves as a prime example: 'And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach'. Assessed against this wider biblical backdrop, it seems that the 'nakedness' described by Adam and Eve speaks suggestively of the body's sexual features. A number of early modern preachers and writers

²⁸ "breech, n." *OED Online*. March 2013. Oxford University Press. 30 May 2013 <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/23009?rskey=oZacJr&result=3&isAdvanced=false>>.

²⁹ "apron, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2014. Web. 8 May 2014.

³⁰ See, for instance, Masaccio, *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden* (Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence: c.1425-27) [Fresco].

certainly interpreted the narrative in these sexual terms. Explaining why the couple concealed their 'secret parts' (or 'the external organs of sex'),³¹ Willet, for instance, states:

But now they eies were opened; the eies of their minde and conscience, to see and acknowledge their sinnes and disobedience, wherein they were blinded before, and to feele the rebellion and disobedience of their members in their disordered and unruly motions, which maketh them for shame to cover them; which use of vailing and covering the secret parts even nature hath taught the barbarous nations, which even in their bathes, as Augustine writeth, will not have their unseemely parts uncovered.³²

Willet aligns Adam and Eve's bodily shame with their newfound sensations of sexual arousal. They single out the genitals, the locus of these erotic promptings, he asserts, with their act of physical concealment. This 'vailing' of the genitals becomes a lesson in modesty and civility for humankind. In her essay 'Clothes Divide' (2006), Joan Turner reads much more into the couple's genital concealment.³³ The 'genitalia', she stresses, are 'the very things that should have nobly served to unite them and bond them together', and thus, the fig-leaves 'symbolize the hideous division of sin'.³⁴ Adam and Eve's concealment of their sexual organs signals that the original transgression not only separates the subject from itself, and from God, but likewise, detaches man from woman, and vice versa. The genitals are also linked to the concepts of knowledge and sin by nature of their implied prominence within this episode, and within early modern interpretations of it.

Like Willet, Milton casts sexual knowledge and experience as the defining characteristic of Adam and Eve's fallen state, within *Paradise Lost*. He distinguishes

³¹ "secret, adj. and n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2014. Web. 1 June 2014.

³² Willet, chpt. 3, pp. 40-41.

³³ Joan Turner, 'Clothes Divide', in *Nudity & Christianity*, ed. by Jim C. Cunningham (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2006), pp. 71-75 (p. 71).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

between the ‘innocent’ sex experienced by the pre-fall couple, and their corrupted sex post-fall. Within their newly fallen gazes, their bodies become objects of lust – of ‘foul concupiscence’ (IX. 1078). In accordance with Turner’s theory, Milton depicts this erotic perspective as that which serves to divide rather than to unite. It is self-seeking, and debasing, prompting shame and disgust on Adam’s behalf. He speaks, as we have seen, of ‘those parts’ which are ‘to shame most obnoxious, and unseemliest seen’ (IX. 1094). Within Milton’s poetic account, fallen shame alters and colours humankind’s sexual experience. Patricia Crawford reflects that ‘most clergy agreed that one consequence of the fall was that the sexual act was to be understood as involving shame’.³⁵ However, William Gouge, a prominent divine, espouses the alternative argument that ‘sexuality was a consequence of sin, so that Adam did not “know” Eve till after the Fall’.³⁶ By suggesting that humanity’s sexual urges and perspective originated in the fallen state, Gouge, like Willet, places great emphasis upon the sexual organs as the source of the couple’s shame and distress. The previous section touched upon the gendered nature of bodily shame. How far, then, are gender differences sensed within the Bible’s depiction of the fall, and within early modern responses to it?

In Genesis’ account of the fall, no gender distinctions are made regarding Adam and Eve’s nakedness and subsequent bodily concealment. However, a number of early modern treatments of this episode are notably less gender neutral. Within Milton’s depiction of the first pre-fall act of sex, for instance, Eve is led to the bower ‘blushing like the morn’ (VIII. 511). Blushing, of course, involves self-consciousness and shame. Brian Cummings states, ‘The blush announces at once a scandalous confession and yet also a balancing re-assertion

³⁵ Patricia Crawford, ‘Sexual Knowledge in England, 1500-1700’, in *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (Harlow: Pearson, 2004), pp. 54-78 (p. 56).

³⁶ William Gouge, quoted by Crawford, p. 56.

of modesty'.³⁷ Even within the confines of Edenic innocence, it would seem that this token of sexual modesty is expected and required of the naked female. Similar gender disparities are perceived within a number of early modern images of the fall. Within Holbein's *The Expulsion* (c.1525), Adam's fully exposed body shields Eve's genitals from the eyes of the spectator, while her hand conceals her breasts.³⁸ Meanwhile, Hans Sebald Beham's *Adam and Eve* (1543) exposes Adam's body to the gaze of the spectator, while Eve conceals her genitals with a hand.³⁹ This emphatic concealment of the female sexual organs is semantically ambiguous. By depicting Eve in an active posture of genital concealment, does Beham suggest that she is fallen and duplicitous? Do Holbein and Beham mark the female body as worthy of greater shame? Or do their images, rather, pre-empt and counter the lascivious gaze of the contemporary viewer and serve to protect the vulnerable female form from the predatory spectatorship of the male? Chapter 3 examines early modern attitudes towards the spectatorship of male and female nakedness in further detail.

The matter of Adam and Eve's bodily concealment becomes even more complex in light of Genesis 3. 21: 'Vnto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord god make coates of skinnes, and cloathed them'.⁴⁰ God's provision of clothing appears to confirm Adam and Eve's sense of physical imperfection and shame. Yet this reading coexists uneasily with God's words upon the creation, 'Let vs make man in our image, according to our likenesse' (Genesis 1. 26). John Barton and John Muddiman provide a convincing reading of verse 21 when they state: 'The somewhat ludicrous picture of God acting as seamstress for the man and his wife is an indication of his continuing concern for mankind now that he has

³⁷ Cummings, 'Animal Passions and Human Sciences: Shame, Blushing and Nakedness in Early Modern Europe and the New World', p. 30.

³⁸ *The Expulsion* (c.1525), in Hans Holbein, *The Dance of Death* [woodcut].

³⁹ Hans Sebald Beham, *Adam and Eve* (1543) [Engraving].

⁴⁰ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 2.

abandoned his original intention to impose the death sentence on them'.⁴¹ According to this interpretation, God's clothing of the couple represents an act of divine love.

In numerous early modern accounts, however, clothing serves as a continuing symbol of humanity's fallen state, and loss of Eden. To John Williams, Dean of Salisbury and 'Dr in Divinitie', for instance, clothing operates as a form of earthly shackle, borne in penitence for original sin. In 'A Sermon of Apparell' (1619), he announces that clothes, 'are the very spoiles of our father Adam, blazoning forth man's downfall and state of misery, and the devil's conquests and great glory'. He continues, 'yet remember, that when our backs came thus to be cloathed, our soules became most poor and naked'.⁴² William Prynne was of a similar mind, declaring that clothing 'put men in mind of their penury, their mortality'.⁴³ Both men frame clothing as an external expression of humanity's spiritual nakedness – a signal of humankind's fallen shame, and lost intimacy with God. Williams' juxtaposition of spiritual and material notions of nakedness finds echoes within *Paradise Lost*. Here, Milton declares that Adam 'covered, but his robe | Uncovered more' (IX. 1058-59). These lines cleverly emphasise the fact that acts of concealment can serve, paradoxically, to expose. In this case, Adam and Eve's physical self-concealment serves to disclose their guilt, and thus, their transgression against God. Joseph Beaumont plays similarly with the states of spiritual and material undress. Describing the pre-fall condition of Adam and Eve within his poem *Psyche, or, Loves Mysterie* (1648), he states: 'They Naked were of every borrow'd Dresse, | And Naked of what you count Nakednesse'.⁴⁴ Within these lines, Beaumont captures the

⁴¹ *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. by John Barton and John Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 44.

⁴² John Williams, *A Sermon of Apparell* (London: 1620), pp. 11-12, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:1934> [accessed 21 May 2011].

⁴³ William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix* (1633; STC 20464), p. 207, quoted by Cressy, p. 255.

⁴⁴ Joseph Beaumont, *Psyche, or, Loves Mysterie in xx. Canto's, Displaying the Intercourse Betwixt Christ and the Soule* (London: 1648), in *EEBO*, VI. 218. 5-6 <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:11691998> [accessed 11 June 2011].

complex exchange of innocent and fallen, and literal and metaphoric meanings, surrounding Genesis' treatment of nakedness.

While the act of clothing the body is described by both Williams and Prynne as a form of penitence for original sin, Williams expresses anger and concern at his contemporaries' apparent reconfiguration of this purpose. He states:

This is the strangest humor of all, that when God hath made man, simply the best he will needs make himself the meanest of the creatures [...] if he hold it a grace, to have the out-cast feathers of birds to plume him, the very excrements of beasts to sent him, the bowels and in trailers of wormes to clothe him, why shouldn't [they] be far more honourable creatures than that man.⁴⁵

Williams attacks the vain and ornate clothing adopted and admired by his contemporaries. To clothe oneself in this manner, he suggests, is to lower oneself to the level of the 'beasts': to value the bestial (i.e. feathers and bowels) above dignified simplicity. His words echo King Lear's mockery of those who adorn themselves with the cat's 'perfume', as explored within the previous chapter.⁴⁶ Like Shakespeare's Lear, Williams inverts the association of finery with civility. Rather, he demands, 'why should our carcases, so full of actuall and originall pollutions, expect such a glorious and costly cover'.⁴⁷ This message is humbling indeed: fallen humanity is associated with physical and moral putrefaction. Sinful in body and in spirit, humankind debases rather than honours that which clothes him.

Williams' words conflict with those of minister Adam Hill, who in his expression of three reasons for the wearing of apparel, proposes: 'for dignity's sake both to distinguish

⁴⁵ Williams, p. 17.

⁴⁶ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by R.A. Foakes (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2007 [c.1605-06]), III. 4. 103-279.

⁴⁷ Williams, p. 1.

men from beasts, and men of high degree from the lower sort'.⁴⁸ Hill expresses the power of clothing to signal social and moral divides. In this sense, clothing is shown to blazon a loss of innocent, Edenic unity. Indeed, Hill's reference to clothing as that which signals and upholds the universal hierarchy calls to mind the Tudor Sumptuary Laws or Statutes of Apparel. Introduced throughout the 1500s, these laws prescribed the textiles and style of an individual's attire rigidly, in reflection of personal rank and income.⁴⁹ Within early modern England, clothing certainly played a vital role within the construction and maintenance of personal and social identity. As Cressy reflects, 'the clothing made and displayed the woman or the man'.⁵⁰ Yet this hierarchy is collapsed within the sermon of Williams, who sees through fine costumes to reveal the fallen 'carkas' that is shared by all.

The notion of the body as a corrupt 'carkas' was not accepted by everybody, however. As I noted within my introduction, a number of writers told tales of the 'Adamites', a religious group whose members protested against the alignment of the body with sin. According to Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini in his *Historia Bohemica* (1451), the early European Adamites professed that 'clothes had been adopted because of the sin of the first parents, but that they were in a state of innocency'.⁵¹ Numerous pamphlets assert that members of this group gathered and worshipped naked. Their nakedness marked an attempt to reclaim the prelapsarian state forfeited by Adam and Eve, these reports claim.⁵² It symbolised a rejection of the legacy of bodily guilt and shame. The Adamites purportedly believed that nakedness brought one spiritually closer to God. Their naked worship provoked a range of reactions amongst the public. As Cressy reports, 'the Adamites were bewildering,

⁴⁸ Adam Hill, *The Crie of England* (London: 1595), p. 38, in *EEBO*
<http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:15611:25> [image 25] [accessed 26 July 2013].

⁴⁹ Wilfrid Hooper, 'The Tudor Sumptuary Laws', *The English Historical Review*, 30.119 (1915), 433-449 (p. 433).

⁵⁰ Cressy, p. 256.

⁵¹ Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, *Historia Bohemica* (1451), quoted by Cressy, p. 260.

⁵² Cressy, p. 267.

frightening, or ridiculous, depending on one's point of view'.⁵³ Willet refers to members of the sect within his commentary on the fall. Here, they are deemed 'impudent and unshamefast persons [...] companying together like bruit beasts'.⁵⁴ Thus, the nakedness of the group is associated with incivility and loose morals – a general lack of Christian, or even human, decorum.

The conduct of the Adamites was cast as an unfavourable contrast to that of their biblical namesakes. Indeed, one pamphleteer remarks that the Adamites 'ground their religion from our father Adam, and yet they go naked when they hear prayers or prophesying, when he hid himself from the presence of God because he was naked'.⁵⁵ The Adamites' attempt to reclaim Christian innocence by detaching nakedness from shame was thus rendered arrogant and contemptuous. It was the mixed nature of their naked meetings, however, which prompted the greatest moral concern. As Cressy details, an anonymous pamphlet of July 1641 declares that this 'new sect of Adamists', 'with men and women promiscuously mingled have their private meetings, where they will not hear the word preached nor have the sacrament administered to them but naked, not so much as fig-leaf breeches upon them'.⁵⁶

The act of gathering together naked, even for purposes of worship, becomes sexually charged through the writer's use of the suggestive phrase 'promiscuously mingled'. Accordingly, numerous illustrations mocked the 'innocent' nudity of the Adamites with depictions of naked prayer meetings characterised by inappropriate sexual arousal. Some writers even claimed that these sessions of 'worship' were used merely as a guise for

⁵³ Cressy, p. 251.

⁵⁴ Willet, chpt. 2, p. 32.

⁵⁵ *A Discovery of 29 Sects here in London* (1641), p. 4, quoted by Cressy, p. 260.

⁵⁶ Anon., *The Brownists Conventicle* (1641), quoted by Cressy, p. 260.

promiscuous sex.⁵⁷ While these pamphlets clearly served to discredit such heterodox religious activity, they likewise spoke of the difficulty of freeing the naked body from the experienced perception. The equation of adult nakedness with innocence was troubled by the presence of the sexual urge and gaze. I revisit this tension throughout my thesis.

III: Naked Shame Beyond Eden

Beyond the creation narrative, the association of nakedness with sin and sexuality becomes more pronounced. Within the book of Lamentations, for instance, nakedness is cast as absolute exposure and degradation. The *King James Bible* reads, ‘Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward’ (Lamentations 1. 8). Nakedness serves here as a metaphor for the shameful revelation of moral depravity. The personification of Jerusalem as an undressed and rejected woman renders this revelation of sin not only spiritually but, likewise, sexually-charged. Or rather, this passage draws upon the potency of female sexual shame as a means of conveying Jerusalem’s spiritual disgrace. The term ‘filthiness’ is used in the place of ‘nakedness’ within the same passage in *The Geneva*. With its connotations of moral and material obscenity, ‘filthiness’ carries much greater moral condemnation. However, it lacks the sense of rawness and vulnerability conveyed by ‘nakedness’. Ezekiel 16. 7, confirms this sense of nakedness as a shameful bareness and dependency. Here, the Lord addresses Jerusalem, stating, ‘I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou has gotten excellent ornaments: *thy* breasts are fashioned, thine haire is growen, whereas thou wast naked and bare’. *The Geneva* annotates this verse with the explanation, ‘These words, as blood, pollution, nakedness, and filthiness, are oftentimes repeated to beat downe their pride, and to

⁵⁷ Cressy, p. 267.

cause them to consider what they were before God received them to mercy, favoured them and covered their shame'.⁵⁸ Like Jerusalem, the Whore of Babylon is also disrobed and rendered 'naked' (Revelation 17. 16). I consider this disrobing and its significance within early modern Protestant thought within Chapter 4's examination of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*.⁵⁹ Spenser's Duessa, I will demonstrate, is described in terms which echo Revelation's whore.

Within Ezekiel's evocation of Jerusalem's spiritual betrayal, the physical allurements of the female body (i.e. the 'breasts' and 'hair') serve to symbolise God's careful nourishment of the city, and its subsequent development from barren infancy to dignified adulthood. God states, 'it was perfite through my beautie which I had set vpon thee' (Ezekiel 16. 14). As in the Song of Solomon, pastoral imagery is employed within these passages to express the female anatomy's beautiful sensuality. Just as the 'breasts' 'thighs' and 'belly' evoked within Solomon's verses are deemed representative of 'the comely beauty of the Church in every part, which is to be understood spiritually', Jerusalem's 'breasts' and 'hair' are described in terms of a gorgeous spiritual dress, supplied by God.⁶⁰ This sense of divine adornment is heightened through Ezekiel's references to the material dress bestowed upon the city: the 'broydered' 'raiment' of 'silke', the 'chaine' and 'bracelets' (Ezekiel 16. 11-13). Following Jerusalem's abuse of God's grace, however, her body is rendered depraved. The emphasis shifts from the attractions of the upper body to images of the lower body engaged in promiscuous sex: 'thou hast opened thy feet to euery one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredome' (16. 25). The female genitals function as the emblem of spiritual disgrace. Similarly, Jeremiah aligns the female genitals with spiritual shame. God informs Jerusalem,

⁵⁸ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 89.

⁵⁹ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene: Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]).

⁶⁰ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 41.

‘Therefore I have also discovered thy skirts vpon thy face, that thy shame may appear’ (Jeremiah 13. 26). Isaiah also draws attention to the female genitals as he recalls the disrobing of the unfaithful Zion. He states, ‘Therefore shall the Lord make the heads of the daughters of Zion bald, and the Lord shall discover their secret parts’ (Isaiah 3. 17). As these examples indicate, the female sexual organs serve within the Bible as a potent symbol of spiritual betrayal and shame. The chapters which follow examine how far this association was reinforced, and challenged, within early modern literature and culture.

Within Lamentations 1. 8, it is less the ‘nakedness’ of Jerusalem, than the spectatorship of this nakedness, which is cast as the locus of the city’s disgrace: ‘all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness’. This verse signals the power of the gaze to intensify shame. As Fernie states, ‘In literature as in life, many are susceptible to public disgrace but less concerned with what it is that is disgraceful, mortified by exposure but unrepentant. As the inventors of the stocks and pillory well knew, the actual presence, the gaze, of a hostile or accusing audience is a strong stimulus to shame’.⁶¹ This passage within Lamentations lays emphasis upon the penetrating eyes of the crowd. Spectatorship clearly has a significant role to play in confirming and magnifying Jerusalem’s sense of exposure. This disclosure of nakedness is personal. It defines the way that Jerusalem is seen by these familiar eyes, altering her relationship with those who have honoured her irrevocably. In this sense, nakedness has repercussions that extend far beyond the actual moment of exposure.

The relationship of nakedness and the familiar gaze plays a prominent role within the biblical narrative of Noah’s disrobing. This time, the nakedness is that of a *male*, and it occurs within the context of the patriarchal family structure. Genesis 9. 21-22 states that

⁶¹ Ewan Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 11.

Noah ‘drunke of the wine, and was drunken, and was vncovered in the middles of his tent. And when Ham the father of Canaan saw the nakednesse of his father, hee tolde his two brethren without’. Again, nakedness is associated closely with sin. *The Geneva* reflects that this narrative ‘is set before our eyes to shew what an horrible thing drunkennesse is’.⁶² By aligning nakedness with the socially undignified condition of drunkenness, Genesis surrounds the exposed body with connotations of the primitive, crude and animalistic. Beaumont describes Noah’s disrobing within a verse of *Psyche, or, Loves Myserie*. He speaks of

Temperance, which here the *Saint* forgot;
Who, as he fell, had neither thought nor care
Of keeping on his modest Mantle; but
Quite destitute of Clothes, and Senses lay,
And did his *double Nakednesse* display.
(XII. 22. 6)

To Beaumont, Noah exposes both body and mind in ‘*double Nakednesse*’ to those who behold his drunken nudity. Both forms of nakedness are expressed as an equal cause for shame. In Willet’s mind, however, the exposure of the genitals is yet again the prime source of mortification. He declares:

as Augustine saith [...] lust hath subdued those members to it selfe, and taken them from the power of the will. 3. Hereof it is, that even the barbarous nations, that onely have nature to guide them, doe yet cover and hide their secret parts. It was therefore so much the greater shame for Noah, so reverend a Patriarke, so undecently to lie uncovered.⁶³

⁶² *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 4.

⁶³ Willet, chpt. 9, p. 90.

Both writers align Noah's naked state with a shameful lack of self-control. For Willet, once again, this instance of disrobing uncovers an uncomfortable truth about the human condition: the subjection of humankind to involuntary sexual stimulation. The genitals symbolise the triumph of the body over rationality and civility. Here, Noah's sexual nature, heretofore a deeply private or 'secret' dimension of his life, is laid bare. As a result, his social status is challenged. Leon R. Kass states that Noah 'is overturned precisely by being reduced to mere male-source-of-seed. Eliminated is the father as authority; as guide'.⁶⁴ Noah is not disgraced by his nakedness itself, but by the spectatorship of his disrobed body, much like Jerusalem, when stripped before her lovers. Kass asserts, 'the horror of it all is magnified many times over when disgrace is witnessed by those we love, and perhaps worst of all, by our children'.⁶⁵

The tension of this familial exchange is intensified by the deliberate nature of Ham's spectatorship. As Willet emphasises, 'he doth not ignorantly, or by chance, but wittingly gaze upon his fathers secrets'.⁶⁶ For Ham to view his father in this vulnerable state constitutes more than mere disrespect. Rather, his act of voyeurism and disclosure is depicted as a form of filial violation. Noah 'knew what his yonger sonne had done vnto him' (Genesis 9. 24). According to John Sietze Bergsma and Scott Walker Hahn, the biblical phrase to 'see the nakedness' has sinister, inter-textual undertones. At various points within the Old Testament the same phrase is employed as a euphemism for sexual intercourse, they argue.⁶⁷ Under this paradigm, this interaction is injected with suggestions of rape. Certainly,

⁶⁴ Leon R. Kass, 'Seeing the Nakedness of his Father', *Commentary*, 93. 6 (1992), 41-47 (p. 43), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30040989>> [accessed 02 April 2011].

⁶⁵ Kass, p. 44.

⁶⁶ Willet, p. 90.

⁶⁷ John Sietze Bergsma, and Scott Walker Hahn, 'Noah's Nakedness and the Curse on Canaan (Genesis 9:20-27)', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 124.1 (2005), 25-40 (pp. 29-30), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30040989>> [accessed 06 April 2011].

this verse casts Ham's intruding gaze, and subsequent indiscretion, as an intimate attack upon his father. By dismissing the notions that 'Cham did cut off his fathers privie parts', or 'did impudently handle his fathers privities, and enchanted them, that he was ever after unapt for generation', Willet highlights the existence of a number of sexualized readings of the narrative within early modern culture.⁶⁸ Significantly, the act of looking at the naked body has been conflated, in some minds at least, with the acts of touching and maiming. Willet rejects these titillating claims as exaggeration.

Despite Willet's objection to these disturbing readings, Kass' recent examination argues that the act of castration lingers within these verses in a figurative sense. Ham's spectatorship and divulgence is 'metaphorically, an act of patricide and incest'. Kass continues, 'stripped of his clothing, naked, exposed, and vulnerable to disgrace, [Noah] appears merely as a male, not as a father – not even as a humanized, rational animal'.⁶⁹ Thus, Kass emphasises the disruptive anonymity of nakedness. Detached from his social position as authoritative patriarch, Noah appears to Ham as a frail human creature, subject to the same base bodily functions as his social inferiors. This is a body that is sexual, and mortal. To gaze upon the shameful humanity of the patriarch, this account suggests, is to alter the power dynamic between father and son irreversibly. Ham has looked upon his father's weakness, and significantly, his father *knows*. A sense of 'hideous intimacy' lingers between father and son, leaving permanent fractures within Noah's social identity.⁷⁰

Kass interprets Ham's disclosure as an act of paternal disempowerment, and aggressive self-assertion.⁷¹ Similarly, the annotator of the *Geneva* passage asserts that Ham's

⁶⁸ Willet, p. 90.

⁶⁹ Kass, p. 43.

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Hanson, *Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 28.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

actions are driven by ‘derision and contempt of his father’.⁷² Meanwhile, the other sons’ reactions to their father’s nakedness are used as a means of exploring the concepts of filial obedience, respect, and loyalty. Indeed, the reactions of Shem and Japheth represent a stark contrast to the exploitative behaviour of Ham. Genesis 9. 23 states, ‘Then tooke Shem and Japheth a garment, and put it vpon both their shoulders, and went backward, and couered the nakednesse of their father with their faces backward: so they saw not their fathers nakednesse’.

The emphasis placed on *not seeing* the father’s nakedness reinforces the semantic magnitude of a mere glimpse of his exposed body. Furthermore, Kass reflects that ‘we should not overlook the stark implication: their piety as a kind of (willing) blindness’.⁷³ By re-covering the body of the disgraced Noah, Shem and Japheth reclaim him as father, restoring him, through this act of bodily concealment, to his accustomed place within the family hierarchy. In contrast, the actions of Ham are set forth by Genesis as a warning against those who abuse and delight in the weakness and indignity of others. Ham’s lineage is condemned to an eternity of slavery, and as such, the humiliation and attempted displacement of the father is revisited upon the son. Chapter 3, in particular, considers how early modern society negotiated the taboos surrounding the spectatorship of another’s nakedness. In this chapter I will demonstrate the fascinating similarities between the sense of dangerous intimacy and sexual violation which surrounds this biblical account of disrobing, and the moral anxieties which attended early modern anatomical scrutiny.

⁷² *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 4.

⁷³ Kass, p. 44.

IV: Nakedness and Prophecy

I have demonstrated that biblical nakedness has strong associations with shame, sin, and sex. And yet, within the Old Testament the state of undress is also linked to the revelation of truth. Isaiah, the Bible states, went naked ‘*as a signe and wonder vpon Egypt, and Ethiopia*’ (Isaiah 20. 3). Additionally, the Bible asserts that the prophet Saul ‘*stript off his clothes, and hee prophecied also before Samuel, and fell downe naked all that day and all that night: therefore they say, Is Saul also among the Prophets?*’ (I Samuel 19. 24). Both accounts embrace nakedness as a prophetic ‘*sign*’. But what does it signal? Within a clothed society, nakedness has the potential to disrupt, and to distinguish. It provokes questions, curiosity, ‘*wonder*’. In the case of King Saul, this wonder is intensified. As *The Geneva*’s annotations emphasise, Saul removes ‘*his kingly apparell*’, thus exchanging power and majesty for vulnerability.⁷⁴ The social hierarchy is momentarily overturned, as Saul renders himself the equal of other men. Certainly, a further annotation reflects that he ‘*humbled himselfe as other did*’.⁷⁵ Through his naked prophesying, Saul expresses absolute submission to ‘*the Spirit of God*’ (I Samuel 19. 23). Indeed, he succumbs to the act of prophesying in the midst of his quest to murder David. In this sense, his nakedness speaks of his powerlessness before God, and frames the human body as God’s own medium.

Similar connotations are ascribed to the act of disrobing within the Book of Job. Job ‘*rent his garment, and shaued his head, and fell downe vpon the ground, and worshipped, And sayd, Naked came I out of my mothers wombe, and naked shall I returne thither*’ (Job 1. 20-21). Job emphasises that nakedness presents the body in its natural form, freed from the flattery, artifice, and protection of clothing. His undressing expresses his abandonment of all self-interest, and his absolute obedience to God’s will. His act of disrobing signals

⁷⁴ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 106.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

humankind's shared and humble origins, and the humble fate that awaits all. In this sense, it is prophetic.

It must be noted that certain early modern theologians rejected such literal, bodily readings of the prophets' nakedness. Perkins, for instance, reflects upon the nakedness of Isaiah, stating, 'it cannot be proved that he put off the garment next to his skin'. Likewise, he responds to the description of Saul's disrobing with the remark, 'we are not to imagine that he prophesied naked, it being so unseemly a thing, and even against the law of nature since the fall'. '[T]he meaning', he declares, 'is that he stript himselfe of his armour'.⁷⁶ As my discussion of the treatment of the Adamites demonstrated, most orthodox Christians regarded full nakedness as inappropriate, distasteful, and sinful, even within the context of spiritual inspiration and devotion.

Perkins most likely speaks against literal interpretations of these biblical passages in an attempt to deter his contemporaries from mimicking such prophetic undress. Records indicate that the adoption of 'prophetic' nakedness was a real concern. Most notably, early modern Quakers sometimes chose to go naked 'as a sign'.⁷⁷ In her examination of early British Quakers, Rosemary Moore observes that '[i]n some cases the call to minister involved prophetic signs, the commonest being going naked or partly naked through the streets, or wearing sackcloth and ashes'.⁷⁸ 'This conduct', she reflects, 'was intended to signal the barrenness of contemporary society, and in some cases was not merely an illustration, but was intended to act like the signs of Old Testament prophets, and bring about

⁷⁶ Perkins, p. 574 [image 312].

⁷⁷ Cressy, pp. 277-78; and Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences: The Early Quakers in Britain 1646-1666* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), p. 126. According to Moore, records suggest that naked marches took place in both Kendal and Oxford between 1652 and 1654.

⁷⁸ Moore, p. 126.

the thing illustrated, the fall of the godless society and the coming of God's kingdom'.⁷⁹ In his broadside *Going Naked, a Signe* (1660), Quaker William Simpson comments upon the symbolic intent of his own acts of public nakedness.⁸⁰ He states, 'As naked shall you be spiritually, as my body hath been temporally naked [...] as a sign of the nakedness and shame that is coming upon the Church of England'.⁸¹ Simpson and his fellow Quakers utilise the startling and shameful potential of bodily exposure as a means of blazoning the spiritual degradation of the established Church, and the terrible exposure which they believed awaited it. Perkins, of course, attempted to sever this association of full, adult nakedness with spiritual truth.

Within the New Testament there is a shift from the startling bodily nakedness of Isaiah and Saul (if this nakedness is interpreted literally) to a nakedness expressed in terms of lifestyle. The prophet John the Baptist, for instance, is distinguished spiritually by his rejection of earthly goods and priorities, as epitomised by his basic camel-skin garb, his simple diet of locusts and wild honey, and his residence within the desert (e.g. Mark 1. 6; Matthew 3. 4). John's subversion of the social norms creates a 'sign' and 'wonder' which arguably equals that of the naked Isaiah and Saul. The humility of John's lifestyle prefigures that of Christ, which I discuss within the following section.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ William Simpson, *Going Naked, a Signe* (London: 1660), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:151336> [accessed 06 April 2012] [broadside].

⁸¹ Ibid.

V: Divine Nakedness

Throughout the Bible, metaphors of dress and undress also serve to evoke the nature of God, and his relationship with humanity. Within the Old Testament, the treatment of God's nakedness differs significantly to that of humankind. It is carefully controlled before human witnesses. God's interaction with Moses, recalled in Exodus (33. 18), is particularly notable. Moses requests that God 'shewe mee thy glory', an appeal glossed by *The Geneva* with 'thy face, thy substance, and thy maiesty'.⁸² *The Geneva* indicates that Moses seeks to access God in his full, embodied form. A curious negotiation of divine concealment and revelation ensues, as God responds:

Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me, and liue [...] Behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou shalt stand vpon the rocke: And while my glory passeth by, I will put thee in a cleft of the rocke, and will couer thee with mine hand whiles I passe by. After I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my backe parts: but my face shall not be seene.

(Exodus 33. 20-23)

The Geneva frames this passage with the annotations, 'For Moses sawe not his face in full maiesty, but as mans weaknesse could beare', and 'So much of my glory as in this mortal life thou art able to see'.⁸³ God's face is cast as the site of sublime but terrifying revelation. To gaze upon the face of the Lord, these verses suggest, is to embrace one's death. This sentiment is reiterated when God instructs Moses, 'charge the people, that they breake not *their bounds*, to goe vp to the Lord to gaze, least many of them perish' (Exodus 19. 21).

Humanity is naturally compelled, it appears, to peer at God's holiness, manifested, within these extracts, in physical form. These passages reveal as much about the spiritual

⁸²*The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 34

⁸³Ibid.

condition of the spectator as they do about God. Certainly, fallen humanity is rendered unworthy to receive God in his full majesty. The retreating glimpse of God's 'back parts' serves as a potent symbol of humanity's lowliness before the divine creator. Despite its transcendental hopes and desires, humankind is too frail, and one senses, too sinful, to bear witness to God's fully exposed perfection, symbolised here by the expressive site of the face. Isaiah's vision of God is similarly obscured. He states, 'I saw also the Lord sitting vpon an hie throne, and lifted vp, and the lower parts thereof filled the Temple. The Seraphims stode vpon it, every one had sixe wings: with twine he couered his face, and with twaine he couered his feete' (Isaiah 6. 1-2).

God's bodily concealment creates a sense of mystery and awe. Yet this partial revelation is enough to provoke spiritual distress on the part of Isaiah. He states, 'Woe is me: for I am vndone, because I am a man of polluted lips, and I dwell in the mids of a people of polluted lips: for mine eyes haue seene the King, *and* Lord of hoasts!' (Isaiah 6. 5). The prophet's words demonstrate the unnerving nature of God's physical presence. God's perfection serves to magnify Isaiah's own sense of sin. His gaze is turned inwards, and he reacts with guilt and disgust, both towards himself, and towards his fallen community. Isaiah's sense of moral repugnance seems echoed within the words of Marlowe's Mephistopheles:

Thinkst thou that I, who saw the face of God
 And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
 Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
 In being deprived of everlasting bliss?⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Christopher Marlowe, *Dr Faustus: The A-Text* (Nedlands: The University of Western Australia Press, 1985 [c. 1590, first known publication 1604]), [Scene III]. 318-21.

Like Mephistopheles, Isaiah's perception of the world and his place within it is altered permanently by the vision of God. It becomes clear that this vision is capable of bringing the spectator to despair and madness. Thus, God's censorship is established as protective and nurturing. His concealment from humanity serves, paradoxically, to prevent his creatures from looking upon *their own* de-habilitating guilt. The annotator of the *Geneva* passage offers a similar reading. He states, 'the more neere that man approacheth to God, the more doth he know his owne sinne and corruption'.⁸⁵ This concept of the 'naked' God's destructive potential plays a significant role within Martin Luther's Reformed theology, as I will establish within the following chapter. As I go on to demonstrate, Luther urged humankind to turn instead to the accessible and immanent Christ.

The incarnation of Christ signals a new era for the body. Although God is depicted in an embodied form within the Old Testament, his majesty is insufferable to fallen humanity. As such, it is heavily shielded: God dwells 'in unapproachèd light', as Milton states (*Paradise Lost*, III. 4). In stark contrast, Christ is born of the flesh and enters the world as an infant: he experiences human vulnerability and dependency. Christ embraces the humility of humankind's corporeal form. A wealth of medieval and early modern devotional images (predominantly, of course, of Catholic origin) depict Christ as a naked infant, suckled by the Virgin Mary. Leo Steinberg notes that Christ's nakedness plays a central role in confirming his sacrificial submission to the full, human experience. He reveals that Christ's genitals were the subject of particular visual emphasis within the devotional artwork of the medieval and early modern periods.⁸⁶ Here, they served as a vital pledge of his absolute, sacrificial embrace of the human condition. Christ's sexuality and bodily accessibility likewise play an

⁸⁵ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 44.

⁸⁶ Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, rev. ed. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996 [1983]), p. 47.

important role within early modern devotional literature. In Chapter 5, for instance, I will explore the significance of Christ's nakedness within the religious lyrics of Donne and Herbert.

The Bible frames Christ's humanity as a symbol of God's love – a sacrifice made in order to redeem humankind from sin and death. The *Geneva*'s annotation of Philippians 2. 5 crystallizes this sense of sacrificial debasement, performed for the salvation of humankind. Christ, it states, 'abased himselfe so farre for our sakes, although he be above all, that hee tooke vpon him the forme of a seruant, to wit, our flesh willingly, subject to all infirmities, euen to the death of the crosse'.⁸⁷ The magnitude of Christ's sacrifice is illustrated through this juxtaposition of his absolute power with the shame of the human flesh. While the baseness of the flesh is emphasised here, there is likewise a sense in which it receives spiritual dignity and glory. Though the human body is humble, it is the form which was embraced by the divine saviour. As the *Geneva*'s annotation illustrates, it is Christ's death that ultimately speaks most powerfully of his saving love. Through death, Christ's body is surrendered entirely in the name of humankind's sin. Matthew 27. 28 states, 'And they stripped him, and put about him a skarlet robe'. And verse 35 continues, 'And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, and did cast lots'.

Matthew recalls how Christ is undressed, humiliated and mocked: his body cast as the site of insult. Christ's abasement reaches its peak at the point of his crucifixion – an excruciating death reserved for ignoble criminals. A range of early modern devotional paintings and literary works depict his crucifixion in intensely physical terms, including the religious lyrics of Donne, as Chapter 5 will demonstrate. Grünewald's *Crucifixion* (c.1513-

⁸⁷ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, p. 88.

15) provides a powerful visual depiction of Christ's agony upon the cross.⁸⁸ Within this graphic painting, Jesus' pierced and bleeding skin is exposed to the spectator. Through the sacrifice of Christ, the repulsive is made beautiful. These wounds serve to provoke both joy and pity at God's suffering, withstood in the name of his love for humanity.

Christ's triumphant resurrection followed his agonising and public death upon the cross. Once again, his body plays a central role: his risen form blazoning the promise of eternal life for the faithful. Michelangelo depicts the risen Christ as a beautiful nude, leaping from his tomb.⁸⁹ Countless religious paintings and engravings of the Day of Judgement also represent humans rising naked from their graves, to receive Christ's judgement.⁹⁰ These visual images suggest that the resurrected body would somehow shed its earthly shame. St Paul captures this divine transformation of the human form when he declares, '*The bodie is sown in corruption, and is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, and is raised in glorie: it is sown in weakenesse, and is raised in power. It is sown a naturall bodie, and is raised a spirituall bodie*' (I Corinthians 15. 42-44). Similarly, Williams announces:

He that out of the dust at the first framed us, knows best at the last, how to trimme and adorne us; to wit, by changing this our *vile body*, and making it like unto his glorious bodie, at that great and fearfull day, when God and his Angels shall come down and see, a man clothed in his truly honourable clothing'.⁹¹

Williams reflects upon the Day of Judgement as a time of triumphant re-clothing through God. This re-clothing will restore glory and innocence to the human body, allowing

⁸⁸ Grünewald, *Crucifixion* (c. 1513-15), reproduced in Michael Gill, *Image of the Body: Aspects of the Nude* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), p. 188 [Former altarpiece].

⁸⁹ Michelangelo, *Risen Christ*, (c. 1530s?), reproduced in Gill, p. 152 [Drawing].

⁹⁰ For an earlier example of this, see anon., *The Last Judgement* (Bourges Cathedral: thirteenth century) [tympanum engraving].

⁹¹ Williams, p. 23.

humankind to look upon ‘God and his Angels’ once more, he asserts. The Bible urges humankind to embrace Christ before death, however. Notably, St Paul calls Christians to ‘cast off that olde man, which is corrupt through the deceiueable lusts’, ‘And put on the new man, which after God is created vnto righteousnesse, and true holines’ (Ephesians 4. 22-24). As I will demonstrate within the following chapters, this concept of spiritual re-clothing, of ‘cast[ing] off’ and ‘put[ting] on’, played a central role within the literature and culture of the Reformation.

VI Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the significant and complex roles played by nakedness and undressing within the Bible. Marx refers to the Bible’s ‘dense dramatic textures’.⁹² These ‘textures’, or layers of evocative meaning, are certainly sensed within the Bible’s representations of the undressed body. I have demonstrated that nakedness is employed throughout the Bible as a means of conveying a diverse array of meanings and concepts, including innocence, purity, guilt, knowledge, sin, shame, sexuality, sacrifice, and truth. Acts of dressing and undressing serve to evoke the social and spiritual relationships of humankind. The states of nakedness and dress serve as a means of signalling human and divine power dynamics: the accessibility of God, humankind’s futile concealment of its sins from its creator, God’s exposure of human depravity. Throughout the Bible, concepts and images of nakedness serve to create a potent sense of intimacy. At times, this intimacy is glorious and loving, and at times it is shameful, scandalous and debasing.

I have established that the Bible’s treatment of female nakedness is more heavily sexualized than that of the male: skirts are raised, legs are opened, ‘filthinesse’ is seen. These images of naked promiscuity serve to publish the shame of the spiritually unfaithful. Noah’s

⁹² Marx, p. 8.

nakedness, in contrast, is merely suggestive of sexual humiliation. And notably, Ham is punished for exploiting his father's bodily exposure. Such is the significance of the naked body (both male and female) that a mere glance from a spectator is enough to sever relationships and to overturn the social hierarchy. Similarly, a glimpse of God's naked majesty has the power to magnify the spectator's sense of sin, and to stimulate despair. In this sense, the Bible warns readers of the dangerous potential of nakedness, and of the disruptive nature of the lustful, envious, or curious gaze. Christ's nakedness, in stark contrast, signals God's loving accessibility and compassion. It blazons the promise of a glorious resurrection for the faithful.

Unsurprisingly, the Bible's rich and sometimes contradictory treatments of nakedness provoked a range of responses from early modern theologians, writers, preachers, and artists. The sermons, poems, images, and biblical annotations consulted throughout this chapter reveal that disagreements emerged regarding the meanings and messages of these biblical depictions of undress. Debates ensued about the cause of humankind's bodily shame: is the body loathsome, or does humankind's fallen perspective merely pollute its perception of its bodily form? Are the sexual organs inherently shameful? Can nakedness serve to stimulate truth, and intimacy with God, as the Adamites suggested? Or is to go unclothed, rather, to rebel against God's imposition of clothing? This chapter has revealed that preachers, writers and artists found it difficult to escape the fears, disgust, and sexual tensions surrounding the realities of human nakedness, and to envision a truly 'innocent' state of bodily undress. The literary and theological responses examined throughout this chapter indicate that the bodily condition was a source of great interest, uncertainty, discomfort, and hope amongst early modern Christians. Within the following chapter I

examine how the Reformation theologians utilised and built upon these biblical images of nakedness and concealment as they re-defined the concepts of Christian faith and worship.

CHAPTER 2: DISROBING AND NAKEDNESS IN REFORMATION THEOLOGY

Within the previous chapter I examined the employment and effect of concepts and images of nakedness within the Bible's explorations of sin, guilt, sacrifice, truth and innocence. This chapter considers how and to what effect these images were developed and charged with contemporary theological significance within the literature and culture of the Reformation. I argue that to examine the theological discourse which shaped the Reformation is to recognise the significant, conceptual roles played by nakedness and disrobing within the identification and articulation of early modern religious belief. Within this period of growing disillusionment with the established Church, theologians across Europe returned to the Scriptures with a renewed zeal to determine the true Christian gospel. At the heart of this intensive re-visitation of God's word was the thirst to strengthen and purify the relationship of God and humankind. This chapter explores how theologians of the Reformation utilised the concepts of nakedness and dress as a means of examining and defining that relationship.

This chapter begins by considering the works of Martin Luther and John Calvin. Christopher Baker captures the impact of Luther and Calvin's theologies upon early modern religious thought and practice when he declares that their work is 'the bedrock upon which the Protestant Reformation stands'.¹ The works of Calvin resonated particularly powerfully within the English Reformation. Baker reflects, 'Because of its systematic organization, clear style, and widespread dissemination across Europe, Calvin's *Institutes* was the single most influential work of theology of the Reformation'.² Meanwhile, Diarmaid MacCulloch states that 'the evidence for the dominance of English Calvinism is impressive. By 1600 there had

¹ Christopher Baker, *Religion in the Age of Shakespeare* (London: Greenwood Press, 2007), p. 27.

² Baker, p. 32.

been no less than 90 editions of Calvin's writings published in English'.³ Calvin's theological ideas have been described as 'Lutheran'. Certainly, this chapter's literary examination of both theologians' works highlights many similarities within their choice of concepts and imagery.⁴ As I demonstrate within the latter section of this chapter and in the chapters which follow, a number of these concepts and images played an important role within the devotional literature of early modern England. Following an analysis of nakedness, disrobing and dress within some of Luther and Calvin's seminal works, this chapter goes on to consider how these concepts and images were employed within the practices, documents, and debates of the English Reformation.

I: 'Clothed' with 'the form of sin'

In *The European Reformation* (1991) Euan Cameron declares:

The reformers strove to convince believers that the saving of fallen souls was not a process of little lapses and little rituals to correct those lapses. Rather, it was a question of real sin, of a massive, all-corrupting inability to do right, which only God, by utterly gratuitous, self-sacrificing mercy, first covered with grace, and then gradually, step by step, replaced with God's own goodness in the Christian, in a process completed only in death.⁵

He continues, 'A heightened and more articulated sense of human inadequacy in the face of God, which the reformers called "sin", was the starting-point of their theology of salvation'.⁶ This section argues that images of nakedness and dress play a significant role within Luther and Calvin's evocations of the intensity of human sin, and humankind's inability to cleanse

³ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England 1547-1603* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 72.

⁴ Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991; repr. 2012), p. 131.

⁵ Cameron, p. 139.

⁶ Ibid.

itself. ‘Luther’s spirituality’, Ewan Fernie identifies, ‘involves an extraordinary embrace of sinfulness. According to the Reformer, a great part of our spiritual task is to *believe in sin*’.⁷

Reflecting upon David’s open admission of his sinful nature, ‘For I know my iniquity, and my sin is ever before me’ (Psalm 51. 3), Luther declares that ‘God is justified only by the one who accuses, and condemns, and judges himself’.⁸ To do so is to take, or rather to embrace, an active role in one’s moral exposure: to become the voluntary orchestrator of one’s own abasement. Luther prompted humanity to view sin not as something abstract, but as something deeply rooted *within its own nature*. He states that the world ‘rather punishes those who expose sins. Even if it recognises, it still does not wish to acknowledge it. But he who confesses and believes is already justified. Men see sin, to be sure, but they do not want this to be sin. They do not want to believe that we still have sins’.⁹ Thus, Luther exposes his fellow humans as those who conceal their sins from God, self, and other.

Within *The Two Kinds of Righteousness* (1519), Luther conveys humanity’s misguided perception of its spiritual condition using the metaphor of usurped clothing:

And if we do not freely desire to put off that form of God and take on the form of a servant, let us be compelled to do so against our will. In this regard consider the story in Luke 7 [:36-50], where Simon the leper, pretending to be in the form of God and perching on his own righteousness, was arrogantly judging and despising Mary Magdalene, seeing in her the form of a servant. But see how Christ immediately stripped him of that form of righteousness and then clothed him with the form of sin by saying: ‘You gave me no kiss...you did not anoint my head’. How great were the sins that Simon did

⁷ Ewan Fernie, *The Demonic: Literature and Experience* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 39.

⁸ Martin Luther, in *Luther’s Works*, American Edition, 55 vols, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muehlenberg and Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-86), XII: *Selected Psalms I* (1955), p. 332.

Luther, in *Luther’s Works*, X: *First Lectures on the Psalms I* (1974), ed. by Hilton C. Oswald, p. 236.

⁹ Luther, *The Disputation Concerning Justification* (1536), trans. by Lewis W. Spitz, Sr, in *Luther’s Works*, XXXIV: *Career of the Reformer IV* (1960), pp. 145-196 (p. 176).

not see! Nor did he think himself disfigured by such a loathsome form as he had. His good works are not at all remembered.¹⁰

Luther explores Simon's failure to 'see' his sins through use of the extended metaphor of dress. Indeed, Simon's righteous attitude is likened to the adoption of stolen robes. By judging Mary, Simon masquerades as one who is divine and spotless (in other words, God). Accordingly, he is 'stripped' and 'clothed' with the rightful 'form of sin': he is exposed by Christ as little more than an arrogant imposter. While humans may strive to appear righteous (often, as is the case here, by casting themselves as the spiritual superior of others), Luther emphasises that righteousness belongs to God alone. The clothing 'of sin' is the only 'form' to which humankind has a true claim. A costume of righteousness may fool those on Earth, but it is both mocked and condemned by God. By adopting 'the form of God', Simon serves rather to expose his spiritual shortcomings. As Luther reflects, he is 'humiliated in the form of a servant'.¹¹ This shameful re-clothing is cast as the inevitable fate of those who deny sin, and as such, set themselves on God's level.

Luther utilises images of the disguised body with considerable frequency within his descriptions of humankind's deceit before God. For instance, he explains that 'the righteousness of man, no matter how much God honours it here in time with the best gifts of this life, nevertheless is a mask and impious hypocrisy before God'.¹² Calvin employs similar imagery as he exposes his contemporaries' attempts to deny and to conceal their moral depravity. Like Luther, he emphasises humankind's inherent sinfulness. Commenting upon Adam's self-clothing with fig-leaves, Calvin declares that '[Adam] proves that original sin does not reside in one part of the body only, but holds its dominion over the whole man,

¹⁰ Luther, *Two Kinds of Righteousness* (1519), trans. by Lowell J. Satre, in *Luther's Works*, XXXI: *Career of the Reformer I* (1957), pp. 293-306 (p. 303).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Luther, *The Disputation Concerning Justification*, p. 151.

and so occupies every part of the soul, that none remains in its integrity; for not withstanding his fig-leaves, he still dreads the presence of God'.¹³ David C. Steinmetz observes that within Calvin's theology, 'only believers knew what sin really was. Repentance was therefore the daily activity of the godly'.¹⁴

Reflecting upon the fallen Adam and Eve's attempt to evade God's judgement, however, Calvin acknowledges that:

We are all infected with the same disease; for indeed, we tremble, and are covered with shame at the first compunctions of conscience, but self-indulgence soon steals in, and induces us to resort to vain trifles, as if it were an easy thing to delude God. Therefore, unless conscience be more closely pressed, there is no shadow of excuse too faint and fleeting to obtain our acquiescence, and even if there be no pretext whatever, we still make pleasures for ourselves, and by an oblivion of three days' duration, we imagine that we are well covered.¹⁵

Like Luther, Calvin laments the tendency of humankind to mask its sins from God. He observes, 'it was ridiculous to place such a covering before the eyes of God'. Indeed, he states that 'all bury the disgrace of their vices under flimsy leaves, till God, by his voice, strikes inwardly their consciences'.¹⁶ Calvin not only emphasises the futility, but additionally, the arrogance of humanity's assumptions that its sins 'are well covered' by 'vain trifles'. Perhaps he refers here to some of the Catholic acts of penance: the 'little rituals' described by Cameron.

¹³ John Calvin, *A Commentary on Genesis*, 2 vols, trans. by John King (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1847), repr. in one vol. (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965 [1554]), p. 162.

¹⁴ David C. Steinmetz, 'The Theology of John Calvin', in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. by David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 39-56 (p. 125).

¹⁵ Calvin, *A Commentary on Genesis*, p. 159.

¹⁶ Calvin, *A Commentary on Genesis*, p. 160.

Certainly, the Catholic Church was a particular target of Calvin's images of hypocritical concealment. Utilising the concepts of nakedness and dress more explicitly, Calvin's *Commentary on Genesis* likens the Catholic Church to the naked and shamed Noah (explored within the previous chapter). Calvin states:

The Papists make themselves ridiculous by desiring to cover the filthiness of their idol, yea, the abominations of their whole impure clergy, with the cloak of Shem and Japheth. But it is necessary that Antichrist and his horned bishops, with all that rabble, should prove themselves to be fathers. (That is, legitimate fathers), if they wish that any honour should be paid them.¹⁷

Just as Shem and Japheth attempted to restore their father's patriarchal power and honour by covering his nakedness, the Church attempts to cloak its shameful weaknesses and transgressions with the semblance of authority and legitimacy, Calvin argues. Its concealment is described here as an act of self-preservation, designed to secure the interests of its leaders. This concealment takes a sinister, demonic turn: it is performed, after all, in the service of the Pope, or as Calvin terms him, 'Antichrist'. Calvin's reference to the covered 'filthiness' of the clergy, juxtaposed with the nakedness implied by his allusion to Noah's exposure, serves to undress the Catholic Church: to set it forth, like the disrobed Jerusalem or Nineveh, in its true state of shame.

Luther and Calvin not only use images of nakedness and dress to explore humankind's impulse to cover its sins, but additionally, to express the spiritual honesty and humility which humankind was called to embrace, according to their reformed theological understanding. Luther urges humankind to undress: 'to put off that form of God', and to clothe itself in mortification — to 'take on the form of a servant'. This process, described

¹⁷ Calvin, *A Commentary on Genesis*, pp. 303-304.

here as an exchange of dress, involves a notable shift in terms of spiritual self-perception. Humankind must abandon all visions of self-purity. Rather, it must see itself as sinful. In his commentary upon Romans (4. 7), Luther explains: ‘The saints are always sinners in their own sight, and therefore always justified outwardly. But the hypocrites are always righteous in their own sight, and thus always sinners outwardly’. He continues, ‘I use the term “inwardly” (intrinsic) to show how we are in ourselves, in our own eyes, in our estimation; and the term “outwardly” (extrinsic) to indicate how we are before God and in His reckoning’.¹⁸

Luther places great emphasis upon individual self-perception: this, he illustrates, is the key to understanding how we appear before God. He presents us with a paradox. Grace in God’s eyes is achieved only by those who see themselves as *ungracious*. To receive the ‘outward’ righteousness of God, one must condemn oneself *inwardly*. One must see oneself, in other words, in ‘the form of a servant’. But what does this shift in perception entail in spiritual, psychological and emotional terms? Luther’s words on Simon the Leper, noted above, present the recognition of sin as a metaphoric re-clothing (‘[Christ] clothed him with the form of sin’). And yet this re-clothing is perhaps more fittingly understood as a shameful undressing. By adorning Simon verbally with ‘the form of sin’, Christ forces him to bear witness to his faults, expressed here through the highly pejorative terms ‘disfigured’ and ‘loathsome form’. Luther blends the senses of spiritual transgression and physical deformity, referring to Simon’s sins while playing upon his literal disfigurement as a leper. Thus, the detection of sin becomes entwined with a discomfiting sense of bodily awareness. St Augustine likewise uses images of bodily distortion and contagion in order to capture the shame and horror attending his awakened awareness of his sins. He states, ‘I could see how

¹⁸ Luther, in *Lectures on Romans*, ed. by Hilton C. Oswald, in *Luther’s Works*, XXV: *Lectures on Romans* (1972), p. 257.

sordid I was, how deformed and squalid, how tainted with ulcers and sores'.¹⁹ The imagery of bodily disease evokes the sense of repulsion and terror prompted by the discovery of personal sin. It captures the distress experienced when one is forced to recognise that this obscenity is one's own: that it is an inextricable part of one's identity. To disrobe oneself in a spiritual sense, then, takes courage: it is to uncover and acknowledge the imperfections of one's soul. This struggle to acknowledge personal depravity and culpability surfaces once again within Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and in the religious lyrics of Herbert and Donne, as I go on to discuss in Chapters 4 and 5.²⁰ 'We tremble', as Calvin observes, 'and are covered with shame'.

Given the sense of discomfort and anguish which frequently accompanies the human acknowledgement of sin, it is little surprise that the sinner works, perhaps subconsciously, to conceal his moral blemishes not only from God, but even more so, from himself. As Calvin indicates, the fig-leaves adopted by the iconic, original sinners of Christianity, Adam and Eve, symbolise the human instinct to mask personal guilt from the active consciousness. Within the sixteenth century, as indeed so often, *money* served as the popular covering with which to cloak sin and prevent moral exposure. Indeed, the widespread practice of purchasing 'indulgences' (a financial donation made to the church in exchange for the promise of a reduced stay in purgatory) signalled the avoidance of spiritual introspection within the established Church. Luther condemns this neglect of 'inward penance'.²¹

¹⁹ Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. by R. S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), p. 169.

²⁰ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene: Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]).

George Herbert: *The Complete English Poems*, ed. by John Tobin (London: Penguin, 2004 [1633]).

John Donne: *The Complete English Poems*, ed. by A. J. Smith (London: Penguin, 1996 [1633]).

William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. by J. W. Lever (London: Arden, 2004 [c.1603]).

²¹ Luther, *Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses* (1518), in *Luther's Works*, XXXI: *Career of the Reformer I* (1957), ed. by Harold J. Grimm, pp. 77-252 (p. 85).

In *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, Calvin utilises images of concealment and disguise in order to illustrate how the psychology of divine evasion pervades the infrastructure of Catholic worship. He states:

While it is incumbent on true worshippers to give heart and mind, men always want to invent a mode of serving God quite different to this, their object being to perform for him certain bodily observances, and keep the mind to themselves. Moreover, they imagine that when they thrust external pomps upon him, they have by this artifice evaded the necessity of giving themselves [...] simply in spirit and in truth. By means of external ceremonies like specious masks we hide the inward malice of the heart, and interpose bodily observances like a wall or partition lest we be compelled to come to him with the heart.²²

Purely external giving is marked by Calvin as superficial and hypocritical: a ‘specious mask’, designed, cynically, to bolster the depraved, spiritual interior against divine detection. He condemns practices lacking Scriptural foundation and authority (for instance, the parading of the Communion) as ‘bare’ ceremony. Seductive and elaborate in earthly terms, such practices lacked the spiritual purity and sincerity which were demanded by God.²³ He deems the Catholic confession, meanwhile, ‘a most suitable cloak for hypocrisy’.²⁴ Calvin paints these ceremonies and rituals as those which not only attempted to mask the heart and mind from God, but likewise served to ‘obscure’ God’s ‘present and conspicuous glory’.²⁵ They were denounced within his works as a two-way barrier to divine and human unity.

²² John Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, trans. by J. K. S. Reid (London: SCM Press, 1954 [1543]), p. 193.

²³ Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, p. 191.

²⁴ Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, p. 193.

²⁵ Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, p. 192.

Luther similarly emphasises the hypocrisy of rituals and good works. Lending a sense of deeply intimate exposure to his objections of Catholic penitential practice, he reflects upon his own time within the monastery:

Outwardly [...] I observed chastity, poverty, and obedience [...] I was devoted only to fasting, vigils, prayers, reading Mass, and things like that. Nevertheless, under the cover of this sanctity and confidence I was nursing incessant mistrust, doubt, fear, hatred and blasphemy against God. This righteousness of mine was nothing but a cesspool.²⁶

Describing his pious exterior (like that of Simon the Leper) as a superficial ‘cover’ under which spiritual obscenities linger, Luther creates distrust towards external appearances of spiritual virtue. The closeness to God proclaimed by Luther’s external gestures of holiness (the fasting, vigils etc) is rendered a mere facade. Here, self-righteousness manifests itself not through the judgement of others, but through the performance of works aimed to gain God’s favour – works unsupported by faith. These works fail to restore him to the grace of God. Rather, the ‘inwards’ man is exposed as a desolate hypocrite. Indeed, the image of the ‘cesspool’ contrasts starkly with Luther’s outward image of chastity. As Fernie establishes, Luther ‘habitually thought of himself sans Christ in excremental metaphors’.²⁷ Luther preaches, ‘God does not judge according to appearances but searches “the minds and hearts”’. For without grace and faith it is impossible to have a pure heart’.²⁸ How did Luther propose that humanity gain the ‘faith’ and ‘grace’ required to cleanse the natural impurities of the ‘inwards’ man, revealed so strikingly within this image of his own internal pollution, if not through acts of holiness?

²⁶ Luther, in *Luther’s Works*, XXVI: *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (1963), p. 70.

²⁷ Fernie, p. 39.

²⁸ Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), trans. by Harold J. Grimm, in *Luther’s Works*, XXXI: *Career of the Reformer I*, p. 43.

Despite his championship of the ruthless acknowledgement of sin and accompanying self-disgust as central experiences for the faithful Christian, Luther warns equally against spiritual over-zealousness. As Fernie reflects, he ‘regards moral scrupulosity as Satanic’.²⁹ Some of Luther’s early writings reflect upon his ferocious contemplations of the heavenly judge, and his subsequent experiences of despair. Stark images of nakedness and exposure are used to capture these overwhelming thoughts and sensations of guilt and terror, known as Luther’s ‘*anfechtungen*’. Luther reveals that he scrutinised his sins with such intensity that he was tormented not only by guilt (and not the *felix culpa*, or ‘happy guilt’ with which he refers to the crucifixion of Christ) but by the fear of God’s rejection. At this stage within his theological understanding, ‘his God’, as Roland Bainton states, ‘was the God who inhabited the storm clouds brooding on the brow of Sinai, into whose presence Moses could not enter without unveiled face and live’.³⁰ I discussed such biblical representations of God within the previous chapter. This was a God from whom Luther felt compelled to mask his sins: an inaccessible God, a God of condemnation.

Luther’s anguished perception of God as a distant and merciless judge is evoked powerfully when he states that ‘[t]he soul deprived of all confidence is placed in a horrifying condition as a guilty criminal, standing alone before the tribunal of an eternal and angry God [...] the conscience being sentenced and convicted’.³¹ Stripped of ‘all confidence’, and ‘alone’ before the God of justice, the soul is rendered entirely vulnerable. Even the soul’s earthly resting place, the body, is absent within this evocation of acute spiritual exposure. There is no refuge, either material or spiritual: the conscience is set forth and condemned. Its guilt is unquestionable, and its punishment inevitable. Luther represents the condition of the soul when deprived of the refuge forged by Christ’s love. He describes another such scene in

²⁹ Fernie, p. 41.

³⁰ Roland Herbert Bainton, *Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1950), p. 50.

³¹ Luther, quoted in V. H. H. Green, *Luther and the Reformation* (London: Methuen, 1964), p. 57.

vivid detail. This time, sensations of physical undress play a central role within his depiction of spiritual exposure. Luther states:

At such a time God seems terribly angry, and with him the whole creation. At such a time there is no flight, no comfort, within or without, but all things accuse. At such a time as that the Psalmist mourns, ‘I am cut off from thy sight’, or at least he does not dare to say, ‘O Lord,...do not chasten me in thy wrath’. In this moment (strange to say) the soul cannot believe that it can ever be redeemed other than that the punishment is not yet completely felt. Yet the soul is eternal and is not able to think of itself as being temporal. All that remains is the stark naked desire for help and a terrible groaning, but it does not know where to turn for help. In this instance the person is stretched out with Christ so that all his bones may be counted, and every corner of the soul is filled with the greatest bitterness, dread, trembling, and sorrow in such a manner that all these last forever.³²

Within this recollection of an ‘experience of the divine wrath’ (supposedly of a man known to Luther) the soul is depicted in a state of rawness: ‘all that remains is the stark naked desire for help and a terrible groaning’.³³ This imagery of spiritual vulnerability echoes that used by Augustine within his reflection upon St Paul’s words (2 Corinthians 5. 1-4). Augustine refers to the ‘vestment of the righteousness of faith’, ‘clothed with which’, he states, ‘we cannot be found naked, and while longing for which we groan, being burdened with mortality, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven’.³⁴ Luther’s invasive imagery heightens the sense of mortality and desperate longing for God’s spiritual comfort conveyed here by Augustine. The penetrating force of spiritual accusation, and its

³² Luther, *Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses*, p. 129.

³³ Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology*, trans. by Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), p. 90.

³⁴ St Augustine, *The Spirit and the Letter*, in *Augustine: Later Works*, ed. by John Burnaby (London: S.C.M. Press, 1955), pp. 182-195 (p. 219).

accompanying despair, are evoked poignantly through his physicalized representation of the soul, that most transcendent of human attributes. ‘Every corner’, Luther states, ‘is filled with the greatest bitterness’. Like the bones which ‘may be counted’, this reference to the soul’s ‘every corner’ renders it almost quantifiable and at the very least, fully assessable. The experience of spiritual exposure is cast, within this passage, as a humbling reduction to one’s common framework. Like a body splayed out and flayed, the soul is rendered intensely visible and vulnerable. In the following chapter I will explore how such images of spiritual dissection resonated within the early modern anatomy theatre.

In spite of each human’s spiritual intricacy and individuality, as implied by the secretive connotations of ‘corners’ and ‘niches’, every inch of the body and soul, within this account, becomes open to judgment and attack. Luther reveals that had this ‘lasted for half an hour, even for one tenth of an hour, he would have perished completely and all of his bones would have been reduced to ashes’.³⁵ The subject is laid bare, ‘in this moment’ of despondency, by the weight of his perceived sin. His passive role throughout the experience is also notable. He is, as Luther states, ‘filled with the greatest bitterness, dread, trembling and sorrow’. Luther presents his acquaintance as a powerless vessel, prone to spiritual and psychological invasion. This experience seems mirrored within Spenser’s representation of Despair in *The Faerie Queene*, as I demonstrate within Chapter 4.³⁶ The intensity of the subject’s vulnerability is confirmed by Luther’s declaration, ‘the person is stretched out with Christ’. I concur with Bernhard Lohse’s reflection that this ‘can only mean that one experiences as it were the crucifixion of Christ in one’s own person’.³⁷ Luther not only recalls the extreme physical suffering endured by Christ upon the cross, but equally, the

³⁵ Luther, *Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses*, p. 129.

³⁶ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene: Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]).

³⁷ Lohse, p. 90.

excruciating doubt and fear of abandonment expressed by his cry, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Matthew 27. 46). As Luther states, there is ‘no comfort, within or without’ but merely ‘the stark naked desire for help’.

A striking feature of this passage is the intense isolation expressed by Luther as he evokes this moment of spiritual vulnerability. Although his images of the body ‘stretched out’, and metaphorically flayed evoke intense observation, a sense of exposure before an inquisitive crowd, it is notable that the subject feels himself entirely detached from the ultimate spiritual judge. He feels ‘cut off’, as Luther writes, from God’s ‘sight’. Paradoxically, it appears that it is the very absence of God’s observance which intensifies the subject’s feelings of exposure. He is rendered most naked when abandoned to his own judgement, for in such moments, humankind has no choice but to accept the moral burden which constitutes the personal ownership of its faults. As Luther redefined his faith, he rejected such instances of ‘*curvatus in se*’ (‘the turning of the soul in upon itself’). He declares that ‘[a] man is truly justified by faith in the sight of God, even if he finds only disgrace before man and in his own self’.³⁸ Thus, he calls humankind to turn outwards: to look to God to release it from the burden of sin. But this is only achievable, he emphasises, by way of a primal recognition of its sinfulness.

II: Christ’s Covering

As Luther’s recollections of despair emphasise, self-judgement and accusation, experienced as a terrible, guilty, and ceaseless nakedness, are unhelpful if Christ’s comfort is not sought, and sought with confidence in his mercy. Luther explains that the faithful Christian is clothed in Christ. Indeed, in line with the teachings of St Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, and those of Augustine, who echoed Paul’s terms, Luther defines ‘God’s righteousness’ as

³⁸ Luther, *The Disputation Concerning Justification*, p. 151.

‘the righteousness with which God clothes us when he justifies us’.³⁹ He states, ‘He spreads his cloak and covers us’, and again, ‘his mercy covers us, just like an enormous heaven’.⁴⁰

The image of righteousness as a cloak or covering imputed by God emphasises that it is the property of God, entirely external to humanity (although at God’s will, humanity may experience its benefits). Within these statements, God is emphasised as the agent of this process of clothing, and humanity, the passive recipient of God’s spiritual dress.

Accordingly, Fernie states that ‘Lutheran salvation involves a scarcely thinkable passivity’.⁴¹

And yet this sense of passivity is disrupted by Luther’s framing of the human as the actor within this divine exchange, when he teaches: ‘for St Peter commands in 1 Peter 6 [5:5]

“clothe yourself with humility toward one another”’, and instructs with the words of Paul,

““Put on the Lord Jesus Christ (13:14)”’.⁴² Here, Luther suggests that the onus is on

humanity to seek the spiritual ‘dress’ of Christ (‘put on’ and ‘clothe yourself’ instruct action). Luther addresses this contradiction in some form when he explains:

Although the Christian is thus free from all works, he ought in this liberty to empty himself, take upon himself the form of a servant, be made in the likeness of men, be found in human form, and to serve, help, and in every way deal with his neighbour as he sees that God through Christ has dealt and still deals with him.⁴³

³⁹ Romans 13. 14.

St Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter*, p. 219.

Luther, in ‘Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther’s Latin Writings’ (1545), trans. by Lewis W. Spitz, Sr, in *Luther’s Works*, XXXIV: *Career of the Reformer IV*, pp. 323-338 (p. 337).

⁴⁰ Luther, *Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses*, p. 190, and *The Disputation Concerning Justification*, p. 178.

⁴¹ Fernie, p. 42.

⁴² Luther, *Why the Books of the Pope and his Disciples were Burned* (1520), in *Luther’s Works*, XXXI: *Career of the Reformer I*, pp. 379-395 (p. 387).

Luther, *The Disputation Concerning Justification*, p. 190.

⁴³ Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520), trans. by W. A. Lambert, rev. by Harold J. Grimm, in *Luther’s Works*, XXXI: *Career of the Reformer I*, pp. 327-377 (p. 366).

Within Luther's theology, it rests with God alone to grant humankind righteousness. Yet he emphasises that the faithful Christian will strive naturally, by very virtue of the grace imputed by Christ, to 'put Christ on'. As the words above illustrate, to 'put Christ on' is to embrace the trials which face the true follower of Christ. It is, in short, to make oneself humble. This humility is encapsulated by Luther's phrase 'be found in human form', which suggests acceptance of one's vulnerability, sins, and limitations, or in Luther's words, 'finding in ourselves nothing but sin, foolishness, death, and hell'.⁴⁴ Humankind, he emphasises, must place 'bare confidence' in Christ's 'mercy'.⁴⁵ This represents a stark contrast to Simon's arrogant attempt to adopt the authority and glory of Christ.⁴⁶ The faithful Christian remembers that he is little more than the fleshy creature of God. To 'put on Christ', Luther emphasises, necessitates a process of 'self-emptying' (here, Luther employs the classic theological concept of 'Kenosis').⁴⁷ Bainton describes this process: 'let him cease to strive; let him surrender himself to the being and the love of God [...] overcoming all the assertiveness of the ego, all arrogance, pride, self-seeking, everything connected with the I, the me, and the my'.⁴⁸

Luther depicts a rigorous process of self-abasement. To receive God fully is to submit wholly to his will, and to face a metaphoric death – an erosion of the self, which struggles instinctively to maintain its independence. This struggle is described by Luther in the striking, physical terms of sexual intercourse. He states:

For the reception [...] of the full glory, we must hold ourselves ever passive like a woman at conception. For we are the bride of Christ [...] when it comes

⁴⁴ Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation*, p. 44.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Jane E. Strohl, 'Luther's Spiritual Journey', in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. by Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), chpt 9, pp. 149-164 (p. 156).

⁴⁸ Bainton, p. 42.

and the soul is penetrated by the spirit we ought neither to pray nor exert ourselves, but only to remain passive. This is, in truth, difficult, and causes violent affliction, for when the spirit surrenders all understanding and desire, it takes flight into the shadows and, as it were, passes into perdition and destruction.⁴⁹

In essence, man must strip every individual impulse from his being, so that he is filled entirely with the will of God. He must render himself vulnerable and prone before his creator, hence Luther's image of the obedient bride submitting to the physical mastery of her husband. Through his employment of this heavily gendered sexual metaphor, Luther not only evokes the intimacy of this human and divine exchange, but also suggests the unequal power relations between God and humanity. Humankind's role within this sexualized congress is definitively 'passive' (although this passivity is described as an exertion, for it runs counter to the human impulse to assert control – to strive, to conceal). Luther's eroticisation of spiritual surrender plays on St's Paul's metaphor of the Church as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5. 25-27). Of course, his own passage injects this metaphor with more explicit notions of marital intimacy. This metaphor is taken to further extremes within the religious lyrics of John Donne, as I will demonstrate within Chapter 5.

In a similar manner to Luther, Calvin asserts that Christians should 'renounce their reason, their carnal desires, and themselves entirely, that they may be brought into obedience to God alone, and live no longer to themselves but to him'.⁵⁰ Like Luther, Calvin captures and communicates this process of self-abasement using images of undress. He states:

we should be led to resign foolish delusions about our own strength and to realize that we can stand upright only in the strength of God so that, naked

⁴⁹ Luther, quoted by Green, p. 55.

⁵⁰ Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, p. 188.

and exposed, we flee to His mercy to lean wholly upon it, to hide ourselves utterly within it, appreciate that it alone is our true virtue and merit and is ever open to us in Christ as long as we desire it with all our hearts.⁵¹

Within this passage, Calvin evokes humankind's absolute dependence upon God. Once again, he emphasises that superstitious, human rituals ('foolish delusions') are nothing more than a man-made cloak of superficial, spiritual comfort. This flimsy covering prevents humanity from recognising its true state of spiritual bareness, and subsequently, from seeking Christ's mercy. Like Luther, Calvin encourages humankind to cast off all self-confidence before God.

The concept of naked exposure provides a fitting evocation of the shameful vulnerability of humankind before its creator. Certainly, within his *Commentary on Genesis*, Calvin reflects that 'there is something so unaccountably shameful in the nakedness of man, that scarcely any one dares to look upon himself, even when no witness is present'.⁵² By employing the metaphor of nakedness, then, Calvin signals the deep mortification and personal horror involved in exposing oneself in honesty and rawness to Christ. And yet, Calvin emphasises Christ's readiness to embrace humankind in this 'shameful' condition. His mercy, 'ever open', offers an eternal hiding place for humankind. Christ's abstract 'mercy' is cast in inviting, concrete terms: 'to lean wholly upon it, to hide ourselves utterly within it'. This sense of openness is tempered, however, by Calvin's conditional assertion that we must 'desire' Christ's mercy 'with all our hearts'. In this sense, he paints Christ's refuge as that which is 'open' to the faithful alone.

Luther and Calvin preach that true faith and subsequent salvation are pre-destined by God. The concept of double predestination was particularly prominent within Calvin's

⁵¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Geneva: 1559), II, 7, 8, reproduced in Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. by Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), p. 96.

⁵² Calvin, *A Commentary on Genesis*, p. 303.

theology. As Baker reflects, ‘Calvin stressed that God’s predestination was his sole prerogative, that it affected every individual, and that it determined both those to be saved and those to be damned’.⁵³ In this sense, Calvin stripped humankind of all power to govern its spiritual fate, and struck fear and uncertainty into the hearts of his followers. Who were the elect, and who were the reprobates? It is little wonder that MacCulloch refers to ‘predestination’ as that which was ‘formalised with pitiless logic’ within Calvin’s theological works.⁵⁴ Faced with the stark alternatives of irredeemable salvation or damnation, humanity was ‘exposed’ indeed.

Like Luther, Calvin utilises the Pauline and Augustinian trope of Christ’s righteousness as a form of ‘clothing’. He makes the spiritual function of this dress clear. Humankind’s ‘faults’, he declares, are ‘covered by the sacrifice of Christ’.⁵⁵ Thus, while Calvin condemns the ‘masks’, ‘leaves’, and ‘trifles’ adopted by worshippers in a base attempt to conceal their sins, he emphasises the contrasting, saving nature of Christ’s ‘clothing’. He reflects:

This is a wondrous way of making just, so to clothe the lost with the righteousness of Christ that they are not afraid when faced by the judgement which they deserve, and while they themselves rightly condemn themselves, they find that they are declared righteous in virtue of some authority outside themselves.⁵⁶

As within Luther’s accounts, the imagery of nakedness and dress serves here as a potent means of illustrating humanity’s relationship with Christ. Christ’s righteousness may be borrowed if he so wishes, supplying comfort and grace to sinners in their state of spiritual

⁵³ Baker, p. 32.

⁵⁴ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Building a Godly Realm: The Establishment of English Protestantism 1558-1603*, New Appreciations in History Series, 27 (London: The Historical Association, 1992), p. 18.

⁵⁵ Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, p. 202.

⁵⁶ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian*, III, 2, 2, reproduced in Niesel, p.132.

inadequacy. Calvin's depiction of Christ's spiritual clothing is emotionally charged. Christ is cast as a loving father, clothing 'the lost' so that 'they are not afraid'. He protects humanity not only from external judgement, but notably, from self-damnation. Indeed, there is a frightening undertone within this passage: those who lack Christ's righteousness will not be able to withstand God's judgement. This process of spiritual re-clothing through Christ is inextricably linked, within Calvin's exegesis, to the incarnation. Only by taking on the humility and suffering of the flesh, Calvin suggests, does Christ become humanity's strength and shelter. This paradox is opened up when Calvin asserts, 'never will faith be firm until it seeks support in the weakness of Christ'.⁵⁷ Humanity is strengthened, Calvin emphasises, by the clothing of divine vulnerability.

Luther also identifies Jesus as the exemplar of this wholehearted surrender to God. He emphasises that by taking on the human form, Christ set aside his robes of divinity and embraced those of a humble sinner in their place. Reflecting upon Philippians 2. 7, he states:

Christ divested or emptied himself, that is, acted as though he laid his Godhead aside, and would not use it – he put off the form of the divine majesty, and did not behave as God, which he truly was [...] did not make use of it, did not make a display of it against us, but much rather served us with it.⁵⁸

Luther explores Christ's abasement as a disrobing prompted by his love for humanity. While 'divested', 'emptied', and 'laid aside' suggest that Christ's power is utterly abandoned, the qualifying 'acted as though' and 'did not make a display of it against us', ascertain that his divinity remained, despite his adoption of the human form. Christ's sacrifice, his suffering

⁵⁷ Calvin, *Calvin's Works*, in *Corpus Reformatorum*, 47, 322, ed. by Baum, Cunitz, and Reuss (Brunswick, 1863-1900), reproduced in Niesel, p. 114.

⁵⁸ Luther, in *Luther's Works*, XXXII: *Career of the Reformer II* (1958), p. 145.

and servitude, are rendered all the more noble and inspiring for his loving failure to utilise his divinity ‘against’ the humans who persecuted him.

This notion of God’s divinity as present, but hidden in Christ, becomes central to Luther’s prescriptions regarding the relationship between God and humankind. Indeed, Luther distinguishes sharply between what he terms the ‘naked’ and ‘clothed’ God:

We must take hold of this God, not naked but clothed and revealed in His Word; otherwise certain despair will crush us. [He] is clothed in such kind appearance [...] in such a pleasant mask that is to say, dressed in His promises – this God we can grasp and look at with joy and trust. The absolute God, on the other hand, is like an iron wall, against which we cannot bump without destroying ourselves.⁵⁹

The ‘clothed’ God is described by Luther in terms of human accessibility. It is paradoxical that this masked God is rendered He who ‘we can look at with joy and trust’. Trust is ordinarily associated, of course, with transparency. Indeed, the metaphor of the mask was employed to connote deceit – the keeping of one’s true self from Christ. Luther condemned human righteousness as a ‘mask’ of ‘impious hypocrisy’, as I demonstrated earlier. In reference to God, however, Luther describes ‘a pleasant mask’. In this instance, the concealment performed by the mask is emphasised as benevolent rather than hypocritical. God, Luther states, is ‘dressed in His promises’. Luther plays upon the capacity of clothing to conceal and reveal simultaneously. The imagery of dress expresses his complex conception of God as one who is both set forth, and hidden. This divine negotiation is designed with humanity’s limited ability to receive divinity in mind, he emphasises.

⁵⁹ Luther, ‘[Exposition of] Psalm 51’, in *Luther’s Works*, XII: *Selected Psalms I* (1955), ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan, pp. 301-410 (p. 312).

By way of contrast, Luther establishes the devastating majesty of the ‘naked’ or ‘absolute’ God: God in his state of essential divinity. According to Luther’s theology, the perception of this unmasked God has a destructive impact upon humankind. As B. A. Gerrish states, Luther ‘sometimes speaks, especially in his latest period – of the “Naked God”. His language clearly indicates that, at this point, the image of God fades into sheer negativity: the *deus nudus* is God in himself, a strange, terrifying, unapproachable abstraction’.⁶⁰ Gerrish’s words on the ‘naked God’ recall Luther’s sensations of anguish and utter isolation before the angry, heavenly judge. Luther’s own accounts, then, appear to demonstrate the feelings of destruction and despair wrought by confrontation with God in his ‘naked form’. Yet this association of the angry God with the naked and absolute is disrupted by Luther’s declaration, ‘He who sees God as angry does not see him rightly but looks only on a curtain, as if a dark cloud had been drawn across his face’.⁶¹ The God of wrath, in this description, is a projection, an obscuration, of the human mind. The ‘naked God’, it appears, is not a God who damages through anger, but he who overwhelms humankind with his innate majesty. Luther challenges:

Do you not know that God dwells in light inaccessible? We weak and ignorant creatures want to probe and understand the incomprehensible majesty of the unfathomable light of the wonder of God. We approach. What wonder then that his majesty overpowers us and shatters!⁶²

⁶⁰ B. A. Gerrish, “‘To the Unknown God’: Luther and Calvin on the Hiddenness of God”, *The Journal of Religion*, 53.3 (1973), 263-292 (p. 267), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1202133>> [accessed 13 March 2012].

⁶¹ Luther, quoted by Bainton, p. 50.

⁶² Luther, quoted by Bainton, p. 43.

Rather, he advises that:

God must be left to himself in his own majesty, for in this regard we have nothing to do with him, nor has he willed that we should have anything to do with him. But we have something to do with him insofar as he is clothed and set forth in his word, through which he offers himself to us.⁶³

Within these declarations, Luther draws heavily upon the terrifying God of Mount Sinai described within Exodus 33, as explored within the previous chapter. He captures humankind's compulsion to seek God in his uncovered, glorious form. Yet such attempts to 'probe' God's 'majesty' are criticised as arrogant and presumptuous. To seek God in his native magnitude is, conversely, to exacerbate the distance between God and humankind.

Luther argues that humanity's limited vision necessitates a more tangible means of receiving God's spiritual message. One such medium, in his mind, is the crucifixion of Christ. He refers, for instance, to 'the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross'.⁶⁴ Here, the bodily shame and suffering which were endured by the incarnate Christ are positioned as the central means by which the abstract God, and his teachings, are made concrete. An understanding of Christ's sacrificial debasement is established as the key to accessing God. Luther reflects that 'it does [humanity] no good to recognise God in his glory and majesty, unless he recognizes him in the humility and shame of the cross'.⁶⁵

God is not only present both spiritually and materially within 'the cross', but as Luther emphasises, 'he is clothed and set forth in his word, through which he offers himself to us'. 'The Word', he declares, 'brings with it everything of which it speaks, namely, Christ

⁶³ Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, in *Luther's Works*, XXXIII: *Career of the Reformer III* (1972), ed. by Philip S. Watson, p. 139.

⁶⁴ Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation*, p. 52.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

with his flesh and blood and everything that he is and has'.⁶⁶ Here, Luther represents the Scriptures as an encapsulation of Christ's full revelation, expressed in nakedly physical terms. This sense of God's complete 'offering' or surrender to humanity within the form of the Scriptures is intensified when Luther describes 'the divine word' as that which is 'wrapped in the swaddling cloth of the human word'.⁶⁷ Thus, Luther casts God's communications with humanity as a linguistic means of mortification, comparable to the incarnation of Christ. The word of God, delivered to humankind, becomes the metaphorical infant, dependent upon humanity's nurture. The imagery is humbling. Indeed, it is little wonder that Esther Gilman Richey describes 'Luther's deity' as 'strangely vulnerable, abandoning himself to intimacy, to union with the other'.⁶⁸

Luther's representation of the intimacy between the Scriptures and humanity distinguishes his theology. To Augustine, for instance, 'The Word', 'is ultimately only a reference to a truth behind it that cannot be expressed or communicated'.⁶⁹ Within Augustine's interpretation, then, 'The Word' constitutes an extension of God's divine mystery. The 'truth' is not within it, but 'behind it': a contrast to the full revelation evoked by Luther. Erasmus likewise speaks of the Scriptures' mystique:

There are some secret places in the Holy Scriptures into which God has not wished us to penetrate more deeply and, if we try to do so, then the deeper we go, the darker and darker it becomes, by which means we are led to

⁶⁶ Luther, 'The Adoration of the Sacrament' (1523), trans. by Abdel Ross Wentz, in *Luther's Works*, XXXVI: *Word and Sacrament II* (1959), ed. by Abdel Ross Wentz, pp. 270- 305 (p. 278).

⁶⁷ Luther, quoted by Peter Meinhold, in *Luther's Sprachphilosophie* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1958), p. 56, reproduced by Lohse, in *Martin Luther's Theology*, p. 191.

⁶⁸ Esther Gilman Richey, 'The Property of God: Luther, Calvin and Herbert's Sacrifice Sequence', *ELH*, 78.2 (2011), 287-314 (p. 289), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41236545>> [accessed 03 April 2012].

⁶⁹ Lohse, p. 191.

acknowledge the unsearchable majesty of the divine wisdom, and the weakness of the human mind.⁷⁰

Both Erasmus and Augustine depict God as a detached and mystifying author. In these descriptions, the Scriptures serve to reinforce the disparity of power between the divine and human: to heighten humanity's sense of humility before God. These commentaries represent a stark contrast to Luther's image of 'the divine word' nurtured and 'clothed' by the human.

The relationship between the Scriptures and humanity is not, however, as simplistic as this image might suggest. Luther paints this relationship as complexly reciprocal. While the human word 'clothes' God's word, making it comprehensible in earthly terms, Luther's reply to the Papal Bull of Leo X makes it equally clear that the word of God clothes the true Christian. He challenges the Pope, 'dost thou think that with thy naked words thou canst prevail against the armor of Scripture?'⁷¹ Luther reflects upon the Scriptures as a form of empowerment – that with which his life and words are reinforced, and his weaknesses covered. The Pope's lack of scriptural evidence, conversely, renders him 'naked'. Thus, while the human word 'clothes' the divine word, the divine word also clothes the human, covering its shameful bareness.

This notion of a reciprocal exchange between God and humanity likewise surfaces within Luther's writings on the Eucharist. Scott Hendrix reflects that the Eucharist forms 'the locus of encounter between Christ and the Christian' within Luther's theology'.⁷² Certainly, Luther depicts the reception of the sacrament as a deeply personal interaction. Employing the sexualised imagery of groom and bride once again, he reflects, 'If he gives

⁷⁰ Erasmus, quoted in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, ed. by E. Gordon Rupp (London: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 38.

⁷¹ Luther, 'Against the Execrable Bull of Antichrist' (Reply to the Papal Bull of Leo X), reproduced by Bainton, pp. 125-126 (p. 125).

⁷² Scott Hendrix, 'Luther', in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. by David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 39-56 (p. 52).

her his body and very self, how shall he not give her all that is his? And if he takes the body of the bride, how shall he not take all that is hers?'.⁷³ Luther casts the reception of the Eucharist, then, as an intimate and all-encompassing spiritual exchange. It is conceived in nakedly sexual terms as a loving intercourse between God and humankind. Indeed, this image of a loving exchange contrasts with that in which humankind is described as the 'passive' woman, acted upon by God. Gilman Richey reflects that Luther's 'communion with God alters the property of the human erotically and economically'. She notes that it 'offers an exchange in which being possessed by God becomes a means of possessing him'.⁷⁴ The sense of intimate reciprocity evoked by Luther's descriptions of communion is heightened when one considers Zwingli's representation of this sacrament. Like a number of the continental reformers, including Calvin, Zwingli rejected the concept of Christ's 'real' bodily 'presence' within the consecrated bread and wine. Lohse encapsulates Zwingli's stance on the matter when he states, 'the assertion that Christ is present in the Supper according to his human nature treads too near the majesty of God'.⁷⁵

In spite of his frequent employment of physically charged imagery within his representations of Christ, Luther is keen to stress that he has material and immaterial, visible and invisible ways. He declares:

Nor does [Christ's] priesthood consist in the outer splendour of robes and postures like those of the human priesthood of Aaron and our present-day church; but it consists of spiritual things through which he by an invisible service intercedes for us in heaven before God.⁷⁶

⁷³ Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, p. 351.

⁷⁴ Gilman Richey, pp. 288-289.

⁷⁵ Zwingli, quoted by Lohse, p. 172.

⁷⁶ Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, p. 354.

Luther puts a premium upon the ‘spiritual things’. Within this passage, he offers a critique of the material preoccupations of the established Church: its ‘outer splendour of robes and postures’. With these words, Luther not only attacks the Church’s emphasis upon external rituals, but likewise, its priestly hierarchy. Luther’s theology destabilises these ecclesiastical barriers, dispensing, for instance, with the requirement for priestly intervention on behalf of the laity. He beckons Christians to embrace an individual relationship with God, and through the word of the Scriptures, to meet with him in the personalised, unguarded terms of spirit to spirit. Thus, Luther’s concept of the ‘common priesthood of all believers’ began to take shape.⁷⁷ Indeed, Luther was to strip away the ‘proud’ titles of ‘those called popes, bishops, and lords’, as he states, in favour of the humbled terms ‘ministers, servants, and stewards’.⁷⁸

As this change might suggest, the human Church, in Luther’s teachings, was to be reformed rather than disbanded. For despite his condemnation of the Church’s external preoccupations, Luther explained that it ‘can only appear in a covering, a veil, a shell, some kind of clothes that a man can grasp, otherwise it can never be found’.⁷⁹ Humankind was advised, then, to seek both the ‘clothed’ God and the ‘clothed’ Church. Yet the established Church, like its worshippers, required a degree of re-clothing. The question of which ‘clothes’ were befitting for a Reformed Church prompted much disagreement within early modern English society, as I will demonstrate within the following section.

Calvin’s theology also distinguished Christ firmly from God: a stark division of roles that echoed Luther’s dichotomy of the ‘naked’ and ‘clothed’ God. Calvin, however, does not use these evocative metaphoric labels. In the passage that follows, he emphasises that Christ

⁷⁷ Luther, quoted by Markus Wriedt, in ‘Luther’s Theology’, *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. by Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 86-119 (p. 102).

⁷⁸ Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, p. 356.

⁷⁹ Luther, quoted by Green, p. 131.

serves as the shield for humankind, with which the faithful may enter God's presence without trembling. He states:

we put Him on and are made members of His body, and He has deemed us worthy to be united with Him so that we may glory in being vitally linked with His righteousness. By such union with Him we become clothed with His righteousness. Because we are sheltered by its authority we can stand as just without limit before God.⁸⁰

Calvin's depiction of humanity's physical absorption into Christ ('made members of His body', 'vitaly linked with His righteousness') speaks of a substantial unification of God and humanity. Notably, his evocation of this relationship lacks the erotic imagery and charge of Luther's descriptions. Nevertheless, he emphasises that this is an intimate and living bond: a bond through which humanity is 'clothed' and 'sheltered' by Christ's spiritual virtues. Despite Calvin's imagery of spiritual and physical conflation (here, indeed, God and humanity are cast as a one body) the terms 'sheltered' and 'clothed' imply that humanity's sin, nevertheless, remains its own. Rather, its sin is masked, or rendered irrelevant, by virtue of this relationship with Christ. This represents a contrast to the exchanges described by Luther, where 'all' of humanity is shared with Christ (sin and filth included) as the sinner and his/her saviour are united in a glorious state of indeterminacy.

In a mirroring of Luther's theological writing, Calvin casts God as the almighty, overpowering figure familiar to us from Exodus. He declares that '[w]e cannot behold God in the splendour of His majesty', and 'The effulgence of the being of God is so excessive that it dazzles our eyes until it shines upon us in the face of Jesus Christ.'⁸¹ He states:

⁸⁰ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III, 11, 10, reproduced in Niesel, p. 135.

⁸¹ Calvin, *Calvin's Works*, in *Corpus Reformatorum*, 55, 34, and 55, 12, reproduced in Niesel, p. 113.

his essence is incomprehensible; hence, his divineness far escapes all human perception. But upon his individual works he has engraved unmistakable marks of his glory [...] Therefore the prophet very aptly exclaims that he is ‘clad with light as with a garment’.⁸²

Calvin’s sublime but fearful descriptions of God echo Luther’s representations of the ‘naked God’. To both theologians, God in his pure and native ‘majesty’ is beyond humanity’s comprehension. The probing of and prying at the undisclosed God is discouraged, as in Luther’s teachings. Calvin declares, ‘It is not right that a man should with impunity enquire into those things which the Lord has willed to remain hidden in Himself’.⁸³ He explains, ‘God alone is an adequate witness to Himself and cannot be recognised except through His own testimony. Hence we must understand Him in the guise in which he has revealed Himself to us’.⁸⁴ Thus, Calvin emphasises that God is accessible to humanity only within his chosen forms. Highlighting the loving debasement performed by Christ for humanity, he stresses that these are ‘the lowliest forms’, for Christ is ‘God revealed in the flesh’.⁸⁵

Like Luther, Calvin tempers God’s divine grandeur and inaccessibility with descriptions of the compassionate presence of the ‘clothed’ God (here, Christ). He explains, ‘Christ veils the majesty of God which otherwise would be terrible to us, so that it is manifest to us only as grace and fatherly kindness’.⁸⁶ Calvin’s Christ performs, then, as the clothing through which the ‘naked God’ is made bearable to fallen humanity. Through Christ, Calvin emphasises, God’s truth is disclosed to humankind. Wilhelm Niesel captures

⁸² Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Geneva: 1559), 2 vols, XX, ed. by John T. McNeill; trans. by Ford Lewis Battles (London: S. C. M. Press, 1961), I, 5, 1, p. 52.

⁸³ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II, 21, I, in *Corpus Reformatorum*, reproduced in Niesel, pp. 160-161.

⁸⁴ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I, 13, 21 in *Corpus Reformatorum*, reproduced in Niesel, p. 54.

⁸⁵ Calvin, *Calvin’s Works in Corpus Reformatorum*, 46, 110, reproduced in Niesel, p. 119

⁸⁶ Calvin, *Calvin’s Works in Corpus Reformatorum*, 55, 56, reproduced in Niesel, pp. 113-114.

this well when he speaks of Calvin's representation of 'the unique, perfect, and exclusive revelation of God in Jesus Christ', crystallised within the 'law and gospel'.⁸⁷

Calvin, like Luther, advocated a remedy of honest and heartfelt engagement both with the Scriptures and with one's faults. He cast the Reformed Church as the champion of this renewed relationship with self and God, stating that it 'dragged hypocrites out of their hiding places into open day, that they might both examine themselves more closely and begin to have a better idea of the divine judgement which they formerly evaded'.⁸⁸ While his tone and language echo Jeremiah's description of the brutal disrobing of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 13. 26), Calvin places emphasis upon the recognition of sin as a means of turning to Christ's mercy. His faith, like that of Luther, was founded upon spiritual-self awareness, tempered by re-clothing through the imputed grace of Christ.

III: The English Reformation

The final section of this chapter considers how concepts, images and acts of nakedness and dress were utilised within the context of the English Reformation. Like the Reformation of continental Europe, the English Reformation was both gradual and erratic. However, by 1553, as Christopher Haigh states, 'the Church of England had a Protestant liturgy, a Protestant theology, and a mainly Protestant episcopate'.⁸⁹ 'By 1603', he declares, 'England was a Protestant nation', with a Protestant 'Church theology' and 'working documents'.⁹⁰

This section explores the use and effects of nakedness within the documents and practices of the Reformed Church. *The Book of Common Prayer*, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, church sermons, the disciplinary actions of the church courts, and a range of poems and letters

⁸⁷ Niesel, p. 35.

⁸⁸ Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, p. 214.

⁸⁹ Christopher Haigh, 'The Reformation in England to 1603', *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. by R. Po-chia Hsia (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 135-149 (p. 141).

⁹⁰ Haigh, p. 147.

addressing the matter of the Reformed Church service are consulted.⁹¹ While the first edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* (1549) is cited occasionally, my quotations are taken primarily from the 1559 edition. As John E. Booty explains, this was ‘the most enduring of the earliest editions and provided the context in which Elizabethans, from Queen Elizabeth and William Shakespeare to the village housewife and yeoman farmer, lived and died’.⁹² This exploration of nakedness within the Reformed Church is not, however, confined to the Elizabethan era. Indeed, Baker even suggests that the ‘Protestant Reformation’ itself extended ‘to the end of the Thirty Years’ War in 1648’.⁹³ Certainly, as late as the mid-seventeenth century, conformists and non-conformists continued to debate the nature of the Reformed Church service in vivid and heated detail, some stating that the Reformation had gone too far, and others that it had not gone far enough. I begin by exploring how the metaphors of nakedness and dress were used to illustrate these concerns.

In a publication of 1640, the Puritan Henry Burton challenges the notion that a church service lacking ecclesiastical costumes, ritual gestures, and ornaments is spiritually shameful and bare.⁹⁴ The imagery of nakedness is employed to comical and sarcastic effect. Indeed, Burton mocks the theological mindset which renders, ‘Without the Surplice and Hood, the Minister naked: without rich Ornaments and a Crucifix, the Altar naked’. He continues:

⁹¹ *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. by Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

John Foxe, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, ed. by John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁹² *The Book of Common Prayer 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book*, ed. by John E. Booty (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976), p. v.

⁹³ Baker, p. 24.

⁹⁴ Henry Burton, *A replie to a relation, of the conference between William Laude and Mr. Fisher the Jesuite. By a witnesse of Jesus Christ* ([Amsterdam]: 1640), p. 102, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:5075> [accessed 09 November 2011].

without a Signe of the Crosse, Baptisme is naked: without Kneeling before the Altar at the Communion, the Sacrament is naked: without a devout Crindge when Jesus is named, Jesus is naked: without looking towards the East when you Pray, Prayer naked: without goodly Images, the Walls naked: without the rich Copes, the Epistle and Gospel naked: without a faire payre of Organs, and Chanting to it, the whole Service naked.⁹⁵

In this parody of the Roman Catholic mass, Burton highlights the audacity of the belief that human adornments (crossing, kneeling, playing music, chanting) serve to ‘clothe’, or to supply a ‘lack’ within Christian worship. Indeed, the term ‘naked’ is used here to evoke shame and impotency. Burton heightens the impudence of these claims with his startling reference to the nakedness of Christ: ‘without a devout Crindge when Jesus is named, Jesus is naked’. The suggestion that Christ requires the clothing of congregational gesture inverts the Reformed belief that Christ alone has the power to spiritually clothe, as expressed by both Luther and Calvin: a belief which renders human works empty, if lacking in Christ’s grace. By placing emphasis upon earthly ceremonials, Burton implies that worshippers presume not only to ‘clothe’ themselves, but most prominently, to ‘clothe’ Christ himself. This image of Christ in naked dependency upon human rituals intensifies this sense of misplaced confidence in devotional works. Indeed, the ‘clothing’ supplied by the ceremonies of the Catholic Church and retained to some degree by the Anglican Church, is rendered superficial. Burton asserts:

But what if the whole Service were thus naked? God neither requires, nor respects any such pomp in his Service. You will say, “Tis sightly and stately”. But one of the Heathen Poets could tell you, that God regards more a simple and honest heart, then all such gifts, or pompous Service. As he saith:

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Tell us, ye Pontifes, what such glittering gold
 Makes on your Temples? &c.
 A mind compos'd of *justice*, and of *right*,
 And holy contemplation (*Gods* delight)
 A brest well dipped in the purple grain
 Of noble *honesty*, That will not stain.

He continues, 'If God as Poems say, a Spirit be: | Then with pure mind let him be serv'd of thee'.⁹⁶

Like Calvin in *The Necessity*, Burton emphasises that it is the internal, moral qualities of humanity, rather than external decorations or shows, which serve as the true Christian adornment – the adornment which both pleases and praises God. He likewise echoes Luther's emphasis upon a priesthood of 'spiritual things', casting spiritual virtues as the only enduring decorations: 'A brest well dipped in the purple grain | Of noble *honesty*, That will not stain'. These lines hint at the opposing *dishonesty* of material adornments, a connection explored with greater vigour within the passage which follows. Burton continues:

tell me, whether was Adam and Eve more beautifull in Gods eyes, and their own too, having no other cloathing, or ornaments upon them, but their naked Innocencie: then in their new devised fashion of Fig-leave-Aprons? Although they now seemed gay with their borrowed *leaves*, as the Crow with his borrowed *feathers*. And surely this may be a very fit *patterne* to Sample your Church by. For yours and *Romes* Church, having lost their *Primitive* and *Originall* beauty of Innocencie, Simplicity, and Purity of Christs Spouse, as the Love of God, Saving Faith, Soundnesse of Doctrine, Sancitivity of Conversation, and Purity of his Worship, which you have by so many of your Superstitions so miserably corrupted: think you now to please GOD with a

⁹⁶ Burton, pp. 102-103.

curious painted Service, which serves to no other purpose, then to please your owne fancie, and other mens carnall senses?⁹⁷

Here, the so-called ‘nakedness’ of the simple church service is equated with the innocence and purity of the unclothed, pre-fall Adam and Eve. Meanwhile, the ceremonies of the Anglican Church are deemed ‘Romish’ and corrupt. They are aligned symbolically with the fig-leaves adopted by the fallen Adam and Eve – a costume designed to conceal spiritual nakedness, but which rather blazoned guilt, vanity, and division from God. Burton mocks the Anglican service as that which is ‘dressed up’ in ‘a Fooles gay Coate, of so many diverse coloured shreds’. Sensuous and excessive, it is cast as the antithesis of the ‘Innocencie, Simplicity, and Purity’ sought by God. Yet according to Burton, this theatrical service will be exposed and shamed at Christ’s second coming. He warns:

Then shall all your Sumptuous Ceremonies, and Solemne Service be discovered, and the rotten inside of your hypocriticall formalities be turned out to the view of all the world [...] all that filthy inside of hypocrisie, and infidelity, shall fly out, to become a laughing stocke, to all the world, which shall then see that GREAT WITNESSE of what sincerity was in your heart, when you bleared ignorant mens eyes with the glaring luster of your externall worship.⁹⁸

Burton offers a vivid depiction of the Church’s spiritual disrobing. Employing images which echo Ezekiel’s description of the stripped Jerusalem (Ezekiel 16. 36-37), he denounces the Church in terms which evoke both physical and sexual depravity: ‘filthy’, ‘rotten’, ‘infidelity’. Its use of ceremony and ritual is cast as a hypocritical disguise, much like the

⁹⁷ Burton, pp. 103-104.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

‘specious mask’ condemned by Calvin in his critique of Roman Catholic worship.⁹⁹ Within this passage, Burton lays great emphasis upon the transparency of the Church’s spiritual ‘inside’. The disclosure imagined here is absolute. Indeed, this disrobing is performed before the gaze of ‘all the world’.

As I demonstrated within the previous section, Luther had maintained that the Church required ‘a covering, a veil, a shell, some kind of clothes that a man can grasp’.¹⁰⁰ Certain opponents of both ‘Puritan’ simplicity and Roman Catholic excess voiced concerns that the balance of nakedness and dress had been tipped, leaving the Church with no ‘covering’. The anonymous author of ‘A Plea for Moderation’ (1642) expresses this fear by depicting the Church as an undressed female: ‘She is left stark naked, exposed to summer scorchers, and winter colds; and I pray to God when she puts on anything next, it do not prove her winding sheet. As I would not have her go like a painted strumpet, so I should be glad to see her in a comely dress’.¹⁰¹ The phrase ‘stark naked’ evokes the exposed female anatomy (the Church, of course, is referred to throughout the passage as ‘She’). Thus, the writer creates a startling sense of sexual shame, evoking the Church’s vulnerability to attack and degradation without the ‘clothing’ of moderate ceremonies and formalities. This imagery of female exposure reflects an urgent need for protection: it prompts action on the part of the virtuous. Indeed, the writer casts the Puritan undressing of church ceremony as over-zealous, and damaging to the Christian faith. The image of the ‘winding sheet’ threatens the death of the Church, should this state of exposure prevail. And yet, the author is keen to emphasise that the opposing state of excessive ‘dress’ is equally degrading. Indeed, the full ceremonial form of the Roman Catholic mass is expressed in sexual terms – to ‘have her go like a

⁹⁹ Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, p. 193.

¹⁰⁰ Luther, quoted by Green, p. 131.

¹⁰¹ Anon., *A Plea for Moderation* (London: 1642), p. 6, in *EEBO*
http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Zin 39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:156598:5 [accessed 07 November 2012].

painted strumpet'. Thus, while a church without formalities is deemed frail and humiliated, that with too many is rendered superficial, unfaithful, and as the term 'strumpet' might imply, diseased.

This concern is expressed in the same evocative terms by John Donne. As Davies declares, Donne 'argued that true religion is not to be found "either in a painted church, on one side, or in a naked church on another"'.¹⁰² To Donne, it was the Church of England which provided 'the via media between the accretions of Rome and the nakedness of Geneva', and hence sported the metaphoric 'comely dress' of 'moderation'.¹⁰³ This view was also echoed by George Herbert, as I will demonstrate within Chapter 5.

Though critiqued for its maintenance of certain Latinate ceremonies and a formal service of worship (as the objections of Burton emphasise) the Church of England sought to restore purity, simplicity, and truth to a Christian faith perceived to have been corrupted by Roman Catholicism. This purification involved a shift from external acts of piety and praise to the kinds of internal scrutiny advocated by Lutheran and Calvinist theology. The devaluation of bodily rituals which ensued is demonstrated by Francis Quarles in his poem, *A Feast for Wormes* (1620).¹⁰⁴ He questions, 'Can sackcloth clothe a fault? or hide a shame? | Can ashes clense thy blot? or purge thy' offence?'.¹⁰⁵ Here, Quarles challenges the spiritual value of physical acts of penitence associated with the Catholic faith. He presents them as feeble, human attempts to conceal or banish sin. He continues:

¹⁰² Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England 1603–1690* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 150.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Francis Quarles, *A Feast for Wormes Set forth in a Poeme of the History of Jonah* (London: 1620), section 9, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:15917:29> [accessed 03 August 2013].

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. No line numbers in *EEBO* facsimile.

Although thou worser weeds then sackcloth weare,
 Or naked goe, or sleep in shirts of haire,
 Or though thou chuse an ash-tub for thy bed,
 Or make a daily dunghill on thy head,
 Thy labour is not poysd with equall Gaines,
 For thou hast nought but labour for thy paines:
 Such idle madnesse God reiects, and loaths,
 That sinkes no deeper, than the skinne, or cloaths[.]¹⁰⁶

Within these lines, physical acts of mortification, be it disrobing to nakedness or clothing oneself in a hair shirt (acts which serve to remind one of one's human corporeality) are dismissed as 'idle madnesse'. God, Quarles stresses, looks for devotion beyond the surface of 'the skinne, or cloaths'. Rather, he seeks humility *within*. 'True Repentance', Quarles states, is an intimate, internal process. It is experienced as 'an *inly* smart', '*within* thy mournfull brest'. It involves the sorrowful recognition of sin ('It detects | Thy wounded conscience').¹⁰⁷ Yet as in Lutheran and Calvinist thought, the Anglican Church was keen to stress that true Christian worship involved more than the mere identification of sin. Rather, as Quarles declares, 'true Repentance' 'yernes for grace'.

This balance between the inward turn of personal scrutiny and the outward turn towards God's forgiveness, a balance so lucidly evoked by Calvin, plays an important role within Anglican theology. Bishop Pilkington, for instance, preaches:

Let us therefore in all our supplications and prayers unto the Lord first confess our beggarly poverty and unableness to help ourselves, the want of his heavenly grace and fatherly assistance; and then our gracious God will plenteously pour His blessings into our empty souls, and fill them with His

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

grace [...] we must know ourselves to be empty and hungry, or else we shall not earnestly desire this heavenly comfort from above, which is requisite in all prayer.¹⁰⁸

Pilkington expresses a theological notion comparable to the concept of ‘self-emptying’ advocated by both Luther and Calvin. Spiritual self-mortification is cast as the means of gaining God’s grace. This process of mortification is emphatically internal in nature: lack and longing are recognised within the soul. This is not to say that ‘good works’, which play a central role within Catholic theology, are abandoned. Rather, it is the personal and social glorification of these works which Anglican congregations are encouraged to discard. As Thomas Playfere advised in *The Pathway to Perfection* (1593):

[if] we can be content to forget all our good works, and to strow our best garments, and our most flowrishing branches at Christs feet: and to cast downe our very crownes before the throne of the Lambe, then he will be a right Lambe indeed, he will not fight with vs, but he will crowne vs with honour & glory. Almighty god appointed his people not to sheare the first borne of the sheep. The first born of the sheep are the best of our good workes. These we must not sheare, nor lay naked and open to the view and knowledge of all men, but *forget* them, and hide them vnder the fleece of silence, and keepe them secret to our selues.¹⁰⁹

Playfere echoes the sentiments expressed by Luther in his words upon Simon the Leper.¹¹⁰ All sense of righteousness (symbolised here by ‘our best garments’, ‘our most flowrishing branches’, and ‘our very crownes’) is to be abandoned, and humility embraced in its place. Like Luther and Calvin, Playfere represents this spiritual process through the metaphors of

¹⁰⁸ James Pilkington, extract in *English Reformers*, ed. by T. H. L. Parker (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 95.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Playfere, *The Pathway to Perfection* (London: 1597, first preached in 1593), p. 22-23, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:3737:17> [accessed 30 May 2012].

¹¹⁰ Luther, *Two Kinds of Righteousness*, p. 303.

disrobing and re-clothing. Here, the self-satisfied exhibition of good works is expressed in the symbolic terms of ‘laying naked and open’. While sins are to be remembered and exposed to God, good works require the opposite treatment – concealment both in public and in private. Indeed, Playfere’s sermon calls humankind to employ a modest covering, actively, before self and other. This ‘fleece of silence’, adopted in the place of naked disclosure, is comparable to the ‘form of a servant’ or ‘clothing of sin’ examined by Luther.

Richard Hooker also employs the imagery of dress in order to explore the value of human works. He declares:

faith is the only hand, which putteth on Christ vnto justification; and Christ, the only garment, which being so put on, covereth the shame of our defiled natures, hideth the imperfections of our workes, preserveth vs blameless in the sight of God, before whom otherwise, the weakness of our faith were sufficient to make vs culpable, yea to shut vs from the kingdome of heaven, where nothing that is not absolute, can enter.¹¹¹

Hooker’s reference to Christ as ‘the only garment’ that ‘covereth’ and ‘hideth’ humanity’s deformities reflects the reformed shift from devotional works to faith, as the means of salvation. Faith, he establishes, is the agent of humanity’s re-clothing through Christ – ‘the only hand’. Hooker’s depiction of Christ as humanity’s covering, sheltering its sins from God’s scrutiny, echoes the language and imagery of Calvin. Likewise, Calvin’s emphasis upon the doctrine of predestination is reflected by the words which follow. Indeed, Hooker makes it clear that this re-clothing, or justification through Christ, is experienced only by the chosen. He declares:

¹¹¹ Richard Hooker, *A Learned Discourse of Justification, Workes & How the foundation of faith is overthrown* (London: 1612, delivered in 1591), p. 50, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:21763:30> [accessed 26 June 2013].

As we haue receiued, so wee teach, that besides the bare and naked worke, wherein Christ without any other associate finished al the parts of our redemption & purchased salvation himselfe alone: for conveyance of this eminent blessing vnto vs, manie things are of necessity required, as to be knowne & chosen of God before the foundation of the world; in the world; in the world to be called, justified, sanctified; after wee haue left the world, to bee receaned vnto glory; Christ in every of these hath somewhat, which hee worketh alone.¹¹²

The ‘worke’ performed by Christ (that is, the sacrifice of the Passion and Crucifixion) is described by Hooker, then, as ‘bare and naked’. These adjectives capture the absolute vulnerability and humiliation embraced by Christ: his acceptance of a base corporeal form and public suffering upon the cross.

Hooker does not shy away from exploring the bodily indignities suffered by Christ. As John Chandos recalls, in reference to Hooker’s *A Remedy Against Sorrow and Fear* (1612):

the familiar drooping divinity on the cross is suddenly and hideously altered; in the turn of a single word the figure changes from Christ the God, transcending brief humanity, to Christ the man, convulsing the wreck of his body in incontinent carnal agony, struggling and ‘roaring’ like any tortured animal.¹¹³

Despite his depictions of Christ’s openness and accessibility to humanity, Hooker emphasises that his absolute sacrifice will not save all. Rather, the saved are ‘chosen of God before the foundation of the world’. Thus, the comfort offered by Christ’s incarnation is

¹¹² Hooker, p. 51.

¹¹³ John Chandos, ‘Richard Hooker’, in *In God’s Name: Examples of Preaching in England from the Act of Supremacy to the Act of Uniformity 1534-1662*, ed. by John Chandos (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1971), pp. 102-107 (p. 103).

tempered by the realisation that his grace will not cover all souls. By the same token, good works will not serve to save. The latter is expressed in more harrowing terms by James Usher, who in ‘The Natural Man is a Dead Man’ (c.1620) states:

Now all these excellent gifts and natural endowments which did adorn a wicked mans soul, before the soul is hurled into hell, must be taken away from him. There is a kind of degradation of the soul, it is depriested as it were, and becomes like a degraded Knight that hath his honour taken from him [...] it shall be stript of all, and packt to hell.¹¹⁴

Usher evokes the absolute undressing of condemned souls to take place on the Day of Judgement. All goodness, he emphasises, will be ‘stript’ away from these. The terms ‘depriested’ and ‘degraded’ not only speak of shame and humiliation, but most prominently, a disowning. Humanity’s ‘excellent gifts’ and ‘natural endowments’ are portrayed by Usher as the property of God. They are cast as trappings lent to humanity throughout earthly life, but reclaimed, in death, from those who are judged unworthy to bear them.

The Reformed Church helped to shape this sense of humble dependence upon God through the physical environments which it provided for worshippers. As Patrick Collinson reflects, ‘What is a man? Was he a humble, receptive creature, nobody without the overwhelming grace of God, an idea that is reflected in the plainness and modesty of protestant places of worship, which are mere receptacles for the saving Word?’¹¹⁵ Collinson evokes ‘the stripping of the altars’ which occurred under Protestant rule.¹¹⁶ Sainly statues, images and friezes, encouraging ritualistic practices and belief in saintly intercession, were destroyed, white-washed, and replaced with scriptural excerpts. As Collinson suggests, this

¹¹⁴ James Usher, ‘The Natural Man is a Dead Man’ (c.1620), reproduced in Chandos, pp. 225-28 (p. 225).

¹¹⁵ Patrick Collinson, *The Reformation* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003), p. 49.

¹¹⁶ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400 – 1580* (London: Yale University Press, 2005).

simplified church architecture both encouraged and reflected a changed relationship to God: it offered worshippers no hiding place beyond God's own mercy and saving word. Likewise, the colourful and decorated vestments worn by Catholic priests were exchanged for simple white surplices within the Anglican Church. And yet, as Judith Maltby reflects, the maintenance of the priestly surplice, even in its simplified form, became a source of tension within certain parishes.¹¹⁷ To some preachers, the surplice was perceived as a Romish costume – a 'foolish weed'.¹¹⁸ Bishop Grindal of London (1507) declares, 'You see me wear a cope or a surplice in [St] Paul's. I had rather minister without these things, but for order's sake and obedience to the prince'.¹¹⁹ Within some parishes priests refused to wear the surplice, even when faced with the complaints of their parishioners.¹²⁰ This refusal to wear the priestly vestment acted as a strong visual indicator of non-conformity. It hinted at the priests' preference for further modesty – a desire to break down the formal distinctions between priest and congregation.

This 'stripping' away of Catholic adornment was likewise reflected within the official liturgy of the Anglican Church, *The Book of Common Prayer*. The 1559 version opens, for instance, with an explanation 'Of Ceremonies, Why Some Be Abolished and Some Retained'. The omitted ceremonies, it states, 'have much blinded the people and obscured the glory of God'.¹²¹ Not only were the ceremonies of the Catholic Church cast as arrogant, deceitful, and superstitious (as in Burton's critique), but by undermining the belief that God alone can save, they were likewise deemed to distance worshippers from his mercy.

The Book of Common Prayer promotes an open and direct relationship to God: a relationship

¹¹⁷ Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 45.

¹¹⁸ Francis Quarles, 'On Those that Deserve it', in *The Metaphysical Poets*, ed. by Helen Gardner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 115.

¹¹⁹ Maltby, p. 45.

¹²⁰ Maltby cites the parishes of Bunbury and Tarporley as examples of such controversy over the priests' refusal to wear the vestment.

¹²¹ *The Book of Common Prayer 1559*, p. 18.

founded upon the word of the Scriptures, read and spoken in the vernacular. The identification of sin also plays a central role within this relationship, so much so that Maltby comments that the prayer book could be described as ‘oppressively sin-obsessed’.¹²²

‘Morning Prayer’, for instance, includes the following declaration:

the Scripture moveth us in sundry places, to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness, and that we should not dissemble or cloak them before the face of the Almighty God our heavenly Father, but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart: to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same by his infinite goodness and mercy.¹²³

These words, which echo Calvin’s condemnation of cloaked sins, encourage worshippers to cast off hypocrisy and deceit and to become spiritually open before God. As in the Roman Catholic faith, the confession of sin is deemed particularly important prior to the receipt of Holy Communion. The Reformed Communion service opens with a prayer to ‘Almighty God [...] unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid’.¹²⁴ Faithful disclosure to God is inextricably linked to personal self-knowledge. Indeed, each recipient of Communion is required to expose his sins *to himself*. In other words, he is to share in God’s intimate knowledge of his sins, for paradoxically, while exposure to God is urged, it becomes clear that God already sees through all cloaks and dissemblance. Spiritual self-exposure, rather, serves as a badge of faith, humility, servitude and repentance. The ‘curate’ bids the congregation:

so to search and examine your own consciences, as you should come holy and clean to a most godly and heavenly feast, so that in no wise you come but in the marriage

¹²² Maltby, p. 2.

¹²³ *The Book of Common Prayer 1559*, p. 50.

¹²⁴ *The Book of Common Prayer 1559*, p. 248.

garment, required of God in Holy Scripture, and so come and be received as worthy partakers of such a heavenly table.¹²⁵

The focus here is emphatically upon the individual, as the agent of his own spiritual exposure. As in the works of Augustine and Luther, the process of spiritual self-scrutiny is presented as the means of re-clothing oneself in the spiritual virtue of Christ. This sentiment is echoed within the prayer book's 'Certaine godly prayers for Sundry dayes'. One such 'godly prayer' reads, 'forgive unto us our sinnes, good Lorde, forgive unto us our sinnes, that by the multitude of thy mercies they may bee covered, and not imputed unto us'.¹²⁶ Again, Christ is cast as the 'garment' with which humanity's sins will be masked from God's judgement: the garment in which humankind becomes 'worthy' of God's grace.

Imagery of re-dressing also suffused the rite of baptism. Latimer, for instance, declares that 'Our baptism [...] signifieth that we must wash away the old Adam, forsake and set aside all carnal lusts and desires, and put on Christ, receive Him with a pure heart, and study to live and go forward in all goodness, according unto His will and commandment'.¹²⁷ While the imagery of dress and undress abounded within the liturgy and sermons of the Anglican Church, the visual enactment of re-clothing within baptism was clearly a matter of discomfort. Within the 1549 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*, baptism was prescribed as follows:

Then the minister shal put the white commonly called the Crysome, upon the childe, saying.

Take thys whyte vesture for a token of the innocencie whiche by goddes grace in the holy sacramente of baptysme, is geven unto thee: and for a signe whereby thou art admonished, so long as thou shalt lyve, to geve thy selfe to

¹²⁵ *The Book of Common Prayer 1559*, p. 257.

¹²⁶ *The Book of Common Prayer* (London: 1585), p. 189.

¹²⁷ Bishop Hugh Latimer, *Works*, I, p. 423, in *English Reformers*, p. 203.

innocencie of livyng, that after this transitory life, thou maiest be partaker of the life everlasting.¹²⁸

Yet as Brian Cummings notes, this practice of clothing the baptised child in a ‘white vesture’, and all references to it, were removed within subsequent editions of the prayer book.¹²⁹ Though the cleansing of the child in the font remained as a physical manifestation of its purification through Christ, the material reflection of ‘putting on’ ‘innocencie’ was rendered, it seems, too ‘popish’ to remain within the Anglican service. This seems surprising in light both of the maintenance of white vestments for the clergy, and likewise, of white sheets within the ecclesiastical courts’ ritual of shaming. I go on to explore this practice later within this chapter. It seems likely that the Church authorities feared the attachment of spiritually-transformative properties to the ‘Crysome’ if its symbolic role was maintained. The removal of the vestment provided a clear signal of the interior, spiritual nature of this cleansing of sin.

The confession of sin is explored in further detail in numerous other places within *The Book of Common Prayer*, but most notably, within ‘A Commination (against sinners)’. Within this ‘Commination’, the following congregational responses are prescribed: ‘But lo, thou requires truth in inward parts’, and ‘The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and a contrite heart’.¹³⁰ Again, the process of spiritual exposure is cast as an essential, on-going part of the Christian journey. The terms ‘inward’ and ‘broken’ evoke the intimacy and humility which a true relationship with God should take. And yet, this sense of an intimate, inward relationship with God is tempered by the public, performative format of the Anglican liturgy.

¹²⁸ *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, p. 55.

¹²⁹ Cummings, ‘Introduction’, in *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, pp. ix- lii (p. xxviii).

¹³⁰ *The Book of Common Prayer 1559*, p. 320-321.

The Book of Common Prayer supplied the words with which worshippers were to frame their spiritual exposure. Ramie Targoff, for instance, describes the shift from ‘private reading and silent prayers’ within the Roman Catholic mass, ‘to a practice built upon shared or responsive texts read aloud by minister and congregation’. She continues, ‘Unlike the Latin service, which, Cranmer contends, at best fills the worshippers’ ears, but fails to penetrate within, the English liturgy was designed to connect the faculty of hearing to its cognitive and spiritual counterparts’.¹³¹ Thus, the congregation’s active vocalisation of prayers and confessional pieces was deemed spiritually penetrative. While the Anglican liturgy ascribed less spiritual value to bodily gesture and visual imagery than the Catholic mass, it seems that the voice had an important role to play within the process of spiritual exposure. This view was reiterated by the preacher Samuel Torshell, who states that the shift from passive ‘hearing’ to active ‘prayer’ entailed ‘the labour of the soul, the exercise of humiliation and brokenness of spirit’. His words cast spiritual mortification and openness as the duty of worshippers – to be ‘all for hearing’, he states, was ‘hypocrisy’.¹³²

In line with Torshell’s advocacy of spiritual ‘humiliation’ and ‘brokenness’, *The Book of Common Prayer* highlights the importance of the communal acknowledgement of sin. ‘Morning Prayer’, for instance, continues:

And although we ought at all times, humbly to knowledge our sins before God: yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands.¹³³

¹³¹ Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 23.

¹³² Samuel Torshell, quoted by Maltby, p. 67.

¹³³ *The Book of Common Prayer 1559*, p. 50.

This emphasis upon the collective exposure of sin represented a departure from the Roman Catholic practice of private confessional exchange between the priest and layperson, as exemplified by the intimacy of the confessional box. Collinson refers, for instance, to ‘the confessional-box with its grille, its invisibility, the instrument of an unsocial idea of sin and forgiveness: the parishioner and his priest, man and his God’.¹³⁴ The prayer book, in contrast, gave increasing prominence to the communal voice. Targoff notes how ‘the replacement of “my” with “our” and “me” with “us”’ within the 1552 prayer book ‘suggests a subtle but important difference in the relationship between individual and corporate speech: although the 1549 congregation would have been speaking out loud, using the same words at the same time, the voice of each worshipper had previously represented only itself’.¹³⁵ Within the Anglican liturgy, spiritual exposure is both deeply intimate and penetrating, yet at the same time, shared and communal. According to Cranmer, the communal mode supported, rather than undermined, the heartfelt revelation of the soul to God. I consider this view further within Chapter 5’s examination of the religious lyric.

The complex relationship of personal and communal exposure was conveyed, additionally, through the intensely physical form of the Anglican Church courts’ white sheet penance – a reconfiguration of the former Catholic practice. This ecclesiastical punishment emphasised the value placed upon the public revelation of personal sins. As Ralph Houlbrooke states, parishioners found guilty of moral transgressions by their local church court were ‘usually ordered to perform penance, barefoot and dressed in a sheet’. The penitent, he continues:

often had to declare why he was doing penance or carry an explanatory placard or symbol. The typical pre-Reformation penitent preceded the cross

¹³⁴ Collinson, p. 103.

¹³⁵ Targoff, p. 29.

borne in procession round the church, carrying a candle which he subsequently placed before the image or took to the high altar at the time of the offertory [...] The Protestant church re-emphasised the ceremony's didactic purpose; penitents were often ordered to make very full declarations or to stand in an appropriate place while a homily was read.¹³⁶

The physical state of undress clearly had a significant role to play within both Catholic and Protestant penance. Penitents not only went 'barefoot', but as Martin Ingram reveals, they sometimes underwent 'further personal humiliations such as appearing bare-legged', or as E. R. C. Brinkworth details, bare-headed.¹³⁷ Brinkworth refers additionally to cases whereby the sinner was stripped 'naked from the middle upward' and struck with a birch rod.¹³⁸ This exposure of the legs, head and feet created a visual spectacle of humility. Costumed in this manner, the penitents appeared stripped of their social identities: they stood before their fellow parishioners as vulnerable and sinning subjects of God.

Within the Protestant performance of penance, the bodily exposure of the penitent was heightened by the verbal exposure of their spiritual transgression. In cases where the penitents wore signs publishing the nature of their transgression, they were quite literally presented before their community 'clothed in sin'. The sense of shame attending this physical and spiritual mortification was intensified by its very public nature. As Ingram states:

the offender had to confess before the whole congregation during service time on a Sunday or major holiday; and often the moral of the occasion was

¹³⁶ Ralph Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and the People during the English Reformation 1520-1570* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 45.

¹³⁷ Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570 – 1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 53.

E. R. C. Brinkworth, *Shakespeare and the Bawdy Court of Stratford* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1972), p. 15.

¹³⁸ Brinkworth, p. 73.

reinforced by the reading of an appropriate sermon or homily. More severe penances involved making such a confession on more than one occasion, sometimes in the market-place of the nearest town.¹³⁹

In Ingram's words, this was 'no doubt a deeply humiliating experience, especially for established householders'.¹⁴⁰ The power of the punishment rested, it seems, in the sinner *being seen* in this mortifying condition by familiar eyes, his sins likewise *heard* by familiar ears. Though temporal, the shame of the penitent would endure within the communal memory. Their physical exposure provided a visual symbol of their spiritual exposure, achieved through the public announcement of their transgressions. Brinkworth refers to the 'intimate detail' in which penitents were required to confess, while Houlbrooke describes their confessions as 'very full'. By all accounts, the penitents performed as the agents of their own spiritual undressing – the confession came from their own lips, as they set forth their sins in ruthless detail before their fellow parishioners. This penitential process represented a departure from the unified confession of sin which characterised the prayers of the Anglican liturgy. An individual sinner was marked out both physically and verbally, and set before the congregation. Sins against God were framed by the church courts as a local, communal concern. Indeed, the communal witness of individual sins was cast as a central part of spiritual purgation. The individual and highly theatrical nature of this process sits uneasily with the Anglican notions that *all* humans are naturally sinners (in which case, is it not hypocritical to set forth one sinner for shame and condemnation before his fellow humans?) and that Christ alone can forgive. The visual, ceremonial nature of the white sheet penance is easy to equate with the Catholic rituals of bodily mortification so mocked by Burton and Quarles. The value of this ritual of spiritual exposure rested less, it seems, in any

¹³⁹ Ingram, p. 53.

¹⁴⁰ Ingram, p. 257.

sense of its efficacy in divine terms, but rather in its power to create spiritual discipline within the community.

For the Elizabethan congregation, the humble, white attire of the penitent may have recalled the undressing to the smock or shirt performed by members of the faith on a very different occasion within their recent past: that is, the Marian persecution of the Protestant martyrs. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* captures the disrobing and torture of faithful Protestants in vivid textual and pictorial detail.¹⁴¹ Woodcuts depict William Tyndale tied to a stake, wearing only a loin cloth; a bare-foot George Marsh, clad only in a shirt; and even the scourging of naked buttocks within a Fulham orchard.¹⁴² It is little wonder that Collinson refers to these pictures as 'arresting and even sensational'.¹⁴³ Moreover, both Collinson and John N. King emphasise the wide availability of Foxe's book, and its powerful influence upon the Protestant consciousness. King states, 'Ordinary people read chained copies of the Bible and the *Book of Martyrs* side by side in many parish churches. Copies also found places in schools, guildhalls, cathedrals, royal palaces, and private libraries.'¹⁴⁴ These images of disrobed Protestant martyrs were therefore highly familiar to the Anglican congregation. The striking woodcuts were framed by detailed textual descriptions of the formal disrobing and public undressing at the stake suffered by many of the martyrs.

The process of ecclesiastical divestiture or disgrading involved the 'putting on' of the full ecclesiastical costume, followed by its symbolic removal. In his account of the disgrading of Bishop Hooper and Master Rogers, Foxe states:

¹⁴¹ John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives* (1563), ed. by John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁴² Foxe, pp. 21, 131, 241.

¹⁴³ Collinson, p. 236.

¹⁴⁴ Foxe, p. xiii.

First, he put upon them all the vestures and ornaments belonging to a priest, with all other things to the same order appertaining, as though (being re-vested) they should solemnly execute in their office. Thus they being apparelled and invested, the bishop beginneth to pluck off, first the uttermost vesture, and so by degree and order coming down to the lowest vesture, which they had only in taking benet and collect: and so being stripped and deposed, he deprived them of all order, benefit, and privilege belonging to the clergy: and consequently, that being done, pronounced, decreed, and declared the said parties so disgraded, to be given personally to the secular power.¹⁴⁵

In response to Foxe's accounts of disrobing, Laurie Shannon raises the pertinent question, 'what does it mean to be formally dressed in or stripped of borrowed robes – by someone else?'.¹⁴⁶ Foxe depicts a semantic battleground, or in Shannon's words, 'a powerful, though ultimately incomplete, contestation of the power of clothes either to confer or cancel personage'.¹⁴⁷ For the agents of undress, the itemised removal of each vestment and ornament was both spiritually and socially charged. The 'putting on' enabled a symbolically potent 'taking off': an undoing of the 'heretic's' social and spiritual identity. The object of disgrading was both spiritually and socially disempowered and disgraced.

This interpretation of ecclesiastical disrobing was challenged, however, both by the words of a number of martyrs as set down by Foxe, and as one would expect, by Foxe's narrative framework. The disgrading of Rowland Taylor provides a prime example. Foxe describes how 'Edmund Bonner Bishop of London with others, came to the said Counter to disgrace him, bringing with them such ornaments, as do appertain to their massing mummery'.¹⁴⁸ The words 'massing mummery', of course, ridicule the props of the Bishop

¹⁴⁵ Foxe, p. 62.

¹⁴⁶ Laurie Shannon, "'His Apparel Was Done Upon Him": Rites of Personage in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*', *Shakespeare Studies*, 28 (2000), 93-98 (p. 194).

¹⁴⁷ Shannon, p. 194.

¹⁴⁸ Foxe, p. 83.

and his assistants, mocking the spiritual potency which they are ascribed within the Catholic faith. Accordingly, Foxe continues:

when [Taylor] was thoroughly furnished therewith, he set his hands by his side, walking up and down, and said: ‘How say you my Lord, am I not a goodly fool? How say you my masters? If I were in cheap, should I not have boys enough to laugh at these apish toys, and toying trumpery?’¹⁴⁹

Taylor, who resisted being clothed in the vestments of Catholicism, responded to this dressing as an undressing, in stark opposition to the intentions of the Bishop. Indeed, it is the wearing of these robes which serves to humiliate and vex him (‘am I not a goodly fool?’). He renders the ecclesiastical robes a mere theatrical costume. As Nicholas Ridley declares, ‘What power be you of, that you can take from a man that which he never had?’¹⁵⁰ Only God, he emphasises, can truly undress. In earthly terms, this dressing creates a disparity between Taylor’s external appearance and spiritual values. As Shannon identifies, ‘What we might call a Protestant semiotic of dress emerges straightforwardly, and it derives from a familiar distinction between mere material (decorated, deceptive) externalities and an interior, “naked” or plain truth’.¹⁵¹ Certainly, the martyrs are aligned, within Foxe’s textual and pictorial accounts, with physical humility and vulnerability. They undress themselves willingly to the flames, requesting only ‘clean’ ‘wedding’ shirts, signalling their dignity and respect for their maker, whom they believed they would meet at their deaths. There was almost certainly an element of self-conscious performance to this peaceful and dignified self-stripping at their public executions (a dignity heightened by Foxe, within this Protestant propaganda). By undressing themselves calmly, the martyrs gained a certain power over the

¹⁴⁹ Foxe, pp. 83-84.

¹⁵⁰ Nicholas Ridley, quoted by Shannon, p. 196.

¹⁵¹ Shannon, p. 194.

symbolically charged interaction. They likewise reconfigured the shame and vulnerability of public nakedness and suffering: this was no shame at all, their conduct asserted, when performed in the name of Christ and his spiritual truth. This view is expressed strongly by Shannon, who refers to ‘a reversed semiotic of weakness and strength’. She declares, ‘The martyrs are alive and transfigured in the naked costumes of sleep and death’.¹⁵² Her words capture the manner in which the disrobing and execution of the martyrs were framed in the triumphant terms of the resurrection.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the central role played by concepts and images of nakedness and dress within the theological thought, writing, and practices of the Reformation. As I demonstrated within the first sections of this chapter, Luther and Calvin’s works adopt and extend the Pauline and Augustinian metaphor of Christ’s righteousness as the clothing and covering of humankind: that which humanity should seek to ‘put on’. Both theologians utilise images of nakedness, disrobing, and re-clothing, including stripping, masking, and veiling, as a means of defining and expressing humanity’s relationship with God and Christ, and with the Church and the Scriptures. Images of dressing and undressing play a particularly prominent role within both theologians’ reflections upon humankind’s sinful nature, as I have shown. Indeed, both confronted humanity’s tendency to bury sin under layers of deceit, and to adopt a false ‘form’ or ‘mask’ of righteousness. Calvin, in particular, casts the practises of the Roman Catholic Church as hypocritical fig-leaves and cloaks, which keep the human soul at a distance from God. Luther’s depictions of sin are more personal. Using brutal and arresting images of the internal filth, trembling conscience, and flayed body and soul of himself and acquaintances, he emphasises the bareness, desolation

¹⁵² Shannon, p. 197.

and depravity of those who lack faith in Christ. And yet, this horror is matched by Christ's saving compassion, expressed by Luther in the loving and nakedly suggestive terms of sexual union.

While motifs of nakedness and disrobing are employed by Luther and Calvin as a means of emphasising the shameful lowliness of humanity and of the Roman Catholic Church, both paradoxically urge humankind to undress itself fully before Christ. This process of kenosis is crystallized within Calvin's call for humankind to run 'naked' to Christ, and to embrace his mercy. Christ's gracious covering, he emphasises, enables the elect to stand before the glory of God. But this re-clothing demands honesty and humility – a casting off of all pride and self-interest. A further paradox emerges within the works of both theologians, as they set forth the incarnate and disrobed Christ as humanity's strength and clothing. Naked and accessible to humankind upon 'the cross' and within the Scriptures, Luther frames Christ as 'the clothed God', the God which humanity should seek. Here, clothing functions as a mark of visibility and proximity, and nakedness, as a mark of the secret and intangible. These motifs resurface complexly within Spenser's allegorical examination of the Christian struggle, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 4.

The Book of Common Prayer serves to signal the emphasis placed upon the exposure of one's spiritual depths to God, to one's community, and to oneself, within English Protestant life, as the last section delineated. As in the theological reflections of Luther and Calvin, the exposure of spiritual brokenness was rendered a virtue. Images echoing those employed by St Paul, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, called the congregation to reject the 'cloak' of deceit and to take up 'the garment' of God in its place. Collective prayer was adopted as the means of prompting this spiritual opening. As we have seen, vocalised, communal devotion was felt to support the process of baring the soul to Christ, and re-

dressing oneself in his grace. Chapter 5 examines the relationship of confession, exposure, and devotional form in further detail.

While *The Book of Common Prayer* utilises predominantly gentle images of humanity's sin, Calvin and Luther's more striking and sensational depictions of humanity's unworthiness are echoed within a number of letters and sermons addressing the condition of the Church. McCulloch reflects that the prayer book offered 'the most elaborate form of liturgy to be found among the Churches of the Protestant Reformation'.¹⁵³ It is therefore little wonder that so-called 'Puritans' raised complaints about the state of Protestant worship. As I have shown, debates ensued as to which coverings or adornments constituted vain hypocrisy before God, and which were indeed required to protect the Church from 'naked' shame. The maintenance of sensory rituals, including the use of white clerical vestments, gestures such as crossing, and church music, provoked accusations that the Church was excessively 'clothed': a 'painted' whore. These images and accusations emerge within *The Faerie Queene*, as I go on to illustrate in Chapter 4.¹⁵⁴

The latter section of this chapter emphasised that concepts of nakedness and dress were not only utilised within the textual and verbal forms of liturgy, letter, and sermon. Indeed, physical undressing also played a notable role within the Protestant Church, where it continued to be used as a means of combating and cleansing sin. The undeniable power of the naked flesh (here, the exposed head and feet) to stimulate shame was utilised within the white sheet shaming ritual of the ecclesiastical courts. This bodily exposure was balanced, however, by the use of a heightened verbal framework. The sins of the offender were confessed in full, and condemned by the means of a fitting church sermon. Thus, the transformative power of bodily exposure was downplayed: the emphasis was shifted from

¹⁵³ MacCulloch, p. 94.

¹⁵⁴ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene: Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]).

the physical spectacle of humiliation to the spiritual message of remorse. The accounts of martyrdom and their accompanying illustrations within *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, meanwhile, signalled that the mortification surrounding the exposure and humiliation of one's naked body could be reconfigured, paradoxically, in terms of spiritual triumph, if framed as a sacrifice conducted in the name of Christ. The relationship between early modern corporeal exposure and spiritual alignment forms a major consideration within the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: ANATOMY, THEOLOGY, AND NAKEDNESS

This chapter considers the spiritual significance ascribed to the body within the processes of early modern torture, execution, and dissection. It examines the theological meanings and tensions surrounding the fragmented and penetrated human form: the dead and broken body. Within the anatomy theatre, cadavers were presented naked to the hands of the anatomist. Florike Egmond depicts the closely linked events of trial, execution, and dissection as an extended process of undressing. She states, ‘Public dissection simply continued the ritual process of punishment, the dishonouring and ultimately destructive movement into the body, which had started with the removal of all outer garments marking the convict’s social position’.¹ As Egmond highlights, early modern dissection took place within the midst of a chain of physical and metaphoric disrobing. The journey to dissection commonly opened with the public trial and execution of a criminal, and often concluded with the memorialisation of the subject’s fragmented form. The Barber Surgeon’s Theatre, for instance, was lined with the skeletons of former cadavers.² Meanwhile, anatomical texts captured images from the dissection table in print.

The process of dissection was infused with the imagery of nakedness and dress. Croke’s influential *Microcosmographia* (1615) described the skin as ‘an unseamed garment covering the whole bodie’, and that which ‘knitteth the whole body together’.³ This reference to

¹ Florike Egmond, ‘Execution, Dissection, Pain and Infamy – A Morphological Investigation’, in Robert Zwijnenberg and Florike Egmond, ed. *Bodily Extremities: Preoccupations with the Human Body in Early Modern European Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 92-128 (p. 127).

² Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 76.

³ Helkiah Croke, *Microcosmographia* (1615), quoted by Stephanie Shirilan, ‘Francis Bacon, Robert Burton, and the Thick Skin of the World: Sympathy, Transmission, and the Imaginary Early Modern Skin’, *English Studies in*

the skin as a ‘garment’ hints at the semantic complexities which attended the physical unraveling of the human form. The skin is deemed a ‘covering’: that which conceals the furthest reaches of the human body, marking them as private and vulnerable. Yet descriptions of the skin as ‘unseamed’ and that which ‘knitteth the whole body together’ also suggest that the intact skin completes the body. Does the stripping or penetration of the skin, then, represent an *undressing* of the body, comparable to the exposure of the naked form through the removal of the outer garments? Or rather, is a body devoid of skin dehumanised?

As Jonathan Sawday, Richard Sugg, and Sarah Covington emphasise, upon the European scaffolds and dissection tables, the broken, exposed body had strong spiritual associations. The ruptured flesh not only signaled the shame and vulnerability of humanity’s mortal form, but likewise evoked the suffering, glory, and redemption of Christ.⁴ These paradoxes are familiar to us from the previous two chapters. Yet how did these conflicting spiritual meanings play out within the very palpable contexts of early modern torture, dissection, and execution? What was the spiritual status of the executed, flayed, and dissected body? And how far did gender shape the treatment and reception of the anatomized body? In its exploration of these questions, this chapter consults a range of contemporary sources, and engages with the rich accounts of the anatomy process provided by Sawday et al. By examining these prominent modern studies of early modern anatomy alongside a number of early modern sources, this chapter builds a strong sense of the knowledge, beliefs, and practices which were informing perceptions of the

Canada, 34.1 (2008), 1-25 (p. 62), in *LION*
 <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:i:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:rec:abell:R04182177> [accessed 20 February 2012].

⁴ Richard Sugg, *Murder after Death: Literature and Anatomy in Early Modern England* (London: Cornell University Press, 2007).

Sarah Covington, *Wounds, Flesh, and Metaphor in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

undressed and dismantled body within early modern society. Within the chapters that follow, I will demonstrate that the attitudes, images, and tensions expressed throughout the processes of dissection and execution reverberated within the literature and spiritual thought of the early modern period. It is therefore essential that I explore these attitudes and images here.

The early modern period saw the expansion and social legitimisation of the practice of human dissection across Europe. Sugg states, ‘Around 1575 the wider English public appeared barely to have heard of anatomy; by 1600 it appeared at times unable to talk about little else’.⁵ The earliest recorded English definition of the practice is attributed to the printer R. Copland (1541). Copland states, ‘Anatomy is called right dyuysyon of membres done for certayne knowleges’.⁶ As Copland’s definition emphasises, anatomization was founded upon humanity’s quest for knowledge. Moreover, Egmond and Robert Zwijnenberg reflect that ‘in the early modern period “anatomy” came to stand for research and discovery in general, for the uncovering of hidden, inner truths and the laying bare of previously hidden secrets’.⁷ This reference to anatomy as the exposure of ‘hidden secrets’ captures the sense of the illicit which surrounded this probing of the bodily interior. The deliberate penetration and scrutiny of the body was morally ambiguous, and called for legal, social, and spiritual negotiation. The question of humanity’s authority to access this knowledge – that which was bound by an opaque, biological seal – stimulated complex religious debate. Was this level of anatomical probing acceptable to God? And if so, to whom should this knowledge be disclosed, and from whom should it be restricted?

⁵ Sugg, p. 2.

⁶ “anatomy, *n.*” *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd Ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 01 February 2012 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/>>.

⁷ Egmond and Zwijnenberg, p. 5.

Chapter 1 considered the biblical connotations which surrounded the concept of ‘knowledge’: namely, deceit and division – the fall of the first parents from the state of innocence to sin and shame. The early modern thirst to gain deeper knowledge through the calculated exploration of the body was set against this foreboding biblical context. Certainly, it was easy to view the anatomist as a latter-day Adam, a Faustian figure upon the brink of a renewed fall. Burdened with these spiritual warnings, early modern anatomists and their humanist advocates defended their pursuit of the body’s mysteries in stringent terms. Robert Burton proposes, ‘And what can be more ignominious and filthie then for a man not to knowe the structure and composition of his owne body, especially since the knowledge of it, tends so much to the preservation of his health, and information of his manners’.⁸ His employment of the morally charged terms ‘ignominious’ and ‘filthie’ casts humanity’s ignorance of its bodily ‘composition’ as a form of neglect verging upon sin. To be ignorant of one’s bodily structure, he suggests, is a mark of incivility. Meanwhile, John Banister dedicates his study *The Historie of Man* (1578), ‘to the benesite of my Christian brethren, the godlie’, and prays that through the discoveries of the body’s composition, ‘we may seeke the aduancement of the glory of God, in healyng our afflicted brethren’.⁹

Within the anatomical arena, the body was understood and treated as a material manifestation of God’s Word: an extension of the Scriptures. Calvin had referred to the natural world as one of the mediums through which God revealed himself to humankind.¹⁰ And Christ,

⁸ Robert Burton, *The Anatomie of Melancholie Vol I* (1621), ed. by Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicholas K. Kiessling, and Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), pp. 139-40.

⁹ John Banister, *The Historie of Man, sucked from the sappe of the most approved Anathomistes* (London: 1578), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:7321:5> [accessed 10 April 2014] [image 5].

¹⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I, 5, I, in *Corpus Reformatorum*, reproduced in Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. by Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), p 41.

of course, had revealed the majesty of God ‘in the flesh’. Anatomists and their audiences were keenly aware that the human body was the form embraced by Christ incarnate. In a number of senses, then, the cadaver represented a source of divine truth. Indeed, Sawday describes dissection as ‘a sanctified process which was akin to theological reasoning which opened the scriptures to human interpretation’.¹¹ Thus, he indicates that knowledge of the body’s ‘structure’ was perceived as a trait of the diligent Christian – or perhaps more accurately, that of the faithful Protestant, empowered to interact with God’s word in the intimate terms of the vernacular. Like the theologies of Luther and Calvin, early modern anatomization represented a shift from the reliance upon historic, human authority (the ancient medical texts) to first-hand interactions with God’s own work (in this case, the human body) in order to establish spiritual truth. As Sawday declares, ‘the criminal corpse was opened so that the “pattern of the divine” could be traced in its physical reality, rather than metaphorical abstraction’.¹² In this sense, an increased intimacy with the body was aligned with an increased intimacy with God. But as we see later within this chapter, notions of growing social intimacy with certain parts of the body (i.e. the sexual organs) provoked great spiritual discomfort.

Early modern dissection was framed carefully to reflect laudable motives of spiritual edification, and to counter accusations of human arrogance and overreaching. Both the Leiden Theatre and Barber Surgeons Theatre, for instance, featured representations of the fig-leaved Adam and Eve within their internal decor.¹³ This tradition extended into print, with the second edition of Helkiah Crooke’s *Microcosmosgraphia* (1631) including the fallen couple on its title

¹¹ Sawday, p. 106.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Sawday, p. 73-4.

page.¹⁴ The decision to incorporate images of Adam and Eve within the visual iconography of the anatomical arena was, of course, highly strategic. By appropriating the biblical account of the fall, medical officials and patrons of the anatomy theatres found a means of gesturing toward their acute consciousness of, and subsequent cautioning against, the human faults of pride and vanity. The use of these biblical icons signalled that the anatomists knew their humble place within the divine hierarchy, and that they operated within a deeply Christian framework of servitude to God, the omnipotent creator.

The body was quite literally perceived as the site of individual truth and revelation. Indeed, Sawday indicates that Socrates' dictum, 'know thyself', was adopted as a by-word for the practice of dissection.¹⁵ Michael C. Schoenfeldt echoes this assertion within his reference to the period's 'deeply physical sense of self'.¹⁶ As Gail Kern Paster emphasises, this was a period during which temperament, or personality, was understood as a bodily construction – the manifestation of an individual's humoral balance.¹⁷ Descartes even claimed to have located 'the seat of the soul' within the human body's pineal gland.¹⁸ However, by 'knowing oneself', humankind paradoxically risked losing its self-integrity. Sawday states:

'Selfhood' – the sense of having or being a unified self – was maintained only when the self ceased to think about the self – only the 'I' that was aware of itself thinking could announce the certainty of existence. And paradoxically, in the

¹⁴ Helkiah Crooke, *Microcosmographia*, 2nd edn (London: 1631), image of title page at <<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/people-and-places/disability-history/1485-1660/mental-illness-in-the-16th-and-17th-centuries/>> [accessed 26 June 2014].

¹⁵ Sawday, p. 159.

¹⁶ Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 2.

¹⁷ Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 10.

¹⁸ Sawday, p.147.

very moment of certainty the sense of wholeness, as Descartes had explained, collapsed. ‘Know thyself’ thus begins to express not so much self-knowledge as self-division.¹⁹

This experience of ‘self knowledge’ as a form of ‘self division’ is reflected within the biblical account of the fall, as explored within Chapter 1. Following Adam and Eve’s introduction to ‘knowledge’, Genesis states, ‘The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked’ (Genesis 3. 7).²⁰ Anatomization, as the surgeons and officials were all too aware, dramatised a parallel act of self-reflection. In the body of the corpse, the anatomist sought the image of the living, and specifically, the living self. Just as Eve plucked the apple from the Tree of Knowledge in a greedy act of vanity, the anatomised body was unsealed and ‘peered into’ in what could be branded a transgressive act of overreaching, driven by human egotism.²¹ By beholding the exposure and demise of their shared human form upon the dissection table, the anatomist and his audience experienced a transition from unconscious subject to self-conscious *subject and object*. This psychological transition mirrored that experienced by Adam and Eve, according to Genesis’ account. To know more about one’s physical framework is, mortifyingly, to recognise one’s own frail materiality. This realisation sits uncomfortably with humankind’s higher faculties and transcendental ambitions, as Chapter 1 explained.

Despite the humility which can be wrought by self-spectatorship, certain moralists were nevertheless keen to emphasise its sinful nature. In *The Anatomy of Abuses* (1595) Philip Stubbes condemns the use of mirrors: a practice comparable (if less extreme) to the act of self-

¹⁹ Sawday, p.159.

²⁰ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, 3rd edn (Pleasant Hope: L. L. Brown, 1993), with an introduction by Michael H. Brown.

²¹ Paster, p. 87.

reflection which characterised the anatomy process. He states, ‘Therefore maie these lookyng glasses be called the devils bellowes, wherewith he bloweth the blast of Pride into our hartes: and those that looke in them may be said to looke in the Devills arse’.²² Stubbes’ metaphor conjures self-gazing not only as an act of sin or blasphemy, but as an inlet for obscenity. Here, pride in one’s physical composition is conveyed as spiritual depravity. It is expressed in crude bodily terms. To linger upon one’s fleshy form, Stubbes stresses, is to become shamefully intimate with the Antichrist: to gaze, in effect, upon his excrement.

Concerns surrounding the self-indulgent study of the human form were heightened considerably by the extension of human dissection into the public sphere. Open spectatorship became common practice within certain European anatomy theatres, and the bodily revelations which took place within these buildings were reproduced and widely circulated within printed anatomical studies. Sawday highlights the broadening in terms of status and motivation perceived within the viewing galleries. ‘These crowds’, he states, ‘were not composed solely of students of medicine and members of the medical profession. Rather, they were the fashionable, educated elite, members of the court, wealthy merchants, senior administrators, even princes themselves’.²³ This prestigious composition suggests an inversion in terms of the object of the audience’s gaze: attendance for the purpose of *being seen*, rather than to witness the spectacle of bodily exposure. As the shared subjects of the public gaze, spectator and cadaver were aligned uncannily. This disturbing conflation of the living and dead was demonstrated by the illustrated title page of Vesalius’ *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (1543).²⁴ By depicting a naked man looking down upon the dissected cadaver from a pillar, while captured within the gaze of a

²² Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomy of Abuses* (London: 1595), quoted by Paster, p. 148.

²³ Sawday, p. 42.

²⁴ Vesalius, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (1543), title page reproduced by Sawday, figure 2.

fellow spectator, Vesalius frames his anatomical study with a discomfoting message. The vulnerability and mortality of the cadaver, he suggests, are shared by the living. This alignment of the living and the dead is intensified by the nakedness of the witness at the pillar, which creates a heightened sense of shared corporeality. Thus, Vesalius' title page conveys a similar message to that of 'Death' in Francisco de Quevedo's *Visions* (1640): 'the truest Image of *Death* is a mans owne selfe, and not a breathlesse trunke or bare anatomy'.²⁵ I revisit the relationship of dissection and the 'memento mori' later within this chapter.

Elizabeth Hanson refers to the 'hideous intimacy' of early modern torture.²⁶ This notion of uncomfortable proximity is echoed within Elizabeth D. Harvey's reflections upon the physical contact of the anatomist and corpse: a contact which 'dangerously allied the physician – both actually and symbolically – to the death and disease he studied'.²⁷ Furthermore, Sugg reveals that this relationship could also be perceived in disturbing, sexual terms. He describes 'the interior or anatomized body' as 'sexually shameful and somehow pornographic'.²⁸ Certainly, the appointment of Inigo Jones to design an anatomy theatre for the Barber Surgeons in 1636 framed dissection as a theatrical experience.²⁹ In this respect, anatomization was cast as an entertaining public spectacle – an invitation to indulge one's desire for titillation. Schoenfeldt's sexually suggestive reference to 'the promiscuous inwardness of the anatomized

²⁵ Francisco de Quevedo, *Visions, or Hels kingdome, and the worlds follies and abuses, strangely displaied by R.C. of the Inner Temple Gent. Being the first fruits of a reformed life* (London: 1640), p. 52, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:1672:33> [image 33] [accessed 01 July 2014].

²⁶ Elizabeth Hanson, *Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 28.

²⁷ Elizabeth D. Harvey, *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 15.

²⁸ Sugg, p. 112.

²⁹ Sawday, p. 76.

corpse, splaying itself out for all to see', lends further confirmation to this reading.³⁰ His words cast the dissection process as a theatrical revelation – a quasi-striptease. By the same token, Sugg and Schoenfeldt suggest that the naked and ruptured corpse is indiscrete, and morally cheapened by the gaze of the onlooker.

These sordid connotations were unalleviated by the eroticized portrayal of the cadaver within numerous prominent anatomical texts. Thomas Laqueur, for instance, points to an 'erotically portrayed' male cadaver, a 'shapely' female corpse within the *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, and Charles Estienne's 'overtly eroticized female figures'.³¹ Numerous anatomical illustrations utilised the female form of the iconic sculptural beauty: the Venus Pudica. The Venus Pudica, or 'modest Venus', played teasingly with the boundaries of sexual concealment and revelation, drawing attention to her genitals and breasts through her fruitless gestures of concealment. By projecting the exposed female interior onto this classical figure, medical authors framed the internal anatomy of the female with notions of sexual beauty and desire. Indeed, Bette Talvacchia remarks upon the similarity of these 'medical' figures to 'erotic engravings' of the period.³²

Sarah Toulalan highlights some striking linguistic parallels between early modern anatomical texts and pornographic works. The rose, for instance, was employed as a metaphor for the female genitals within both contexts. This metaphor seems suggestive of modesty, implying a reluctance to name the sexual organ in unveiled terms. However, Toulalan emphasises that such figurative references functioned in pornography to draw the reader's

³⁰ Schoenfeldt, p. 1.

³¹ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (London: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 73, 74.

³² Sarah Toulalan discusses Bette Talvacchia's findings, in *Imagining Sex: Pornography and Bodies in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 13.

attention, ‘revealing’ and ‘illuminating’ that which they described.³³ As Melissa Mohr states, when it comes to referencing the sexual organs, ‘respectable words conceal while obscene ones reveal’.³⁴ Thus, according to Mohr, the object of respectability is precisely to *hide* the sexual organs, even where they form the subject of discourse. Yet the employment of floral imagery across the medical and pornographic genres implies that modest concealment and teasing revelation could be difficult to distinguish. Spenser plays with the proximity of modesty and titillation within his coy representations of sexual temptation in *The Faerie Queene*, as I will demonstrate within the next chapter.³⁵

Paster highlights that medical texts were considered vulnerable to misuse, particularly when set before the ‘uncontrolled’ sphere of the ‘male imagination’.³⁶ Certainly, Toulalan reveals that medical and midwifery texts were condemned, alongside pornographic works, as ‘lascivious’ and ‘lewd’. She asserts that medical literature brought ‘descriptions of the sexual body into public space, opening them indiscriminately to the gaze of many, rather than reserving them to the realm of the private and personal’.³⁷ The tensions surrounding the morality of anatomical disclosure were heightened by the emergence of these texts within the vernacular. Printers confronted concerns that to define the body through the socially transparent medium of the vernacular was to send it forth to the public in a crude, ‘unprotected’ and thus unbearably naked state, where it was susceptible to pornographic desires.³⁸ The sense of discomfort

³³ Toulalan, p. 13.

³⁴ Melissa Mohr, ‘Defining Dirt: Three Early Modern Views of Obscenity’, *Textual Practice*, 17.2 (2003), 253-75 (p. 266) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0950236032000094836>> [accessed 12 March 2014].

³⁵ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene: Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]).

³⁶ Paster, p. 187.

³⁷ Toulalan, p. 161.

³⁸ Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 109.

surrounding this disclosure in the vernacular parallels the opposition met by Tyndale, in his attempts to make the Bible widely accessible to the masses. Latin anatomical texts, though framing the same delicate subject matter as vernacular ones, were somehow perceived to bolster or clothe the naked body from such abuse. Here, perhaps, the body was considered dressed in the virtuous semantics of learning, thus remaining textually impenetrable to the vulgar.

These concerns gave rise to a series of complaints, both on the part of the prurient and also of the medical authors who sought to assert the integrity of their texts. H. G. Koenigsberger et al., emphasise that '[b]oth the Catholic and the Protestant Reformation sought to forbid frank discussion or representation of human sexuality as tempting men and women to indecency', and thus, to 'impiety': 'exposure, indeed all nudity, encouraged the sins of the flesh'.³⁹ In 1614, Bishop John King offered a clear spiritual judgment on the subject of depicting 'the generative organs', condemning Crooke's images of these within *Micocosmographia*.⁴⁰ Crooke responded to this spiritual critique by emphasising that the college itself 'in public dissections exhibited the human body of either sex to be seen and touched and that they cut up indecent parts and explained each separately *in the vernacular*'.⁴¹ Here, Crooke draws distinctions between the textual mode of display, and the live, sensory explorations of the sexual organs taking place within the anatomy theatres. Perceived in the flesh within this real-time setting, the organs are deemed 'indecent'. The event is coloured by Crooke with a sense of sexual scandal, the dangers of which, he implies, are lessened within the textual form. Within the medical text, the *actual* is replaced by the *representative*. In this respect, the sexual organs are protected from the direct

³⁹ *Europe in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by H. G. Koenigsberger, George L. Mosse, and G. Q. Bowler (Longman: New York, 1982 [1968]), p. 70.

⁴⁰ Sawday, p. 225.

⁴¹ Sugg, p. 113.

gaze of the public. Chapter 6, which examines nakedness in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, revisits the spiritual and moral implications of live bodily exposure.⁴²

Back at the dissection table, certain medical officials made efforts to de-sexualize the spectacle of the cadaver. Laqueur reveals that Charles Estienne 'cautioned his students to hide the face and private parts of their cadavers so as not to divert the attention of spectators'.⁴³ This strategic concealment provides a further indication of the perceived potential for sexual voyeurism within the early modern anatomy theatre. Toulalan crystallizes the semantic proximities of pornography and dissection when she explores the mechanics of the pornographic text:

the reader is cast as voyeur, observing what should not be observed, and this gives rise to the possibility of an experience of sexual pleasure through others, but without either the consent or the knowledge of those others. Part of the frisson of pornography, then, is the pleasure and shock of seeing something that 'should' remain hidden and private.⁴⁴

This sense of violated privacy certainly applied to the early modern dissection process, referred to by contemporaries in terms of lifting 'Nature's veil', or 'de-mystifying' that which was 'hidden'.⁴⁵ Even Banister refers to the body as 'that shrine which *Nature* her selfe hath veyled and sealed up from our senses'.⁴⁶ Where did this intrusion leave the cadaver in semantic terms? Paster, considering early modern perceptions of bleeding battle wounds, refers to the 'shameful

⁴² William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. by J. W. Lever (London: Arden, 2004 [c.1603]).

⁴³ Laqueur, p. 130.

⁴⁴ Toulalan, p. 161.

⁴⁵ Harvey, p. 95.

⁴⁶ Banister, quoted by Harvey, p. 95.

uncontrol' and 'shameful bodily openness' of the ruptured physique.⁴⁷ Egmond likewise reflects upon 'the intimate connection between honour and physical integrity'.⁴⁸ The female body, with its natural vaginal opening, was particularly vulnerable to charges of shame and grotesqueness. Margaret R. Miles reveals how in the later medieval period '[f]emale grotesques and sheelas, often on the facades of churches, displayed their splayed vaginas, reminding viewers of the dangerous power of female sexual organs', while 'the vagina appears covertly in icons and paintings as the mouth of hell'.⁴⁹ Milton's depiction of 'the wide womb of uncreated Night', the sight of which, as John Leonard notes, 'threatens "utter loss of being"' echoes this association of the female sexual anatomy with death and darkness.⁵⁰ Paster's exploration of the early modern usage of childbirth rituals, such as 'lying in', as a means of countering the bodily 'opening and emptying' characterising the birth process, serves as an additional indication that suspicion, fear, and disgust continued to surround the female reproductive system within early modern culture.⁵¹ Spenser utilises these attitudes within his treatment of Duessa and Charissa in *The Faerie Queene*, as I go on to demonstrate within the following chapter.⁵²

Paster reveals that the desire to protect the female anatomy from public scrutiny stemmed, in particular, from concerns about male reactions towards it. She refers to the anxiety that such knowledge 'would contribute specifically to female shame and male disgust about

⁴⁷ Paster, pp. 103, 121.

⁴⁸ Egmond, p. 127.

⁴⁹ Margaret R. Miles, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1992), p. 156.

⁵⁰ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Christopher Ricks (London: Penguin Books, 2000 [1674]), II. 150.

John Leonard, 'Introduction', in John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, pp. vii-xliii (p. xx).

⁵¹ Paster, p. 189.

⁵² Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene: Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]).

female reproductivity'.⁵³ Considered in this light, Pietro Berrettini's engraving of a female figure with exposed womb (1618) is discomfoting.⁵⁴ Certainly, Miles and Paster's studies mark the exposure of the female anatomy as an unveiling of that which is deeply private and vulnerable, and this is confirmed by Banister's comment that those who expose 'Natures secrets, in womens shapes [...] will commit most indecencie in the office of Decorum'. His preface to *The Historie of Man* explains:

I haue earnestly, though rudely, endeouored to set wyde open the closet doore of natures secretes, whereinto eury Godly Artist may safely enter, to see clearly all the partes, and notable deuises of nature in the body of man. From the Female, and that (as I suppose) for sundry good considerations, I haue wholly abstained my pene: least, shunning Charibdis, I should fall into Scylla headlong.⁵⁵

Banister's 'wyde open' approach to the male body contrasts strikingly with his refusal to explore the female body (here, the 'closet doore' remains firmly closed, and the phallic 'pene' is 'abstained'). In stark opposition, Berrettini's anatomical illustration depicts the flayed, gestating female in the posture of a proud exhibitionist. She draws open her outer covering invitingly. By suggesting that the cadaver is complicit in her exposure, Berrettini counters the sense of moral intrusion which is aroused by this intimate bodily disclosure.

⁵³ Paster, p. 186.

⁵⁴ Pietro Berrettini (1618), [Dissected female figure], reproduced in *The Body Emblazoned*, figure 31 [engraving].

⁵⁵ Banister, *The Historie of Man* (London: 1578) <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:7321:6> [image 6].

Such postures of complicity were a common feature of the anatomical images of the period.⁵⁶ Indeed, Sawday refers to the convention of ‘self-demonstration’ – a means of gesturing, artistically, towards the integrity of the anatomist.⁵⁷ This convention hints at the sense of discomfort surrounding the realities of the cadaver’s passive role within the process of anatomical exposure. To gaze at prostrate nakedness is disturbingly akin to rape, albeit in ocular form. This is demonstrated within the biblical episode of Noah’s nakedness (Genesis 9), an episode which is injected with sinister sexual suggestions, as Chapter 1 identifies. As this narrative signals, the naked body is closely associated with the phenomenon of shame. The revelation of one’s nakedness before spectators has the potential to undermine one’s social dignity and status, by publishing one’s mortality and vulnerability. Ham is cursed as a result of his exploitative spectatorship and disclosure of his father’s shame. Chapter 6 considers how this sense of complicity is utilised in order to create moral discomfort within Shakespeare’s *Measure*.

The sense of shame surrounding nakedness, even within the state of death, is emphasised by David Cressy’s examination of early modern burial rituals. He states, ‘No one was lowered to the grave without some sort of covering. It was a point of human dignity to observe that only animals were buried naked’.⁵⁸ The centrality of bodily concealment to the maintenance of Christian identity and honour is highlighted by Cressy’s observation that in Poynings, Sussex (1608), ‘was buried John Skerry, a poor man that died in the place stable, and being brought half naked with his face bare, the parson would not bury him so, but first he gave a sheet and caused

⁵⁶ See, for instance, Valverde’s *Anatomia del corpo umano* (1560), images reproduced in *Making Sex*, p. 76.

⁵⁷ Sawday, pp. 117-119.

⁵⁸ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 430.

him to be sacked therein, and they buried him more Christian like'.⁵⁹ Finally, Cressy reveals that one Richard Dawson, in 1625, 'took pains to ensure that clothes "were laid upon him" and he could die with his honour intact'.⁶⁰ The care taken to preserve the dignity and modesty of the dead through acts of bodily concealment and adornment highlights the acute shame which attended the exposed or violated corpse. If the covered corpse was deemed 'Christian like', surely the naked and severed corpse represented the precise opposite? Moreover, Cressy remarks that 'it was a source of pride in some quarters that God's people did not handle cadavers "as we be wont to carry forth dead horses or dead swine"'. Exposed both internally and externally, the cadaver captured the weakness and mortality of humanity in an intensified form. As Egmond reminds us, these 'bodies were dismantled and literally stripped to the bone'.⁶¹ Cressy's sources suggest that in the eyes of some communities, such bodily disclosure reflected shamefully not only upon the dead, but perhaps more strikingly, upon those who handled and displayed them. By printing images of the cadavers in postures of 'self-demonstration', the anatomists attempted to readdress the unsettling power dynamics of the anatomy theatre, and to temper the sense of immorality and horror attending the revelation of the dissected body.

What was the status of the fractured body? Margaret E. Owens explains that '[w]hen a limb is amputated, the detached body part enters a disturbingly liminal state somewhere between subject and object'.⁶² This relationship between the body and its severed parts is captured within numerous artistic depictions of the saints. St Lucy is portrayed traditionally in a fully

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Cressy, p. 431.

⁶¹ Egmond, p. 109.

⁶² Margaret E. Owens, *Stages of Dismemberment: The Fragmented Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Drama* (Newark: Delaware University Press, 2005), p. 20.

regenerated form, and yet she holds out the eyes which were, according to legend, gouged out.⁶³ Meanwhile, St Bartholomew is often depicted with his flayed skin draped over his shoulder in the manner of a robe.⁶⁴ Like Lucy's eyes, Bartholomew's skin serves as the emblem of his horrendous martyrdom. The presence of these detached body parts likewise signals the ambiguous relationship between 'self' and 'body'. Within these artistic representations, the saints' earthly body parts continue to operate as part of their spiritual identities. This prompts a question which underscored the execution, torture and dissection process: when does the body cease to be one's own?

Elaine Scarry reflects that 'it has often been observed that when a knife or a nail or pin enters the body, one feels not the knife, nail or pin but one's own body, one's own body hurting one – one feels acted upon, annihilated, by inside and outside alike'.⁶⁵ Within the suffering of torture, even the self can be turned against oneself, as one's individual unity is violated. This attempt to alienate a subject from his or her own body is represented within John Cowell's *The Interpreter* (1607). Cowell reveals that the early modern judicial sentence sometimes specified the penalty of having one's bowels ripped from one's body, 'and burnt before thy face', before the inevitable moment of execution.⁶⁶ This is a further instance of 'one's own body hurting one'. To experience the full shame and horror of this inversion of the body, the criminal is required to become the spectator of his own defilement: to register, within his very own mind, his

⁶³ See Domenico Beccafumi, *Saint Lucy* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena: 1521) [Oil on wood].

⁶⁴ See, for instance, Michelangelo, *The Last Judgement* (The Sistine Chapel, Rome: 1533-1541) [Fresco].

⁶⁵ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 53.

⁶⁶ John Cowell, *The Interpreter: Or Booke Containing the Signification of Words: Wherein is set forth the true meaning of all, or the most part of such Words and Termes, as are mentioned in the Lawe Writers, or Statutes of this victorious and renowned Kingdome, requiring any Exposition or Interpretation* (Cambridge: 1607), Vvv2, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:9441:266> [accessed 04 February 2012].

deseccated status as a repulsive carcass. Physical fragmentation has complex ramifications in terms of spiritual and psychological identity. As Daniela Bohde declares of the dissected bodies of the early modern period, ‘in the hands of the anatomist, they were simply skin, flesh and bones’.⁶⁷ And yet the skeletons of the notorious criminals ‘Counterey Tom’ and ‘Canberry Bess’, which were displayed as trophies in the Barber-Surgeons’ Hall, and the relics of saints, displayed and worshiped within Catholic churches, emphasise that this was not always the case.⁶⁸

Spiritual and social identity, if society so dictated, could remain inscribed upon the body after death, dismemberment, *and* decomposition. Such bodily remains could be framed as emblems of the subject’s shame and defeat, and simultaneously, of the glory, fortitude, and sacrifice of the executed. The human anatomy was frequently preceded by the adjective ‘bare’ within early modern literary references (suggesting, of course, starkness: a state of undress). However, it is clear that while execution and dissection stripped the body of its flesh and organs, its semantic life proved more difficult to remove.⁶⁹ In Chapter 6 I will discuss how Shakespeare plays with the complex relationships of the body, death, and social/spiritual identity within his treatment of Claudio in *Measure*.

The anatomy theatres’ common utilisation of the bodies of criminals meant that dissection was not only linked to the shame of nakedness and physical disintegration, but was also associated more deeply with social and spiritual disgrace. I have already explored the sense of sexual defilement which attended the medical penetration of the human subject upon the

⁶⁷ Daniela Bohde, ‘Skin and the Search for the Interior: The Representation of Flaying in the Art and Anatomy of the Cinquecento’, in *Bodily Extremities*, pp. 10-39 (p. 31).

⁶⁸ Sawday, p. 61.

⁶⁹ A search on *EEBO* returned many usages of this term within the literature of the early modern period. Examples include Henry’s Chettle’s *The Tragedy of Hoffman* (1631) (see footnote 77), and Francisco de Quevedo’s *Visions* (1640).

dissection table. Egmond reinforces this when she states, ‘When we keep in mind that honour, unlike pain, transcends death, to be dissected in public must have been an experience directly comparable with rape or public punishment’.⁷⁰ Within Henry Chettle’s *The Tragedy of Hoffman* (1631), the sense of disgrace attending the public desecration of the body is made abundantly clear when Hoffman accuses:

You virtuous gentleman
 Sate like a just judge of the vnder-shades,
 And with an unchang’d Rhadamantine looke,
 Beheld the flesh mangled with many scars
 Par’d from the bones of my offended father
 And when hee was a bare anatomy,
 You saw him chain’d unto the common gallowes.⁷¹

The sense of dishonour attending the public disintegration of the anatomist’s cadaver was enhanced, in the case of female corpses, by the fact that many dissected females had been prostitutes.⁷²

In the midst of shame, bodily anonymity could present itself as the idealised state. It was perhaps for reasons of the cadaver’s social dignity, as much as for the maintenance of sexual decorum, that Estienne bade his students to shield the faces of the corpses from their audiences. A degree of anonymity was likewise achieved through the introduction of the regulation that

⁷⁰ Egmond, p. 111.

⁷¹ Henry Chettle, *The Tragedy of Hoffman; or, A Reuenge for a father As it hath been diuers times acted with great applause, at the Phenix in Druery – Lane* (London: 1631), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:8232:6> [accessed 05 May 2014].

⁷² Egmond, p. 113.

‘victims’ of dissection must be ‘outsiders’ (i.e. from a different city).⁷³ This regulation would prevent the disturbing and shameful recognition of cadavers within the anatomy theatre. And yet, it seems unlikely that this ruling was designed to protect the honour of the cadaver. Certainly, the practises of public carting (whereby offenders were transported semi-naked before the community) and hanging and gibbeting were designed to maximise the physical humiliation of convicts.⁷⁴ Conjuring an image echoing that of Chettle’s Hoffman, Egmond describes the process which followed hanging:

the body remained there hanging in chains or ropes in full view of all passers-by, until it disintegrated and the remains fell on the unconsecrated ground of the pit below the gallows [...] all over Europe the final and very public phase of disintegration at the gallows was a common and integral part of the ritual of punishment.⁷⁵

Egmond’s references to the ‘full view’ and ‘very public’ decomposition of offenders’ bodies indicates that the sight of a known member of the community’s decaying flesh was far from socially or morally taboo. George Whetstone’s account of a public execution is also telling in this respect. Whetstone reflects that ‘the odiousness of [the victims’] treasons was so settled in every man’s heart as there appeared no sadness or alteration among the people at the mangling and quartering of their bodies; yea the whole multitude without any sign of lamentation greedily

⁷³ Egmond, p. 112.

⁷⁴ Toulalan, p. 114.

⁷⁵ Egmond, pp. 101; 102.

beheld the spectacle from first to last'.⁷⁶ Given the common nature of shameful and brutal public punishments, and the popular support which often accompanied these (as indicated, for instance, by Whetstone's use of the enthusiastic 'greedily') it is difficult to ascertain why such efforts were made to preserve the anonymity of cadavers within the anatomy theatre. Egmond suggests that this regulation was designed 'to protect the reputation of the city or state' – but to protect their reputations from what?⁷⁷ From the scandal of violent or emotional outbursts on the part of relatives? From the stigma of exploring the bodies of their own citizens? Just as dissection has been deemed comparable to rape, the dissection of one's own community members could be perceived, perhaps, as 'a kind of incest'.⁷⁸

The punishments of carting, gibbeting, execution and dissection exploited the shame created by the exposure of the body before the public gaze. They echoed the Old Testament's harrowing accounts of revelation and judgement. Recalling the judgement of Nineveh, Nahum states, 'I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and I will set thee as a gazing stock' (Nahum 3. 5-6). Stripped of clothing and skin before the public, the cadaver surely functioned as a concrete epitome of the biblical 'gazing stock'. Egmond states that the early modern cadaver was 'on show: with little individuality left and no honour, it had been reduced to a thing to be gaped at'.⁷⁹ The motifs and slogans of 'memento mori' which

⁷⁶ George Whetstone, *The Censure of a Loyal Subject: Upon Certain Noted Speech and Behaviour of those Fourteen Notable Traitors...* (London: 1587), quoted by Peter Lake, in *The Anti-Christ's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 234.

⁷⁷ Egmond, p. 112.

⁷⁸ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. by J. W. Lever (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 1965, repr. 2004 [c.1603]), III. I. 138.

⁷⁹ Egmond, p. 121.

were displayed within a number of anatomy theatres, meanwhile, encouraged spectators to view the dissection process as a warning that death and exposure come to all.

The earliest sketches of human dissection reflected this humbling promise. The dissection scene from Johannes de Ketham's *Fasciculo de Medicina* (1493) displays a medical official presiding in state over the process of anatomization.⁸⁰ His distance from the corpse is marked by his gloved hand (a stark contrast to the bare hands of the labourer who grapples the cadaver) and by his enclosure within an elevated booth. The official is protected from the crudities of the dead body by his social reputation. Even his gaze is directed above the corporeal procedure. Yet the image also charts a process of disintegration. The strong physical resemblance of the official and cadaver disturbs the social hierarchy. Furthermore, the sketch depicts the living figures in a downwards movement – a bending or lowering towards the dissection table. Thus, de Ketham frames the dissection process as that which destabilises earthly pride and complacency, reminding the living that nakedness and decay are humanity's universal fate. Humanity's frail, temporal state was a popular subject of the early modern sermon. Thomas Adams echoes de Ketham's scene, for instance, when he asserts, 'I haue but one staire more, downe from both Text and Pulpit; and it is a very low one; *Dust and ashes*'.⁸¹ James Usher's warning was more harrowing. He preached, 'The greatest man that lives cannot shield himself from death, and from a covering of worms'.⁸²

⁸⁰ Johannes de Ketham, scene from *Fasciculo de Medicina* (1493), reproduced by Sawday, figure 3.

⁸¹ Thomas Adams, *Fiue Sermons Preached vpon sundry especiall Occasions* (London: 1626), p. 20, in *EEBO* < http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:16051:13 > [accessed 30 July 2013].

⁸² James Usher, 'The Natural Man is a Dead Man' (c. 1620), reproduced in *In God's Name: Examples of Preaching in England 1534-1662*, ed. by John Chandos (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1971), pp. 225-28 (p. 227).

Within Protestant sermons and poems, anatomization served as a common metaphor for God's penetrating vision of each and every human soul. Ben Jonson, for instance, refers to God as he 'Who knows the hearts of all, and can dissect | The smallest fibre of our flesh'.⁸³ Jonson's imagery echoes that of Hebrews 4. 12, where God's 'word' is described as 'quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart'.⁸⁴ As I explored within the previous chapter, similarly invasive imagery was employed by Luther. The metaphor of dissection (or more fittingly, vivisection) emerges potently within his depiction of the 'stretched' body, its bones, 'corners' and niches splayed visibly before the judgemental gaze of the imagined spectator.⁸⁵ Here, Luther visualises the sinner in terms suggestive of the repulsive and unworthy cadaver. As Covington observes, 'where wounds give hope when they are imagined as emanating from Christ or divinely opening the heart, in the context of despair they are depleting and destructive, emblematic of anguish and malignancy'.⁸⁶ In the case evoked by Luther, the subject's wounds are certainly those of 'anguish' and 'despair': there is no 'comfort' through Christ. As Covington illustrates, wounds were also 'imagined' and evoked as a form of divine 'opening'. If acknowledged by the wounded, in the assurance of Christ's mercy, the spiritual wounds of sin and weakness offered a means for Christ to enter, bringing spiritual wholeness with him.

Preachers utilised images of dissected and wounded flesh as they explored the subjects of prayer and confession. As Owen C. Watkins asserts, 'it was the task of the good pastor to

⁸³ Ben Jonson, 'Elegy for Lady Digby', reproduced in *Murder after Death*, p. 98.

⁸⁴ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, 3rd edn (Pleasant Hope: L. L. Brown, 1993), with an introduction by Michael H. Brown.

⁸⁵ Martin Luther, in *Luther's Works*, American Edition (55 vols), XXXI (1957), ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muehlenberg and Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-86), p. 129.

⁸⁶ Covington, p. 173.

transpose abstract doctrine into a rule of practice so that by diligent self-examination the perplexed believer could accurately dissect his soul'.⁸⁷ Richard Sibbes declares, 'Art thou bruised? Be of good comfort, he calleth thee; conceal not thy wounds, open all before him, keep not Satan's counsel'.⁸⁸ John Donne utilises similar images. He refers, for instance, to 'That soul that is dissected and anatomized to God, in a sincere confession'.⁸⁹ It is clear that dissection served as a fitting image for the sharp self-scrutiny and exposure which Protestant preachers called their congregations to perform. As I established within the previous chapter, brokenness before God was no shame within reformed theology, but rather, a saving virtue. In one of his sermons, Donne declares:

even God's demolitions are super-edifications, his anatomies, his dissections are so many re-compactings, so many resurrections; God winds us off the skein, that he may weeve us up into the whole peece, and he cuts us out of the whole peece into peeces, that he may make us up into a whole garment.⁹⁰

Donne draws upon the relationship of anatomist and cadaver and blends this with the gentler imagery of the seamstress, creating a potent metaphor for humankind's relationship with God. His words reflect the Lutheran and Calvinist sentiment that spiritual weaknesses or wounds serve to heal, and to unite the faithful with God.

⁸⁷ Owen C. Watkins, *The Puritan Experience* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 10.

⁸⁸ Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reede, and Smoaking Flax* (London: 1630), p. 25, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:2554:38> [accessed 20 February 2012].

⁸⁹ John Donne, 'Sermon LXVI' (preached at St Paul's, London: 1625), in *The Works of John Donne D. D, with a Memoir of his Life*, ed. by Henry Alford, 6 vols (London: John W Parker, 1839), III, p. 176.

⁹⁰ John Donne, 'Sermon 13', *The Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne*, 16 vols, ed. by David Colclough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013–), III (2013), pp. 213-14.

Within this passage, Donne casts God in the paradoxical role of tender anatomist, severing and sculpting sinners so that they might be redeemed. Within the Catholic devotional tradition, meanwhile, heavy emphasis was placed upon the saving power of Christ's wounds. The *Primer* of Catholic prayers and hymns included 'A Prayer unto the Wounds of Christ'.⁹¹ Invoking Christ's 'heath-bringing wounds', the supplicant calls for him to 'wound this my sinful soul'.⁹² The prayer continues, 'Strike, O Lord, strike, I beseech me, this my most hard heart with the holy and forcible prick of thy love, and pierce it more deeply into the inner parts with thy mighty force'.⁹³ This graphic and invasive plea is intensified within a further prayer in the *Primer*, which reads:

I beseech thee from the deepness of thy wounds that went through thy tender flesh, also thy bowels and the marrow of thy bones, that thou would vouchsafe to draw me out of sin and hide me ever after in the holes of thy wounds from the face of thy wrath.⁹⁴

These prayers illuminate the physical deformities suffered by Christ, and present them as potent means of spiritual access. This is also a striking feature of the religious lyrics of Donne and Herbert, as I will go on to establish in Chapter 5. These examples indicate that the naked, weakened body served as an important symbol of Christian strength within both Catholic and Protestant worship. Through his abjection, suffering and violation, Christ conquered sin and death, the Gospels proclaim. Christ's stripped and tormented body became an emblem of love

⁹¹ 'A Prayer unto the Wounds', in *The Primer, or Office of the Blessed Virgin Marie in Latin and English*, trans. by R[ichard] V[estigan] (Antwerp: 1599), reproduced in *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources*, ed. by Robert S. Miola (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 271.

⁹² 'A Prayer unto the Wounds', p. 272.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ From 'The Fifteen Oes of St Bridget', in *The Primer*, reproduced by Miola, p. 273.

and triumph, colouring the defilement and humiliation of the faithful with a sense of divine glory. This central Christian paradox resonated powerfully within the discourse of early modern anatomization.

The cadaver, as I have noted, underwent an undressing of earthly status, becoming ‘naked’, ‘empty’ and ‘as nothing’. Describing the fate of those condemned to execution and dissection, Egmond declares:

Garments, in particular hats or caps which closely defined social position, were removed; heads sometimes were shaved. The condemned person usually appeared at the scaffold bareheaded and wearing only a shirt [...]. This process of peeling away layers of social status, identity, respect and honour came even closer to the skin of the convict. By ‘peeling’ off skin, opening up skulls; and destroying the body’s inner cohesion – by crossing the margins of the body – they wiped out the last vestiges of the convict’s honour and identity.⁹⁵

Dissection is described here in terms of physical and social annihilation: the final blow to the convict’s human integrity. In order to lessen this sense of barbarity, Sawday reveals that the dissection of criminals was cast as a ‘service’ performed for the edification of the scientific community.⁹⁶ This ‘service’ represented a form of retribution for the wrongs committed by the criminal in earthly life. Cadavers were framed as those who performed spiritual sacrifices – acts of mortification for the good of their fellow citizens. This framework bears some resemblance to the Catholic investment in ‘good works’ as a means of achieving forgiveness and salvation, and likewise, to the ritual of praying for the dead in order to shorten their sentences in purgatory: to

⁹⁵ Egmond, p. 108.

⁹⁶ Sawday, p. 55.

cancel out, as it were, the burden of their sins. These beliefs had been rejected firmly by Luther and Calvin. As the previous chapter established, within their reformed theologies, God's grace alone could save. Yet acts of spiritual self-mortification, if performed through faith in Christ, were cast as signs of Christian grace.

The reconfiguration of dissection from a debasing invasion of the body to a means of aligning the dead with the crucified and resurrected Christ was disrupted by the simple fact that the cadavers lacked any spiritual will or agency. They did not consent to their exposure – to this redeeming 'sacrifice'. Within the process of dissection, the dead were merely *acted upon* by their fellow Christians. Yet this discomfoting reality could be abandoned, conveniently, within the textual representations of dissection. As detailed previously, cadavers were commonly represented as the agents of their own anatomization. Sawday refers to this convention as 'part of a dense network of sacred imagery surrounding the figure of Christ in various stages of the passion'. He continues, 'The human body is redeemed here even as it peels back the surface covering of skin, which falls like discarded cloth over the subject's thighs'.⁹⁷ Within these images, the cadavers were transformed from the passive dead to the active recipients of 'eternal life'.⁹⁸ Their exposure was cast as self-sacrifice, mirroring Christ's own loving embrace of corporeal suffering. As Sawday identifies, this sacrifice was expressed in the gentle terms of undress: the skin 'falls like discarded cloth'. Here, Sawday states, the 'flayed human skin' serves as 'a concrete expression of the theologically informed metaphor of the body as the "garment" of the soul'.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Sawday, p. 118.

⁹⁸ Sawday, p. 75.

⁹⁹ Sawday, p. 73.

In a sense, it was ‘eternal life’ which the anatomists and spectators sought within the body of the cadaver. Indeed, Sugg refers to the keenness of surgeons to seek the ‘divine artifice’ of God, and the glory of Christ’s incarnation, within the penetrated corpse.¹⁰⁰ Certainly, Banister was keen to set forth and admire that which he termed ‘the handy worke of the incomprehensible Creator’.¹⁰¹ In this respect, the dissection table became charged with the spiritual significance of the church altar. As Sugg declared, the anatomist ‘can also be seen as a kind of priest, transforming degraded matter into a spiritually saturated object of wonder’.¹⁰² This ecclesiastical framework was strengthened by the use of churches as temporary anatomy theatres prior to the establishment of custom-built spaces, and by the incorporation of Christian motifs into anatomy theatres and texts.¹⁰³ A sense of Christian redemption and triumph was also ascribed to the dissection process through the symbolic positioning of corpses within printed images of anatomization. Sawday notes the outstretched arm of the cadaver within the image of the Leiden Anatomy theatre (1609).¹⁰⁴ He interprets this posture as a self-conscious reference to the crucified Christ. In this sense, the detailed exploration of the depths of the human form was represented as an act of reverence and faith: a medium for the full realisation and celebration of Christ’s incarnation.

Sugg’s reference to the transformation ‘of degraded matter’ highlights that this search for Christ’s divinity within the desecrated form of the cadaver involved a shift from a literal to a spiritual perception of the body. Sugg crystallizes this process when he declares, ‘it might be said that the criminal’s body effectively splits, here, into a concrete, perishable and ignominious

¹⁰⁰ Sugg, p. 35.

¹⁰¹ Banister, <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:7321:41> [image 41].

¹⁰² Sugg, p. 71.

¹⁰³ Paster, p. 64.

¹⁰⁴ Sawday, p. 118.

entity, on the one hand, and a more abstractly symbolic vehicle on the other'.¹⁰⁵ To what extent was this process of abstraction affected by the gender of the cadaver? Or more precisely, was the glory of Christ's incarnation also sought within the body of the female (which was at a further remove again, from the form embraced by Christ)? Sawday suggests not. He declares:

If the Renaissance anatomy theatre, in its modes of ritual and representation, offered the suggestion of redemption to the male cadaver, what it offered to the female was the reverse: a demonstration of Eve's sin, a reinforcement of those structures of patriarchal control which, so the argument ran, were necessary to avoid a repetition of that first act of rebellion in the garden of Paradise [...] Once Eve was transported into the theatre, then the investigation of the origin of death was buttressed by the pressing theological, social, and scientific need to master her abhorrent sexual nature.¹⁰⁶

To Sawday then, the body of the female was framed rather with pejorative theological symbolism. While the male cadaver was associated with Christ's redeeming sacrifice, the female was treated as the very origin of human sin: the cause of universal suffering. By emphasising the 'abhorrent sexual nature' of the female, Sawday suggests that she was treated as a perverse temptress. This heightened sexualisation of the naked female echoes the Old Testament's approach to male and female nakedness, as observed within the previous chapter. Once again, the naked female is framed as a Jezebel or Whore of Babylon. The fact that female cadavers were quite commonly prostitutes surely did little to alleviate this stigma of sexual

¹⁰⁵ Sugg, p. 69.

¹⁰⁶ Sawday, p. 224.

depravity. Fallen in life, they were offered forth as abstractions of the destructive powers of sexuality.

The legendary case of the dissection of Sister Chiara, in 1308, offers a striking contrast. Although the dissection of the nun falls outside of the time scale of this early modern English study, it nevertheless provides a fascinating model of deeply sympathetic female anatomization. David J. Rothman et al., recall the tale of Chiara's dissection by her fellow sisters.¹⁰⁷ '[T]he Augustinian nuns [...] deemed that "it was not proper for that virgin flesh to be touched by any man whatsoever"', and that 'her "saintly body" which had been "a living temple to the Holy Ghost"', should not be contaminated by the hands of a barber-surgeon'.¹⁰⁸ Seeking the physical signs of Chiara's piety and faith within her body, the sisters' process of anatomical penetration represented an act of adoration. They discovered an enlarged heart, and organs shaped like the physical emblems of Jesus' passion. Accordingly, Chiara's remains were exhibited annually 'on the eve of the feast of St John the Baptist'.¹⁰⁹ This legend, and its accompanying relics, served as ecclesiastically sanctioned proof that faith could indeed be read upon (or more fittingly, *within*) the human body. Moreover, it served as a challenge to the branding of females as 'Eves'. Sister Chiara's body spoke in very clear terms of her alignment with Christ and his redeeming sacrifice (should this story, of course, be accepted as truth). Significantly, however, this positive spiritual exploration of the female body was carried out by fellow females.

This tale could be dismissed as a mere instance of Catholicism's emphasis upon the sensual and material as a means of expressing faith. Certainly, Caroline Walker Bynum

¹⁰⁷ David J. Rothman, Steven Marcus, and Stephanie A. Kiceluk, *Medicine and Western Civilization* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995), p. 37.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Sawday, p. 100.

highlights the prevalence of wondrous bodily signs of faith amongst Catholic females within the late medieval and early modern periods.¹¹⁰ These included ‘miraculous lactation’, bleeding, wounds, and the ‘incorruptibility’ of cadavers.¹¹¹ However, the equation of bodily form with spiritual identity also played an important role within Protestant culture. As noted within the previous chapter, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* attached great spiritual significance to the physical endurance of those persecuted as heretics to the Catholic faith.¹¹² The burning of John Hooper serves as a prime example. Foxe utilises graphic bodily details as a means of signalling Hooper’s spiritual strength at the stake. He states:

Thus he was three quarters of an hour or more in the fire. Even as a lamb, patiently he abode the extremity thereof, neither moving forwards, backwards, or to any side, but having his nether parts burned, and his bowels fallen out, he died as quietly as a child in his bed: as now he reigneth as a blessed martyr in the joys of heaven prepared for the faithful in Christ, before the foundations of the world: for whose constancy all Christians are bound to praise God.¹¹³

Hooper’s physical suffering is intense. And yet he reacts, according to Foxe’s account, as one unmoved by this agonizing desecration of his body. His dignity and fortitude in the midst of this exposure and suffering serve as evidence of the integrity of his faith. His bodily conduct is received as a spiritual and moral revelation. By physically dismantling the source of human ‘mystery’, ‘the enshrouded domain’ of the body, early modern officials hoped equally to

¹¹⁰ Caroline Walker Bynum, ‘The Female Body and Religious Practice’, in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body Part One*, ed. by Michel Feher (New York: Zone, 1989), pp. 160-219.

¹¹¹ Bynum, 166.

¹¹² John Foxe, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives* (1563), ed. by John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹¹³ Foxe, p. 70.

dismantle the spiritual identity of the accused.¹¹⁴ Katherine Eisaman Maus declares that the early modern judicial destruction of the body reflected the urge to ‘perform’ the ‘impossible feat of rendering publicly available a truth conceived of as initially – and perhaps inescapably – inward, secret, and invisible to moral sight’.¹¹⁵

This desire to uncover spiritual truths within humankind’s visible, corporeal form was also reflected within the theories and practices which surrounded the exposure of demonic activity. Paster refers to ‘the almost obsessive attention that English authorities paid to the presence on the witch’s body of a “bigge” or mark, the site where the familiar was said to suck the witch’s blood in payment for his services’.¹¹⁶ Thus, demonic practice is imagined in physically grotesque terms which leave concrete signs upon the offenders. Certainly, the ‘bigge’ or ‘mark’ upon the skin betrayed the suspect’s inner life: it spoke of their spiritual depravity. Notably, this mark was most commonly located upon the woman’s ‘secret parts’: her genitals or buttocks.¹¹⁷ The exposure of witchcraft thus necessitated an intimate bodily inspection of suspected females. The search was rigorous, for as Paster reveals, ‘one step involved shaving the accused woman’s body hair’.¹¹⁸ In this sense, the body of the suspect was undressed as far as possible (bar, of course, the flaying of the skin). In this quest to disclose the spiritual secrets of the accused, the intimacies of the female anatomy were exposed to hostile scrutiny. In this respect, the investigation took on a sexual nature. This raising of the skirt to reveal sin and shame echoed the sexualized exposure of Jerusalem within the Old Testament, as explored

¹¹⁴ Katherine Eisaman Maus, ‘Proof and Consequences: Inwardness and its Exposure in the English Renaissance’, *Representations*, 34 (1991), 29-52 (p. 39), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928769>> [accessed 15 January 2012].

¹¹⁵ Eisaman Maus, p. 41.

¹¹⁶ Paster, p. 247.

¹¹⁷ Paster, p. 247.

¹¹⁸ Paster, p. 250.

within Chapter 1.¹¹⁹ Here, as within the Bible, the worship of false idols was aligned with a sense of female sexual impurity and betrayal. We will come across these associations again within the following chapter's examination of *The Faerie Queene*.

Conclusion

The early modern anatomy theatre saw the final, earthly undressing of the human body. This chapter has established that the public removal of clothing and of skin, the splicing and probing of the deceased, had profound spiritual implications. Early modern society struggled to contain the barrage of rich, contradictory meanings generated by this penetration and inspection of its shared human form. The boundaries between concealment and disclosure, triumph and shame, pornography and edification, sanctification and destruction, the desire to see and not to see, proved difficult to define and to manage. Within the chapters which follow, I will demonstrate the active role played by these tensions in shaping spiritual and literary meaning and experience.

Throughout this chapter, we have seen that anatomists and commentators responded to the female body as that which was particularly sensitive in both sexual and moral terms. The representation of the naked female body and bodily interior within medical sketches and texts provoked fears of pornographic reception. Paradoxically, however, certain commentators voiced concerns that the revelation of the female reproductive system would repulse men. Moreover, the treatment of suspected witches spoke of a potent association of the female genitals with sin and shame – an association which is also confirmed by Sawday's reference to the alignment of female cadavers with Eve. This evidence points to a complex perception of the female body as that which was both beautiful/desirable and dangerous/perverse – or perhaps more accurately, a body which was perverse because of its threatening sexual appeal. I look more closely at the

¹¹⁹ See Lamentations 1. 8, and Jeremiah 13. 26, for example.

literary and spiritual treatment and impact of male and female nakedness within my analysis of *The Faerie Queene*.

I have shown that the ruptured body had a complex spiritual and social status within early modern thought and practice. The opened corpse was treated and received as something deeply shameful: a disruptive reminder of humanity's base, corporeal condition. And yet, it was also interpreted and framed as a reflection of Christ's own triumphant and redemptive suffering, and the locus of divine mystery. The sexual framework surrounding the human body proved to be a particular stumbling block to the reception of the cadaver as an abstract symbol of spiritual sacrifice and redemption. Did the concealment of the faces and genitals of cadavers, and the censorship of the genitals within medical texts, reflect the body's impurity, or the corrupt nature of the human gaze? In this respect, the tensions surrounding the early modern anatomy process echoed those which surrounded the interpretation and representation of Adam and Eve's prelapsarian nakedness, as explored within Chapter 1.

The idealised spiritual imagery of the anatomy theatres and texts clashed with the sense of social, spiritual, and moral unease which attended the public dismantling and intimate examination of non-consenting fellow humans. In this sense, the anatomy theatre served both as 'the theatre of cruelty' and the theatre of redemption.¹²⁰ In seeking to explore the body of the other, I would argue that the anatomists put their own cultural systems under inquisition. The texts and practices surrounding human dissection disclosed the intimate beliefs and fears of the *living*, rendering the societies which produced them the truly naked.

¹²⁰ Antonin Artaud developed and explored the concept of 'the theatre of cruelty', in *The Theatre and its Double*, trans. by Victor Corti (Richmond: Oneworld Classics, 2010 [1938]). See, in particular, p. 81.

CHAPTER 4: DISROBING IN *THE FAERIE QUEENE* BOOK I

This chapter considers how Edmund Spenser employs concepts and images of nakedness and undressing within Book I of his spiritual allegory, *The Faerie Queene* (1590).¹ Book I, which engages explicitly with the theologically charged subject ‘Of Holinesse’, draws heavily upon the potential of the undressed body to convey spiritual meanings, and to provoke spiritual challenges. The previous three chapters have explored some of the central spiritual frameworks and tensions which surrounded the representation and reception of the body within early modern society. This chapter examines how these meanings are utilised within the context of the Protestant allegory. How far do Spenser’s representations of nakedness and undressing draw upon and respond to biblical and contemporary ecclesiastical symbolism, and to what spiritual effect? To what extent are the symbolic and immediate meanings and sensations of nakedness entwined? In other words, does nakedness within *The Faerie Queene* serve *merely* as a symbol to be unpacked by the reader, or are its effects more physiologically and temporally urgent? And how far do male and female bodies serve distinct spiritual purposes? I explore these questions throughout the course of this chapter.

The processes of dressing and undressing play a significant structural and thematic role within the narrative of *The Faerie Queene* Book I. As Elizabeth Heale asserts, ‘[t]he drama of salvation as described by St Paul [...] provides a major source of imagery and the structural model for Book I’. She quotes St Paul: ‘Cast off [...] the old man which is corrupt through ye deceivable lusts, And bee renewed in the spirit of your minde, And put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holinesse’ (Ephesians 4. 22-

¹ Edmund Spenser, *‘The Faerie Queene’: Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]).

4).² Certainly, Spenser's letter to Sir Walter Raleigh 'expounding his whole intention in the course of this worke' confirms that the armour 'put on' by the Redcrosse knight is designed to evoke 'the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul v. Ephes'.³ St Paul indicates that there must be a casting off or undressing before the spiritually 'new man' can be 'put on'. Accordingly, the process by which Redcrosse puts on 'the armour of a Christian man' is underscored by a paradoxical sense of spiritual disrobing. This concept of undressing as a means of 'putting on' Christ is familiar to us, of course, from the works of Luther and Calvin, who likewise employed St Paul's striking metaphor. Spenser evokes this spiritually charged exchange of clothing within the opening stanza of *The Faerie Queene*.

Spenser describes the armour of the 'Gentle Knight' as that '[w]herein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine, | The cruell markes of many' a bloody fielde' (I. 1. 3-4). His use of the personifying 'wounds' creates an image of tender, ruptured flesh. Spenser describes the knight's external dress, and yet this imagery appears to evoke the bodily and psychological interior. Like the 'bloudie Crosse' which the knight bears upon his 'brest' (I. 1. 10), these 'deepe wounds' recall both the physical wounds received by Christ at the crucifixion, and the spiritual injuries endured by Christians faced by doubt, temptation, blasphemy, and persecution throughout earthly life. Spenser's description prompts the reader to dwell upon the suffering experienced by the faithful – a suffering expressed through the affecting terms of bodily vulnerability.

Within these opening stanzas, Spenser also draws upon the strength which is connoted by armour. He introduces Redcrosse as one who bears 'mightie armes and silver shielde' (I. 1. 2.). In this sense, Redcrosse is framed as a powerful and glorious character.

² Elizabeth Heale, *'The Faerie Queene': A Reader's Guide*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 20.

³ Spenser, 'A Letter of the Authors expounding his whole intention in the course of this worke' (c.1552-1618), reproduced in *'The Faerie Queene': Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley, pp. 39-43 (p. 42).

Thus, Spenser explores the ‘armour’ of a Christian as that which simultaneously, and complexly, bestows vulnerability *and* strength: that which protects *and* exposes. Redcrosse’s armour serves initially to highlight his inexperience as a knight, or in Spenser’s allegorical terms, as a champion of Christianity. Though standing ‘fair’ within this armour, Redcrosse is divided from its legacy of tested faith: ‘Yet armes till that time did he never wield’ (I. 1. 5). While this ‘putting on’ of Christ is celebratory within the wider context of the allegory, at this stage within the spiritual narrative it serves to uncover Redcrosse’s shortcomings as a Christian. Juxtaposed with the resilient armour that he wears, Redcrosse is exposed as naive and untested by the trials which distinguish true Christians from those who merely bear the external appearance of faith.

P. C. Bayley asserts that ‘[t]he Knight is a newly baptized Christian, wearing for the first time the armour of Christ’.⁴ Within the Calvinist reading offered by Darryl J. Gless, meanwhile, Redcrosse’s armour is interpreted as a sign of his election.⁵ I concur most strongly with Virgil K. Whitaker’s view, however. Whitaker aligns Redcrosse’s donning of the armour with the onset of a gruelling spiritual purging: the process of justification.⁶ A humbling tone is established, as Spenser conveys the personal struggle entailed in clothing oneself ‘with Christ’s righteousness’.⁷ Esther Gilman Richey also perceives this process as one of self-mortification. She reflects that Redcrosse’s ‘decision to wear Una’s armour actually negates the cross’s meaning; he puts it on out of desire for power and prestige rather than out of vulnerability and powerlessness. He takes on the quest to prove himself — and

⁴ P. C. Bayley, p. 25.

⁵ Darryl J. Gless, *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 70.

⁶ Virgil K. Whitaker, ‘The Theological Structure of the *Faerie Queene*, Book I’, *ELH*, 19.3 (1952), 151-164 (p. 154).

⁷ Gless, p. 46.

he must find that he cannot prove himself'.⁸ Within these opening stanzas, Spenser indicates that the armour of a Christian is more internal and private than it is external and public in nature. As both Luther and Calvin emphasised, to clothe oneself in Christ is to admit one's essential weakness, sinfulness, and dependence upon God's grace: it is to bare oneself spiritually.

Like Francis Quarles and Henry Burton, whose critiques of religious hypocrisy featured in Chapter 2, Spenser encourages his readers to look beyond external appearances of piety to the spiritual condition *within*. He introduces Archimago, the 'arch magician' and maker of images: one who exploits the potential of gestures, words and dress to deceive. Archimago is '[a]n aged Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad, | His feete all bare, his head all hoarie gray'. Spenser continues:

And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent
Simple in shew, and voyde of malice bad,
And all the way he prayed, as he went,
And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.

(I. 1. 254-61)

Spenser states:

that old man of pleasing words had store,
And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas;
He told of Saintes and Popes, and evermore
He strowd an *Ave-Mary* after and before.

(I. 1. 312-15)

⁸ Esther Gilman Richey, 'The Intimate Other: Lutheran Subjectivity in Spenser, Donne, and Herbert', *Modern Philology*, 108.3 (2011), 343-74 (p. 355), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/658327>> [accessed 03 November 2011].

Archimago presents himself as a penitent hermit. His naked feet and exposed head suggest spiritual humility and servitude, and his 'gray' hair signals human mortality. Yet nakedness, here, is adopted as part of a disguise. Its connotations are utilised by Archimago as a means of concealing his satanic purpose. His gestures of self-mortification ('knockt his brest, as one that did repent') and speech 'strowd' with ecclesiastical references, serve as an extension of his spiritual costume. Prayer itself becomes a form of clothing, a means of shaping Archimago's public identity: 'He strowd an *Ave-Mary* after and before'. These self-conscious gestures of spirituality are framed skilfully to quell the fear or suspicion of Redcrosse and Una. By drawing attention to himself as an (apparently) devout Christian, Archimago discourages their spiritual inquisition and instead invites their trust. Yet for Spenser's discerning Protestant reader, Archimago's costume has precisely the opposite effect. His monastic appearance, unthinking ritualism (note how prayer is 'strowd' indiscriminately about his speeches) and secluded lifestyle hint strongly at Catholic loyalties. Thus, Spenser raises the reader's expectations of spiritual deception.

The sense of duplicitous theatricality surrounding Catholicism within reformed, Protestant discourse, is captured by Thomas Cranmer's reference to the 'falsehood of the subtile papists [...] all maskers, counterfeiteres, and false deceivers'.⁹ Tyndale had also criticised those who placed their faith 'in a bald ceremonye or in a lowsye freris coete [...] in a thyng of his owne ymagynacion | in a folishe dreame and a false vision | & not in Christes bloude, and in the trueth that god hath sworne'.¹⁰ The adjective 'bald' operates here as a synonym for 'naked'. Tyndale signals the empty, trivial nature of Catholic ceremony: ceremony which was not founded upon the 'truth' of the Scriptures, but rather, stemmed

⁹ Thomas Cranmer, *Writings and Disputations of Thomas Cranmer*, quoted by D. Douglas Waters, in *Duessa as Theological Satire* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1970), p. 11.

¹⁰ William Tyndale, *The Parable of the Wycked Mammon* (London: 1547), p. ix, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:5129:65> [accessed 01 May 2012].

from humanity's corrupt 'imagynacyon'. Tyndale suggests that style, in the form of gestures and vestments, was valued more than spiritual substance, crystallized here within the moving, corporeal image of Christ's sacrificial 'blode'. John N. King notes that these beliefs were theatricalised through the Protestant stage convention 'of costuming personifications of Hypocrisy in monastic attire'.¹¹ John Bale utilises a similar technique to expose the deceptive theatricality of the Catholic Church within his play, *Three Laws* (1548).¹² Here, the character 'Infidelitas' presents the language and dress of Catholicism as a flimsy costume with which to entice humans to sin. Instructing 'Sodomismus' in the manner of perverting the human soul, Infidelitas states:

Set thou forth Sacramentalles
 Saye dirge, and synge trentalles
 Studye the popes Decretals
 And myxt them with buggerage

Here is a stoale for the
 A ghostly father to be,
 To here, Benedicite,
 A boxe of creame and oyle
 Here is a purse of rellyckes
 Ragges, rotten bones, and styckes
 A taper with other tryckes,
 Shewe them in every soyle.¹³

¹¹ John N. King, *Spenser's Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 51.

¹² John Bale, *A Nevve Comedy or Enterlude Concernynge Thre Lawes* (London: 1562), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:4672:11> [accessed 03 May 2012] [images 10 and 11].

¹³ *Ibid.*

The names ‘Infidelitas’ and ‘Sodomismus’ align these characters explicitly with the concepts of spiritual and sexual depravity. Sodomismus is to adorn himself with the phrases, gestures and clothing associated with Catholic worship. Thus, Bale links Catholicism to these notions of corruption. Although this scene depicts a dressing up or ‘putting on’, its true purpose and effect is to undress, or demystify – to destroy any sense of awe surrounding the material culture of Catholicism. The accessories of Catholicism are deconstructed and exposed as empty props (‘sacred’ relics, for instance, are reduced to mundane ‘Raggess, rotten bones, and styckes’, devoid of true spiritual value). The process of ‘putting on’, paradoxically, facilitates the stripping away of spiritual mystique. Similarly, by casting the deceitful Archimago as a monastic figure, Spenser not only draws upon, but equally reinforces the belief that Catholics utilise external signs of divine servitude as a means of disguising their true spiritual depravity. Like Bale (although this time, within the textual, allegorical mode rather than the physical, theatrical arena) Spenser employs the clothing of Catholicism in order to discredit its spiritual symbolism. As I argue later within the chapter, this process reaches its climax within his depiction of Duessa’s disrobing.

While Archimago symbolises hypocrisy, Spenser frames Una as the personification of truth. As Colin Manlove elaborates, ‘her name portrays the nature of truth – one, single and entire’.¹⁴ To both Anthea Hume and Michael O’Connell, Una functions as a symbol of the Reformed Church. Hume labels Una ‘the embodiment of true religion’, while O’Connell describes her representation of ‘the pure and primitive Christianity’ which the Reformation sought to restore.¹⁵ Accordingly, Spenser depicts Una as the daughter of the first parents, Adam and Eve (I. 12. 226). In a departure from the biblical narrative of the fall, however,

¹⁴ Colin Manlove, *Christian Fantasy from 1200 to the Present* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 54.

¹⁵ Anthea Hume, *Edmund Spenser: Protestant Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 83. Michael O’Connell, *Mirror and Veil: the Historical Dimension of Spenser’s ‘Faerie Queene’* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1977), p. 45.

Spenser describes the couple's loss of Eden in terms which emphasise their innocence. The sense of guilty shame surrounding their biblical temptation and transgression is diluted by Spenser, who attributes their banishment from Eden to the failure of their knightly subjects to conquer the satanic beast that plagues their kingdom (I. 7. 397-496). Thus, Spenser aligns Una with Christianity's very origins, yet preserves her from the shame surrounding the corruption of humankind's relationship with God.

Una's innocence within a fallen world is suggested by her modest appearance.

Spenser describes her skin as that which is 'more white then snow'. He continues:

but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled was full low,
And over all a black stole she did throw,
As one that inly mourned[.]

(I. 1. 30-33)

Significantly, then, Spenser depicts 'truth' as a veiled woman. Indeed, Rufus Wood reflects that 'Una is a "darke conceit", a veiled truth'. He refers to Spenser's 'paradoxical representation of truth as a hidden beauty awaiting disclosure'.¹⁶ Una's self-concealment echoes Luther and Calvin's representations of the masked and veiled God, as explored within Chapter 2. I revisit this connection later within this chapter.

To Claire Falck, Una's veiled appearance speaks most immediately of 'the anxieties and ambiguities inherent' in the 'embodiment' of 'the true church'.¹⁷ Una's 'character', she asserts, 'is a sustained attempt to perfect the Reformation project of visualizing the invisible

¹⁶ Rufus Wood, *Metaphor and Belief in the 'Faerie Queene'* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p. 39.

¹⁷ Claire Falck, "'Heavenly Lineaments" and the Invisible Church in Foxe and Spenser', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 53.1 (2013), 1-28 (p. 6).

church'.¹⁸ Certainly, Una occupies a complex space between the visible/accessible and invisible/inaccessible. As Gless reflects, her veil reveals while it conceals. It is charged with spiritual potential. He observes, 'the clerical costume functions in part to obscure her snowy whiteness, metonymy for unearthly beauty, in part to express a special degree of sanctity'.¹⁹ Perhaps Spenser uses Una's concealed presence (conveyed by her veiled body) as a means of exploring and defining the nature of the Reformed Church's earthly manifestation, as Falck suggests. Certainly, Chapter 2 established that the Reformed Church sought to avoid the material excesses of the 'corrupted' Roman Catholic Church, but likewise needed a concrete form. In Luther's words, it required 'a covering, a veil, a shell, some kind of clothes that a man can grasp, otherwise it can never be found'.²⁰ I would concur that the veiled Una appears to capture and symbolise these tensions between divine concealment and revelation, and the spiritually abstract and concrete.

Throughout *The Faerie Queene*, Una's veil is loaded with the promise of spiritual revelation. Within Canto 3, Spenser offers his readers a glimpse behind it. The sense of violated privacy which attends Una's unveiling draws upon the pornographic appeal of seeing that which is not meant to be seen (to use Sarah Toulalan's theory of pornographic pleasure).²¹ Spenser arrests the reader's attention, stating:

In secret shadow, farre from all mens sight:
 From her faire head her fillet she undight,
 And laid her stole aside. Her angels face
 As the great edge of heaven shyned bright
 And made a sunshine in the shadie place;

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Gless, p. 75.

²⁰ Luther, quoted by V. H. H. Green, *Luther and the Reformation* (London: Methuen, 1964), p. 131.

²¹ Sarah Toulalan, *Imagining Sex: Pornography and Bodies in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 161. See Chapter 3.

Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace.
(I. 3. 31-36)

To Susanne L. Wofford, Una's dazzling revelation reflects Christ's transfiguration.²² Meanwhile, numerous Spenserian scholars have emphasised the poet's allusion here to Revelation's 'woman clothed with the sun'.²³ By aligning Una with this apocalyptic figure, Spenser links her more explicitly with the concepts of spiritual virtue and divine salvation, and additionally, with the 'true', Reformed Church. Heale stresses that the woman clothed with the sun was interpreted and adopted by early modern Protestants as a symbol of the 'faithful' Reformed Church.²⁴ Una's disrobing guides the reader, then, by strengthening her association with the Protestant cause. Within the diegesis, however, the exposure of her 'unearthly beauty' renders her vulnerable to misunderstanding and abuse. Her 'heavenly grace', communicated to the satyrs by her 'lovely face', creates spiritual havoc. She becomes 'the Image of Idolatryes' (I. 6. 169). Those who do not 'flocke' to view her, we are informed, 'fly away for feare of fowle disgrace' (I. 6. 160). In an echoing of Exodus, Una's unveiling signals the destructive potential of divine truth when revealed to fallen and impure humanity, or as Wofford states, 'how direct revelation will fail in the human world'.²⁵

Displayed in her full, heavenly form, Una overwhelms, creating fear, shame and bewilderment. Her divine perfection exposes the spiritual deformities of the satyrs. Indeed, they fail to understand that which they worship. This is emphasised by their idolisation, first of Una, and then of her palfrey. The ease with which the satyrs move from divine to bestial worship puts the spiritual value of their servitude under question. They do appear to have

²² Susanne L. Wofford, 'The Faerie Queene, Books I-III', in *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 106-123 (p. 111).

²³ For example, O'Connell, p. 48; Falck, p. 18.

²⁴ Heale, p. 22.

²⁵ Wofford, p. 111.

some natural religion, for they save Una from rape, and have an instinctive sense of her divinity. And yet, they are easily confused and misled. It is possible that Spenser conveys his views about the spiritual condition of the Irish here. As Bayley asserts, *The Faerie Queene* was ‘almost certainly written in Ireland’. He continues ‘the fascination and repulsion [Ireland] held for Spenser, its desolation and its surpassing beauty, its romance and its misery, its nobility and savagery, occupied his consciousness and pressed upon his imagination’.²⁶ Within *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, Spenser acknowledges the Christian inclinations of the Irish people.²⁷ However, he lamented that ‘it is certain that religion was generally corrupted with their Popish trumpery. Therefore, what other could they learn than such trash as was taught them, and drink of that cup of fornication, with which the purple harlot had then made all nations drunken?’²⁸ Like the worship performed by the satyrs, the innate spirituality of the Irish is deemed tainted by corrupted veneration. With his reference to ‘that cup of fornication’, Spenser utilises Revelation’s sexual metaphor for spiritual idolatry (Revelation 17. 4). He points, of course, to the Catholicism of Ireland. The parallel between the Irish and the satyrs is strengthened by Spenser’s depictions of the Irish people, throughout *A View*, as a ‘wylde’ race in need of a rigorous process of civilization: a people dwelling in basic conditions within the rugged, pastoral landscape.

Una’s first unveiling not only raises contemporary political and ecclesiastical concerns, but also offers a powerful theological reflection upon the nature of God. As explored within Chapter 2, Luther utilises the imagery of nakedness and dress as he examines God’s hidden and revealed states. The satyrs’ response to the unveiled Una seems to support the sentiment expressed by Luther when he explains:

²⁶ Bayley, p. 4.

²⁷ Edmund Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. by W. L. Renwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970 [c.1596]).

²⁸ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, p. 84.

We must take hold of this God, not naked but clothed and revealed in His Word; otherwise certain despair will crush us. [He] is clothed in such kind appearance [...] in such a pleasant mask that is to say, dressed in His promises – this God we can grasp and look at with joy and trust. The absolute God, on the other hand, is like an iron wall, against which we cannot bump without destroying ourselves.²⁹

In her clothed form, Una resembles Luther's 'clothed' God (or Christ). Tyndale emphasises that Christ 'hath brought us all into the inner temple within the vayle or forehanginge, | and unto the mercy stole of God'.³⁰ He is able to penetrate the barriers which divide sinful humanity from its omnipotent creator. Yet to perform this feat, he masks his divinity, and 'puts off the form of righteousness', as Luther states. Spenser's Una likewise veils her divine nature in order to bring Redcrosse closer to understanding God. When mediated by earthly garments, her values are accessible and inviting: they are tangible and human. The veiled Una is able to guide Redcrosse on his spiritual journey.

The satyrs' reaction to the uncovered Una suggests that Redcrosse may have responded with blind and foolish devotion, or paralysing terror, had she bared her unearthly nature to him within the early stages of his quest. Perhaps the reader, additionally, finds the earthly, concealed Una a more fitting guide upon entering the narrative world of Spenser's allegory. Certainly, the reader accompanies Redcrosse on his spiritual quest, and shares his requirement for carefully-paced revelation. And as Gary Waller reminds us, 'The characters in whom Spenser is interested are primarily, ourselves'.³¹ This is confirmed by Spenser's

²⁹ Martin Luther, in *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald and H. T. Lehmann (St Louis, Concordia, 1999), XII: *Selected Psalms I* (1955), ed. by Jaroslav Pelian, p. 312.

³⁰ William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (Antwerp: 1528), fo. rcii, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:5122:92> [accessed 05 June 2012].

³¹ Gary Waller, *Edmund Spenser: A Literary Life*, ed. by Richard Dutton (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 105.

letter to Raleigh, in which he states that ‘[t]he generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline’.³² Spenser’s gradual unfolding of his allegorical symbolism accommodates a steady growth of spiritual understanding on the part of the reader – the understanding upon which Reformed faith is built.

I would argue that the analogy between Una’s glorious, carefully controlled nakedness and that of God is strained, however, by Spenser’s eroticised treatment of her at various points within the allegory. Within Canto 1, for instance, Spenser explores the potential of Una’s veiled form to blazon not only spiritual, but *sexual* promise. Determined to separate Redcrosse from Una (truth), Archimago utilises Una’s corporeal appeal, creating a sensuous replica with which to arouse the lust of Redcrosse. Archimago:

with charmes and hidden artes,
Had made a Lady of that other Spright,
And fram’d of liquid ayre her tender partes
So lively, and so like in all mens sight,
That weaker sence it could have ravisht quight [.]

(I. 1. 397-401)

It is little wonder that Melinda J. Gough refers to this scene as ‘a pornographic spectacle’.³³ Spenser is keen to stress the realism of the illusory Una. He lays great emphasis upon the sensory appeal of her naked body, through use of the evocative ‘tender’ and ‘lively’. The evasive ‘tender partes’ is highly suggestive, of course, of the female body’s sexual attributes: the breasts and genitals. Spenser extends and intensifies this vivid depiction of female

³² Spenser, ‘A Letter of the Authors expounding his whole intention in the course of this worke’ (c.1552-1618), reproduced in *The Faerie Queene Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley, pp. 39-43 (p. 39).

³³ Melinda J. Gough, “‘Her Filthy Feature Open Showne’ in Ariosto, Spenser, and “Much Ado about Nothing””, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 39.1 (1999), 41-67 (p. 48).

nakedness within his description of ‘the Bower of Bliss’ in Book II, ‘Of Temperaunce’.³⁴

Here:

As Guyon hapned by the same to wend,
Two naked Damzelles he therein espyde,
Which therein bathing, seemèd to contend,
And wrestle wantonly, ne car’d to hyde,
Their dainty parts from vew of any, which them eyde.

(II. 12. 563-67)

Spenser’s coy reference to the Damzelles’ ‘dainty parts’ echoes his description of the ‘tender parts’ of the replica Una. He continues:

The whiles their snowy limbes, as through a vele,
So through the Christall waves appeared plaine:
Then suddainly both would themselves unhele,
And th’ amorous sweet spoiles to greedy eyes revele.

(II. 12. 573-76)

He then goes further, detailing ‘two lilly paps aloft displayd’, and concluding, ‘The rest hid underneath, [Guyon] more desirous made’ (II. 12. 591; 594).

Within these erotically charged lines, Spenser exploits the potential of concealment (here, partial bodily concealment) to titillate. The naked bodies of the damsels are framed by a superficial, watery ‘veile’: a ‘veile’ through which their bodies appear ‘plaine’, yet with which they can gesture teasingly towards sexual modesty (much like the figural pose of the *Venus pudica*, discussed within the previous chapter). Archimago attempts to cast Una’s

³⁴ Edmund Spenser, ‘*The Faerie Queene*’, Book 2, Canto 12, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 7th edn, ed. by M. H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt, vol. I (London: Norton, 2000), pp. 772-783.

characteristic physical modesty in a similar light; that is, as a mere seductive ploy. And yet, Redcrosse's seduction also depends upon some maintenance of the sense of spiritual virtue which attends Una's costume of modesty and sorrow. After all, as Shakespeare's Angelo declares, 'to catch a saint', one 'with saints' must 'bait thy hook'.³⁵ Accordingly, Archimago tempers the disclosure of the false Una's bodily appeal (reflected within the sensuous scene of pseudo creation) with the sexual appeal of the veiled body, and crucially – if paradoxically – with the spiritual traits of humility and chastity which the wimple and veil also connote. Spiritual and sexual appeal are combined, in effect, in Archimago's bid to corrupt Redcrosse.

Archimago negotiates the degree of the false Una's undress carefully. Spenser states, 'Her all in white he clad, and over it | Cast a black stole, most like to seeme for *Una* fit' (I. 1. 404-05). Thus, the false Una's 'tender' and 'lively' limbs, while momentarily revealed to the reader, are concealed from Redcrosse. Moreover, the sprite is clothed, in physiological terms, in the subtle details of Una's manner and expressions. Archimago, we are informed, 'taught' the sprite 'to imitate that Lady trew, | Whose semblance she did carrie under feignèd hew' (I. 1. 413-14). Spenser goes on to describe the false Una's 'halfe blushing': her adoption of a 'gentle blandishment and lovely looke | Most like that virgin true' (I. 1. 440-41). Falsehood, then, is clothed in the borrowed robes of Una's truth. In Archimago's hands, her spiritual beauty is perverted – it functions as the apparatus of a devilish whore. Once again, Spenser discourages the reader from placing trust in appearances, and encourages spiritual vigilance.

When Archimago's attempt fails, the false Una's veil is cast off in favour of a new façade: that of uncensored sexual depravity. Redcrosse is brought to gaze, not merely upon a naked 'Una', but a naked 'Una' engaged in the intimate act of sexual intercourse with an

³⁵ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. by J. W. Lever (London: Arden, 2004 [c.1603]), II. 2. 180-81.

unknown squire. He discovers ‘a secret part, | Where that false couple were full closely ment | In wanton lust and lewd embracèment’ (I. 2. 39-41). Redcrosse abandons Una, in what is described as a fit of moral disgust. And yet, in a convincing reading offered by Wood, this supposed moral rage is interpreted as the manifestation of Redcrosse’s underlying sexual jealousy. Indeed, Wood links this episode to Guyon’s overzealous destruction of the Bower of Bliss within Book II. Of this, he states, ‘Guyon’s violent uprooting of the external image can be seen as a displacement of a deeper fear concerning his own attraction to the carnal pleasures of idolatry’.³⁶ Perhaps Redcrosse’s escape from sexual temptation is not as complete, then, as one might assume. And perhaps this applies to the reader also.

Wood asserts that the erotic appeal of the Bower of Bliss is designed to tempt the reader as much as Guyon. I would suggest that this argument applies equally to Book I’s sensuous depiction of the naked sprite. Reflecting upon the Bower of Bliss episode, Wood states:

Suddenly, readers are forced to confront the allegorical representation of concupiscence as a full-blooded embodiment of venerean enticements capable of kindling prurient desires in them as well as Guyon [...] If Guyon’s self-control is questioned by the episode, then a similar question is asked of the reader (particularly of the male reader) concerning the extent to which his own willingness to indulge himself erotically draws him away from the path of temperate reading [...] figured concupiscence is experienced as actual concupiscence.³⁷

The sensuous description of the sprite’s naked form, succeeded swiftly by the concealment of this form below the veil and stole, involves the reader of Book I in a strip-tease of sorts –

³⁶ Wood, p. 156.

³⁷ Ibid.

the reader cast as the unseen voyeur. Spenser constructs an episode whereby the allegorical temptation of Redcrosse (holiness) by lust is echoed within the real and immediate relationship of reader and text. In this sense, his allegorical symbolism becomes lived and experienced *reality*. Wood captures the intensity of Spenser's evocation of nakedness through this reference to the 'full-blooded embodiment of venerean enticements' within the Bower of Bliss episode. Spenser's reflection of Una's nakedness within the form of the sprite shares this concreteness. It is almost obscenely vivid. The real exposure is not that of Una's sexualized anatomy, but that of the reader's own susceptibility to the promptings of the flesh. In other words, the spiritual threat is not rooted within the titillating lines of Spenser's allegory, but within the internal weaknesses of the reader himself: weaknesses which are coaxed into life by Spenser's vivid depictions of naked female sexuality.

John S. Pendergast sheds further light upon the spiritual and sexual dynamics of Spenser's Bower of Bliss episode. He declares, it 'seems to call for less than temperate and Puritanical thoughts on the part of the reader [...] the lesson always prevalent to the careful ("worthy") reader of Spenser is that rationality, something which should always take precedent over the senses alone, is in danger of being overcome by the senses'.³⁸ As Katharine A. Craik establishes, pornography is 'a matter not so much of content but readerly approach': it is a 'transaction between books, writers and readers'.³⁹ In this respect, Spenser's sensual imagery, if it succeeds to arouse readers, stimulates a heightened awareness of their own spiritual faults. Any arousal serves to expose their own sexual

³⁸ John S. Pendergast, *Religion, Allegory, and Literacy in Early Modern England, 1560 – 1640: The Control of the Word* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 144.

³⁹ Katharine A. Craik, *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 116-17.

complicity. In this respect, Spenser reflects Luther's belief 'that the physical removal of imagery was secondary to the suppression of the idolatry of the heart', as Wood highlights.⁴⁰

On a narrative level, Archimago's violation of Una through the creation of a perverse double prefigures the attempted rape to which she is subjected at the hands of Sansloy. While Archimago disrobes Una's illusionary double, Sansloy (notably, 'without love') attempts to deflower her 'real' body. He 'snatcht the veile, that hong her face before; | Then gan her beautie shine, as brightest skye, | And burnt his beastly hart t'efforce her chastitye' (I. 6. 34-36). This aggressive undressing of the sacred, marked by the forceful 'pluckt' and 'snatcht', evokes the urge of heretics to defile the pure or to pry into Christ's mysteries. Certainly, Sansloy's demand for immediate sexual gratification could be perceived as a metaphoric representation of humanity's demand to know God's hidden truths. Luther, for instance, criticises the worshipper who 'does not take hold of the God [...] as He is veiled in the sort of mask or face that is suited to us; but [...] invades Him'.⁴¹ He establishes that God has a majestic form, in which 'he must be left to himself'. Only 'clothed and set forth in his word' does he offer himself to humankind.⁴² The analogy is striking.

Sansloy's self-seeking approach to divinity is deemed all the more corrupt through Spenser's employment of the imagery of sexual abuse. Unable to possess Una (or truth) upon her own terms, Sansloy attempts to contaminate her: to make her the mistress of his own desires. As with Archimago's projection of Una's 'nakedness' upon the sprite, Sansloy's erotic response to Una's exposed face serves to disrupt her allegorical equation with God. On a literal, narrative level, Sansloy is aroused by Una's specifically feminine

⁴⁰ Wood, p. 156.

⁴¹ Martin Luther, in *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muehlenberg and Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-86), XII: *Selected Psalms I* (1955), p. 313.

⁴² Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), trans. by Philip S. Watson, in *Luther's Works*, XXXIII: *Career of the Reformer III* (1972), p. 139.

‘beauty’. Margaret R. Miles speaks of ‘society’s identification of the female body with male desire, its relegation of the naked female body to spectacle and object’.⁴³ Una is certainly treated here as an ‘object’ of lust. However, Sansloy’s actions, like those of Archimago, are undermined by Spenser’s alignment of both characters with spiritual corruption. Nevertheless, within both instances of attempted sexual exploitation, Spenser draws heavily upon the conception of the female body as physically frail and sexually appealing. Una’s erotic, female presence challenges our perception of her as an abstract, spiritual symbol, and limits the extent to which we associate her with Christ. However, it is important to acknowledge that Christ’s body was also sexualized, and even feminised, within certain early modern devotional pieces. Caroline Walker Bynum, for instance, explores the motif of ‘Jesus as mother’.⁴⁴ The next chapter will consider how some of these sexual and maternal depictions of Christ function within the religious lyric.

Like Sansloy, the aptly named Kirkrapine is characterised by a self-gratifying attitude towards spiritual life. We are informed:

The holy Saints of their rich vestiments
 He did disrobe, when all men careless slept,
 And spoild the Priests of their habiliments,
 Whiles none the holy things in safety kept [.]
 (I. 3.149-152)

Through his undressing of the Church, Kirkrapine is aligned with the Protestant iconoclasts. However, the underhand manner in which he performs this stripping indicates that his actions are dishonourable and shameful. Spenser emphasises that Kirkrapine puts these

⁴³ Margaret R. Miles, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Tunbridge Wells: Burn & Oates, 1992), p. 54.

⁴⁴ Caroline Walker Bynum, ‘The Female Body and Religious Practice’, in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body Part One* (New York: Zone, 1989), pp. 160-219.

spoils to personal and corrupt usage, bestowing them as gifts upon his mistress, Abessa. In this sense, King reflects that Kirkrapine ‘may symbolize both the misappropriation of ecclesiastical wealth by the monks of old and the excesses to which the Protestant movement was prone’.⁴⁵ Like Donne, and of course, the anonymous author of ‘A Plea for Moderation’, Spenser appears to speak here for a respectable ‘*via media*’: for a Church that is neither ‘naked’ (i.e. lacking all rituals and formalities) or ‘painted’ (i.e. serving the human senses in the place of God and his Word).⁴⁶

Throughout the course of Book I, Spenser certainly satirises the false worship conducted within the ‘painted’ Church of Catholicism. Corceca (‘blind heart’) and her daughter Abessa (‘absence’) serve as prime examples of this mockery. As her name suggests, Corceca lives in a ‘darkesome corner’, where she devotes her time to bodily mortification: ‘Thrise every weeke in ashes she did sit, | And next to her wrinkled skin rough sackcloth wore’ (I. 3. 119-120). These images are echoed by the spiritual challenges posed by Francis Quarles within his poem, *A Feast for Wormes*, as explored within Chapter 2.⁴⁷ He asks, ‘Can sackcloth clothe a fault? or hide a shame? | Can ashes clense thy blot? or purge thy’ offence?’ In a sense, Corceca’s sackcloth does ‘clothe a fault’ and ‘hide a shame’, although not in the manner implied by Quarles. Her focus upon bodily rituals at the cost of all other concerns prevents her from seeing the shame of her own daughter, who is ‘with whoredome usd’ (I. 3. 158). Corceca also fails to see or to acknowledge Abessa’s reception of Kirkrapine’s stolen church goods. Again, Spenser’s poem reflects the common Protestant critique of Catholicism as a faith preoccupied with superficial, man-made modes of serving God, at the expense of

⁴⁵ King, p. 5.

⁴⁶ Anon., *A Plea for Moderation* (London: 1642), p. 6, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Zin 39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:156598:5> [accessed 07 November 2011].

⁴⁷ Francis Quarles, *A Feast for Wormes Set forth in a Poeme of the History of Jonah* (London: 1620), section 9, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:15917:29> No line numbers in this facsimile version [accessed 03 August 2013].

spiritual honesty and obedience. Luther captured this sense of the flawed, material priorities of the faith within his reflection that the Roman Catholic leaders ‘fell into the foolishness of persuading men troubled with sorrows of conscience to put on cowls, accept monastic rules, and the like, by which they believed they would please God’.⁴⁸ Accordingly, Corceca and Abessa react to Una (or truth) with anger and fear. Their persecution of Una speaks of their inability, or unwillingness, to acknowledge their own faults.

As Chapter 2 established, the unwillingness to uncover one’s sins was a major preoccupation of Luther and Calvin’s reformed theologies. Within Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, Error exemplifies this sinful trait. Redcrosse’s armour, which reflected his own spiritual deficiencies within the poem’s opening stanzas, exposes the depravity of this monster. Spenser states:

his glistring armor made
 A litle glooming light, much like a shade,
 By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
 Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
 But th’ other halfe did womans shape retaine,
 Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

(I. 1. 121-26)

The light of Redcrosse’s armour (the light of faith) lays bare the perversion of truth represented by Error. Half woman and half serpent, Error corrupts the revered aspects of femininity. Maternity is made grotesque by her nursing of a ‘cursed spawne of serpents’, ‘sucking upon her poisonous dugs’ (I. I. 195; 132). Spenser perhaps plays upon, and inverts, the iconography surrounding Mary as the divine mother. Miles, for instance, explores the

⁴⁸Luther, ‘[Exposition of] Psalm 51’, in *Luther’s Works*, XII: *Selected Psalms I* (1955), ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan (1955), pp. 301-410 (p. 304).

medieval and early modern devotional tradition of depicting Mary with one breast exposed, as she suckles the infant Christ.⁴⁹ Errour's perverse motherhood also reflects Spenser's branding of the Irish wetnurses' milk as a corrupting, Catholic poison, within *A View of the Present State of Ireland*.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, in terms of the narrative itself, Errour's fertility and definitive motherhood prompt readers to compare her with Charissa, Spenser's symbol of 'charity'.⁵¹

Charissa's body is likewise described in stark anatomical terms which emphasise her maternal function. Spenser states, 'Her necke and breasts were ever open bare, | That ay thereof her babes might sucke their fill' (I. 10. 268-69), 'A multitude of babes about her hong, | Playing their sports' (I. 10. 271-72). Unlike that of Charissa, Errour's maternity is conveyed in base, animalistic terms. However, the mothers differ most dramatically in their attitudes towards bodily revelation. Charissa's 'necke and breasts' are emphatically, and unashamedly, 'ever open bare'. This evocation of her bodily unselfconsciousness creates a sense of innocence and honesty comparable to that of the prelapsarian Adam and Eve. Charissa converses with the armed Redcrosse not as an equal, but as an instructor. She is set forth, one of human and feminine flesh, as a figure of spiritual strength. Charissa highlights the internalised nature of Christian armour. Indeed, her physical bareness could be interpreted as a further means of signalling or deconstructing the metaphoric role performed by Redcrosse's armour, as Book I draws to a close.

Spenser's utilisation of female nakedness within his personification of Christian charity is surprising, considering his heavy sexualisation of the female anatomy (including the breasts) within his depictions of the Bower of Bliss and Una's double. In these episodes,

⁴⁹ Margaret R. Miles, 'The Virgin's One Bare Breast: Female Nudity and Religious Meaning in Tuscan Early Renaissance Culture', in *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by Susan Rubin Sulieman (Cambridge; Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 193-208.

⁵⁰ Spenser, *A View*, p. 151.

⁵¹ *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. by A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 333.

as we have seen, the exposed female body functions as an emblem of sinful temptation: a sensuous invitation to spiritual fornication. Even Serena's exposed body in Book VI elicits a sexual response on the part of her kidnappers (and Serena, unlike the false Una or the damsels of the Bower, is a pure maiden, innocent of deliberate sexual provocation). Yet Spenser's depiction of the semi-naked Charissa is strikingly desexualized. Through the presence of her suckling babes, her body is framed in terms of fecundity rather than sexual desirability. Indeed, this imagery of sanctified motherhood echoes that which surrounds the Virgin Mary. As Miles emphasises, the naked breast of the Virgin serves in devotional images as a symbol of purity and nurture, defying sexual response.⁵²

In stark opposition to the openness of Charissa, of *Error* we are informed, 'light she hated as the deadly bale, | Ay wont in desert darknesse to remaine, | Where plaine none might her see, nor she see any plaine' (I. 1. 142-44). Spenser repeats the term 'plaine' throughout *Error*'s encounter with Redcrosse. The interaction is dominated by a conflict between complete, unadorned revelation, and the urge for concealment. The latter line suggests that *Error* not only wishes to hide herself from onlookers, but equally, desires to remain blind to any passers-by. Within these stanzas, Spenser dramatises the complex psychology surrounding exposure. As the prophet Isaiah acknowledged following his vision of God, it is when set against the truth that falsehood and impurity are felt most intensely (Isaiah 6. 5). As within Spenser's descriptions of Corceca and Abessa, blindness and ignorance, represented here by darkness, are painted as a haven of false comfort for the sinner.

Redcrosse forces *Error* to make her inner degradation known. Her attempts at resistance are described by Spenser in terms which evoke both physical and psychological

⁵² Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, p. 120.

concealment. Indeed, we are informed that ‘her selfe she gathered round’, ‘wrapping up her wretched strene arownd’ (I. 1. 155; 158). Redcrosse’s triumph begins when he acts to ‘loose her wicked bands’ and cast off her ‘endless traine’ (I. 1. 171; 162). The language employed within these lines is suggestive of disrobing. Errour’s exposure is completed as her grotesque body and its contents are set forth without composure, or indeed, any form of self-regulation. This loss of basic governance is heightened by Spenser’s choice of crude and monosyllabic language: ‘she spewd out of her filthy maw, | A floud of poyson horrible and blacke, | Full of great lumpes of flesh and gobbets raw’ (I. 1. 172-74). Here, Spenser plays upon the sense of shame, of lost integrity, which attended the leaking or fragmented body within early modern European culture, as discussed within the previous chapter.⁵³

Errour’s humiliating demise not only prefigures that of Duessa, but likewise, that of the giant Orgoglio. Describing Orgoglio’s defeat in similarly graphic, bodily terms, Spenser declares:

headlesse his unweldy bodie lay,
 All wallowed in his owne fowle bloody gore,
 Which flowed from his wounds in wondrous store.
 [...]
 That huge great body, which the Gyant bore,
 Was vanisht quite, and of that monstrous mas
 Was nothing left, but like an emptie bladder was.
 (I. 8. 210-16)

Errour and Orgoglio are reduced by Spenser to their base corporeal components. Orgoglio’s excessive frame, his source of power in life, serves to intensify his shame in

⁵³ Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 186.

death. His ‘huge great body’ is transformed into ‘gaping’ wounds and torrents of bodily fluid. The base image of the ‘empty bladder’ was used commonly within the early modern period to denounce the hollowness of the proud and pompous, as Hume reveals.⁵⁴

Errorr’s degradation is complete when her sinful offspring, unable to conceal themselves within her body any longer, feast upon her blood, causing their own deaths: ‘Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst, | And bowels gushing forth’ (I. 1. 230-31). Milton utilises a similar image in his depiction of ‘Sin’ within *Paradise Lost*. King interprets this barbarous feast as ‘a blasphemous parody of transubstantiation and the mass offered by yet another “mother”, the Church of Rome’.⁵⁵ The contents of Errorr’s body are certainly suggestive of Roman Catholic doctrine. As Spenser’s ruthless anatomization continues, we are informed that Errorr’s ‘vomit full of books and papers was’ (I. 1. 177). These papers are presumably the products of fallible, human minds, detailing practices and beliefs which have no biblical foundation. By aligning these works with Errorr’s base internal matter, Spenser suggests that the ‘blind regard for erroneous books’, as John N. Wall lucidly terms it, is as threatening to human salvation as the sins of the body.⁵⁶ The latter are symbolised unsubtly by the ‘lumpes of flesh’ vomited forth by Errorr, and additionally, by the phallic suggestiveness of the towering Orgoglio, as John W. Schroeder highlights.⁵⁷

Spenser also employs images of bodily degradation in order to expose sin within Canto 5, where Redcrosse enters the house of Pride. In this palace:

many corses, like a great Lay-stall
Of murdered men which therein strowed lay,
Without remorse, or decent funerall:

⁵⁴ Hume, p. 83.

⁵⁵ King, p. 87.

⁵⁶ John N. Wall, *Transformations of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, Vaughan* (London: University of Georgia Press, 1988), p. 93.

⁵⁷ John W. Schroeder, ‘Spenser’s Erotic Drama: The Orgoglio Episode’, *ELH*, 29.2 (1962), 140-59 (p. 156).

Which all through that great Princesse pride did fall
And came to shameful end.

(I. 5. 470-74)

Spenser continues, ‘underneath the castell wall, | A donghill of dead carkases he spide’ (I. 5. 475-76). Earlier, we are informed that ‘All these together in one heape were throwne | Like carkases of beasts in butcher’s stall’ (I. 5. 433-34). By employing the imagery of common meat stands and refuse heaps, Spenser stresses the divestment of personal identity and decorum suffered by those seduced by pride. All sense of human transcendence is undercut by the crude, bestial spectacles formed by the corpses of the great. In its emphasis on the fundamental mortality of man, this scene evokes the early modern dissection chamber. Yet unlike the anatomy theatres, in which the cadavers were framed by symbols of Christian sacrifice, Spenser depicts a scene of crass butchery unadorned by any spirituality or dignity: they ‘lay, | Without remorse, or decent funerall’. This stark display of corpses functions as part of the wider metaphor of the house of Pride. A house ‘[w]hich cunningly was without mortar laid, | Whose wals were high, but nothing strong, nor thick, | And golden file all over them displaid’ (I. 4. 29-31), ‘And all the hinder parts, that few could spie, | Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly’ (I. 4. 44-45). The house of Pride serves as a metaphor for superficial allurements. Spenser describes a building, but does so in terms which evoke a concealed body, and specifically, the body of Duessa. Duessa’s ‘hind parts’, as we discover, are likewise ‘ruinous and old, but painted cunningly’.

Duessa, the offspring of ‘Deceit and Shame’, functions as the narrative’s epitome of deception (I. 5. 234). Her very name communicates her essential duplicity, and casts her in immediate opposition to Una. Spenser’s depiction of Duessa draws heavily upon the iconography of Revelation’s Whore of Babylon (Revelation 17). She is:

A goodly Lady clad in scarlot red,
 Purfled with gold and pearle of rich assay,
 And like a *Persian* mitre on her hed
 She wore, with crownes and owches garnished,
 The which her lavish lovers to her gave;
 Her wanton palfrey all was overspred
 With tinsell trappings, woven like a wave,
 Whose bridle rung with golden bells and bosses brave.

(I. 2. 110-117)

This biblical comparison intensifies as the narrative proceeds, with Duessa not only attaining the golden chalice of the biblical whore, but additionally, ‘a purple beast’: the seven-headed dragon of St John’s apocalyptic vision (I. 7. 162). This comparison operates upon a further symbolic level, for within the Protestant discourse of the early modern period, the Whore of Babylon was appropriated as a metaphor for the Roman Catholic Church. *The Geneva Bible*, for instance, annotates John’s description with the gloss, ‘That harlot, the spirituall Babylon, which is Rome’. The beast, moreover, is deemed ‘that Empire of Rome’.⁵⁸ Frances E. Dolan and D. Douglas Waters reveal that this motif was utilised within an array of early modern sermons and doctrinal texts.⁵⁹ Analysing the Catholic Church’s reduction to ‘a corrupt and feminized body’, Dolan explains how ‘the epithet [...] yokes together the familiar seduction and corruption of the unruly feminine and the more outlandish threat of the foreign, even fantastical’. She continues, ‘By persistently associating the Roman Church with fallen

⁵⁸ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, 3rd edn (Pleasant Hope: L. L. Brown, 1993), with an introduction by Michael H. Brown, p. 118.

⁵⁹ Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth Century Print Culture* (London: Cornell University Press, 1999).

women, reformers could acknowledge its seductive appeal while simultaneously repudiating it'.⁶⁰

Duessa encapsulates both the sensual appeal and the repulsion associated with the iconic whore. She offers a sensory feast to those who encounter her, as emphasised by Spenser's references to her 'golden bells', 'scarlot red', and 'tinsell trappings'. Indeed, Spenser's luxurious imagery, conveyed in alliterative terms, evokes the seductive, sensory dress of the Roman Catholic mass: its 'smells and bells', images and ornamentation. Duessa is the stark opposite of Una, who attempts to deflect sensual attention and to draw the hearts of those around her to her spiritual teachings. King captures the ecclesiastical tensions symbolised by the clothing of these contrasting characters, when he declares:

Redcrosse's difficulty in distinguishing between the respective claims of Una, whose 'black stole' conceals her 'heavenly beautie', and the gorgeously costumed Duessa, who disguises herself as truth, epitomizes the Reformation dilemma of choosing between 'images' of competing churches.⁶¹

As explored within Chapter 2, the Reformation sought to strip away that which obscured or polluted the word of God. The Mass was critiqued by reformers as a luxurious mask, behind which spiritual deformities lay. This tradition is echoed within Spenser's depiction of Duessa.

He states:

What man so wise, what earthly wit so ware,
As to descry the crafty cunning traine,
By which deceit doth maske in visour faire,
And cast her colours dyed deepe in graine,
To seeme like Truth, whose shape she well can faine,

⁶⁰ Dolan, pp. 43-52.

⁶¹ King, p. 73.

And fitting gestures to her purpose frame,
 The guiltless man with guile to entertaine?
 Great maistresse of her art was that false Dame,
 The false *Duessa*, cloaked with *Fidessaes* name.

(I. 7. 1-9)

Duessa presents herself in the clothing of 'Faith'. Like Thomas Dekker's eponymous *Whore of Babylon*, she is 'cloath'd in garments of hypocrisie'.⁶²

Duessa maintains this external appearance of truth by means of manipulative self-disguise, depicting herself as a humble, chaste and wronged damsel, bereaved of her fiancé and abducted from her kingdom. She relies equally upon her ability to falsely accuse and expose her rivals. Here, Spenser evokes the defamation of the 'true', Reformed Church performed by the Roman Catholic authorities. The metamorphosed knight of Canto 2 (aptly named Fradubio, or 'brother doubt') recalls how he was 'doubly lov'd of Ladies unlike faire, | Th' one seeming such, the other such indeede' (I. 2. 325-26). Yet again, Spenser evokes the ease with which worshippers can be persuaded that true is false and false is true. Unable to win Fradubio's favour, Duessa stages an illusory disrobing of her rival. As Spenser states, she 'with foule ugly forme did her disgrace' (I. 2. 341). Then, 'cride she out, "Fye, fye, deformèd wight, | Whose borrowed beautie now appeareth plaine"' (I. 2. 343-44). Duessa inverts truth and falsehood, covering the fair body of her rival in a projection of her own 'secret filth' (I. 8. 414). The damsel is undone both physically and morally by this exchange. With this false adornment, Duessa strips her victim of her integrity in the eyes of her knight. She lays emphasis upon the maiden's supposed hypocrisy more so than her apparent

⁶² Thomas Dekker, *The Whore of Babylon* (London: 1607), G3, in *EEBO*
 <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.882003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:10082:28> [accessed 30 May 2012] [image 28].

physical deformity. Once again, Spenser demonstrates the potential of hypocrisy to subsume the looks and voice of ‘plaine’ truth.

This episode of feigned disrobing prefigures Duessa’s own exposure in Canto 8. In the tradition of ‘Mistress Missa’, which in turn draws upon Ecclesiastes and Revelation, Duessa is stripped naked before the faithful.⁶³ Indeed, Gough notes that ‘Mistress Missa’, ‘a personification of the Roman Mass found in sixteenth-century English Protestant polemic’, was, like Duessa, ‘disrobed and shown to be a foul, misshapen hag’. She was ‘[b]anished from England to Rome just as the shamed Duessa is banished to the wilderness’.⁶⁴ Echoing Revelation’s prophecies regarding the Whore of Babylon, Duessa is deprived of her lovers.⁶⁵ Her exposure begins as she is soiled with the blood of her dying lover and defender, Orgoglio: ‘A sea of bloud gusht from the gaping wound, | That her gay garments staynd with filthy gore’ (I. 8. 141-42). Duessa’s façade begins to dissolve; her robes, once disguising her deformities, are now bloodied, blazoning her moral taint. Her regal costume now mocking her newly revealed depravity and helplessness, Duessa abandons her most outlandish props. Spenser states: ‘Her golden cup she cast unto the ground, | And crownèd mitre rudely threw aside’ (I. 8. 218-19). Her graceless self-divestment signals self-pity, contempt, and even, a final attempt to assert her power. However, all remaining dignity is stripped from Duessa at the scene of her retribution.

In a punishment fitting for one who has deceived and disrobed her prey, Duessa is laid entirely bare. Devoid of her outward ‘display’, she is revealed as a grotesque, half bestial hag, wallowing in her own filth. Yet Spenser does not allow the enchantress to evade human shame via an animal form. By perverting the familiar womanly form as he depicts the disrobing of this satanic whore (Duessa, indeed, has the breasts and ‘neather parts’

⁶³ Waters, p. 6.

⁶⁴ Gough, p. 46.

⁶⁵ *The Geneva*, Revelation 17. 16.

characteristic of her sex), he draws upon the shame which can be conjured by human, and specifically female nakedness. Spenser directs the reader's attention to the most intimate features of the female body, by his very announcement that he will not do so. He declares, 'Her neather parts, the shame of all her kind, | My chaster Muse for shame doth blush to write' (I. 8. 424-25). A similar technique is employed within Fradubio's account of the naked Duessa:

'Her neather partes misshapen, monstrous,
Were hidd in water, that I could not see,
But they did seeme more foule and hideous,
Than womans shape man would beleewe to bee'.
(I. 2. 361-64)

Here, Spenser operates under his own literary cloak, using feigned modesty as a means of orchestrating sexual voyeurism and contempt. Fradubio's curious assertion that he 'could not see, | But they did seeme most foule and hideous', causes Gough to suggest that he in fact 'projects onto Duessa's body his own feared mortality and imaginatively endows her with the power to effect that "decay" in him'.⁶⁶ The open nature of the female genitals, and the emphatically material processes of menstruation and gestation to which they are linked, contributed to their association with fear, shame, and disgust within the early modern mind, as the previous chapter emphasised. Spenser's depiction of Duessa's sexual organs both exploits and reflects this fearful perception of the female anatomy as a harrowing symbol of humankind's grotesque biological origins and mortality.

Notably, when Spenser lays praise upon the maternal role of the female, as he does through his use of the fertile Charissa as the personification of 'charity', the process of birth

⁶⁶ Gough, p. 50.

is masked from view. Charissa proudly bears the products of reproduction (her multiple babes) and yet the bodily ‘opening’ and ‘emptying’ preceding these births is omitted within the poetic episode. Where female reproduction plays a more graphic role, as it does in Redcrosse’s encounter with Errour, it contributes to a wider sense of moral disgust. Errour’s offspring move in and out of her mouth, and the mouth, Miles notes, often served as a displaced image of the vaginal opening.⁶⁷ Gough concurs, noting that ‘the disgust we are meant to feel toward Errour is directed largely at her monstrous bodily functions, functions associated with maternity and femaleness more generally’.⁶⁸ The functional female body is thus linked by Spenser to the concepts of deceit, shame and sin. And yet, as the sexualized disrobing of Jerusalem and Nineveh indicates (see Chapter 1), these associations have a powerful biblical precedent.

John E. Hankins points to the parallels between Duessa’s stripping and that described by Isaiah:

Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts...

And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sack cloth; and burning instead of beauty (Isaiah 3. 17-24).⁶⁹

In a culmination of these biblical strippings, the filth of Duessa’s nakedness is ‘knowne’. Her deceit is inverted, ‘beheld’, ‘open showne’ (I. 8. 440). Duessa flees not from the world that has defeated her, but from the world that ‘her discovered wide’ (I. 8. 443). Spenser

⁶⁷ Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, p. 165.

⁶⁸ Gough, p. 49.

⁶⁹ John E. Hankins, ‘Spenser and the Revelation of St. John’, *PMLA*, 60.2 (1945), 364-381 (pp. 365-66).

draws upon the power of the gaze to mortify. However, Gough notes Spenser's reluctance to uncover Duessa's grotesque female body in stark terms. She declares:

in lines one to three, 'scurfe' and 'scald' cover Duessa's hairless head; line four's syntax and diction emphasize the hag's teeth, not the empty mouth from which they have fallen; and the lines describing Duessa's breasts as dried dugs and empty bladders turn immediately to depict the 'filthy matter' which 'from them weld'. This dynamic of uncovering and re-covering, emptying out and filling in, also characterizes the first lines of the antiblazon's final stanza: 'Her neather parts, the shame of all her kind, My chaster Muse for shame doth blush to write; But at her rompe she growing had behind A foxes taile, with dong all fowly dight' (1. 8. 48). Unable to bring himself to write the witch's 'neather parts', the poet substitutes a description of the phallic tail onto which the hag's 'filth' has been displaced.⁷⁰

This is not the first point within the narrative that Spenser offers 'displaced' images of the sexual organs. Schroeder refers to the landscape's suggestively sexual appearance within the episode of Redcrosse and Duessa's fornication. He states, 'what his fountain – that everwelling pool in a dark glade circled by foliage represents is not, as in Venus' speech, the female breast but rather the pudendum, a *mons veneris*'.⁷¹ This technique is also repeated within Book 3's depiction of the Garden of Adonis. Here, Spenser describes 'a stately Mount, on whose round top | A gloomy grove of mirtle trees did rise, | Whose shadie boughes sharpe steele did never lop, | [...] And from their fruitfull sides sweet gum did drop' (III. 6. 709-16).⁷² The mound is glossed by A. H. Abrams and Greenblatt as an 'allusion to the *mons*

⁷⁰ Gough, p. 53.

⁷¹ Schroeder, p. 147.

⁷² Spenser, *The Faerie Queene Disposed into twelue bookes, fashioning XII. morall vertues* (1596), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:18313:246> [accessed 12 May 2012].

veneris’; meanwhile, the ‘sweet gum’ is identified by Hankins as ‘the masculo-feminine coital fluid’.⁷³ Furthermore, the sexual nature of Duessa and Redcrosse’s encounter is also suggested by the timely appearance of the phallic giant, Orgoglio. Thus, Redcrosse’s masculine nakedness is suggested. It is notable that Spenser chooses not to provide an explicit description of the knight’s naked, aroused body.

The spiritual consequences of Redcrosse’s sexual dalliance are signalled powerfully by his abandonment of his armour. As the giant Orgoglio emerges, Redcrosse is described in terms which evoke both physical and spiritual vulnerability: ‘Disarmed all of yron-coted Plate’ (I. 7. 17), he ‘Upstarted lightly from his looser make, | And his unready weapons gan in hand to take’ (I. 7. 62-63). Spenser continues, ‘But ere he could his armour on him dight, | Or get his shield, his monstrous enemy | With sturdie steps cam stalking in his sight’ (I. 7. 64-66). Redcrosse is discovered ‘disarmd, disgrast, and inwardly dismayde’ (I. 7. 96). Although implicitly naked, his exposure contrasts dramatically with that of Duessa, which is expressed in intensely physical and sexualized terms. Spenser highlights Redcrosse’s spiritual weakness, rather than his bodily shame. His allegorical treatment of sin, as such, mirrors the gender disparities apparent within many medieval and early modern accounts of saints, as noted by Bynum. She states, ‘hagiographers were inclined to see female sin as bodily or sexual, as arising from within the woman’s body, whereas male sinners were depicted as tempted from without – often, indeed as tempted by the proffered bodiliness of women’.⁷⁴

In their emphasis upon Redcrosse’s unprepared state, the lines detailing his exposed condition echo the prophetic warning of Revelation: ‘Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he

⁷³ Hankins, quoted by Judith H. Anderson, in ‘Flowers and Boars: Surmounting Sexual Binarism in Spenser’s Garden of Adonis’, in *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual XXIII*, ed. by William A. Oram, Anne Lake Prescott, and Thomas P. Roche, Jr (New York: AMS Press, Inc, 2008), pp. 103-108 (p. 104).

⁷⁴ Bynum, p. 175.

that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, least he walke naked, and men see his filthinesse' (Revelation 16. 15). *The Geneva Bible* elaborates upon this verse with the gloss '[s]o the Church of the vngodly, & kingdome of the beast is said to be left naked, all the defences whereof, in which they put their trust being taken away from it'.⁷⁵ In parallel with this contemporary annotation, Redcrosse has abandoned his trust in Christ, symbolised by the armour of faith, in favour of the sensual attractions of Duessa, the personification of the Roman Catholic Church. As a consequence, he is rendered bare. *The Geneva* continues:

God warneth his holy servants [...] alwayes to addresse their minds vnto his comming, and to looke vnto themselves, that they be not shamefully made naked and circumvented of these uncleane spirits, and so they be miserable vnprepared at the comming of their Lord.⁷⁶

Redcrosse is accordingly 'made naked' through his relinquishment of Christian thought: it is his spiritual purpose which fortified him previously against his foes. In pursuing the pleasures of the body, he has rendered himself spiritually exposed, humiliated before his enemies: 'The monster mercilesse him made to fall, | Whose fall did never foe before behold' (I. 7. 455-56). His disrobing is heightened by Spenser's depiction of his empty armour. Spectator of his master's defeat, the Dwarfe:

tooke up [Redcrosse's] forlorne weed,
His mightie armour, missing most at need;
His silver shield, now idle maisterlesse;
His poynant speare, that many made to bleed,
The ruefull moniments of heavinesse,
And with them all departes to tell his great distresse.

⁷⁵ *The Geneva*, p. 118

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

(I. 7. 166-171)

The knight's abandoned armour serves as a powerful narrative resource. In this stanza, Spenser juxtaposes the triumphant potential of the arms with their state of desertion. The forsaken weapons and empty mail symbolise the fall of the absent knight from Christian glory. A great sense of pity accompanies these lines. The same technique emerges within the Bower of Bliss episode, where Acrasia's lover lies undressed: 'His warlike armes, the idle instruments | Of sleeping praise, were hong upon a tree, | And his brave shield, full of old monuments, | Was fowly ra'st, that none the signes might see' (II. 12. 712-15). Unlike Acrasia's lover, however, Redcrosse laments his 'lewd loves, and wastfull luxuree' (II. 12. 718). Indeed, in the following canto, Spenser moves beyond the armour of Redcrosse, using his body itself to illustrate his exposure and loss:

His sad dull eyes deepe sunck in hollow pits,
 Could not endure th' unwonted sunne to view;
 His bare thin cheekes for want of better bits,
 And empty sides delivered of their dew,
 Could make a stony hart his hap to rew;
 His rawbone armes, whose mighty brawned bowrs
 Were wont to rive steel plates, and helmets hew,
 Were cleane consum'd, and all his vitall powres
 Decayd, and all his flesh shronk up like withered flowers.

(I. 8. 361-69)

Redcrosse is physically humbled, and hovers on the periphery of life. Indeed, Spenser's language suggests a stark reduction to base, human components: 'bare thin', 'empty sides' 'deepe sunck', 'hollow pits', 'rawbone'. This is a body laid bare, a body unmasked even of

substantial skin and muscle. Una's words to Redcrosse crystallize his condition. She states, "of your selfe ye thus berobbèd arre" (I. 8. 377). Here, Spenser puns upon the notion of a man 'robbed' of himself – of his very own identity. He represents Redcrosse stripped of self will, including the arrogance, vanity and pride with which he flirted on his various encounters. Manlove concurs, describing this episode as 'a kind of stripping'. He continues, 'Redcrosse is stripped of his pride, his illusions, and even much of his flesh'.⁷⁷ Redcrosse's condition mirrors that of the revered Contemplation in Canto 10, of whom '[e]ach bone might through his body well be read' | 'And every sinew seene through his long fast', for 'his mind was full of spirituall repast, | And pyn'd his flesh to keepe his body low and chast' (I. 10. 428-32).

Heale deems this depiction of Redcrosse definitively shameful, stating that it is 'pathetically analogous to Orgoglio's evaporation (viii. 24) and Duessa's stripping (viii. 46-8)'. She continues, 'The pride of the flesh and its lusts are exposed for what they are: the lusts monstrous and deceitful, the pride empty, and the flesh subject to decay and death "like withered flowers"'.⁷⁸ While Redcrosse's frail corporeal condition is certainly disclosed within these lines, I take issue with Heale's alignment of this disrobing with that of Duessa. In a notable departure from Duessa's stripping later within the poem, the nakedness evoked here is spiritual rather than sexual. Spenser's imagery and tone suggest the kenosis or 'self-emptying' which was advocated by Luther, in order to facilitate the entrance of Christ: the 'putting off' which enabled a glorious 'putting on'. Redcrosse is described in terms of a receptacle, emptied of fleshy excess in preparation for the reception of Christ. His stripping, unlike that of Duessa, is redemptive. As the Puritan preacher Richard Greenham stated:

⁷⁷ Manlove, p. 68.

⁷⁸ Heale, p. 40.

Wee would cloake, we wold hide and cover our sinnes, as it were with a curtaine; but it is more sound [...] to pricke and pierce our Consciences with the buring yron of the law; an to cleanse the wound of the Soule by sharpe threatenings, least that skinne being pulled over the conscience for a while, wee lament the rotten corruption, which remains uncured underneath.⁷⁹

The purging represented by Redcrosse's defeat and imprisonment is followed by an encounter which humbles him further. In Canto 9, Redcrosse chooses to face Despair. The spiritual strength demanded by this wilful confrontation is reflected by the interaction with which Spenser frames this encounter. Redcrosse converses with a fearful knight, who declares of Despair, 'lever had I die, then see his deadly face' (I.9. 288). Despair's 'subtill tongue', he reveals:

like dropping honny, mealt'th
 Into the hart, and searcheth every vaine,
 That ere one be aware, by secret stealth
 His powre is reft, and weaknesse doth remaine.
 (I. 9. 275-278)

The knight depicts an intimate probing of the soul, described in terms of a spiritual vivisection. Accordingly, Despair's speech 'as a swords point through [Redcrosse's] hart did perse, | And in his conscience made a secret breach' (I. 9. 425-26). Despair causes his victims to turn inwards and to scrutinise their sins. These are presented in their most brutal form (Spenser speaks of the 'fresh remembrance' of personal sin, of 'The ugly vew' of 'deformed crimes') (I. 9. 428-29). As Luther declares, 'Satan is busy day and night, making us run to the naked God so that we forget His promises and blessings and think about the

⁷⁹ Richard Greenham, *A Fruitful and Godly Sermon* (London: 1595), p. 37, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:150931:19> [accessed 04 June 2012].

judgment of God. When this happens, we perish utterly and fall into despair'.⁸⁰ Despair's comfortless, internal probing closely parallels the episodes of despair recalled by Luther. As discussed within Chapter 2, Luther learned to discourage such intense and unbalanced inward gazing. Spenser offers his readers a similar message.

Redcrosse's uncontrolled self-chastisement is replaced by a process of controlled self-abasement within the House of Holiness. This takes the ritualised terms of fasting, wearing sackcloth, routine praying, whipping, and cleansing. These methods, with their focus upon bodily purging and works as a means of achieving spiritual purity, appear to align Redcrosse with the practices of Catholicism. Yet Spenser's repetition of the rituals conducted by the blind Corcera directs the reader to compare the two approaches to penitence. It becomes clear that Corcera performs similar feats, yet at a level which lacks spiritual depth or self-reflection. Her lack of self-awareness, as previously addressed, points to the superficial nature of her worship. For Redcrosse, meanwhile, this abasement is combined with the precise and intimate identification of his sins:

ever as superfluous flesh did rot
Amendment readie still at hand did wayt,
 To pluck it out with pincers firie whot,
 That soone in him was left no one corrupted jot.

(I. 10. 231-34)

Again, Spenser's language evokes the process of dissection. These lines reflect Luther's declaration that '[w]e must not concentrate on those external sins, but go further and look at

⁸⁰ Martin Luther, '[Exposition of] Psalm 51', in *Luther's Works*, XII: *Selected Psalms I* (1955), ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan, in *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muehlenberg and Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-86), pp. 301-410 (p. 312).

the whole nature, source, and origin of sin'.⁸¹ Furthermore, Spenser evokes the sacrament of baptism (one of the remaining sacraments within the reformed faith) when he states, 'His bodie in salt water smarting sore, | The filthy blots of sinne to wash away' (I. 10. 240-41).

An understanding of one's self, coupled with a firm belief in God's grace, Spenser suggests, is what differentiates blind devotion from true servitude. Redcrosse's spiritual degeneration and confrontation with Despair represent integral steps towards a true relationship with God. Yet Spenser is keen to emphasise that the process is challenging, and deeply painful:

Redcrosse has to battle *with himself*. Spenser captures this struggle when he declares, 'like a Lyon he would cry and rore, | And rend his flesh, and his own synewes eat' (I. 10. 245-46).

It is this spiritual disrobing and strengthening which prepares Redcrosse for his ultimate battle: that against the dragon that holds Una's parents captive. Here, of course, Spenser alludes to the dragon of Revelation. The dragon appears invulnerable to the assaults of humankind. Indeed, Spenser describes his 'brasen scales', 'Like plated coate of steele' (I. 11. 73-74), 'That nought mote perce, ne might his corse be harmd | With dint of sword, nor push of pointed speare' (I. 11. 75-76). His eyes, meanwhile, are 'like two bright shining shields' (I. 11. 118). Spenser plays with the language of armour in order to emphasise that Redcrosse has met his fiercest opponent. While he is steeled by the shield of faith, the dragon boasts the power of the Antichrist. Indeed, the dragon conducts what is a symbolic attack upon Redcrosse's faith. Once again, the struggle is conveyed using the metaphor of disrobing. Spenser states:

The scorching flame sore swinged all his face,
And through his armour all his body seard,
That he could not endure so cruell cace,

⁸¹ Ibid.

But thought his armes to leave, and helmet to unlace.
(I. 11. 231-234)

Redcrosse's armour, 'Whom fyrie steele now burnt, that earst him arm'd | That erst him goodly arm'd, now most of all him harm'd' (I. 11. 242-43). Within these verses, Spenser uses the armour of Redcrosse to signal that faith does not protect the Christian from suffering or temptation. Thus, he refutes such idealistic claims as those made by the preacher Henry Smith. Smith states that '[t]his garment [faith] is called an armour, because it defendeth us from all the assaults of the devil, the flesh, the world, the heat of persecution, and the cold of defection'.⁸² Rather, Spenser reflects the more tempered claims of Calvin, that faith, 'when held up against weapons [...] so receives their force that it either completely turns them aside or at least weakens their thrust, so that they cannot penetrate to our vitals'.⁸³ Like the Protestant martyrs described within the iconic *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, Redcrosse suffers the burning of his flesh in the name of Christ.⁸⁴ He refuses to succumb to the rule and terror of the ungodly. The struggle between body and spiritual will which this Christian persistence entails is conveyed beautifully by Spenser using the motif of the armour (or faith), which Redcrosse is tempted to 'unlace' in order to free himself from present pain.

Redcrosse's refusal to unlace his Christian armour is rewarded by an unlacing of another kind. At the defeat of the dragon, Una removes her veil, revealing her spotless, heavenly beauty to her champion:

For she had layd her mournfull stole aside,

⁸² Henry Smith, *The Wedding Garment* (London: 1590), p. 21, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:18042:11> [accessed 27 May 2012].

⁸³ John Calvin, in *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Geneva: 1559), 2 vols, XX, ed. by John T. McNeill; trans. by Ford Lewis Battles (London: S. C. M. Press, 1961), III, ii, 21, p. 567.

⁸⁴ John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives* (1563), ed. by John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

And widow-like sad wimple throwne away,
 Wherewith her heavenly beautie she did hide,
 Whiles on her wearie journey she did ride;
 And on her now a garment she did weare,
 All lilly white, withoutten spot, or pride,
 That seemed like silke and silver woven neare,
 But neither silke nor silver therein did appeare.

(I. 12. 191-198)

By casting off her ‘widow-like’ wimple, Una signals the resignation of her chastity, which she will surrender to Redcrosse, following their marriage. She likewise marks the removal of her grief. Her re-clothing in the dazzling, ‘lilly white’ garment not only suggests virginity, and the new life of the Resurrection, but as King identifies, it also alludes to the clothing of Christ’s bride in “‘pure fine linen and shining’” (Revelation 19. 7). Indeed, Revelation declares that ‘the fine linen is the righteousness of saints’ (Revelation 19. 7-8).⁸⁵ Una’s unveiling not only confirms her own spiritual beauty, but also speaks of Redcrosse’s spiritual worthiness, following his trials throughout the narrative. This concluding unveiling marks Redcrosse as Una’s spiritual equal, now able to gaze upon her ‘heavenly lineaments’ and ‘[t]he blazing brightnesse of her beauties beame’ (I. 12. 199; 203). In ecclesiastical terms, of course, the closing stanzas of Book I emphasise the defeat of Catholicism, and the marriage of England’s Reformed Church to ‘truth’. Thus, Spenser offers a powerful statement of the Reformed Church’s status as the one true Church. Una’s appearance in the garments of righteousness serves as an inspiring symbol of the spiritual beauty awaiting those who strive to ‘put on’ Christ.

⁸⁵ King, p. 174.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the centrality of concepts and images of dressing, undressing, and nakedness within Book I of Spenser's Protestant epic. At the heart of this allegory is an examination of the difficulty involved in clothing oneself in Christ. From the Book's very opening, this re-clothing is expressed in terms of undressing: Redcrosse's bloodied, wounded armour speaks of the naked dependency which the true Christian must embrace before God. Pride, lust, and vanity must be stripped away, Spenser emphasises, before Redcrosse is able to receive Christ fully. This metaphor of naked surrender to God (a metaphor familiar to us, of course, from Chapter 2) reaches a physical climax when Redcrosse receives spiritual instruction from the bare breasted Charissa, and similarly when he is guided by Contemplation, who exposes every bone to the gaze of the beholder. Yet nakedness itself is certainly no symbol of honesty within this allegory. The apparent humility of the bare-foot and bare-headed Archimago signals that Christians must remain alert at all times to sin, which manifests itself *internally*. Truth, moreover, is represented as veiled, and thus easy to mistake and overlook. As such, Spenser fosters a sense of distrust towards external appearances.

This message aligns well with the Protestant purpose of the narrative. It serves to devalue the sensory worship of the Catholic Church (associated at various points throughout the narrative with material excess, as I have shown) and to highlight the importance of the inward, spiritual condition. However, by undermining the reader's trust in sensory forms, Spenser creates a tension with his own allegorical form, which operates through the use of vivid, visual descriptions. Pendergast crystallises this tension when he declares that '[a]llegory must be asked to do the impossible: to make sense of supra-material truths while

doing so in material signs and signifiers'.⁸⁶ The task of making spiritual truths accessible presented difficulties not only for devotional writers, but as I demonstrated within Chapter 2, for leaders of the Reformed faith, who sought some form of 'visible' 'clothing' for their Church. Unsurprisingly, Spenser's allegory represents a compromise. As Pendergast states, 'allegory is a way of talking about substances by way of surfaces, a means of focusing on the private, inner, and hidden through the public, available, and open'.⁸⁷

A major 'surface' utilised by Spenser in his quest to communicate spiritual meaning to the reader is the undressed body, as I have shown. However, Spenser uses male and female nakedness in distinctly different ways throughout his allegory. The disrobed Una and Duessa are heavily sexualized, while the bare-breasted Charissa and Error are both associated with motherhood. Where the female genitals are evoked, as they are when Duessa is disrobed, when Error is exposed, and when Archimago creates the false Una, they are cast either as sinful emblems of lust, provoking men to commit spiritual fornication against God; or as the objects of human shame and repulsion, prompting banishment from polite and honest existence. Spenser both uses and reinforces the association of open, female flesh with fear: fear of mortality, and fear of lost sexual and moral control. Within his heavily sexualized representations of spiritual exposure, he echoes the strikingly gendered and erotic accounts of disrobing offered by Ezekiel and Isaiah as they condemn spiritual idolatry. These physical, feminized expressions of depravity are linked by Spenser, in accordance with the well-known 'Mistress Missa' tradition, to the Catholic faith.

Throughout Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser uses full female nakedness to evoke the shame of the human condition. While Redcrosse's surrender to lust is marked implicitly by the appearance of the phallic Orgoglio, his shame is repaid, most notably,

⁸⁶ Pendergast, p. 142.

⁸⁷ Pendergast, p. 136.

through the disrobing of Duessa. Her naked humiliation, exemplified by the revelation of her obscene genitals, reflects the magnitude of Redcrosse's own spiritual transgression. His loss of armour and strength following his act of fornication is spiritually rather than sexually charged. This instance of stripping arouses pity rather than disgust, and is suggestive of the kenotic approach to worship advocated by both Luther and Calvin. Disgust at Redcrosse's fleshy fall is channelled, rather, towards Duessa, and her perverted female form.

The sexually appealing and repulsive female body is conveyed so graphically and intensely by Spenser within Book I that his allegorical form is overwhelmed, at points, by immediate sensation. C. S. Lewis captured the surreal vividness of the *Faerie Queene* when he stated, 'Things we read about in it are not like life, but the experience of reading it is like living'.⁸⁸ Book I not only reflects the contradictions and concerns surrounding the naked body within early modern theological and anatomical thought, but confronts its readers with them. That which is ordinarily 'private' and 'hidden', perhaps from the reader himself, is stimulated and set forward for spiritual inspection. The relationship between nakedness, sexual feeling, and spiritual devotion, and the textual stimulation of spiritual affect, are considered in further detail within the next chapter.

⁸⁸ C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 358.

CHAPTER 5: NAKEDNESS, DISROBING, AND CONCEALMENT IN THE RELIGIOUS LYRICS OF DONNE AND HERBERT

This chapter considers the roles of nakedness, disrobing, and concealment within the religious lyrics of two major ‘metaphysical’ poets. It explores the utilisation, treatment, and spiritual affect of the undressed and covered body within John Donne’s ‘Divine Poems’ and George Herbert’s *The Temple*.¹ The label ‘metaphysical’ points to the transcendence of immediate, corporeal concerns. And yet, this chapter argues that the physicality and functionality of the body are central to Donne and Herbert’s poetic examinations and expressions of faith. In his extensive study of early modern ‘sacred eroticism’, *Closet Devotions* (1998), Richard Rambuss reflects that ‘Donne’s writing [...] espouses a devotion that is cathected onto the corporeal: a spirituality that, paradoxically, keeps returning us to the physical body and its operations, even – or all the more so – in any pietistic endeavour to discipline or rein them in’.² In Rambuss’ words, the body is ‘redemptively reappropriated’ by Donne, serving as ‘an implement of heightened devotional expressivity’ within his religious works.³ This chapter departs from Rambuss’ work by considering the ‘devotional expressivity’ of nakedness and concealment, both erotic and otherwise, within Donne and Herbert’s religious lyrics. It investigates how and why both poets use concepts and images of nakedness and covering to create an engaging spiritual dialogue; with Christ, with readers, and in some instances, with a congregation of worshippers. I will consider how Donne and Herbert employ these concepts as a means of exploring and communicating fears, hopes, and

¹ *John Donne: The Complete English Poems*, ed. by A. J. Smith (London: Penguin, 1996 [first collected edition of verse published 1633]).

George Herbert, *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (1633), in *George Herbert: The Complete English Poems*, ed. by John Tobin (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 2-187. All of Herbert’s English poems referenced in this chapter are taken from this edition.

² Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions* (London: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 16.

³ Rambuss, p. 17.

beliefs regarding such spiritual matters as sin, redemption, confession, worship, and prayer. Questions regarding the comparative efficacy of public and private, internal and external, and prescribed and spontaneous forms of worship were a source of great contention and anxiety within early modern Protestant England, as Chapter 2 illustrated. These topical concerns are reflected within many of Donne and Herbert's poetic images of concealment and undress, as this chapter will go on to establish.

I: The Religious Lyric – Questions of Form

Donne and Herbert were both poets and preachers. In this sense, their representations of concealment and exposure draw complexly upon their public and private spiritual identities.

As A. D. Nuttall reflects:

[Herbert's] *The Temple* consists of poems which will be read by people, and in a sense the poems are written for these people – or at least for those of them who may obtain spiritual profit [...] one is reminded of the village priest, who prays to God indeed, but with one eye, so to speak, on his congregation. He must adjust his language to their needs and all his persuasion of God must at the same time persuade his human listeners.⁴

Nuttall likens the role of the devotional poet to that of the preacher, and the audience of his poetry to that of the sermon. He highlights that the devotional poetry of the preacher occupies an ambiguous mode, straddling divine and human concerns. It addresses both the perfect and all-seeing God – *and* in stark contrast – a readership or congregation of fellow sinners. This chapter considers how the meaning and reception of nakedness and dress are shaped by the ambiguous form of Donne and Herbert's religious lyrics. Does the poets' anticipation of a wider, human audience alter the confessional rawness of their poems? How

⁴ A. D. Nuttall, *Overhead by God: Fiction and Prayer in Herbert, Milton, Dante and St. John* (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 18.

heavily are their religious lyrics shaped (or even censored) for purposes of wider spiritual inspiration and edification? Does God remain their primary recipient?

While I bear these questions in mind throughout this chapter, I acknowledge that they remain regretfully difficult to answer. Scholars continue to debate which of the poets' religious lyrics were composed for public readership or recital. R. V. Young draws attention to the 'elusive textual history' of Donne's 'Holy Sonnets'. Meanwhile, Gary A. Stringer asserts that 'Most of Donne's poetry [...] was unprinted during his lifetime', and proposes that 'Donne made public, in print or in the pulpit, close to 75 per cent of his extant writings'.⁵ The biographer Izaak Walton provides a little illumination. Recalling how Donne incorporated a 'Hymn to God the Father' into his church services, he states that he 'caus'd it to be set to a most grave and solemn Tune, and to be often sung to the *organ* by the *Choristers* of *St. Pauls* Church, in his own hearing; especially at the Evening Service'.⁶ Surely such public, congregational employment altered the dynamic of the poem, giving its lines fresh spiritual meaning and affect? Kirsten Stirling suggests so, when she reflects that a poem, when performed by groups of worshippers, 'becomes, in a sense, public property'.⁷ This concept is particularly compelling if the poem in question features intimate images of spiritual undressing. Within the following section I demonstrate that Donne and Herbert's religious lyrics employ such images.

⁵ R. V. Young, 'The Religious Sonnet', in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, ed. by Jeanne Shami, Dennis Flynn, and M. Thomas Hester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 218-232 (p. 219).

⁶ Izaak Walton, *Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert* (London: 1670), in *EEBO*, p. 55 <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:56222:34> [accessed 15 June 2012].

Gary A. Stringer, 'The composition and dissemination of Donne's writings', in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, pp. 12-25 (p. 14).

Gary A. Stringer, quoted by Shami, Flynn, and Hester, 'General Introduction', in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, pp. 1-8 (p. 1).

⁷ Kirsten Stirling, 'Liturgical Poetry', in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, pp. 233-241 (p. 240).

In contrast to Donne's poetry, none of Herbert's English poems were published during his lifetime.⁸ Furthermore, the *ODNB* states that there is no 'evidence that they were circulated among his friends or family with the exception of the early sonnets sent to his mother'.⁹ However, there is evidence to suggest that Herbert anticipated the publication of his work. It is known that he revised and re-organised his poems. Moreover, Walton declares that Herbert sent his manuscripts to Nicholas Ferrar upon his deathbed, instructing him to publish them 'if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor Soul'.¹⁰ Thus, Nuttall's illustration of the poet with one eye on God and another on the wider community seems to offer a fitting sense of the indeterminate public/private status of the religious lyric. Throughout this chapter I also draw upon Herbert's treatise *The Country Parson* and a selection of Donne's sermons.¹¹ These demonstrably public texts serve to illuminate some of the devotional ideas and images employed by both poets within their religious lyrics.

Barbara Kiefer Lewalski casts the religious lyric as a deeply intimate form – a means of revealing the soul. She describes it as 'an intrinsically private mode, an expressive form' that is 'concerned to discover and express the various vacillating spiritual conditions and emotions the soul expresses in meditation, prayer, and praise'.¹² Her assertion sits uneasily with the public dimensions of the religious lyric discussed previously. Helen Gardner's work also challenges Lewalski's alignment of the religious lyric with notions of spiritual authenticity. In her view, all poetry is a form of 'feigning': 'the love poet creating an image

⁸ Helen Wilcox, 'Herbert, George (1593–1633)', in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13025>> [accessed 7 November 2013].

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Walton, p. 74.

¹¹ *A Priest to the Temple or, The Country Parson his Character, and Rule of Holy Life* (1632), in *George Herbert: The Complete English Poems*, pp. 199–262.

¹² Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 110.

of himself in love, the divine poet creating an image of himself at prayer'.¹³ Gardner's reflection points to the self-conscious and quasi-theatrical nature of the religious lyric. And yet, the poet's deliberate evocation of a spiritual 'image' or posture does not represent any more of a 'feigning' than the preacher's sermon. Indeed, John Craig states that the preacher's words, tone, gestures and glance are utilised strategically throughout the church sermon in order to extract 'sweat' and 'tears', both literal and metaphoric, from the congregation.¹⁴

Reflecting upon Donne's poetry at the event 'John Donne: Poet in the City' (2012), the Reverend Mark Oakley acknowledges the continuing theatricality of the preacher's role. He confesses, 'Although us clergy can look pretty smooth and together in our black suits and our collars, there's no business like holy show business'.¹⁵ However, Ramie Targoff draws an important distinction between the devotional and theatrical modes. She states, 'What differentiates the liturgical from the theatrical performance is the nature of its ethical charge'.¹⁶ Targoff reveals that public modes of worship (including the proclaimed, circulated, and published lyric) were felt to have a profound spiritual impact upon participants and spectators, in spite of their potentially artificial nature. Drawing upon Hooker's notions of devotional 'earwitnessing' and 'eyewitnessing', Targoff asserts that such spectatorship was perceived to 'give shape to the worshiper's inward disposition'. She states that a 'convincing performance of prayer [...] was regarded as a potentially powerful vehicle for devotional

¹³ Helen Gardner, 'Introduction', in *John Donne: The Divine Poems*, ed. by Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. xvi.

¹⁴ John Craig, 'Sermon Reception', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, ed. by Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington, and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 178-197 (p. 188).

¹⁵ Mark Oakley, speaking at 'John Donne: Poet in the City' (St Paul's Cathedral, London, 26 April 2012) <<http://www.poetinthecity.co.uk/john-donne>> [Online recording] [accessed on 02 July 2012]. This event consisted of the public performance of a selection of Donne's sermons and poems, alongside talks about his life and works, delivered by academics and religious speakers.

¹⁶ Ramie Targoff, 'The Performance of Prayer: Sincerity and Theatricality in Early Modern England', *Representations*, 60 (1997), 49-69, in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928805>> [accessed 25 June 2012] (p. 60).

change'.¹⁷ In the course of this chapter I will consider how concepts and images of nakedness and concealment serve to capture, express, and shape the 'inward disposition' or spiritual condition of Donne and Herbert, and their potential readers and audiences.

II: 'Dress and undress thy soul'

I will begin by considering Herbert's 'Perirrhanterium', the poem which opens 'The Church-Porch', prelude to the main poetic body of *The Temple*. A 'Perirrhanterium' is defined as 'an instrument for sprinkling holy water, especially upon the newly baptised'.¹⁸ In accordance with its title, Herbert's poem instructs a spiritual purging. In contrast to the poems which follow, the tone of this piece is decidedly that of an edifying, public address. The speaker refers emphatically to 'thy' and addresses the reader with the authoritative tone of a church minister. At various points within 'Perirrhanterium' the speaker draws upon images of nakedness and dress in order to guide the reader in matters of devotional practice. Stanza 25 declares:

By all means use sometimes to be alone
 Salute thyself: see what thy soul doth wear.
 Dare to look in thy chest; for 'tis thine own:
 And tumble up and down what thou find'st there.
 Who cannot rest till he good fellows find,
 He breaks up house, turns out of doors his mind.
(145-150)

In this stanza, the speaker urges a process of spiritual self-recognition. The instruction to 'see what thy soul doth wear' implies an unfamiliarity between subject and soul – a lack of intimacy which stands as a barrier to worship. By applying the material concept of

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ John Tobin, in *George Herbert: The Complete English Poems*, p. 325.

adornment to the intangible soul, Herbert lends it a sense of concreteness. In semantic terms, the soul is made visible, accessible and familiar: a metaphoric body, awaiting examination by its possessor. This concept of seeing ‘what thy soul doth wear’ evokes Luther’s references to the garments of righteousness and sin. As I discussed in Chapter 2, Luther paints Simon the Leper as one who masquerades in the clothing of righteousness – one who is re-clothed accordingly in the dress of a sinner, his deformities exposed by Christ.¹⁹

‘Perirrhantierium’ promotes the performance of ‘putting on’ *and* taking off as a means of capturing the spiritual shape of one’s soul. Notably, Herbert marks this process as private and introspective: ‘By all means use sometimes to be alone’. The reader is urged to ‘tumble up and down’, to ‘Dress and undress thy soul: mark the decay | And growth of it’ (453-54). Spiritual dressing *and* undressing are cast as equally-weighted performances in humankind’s preparation for the servitude of God. The speaker suggests that it is only by ‘trying on’ a range of virtues, criticisms, and moral accusations, that one gains a strong measure of one’s spiritual condition. By way of this process, one is able to identify aspects of one’s spiritual life which require adjustment or improvement.

Herbert’s extended metaphor of carefully-monitored dress and undress draws upon the image of a subject confronting his naked body within the privacy of his chamber. For many, such stark self-reflection causes humility, and even shame and repulsion. As established within the previous chapters, the mortality and base functionality of the body, heightened by the condition of nakedness, sit uneasily with the concept of the civilised self. By framing spiritual self-exploration in these suggestive, corporeal terms, Herbert indicates that the attentions given to the body should be channelled inwards, towards the soul. Furthermore, he captures the sense of self-alienation which may attend the process of honest,

¹⁹ Martin Luther, in *Luther’s Works*, American Edition, 55 vols, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muehlenberg and Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-86), XXXI (1957), p. 303.

spiritual examination. This concept is familiar to us from the works of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. The presence of ‘dare’ in stanza 25 confirms the fearful nature of spiritual undressing. Unlike these theologians, however, Herbert avoids the imagery of disease and filth (Augustine describes his sins as spiritual ‘ulcers and sores’, for instance, as Chapter 2 noted). To ‘tumble up and down’, as Herbert gently phrases it, is perhaps to stumble upon one’s sinful thoughts, actions, and inclinations. It is to recognise that which is ordinarily repressed by the psyche as it strives towards self-preservation – the temptations and appetites of the body and mind.

To confront one’s sins is potentially distressing, provoking guilt, repulsion, and self-loathing. This is illustrated vividly, as I demonstrated within Chapters 2 and 4, in Luther’s recollection of his ‘*anfechtungen*’ and in Spenser’s representation of Redcrosse’s encounters with Despair and Contemplation.²⁰ Herbert tempers the harrowing nature of self-revelation (suggested by the imperative ‘Dare’) by employing a reassuring, domestic framework here. The soul in stanza 25 is a ‘chest’. Yet far from urging a spiritual vivisection in graphic, anatomical terms, Herbert chooses to explore the alternative and least intrusive meaning. He speaks of a chest of clothing, and merely plays upon the opposing bodily sense. As such, he cleverly blends the imagery of anatomy and attire – a technique which also emerges within his poem ‘The Bag’, as I demonstrate later within this chapter. Thus, Herbert relaxes his intimidating theological message (here, of moral examination and refashioning) by juxtaposing it with the invitingly habitual: the mundane act of adjusting one’s watch. He states:

Sum up at night, what thou hast done by day;
And in the morning, what thou hast to do.

²⁰ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene: Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]).

Dress and undress thy soul: mark the decay
 And growth of it: if with thy watch, that too
 Be down, then wind up both.

(451-455)

The reader is coaxed gently to look inwards, to bare and examine his own soul as a matter of course ('for 'tis thine own').

Herbert recognises that such interior probing can be hampered by the sensory distractions posed by humankind's external surroundings. Even the spiritual setting of the church has the potential to draw the worshipper away from diligent self-contemplation.

Stanza 70 declares:

In time of service seal up both thine eyes,
 And send them to thine heart; that by spying sin,
 They may weep out the stains by them did rise:
 Those doors being shut, all by the ear comes in.
 Who marks in church-time others' symmetry,
 Makes all their beauty his deformity.

(415-420)

Herbert suggests that spiritual self-intimacy requires a form of blindness – the inversion of the external sight into an attentive internal gaze. Objects of fleshy beauty serve to reflect and to expose the onlooker's own spiritual faults (here, vanity and lust). Spenser also offers a powerful dramatisation of this concept within his depiction of the 'Bower of Bliss', as discussed within Chapter 4. Here, the naked and promiscuous maidens blazon the moral shortcomings of Guyon and the reader alike (namely, the susceptibility of both to sexual temptation). Spenser's sensuous and gendered evocation of lust contrasts sharply with

Herbert's concise and reserved warning within 'Perirrhaterium'. However, Herbert's advocacy of deep, internal searching aided by active listening was cast in more vivid, sexual terms by Donne. Indeed, one of Donne's sermons proclaims that '[t]he eares are the Aqueducts of the water of life; and if we cut off those, that is, intermit our ordinary course of hearing, this is a castration of the soul, the soul becomes a Eunuch, and we grow to a rust, to a mosse, to a barrenesse, without fruit, without propagation'.²¹ By equating spiritual deafness with sexual impotency, Donne renders the failure to heed the word of God and priest deeply shameful. His striking sexualisation of the soul renders the inattentive congregation spiritually emasculated.

To Herbert in 'Perirrhaterium', the process of tending to the soul is cast as humankind's means of preventing shame and indignity. Stanza 69 of 'Perirrhaterium' states, 'Thus hell doth jest | Away thy blessings, and extremely flout thee, | Thy clothes being fast, but thy soul loose about thee' (412-14). The role of the soul has shifted from that of a receptive body awaiting dress ('dress and undress thy soul') to humankind's protective covering. He who clings to the transient dress of earthly life leaves himself spiritually naked, Herbert indicates. These lines evoke the threatened exposure of the spiritually unprepared on the Day of Judgement, described in Revelation (16. 15). 'Perirrhaterium' urges an inversion of priorities: one's soul must be attended to, and adjusted through worship and prayer. Herbert offers an ecclesiastical prescription for conquering spiritual bareness. Through his juxtaposition of prayer and dress in stanza 69 he suggests that prayer is the chief means of adorning the soul. He states, 'Resort to sermons, but to prayers most: | Praying's the end of preaching. O be dressed' (409-410). Thus, Herbert implies that prayer is the most effective method for preventing shameful spiritual exposure before God. Unlike the sermon, prayer

²¹ Donne, in *The Works of John Donne D. D., with a Memoir of his Life*, ed. by Henry Alford, 6 vols (London: John W Parker, 1839), II (1839), 'Sermon 31', p. 41.

employs the individual voice, thereby drawing the supplicant into a more personal and active relationship with God.

These stanzas imply that spiritual strength, imagined here as clothing, is obtained by opening oneself to Christ – by daring to address him with one’s needs. And yet, the potency of the individual plea is disrupted by Herbert’s qualifying declaration that ‘public [prayer] hath more promises, more love’ (398). This line seems to favour prescribed, communal prayers above the spontaneous prayers of individuals. Of course, it is also possible that Herbert refers here to the practice of uttering one’s own prayers in the company of other worshippers. At the opening of *The Temple*, then, Herbert sets a communal tone. Christ’s clothing, he implies, is gained more readily by the group than the individual. Through ‘public’ prayer, the worshipper becomes more adequately ‘dressed’.

The formality of Herbert’s ‘Perirrhantierium’ collapses as the reader passes the threshold of the ‘Porch’ into the poetic body of ‘The Church’. Authority is stripped away as the mode of assured public instruction observed in this opening poem gives way to a voice of personal vulnerability in ‘The Altar’. This shift in poetic tone reflects the instruction of social and spiritual disrobing presented by stanza 68 of ‘Perirrhantierium’:

When once thy foot enters the church, be bare.
 God is more there, than thou: for thou art there
 Only by his permission. Then beware,
 And make thyself all reverence and fear.
 Kneeling ne’er spoil’d silk stocking: quit thy state.
 All equal are within the church’s gate.

(403-408)

These lines capture the humility which Herbert urges humankind to embrace before God. His direction ‘be bare’ suggests that worshippers should abandon all earthly pride – a notion which is confirmed both by his irreverent reference to the ‘silk stocking’, and his assertion, ‘quit thy state’. The social hierarchy, he signals, collapses before the creator: ‘All equal are within the church’s gate’. Herbert’s utilisation of the language of stripping (‘be bare’) evokes Calvin’s kenotic declaration that humankind should acknowledge its helplessness and run ‘naked’ to the comfort and strength of Christ. This posture of submission, of ‘kneeling’ in ‘reverence and fear’, is demonstrated by the humble, self-mortifying tone of a number of Herbert’s religious lyrics. In this sense, the poems of *The Temple* both echo and promote Herbert’s own advocacy of spiritual humility: ‘quit thy state’. ‘Sighs and Groans’ serves as a prime example.

The stark, emotional title, ‘Sighs and Groans’, encapsulates the raw humility conveyed within this poem. In contrast to the poetic composure of ‘Perirrhaneum’, ‘Sighs and Groans’ is structured by a series of dramatic exclamations – the desperate entreaties of a sinner. The speaker pleads:

O do not use me
 After my sins! look not on my desert,
 But on thy glory! then thou wilt reform
 And not refuse me: for thou only art
 The mighty God, but I a silly worm;
 O do not bruise me!

(1-6)

The speaker addresses God in the individual, first person singular terms of ‘I’, ‘me’ and ‘my’, thus establishing a tone of personal confession. Yet the sins voiced throughout this poem are

concealed within sweeping metaphors: ‘I have abused thy stock, destroyed thy woods, | Sucked all thy magazines’ (9-10). Thus, despite the emotional abandonment suggested by the frequent, emphatic ‘O’, a sense of self-preservation or spiritual withholding remains. This is heightened by the repetitive formula which opens and closes each stanza. These features lend the poem a sense of a church recital – a communal confession of sin, raised to a certain objectivity. The speaker’s intimate revelations of spiritual failure are universalised, perhaps, in order to create an expression of shared, human guilt. While it remains unclear whether this poem was composed with public readership in mind, its juxtaposition of a personal framework with more generalised expressions of sin certainly invites the reader into a joint process of spiritual disclosure. Guided forms of prayer and confession were advocated by the Reformed Church, as exemplified by *The Book of Common Prayer*’s prescribed recitations and reflections (explored within Chapter 2). As Targoff reflects, some formality was perceived to offer ‘a crucial safeguard against the natural weaknesses of human devotion’.²²

Herbert’s sonnet, ‘The Sinner’, follows a similar pattern. The speaker presents his soul as little more than a refuse heap. He lays open the humble contents with ruthless honesty: ‘I find there quarries of piled vanities, | But shreds of holiness, that dare not venture | To show their face’ (5-7). His hidden interior is turned outwards and exposed in stark, visible form to God and to the reader. Touchingly, it is the *virtue* within him which strives to conceal itself from God’s gaze. Conscious of their meagre and neglected state, his ‘shreds of holiness’ recoil in shame, anxious of God’s judgement – of his disgust. The speaker continues, ‘In so much dregs the quintessence is small: | The spirit and good extract of my heart | Comes to about the many hundredth part’ (9-11). It is here, in particular, that one

²² Targoff, p. 20.

appreciates the perceptiveness of Richard Strier's observation. He states, 'What is striking about [Herbert's conception of sin] is how inward and psychologically intimate it is. It locates sin in the tiniest motions and impulses of the heart'.²³ In what is arguably the most pitiful and intimate poetic moment of *The Temple*, the speaker condenses himself, through quantification and abstraction, to a fleshy vessel of sin. His sinfulness overcomes all personal attributes, hence the reductive label imposed by the title, 'The Sinner'. The 'good extract' of the speaker, though fleeing from God's stare, finds expression through the voice of prayer: 'Yet Lord restore thine image, hear my call' (12). Like the speaker of 'Sighs and Groans', he turns his deeply interior focus outwards, abandoning his analysis of his deformities in order to invoke the saving power of God. He concludes, 'And though my hard heart scarce to thee can groan, | Remember that thou once didst write in stone' (13-14). Paradoxically, God's capacity to overwhelm humankind becomes the sinner's source of spiritual reassurance and strength.

In common with Herbert's religious lyrics, Donne's devotional poetry performs a spiritual deconstruction of man which operates on both a private and a communal level. The opening stanzas of 'A Litany' provide a notable example of this. The speaker of 'The Father' urges:

come
 And re-create me, now grown ruinous:
 My heart is by dejection, clay,
 And by self-murder, red.
 From this red earth, O Father, purge away

²³ Richard Strier, *Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), p. 29.

All vicious tinctures, that new fashioned
I may rise up from death, before I'm dead.

(3-9)

The *OED* defines 'a litany' as '[a]n appointed form of public prayer, usually of a penitential character, consisting of a series of supplications, deprecations, or intercessions in which the clergy lead and the people respond, the same formula of response being repeated for several successive clauses'.²⁴ Donne's choice of title, then, indicates that he designed this poem with public recital in mind. In this sense, the 'I' and 'me' of the poet become the 'I' and 'me' of worshippers, voicing these supplications collectively.

One can only speculate as to the spiritual resonance of Donne's words amongst those who repeated them – if, of course, they did. Donne himself declared that 'no prayer is so truly, or so properly mine as that that the Church hath delivered and recommended to me'.²⁵ Does this mean that the words of the liturgy or preacher have the same spiritual meaning and authenticity when expressed by members of the congregation? Does the vocalization of 'recommended' phrases work upon the spiritual interior of the worshiper, much like the 'earwitnessing' and 'eyewitnessing' promoted by Hooker? Certainly, *The Book of Common Prayer* places great spiritual value upon the communal recitation of pre-formulated prayer, as Chapter 2 detailed. However, in Targoff's view, Donne's 'A Litany', though 'ostensibly liturgical [...] does not ultimately offer prayers that one might plausibly imagine to be either read aloud by a congregation or read privately by anonymous worshippers'.²⁶ She explains, '[Donne's] consistently idiosyncratic and complex formulations for devotional relief seem

²⁴ "litany, n.". *OED Online*. June 2012. Oxford University Press. 30 August 2012
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109043?redirectedFrom=litany>>.

²⁵ Donne, in *The Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne*, 16 vols, ed. by David Colclough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013 –), III, 'Sermon 13', p. 215 [preached to the King on April 20 1630].

²⁶ Targoff, p. 93.

entirely incompatible with the utterances of public worship’, and also notes that ‘he focuses on his supremely personal sins’.²⁷ Certainly, a number of the stanzas within this poem are intimate, graphic, and viscously self-accusing. The suppliant of ‘The Father’ presents himself to God in base, corporeal terms: a self-tainted body. He confesses himself mere earthly substance – subverting conceptions of the heart as the emotional and biological centre of humankind with his stark definition of his own as mere ‘clay’. Herbert, as we have seen, expresses sin in primarily poignant terms (for instance, ‘shreds’ and ‘quarries’) – terms which maintain a sense of poetic beauty, despite their negative connotations. Donne, in contrast, turns to the most basic and brutal terms available (‘murder’, ‘red’). Perhaps ‘A Litany’ was not only too ‘complex’ and ‘personal’, but likewise too merciless to be embraced within the sphere of public devotion: to be ‘read aloud’, or ‘read privately by anonymous worshippers’. However, this view is weakened by the fact that Donne’s church sermons adopted similarly ruthless and startling images of sin and exposure, as we see later within this chapter. And of course, intimate church exposure took place commonly as part of the ecclesiastical courts’ white sheet shaming rituals. Sinning individuals were ordered to appear before their parish bare-foot and clad in a white sheet, and to confess the nature of their personal transgressions in ‘detail’, as Chapter 2 notes.

The struggle against sin is expressed in its most intimate, corporeal terms within the second stanza of Donne’s ‘A Litany’, which addresses ‘The Son’. Within these early verses of ‘A Litany’ it is clear that the speaker adapts the degree and nature of his exposure in order to reflect his relationship with the addressee. Within this stanza, the speaker sketches himself as a fleshy receptacle, open to invasion. ‘Sin, and death’ he reveals, have ‘crept in’ (11). The speaker uncovers his bodily interior, keenly aware that this level of self-mortification

²⁷ Ibid.

matches that performed by Christ, his audience. His exposure is framed as both a gesture and an invocation of unity with Christ. He urges ‘The Son’, ‘O be thou nailed unto my heart, | And crucified again’ (14-15). Here, the theological metaphor of Christ as humanity’s cloak or covering, utilised by Augustine, Luther, and Calvin (as discussed in Chapter 2), is expressed in a much more agonizingly literal sense. This verse continues, ‘Part not from it, though it from thee would part, | But let it be by applying so thy pain, | Drowned in thy blood, and in thy passion slain’ (15-18). The speaker longs to share in torments personal to Christ. In this sense, Donne represents a torturous communion of man and God. His image of drowning in Christ’s blood seems to offer a startling reconfiguration of the sacrament of transubstantiation, whereby the worshipper is nourished spiritually by his consumption of the body and blood of Christ. This shift from tender nourishment to torture is characteristic of Donne’s devotional poetic mode – a brutality of thought and expression which distinguishes his writing from that of Herbert. Reflecting upon Donne’s approach to sin, John Carey states, ‘He is attracted, rather, to its organic mass, volume and articulation. His imagination intrudes into its inner structures. His impulse is towards vivisection’.²⁸

In his elegy to Donne, Sidney Godolphin cast him fittingly as a ‘Pious dissector’, one who ‘didst pursue our lov’d and subtill sin, | Through all the folding wee had wrapt it in’.²⁹ Donne’s ‘impulse’ towards ruthless exposure, conceived here in striking bodily terms, is also conveyed powerfully within a number of his sermons. He preached, for instance, that:

we may better discern ourselves *in singulis*, then *in omnibus*; better by taking ourselves in pieces, then altogether, we understand the frame of mans body, better when we see him naked, than apparelled, howsoever; and better by seeing him cut up, than by seeing him do any exercise alive; one dissection,

²⁸ John Carey, *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), p. 121.

²⁹ Sidney Godolphin, quoted by Gale H. Carithers Jr, in *Donne at Sermons: A Christian Existential World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972), p. 53.

one Anatomy teaches more of that, than the marching, or drilling of a whole army of living men. Let everyone of us therefore dissect and cut up himself, and consider what he was before God raised him.³⁰

The anatomist's splicing and probing of the naked, broken body is utilised by Donne as a means of illustrating the depth of spiritual knowledge and humility that each Christian should strive to gain. I explored this metaphor within Chapter 3, of course. The tone of authority and assurance adopted within Donne's declaration from the pulpit contrasts markedly with the sense of personal nervousness captured within the more internalised mode of the religious lyric. I would argue that Donne's religious lyrics both enact and reflect his own spiritual advice, expressed here in this sermon. In 'A Litany', for instance, the speaker presents himself to God stripped of clothing and self-assurance, in spiritual and physical 'pieces', as I have shown. Such humbling images resurface throughout Donne's works, as I go on to demonstrate.

Donne's vivid and invasive direction, '[L]et everyone of us therefore dissect and cut up himself', contrasts notably with Herbert's gentler spiritual instructions. As we saw within 'Perirrhantierium', Herbert couches the examination of the soul in the everyday terms of dressing and undressing. In this sense, it is little wonder that Martz refers to the 'delicate restraint' of Herbert's poetry.³¹ Within Holy Sonnet XIV, 'Batter my heart', Donne's choice of imagery is far from restrained. This poem takes on an arresting, sexual charge, as the speaker urges God to reform him by means of intimate, physical contact. Sweeping away God's polite spiritual interventions, Donne demands, 'Take me to you, imprison me, for I | Except you enthrall me, never shall be free, | Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me' (12-14).

³⁰ Donne, in *The Sermons of John Donne*, 10 vols, ed. by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), I (1953), 'Sermon 7', p. 273 [White-Hall, April 12. 1618].

³¹ Louis L. Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 4.

The speaker fantasises, thus, about highly physicalized spiritual invasion and surrender. Here, as in ‘The Son’ (‘A Litany’), the speaker expresses his desire for a close and faithful relationship with God through images of bodily violation. The erotic, Petrarchan heritage of this sonnet serves to intensify the sexual potency of the speaker’s plea for divine rape. This request conjures an image of a naked and sexual body. Donne’s lines, moreover, seem homo-erotically charged. As John Stachniewski indicates, this poem is starkly revealing in a further sense. He states, ‘Calvinist conversion involved God’s simultaneous seizure of all the faculties, and it is this that Donne invites’.³² Donne’s vivid bodily images seem to reflect his spiritual anxiety and self-distrust. Perhaps the most touching exposure of this poem is not that of the speaker’s surrendered body, ripe for piercing and sexual assault, but that of his self-doubt regarding the constancy of his own faith.

Discussing Donne’s ‘spiritual and sexual energies’, as he terms them, Oakley names the poet a ‘truth seeker and self-seeker’. ‘I’m drawn’, he states, ‘to this fragmented, improvised soul, and I’m grateful he could speak of it’.³³ ‘Batter my heart’ crystallizes Donne’s moving spiritual honesty. In his desperate requests for enforced and irreversible unification with God, the speaker communicates his intense fear that his spiritual conviction will slip away, leaving him open to sin, corruption and eternal damnation. In this sense, as Gene Edward Veith Junior notes, Donne conveys a lack of trust in the Calvinist notion of unconditional salvation through God’s imputed grace.³⁴ Through this striking evocation of divine, sexual imprisonment, Donne captures a heightened sense of spiritual insecurity. He seems to cry out to God for release and refuge *from himself*.

³² John Stachniewski, ‘John Donne: The Despair of the Holy Sonnets’, *ELH*, 48.4 (1981), 677-705, in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2872957>> (p. 689) [accessed 15 June 2012].

³³ Oakley, at ‘John Donne: Poet in the City’.

³⁴ Gene Edward Veith, Jr, *Reformation Spirituality: The Religion of George Herbert* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1985), p. 121.

Donne's poetic exposure of such doubts and deformities is unsurprising in light of his sermons' advocacy of spiritual transparency. Employing the imagery of dress and dissected flesh once again, he preaches:

We must not hide our desires under our groanes, nor hide our groanes under our desires [...] by wrapping up all our sinnes in a sadness, in a dejection, in a stupidity, soe that I never see my sinnes in a true proportion as they lye upon Christ's shoulders and not upon my soule, nor in their true apparel as they are clothed with Christs righteousness, and not with my corruption [...] We must hide neither, but anatomize our soule in both, and find every sinnewe, and fiber, every lineament and ligament of this body of sinne, and then every breath of that new spirit, every drop of that newe bloud that must restore and repayre us.³⁵

By 'wrapping up' his sins in his personal grief, Donne emphasises that the subject burdens and, in a sense, blinds himself. While he urges humanity to uncover or 'anatomize' 'this body of sin', it is not, conversely, to be abandoned in its state of exposure. Rather, in an outward turn of perception, its 'true apparel' must be sought. Christ is equally undressed in this search for 'every drop of that newe bloud'. Indeed, this 'newe bloud' is that which was shed by the crucified Christ: his body pierced and displayed for the salvation of humankind. As Rambuss states, 'the effect of the utter immersion of God within the conditions of corporeality turns out to be at once disconcertingly abashing as well as transformatively etherealizing – both for Christ and for the human body and its products'.³⁶ Here, humankind's sin, expressed in base bodily terms, is covered by the sacrifice of Christ.

³⁵ Donne, in *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. by Potter and Simpson, II (1955), 'Sermon 6', p. 158.

³⁶ Rambuss, p. 21.

This corporeal expression of divine and human unity reaches its zenith, perhaps, when Donne preaches, ‘consider, that in receiving his body, and his bloud, every one doth as it were conceive Christ Jesus anew; Christ Jesus hath in every one of them, as it were a *new incarnation*, by uniting himselfe to them in these visible signes’.³⁷ This depiction of the Eucharist as a sexual communion of Christ and humanity (‘conceive’) echoes Luther’s vivid, sexualised portrayal of the sacrament, as explored within Chapter 2. While humanity conceives Christ within the context of this passage, embodying the divine saviour in this sense, Donne ultimately stresses that Christ is humanity’s ‘garment’. He wrote to Mr Roland Woodward, ‘If our souls have stained their first white, yet we | May clothe them with faith, and dear honesty, | Which God imputes, as native purity’ (13-15).³⁸ The centrality of this vision of re-clothing to Donne is likewise reflected by the inscription which accompanied his bedside image of himself, enshrouded. In Lewalski’s words, this was ‘a prayer that his own white shroud might typify the white shroud (Christ’s shroud) covering his sinful soul’.³⁹ As I demonstrated within Chapter 2, of course, Calvin had emphasised Christ’s role as humanity’s covering, shielding sinners from God’s destructive perfection and wrath.

Walton recalls how Donne posed as a corpse for this portrait. He ‘put off all his cloaths’ and ‘had this sheet put on him, and so tyed with knots at his head and feet, and his hands so placed, as dead bodies are usually fitted to be shrowded and put into the grave’.⁴⁰ Donne enacted a literal and metaphoric undressing, embracing his own depictions of the human body as mere ‘splinters’ of bone, ‘jelly’ and ‘atoms of flesh’, poised for putrefaction.⁴¹ Like Donne, Herbert emphasises the humbling mortality of humankind. Once again, his imagery is less physically brutal. In his religious lyric ‘Repentance’, for instance,

³⁷ Donne, in *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. by Potter and Simpson, II (1955), ‘Sermon 10’, p. 223.

³⁸ Donne, in *John Donne: The Complete English Poems*, p. 207.

³⁹ Lewalski, p. 201.

⁴⁰ Walton, p. 75.

⁴¹ Donne, in *The Works of John Donne*, ed. by Henry Alford, IV (1839), ‘Sermon 71’, p. 5.

the speaker describes himself as one ‘Whose life still pressing | Is one undressing, | A steady aiming at a tomb’ (4-6). By visualising ageing and death as a process of ‘undressing’, Herbert undercuts pride and vanity and captures the shameful disintegration of the human body which occurs throughout life. This conception of death as a process of undressing was prominent within the literature and culture of this period, as discussed within Chapter 3.

Within his poem ‘Aaron’, Herbert explores humankind’s inherent lack of spiritual clothing. Playing with Exodus’ account of the eponymous high priest’s dress, he describes Aaron’s costume of spiritual virtue:

Holiness on the head,
Light and perfection on the breast,
Harmonious bells below, raising the dead
To lead them unto life and rest.
Thus are true Aarons dressed.

(1-5)

Herbert departs notably from the heavy emphasis which Exodus places upon Aaron’s clothing. The priest’s ‘ephod’, ‘robe’, ‘brodered coat’, ‘mitre’ and ‘girdle’ (Exodus 28. 4) are expressed here in terms of the spiritual qualities which they represent: ‘holiness’, ‘light’, ‘perfection’, and salvation. However, Herbert does maintain the preposition ‘on’. Thus, the original sense of external attire lingers on within his poem.

By drawing attention to spiritual rather than material dress, this poem has been said to ‘contain an implicit criticism of the Roman Catholic Church with its sacrificial liturgy of the Mass, its splendid churches and elaborate vestments’.⁴² Similarly, ‘Aaron’ has been

⁴² Chana Bloch, *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 146.

interpreted in terms of an ‘antivestiarian’ approach towards the Anglican Church: an expression, on Herbert’s part, of the view that ‘ministers should show their calling by life and character rather than by apparel’.⁴³ Certainly, Herbert’s ‘Jordan I’ and ‘Jordan II’ suggest the poet’s preference for plain, unvarnished worship, while ‘Dotage’ cuttingly refers to ‘gilded emptiness’ and ‘Embroidered lies’ (3, 5). As such, Herbert frames both visual and verbal adornment with cynical suggestions of emptiness and hypocrisy, much like Spenser within Book I of *The Faerie Queene*. However, Herbert’s ‘The British Church’ calms any critical zeal to render the poet an advocate of absolute austerity. Framing the church as a woman, the speaker of this poem criticises ‘She’ who ‘wholly goes on th’ other side, | And nothing wears’ (23-24). Within Chapter 2, of course, I illustrated how the same gendered and sexually striking metaphor surfaced in a number of complaints about church austerity.⁴⁴ ‘The British Church’ promotes a mid-point between the states of nakedness and dress: ‘Neither too mean, nor yet too gay, | Shows who is best’ (8-9).

While ‘Aaron’ has been linked to contemporary debates about ecclesiastical dress, I would argue that Herbert’s images of spiritual clothing serve ostensibly to explore and convey the sinner’s relationship to Christ. Stanza two inverts the perfect spiritual profile represented by the opening verse. Paradoxically, through ‘trying on’ the dress of Aaron, the speaker performs a spiritual self-undressing. What follows is an honest declaration of spiritual deficiency – a shift from the ‘on’ describing Aaron, to the more probing ‘in’, as the speaker turns his own state of moral ‘dress’ outwards, to personal and divine critique. In this second stanza, ‘Aaron’ enacts the fears voiced within another of Herbert’s poems, ‘The Priesthood’. Within this poem, the speaker reflects:

⁴³ Strier, p. 150.

⁴⁴ For example, Anon., *A Plea for Moderation* (1642), p. 5, in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Zin 39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:156598:5> [accessed 07 November 11].

should I presume
 To wear thy habit, the severe attire
 My slender compositions might consume.
 I am both foul and brittle; much unfit
 To deal in holy Writ.

(8-12)

In a similar manner, the speaker of ‘Aaron’ heightens his own sense of deformity and unworthiness to lead a congregation by way of his meditation upon spiritual perfection, symbolised by the dress of the priest. Spenser employed a comparable technique within *The Faerie Queene* Book I, as I noted within the previous chapter.⁴⁵ Here, Redcrosse’s armour serves, initially, to underline his Christian failings. Herbert’s second stanza reads:

Profaneness in my head,
 Defects and darkness in my breast,
 A noise of passions ringing me for dead
 Unto a place where is no rest.
 Poor priest thus am I dressed.

(6-10)

In this moment of self-reflection, the speaker presents himself in the ‘anti-dress’ of Aaron. His costume is described as that of a sinner, destined for damnation.

In Exodus’ account (28. 38), Aaron bears ‘the iniquity of the children of Israel’. As *The Geneva Bible* glosses, ‘Their offerings could not be so perfect, but some fault would be

⁴⁵ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene: Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]).

therein: which sin the high Priest bare and pacified God'.⁴⁶ The speaker of Herbert's 'Aaron' also turns to a spiritual substitute. The stanzas which follow perform a shift towards the New Testament, as the speaker gestures towards Christ's saving presence. He declares, 'Only another head | I have, another heart and breast' (11-12). He concludes, 'In Him I am well drest' (15). Herbert highlights that in the presence of Christ, the speaker's native dress becomes irrelevant.

The imagery of substitution develops into that of self-divestment, as he declares:

Christ is my only head,
My alone only heart and breast,
My only music, striking me ev'n dead;
That to the old man I may rest,
And be in him new dressed.
(16-20)

The speaker's self-abandonment is performed in the assurance of Christ's all-embracing perfection. He is re-clothed: 'in him new dressed' (20). This image of transition from a corrupt, earthly form to a 'new', glorious body, 'holy, 'perfect and light' (21, 22) anticipates the Day of Resurrection. On this day, as Herbert declared in his poem 'Death', 'souls shall wear their new array, | And all thy bones with beauty shall be clad' (19-20).

The closing stanza of 'Aaron' emphasises a re-discovery of identity – a blending of divine and human dress: 'My doctrine tuned by Christ (who is not dead, | But lives in me while I do rest)' (23-24). Moreover, the concluding line evokes a sense of spiritual readiness and self-assurance. Previously set apart from the priesthood (as emphasised by the marked contrast between 'Thus are true Aarons drest' and 'Poor priest! Thus am I drest') (5, 10), the

⁴⁶ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, 3rd edn (Pleasant Hope: L. L. Brown, 1993), with an introduction by Michael H. Brown, p. 31.

speaker draws the poem to a close with the invitation, ‘Come, people; Aaron’s drest’ (25). These words signal his newfound sense of worth, achieved through unity with Christ. Here, Herbert draws upon the Pauline concept of putting on Christ. As I noted within Chapter 2, this concept played a prominent role within the theological works of Luther and Calvin.

While ‘Aaron’ speaks of the saving beauty of Christ’s ‘dress’, *The Country Parson* emphasises that this dress is characterised by ‘humility’ in addition to glory. Herbert reflects:

*To put on the profound humility and the exact temperance of our Lord Jesus, with other exemplary virtues of that sort, and keep them on in the sunshine and noon of prosperity, he [the parson] findeth to be as necessary and as difficult at least as to be clothed with perfect patience and Christian fortitude in the cold midnight storms of persecution and adversity.*⁴⁷

Thus, Herbert emphasises that to wear the spiritual dress of a Christian leader is to struggle daily with the imperfections of human nature. This paradoxical notion of dressing in Christ as a kind of mortification – a ‘profound humility’ – echoes Luther’s declaration that the faithful must be ‘found in human form’. As I highlighted within the previous chapter, Spenser illustrates the great challenges faced by those who ‘put on’ Christ, using the extended metaphor of Redcrosse’s turbulent relationship with his armour: ‘the armour of a Christian man’.

Like Spenser, Herbert emphasises the importance of exposing one’s sins to God. And yet, he also stresses the instinctive nature of spiritual concealment amongst fallen humanity. Addressing God in ‘Sighs and Groans’, the speaker confesses that ‘my lust | Has still sewed fig-leaves to exclude your light’. God’s ‘light’ continues to stimulate uncomfortable sensations of nakedness within humankind, he suggests. Moreover, Strier notes:

⁴⁷ Herbert, *The Country Parson*, p. 213.

By making ‘my lust’ the subject of ‘sewed’ Herbert presents the primary impulse of lust not as sexual but as the desire to establish a secret place, a place apart. Man, in this view, constantly uses his ingenuity to create a place where he can be happily ‘curved in upon himself’, free from the demanding attentiveness of God’s love.⁴⁸

To be ‘curved in’ (a term evoking Luther’s ‘*curvatus in se*’) is to alienate oneself from God. Donne also emphasises that to conceal one’s sins from God is to intensify one’s suffering. He states, ‘Sin hath that pride, that is not content with one garment. But beloved, sin is a serpent, and he that covers sin, does but keepe it warme, that it may sting the more fiercely’.⁴⁹ Likewise, in ‘Confession’ Herbert exposes this multitude of ‘garments’: the layers of disguise utilised by humankind in an attempt to cover sin. The speaker states, ‘within my heart I made | Closets; and in them many a chest; | And like a master in my trade, | In those chests, boxes; in each box, a till’ (2-5). Herbert emphasises that concealment has become a human craft: the humble fig-leaf subsumed by an intricate, psychological process. And yet the arrogance and naivety of this craft is trumpeted by the simple line which follows, ‘Yet grief knows all, and enters when he will’ (6). With this line, Herbert undercuts humanity’s efforts at self-preservation. As Donne lucidly (and wittily) declared, ‘Adam had patched up an apron to cover him; God tooke none of those leaves’.⁵⁰

Attempts at concealment are not only impotent, but they intensify spiritual affliction, as Herbert and Donne stress. He who distances himself from God’s presence in a bid to evade shame, paradoxically, invites a torturous invasion of his ‘tendrest parts’, and thus, real humiliation. Addressing the matter of spiritual afflictions, Herbert’s ‘Confession’ reads,

⁴⁸ Strier, p. 31.

⁴⁹ *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. by Potter and Simpson, IX (1958), ‘Sermon 11’, p. 270.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

‘Only an open breast | Doth shut them out, so that they cannot enter’ (19-20), ‘Smooth open hearts no fast’ning have; but fiction | Doth give a hold and handle to affliction’ (23-24).

These lines find a parallel in Donne’s declaration, in which he quotes Matthew 10. 26. He states:

He that will have his sins covered, let him uncover them; He that would not have them known, let him confesse them; He that would have them forgotten, let him remember them. He that would bury them, let him rake them up.
*There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be knowne.*⁵¹

Donne and Herbert crystallize a central Christian paradox familiar from the previous chapters. Faithful surrender to God (involving the abandonment of earthly self-interest) is set forth as the pathway to spiritual triumph and fulfilment. In the concluding stanza of ‘Confession’ Herbert provides a model for self-exposure. He states, ‘Wherefore my faults and sinnes, | Lord, I acknowledge; take thy plagues away’ (25-26). Although true confession entails the baring of one’s soul, it offers one the covering of Christ in recompense. As Herbert states in ‘Misery’, ‘[Christ’s] love’, ‘doth cover | Their follies with the wing of thy mild Dove’ (26; 27-28).

Herbert’s calls for spiritual self-exposure are accompanied frequently, like those of Donne, with evocations of Christ’s self-mortification, performed for the salvation of humankind. Within ‘The Bag’, Herbert frames Christ’s incarnation as a loving disrobing. He states, ‘The God of power, as he did ride | In his majestic robes of glory, | Resolved to light; and so one day | He did descend, undressing all the way’ (9-12). Christ renders himself naked in the service of humanity, through a self-performed undressing. Herbert continues:

⁵¹ Donne, in *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. by Potter and Simpson, IX (1958), ‘Sermon 11’, p. 268.

The stares his tire of light and rings obtained,
 The cloud his bow, the fire his spear,
 The sky his azure mantle gained.
 And when they asked, what he would wear;
 He smiled and said as he did go,
 He had new clothes a-making here below.

(13-18)

By emphasising each item cast off by Christ, Herbert paradoxically draws attention to his dazzling power and divinity – his authority as king of heaven and Earth. Indeed, he applies a similar technique to that used by Donne in ‘Elegy 19 To His Mistress Going to Bed’. Within this erotic poem, the speaker’s detailed description of his mistress’ discarded attire serves to capture the very essence of the undressed (‘Off with that girdle, like heaven’s zone glistening, | But a far fairer world encompassing. | Unpin that spangled breastplate which you wear, | That th’ eyes of busy fools may be stopped there’) (5-8).

‘The Bag’ shares some of the sexual suggestiveness of Donne’s ‘Elegy 19’. Indeed, one could even describe Christ’s smile as coy. This interpretation is supported by Michael C. Schoenfeldt’s reflection that ‘[t]he *kenosis* of Christ is rendered as a kind of cosmic strip tease’. He continues:

The poem’s details – the action of ‘undressing’, the placement in an ‘inne’, the emphasis upon pregnability, the seductive promise that ‘the doore | Shall still be open’ – all connote a sexual scenario which never fully surfaces, but which suffuses the process by which the almighty God of power becomes a vulnerable and compassionate deity.⁵²

⁵² Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), p. 249.

Certainly, Christ's vulnerability is emphasised when Herbert declares:

there came one
That ran upon him with a spear.
He, who came hither all alone,
Bringing nor man, nor arms, nor fear,
Receiv'd the blow upon his side.
(25-29)

With 'all alone', and the repetitive 'nor man, nor arms', Herbert intensifies the reader's sense of Christ's nakedness before his aggressor. Yet with 'nor fear', he juxtaposes Christ's spiritual strength with his corporeal weakness. It becomes clear that he is naked merely in material terms. Christ's wound, moreover, is reconfigured: it is not an embarrassing emblem of weakness, mortality or lost integrity (as Gail Kern Paster, for instance, describes the broken body of the early modern period). Rather, it is a symbol of sacrifice, love and forgiveness.⁵³ Schoenfeldt concurs with this reading. He states, 'the painful wounds that humans inflict on Jesus become portals to the visceral authenticity of his divine love'.⁵⁴

Herbert frames the wound as a space of spiritual comfort, a medium through which humanity can communicate with God. This sentiment is expressed through similarly sensual imagery within his poem 'In Thomam Didymum', which reads:

The servant puts his fingers in you.
Do you, Redeemer, permit this sign?
For sure, you are all love, and the pith of it.

⁵³ Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

⁵⁴ Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 102.

You make a shelter and a sweet rest
 For a grudging faith and a narrow mind,
 In which, luxuriating, they may conceal
 And wrap themselves
 As in a good inn or a strong fort,
 Before a roaring lion eats
 Them as they wander.⁵⁵

This poem echoes a number of the Catholic prayers to Christ's wounds which I explored within Chapter 3. Its resonance with that which asks Jesus to 'draw me in out of sin and hide me ever after in the holes of thy wounds', is particularly striking.⁵⁶ Within 'The Bag', in contrast, Christ voices his own invitation to humankind. Playing with the physical and spiritual dimensions of his bodily opening, he states, 'If ye have any thing to send or write, | (I have no bag, but here is room)' (31-32). The graphic impact of the wound is softened by this familiar imagery ('the bag') and through use of the evasive 'here', which directs, without naming the corporeal destination in explicit terms. In this sense, Herbert negotiates the balance of concealment and revelation to maximum semantic efficacy. He utilises the spiritual potency of the naked wound, while limiting its grotesqueness. This softening of anatomical imagery with a sense of the mundane and domestic was also a feature, of course, of Herbert's 'Perirrhanterium'.

Despite Herbert's careful management of his graphic bodily imagery, Schoenfeldt deems 'The Bag' 'Herbert's uncharacteristically grotesque' piece. It seems that he overlooked Herbert's reference to the 'Old and new Babylon' as 'Sin's nipples, feeding th'

⁵⁵ Herbert, in *The Latin Poetry of George Herbert: A Bilingual Edition*, ed. by Mark McCloskey and Paul R. Murphy (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1965), p. 107.

⁵⁶ Richard Verstegan, trans. the *Primer* [1599], in Robert S. Miola, *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 273.

east and west', within his poem 'The Church Militant' (215, 220). To Schoenfeldt, the wound of 'The Bag' is charged with heavily gendered sexual meaning. It 'functions', he states, 'as a kind of vaginal orifice, feminizing a traditionally masculine Christ'. He continues, 'Christ's willingness to assume a vulnerable body and be entered by all opens him up to the contamination of a fallen, and surprisingly feminine, sexuality'.⁵⁷

Herbert's feminisation of Christ is not entirely surprising in light of the prevalence of the motif of 'Christ as mother' within the Catholic culture of the later Middle Ages and early modern period. Indeed, Caroline Walker Bynum establishes that depictions of Christ with breasts, and giving birth to the Church, appeared within the devotional art, texts and visions of these periods.⁵⁸ Like the writers and artists identified by Bynum, Herbert utilises the allure of the 'open' feminine body, in contrast to the closed, masculine form. And yet, as Schoenfeldt highlights, this openness is not without tainted association. Such indiscriminate bodily accessibility has suggestions of promiscuity, not to mention a perverse permeability (as Paster's study of early modern medical handbooks and practises emphasises). On Christ, however, the taint of female sexuality is redeemed: it is re-cast in terms of his divine willingness to take on human shame and humility. Interpreted in these gendered terms, 'The Bag' offers a fascinating inversion of Donne's 'Batter My Heart', whereby the speaker is feminized before a sexually potent, masculine God. Of course, as Rambuss highlights, there is likewise scope within 'The Bag' for an alternative gendered reading. He questions, 'Would it be going too far to see that pouch doubling as something like a kind of scrotum?'⁵⁹ However, I would argue that this reading is weakened by the closed nature and connotations

⁵⁷ Schoenfeldt, *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship*, p. 249.

⁵⁸ Caroline Walker Bynum, 'The Female Body and Religious Practice', in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body Part One* (New York: Zone, 1989), pp. 160-219 (p. 176).

⁵⁹ Rambuss, p. 36.

of the male genitalia. After all, this is a poem in which the concepts of bodily accessibility and openness play a central metaphoric role.

The wound of 'The Bag' is used to symbolise humanity's intimate relationship with Christ, whose interior accessibility serves to express his spiritual and emotional accessibility to those who call upon him: 'That I shall mind, what you impart; | Look, you may put it very neare my heart' (35-36). Similarly, Donne utilises the imagery of Christ's wounds as a means of comforting worshippers. In one sermon, he urges his congregation to 'lay thy sins in his wounds, and he shall bury them so deepe, that onely they shall never have resurrection'.⁶⁰ Within the last stanzas of 'The Bag', the anatomical immediacy of the former lines fades away. And yet, the sense of Christ's openness is sustained. 'Christ' concludes, 'Sighs will convey | Any thing to me' (41-42). In this sense, humanity's 'sighs' are cast as the verbal equivalent of Christ's wound. They are humanity's means of exposing its innermost conflicts and desires, of establishing emotional intimacy with God. Within 'The Bag', then, Herbert moves away from the more formalised mode of worship promoted in 'Perihanterrium' (i.e. communal prayer). Rather, he stresses the spiritual value of humankind's raw and spontaneous utterances to Christ.

Within the poem's final stanzas, the focus shifts from the flesh to the word. The very poetic structure of 'The Bag' reinforces Christ's promise of spiritual proximity to humankind. Certainly, Christ is adopted by the speaker as his shield against despair. 'Away despair', he states, 'my gracious Lord doth hear' (1). Accordingly, the subject matter of 'despair' is kept at bay by his narration of Christ's incarnation and Passion. In the course of the poem's narrative, the voice of the speaker blends into that of 'Christ'. Indeed, it is unclear whether it is the speaker or Christ who voices the closing imperative, 'Hark despair, away' (42). Hence,

⁶⁰ *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. by Potter and Simpson, IX (1958), 'Sermon 11', p. 273.

Herbert demonstrates, in both structural and thematic terms, the intertwining of man and God achievable at the modest cost of an honest sigh.

Within ‘The Son’, as I highlighted earlier within this chapter, Donne, like Herbert, casts the wounds of Christ as the speaker’s spiritual strength and means of salvation. Yet in ‘Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward’ there is a shift in mood, as he enacts the perspective of spectator. Donne casts himself as an imagined onlooker upon the events of the Passion. Unlike Herbert’s ‘The Bag’, which recalls Christ’s sacrifice unflinchingly, Donne’s speaker is agonized by guilt, and his sense of unworthiness. Line 17 reads ‘Who sees God’s face, that is self life, must die’. Donne draws upon the removed God of Exodus: the God whose absolute presence, unveiled from humanity, will overcome his fragile faculties. This line reflects Luther’s fearful imaginings of the God of Judgement, poised with lily and sword.⁶¹ The lines which follow mark the dramatic shift between the Old and New Testament accounts of divine exposure. How is it, Donne seems to question, that the beings who could not bear to observe God’s omnipotent face within the Old Testament, could bear witness to his humiliation and torture in the New Testament? The poem takes the form of a spiritual self-interrogation, as the speaker demands:

What a death were it then to see God die?
 [...]
 Could I behold those hands which span the poles,
 And turn all spheres at once, pierced with those holes?
 Could I behold that endless height which is
 Zenith to us, and to’our antipodes,
 Humbled below us? Or that blood which is
 The seat of all our souls, if not of his,
 Made of dirt of dust, or that flesh which was worn,

⁶¹ Roland Herbert Bainton, *Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1950), p. 50.

By God, for his apparel, ragged, and torn?

(18-28)

Donne juxtaposes images of God's omnipotence with those which express the degradation of his incarnate form. The contrast is stark. The latter images perform an undercutting, yet it is an undercutting which, paradoxically, raises God even higher above the vision of humankind. Indeed, by describing Christ's flesh as that which 'was worn, | By God, for his apparel', Donne emphasises that God 'put on' human vulnerability, despite his native glory. By humbling himself to a pierced, bloodied, naked human carcass, Christ instils the speaker with a blinding sense of shame: shame felt not at the lowliness of this spectacle, but rather, at *his* unworthiness of it. He states, 'O Saviour, as thou hang'st upon the tree; | I turn my back to thee, but to receive | Corrections' (36-38). In the lines which follow, fear that Christ will not recognise him is revealed as the cause of the speaker's facial concealment. Sin is cast here as a perverse disguise which alienates humankind from its creator. Yet by referring to the ashamed concealment of his face, Donne, paradoxically, draws attention to it. The speaker pleads for exposure at the hands of his maker, and thus, the reversal of their positions: 'Burn off my rusts, and my deformity, | Restore thine image, so much, by thy grace, | That thou mayst know me, and I'll turn my face' (40-42). This desired passivity is characteristic of Donne's writing. Uncomfortable with rendering the naked God the object of his vision, he calls upon God to take the role of subject, and to capture him, conversely, within his divine gaze. The poem concludes with the redeeming power of God's knowing look – a contrast to the opening mood and posture.

God's gaze is likewise the subject of Herbert's 'The Glance'. Within this poem, the experience of God's spectatorship is described in nurturing terms. In contrast to the guilt and

anxiety provoked by thoughts of God's 'glance' within Donne's 'Good Friday' and in Herbert's 'The Sinner', Herbert's speaker relates:

When first thy sweet and gracious eye
 Vouchsafed ev'n in the midst of youth and night
 To look upon me, who before did lie
 Welt'ring in sin;
 I felt a sug'red strange delight,
 Passing all cordials made by any art,
 Bedew, embalm, and overrun my heart,
 And take it in.

(1-8)

Herbert describes the divine 'glance' in gentle, mellifluous tones. The speaker appears as a child, comforted from the nightmare of sin by a tender look from his father. In the concluding stanza of the poem, the speaker anticipates the ultimate gaze – that to which humankind will be subjected on the Day of Judgement. He states, 'If thy first glance so powerful be, | A mirth but opened and sealed up again; | What wonders shall we feel, when we shall see | Thy full-eyed love!' (17-20). With 'full-eyed', Herbert captures the absolute, revelatory nature of this day, when all sins shall be laid bare. Yet God here is not the terrifying, penetrative judge of Luther's nightmares, but rather, a figure of 'love'. This is an intimate gaze, but the intimacy is comforting. The speaker, indeed, has the courage to meet God's full-eyed gaze with his own. In a reversal of positions, and an inversion of the events of Donne's 'Good Friday', it is humankind that will 'see' God. Or rather, God and humankind will lock eyes within a mutual glance. Within the concluding lines of 'The Glance', there is a shift from the singular to the plural, as Herbert draws his audience into a meditation upon this future scene, when that which is 'sealed' will be set 'open'. Herbert's

reference to God's gaze as that which is 'opened and sealed up again', of course, reflects God's hidden nature throughout the earthly life of his subjects. God's revelations to humankind are carefully controlled, as both Luther and Calvin emphasise.

The yearning to look upon God's face expressed throughout 'The Glance' is conveyed with greater immediacy within Herbert's 'Home'. Each stanza within this poem concludes with a refrain pleading for physical proximity with God: 'O show thyself to me, or take me up to thee!' (5-6, 11-12, 17-18 etc.). More movingly, Herbert's 'The Search' puzzles over humankind's deprivation of the sight of its creator. The speaker questions, 'Where is my God? What hidden place | Conceals thee still? | Which covert dare eclipse thy face? | Is it thy will?' (29-32). While humanity has a tendency to hide from God, these religious lyrics emphasise that the converse is likewise experienced, much to humanity's anguish.

While Herbert calls here for a vision of God, Donne asks for the revelation of God's true Church. His request is apt, given the denominational conflicts which characterised the Reformation period. In a bid for transparency, Donne's 'Divine Meditation 18' urges, 'Show me, dear Christ, thy spouse, so bright and clear' (1). Extending St Paul's biblical metaphor of the Church as the bride of Christ to what Anne Ferry deems 'its most shocking limits',⁶² Donne invokes Christ to:

Betray kind husband thy spouse to our sights,
And let mine amorous soul court thy mild dove,
Who is most true, and pleasing to thee, then
When she' is embraced and open to most men.

(11-14)

⁶² Anne Ferry, *The 'Inward' Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 232.

Reflecting upon this stanza, Lewalski remarks, ‘Surely no one but Donne would so wittily seem to confuse the Bride with her antithesis in Revelation, the Great Whore of Babylon’.⁶³ Like Herbert in ‘The Bag’, Donne reconfigures an image of typically shameful bodily openness as a symbol of salvation. In this case, the openness is explicitly female, and its sexually suggestive nature is unmistakable. As Lewalski signals, Donne plays upon the striking biblical metaphor for spiritual idolatry: the fornicating woman. But the female’s sexually prone nature does not symbolise spiritual betrayal here, but rather the universality of the true Church. Thus, Donne inverts the association of female sexual promiscuity with spiritual depravity – an association which we saw, for instance, within Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*. Within this startling stanza, Donne imagines Christ as a benevolent pimp. As we have seen, such daring utilisation of bodily imagery is a prominent feature of Donne’s poetic explorations of the divine and human relationship.

III Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the spiritual potency of concepts and images of nakedness, disrobing, and covering, as they are employed within the religious lyrics of Donne and Herbert. Both poets revel in the paradoxes presented by Christian exposure: the dress which is found through undressing, the integrity achieved through self-devastation. Their devotional poetry seems to create a confessional space – a space in which to try out postures of nakedness and dress and to ‘tumble up and down’ the paradoxes of Christianity. Although the extent to which these poems were composed with a public readership/audience in mind remains unclear, they certainly serve to draw readers and listeners into shared acts of spiritual contemplation. Readers and auditors are invited to ‘dress and undress’ themselves,

⁶³ Lewalski, p. 274.

and to extend this process to their creator, whose naked flesh and sacrificial wounds are set forth for spiritual exploration, and inspiration.

In Regina M. Schwartz's mind, these religious lyrics are 'virtually "sacramental"' – they are 'called upon to carry the performative power of liturgy'.⁶⁴ The poets' vivid evocations of confession, communion, and meditation have an intensity and sincerity which goes beyond mere passive representation, but could be deemed, rather, spiritually transformative. And concepts and images of nakedness play a central role in fostering this striking sense of honesty. This chapter has illustrated that scenes and suggestions of physical and spiritual concealment and disrobing, both tenderly and graphically described, fuel a sense of heartfelt, spiritual exposure, and a desire to re-clothe in Christ's saving virtues.

The poets' shocking, pitiful, and seductive representations of nakedness and undressing serve not only to arrest, but to create a sense of irreducible spiritual immediacy. At 'John Donne: Poet in the City', it became clear that these poems continue to resonate intimately with readers today. As Jo Shapcott declares of Donne's lyric poetry, '[we] experience the sinewy tracks of his thoughts as if they were our own', and '[w]e witness the movements of his thoughts until they become our own'.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Oakley reflects that '[i]t is Donne's exquisite gift in communicating his own experience that I am grateful for as both human and clergyman'.⁶⁶ The following chapter explores the relationship of nakedness, spiritual experience, and the modern audience in further detail.

⁶⁴ Regina M. Schwartz, *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism: When God Left the World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 120.

⁶⁵ Jo Shapcott, at 'John Donne: Poet in the City'.

⁶⁶ Oakley, at 'John Donne: Poet in the City'.

CHAPTER 6: NAKEDNESS AND THEOLOGY IN *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*

This chapter considers the treatment and spiritual affect of nakedness within early modern drama, using Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (c.1603) as its case study.¹ The dramatic form departs from the religious lyric and narrative poem, most notably, through its utilisation of the bodily presence of actors and their audiences. It goes without saying that the 'corporeal exigencies of performance', as Katherine Eisaman Maus neatly terms the live and sensory characteristics of theatre, have a significant role to play within the representation and reception of nakedness.² The potential for live, bodily exposure throughout the course of the dramatic narrative creates interesting parallels with the early modern dissection process (conducted, as explored within Chapter 3, within custom built anatomy *theatres*, designed to facilitate bodily spectatorship) and likewise, with early modern ecclesiastical ritual. Laura Lunger Knoppers, for instance, describes the white sheet penance imposed by the ecclesiastical courts as 'a liturgical drama'.³ And as the previous chapter established, early modern church worship has been described as 'theatrical'. 'By the early seventeenth century', Ramie Targoff states, 'to pray in the English church meant always to perform'.⁴ Targoff asserts that 'liturgical' and 'theatrical' performances are distinguishable by the 'nature' of their 'ethical charge', as noted within the previous chapter.⁵ But are these distinctions really so simplistic? *Measure* is a secular text, but this chapter will argue that it has a strong spiritual resonance. As this chapter draws to a close, I will consider how far the theatrical

¹ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. by J. W. Lever (London: Arden, 2004 [c.1603]).

² Katherine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 177.

³ Laura Lunger Knoppers, '(En)gendering Shame: *Measure for Measure* and the Spectacles of Power', *English Literary Renaissance*, 23.3 (1993), 450-71 (p. 452).

⁴ Ramie Targoff, 'The Performance of Prayer: Sincerity and Theatricality in Early Modern England' *Representations*, 60 (1997), 49-69 (p. 57), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928805>> [accessed 25 June 2012].

⁵ Targoff, p. 60.

form serves as the place, both within early modern culture and today's culture, where the spiritual resonances of nakedness are experienced most potently.

Measure is perhaps Shakespeare's most explicitly theological play, its action framed, by virtue of its title, by Christ's Sermon on the Mount. Christ's words reverberate within the 'audience mind', as Emrys Jones terms it: 'For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again'.⁶ The Sermon continues, 'And why seest thou the mote, that is in thy brother's eye, and perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?' (Matthew 7. 1-3).⁷ Thus, Shakespeare invokes a sermon in which the critical gaze is deflected back onto the observer. The moral blemishes of others are cast by Christ as a prompt for self-reflection – a signal of the beholder's own deformities. In its promise of 'judgement', moreover, the Sermon on the Mount calls to mind the exposure and scrutiny of *all* sins to take place at the second coming of Christ. Through his evocation of this biblical sermon, Shakespeare establishes the central theme of his 'comedy': the revelation of sin. And this is no abstract revelation of sin, but as Christ's sermon implies, the revelation of *our sin*, of *my sin*: that is, the sin borne both personally and collectively by members of the audience.

While the characters and events we observe are fictional, on paper and on-stage, a number of critics and reviewers have asserted the discomfiting power of *Measure* to lay bare the sins of its audience and readers, stimulating self-reflection within the world beyond the theatre. Louis Burkhardt declares that 'the themes of reciprocity and mercy so consciously hammered out in five acts invite the spectator to admit that he or she is "the

⁶ Emrys Jones, *Scenic Form in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 6.

⁷ *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, 3rd edn (Pleasant Hope: L. L. Brown, 1993), with an introduction by Michael H. Brown, Matthew 7. 1-2.

culprit”, or at least is capable of becoming one’.⁸ This sentiment is echoed by Ewan Fernie, who writes that ‘*Measure* seems to compel confession, not so much in the gut-spilling and self-disclosing as the spiritually serious sense. And the confession it compels is of a horrible failure to love, a deeply ingrained and systematic practice of rape in moral and spiritual life’.⁹ *Measure*’s provocation of spiritual uncovering — an exposure and admission of one’s inherent corruption — aligns it with the church sermon, the religious lyrics of Donne and Herbert, the Anglican liturgy, and Spenser’s spiritual allegory. This chapter will consider the utilisation of concepts and images of nakedness and covering, and their spiritual affect, within the text of *Measure*, and in productions of the play. Centrally, it will consider how the ‘corporeal exigencies’ of performance contribute to the spiritual resonance of nakedness, and how far the spiritual meanings surrounding and prompted by the undressed body continue to emerge within modern readings and productions of *Measure*.

The action of *Measure* centres upon Angelo’s very public exposure of another man’s sin. ‘Fellow, why dost thou show me thus to th’ world? Bear me to prison where I am committed’ (I. 2. 108-109). These are Claudio’s words as he is paraded – a condemned fornicator – before the citizens of Vienna. He is accompanied in this public shaming by his pregnant lover, Juliet. The hyperbolic ‘world’ to which Claudio refers not only comprises the on-stage witnesses, but also, the play’s audience. This is one of several dramatic moments within *Measure* in which Shakespeare causes the audience to reflect upon its position of spectatorship, and to consider its complicity, as such, with the young couple’s exposure. Barbara Freedman defines ‘theatrical’ works as those which ‘confound the spectator’s look and parade that fact’, those which disrupt ‘a steady position of spectatorship’ by returning

⁸ Louis Burkhardt, ‘Spectator Seduction: *Measure for Measure*’, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 37, 3 (1995), 236-63, in *JSTOR* (p. 256) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40755073>> [accessed 16 November 2012].

⁹ Ewan Fernie, *The Demonic: Literature and Experience* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 199.

the observer's 'gaze'.¹⁰ *Measure* is certainly 'theatrical' in this sense. By having Claudio express his acute awareness of his exposure to the masses, Shakespeare seems to morally implicate his audience, putting them 'on stage', in psychological terms. For if we find ourselves judging Claudio, or contributing to his naked shame, are we not, as Christ's sermon states, compelled to return this gaze upon ourselves?

This sense of moral intrusion was heightened by Simon McBurney's use of visual nakedness within this scene, in his production at The National Theatre (2006).¹¹ His Claudio is led out bare-chested, wearing only shorts: his body young and muscular, a visual emblem of human sensuality. Set against the full, layered attire of suits and ties worn by the characters who survey him, the actor's naked limbs and torso mark his social and moral exposure. He is, in effect, 'costumed' with nakedness. Claudio's comparative state of undress bespeaks his impotency in the hands of the law, which now exhibits its control over his body. Alongside the suited officials and citizens, whose dress signals civility and transcendence of the base demands of the body, the undressed Claudio appears fleshy and primitive. Ironically, the highly sexualized Lucio is a member of the suited party.

Through his near-naked appearance at Angelo's command, Claudio is cast as the representative, both for Vienna and the audience, of human corporeality. His enforced bodily exposure marks a loss of individuality. This is reflected by Michael Neill's reference to nakedness as a harrowing symbol of 'indistinction'.¹² This abstraction of Claudio's nakedness is rooted within the text. Indeed, he speaks of his punishment in terms which highlight his configuration, under Angelo's sentence and legal parade, as the symbol of

¹⁰ Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* (London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. i.

¹¹ *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Simon McBurney (The Lyttelton Theatre, The National Theatre, London: The National Theatre and Complicite, 2004-2006) [performance] [DVD recording of 'revival', 15 February 2006, The National Theatre Archive].

¹² Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 9.

Vienna's unruly sexuality. He states that Angelo, 'for a name | Now puts the drowsy and neglected act | Freshly on me: 'tis surely for a name' (I. 2. 158-160). Thus, Claudio highlights the arbitrary nature of this sentence upon his life. He disassociates himself from the judgement which he is condemned to represent. His words prefigure the substitutability of bodies demonstrated by the later head and bed tricks – the sense that *any* body will serve Angelo's purpose of demonstrating his control of fleshy activity. As Kiernan Ryan observes, this is a play in which 'official social and moral distinctions' are blurred. He reflects, 'Duplication and exchange swarm through the body politic of Vienna like a contagious disease, infecting high and low, the virtuous and the vicious alike, and thereby erasing the divisions upon which such discriminations rest'.¹³

As Lunger Knoppers notes, the public exposure to which Claudio and Juliet are subjected reflects the shaming ritual employed by the early modern church courts, for the punishment of sexual misconduct.¹⁴ As detailed within my second chapter, the offender was ordered to stand before the church congregation in a white sheet, and to confess the nature of his sin before the community. In addition to this public confession, a sign was sometimes pinned to the offender's body, naming his moral transgression. This exercise was sometimes repeated on market day, at the busiest point within the market square. Both John Barton (RSC, 1970) and Michael Boyd (RSC, 1998) draw upon the visual details of this ecclesiastical ritual within their representations of this scene.¹⁵ Barton's Claudio wears white, and has an imposing codpiece – a fitting indicator of the sexual nature of his crime. He bears

¹³ Kiernan Ryan 'Measure for Measure: Marxism before Marx', in *Marxist Shakespeares*, ed. by Jean E. Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 227-244 (p. 242).

¹⁴ Lunger Knoppers, p. 452.

¹⁵ *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Michael Boyd (The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 1998) [Performance] [DVD recording, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive].

Measure for Measure, by William Shakespeare, dir. by John Barton (The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 1970) [Performance] [Performance photographs, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive].

a sign reading ‘*fit mors eis qui fornicator*’. Meanwhile, Michael Boyd’s Claudio and Juliet enter the stage in chains, wearing wooden plaques which read ‘fornicator’. Thus, both Barton and Boyd evoke the shame and condemnation of the young couple through the use of historical and ecclesiastically charged imagery. This contrasts with McBurney’s simple but striking use of the naked torso to mark Claudio’s shame and vulnerability. Boyd’s decision to heighten the ecclesiastical associations of this scene is unsurprising, given his vision of his *Measure* as ‘a shadow of a Christian story’.¹⁶ Indeed, his production opens with projected text from Revelations, recounting the burning of the fornicating whore, witnessed by those who ‘lived deliciously with her’. The projections are set to trumpets, evoking the Day of Judgement. The branding of Claudio and Juliet with antique signs bearing the judgement ‘fornicator’ injects this scene with similar, Old Testament associations. Certainly, this public exposure of sexual shame echoes the biblical denouncement of the fornicating Jerusalem and Zion, discussed within Chapter 2.¹⁷

Within the text of *Measure* itself, Shakespeare lays emphasis upon the body’s own potential to disclose sin. Unlike that of Claudio, Juliet’s body bears the signs of sin, so much so that her bodily condition and fault become semantically intertwined. The Duke questions her, ‘Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry?’ (II. 3. 19). As Mary Thomas Crane reflects, ‘The Duke suggests that Juliet is literally pregnant with sin and shame, which “character” her body’.¹⁸ The Provost’s reference to Juliet as one who has ‘blister’d her report’ (II. 3. 12) casts her fornication and pregnancy in terms which render her body disfigured, perhaps indelibly, by her sin. This notion of sin manifested in the imagery of the flesh is widespread

¹⁶ Michael Boyd, ‘*Measure for Measure*, The Ashcroft Room’, Stratford-upon-Avon: May 1998 [DVD recording, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive].

¹⁷ See Lamentations 1. 8, and Isaiah 3. 17.

¹⁸ Mary Thomas Crane, ‘Male Pregnancy and Cognitive Permeability in *Measure for Measure*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 49.3. (1998), 269-92 (p. 281).

within the religious discourse of this period. Such imagery pervades the religious lyrics of Donne and Herbert, as the previous chapter established.

Juliet's protruding womb serves as the caption publicising the couple's transgression. Certainly, Claudio draws upon the imagery of inscription when he declares that '[t]he stealth of our most mutual entertainment | With character too gross is writ on Juliet' (I. 2. 143-144). Lucio's reflection that 'this Claudio is condemned for untrussing' (III. 2. 173) or as J. W. Lever glosses this line, 'for untying the "points" attaching hose to doublet' is very much to the point.¹⁹ However, it is the morally transgressive nature of this undressing that captures Angelo's 'strict' restraint. Juliet's body blazons the couple's sensual gratification. Lisa Jardine refers to the pregnant female as the 'Renaissance image of female sexuality'.²⁰ Mario Digangi echoes Jardine's assertion, pointing to the widespread medical belief that pregnancy was dependent upon female sexual pleasure. He speaks of Juliet as 'an image of her own fulfilled sexuality, her belly an eloquent narrative of her illicit desires'.²¹ Far from decorating the couple with signs of sin and repentance, Shakespeare suggests that Angelo allows the *revealing* body of Juliet to confess their transgressive acts; and more widely, one senses, the transgressive acts of the Viennese community. Juliet (alongside her counterpart, Claudio) 'carries', symbolically, the sins of all human flesh. Within the textual world of *Measure*, she is the visual and moral emblem of 'sweet uncleanness' (II. 4. 54).

Alexander Leggatt notes the physical absence and silence of prostitutes within the text. In light of the many references to 'the stews' and the presence of several bawds

¹⁹ J. W. Lever, in William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. by J. W. Lever, p. 89.

²⁰ Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1983), p. 130.

²¹ Mario Digangi, 'Pleasure and Danger: Measuring Female Sexuality in *Measure for Measure*', *ELH*, 60. 3 (1993), 589-609 (p. 589).

(namely, Pompey and Mistress Overdone), this absence is surprising.²² However, it is addressed and countered within the majority of modern productions. Directors commonly fill the stage with prostitutes and their clients, who simulate flirtation and even sexual acts as a backdrop to Act I Scene 2. Within McBurney's production, these simulations are particularly graphic: television screens display distorted pornographic images, and there are flashes of naked buttocks on stage as prostitutes and their clients engage in sexual activity. Roxana Silbert's production (RSC, 2011) avoids nakedness below the waist, but opens Act I Scene 2 with displays of sadomasochistic activity.²³ Lucio pauses to remove nipple clamps from his chest before speaking, for instance. These displays of sexualized bodies (both male and female) displace some of the sexual shame attending the body of Juliet – sexualized by the intimate physical activity which is blazoned by her swelling womb. Indeed, by lending visual and highly physicalized imagery to Lucio and his friends' bawdy exchanges, these directors heighten the sense of devotion surrounding the sexual activity of the affianced Claudio and Juliet. Thus, they highlight the cruelty and injustice of Angelo's sentence.

Despite its corresponding revelation and humiliation of the sinner, the act of white sheet shaming was grounded in the concepts of reconciliation and reintegration into the Christian community. This ecclesiastical punishment addressed the spiritual nature of the offender's sin, calling for a personal confession and a plea for the forgiveness of God and neighbour, as I illustrated within Chapter 2. Indeed, the white sheet *covered* the offending body of the sinner, masking the sensuality of the flesh. It spoke of the purity to which the offender, now penitent, would strive. In this sense, this ritual represented a process of spiritual purging and re-clothing. Within Shakespeare's text, Angelo's shaming of Claudio

²² Alexander Leggatt, 'Substitution in *Measure for Measure*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39. 3 (1988), 342-59 (p. 356).

²³ *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Roxana Silbert (The Swan Theatre: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 2011) [Performance] [DVD recording of November 2011 performance at The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive].

and Juliet notably lacks any such framework of spiritual cleansing and regeneration – the laying open of sin in order to enable the healing entrance of Christ. This process was advocated by Luther and Calvin, and by the poetry of Herbert and Donne, as the previous chapters demonstrate. Angelo’s exposure of the couple lacks this spiritual re-clothing. Rather, it signals irrevocable condemnation: a final judgement on their sin. ‘See you’, he states, ‘the fornicatress be removed’ (II. 2. 23).

In contrast to Angelo, the Duke (disguised as Friar Lodowick) speaks to Juliet in terms of spiritual adjustment and adornment. He states, ‘I’ll teach you how you shall arraign your conscience | And try your penitence, if it be sound, | or hollowly put on’ (II. 3. 22-23). The phrase ‘arraign your conscience’ implies that Juliet should conduct a personal spiritual examination and trial – a judgement more valuable spiritually than that of Angelo, which appears rooted in the flesh. In an echoing of the reformed emphasis upon spiritual authenticity and the banishment of spiritual hypocrisy, the Duke implies that true penitence takes root internally. A mere ‘showing’ of remorse, like that of the white sheet and wand, lacks any spiritual value if it is not reciprocated in spiritual terms. Of course, the phrase ‘put on’ also offers an ironic reflection of the Duke’s own position – one who has ‘put on’ the spiritual robes of the friar in order, it would appear, to expose the sins of others.

Shakespeare’s Duke presents a curious overlap of character, theatrical, and spiritual function. In his application of Foucauldian theory to the play, Richard Wilson remarks that ‘the cover adopted by the “old fantastical Duke of dark corners”’ (i.e. the costume of the friar) is highly fitting.²⁴ ‘[B]oth priest and psychiatrist’, he states, ‘require subjects to bare their souls in light and language they control from a darkness and silence which occludes

²⁴ Richard Wilson, “‘Prince of Darkness’: Foucault’s Renaissance’, in *Shakespeare in French Theory: King of Shadows* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 96.

their own'.²⁵ In Wilson's view, *Measure* 'tests' 'that utopian fantasy of total social transparency before panoptic power'.²⁶ He argues that the Duke substitutes 'a web of internalised submission for the executioner's block', adopting 'a far more subtle "Craft" that practices on what man may "within him hide"'.²⁷ Certainly, the Duke's spiritual robes allow him to access the internal identities of his subjects: knowledge which he utilises in order to consolidate his own position. Sin itself, within this reading, serves as a subtle but potent mechanism of social control. Wilson reflects that '[s]in, especially when internalised as guilt, has produced the subjects of authority as surely as any ideology'.²⁸ Thus, Wilson frames sin as that which is engendered by power, and keeps the people in their place. He suggests that Shakespeare uses *Measure*, and the Duke's spiritual covering in particular, to expose the very constructs of social authority. Religion, of course, is one such construct.

Jonathan Dollimore expresses a similar view within his earlier *Radical Tragedy*.²⁹ Indeed, he suggests that the Duke's adoption of a 'religious disguise' serves to unmask Christianity itself as 'a mere politic device'.³⁰ The Duke's manipulative and morally dubious behaviour as Friar Lodowick (most notably, his lies to Isabella) certainly raises questions about religious authority and its susceptibility to abuse. And yet, G. Wilson Knight refers to the play as a Christian 'parable'.³¹ Perceived in these terms, the Duke surely performs the allegorical part of God or Christ. Angelo's reaction to the revealed Duke frames him with these spiritual connotations. He declares:

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Wilson, p. 100.

²⁸ Wilson, p. 96.

²⁹ Jonathan Dollimore, 'Transgression and Surveillance in *Measure for Measure*', in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 72-87 (p. 85).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1977), p. 96.

O my dread Lord,
 I should be guiltier than my guiltiness
 To think I can be undiscernible,
 When I perceive your Grace, like power divine,
 Hath looked upon my passes.

(V. 1. 364-367)

These lines seem to capture and reflect the ever present and penetrating gaze of God, to which all are subject. Angelo's words reflect the reformed theological notion that to presume to conceal one's sins from God is itself a heinous sin. This view was asserted with great vigour by Calvin, as we saw within Chapter 2. In this sense, Shakespeare casts Angelo as a fallen Adam, ashamed at his attempts at concealment before the almighty.

In the opening scene of the play, the Duke announces his personal 'unfold[ing]' of power. He 'dresses' Angelo, subsequently, in the 'organs' of his 'power' and 'love' (I. 1. 3; 19-21) and conceals himself in the humble robes of a friar. From an allegorical viewpoint, his actions could be interpreted as a dramatic parallel to the incarnation of Christ. Though empowered by the social and spiritual knowledge which he gains by embracing the humble dress and persona of 'Friar Lodowick', this disguise renders the Duke vulnerable, in other respects, within Vienna. His social weakness is reflected most prominently by the taunts and lies of Lucio. Moreover, the Duke's lack of social authority within this role is also made apparent in his exchange with the Provost in Act IV, Scene 2. Here, despite the supposed spiritual authority proclaimed by his habit, the Duke is required to fall back upon signs of secular power in order to prevent Claudio's execution. He states:

Yet, since I
 see you fearful, that neither my coat, integrity, nor

persuasion can with ease attempt you, I will go
 further than I meant, to pluck all fears out of you.
 Look you, sir, here is the hand and seal of the Duke.
 (IV. 2. 187-191)

The impact of the revelation of this mere, distant prop of authority (a letter signed and stamped by the Duke – a shadow of his presence) hints at the paralysing majesty of his full presence. Like the veil of *The Faerie Queene*'s Una, or the humble flesh adopted by Christ, the Duke's habit masks his inherent authority. His disguise allows the citizens of Vienna to operate unselfconsciously before his gaze. In these spiritual robes, moreover, he renders himself accessible to the vulnerable. Indeed, Isabella's apology to the revealed Duke, 'O, give me pardon, | That I, your unknown vassal, have employ'd and pain'd | Your unknown sovereignty' (V. 1. 382-384) suggests that sensations of shame and inferiority would have strained honest exchanges between them, had his true identity been known to her.

Described as one who strives 'above all', 'to know himself' (III. 2. 226-27), the Duke appears as one who rather strives to know others – and to do so in intimate, spiritual terms. Critics including Harry Berger Jr have puzzled over the potential implications of the Duke's words, 'Angelo: | There is a kind of character in thy life | That to th' observer doth thy history | Fully unfold' (I. 1. 26-29). There is, as Berger expresses, 'a vague sense of withheld or occulted meanings, which, on our returning to I.I. from later scenes, becomes much less vague and more unsettling'.³² The Duke is established by Shakespeare as a figure of secrecy. His imagery of fullness and unfolding is striking. He speaks of Angelo as one whose inner life, his personal 'history', spreads open before his enquiring gaze. Do these remarks regarding Angelo's disclosing 'character' ('character' glossed by J. W. Lever as an

³² Harry Berger Jr, *Making Trifles of Terrors: Redistributing Complicities in Shakespeare* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 343.

‘engraving’ or ‘inscription’) suggest that he bears the spiritual marks or inscriptions of sin: the blemishes of the human condition?³³ Are his sins as transparent to the Duke as those marked upon the body of Juliet, displayed ‘with character too gross’? Or does he merely refer to his own knowledge of Mariana? I would argue that what we see here is best described by Simon Palfrey’s notion of ‘the unanswered curiosity’ of Shakespeare’s plays. Palfrey states:

It is the most basic hook there is: leave something dangling and we will seek to pluck it, leave it in darkness and we will hope to illuminate it. The aim is to get the reader or viewer leaning forward, desperate to peep into undisclosed spaces.³⁴

This theory is somewhat akin to Sarah Toulalan’s definition of pornographic ‘pleasure’, as that which is derived from spectatorship of the apparently ‘hidden’ or ‘private’.³⁵ Certainly, by shrouding both Angelo and the Duke in narrative mystery, Shakespeare makes them more conspicuous to the audience’s gaze. There is a sense in which characters such as Juliet, Lucio and Pompey evade exposure, paradoxically, by nature of their open corporeality. Lucio’s sexual functions are made plain, of course, by the crude and graphic language with which he recalls his bodily exploits. Meanwhile, Juliet’s telling bodily state is accompanied by a free admission of her fault: ‘Then was your sin of a heavier kind than his’, states the Duke. ‘I do confess it’ she replies ‘and repent it, father’ (I. 1. 26-29). In this sense, these characters create the ‘disclosed spaces’ which make the ‘undisclosed spaces’ occupied by Isabella, the Duke, and Angelo, all the more theatrically alluring. In direct

³³ Lever, p. 5.

³⁴ Simon Palfrey, *Doing Shakespeare* (London: Arden, 2005), p. 249.

³⁵ Sarah Toulalan, *Imagining Sex: Pornography and Bodies in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 161. See Chapter 3.

contrast to Lucio, Angelo is presented as one who ‘scarce confesses that his blood flows, or that his appetite is more to bread than stone’. He ‘doth rebate and blunt his natural edge’ (I. 4. 57-60). Hence, we look for the revelation of his human frailties.

A number of critics see an indirect disclosure of Angelo’s ‘natural edge’ within his exposure and humiliation of Juliet and Claudio. Ronald R. MacDonald states that ‘[i]t is perhaps best understood as his displaced attack on his own sexuality, a symbolic attempt to purge his own nature of the sensuality it is irrevocably saddled with’.³⁶ Is it Angelo’s discomfoting awareness of a biblical ‘mote’ within his own eye that causes him to magnify the ‘mote’ of others? To what degree should the revelation of Claudio and Juliet’s sexualized bodies be viewed as Angelo’s attempt to displace and control his own unruly urges? Does their display of shame speak *Angelo’s* name, as Claudio implies, more than it does their own? As Chapter 4 identified, Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* presents some similarly displaced attacks upon the sensual body.

The creation of a substitute to bear one’s shame is a recurrent theme within *Measure*. The Duke’s transfer of power seems designed, at least partially, to cloak his own weaknesses. By laying open Angelo’s faults, he re-directs the critical gaze of his citizens. The Duke’s dislike for public scrutiny emerges when he states, ‘I love the people, | But do not like to stage me to their eyes’ (I. 2. 67-68). In fact, he primes Angelo to step into the line of public exposure, while he himself enjoys the role of voyeur. The Duke muses:

What figure of us, think you, he will bear?
For you must know, we have with special soul
Elected him our absence to supply;
Lent him our terror, drest him with our love,

³⁶ Ronald R. MacDonald, ‘*Measure for Measure: The Flesh Made Word*’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900*, 30.2 (1990), 265-282 (p. 274).

And given his deputation all the organs
Of our own power.

(I. 1. 16-21)

The imagery of clothing, within this speech, is very evocative. It is the clothing of political power, but notably encompasses the spiritual virtues of 'love' and 'mercy' (I. 1. 44). Thus, Shakespeare emphasises that political power is spiritually charged. The qualities bestowed upon Angelo remain, quite emphatically, those of the Duke: it is 'our love', 'our power' and 'our terror' with which Angelo is 'drest'. This sense of impermanency is reinforced by the verb 'Lent'. The Duke describes Angelo's robing in terms which signal the *disrobing* that will inevitably follow. It is a mere costume of power, and can be stripped from him as quickly as it is bestowed. This act of 'dressing' serves, paradoxically, to highlight Angelo's inherent nakedness, in contrast to the Duke's inherent power. This is demonstrated in full by Lucio's unwitting unmasking of the friar as the Duke within the play's final act. Only a glimpse of the Duke's visage is required to establish his words (uttered in the person of Friar Lodowick) as 'truth', and to expose those of Angelo and Lucio as lies.

The precarious costume established within the Duke's abdicating speech prefigures that which is later depicted by Isabella. She confronts the merciless Angelo, stating:

man, proud man,
Dress'd in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd –
His glassy essence – like an angry ape
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As makes the angels weep; who with our spleens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

(II. 2. 118-124)

Again, Angelo's power is described in terms of a flimsy costume: 'brief' not only in the sense that it is 'lent' to him by the Duke, but most importantly, 'brief' in terms of the ultimate stripping of earthly status to be performed at the Last Judgement. In this sense, the Duke is also implicated within Isabella's undressing of power. Lever remarks that this description 'implies the analogous proverb, "The higher an ape goes, the more he shows his tail"'.³⁷ Certainly, Isabella cuts through Angelo's facade of abstract authority and justice, forcing him to perceive his mortality. The same technique is used when she declares that:

authority, though it err like others,
 Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself
 That skins the vice o'th'top. Go to your bosom,
 Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
 That's like my brother's fault.

(II. 2. 135-139)

Unlike Lucio, who proclaims that Angelo is 'an ungenitur'd agent', 'one whose blood | Is very snow-broth' (I. 4. 58), Isabella appeals to him as a man of flesh and blood, and inspires him to view himself in such naked terms. Indeed, she critiques the tendency of the powerful to conceal unhealed vices behind a new covering of skin.

Isabella's imagery penetrates Angelo's social trappings, drawing upon his internal anatomy. It offers a fitting evocation of the inward, psychological turn invoked by her arguments. This undressing is described by Angelo as a discomfoting dressing: the acquisition of an intensified bodily awareness, and of spiritual doubt. He demands, 'Why do you put these sayings upon me?' (II. 2. 134). Isabella offers Angelo an alternative, spiritual 'dress', stating:

³⁷ Lever, p. 46.

No ceremony that to great ones longs,
 Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
 The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
 Become them with one half so good a grace
 As mercy does.

(II. 2. 59-63)

In this sense, Isabella echoes the Pauline concept of undressing oneself in earthly terms in order to 'put on' Christ. As we saw within the previous chapters, this concept was adopted by Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. The costume of secular authority ('the king's crown', 'the deputed sword', 'the marshal's truncheon', 'the judge's robe') – the symbols, in other words, of majesty, justice, power, and honour, bestow little glory or dignity upon the subject if Christian compassion is lacking. Mercy, rather, is the one true badge of nobleness.

Angelo responds to Isabella as one who is 'undressed' by her arguments. Perceiving the stirring of sexual feelings within himself, he begins to conduct a sensory self-dissection. He begins, 'What's this? What's this?' (II. 2. 163). The self-doubting speech which follows signals a shift within Angelo's self-perception, from abstract self-assurance to intimate self-probing. His gaze as 'precise' judge is turned inwards – interiorised. He becomes the object of his own merciless examination. His sexual awakening prompts an agonising new awareness of himself as one who is mortal, one whose feelings are rooted in base flesh: one who bears the human taint of sin. His internal workings are scrutinised, and vocalised with touching honesty and puzzlement: 'O heavens, why does my blood thus muster to my heart, | Making both it unable for itself, | And dispossessing all my other parts | Of necessary fitness?' (II. 4. 19-23). Janet Adelman refers to this scene as 'an elaborately psychologised

version of the fall'.³⁸ Angelo expresses his sense of nakedness in a linguistic outpouring of self-disgust, accusing *himself* of foulness, and expelling *himself* from his internal Eden. 'O fie, fie, fie! | What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?' (II. 2. 172-173). Feeling stripped of all integrity by his sensations of illicit desire, he momentarily divests *himself* of the social power bestowed on him by the Duke: 'O, let her brother live! | Thieves for their robbery have authority, | When judges steal themselves' (II. 2. 175-177). The personal pronoun, 'I', begins to slip into Angelo's speeches, weaving in and out of his usage of the collective 'our'. Angelo discredits yet continues to cling to his protective public identity. He is destabilised by his discovery, unable to reconcile his higher faculties with the depravity of his embodied condition.

Angelo's behaviour within this scene reflects the sexual theory of Georges Bataille. Bataille describes 'eroticism' as that which destroys 'self-possession'.³⁹ He states:

The individual splits up and his unity is shattered from the first instant of the sexual crisis [...] Eroticism shows the other side of a façade of unimpeachable propriety. Behind the façade are revealed the feelings, parts of the body and habits we are normally ashamed of.⁴⁰

The 'other side' of Angelo's 'façade' is exhibited both to himself and to the audience. His shame and sense of exposure are magnified by his lingering self-regard. Indeed, it is his very sense of spiritual superiority that characterises his 'fall'. The feelings aroused by his dialogue with Isabella blend his spiritual pride with the promptings of the body. Angelo declares, 'Most dangerous is that temptation that doth goad us on | To sin in loving virtue' (II.

³⁸ Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 93.

³⁹ Georges Bataille, *Eroticism, Death and Sensuality*, trans. by Mary Dalwood (San Francisco: City Lights, 1986).

⁴⁰ Bataille, pp. 105-109.

2. 182-83). In this sense, Angelo congratulates himself for falling, at least, for the charms of one with an aura of the sacred – the very emblem of chastity. He admits that his sexual drive has been betrayed not by the naked, overtly sexualized flesh of ‘the strumpet’, but conversely, by Isabella’s very ‘modesty’ (II. 2. 183; II. 2. 169). As with Spenser’s treatment of Una in *The Faerie Queene*, we see an eroticism of the veiled body within Angelo’s attraction to Isabella’s sexual concealment.

Angelo is disturbed by his desire to sexualize the sacred and chaste, accusing himself, ‘Having waste ground enough, | Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary | And pitch our evils there?’ (II. 2. 170-172). Graham Bradshaw deems this a ‘horribly revealing image’. He states, ‘the word “evils” could at this time mean *excrement*, and when Angelo speaks of razing the sanctuary and pitching “our evils there” he sees the sexual act as an excremental spilling of seed’.⁴¹ Although Bradshaw’s interpretation has been contested, this striking bodily reading remains fascinating. Within this emotional outpouring, Angelo marks his sexual desire as something filthy and contagious. It even infects his prayer. In a moment of intimate exposure, Angelo reveals:

Heaven hath my empty words,
 Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue,
 Anchors on Isabel: Heaven in my mouth,
 As if I did but only chew his name,
 And in my heart the strong and swelling evil
 Of my conception.

(II. IV. 2-7)

⁴¹ Graham Bradshaw, *Shakespeare’s Scepticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 200.

As Fernie notes in reference to the latter two lines, ‘it is impossible not to hear in the phrase a visceral recognition of original sin’.⁴²

Like *Hamlet*’s Claudius, Angelo lays open the disparity between his spirit and his flesh.⁴³ His body bows in service to God, while his spirit, in mockery of this framework of private devotion, urges him towards sexual corruption. This stark identification of his spiritual hypocrisy causes Angelo to undress those of similarly virtuous appearance – to suspect the visceral nature which they conceal. He declares:

O place, O form,
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,
Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls
To thy false seeming! Blood, thou art blood.
Let’s write good angel on the devil’s horn –
’Tis not the devil’s crest.

(II. 4. 12-17)

As Ryan notes, Angelo’s words parallel those of the stripped Lear:

Thou, rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand;
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back,
Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind
For which thou whipp’st her
Through tattered clothes great vices do appear;
Robes and furred gowns hide all.

(IV. 6. 156-161)⁴⁴

⁴² Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 103.

⁴³ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *The RSC Shakespeare: William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: The Royal Shakespeare Company and Macmillan, 2007 [c. 1600]), pp. 1918-2003, III. 3. 38-75.

⁴⁴ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (London: Arden, 2007 [c.1605-06]). Ryan, p. 237.

Spiritual hypocrisy is rife, and finds a home behind the robes of authority, both characters note. To Fernie, Angelo's words penetrate even deeper. He states:

My life is ordinary and law-abiding but Shakespeare seems to link it to Angelo's extreme experience, discovering under also my cloak of relative decency and decorum a gross and criminal guilt [...] it's Shakespeare's intimate portrayal of Angelo's tragedy of desire which has the power to get under my skin and disturb my moral self-conceit.⁴⁵

Shakespeare's exposure of Angelo's 'natural guiltiness' gestures towards the shared, human guilt of the audience members. Our propriety, like that of Angelo, is little more than a false mask. And there is something about the immediate, theatrical conditions of Angelo's exposure that serves to pluck at the audience's mask, stimulating discomforting self-reflection. Fernie reflects upon 'the strangely compulsive inclusiveness of shame as a dramatic phenomenon'.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Maus acknowledges that Shakespeare's 'art is bound up, however uncomfortably, with the values of public exposure and group experience'.⁴⁷ We sense this complicity particularly intensely within this scene of stark, spiritual exposure.

Angelo's confession of sin and corporeal disgust almost offers an enactment of reformed spirituality. Yet in a crucial departure from reformed spiritual practice, Angelo fails to seek the comfort of a continuing dialogue with Christ. As expressed within his moment of prayer, he perceives this channel as contaminated by his sinful thoughts and urges. His denouncement of much virtue as mere appearance causes him to re-adjust his moral value system: to allow a shift whereby he may pursue personal gratification, so long as his sins are masked from the social gaze by a saintly exterior. Angelo refers to the 'credent

⁴⁵ Fernie, *The Demonic*, p. 198.

⁴⁶ Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare*, p. 76.

⁴⁷ Katherine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 177.

bulk' of his 'authority' as that which will shield his immorality from view (IV. 4. 24). And yet, he cannot conceal his actions from his own conscience. In a pitiful declaration of his self-alienation following his supposed defloration of Isabella, he states, 'this deed unshapes me quite' (IV. 4. 18).

There is something both vulnerable and perverse about Angelo's longing to implicate Isabella, the image of his chaste and un-tempted self, in his discovery of human corporeality. This is enacted powerfully within Simon McBurney's production. Stuart Hampton Reeves recalls how in Act II, Scene 2:

Angelo tried to get up from his seat but shot back into it as if hit by electricity, his body twisting, his hands grabbing at his crotch with surprise and alarm, as if he had never had an erection before. In their second interview, Angelo forced Isabella's hand into his flies so she could feel his erection: his discovery has to become hers.⁴⁸

In this moment of great sexual exposure, there is a sense that Angelo is empowered: his naked disclosure of sexual guilt enabling psychological and spiritual release. McBurney offers an inversion here of the fig-leaved shame of Adam and Eve – disclosure, rather than concealment.

This highly physicalized theatricalization of Angelo's sexual passion comes at the point within their exchange whereby Angelo lowers his veil of legal abstraction, confronting Isabella openly with his sexual bargain: 'To be received plain, I'll speak more gross' (II. 4. 82). Isabella pleads that he 'speak the former language' (II. 4. 139). Though sensually charged, his prior words lay within the safer semantic boundaries of the hypothetical. Within

⁴⁸ Stuart Hampton-Reeves, *The Shakespeare Handbooks: Measure for Measure* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 126.

these boundaries, Isabella, perhaps naively, offers Angelo a striking image of her disrobed body:

were I under the terms of death,
Th' impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death as to a bed
That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to shame.

(II. 4. 100-104)

Isabella conjures a vivid image of her tender flesh, revelling in the notion of sacrificial imprints. She acknowledges that this flesh is also vulnerable, by the very same token, to secular marks: 'Nay, call us ten times frail; | For we are soft as our complexions are, | And credulous to false prints' (II. 4. 127-129). Thus, her physical vulnerability is heightened before her would-be seducer: the feminine form cloaked by her modest, spiritual dress is *verbally* exposed. Countless literary critics have spoken of these lines as an indication of Isabella's repressed eroticism. Robert N. Watson, for instance, notes that 'the erotic undertones of religious flagellation throughout *Measure*, the ways mortification of the flesh becomes gratification instead, have been thoroughly documented.'⁴⁹ Yet these lines likewise echo a tradition of devotional sexuality – Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich; and post-Shakespeare, John Donne, and George Herbert. All experienced the sexualized body as a means of expressing devotion to God.

To Lunger Knoppers, Isabella's striking image represents a subversion of masculine attempts to sexualize and de-sanctify the female body. She states, 'Isabella reverses the patriarchal spectacle of shame: she pictures herself whipped and stripped naked not for

⁴⁹ Robert N. Watson, 'False Immortality in *Measure for Measure*', in *Shakespeare's Comedies: A Guide to Criticism*, ed. by Emma Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 54-80 (p. 58).

sexual transgression but for chastity'.⁵⁰ Thus, an image of sexualised and debased femininity is reclaimed as a symbol of spiritual triumph. Isabella fearlessly embraces the corruption wrought by death upon the body, joyful in the blows borne by her flesh in devotion to the principles of Christ. While she can strip and deform herself wilfully in the name of spiritual servitude, the secular nakedness of fornication presents itself as the height of repulsion – the 'natural guiltiness' of such intercourse represents an eternal death, corrupting both body and soul. I would argue that the true revelation of Isabella occurs when she is faced with the reality of Angelo's proposition: 'Redeem thy brother | By yielding up thy body to my will' (II. 4. 162-163). Angelo casts Isabella's Christian championship of chastity against familial love. In effect, he creates an interior battle-ground of both personal and religious values. The fragmented state which he imposes upon Isabella reflects his own internal conflict, following his sexual awakening.

Angelo orders Isabella to 'Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes | That banish what they sue for' (II. 4. 161-162). He demands that she undress herself of chaste modesty and reveal herself as *willing* flesh – the same frail femininity of which she spoke herself:

Be that you are,
That is, a woman; if you be more, you're none.
If you be one – as you are well express'd
By all external warrants – show it now,
By putting on the destin'd livery.

(II. 4. 133-137)

Angelo wishes to reduce Isabella to her most basic, biological status: 'a woman'. H. Jenkins glosses the 'destin'd livery' as 'the uniform of her kind, the frailty which is the natural

⁵⁰ Lunger Knoppers, p. 464.

destiny of women'.⁵¹ Thus, Angelo desires that Isabella exchange her uniform of Christian devotion (i.e. her modest dress and veil) for the uniform of generic, female sensuality. He demands that she become the agent of this re-clothing.

Paradoxically, Angelo speaks of this revelation of naked sexuality as a 'putting on'. Indeed, he de-values the creed of chastity which governs Isabella's bodily conduct – 'if you be more, you're none' (II. 4. 134). This haunting line is echoed within *Macbeth*, where it offers a fascinating gender reversal of Angelo's attack – 'I dare do all that may become a man: | Who dares do more is none' (I. 7. 49-50).⁵² By undressing to the nakedness of sexual intimacy, Angelo implies that Isabella will gain the full identity of 'a woman'. He de-values her habit of Christian dedication, framing her as 'a woman', 'by all external warrants' (II. 4. 134; II. 4. 136). One gains an image here of Angelo admiring the feminine shape apparent beneath the novice's garb. This is the interpretation offered by Boyd, whose Angelo caresses and lifts Isabella's 'religious train' 'leeringly from behind'.⁵³ Similarly, within Sean Holmes' production (2003) Angelo opens Isabella's coat as he speaks these lines, and begins to touch the body beneath it.⁵⁴

Just as Isabella compelled Angelo to acknowledge his humanity, he forces Isabella to view herself as the fleshy object of sexual desire. In McBurney's production this undressing is enacted literally, with Angus Wright's Angelo tearing open Isabella's blouse and brassiere, leaving her breasts exposed before the audience, in what reviewer John Thaxter describes as

⁵¹ H. Jenkins, quoted by Lever, p. 62.

⁵² William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* [1606], in *The RSC Shakespeare: William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: The Royal Shakespeare Company and Macmillan, 2007), pp. 1859-1917.

⁵³ Michael Coveney, 'No Short Measures in this Contemporary Shakespeare', *The Daily Mail*, 1 May 1998, p. 26 [Newspaper review].

⁵⁴ *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Sean Holmes (The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 2003) [Performance] [DVD recording, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive].

‘a moment of explicit shock’.⁵⁵ Isabella continues to address the audience in this exposed condition as she questions, ‘dare I tell this, who would believe me?’ She then covers herself frantically, as if suddenly aware of her physical state. Her lingering nakedness before the audience speaks powerfully of her paralysing horror in the wake of Angelo’s sexual threat. It suggests that her concern for her body is truly secondary to her concern for the corruption of her spirit (which of course, this sexual bargain would entail, according to her Christian values). As she asserts, ‘believe this, | I would rather give my body than my soul’ (II. 4. 55-56).

The continued exposure of Isabella’s breasts as she questions her credibility should she complain, likewise links her weakened social voice to her gender. Indeed, Frederick’s bare breasts serve to heighten the audience’s sense of Isabella’s feminine status at this moment of self-expressed fragility. Consciously or not, McBurney suggests that women, even within the contemporary setting of his production, are more vulnerable both sexually and socially than their male counterparts. Perhaps most potently, however, Isabella’s presence before the audience in this half-naked state of violation has a startling emotional and moral affect upon its members. Bataille reflects, ‘Sexual activity even if only shown by a hardly perceptible agitation or by clothes in disarray easily induces in a witness a feeling of participation’.⁵⁶ If this is the response provoked by the observation of the slightest quiver of sexual activity, how, then, do witnesses respond to sexual assault – to aggressive stripping and touching performed before their eyes? Faced by this encounter on stage, do we suffer *with* Isabella, or do we respond as guilty bystanders? Fernie observes that ‘[t]heatrical shame unites the audience in a collective and (as it seems) cruelly pain-inflicting act of beholding

⁵⁵ John Thaxter, ‘*Measure for Measure*: William Shakespeare, Complicite, RNT Lyttelton, (2006)’, *The British Theatre Guide* <<http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/compliciteMforM-rev>> [accessed 11 August 2013] [online review].

⁵⁶ Bataille, p. 152.

the shamed figure before them'.⁵⁷ Certainly, theatre reviewer Robert Hanks was deeply moved. He states:

I wasn't convinced by the scene in which [Angelo] makes his offer, virtually raping Isabella, leaving her half-naked, shaking with shame. But the aftermath of this scene is intriguing: In the past, I've tended to side with Claudio when he begs Isabella to swap her virtue for his life; but after her ordeal here, sympathies are reversed.⁵⁸

The graphic, bodily nature of this staging of Angelo and Isabella's second encounter provokes a complex response from Hanks. While the scene is deemed unrealistic – perhaps artificial, or sensationalised – Hanks confesses that Frederick's nakedness nevertheless works a change within him. His response is final – 'sympathies are reversed'. What is it about Frederick's nakedness that prompts this moral and emotional re-alignment? Does the material shock of this moment of live exposure intensify the sense of complicity between character and audience? Or in other words, does this literal and immediate representation of Angelo's social and spiritual attack serve to heighten the audience's sense of moral outrage?

Isabella emerges shaken and vulnerable, clinging to the creed, 'More than our brother is our chastity' (II. 4.184). As MacDonald notes, Isabella makes herself 'the site of an abstraction', thus shielding herself from the sense of personal responsibility attending her decision.⁵⁹ G. Wilson Knight perceives Isabella as naked in another sense. He refers to her 'fall' – a 'fall' which he perceives as 'deeper' than that of Angelo. He states:

⁵⁷ Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare*, p. 76.

⁵⁸ Robert Hanks, 'Measure for Measure: National Theatre, Lyttelton, London', *The Independent*, 17 February 2006, p. 40 [Newspaper review].

⁵⁹ Macdonald, p. 275.

Her sex inhibitions have been horribly shown her as they are, naked. She has been stung – lanced on a sore spot of her soul. She knows now that it is not all saintliness, she sees her own soul and sees it as something small, frightened, despicable, too frail to dream of such a sacrifice.⁶⁰

Wilson Knight rather simplifies Isabella's dilemma, by casting it in purely sexual terms. Of course, there is an outpouring here of her disgust towards humanity's sexual nature: a nature which she is not exempt from, as Angelo has forced her to recognise. This is conveyed potently within Holmes' production, where Isabella screams 'abhorred pollution' in a hysterical manner. She appears visually and verbally pained by the thought of surrendering her body to Angelo's sexual will, touching her body where Angelo, moments earlier, placed his hands: shocked and disturbed to find herself an object of sexual desire. Yet, drawing upon Isabella's previous reference to the 'frailty' of her sex, Mary Thomas Crane reflects that '[h]er intention to hide herself inside the protective walls of the convent may be motivated by a sense of herself as soft and vulnerable'.⁶¹ Thus, Crane suggests that Isabella retreats into the sacred space of the convent as a means of hiding or cloistering her delicate, female flesh. This reading suggests that she is already deeply aware of her vulnerability within the sensual, secular world. Angelo, I would argue, strips away Isabella's spiritual self-assurance. He challenges the creed by which she lives, threatening her self-perception as one who exemplifies Christ's virtues. Without mercy, as she herself attested, she is naked: devoid of 'grace'. But mercy here conflicts with another of Christ's commands: chastity.

Isabella comforts herself by reflecting upon Claudio's honour: 'had he twenty heads to tender down | On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up | Before his sister should her body stoop | To such abhorred pollution' (II. 4. 178-182). Here, hyperbole serves as a means

⁶⁰ Wilson Knight, p. 93.

⁶¹ Crane, p. 286.

of depersonalising the loss of her brother's life. She presents the bargain to Claudio as that which would expose him to an equal or greater degree than herself. It '[w]ould', she states, 'bark your honour from that trunk you bear, | And leave you naked' (III. 1. 71-72). Her deflowering, performed on his behalf, would render him dishonoured, shamed – an ignoble coward. Shakespeare creates an interesting interplay here between physical, spiritual and social nakedness. Indeed, faced with the bodily corruption of death ('To lie in cold obstruction and to rot; | this sensible, warm motion to become a kneaded clod') (III. 1. 118-120), Claudio clings to the potential life of 'naked' shame suggested by Isabella. Better this, he suggests, than the bodily decomposition of death – a greater source of human shame, perhaps, than dishonour.

As detailed within Chapter 3, execution and death were perceived as a form of undressing. Within his exploration of early modern treatments and perceptions of death, Neill explains:

the assaults of death have come to be experienced as something profoundly *unnatural*, an unwarrantable annihilation of individual difference, [...] imagined as a brutal stripping away of the outward persona. This obscene and shameful nakedness effectually unforms the self.⁶²

Death, Neill emphasises, is the epitome of shameful exposure and self-alienation. The redeeming spiritual associations of death familiar to us from the religious lyric and sermon (in other words, joy in the malleability and descent of the human flesh, for God will redeem and resurrect) are notably lacking within Claudio and Isabella's exchange. The scene is stark and comfortless. Shakespeare cleverly juxtaposes and draws parallels between the mortifications wrought by loss of life, and loss of chastity. Both are conveyed through the

⁶² Neill, p. 9.

use of disconcerting bodily images. Indeed, just as Claudio strips the body in his references to death's putrefaction, Richard P. Wheeler identifies the obscene anatomical pun on 'vice' ('referring to the pudend and closed thighs') when Isabella challenges her brother, 'Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?' (III. 1. 137).⁶³ As Watson notes, 'Both siblings are worried about the "pollution" of their bodies, but they have virtually opposite definitions of the term, Isabella associating it with sexual reproduction and Claudio with mortal decay'.⁶⁴

In stark contrast to the physical and moral fears expressed by Claudio and Isabella, the murderer Barnardine has 'a stubborn soul | That apprehends no further than this world' (V. 1. 478-479). The Provost describes him as '[a] man that apprehends death no more dreadfully | but as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fear- | less of what's past, present, or to come: insensible of | mortality, and desperately mortal' (IV. 2 .140-143). The latter two lines are strengthened within Holmes' production (2003). Here, Barnardine, played by Bill Nash, emerges naked from his cell. In this sense, his vulnerability and corporeality are visually emphasised. And so are his lack of shame and fear of his human frailty. Barnardine, in contrast to so many of *Measure*'s characters, has nothing to hide: his crimes, the Provost reveals, are 'not denied by himself' (IV. 2. 137). In Ryan's view, Barnardine, with 'his sublime indifference', 'affords us a position uncontaminated by the codes that constrain the rest of the cast'.⁶⁵ This absolute social and moral indifference is captured wonderfully by the casual nakedness (or 'manic nudity', as one reviewer describes it) of Barnardine within Holmes' production.⁶⁶ However, theatre critic Richard Wood disagrees. While acknowledging the 'audience reaction' achieved both by Nash's nudity, and the striking on-

⁶³ Richard P. Wheeler, *Shakespeare's Development and the Problem Comedies: Turn and Counter-Turn* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 111.

⁶⁴ Watson, p. 71.

⁶⁵ Ryan, p. 237.

⁶⁶ Faye Claridge, 'RSC Romps into the Roaring Forties', *BBC Coventry and Warwickshire*, 5 May 2003 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/coventry/stage/stories/2003/05/measure-for-measure-review.shtml>> [accessed 12 October 2013] [online review].

stage guillotine, he states that neither feature ‘add[s] to the sense of the play’ and deems both, rather, ‘constructed entirely out of the need to entertain’.⁶⁷

Wood’s cutting reference to ‘the need to entertain’ serves to highlight an important aspect of Barnardine’s dramatic role: the provision of some comic relief. Nakedness, here, provokes a laugh from the audience. Unlike Claudio, Nash’s burly Barnardine is no sorrowing, vulnerable victim stripped by the law, but rather, a self-assertive man, at striking ease, socially, spiritually, and physically, within his own skin. With an absurd sense of authority, he informs his captors, ‘I swear I will not die today for any man’s | persuasion’ (IV. 3. 58-59). I would argue that there is much truth in Watson’s reflection that ‘Barnardine may represent the body, the stupid force of heartbeat, survival instinct, physical appetite, that is unwilling to die in the condemned Everyman and is (here) finally spared’.⁶⁸ Nash’s nakedness within Holmes’ production cleverly captures this striking combination of absurd animalism and essential humanity: a humanity which prompts the Duke to respond with mercy. The audience is jolted into the presence of full nakedness, and this nakedness cuts through the psychological and material clothing of authority and rank. Both characters and audience are confronted here by ‘the thing itself’, and the results are both comical and harrowing.⁶⁹

The threat to human individuality posed by both sex and death, as emphasised within Isabella and Claudio’s exchange, is conveyed powerfully by *Measure*’s head and bed tricks. Death, states the Duke, is ‘a great disguiser’ (IV. 2. 174). A few adjustments to the despatched head – some shaving of the hair and tying of the beard, enable one corpse to stand in for another. Here, Neill asserts, ‘it is the very bareness of Death’s masquerade that

⁶⁷ Richard Wood, ‘Review of *Measure for Measure*’, *Early Modern Literary Studies* 9.3 / Special Issue 12 (2004), 15, 1-5 <URL: <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/09-3/measrev.html>> [accessed 12 October 2013].

⁶⁸ Watson, p. 76.

⁶⁹ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (London: Arden, 2007 [c.1605-06]), III. 4. 101.

renders it impenetrable'.⁷⁰ Angelo is satisfied by the substituted head of Ragozine, 'A man of Claudio's years: his beard, and head | Just of his colour' (IV. 3. 70-71). The dislocated head, though that of a criminal unknown to Angelo, has the power to prompt a paroxysm of guilt within him: 'he should have liv'd' (IV. 4. 26). The fragmented corpse serves, within Angelo's mind, as a personal emblem of his lost 'grace' – a measure of the depth of his fall. Our knowledge that Claudio lives does not detract from this disclosure of grief, for in Angelo's mind, at least, his death is real. This is captured beautifully through the heightened physicality of this scene within McBurney's production. Having smeared his white shirt with 'Claudio's blood, Angelo conceals the blood-stain beneath his closed suit jacket. Thus, McBurney creates a striking visual symbol of Angelo's deep-seated guilt and decline into base, corporeal instincts, which he continues to mask with his official, public facade.

To what extent does the head-trick serve merely as a comedic plot device, and to what extent does it speak more seriously of the body's status as a depersonalised commodity? To Watson, the head-trick is:

a disturbance to the audience: the stark reminder that in decay all human bodies reveal their horrible sameness. This is the dirty secret that *Measure* half-reveals, in half-concealing it: just as these two women's bodies (even at the moment they are supposedly expressing their most intimate qualities) may be virtually indistinguishable, so are all the rest of us when we fall into the clutches of the omnivorous Angel of Death. [...] Any body will do.⁷¹

Watson indicates that *Measure*'s head and bed-tricks raise disturbing questions. I concur with this view. Indeed, I would argue that the head-trick is more than 'a tedious and artificial

⁷⁰ Neill, p. 12.

⁷¹ Watson, pp. 73-74.

plot device', as John Wain terms it,⁷² or 'too mechanical an expedient – unacceptable even shocking when applied to characters of [...] individuality', as Jonas Barish declares.⁷³

Isabella's 'goodness', her aura of sanctity that stirred Angelo to sexual desire, plays no role within the sexual encounter itself, except for its presence as social (or more aptly, *spiritual*) clothing within Angelo's mind. Mariana states, 'This is the body | That took away the match from Isabel | And did supply thee at thy garden-house, | In her imagin'd person' (V. 1. 209-212). Through the process of the bed-trick and the language which surrounds it, Angelo is equated with a Lucio. Mariana's body 'did *supply*' Angelo. The sense is base and servile. This phrase casts Angelo as little more than one of Mistress Overdone's clients, seeking an hour of sexual satisfaction with a woman. 'In her imagin'd person', meanwhile, reveals that Angelo framed Mariana's naked body with fantasies of Isabella. Though undressed, Mariana is clothed psychologically by Angelo for the duration of the sexual act.

The sexual encounter is disclosed by Mariana in terms much less revealing and erotic than those exchanged by Angelo and Isabella in the scene of his sexual proposition. For all of its potential for dramatic sensation, the bed-trick itself takes place off-stage. However, Carolyn E. Brown notes Isabella's 'erotically loaded' relation of the planned liaison. Examining her exchange with the Duke, Brown states, 'Isabella's syntax is strained, and she seems to be describing much more than an entrance to a garden. She speaks of a male agent 'opening' an entrance, of 'making' an opening or enjoying a woman sexually'.⁷⁴ Thus, although it is Mariana who is literally undressed by the sexual encounter, Shakespeare encourages his audience to imagine Isabella's naked and 'prone' body. Like Brown, Adelman argues that the garden is 'carefully described to evoke the double passage of the

⁷² John Wain, quoted by Marliss C. Desens, in *The Bed-Trick in English Renaissance Drama: Explorations in Gender, Sexuality and Power* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1956), p. 12.

⁷³ Jonas Barish, quoted by Desens, p. 12.

⁷⁴ Carolyn E. Brown, 'The Wooing of Duke Vincentio and Isabella of *Measure for Measure*: "The Image of It Gives [Them] Content"', *Shakespeare Studies*, 22 (1994), 189-219 (p. 206).

female genitalia'.⁷⁵ This technique echoes Spenser's utilisation of the landscape as a sexual metaphor within *The Faerie Queene*. Does Shakespeare suggest that it is Isabella that is truly undressed by Angelo's bargain, despite her *physical* escape from nakedness through the use of Mariana? As I have already demonstrated, Wilson Knight describes Isabella as spiritually exposed and shamed by her frigidity. Meanwhile, Arthur Quiller-Couch states, 'To put it nakedly, she is all for saving her own soul, and she saves it by turning, of a sudden, into a bare procuress'.⁷⁶ Through his use of the suggestive terms 'nakedly' and 'bare', Quiller-Couch expresses Isabella's morally questionable role within the bed-trick as a form of undressing. Her spiritual consent to the bargain is cast here as a shameful, spiritual exposure. Perhaps she is not as free from moral taint as the Duke might suggest: in Quiller-Couch's eyes, her behaviour mirrors that of a bawd.

The sexually suggestive imagery of the garden likewise reflects Angelo's moral state. To Adelman, as to numerous other critics, this is a Garden of Eden: a fitting setting for Angelo's attempted rape of virtue, his sexual discovery, and loss of purity.⁷⁷ Within Michael Boyd's production (RST, 1998) there is a literal exchange of dress at this point. Mariana enters in Isabella's saintly attire, a 'bride of Christ' in her sweeping white gown and veil, and Isabella, in Mariana's dress – the clothing of an ordinary woman. This exchange of costumes supports the reading of Mariana as spiritually enhanced or clothed by her sacrifice (though paradoxically, naked before a corrupt deputy) and of Isabella, as exposed and spiritually humbled – stripped of the hypocritical robes of 'righteousness'.

Mariana confronts Angelo before the city gate, her face veiled. The veil, of course, is associated with the chaste modesty of the nun. Thus, Mariana's costume upholds the

⁷⁵ Adelman, p. 92.

⁷⁶ Arthur Quiller-Couch, in 'Introduction', *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, ed. by John Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. xxx.

⁷⁷ Adelman, p. 92.

semblance of Isabella, with which she was cloaked on the night of the consummation. In contrast, Isabella stands both physically and socially exposed before Vienna. At the disguised Duke's insistence, she announces the loss of her virginity to Angelo:

He would not, but by the gift of my chaste body
 To his concupiscible intemperate lust,
 Release my brother; and after much debatement,
 My sisterly remorse confutes mine honour,
 And I did yield to him.

(V. 1. 100-104)

This is an abandonment of sexual pride indeed, for by describing the sexual encounter in this '[public place near the city gate]', Isabella unravels her chaste social reputation.⁷⁸ In the eyes of those who witness the scene, she surrenders her sexual innocence, embracing social mortification. In these moments, nothing but inward knowledge distinguishes the virgin Isabella from the sexually initiated Mariana. And as Lunger Knoppers notes, 'in a shame culture the display is as important as the reality'.⁷⁹

Mariana's lifting of her veil at Angelo's command perhaps symbolises and replays her deflowering. Yet this time, her body no longer serves as the blank female form upon which Angelo formally projected his sexual fantasies. Rather, it is a body which is charged with their shared personal history:

This is that face, thou cruel Angelo,
 Which once thou swor'st was worth the looking on:
 This is the hand which, with a vow'd contract,
 Was fast belock'd in thine: this is the body

⁷⁸ Lever, p. 125.

⁷⁹ Lunger Knoppers, p. 466.

That took away the match from Isabel
 And did supply thee at thy garden-house,
 In her imagin'd person.

(V. 1. 206-212)

The three-fold nature of Mariana's 'undressing' ('that face', 'the hand', 'the body') suggests the fullness of her presence before Angelo. Her revelation signals the beginning of his demise. Isabella's prayer, expressed fittingly in the language of physical concealment and undress, begins to take force. She pleads, 'Unfold the evil which is here wrapt up | In countenance' (V. 1. 120).

It is little wonder that the closing scene of *Measure* has been compared to scenes of 'The Last Judgement'.⁸⁰ The Duke is set as the theatrical parallel to God – the trumpeting of his arrival encourages this comparison. Yet in what is perhaps the culminating moment of exposure, he seats himself and his fellow officials, inviting Angelo to 'judge' his 'own cause', while they take on the role of spectators (V. 1. 168-169). Fernie reflects:

The analogy of exposure before God is brilliantly reinforced in the theatre since, just as the soul on judgement day is said to be exposed before heaven and the dead, as well as all the world, Angelo is exposed in more than one dimension, not only before the audience on stage, but also before that in the theatre.⁸¹

Angelo clings to his saintly facade, his hypocrisy complete. Following Lucio's unwitting revelation of Friar Lodowick's true identity, his deceit is revealed before all. Fernie frames this exposure as an undressing, stating, 'the Duke, operating as a kind of secular providence, strips Angelo of "all his deservings, caracts, titles, forms"'. Now bereft of his "little brief

⁸⁰ Watson, p. 75; Wilson Knight, p. 89.

⁸¹ Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare*, p. 108.

authority”, Angelo is the naked “arch-villain”⁸² N. W. Bawcutt concurs. He states, ‘In the final scene Angelo’s “false seeming” is nakedly exposed’.⁸³ Angelo’s sudden vulnerability is conveyed powerfully within McBurney’s production, in which he is revealed to the audience, huddled in a desk chair, his body curled into the foetal position.

In the midst of this exposure of deceit, there seems little promise of peace – little sense, indeed, of finality. The Duke’s offer of marriage to Isabella reveals his own humanity, in its suggestion of his own desire for sexual companionship. Unanswered at the play’s conclusion, his romantic proposition has further implications for the body and spirit, so much so that in McBurney’s production, it is accompanied by the suggestive revelation of a double bed. Thus, McBurney suggests that further undressings await both characters. Within Barry Kyle’s production for the RSC (1978) Rutter notes that ‘the Duke bent down to retrieve the robe of justice Angelo had discarded. Then he left it there. [Isabella] cast a long look at her fallen veil, then let it lie too’.⁸⁴ Within this production, then, the disrobing of social and spiritual authority is played out in symbolic, visual terms.

Measure’s final scene suggests that all are dependent upon a frail, corporeal frame. The audience, of course, is reflected within this closing image. As Louis Burkhardt comments, ‘*Measure for Measure*, a masterpiece of mediated desire, could never have been Shakespeare’s most popular play because it does something to spectators that they are reluctant to admit: it *scandalizes* them’.⁸⁵ Within this final scene of revelation, confession, and punishment, the audience, as Burkhardt suggests, is confronted yet again with its own human imperfections: its sexual appetite, its fear of death, and perhaps even, its tendency to judge others. In this respect, the audience is exposed. As Boyd reflects, *Measure* ‘has always

⁸² Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare*, p. 107.

⁸³ N. W. Bawcutt, ‘Introduction’, in *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. xi–xcviii (p. 62).

⁸⁴ Rutter, quoted by Hampton-Reeves, p. 39-40.

⁸⁵ Burkhardt, p. 256.

been about looking problems in the eye and stopping people getting cosy, really making people stop and examine their own hearts'.⁸⁶ Boyd's words seem to echo the advocacy of spiritual self-inspection urged commonly by preachers and poets of the Reformation, as explored within the previous chapters.

Conclusion

Like the theological treatises of Luther and Calvin, Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and the religious lyrics of Donne and Herbert, *Measure* encourages the reader (and in this case, the spectator) to uncover themselves in spiritual terms: to perceive their mortality and guilt, and to abandon the hypocritical robes of righteousness (to borrow Luther's imagery).

Shakespeare stimulates this exposure by uncovering others. Within Donne and Herbert's lyrics, the speaker's heart and soul are undressed before God and reader. Within *Measure*, this exposure is performed on stage, before an audience. Although the action is fictional, the live presence of actors and audience lends *Measure*'s confessions about the human condition, or as Boyd fittingly terms it, its 'sandpaper[ing]' down of humanity, a deeply moving and disturbing resonance.⁸⁷ We have seen that Shakespeare draws upon the potency of the communal experience, utilising the sense of complicity created by the immediate, theatrical setting. In this respect, *Measure* shares the uncomfortable immediacy of the anatomy theatre, and the spiritual potency of the liturgical service.

The potential of modern productions to utilise physical bareness, interweaving shocking and pitiful instances of on-stage nakedness with Shakespeare's verbal evocations of undressing, heightens the play's power to startle and awaken modern audiences to the body's spiritual resonance. The nakedness of Barnardine and Isabella within Holmes and McBurney's productions creates a material confrontation: a literal and live encounter with

⁸⁶ Boyd, 'Measure for Measure, The Ashcroft Room' [Recording].

⁸⁷ Boyd, 'Measure for Measure, The Ashcroft Room' [Recording].

the flesh. Just as Spenser's vivid depictions of nakedness seem on occasion to overflow the boundaries of his allegory, this immediate presence of nakedness within the shared theatrical space works against the play's fiction, and even, its theatricality. It provides a palpable disclosure of the realities of humanity's embodied state. Indeed, it is difficult to distinguish and detach the shock, shame, sympathy or amusement prompted by the nakedness of a character within the world of the play, from that which is felt at the simultaneous acknowledgement that this is a naked actor – an individual human – standing uncovered within this space, before *me*. In this sense, live nakedness intensifies the audience's awareness of its own gaze – its own presence. Perhaps this heightened awareness extends even to realisation and reflection upon one's psychological and spiritual presence and condition.

Literary and theatre critics leave productions of *Measure* 'disturbed' and 'queasy': psychologically and morally altered.⁸⁸ Like Donne and Herbert's gentle and ruthless depictions of the soul, which continue to draw modern readers in (as we saw within the previous chapter), *Measure*'s exposure of the human condition retains the ability to speak to readers and audiences about their spiritual and political lives. Its continuing stimulation of spiritual, physical, and psychological honesty is supported by Shakespeare's potent exchange of visual and verbal images of nakedness and covering.

⁸⁸ Examples include: Nicholas de Jongh, feels 'shocked', 'startled' and 'disturbed' by McBurney's *Measure*, in 'Recast *Measure* loses some bite and spite', *The Evening Standard*, 16 February 2006, p. 36. Brown speaks of *Measure* as 'an uncomfortable work', p. 139. Ryan speaks of *Measure* as 'that twisted queasy comedy', p. 230.

FINAL CONCLUSION

Part I

This thesis has considered the treatment and significance of concepts and images of nakedness within early modern Protestant literature and culture. It has questioned how nakedness is charged with theological meaning, and how these meanings are used to shape spiritual and literary experience. Within my Introduction, I noted that nakedness has a striking array of meanings, the most prominent being the state of bodily exposure: a sense of rawness or revelation commonly contrasted with the condition of being covered, clothed, or concealed. The central role played by concepts and images of nakedness and disrobing within early modern devotional literature and culture is signalled by their prevalence within the Bible – the heart of the Christian faith.

Chapter 1 established the complex biblical heritage of nakedness. Within the narrative of the fall, Genesis casts the perception of nakedness as the product of original sin. The sensation of nakedness and subsequent desire to cover the body not only serve to symbolise humankind's deceit and division from God, but likewise, humankind's self-division. Here, nakedness expresses the agonising tension characterising humanity's simultaneous subjectivity and objectivity: I am a thinking, feeling, philosophising *individual*, but I am also a fleshy *object*, captured within the gaze of the spectator. Nakedness is established as that which is as much psychological – a way of seeing oneself and of being seen – as it is physical. This treatment and perception of nakedness as that which is both bodily and deeply psychological is reflected within the literature and cultural practices examined throughout this thesis.

By placing emphasis upon the organic, unselfconscious 'nakedness' of Adam and Eve prior to their fall, Genesis creates a significant distinction between bodily *perception* and bodily *reality*. This distinction is reflected within many early modern responses to this

biblical account, as Chapter 1 noted. And yet the attempts of these poets and preachers to assert the inherent innocence of the body, even the prelapsarian body, are overwhelmingly unconvincing. This is unsurprising, for while Genesis' depiction of the fall prompts the question, 'how far is the unclothed body shameful in and of itself?' many of the biblical episodes which follow serve to reinforce the relationship of the undressed body with sin and shame. Within the Bible and the early modern literature, artwork, and religious practises which capture, convey, and respond to its messages, I have argued that the human body is never reclaimed fully from the taint of the experienced glance. Where the innocence and glory of nakedness is evoked, as it is, for instance, through the devotional nudity of the Adamites, or where Milton describes the 'naked majesty' of Adam and Eve, it is always set against the backdrop of the body's fallen heritage.¹

Within the Bible's descriptions of the exposure of the drunken Noah, the raised skirts and bared legs of the personified Jerusalem, the Whore of Babylon, and the daughters of Zion, nakedness is utilised actively as a metaphor for humiliation – for humankind's loathsome spiritual failings.² These biblical accounts draw upon the stark realities of the body's base materiality: its vulnerability to pain, ageing, and deformity, and its reliance upon the processes of urination, defecation, and copulation. This disclosure of human mortality and sexuality serves not only to mortify the disrobed, but additionally, those who witness their nakedness. The sexual nature of nakedness is particularly resonant within these biblical instances of exposure. Certainly, the spiritual and social weight attached to the raising of the skirts and the exposure of the 'secret parts' suggests that the genitals are the locus of human shame. Furthermore, within these accounts, it is the *female* genitals which serve as the epitome of humankind's social and spiritual disgrace. Notably, Genesis' depiction of Noah's

¹ John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London: Penguin, 2000 [1674]), IV. 290.

² *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, 3rd edn (Pleasant Hope: L. L. Brown, 1993), with an introduction by Michael H. Brown. See Genesis 9. 21-22, Lamentations 1. 8, Revelation 17. 16, Isaiah 3. 17.

disrobing is less explicitly focused upon the uncovered genitals than the Old Testament's numerous accounts of female disrobing.

The continuing treatment and reception of the genitals as the source of heightened shame within early modern society is reflected through *The Geneva*'s modest reference to the 'breeches' created by the fallen Adam and Eve.³ Andrew Willet reinforces this association of the human genitals with fallen shame. He declares that the fallen couple 'feele the rebellion and disobedience of their members' – 'their disordered and unruly motions'.⁴ This humiliating realisation of one's essential condition as 'a poor bare, forked animal', as Shakespeare's *Lear* so eloquently puts it, is intensified by the acknowledgement that the desires and promptings of one's 'animal' body are beyond one's control.⁵

Within the biblical account of Noah's disrobing, Ham's deliberate spectatorship of his father's nakedness stimulates shame and disempowerment. Its impact is so socially and morally disruptive that it is aligned, within the biblical account, and within a number of early modern commentaries, with the act of rape. The Bible indicates that a mere glimpse of the exposed body has the power to disturb, and to alter relationships irrevocably. Nakedness works upon object and spectator alike, drawing the latter into a relationship of complicity so intense that his or her gaze upon the naked body feels comparable to sexual contact. The disturbing sense of intimacy and violation surrounding the spectatorship of prostrate nakedness reached its zenith within the early modern anatomy theatre, as I illustrated within Chapter 3. Here, the motionless corpse, drawn open before an audience of eager spectators, represented the body at its most naked and vulnerable: a 'bare anatomy'.

Death was treated as a process of undressing: an exposure of bodies once bolstered by marks of social identity as mere flesh, bone, and humoral fluid. The penetration and display

³ *The Geneva Bible*, Genesis 3. 7.

⁴ Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Genesin, A Sixfold Commentarie upon Genesis* (London: 1632), chpt. 3, pp. 40-41 (STC 25687) [Microform].

⁵ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (London: Arden, 2007 [c.1605-06]), III. 4. 104.

of the dead body was shameful indeed, and as such, dissection was a fate reserved for criminals, prostitutes, and other social outcasts.⁶ Even within death, fears of sexual voyeurism and violation surrounded the body. Its passivity and openness before the anatomist and spectators was rendered ‘promiscuous’.⁷ As Chapter 3 noted, this interpretation was strengthened by the eroticised depictions of cadavers within a number of prominent anatomical texts.⁸

Through this stark exploration of the human anatomy, medical professionals sought to understand and glorify God’s craftsmanship, and to discover the image of Christ; or so they were eager to claim. A major tension was at play. The human body was God’s creation, and man, as Genesis states, was made in God’s image (Genesis 1. 27). How was it, in this case, that the body was perceived and experienced as base and shameful? And more immediately, was it acceptable for humans to pry into God’s work – to lift ‘Nature’s veil’?⁹ As Chapter 3 emphasised, the practice of anatomisation remained a source of moral and religious unease.

Within the anatomy theatre, the naked human form was treated as a site of spiritual truth: truth which was both universal, and individual. A similar sentiment surrounded the process of early modern torture, as Katherine Eisaman Maus notes.¹⁰ Here, the body was treated as that which would disclose what the lips would not: the bodily interior could not equivocate. In fact, the naked flesh could betray its owner with the secrets that it could reveal. The practice of searching naked female skin for the tell-tale ‘bigge’ or mark of the witch

⁶ Florike Egmond, ‘Execution, Dissection, Pain and Infamy – A Morphological Investigation’, in Robert Zwijnenberg and Florike Egmond, ed. *Bodily Extremities: Preoccupations with the Human Body in Early Modern European Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 92-128 (p. 113).

⁷ Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 1.

⁸ See Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (London: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 73-74; and Sarah Toulalan, *Imagining Sex: Pornography and Bodies in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 13.

⁹ John Banister, *The Historie of Man, sucked from the sappe of the most approved Anathomistes* (London: 1578), quoted by Elizabeth D. Harvey, in *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 95.

¹⁰ Katherine Eisaman Maus, ‘Proof and Consequences: Inwardness and Its Exposure in the English Renaissance’, *Representations*, 34 (1991), 29-52.

stands as a testament to this belief.¹¹ And yet, within Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, nakedness not only represents the exposure of truths, or 'the thing itself' (as when the disrobed Error vomits forth flesh and books, or when Duessa's filth is 'open showne'), but also a means of disguise.¹² Duessa projects her grotesque naked form onto an innocent maiden (I. 2. 341). Meanwhile, the bare-foot Archimago is a deceptive shape-shifter. This paradoxical association of nakedness with both truth and deceit also emerges within Shakespeare's *King Lear* (as noted within the Introduction) and *Measure for Measure*.¹³

The body occupies a complex space between the deeply intimate and individual, and the universally representative. Nakedness is both highly personal (revealing the undressed in their rawest, material form) and disturbingly abstract (my body, my nakedness, to all purposes, is the same as many others: a mere mirror of the human condition). Shakespeare examines and exploits these tensions to great effect within the head and bed tricks of *Measure*. 'Death', the Duke declares, 'is a great disguiser' (IV. 2. 174). And so, it would seem, is the sexual imagination: provided that Angelo sees the chaste young Isabella within his mind, one woman's body will serve as well as another. In a sense, this truth is played out each night within the theatre. When Naomi Frederick's breasts are exposed before the audience in Simon McBurney's production of the play (2006), is it Isabella or Frederick who is naked?¹⁴ Or is it, rather, the members of the audience who are exposed – reflected within this immediate spectacle of shame? If another actress were playing the role in Frederick's place, would her exposed body provoke the same emotional and moral response? As

¹¹ Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 247.

¹² Edmund Spenser, *'The Faerie Queene': Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]), I. 1. 121-26 and I. 8. 440.

¹³ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. by J. W. Lever (London: Arden, 2004 [c.1603]).

¹⁴ *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Simon McBurney (The Lyttelton Theatre, The National Theatre, London: The National Theatre and Complicite, 2004-2006) [performance] [DVD recording of 'revival', 15 February 2006, The National Theatre Archive].

audiences at theatres, are we not witnessing head and bed-tricks, as it were, as fantastic and harrowing as those performed within Shakespeare's play?

Chapter 4 argued that Spenser utilises the nakedness of a number of his characters (for instance, Duessa, the wanton maidens, Una's double) as a means of exposing the sins of his protagonists (in our examination, Redcrosse and Guyon). Ultimately, his readers are exposed by the nakedness of these characters. Like readers and audiences of *Measure*, Spenser's readers are invited to turn the eye of spiritual judgement upon themselves. As a narrative poem, *The Faerie Queene* is unable to exploit the actual bodily presence of actors and their audiences, and the intensified sense of complicity and reality which these theatrical conditions create. However, Spenser's evocation of nakedness is so vivid and lingering that it attains its own power to disturb the reader and stimulate temptation and disgust. As Chapter 4 noted, the striking immediacy of Spenser's depictions is somewhat in tension with the allegorical form of the narrative: we expect meaning to *unfold*, not to be lost in sensual poetic experience. But I would argue that Spenser provokes the reader's own exposure with a similar intensity to Shakespeare. Just as Ewan Fernie finds himself disturbed and tainted by Angelo's 'visceral' confession of sin, Spenser's readers are forced to reflect upon their own moral and mortal conditions.¹⁵ Are we taken in by Despair? Do we feel more relaxed with Duessa's sensuality than with Una's saintly restraint? Do we detect the promptings of lust within our bodies and minds when Spenser titillates with teasing depictions of half exposed bodies?

Throughout this thesis I have argued that nakedness is not aligned with sin alone within the spiritual framework of early modern literature and culture. As Chapter 1 established, a number of the Bible's accounts employ nakedness as a symbol of redemption, truth, and spiritual strength, in seeming contradiction or defiance of the body's shameful

¹⁵ Ewan Fernie, *The Demonic: Literature and Experience* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 198.

connotations. The nakedness of the Old Testament prophets, and that of the crucified Christ, serve as the most notable examples. How is it that the fleshy form of humankind, so sexualized and shamed within certain biblical episodes, can emerge as such a potent sign of holiness? Significantly, bodily shame is not dispelled within these instances. Rather, it is re-channelled. Christ and the prophets draw upon humankind's bodily shame as a source of spiritual potency. By embracing the humility of the flesh, they sacrifice earthly comfort and status, signalling great spiritual strength. I have also illustrated that the literal accessibility of the naked body (in other words, its vulnerability to the intimate gaze and touch of spectators) serves as a means of communicating spiritual accessibility, both within the Bible, and even more so within the early modern texts and images which respond to it. The incarnation and public suffering of Christ contrast starkly with the veiled and remote nature of God within the Old Testament. As I demonstrated within Chapter 1, the latter uses mists and clouds to mask the overwhelming vision of his face from humankind. Despite Christ's comparative accessibility to humanity, however, his nakedness within the Bible, like that of the prophets, lacks the striking sexual charge which attends the accounts of Jerusalem and Noah's disrobing.

Is sexual nakedness always scandalous and degrading? These biblical treatments would seem to suggest so. And yet, the Song of Solomon, and St Paul's sexually suggestive metaphor of the Church as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5. 25-27) imply that the sexualized body can indeed serve devotional purposes. Early modern theological works, devotional artwork, religious lyrics, and sermons do not shy away from sexual nakedness – even that of Christ – as a means of expressing and invoking faith. In Chapter 5, we saw that Donne and Herbert adopt images of sexualized male and female bodies within their religious lyrics.¹⁶

¹⁶ *John Donne: The Complete English Poems*, ed. by A. J. Smith (London: Penguin, 1996 [first collected edition of verse published 1633]).

George Herbert, *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (1633), in *George Herbert: The Complete English Poems*, ed. by John Tobin (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 2-187.

These poets/preachers cast the body's sexual features and postures as metaphoric channels for spiritual contact. In Donne's 'Batter My Heart', as we have seen, the speaker takes on an open and sexually passive position, invoking God to rape him. And Herbert lingers upon the orifice of Christ's wound, which emerges as 'a kind of vaginal orifice', as Michael Schoenfeldt notes.¹⁷ This is no shameful orifice, but rather, a space in which humanity can communicate its most intimate thoughts and fears to God.

Spenser's utilisation of sexual nakedness represents a contrast to Donne and Herbert's works, in which both male and female nakedness play a redemptive role. Although the bare-breasted Charissa serves as the allegorical emblem of Christian charity, her nakedness is deeply maternal (I. 10. 268-69). Through his treatment of Charissa, Spenser celebrates the physicality of motherhood and aligns it with spiritual virtue: Charissa offers guidance to Redcrosse within her state of undress. As noted within Chapter 4, however, Charissa's lower half remains concealed. In fact, where the genitals are revealed or suggested by Spenser's narrative, they serve to blazon sin. Physically and spiritually promiscuous, they threaten to contaminate the Christian. The exposure of Duesza and the creation of Una's double serve as key examples of this.

Spenser's employment of nakedness within his spiritual allegory is heavily gendered, as Chapter 4 established. Within Book I, for instance, the female genitals are depicted as sensual and tempting on the one hand, and 'filthy', quasi-bestial emblems of sin on the other. The male genitals, in contrast, are never evoked explicitly. Rather, they are gestured towards through the more muted means of phallic symbols, such as the 'tall' and 'hye' Orgoglio (I. 7. 67-68). I have argued that the female genitals serve to reflect both male and female shame within Spenser's allegory. In this sense, Spenser echoes the Bible's employment of female sexual exposure as the epitome of human humiliation. Of course, there was also a precedent

¹⁷ Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 249.

within early modern culture of aligning the female reproductive organs and functions with a sense of fearful obscenity, as Chapter 3 demonstrated. Concerns emerged that males would react with disgust and contempt to too candid a revelation of the female bodily realities of menstruation and gestation. The female genitals blazoned humanity's mortality more intensely than those of the male. Nakedness could create a powerful sense of intimacy, and sometimes, as Elizabeth Hanson notes, this intimacy was perceived as 'hideous'.¹⁸

Concepts and images of nakedness were also used to create a sense of sacred intimacy. This is expressed most powerfully within the theological treatises of Martin Luther and John Calvin, and within the religious lyrics of Herbert and Donne. Here, nakedness is used frequently to express the spiritual act of giving oneself to God honestly and entirely. Within these treatises and poems, concealment (commonly conveyed using metaphors of hypocritical dress or coverings) is cast as the spiritual enemy of humankind. The theological works of Luther and Calvin explore the defensive dress or coverings which they felt Christians had internalized, particularly within the Roman Catholic faith. Luther and Calvin cast the elaborate rituals which characterised Catholic worship as a means of maintaining a false sense of spiritual composure before God: a deceitful mechanism for keeping God at a distance, while feigning devotion. While these acts of personal and communal concealment would seem to offer the sinner refuge from God's penetrating gaze, Luther and Calvin frame them as those which leave worshippers vulnerable, shamed, estranged from God, and paradoxically, naked. Within this context, images of nakedness serve to illustrate humanity's shameful and anguished state of desolation without the grace of Christ. This is demonstrated

¹⁸ Elizabeth Hanson, *Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 28.

most potently within Luther's vivid recollection of the despair of his 'friend'.¹⁹ He evokes this experience using the stark, anatomical terms of a vivisection, as Chapter 2 observed.

In a paradoxical twist, however, Luther and Calvin encourage their followers to embrace a form of absolute spiritual nakedness before Christ. This was to be achieved through a testing and life-long process of kenotic 'self-emptying'.²⁰ It involved utter submission to God, and thus, the acceptance of human impotency in the matters of divine forgiveness and salvation. Only by submitting to God and banishing self-interest entirely, they argue, can the process of re-clothing the soul in Christ begin. Here, of course, both theologians utilise the Pauline and Augustinian metaphor of putting on the 'garment' of Christ's righteousness. Paradoxically, then, Reformation theology promotes the process of clothing the soul by means of stripping off and away: it advocates a state of spiritual dress which can be obtained only through the active acceptance of spiritual nakedness. This spiritual nakedness is expressed in intensely physical terms, particularly within the religious lyrics of Donne. Physical nakedness, with its connotations of shame, exposure and authenticity, serves here as a powerful and moving means of evoking and even stimulating the spiritual transparency and humility demanded of those who seek unity with Christ.

As I demonstrated within Chapter 2, Luther also utilises images of nakedness and dress in order to draw a firm distinction between God and Christ. The 'naked' God was terrifying: the God of Mount Sinai, on whom to gaze was destruction and despair. This God, Luther states, was to be left 'in his own majesty'.²¹ Christ, in contrast, is set forth by Luther as God in his 'clothed' form, made fully accessible to humanity.²² Yet Christ is rendered

¹⁹ Martin Luther, *Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses*, in *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muehlenberg and Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-86), XXXI: *Career of the Reformer I* (1957), ed. by Harold J. Grimm, pp. 77-252 (p. 129).

²⁰ Jane E. Strohl, 'Luther's Spiritual Journey', in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. by Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), chpt 9, pp. 149-164 (p. 156).

²¹ Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, in *Luther's Works*, XXXIII: *Career of the Reformer III* (1972), ed. by Philip S. Watson, p. 139.

²² Luther, '[Exposition of] Psalm 51', in *Luther's Works*, XII: *Selected Psalms I* (1955), ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan, pp. 301-410 (p. 312).

‘clothed’ by virtue of his incarnation, to which, paradoxically, nakedness is central. Calvin distinguishes similarly between God and Christ. Within his theological works, he paints Christ as the veil with which sinners can stand before the gaze of God.²³

By adopting humankind’s corporeal form, and subjecting himself to all of its indignities and discomforts, as crystallized by his agonizing and public death upon the cross, Christ redeemed the human body from its heritage of shame. Christ bestowed a new, beautiful, and sacrificial meaning upon nakedness. In this context, nakedness becomes a symbol of God’s love and accessibility. It is through Christ’s ultimate act of abasement that humanity finds the courage to become spiritually bare before God: ‘*Nudus Nudum Christum Sequi*’.²⁴ And Christ, in his nakedness, shields humankind from God’s overwhelming perfection.

These beliefs played a central role within Reformation theology and worship. Their subsequent prominence within early modern Protestant culture is highlighted with particular intensity within the religious lyrics of Donne and Herbert, and within Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*. Book I of *The Faerie Queene* adopts the Pauline metaphor of ‘putting on’ Christ as its central allegorical motif, as we saw within Chapter 4. In accordance with Luther and Calvin’s theologies, Redcrosse must acknowledge and bare his sins in order to achieve unity with God: a process evoked through images of literal undress, and even, dissection. This unity is symbolised by Una’s unveiling within Book I’s concluding stanzas.

Within the Reformed Church itself, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* glorifies the nakedness and horrific bodily torture borne by the Protestant martyrs.²⁵ Moreover, the ecclesiastical courts’ ritual of white sheet shaming offered a physical enactment of the process of ‘putting

²³ John Calvin, *Calvin’s Works in Corpus Reformatorum*, 55, 56, reproduced in Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. by Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), p. 113-114.

²⁴ St Francis, quoted by Kenneth Clark, in *Civilization: A Personal View* (London: BBC Books, 1991 [1969]), p. 74.

²⁵ John Foxe, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives* (1563), ed. by John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

off sin' and 'putting on' the virtue of Christ. Maintained from Catholic practice, this ritual was adapted for the Anglican Church community by way of an increased emphasis upon the corresponding verbal confession of the sinner, and likewise, by the provision of a fitting church sermon. In this sense, the visual spectacle of shame and repentance was framed clearly by a spiritual message, rooted within the word of God.

As Chapter 2 established, the balance between the laying bare and re-clothing of the soul was precarious, and fuelled tensions throughout early modern Europe in terms of what constituted the correct manner of worship. A number of Herbert's religious lyrics suggest that communal prayer provides a powerful means of clothing the soul. Yet, in his poem 'Sighs and Groans', Herbert promotes the spontaneous and heartfelt sigh of the individual. Meanwhile, Puritans rejected organised prayer completely. As Chapter 2 established, disagreements flared over that which rendered the Church and congregation 'over-dressed', and that which took spiritual plainness to disrespectful extremes, rendering the Church shamefully naked and its members lacking in adequate spiritual guidance and mediation. Somewhere near the heart of this intellectual and political conflict was the level of intimacy permitted between God and humanity.

Part II

Early modern literature stands as a testament to the physical and metaphysical richness of the naked body. This thesis has demonstrated that nakedness is active and passive, live and static, revealing and concealing, innocent and obscene. The naked body is never neutral, but is surrounded by a wealth of meanings determined by biological fact and personal and communal histories of thought and experience. I have demonstrated that concepts and images of nakedness have the capacity to create urgent, and sometimes disruptive, temporal meaning. And yet, the meaning of nakedness within a given moment or context is shaped by a complex interaction of diverse and paradoxical associations.

Throughout this thesis, we have seen that early modern writers revel in the opportunities for complex and emotionally charged expression afforded by concepts and images of nakedness. How is it that literary representations of the state of undress have the power to provoke such profound experiences, emotions and sensations? At this point, I find it helpful to turn once again to Jean-Luc Marion's illuminating concept of 'the saturated phenomenon'.²⁶ Certainly, we have seen that where the meaning and reception of nakedness is concerned, 'there is always an excess left over'.²⁷ My chapters have demonstrated that nakedness has an 'irreducibility': a spiritual and emotional potency which pushes against any attempts at human 'limitation' or neat categorisation.²⁸ In this sense, nakedness reflects some of the distinctive features of Marion's 'saturated phenomenon'.

Within the modern and increasingly secular Western world, nakedness retains the power to shock, to disturb, to move and to inspire. It perhaps even continues to have sacred resonances. Within McBurney's *Measure for Measure* (2004), Frederick's exposed breasts, a bodily spectacle comparatively tame by today's standards of filmic and artistic nudity, served to morally and emotionally disrupt. As one critic noted, this act of public violation against Isabella's body, shared by the audience, lent striking conviction to a sentiment which would by all other counts be rendered frigid and outdated: 'more than our brother is our chastity'.²⁹ How did Frederick's bodily exposure before an enclosed audience of spectators contribute to the moral, emotional and spiritual impact of Shakespeare's play? This is a difficult question. Eric Bogosian speaks of the 'holiness' of live theatre.³⁰ And within Chapter 5, we noted the theatrical nature of public prayer, and the sermon. These popular Protestant modes of worship

²⁶ Shane Mackinlay, *Interpreting Excess: Jean-Luc Marion, Saturated Phenomena and Hermeneutics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), pp. 1-4.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Mackinlay, p. 2

²⁹ Robert Hanks, 'Measure for Measure: National Theatre, Lyttelton, London', *The Independent*, 17 February 2006, p. 40 [Newspaper Review].

³⁰ Eric Bogosian, *Pounding Nails in the Floor with my Forehead* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1994), p. xii.

drew upon the concepts of ‘earwitnessing’ and ‘eyewitnessing’ (to borrow Hooker’s terms) as a means of stimulating deep spiritual searching amongst members of the congregation.³¹

Within the theatre, the audience is likewise cast as ‘ear’ and ‘eye’ witness: it is a congregation of sorts. This parallel is intensified within productions of *Measure*, a play which puts its audience, as much as its characters, under spiritual scrutiny. Perhaps nakedness, and not only physical nakedness, but the nakedness evoked when Shakespeare cuts through the psychological clothing of his characters and audience, retains its theological colouring most demonstrably within this live and communal literary setting.

The RSC’s omission of nudity within its archival footage of Bill Nash’s *Barnardine* (2003) suggests fears of violation and voyeurism strikingly akin to those which surrounded the early modern anatomy process: a sense that the body (passive and untouchable as it is on screen) is vulnerable to violation merely by impure thought and motive.³² This instance of cautious concealment indicates that nakedness remains complexly associated with feelings and notions of intimacy and integrity, both physical and spiritual. It is deeply entwined with the human sense of self. Nakedness *is* and *is not* us. Nash bares himself while performing as a character within a play. He is costumed in nakedness. And yet, there is no escaping from the fact that this body is his own, and that viewers may choose to view it in these intimate terms. In contrast, Ian McKellen reveals his naked genitals within the RSC’s archival video footage of *King Lear* (2007), just as he does within the live, unrecorded performances of Trevor Nunn’s production.³³ And yet, within the commercial video of the production, McKellen’s

³¹ Ramie Targoff discusses Hooker’s concepts in ‘The Performance of Prayer: Sincerity and Theatricality in Early Modern England’, *Representations*, 60 (1997), 49-69 (p. 60), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928805>> [accessed 25 June 2012].

³² *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Sean Holmes (The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 2003) [Performance] [DVD recording, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive].

³³ *King Lear*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Trevor Nunn (The Courtyard Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 2007) [performance] and [DVD recording, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive].

nakedness is censored.³⁴ The camera pans strategically above the waist, as he disrobes within the scene of the storm. Does this concealment reflect fears of sexual or moral indecency on the part of the film company? Or rather, does it speak of anxieties surrounding the revelation of McKellen's body to a mass market of viewers, beyond the more explicitly artistic bounds of the theatre and theatrical archive? Although the motivations resting behind both instances of censorship are unclear, these examples serve to awaken us to the fact that nakedness remains socially, politically, and morally charged – its meaning and significance shaped, in part, by the form and medium of representation.

Nakedness is complex and contradictory because it is connected so deeply and instinctively to humanity's constant struggle to understand and to define itself, its relationships, and its place within the world. Within the period examined within this thesis, this was a world of great religious anxiety and conflict. And yet, within today's very different cultural circumstances, these striking literary depictions of nakedness seem to retain something like a spiritual resonance. Does what we have discovered about nakedness and spiritual meaning within this thesis continue to charge experiences of disrobing today – even after much of the theological context of early modern bodily treatment and representation has faded?

Nakedness continues to be used as a tool for humiliation: a means of disturbing social identity and stimulating sensations of both deeply personal and material shame. The process of undressing still provokes a sense of individual revelation and vulnerability, and paradoxically, a sense of lost individuality, or distressing anonymity. It seems plausible to suggest that memories of the body's theological associations with sin, and with an absolute creatureliness, linger within and intensify such 'secular' experiences of naked mortification.

³⁴ *King Lear*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Trevor Nunn and Chris Hunt (The Royal Shakespeare Company and Metrodome Distribution, 2008) [on DVD].

Certainly, the tensions at play here echo those which characterise the biblical depictions of Adam and Eve's fallen nakedness, and early modern treatments of this biblical narrative. Sensations and experiences of vulnerability, personal disclosure, intimacy, and trust continue to attend experiences of undressing for sex, moreover. Does a distant memory of theological sacrifice inform such experiences of nakedness as a heightened presence, a gifting, or ultimate surrender of oneself to another? Of course, to determine this would entail a whole new research project, run in collaboration with psychologists. And yet, the findings of this thesis suggest that this is a study worth undertaking. The continuing power of early modern literary representations of nakedness suggests that the body's spiritual heritage remains obscurely active within experiences of disrobing today.

WORKS CITED

Primary Sources

Adams, Thomas, *Fiue Sermons Preached vpon sundry especiall Occasions* (London: 1626), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:16051:13> [accessed 30 July 2013]

Anon., *A Plea for Moderation* (London: 1642), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Zin 39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:156598:5> [accessed 07 November 2011]

Anon., *The Last Judgement* (Bourges Cathedral: thirteenth century) [tympanum engraving]

Anon., *The Primer, or Office of the Blessed Virgin Marie in Latin and English*, trans. by R[ichard] V[estigan] (Antwerp: 1599), reproduced in *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources*, ed. by Robert S. Miola (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Bale, John, *A Nevve Comedy or Enterlude Concernynge Thre Lawes* (London: 1562), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:4672:11> [accessed 03 May 2012]

Banister, John, *The Historie of Man, sucked from the sappe of the most approved Anathomistes* (London: 1578), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:7321:5> [accessed 10 April 2014]

Beaumont, Joseph, *Psyche, or, Loves Myserie in xx. Canto's, Displaying the Intercourse Betwixt Christ and the Soule* (London: 1648), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:11691998> [accessed 11 June 2011]

Beccafumi, Domenico, *Saint Lucy* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena: 1521) [Oil on wood]

The Bible: Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha, ed. by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997 [1611])

The Book of Common Prayer 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book, ed. by John E. Booty (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976)

The Book of Common Prayer (London: 1585)

The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662, ed. by Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Boyd, Michael, 'Measure for Measure, The Ashcroft Room' (Stratford-upon-Avon: May 1998) [DVD recording, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive]

Brathwait, Richard, *The English Gentlewoman* (Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1970 [1631])

Brown, David, 'Naked woman, or a rare epistle sent to Mr. Peter Sterry minister at Whitehall' (London: 1652), in *EEBO*
<http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99865902> [accessed 20 March 2011]

Burton, Robert, *The Anatomie of Melancholie Vol. I* (1621), ed. by Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicholas K. Kiessling, and Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)

Burton, Henry, *A replie to a relation, of the conference between William Laude and Mr. Fisher the Jesuite. By a witnesse of Jesus Christ* ([Amsterdam]: 1640), in *EEBO*
<http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:5075> [accessed 09 November 2011]

Calvin, John, *A Commentary on Genesis* (1554), 2 vols, trans. by John King (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1847), repr. in one vol. (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965)

———, *Calvin's Works*, in *Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. by Baum, Cunitz, and Reuss, vols 1-59 (Brunswick: 1863-1900), reproduced in Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. by Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956)

———, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Geneva: 1559), reproduced in Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. by Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956)

———, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church* (1543), in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, trans. by J. K. S. Reid (London: SCM Press, 1954)

———, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Geneva: 1559), 2 vols, XX (1961), ed. by John T. McNeill; trans. by Ford Lewis Battles (London: S. C. M. Press, 1961)

- Chettle, Henry, *The Tragedy of Hoffman; or, A Reuenge for a father As it hath been diuers times acted with great applause, at the Phenix in Druery – Lane* (London: 1631), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:8232:6> [accessed 05 May 2014]
- Cowell, John, *The Interpreter: Or Booke Containing the Signification of Words: Wherein is set forth the true meaning of all, or the most part of such Words and Termes, as are mentioned in the Lawe Writers, or Statutes of this victorious and renowned Kingdome, requiring any Exposition or Interpretation* (Cambridge: 1607), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:9441:266> [accessed 04 February 2012]
- Crooke, Helkiah, *Microcosmographia*, 2nd edn (London: 1631), image of title page at <<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/people-and-places/disability-history/1485-1660/mental-illness-in-the-16th-and-17th-centuries/>> [accessed 26 June 2014]
- D’Agrate, Marco, *St Bartholomew Flayed* (Milan Duomo: 1562) [Statue]
- de Ketham, Johannes, *Fasciculo de Medicina* (1493), dissection scene, reproduced in Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned* (figure 3)
- Dekker, Thomas, *The Whore of Babylon* (London: 1607), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.882003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:10082:28> [accessed 30 May 2012]
- Donne, John, *John Donne: The Complete English Poems*, ed. by A. J. Smith (London: Penguin, 1996 [1633])
- , *John Donne: The Divine Poems*, ed. by Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952 [1633])
- , *The Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne*, 16 vols, ed. by David Colclough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013–), III (2013)
- , *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. by George R. Potter, and Evelyn M. Simpson, 10 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953-1962), I (1953), II (1955), III (1957), IX (1958)
- , *The Works of John Donne D. D, with a Memoir of his Life*, ed. by Henry Alford, 6 vols (London: John W Parker, 1839), II, IV (both 1839)

- Foxe, John, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives*, ed. by John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 [1563])
- Gardner, Helen, ed., *The Metaphysical Poets* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972)
- The 1599 Geneva Bible*, 3rd edn (Pleasant Hope: L. L. Brown, 1993), with an introduction by Michael H. Brown
- Greenham, Richard, *A Fruitful and Godly Sermon* (London: 1595), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:150931:19> [accessed 04 June 2012]
- Grünewald, *Crucifixion* (c.1513-15), reproduced in Michael Gill, *Image of the Body: Aspects of the Nude* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), p. 153 [Former altarpiece]
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977 [1807])
- Herbert, George, *A Priest to the Temple; or, The Country Parson his Character, and Rule of Holy Life* (1632), in *George Herbert: The Complete English Poems*, ed. by John Tobin (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 199-262
- , *The Latin Poetry of George Herbert: A Bilingual Edition*, ed. by Mark McCloskey, and Paul R. Murphy (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1965)
- , *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (1633), in *George Herbert: The Complete English Poems*, pp. 2-187.
- Hill, Adam, *The Crie of England* (London: 1595), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:15611:25> [accessed 26 July 2013]
- Holbein, Hans, *The Consequences of the Fall* (c.1525), in *The Dance of Death* (Boston: The Heintzeman Press, 1903 [1538]), in *Project Gutenberg* <<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jbh2yr/21790-h.htm>> [accessed 20 July 2011] [woodcut]
- , *The Expulsion* (c. 1525), in *The Dance of Death* [Woodcut]
- Hooker, Richard, *A Learned Discourse of Justification, Workes & How the foundation of faith is overthrowne* (London: 1612; preached in 1591), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:21763:30> [accessed 26 June 2013]

- ‘John Donne: Poet in the City’ (St Paul’s Cathedral, London: 26 April 2012)
<<http://www.poetinthecity.co.uk/john-donne>> [Online recording] [accessed 02 July 2012]
- Luther, Martin, ‘Against the Execrable Bull of the Antichrist’, reproduced by Roland Herbert Bainton, *Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1950), pp. 125-126
- , *Luther’s Works*, American Edition, 55 vols, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muehlenberg and Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-86), IV (1960), X (1974), XII (1955), XXV (1972), XXVI (1963), XXXI (1957), XXXII (1958), XXXIII (1972), XXXIV (1960), XXXVI (1959)
- Marlowe, Christopher, *Dr Faustus: The A-Text* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1985 [c.1590])
- Masaccio, *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden* (Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence: c.1425-27) [Fresco]
- Michelangelo, *Risen Christ* (c.1530s?), reproduced in Gill, *Image of the Body: Aspects of the Nude*, p. 159 [Drawing]
- , *The Last Judgement* (The Sistine Chapel, Rome, 1533-1541) [Fresco]
- Milton, John, *Paradise Lost* (London: Penguin, 2000 [1674])
- Miola, Robert S., ed., *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Oxford English Dictionary* <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 15 July 2014]
- Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience* (Cambridge: 1606), in *EEBO*
<http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:14434:311> [accessed 15 April 2014]
- Petrioli, Gaetano (1741), [Dissected female figure], reproduced by Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned* (figure 32) [Engraving]
- Playfere, Thomas, *The Pathway to Perfection* (London: 1597; first preached in 1593), in *EEBO*
<http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:3737:17> [accessed 30 May 2012]

Quarles, Francis, *A Feast for Wormes Set forth in a Poeme of the History of Jonah* (London: 1620), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:15917:29> [accessed 03 August 2013]

——, ‘On Those that Deserve it’, in *The Metaphysical Poets*, ed. by Helen Gardner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 115

Quevedo, Francisco de, *Visions, or Hels kingdome, and the worlds follies and abuses, strangely displaid by R.C. of the Inner Temple Gent. Being the first fruits of a reformed life* (London: 1640), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:1672:33> [Accessed 01 July 2014]

Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. by R. S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961)

——, *The Spirit and the Letter*, in *Augustine: Later Works*, ed. by John Burnaby (London: S.C.M. Press, 1955), pp. 182-195

Sebald Beham, Hans, *Adam and Eve* (1543) [Engraving]

Shakespeare, William, *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth* (c.1612), in *The RSC Shakespeare: William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: The Royal Shakespeare Company and Macmillan, 2007), pp. 1382-1455

——, *King Lear*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (London: Arden, 2007 [c.1605-6])

——, *King Lear*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Trevor Nunn (The Courtyard Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 2007) [performance]

——, *King Lear*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Trevor Nunn, and Chris Hunt (The Royal Shakespeare Company and Metrodome Distribution, 2008) [on DVD]

——, *Macbeth* (1606), in *The RSC Shakespeare: William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: The Royal Shakespeare Company and Macmillan, 2007), pp. 1859-1917

——, *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by John Barton (The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 1970) [Performance photographs, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive]

- , *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Michael Boyd (The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 1998) [DVD recording, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive]
- , *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Sean Holmes (The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 2003) [DVD recording, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive]
- , *Measure for Measure*, ed. by J. W. Lever (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 1965, repr. 2004 [c.1603])
- , *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Simon McBurney (Lyttelton Theatre, London: The National Theatre and Complicite, 2006) [Performance, February 2006] [DVD recording, The National Theatre Archive]
- , *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, dir. by Roxana Silbert (The Swan Theatre: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 2011) [DVD recording, November 2011, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive] [Performance, 7 March 2012]
- Sibbes, Richard, *The Bruised Reede, and Smoaking Flax* (London: 1630), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:2554:38> [accessed 20 February 2012]
- Simpson, William, *Going Naked, a Signe* (London: 1660), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:151336> [accessed 06 April 2012] [broadside]
- Smith, Henry, *The Wedding Garment* (London: 1590), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:18042:11> [accessed 27 May 2012]
- Spenser, Edmund, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. by W. L. Renwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970 [c.1596])
- , ‘*The Faerie Queene*’: *Book I*, ed. by P. C. Bayley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1590]). Including Spenser’s ‘A Letter of the Authors expounding his whole intention in the course of this worke’ (c.a. 1552-1618), pp. 39-43.
- , *The Faerie Queene, Book 2*, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 2 vols, 7th edn, ed. by M. H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt, vol. I (London: Norton, 2000), pp. 772-783

- , *The Faerie Queene Disposed into twelue bookes, fashioning XII. morall vertues.* (1596), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:18313:246> [accessed 12 May 2012]
- Tyndale, William, *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (Antwerp: 1528), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:5122:92> [accessed 05 June 2012]
- , *The Parable of the Wycked Mammon* (London: 1547), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:5129:65> [accessed 01 May 2012]
- Usher, James, 'The Natural Man is a Dead Man' (c.1620), reproduced in *In God's Name: Examples of Preaching in England 1534-1662*, ed. by John Chandos (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1971), pp. 225-28
- Valverde, *Anatomia del corpo umano* (1560), images reproduced in Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (London: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 76. Or see also <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/historicalanatomies/valverde_home.html> [accessed 17 July 2014]
- Vesalius, Andreas, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (1543), title page reproduced by Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned* (figure 2)
- Walton, Izaak, *Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert* (London: 1670), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:56222:34> [accessed 15 June 2012]
- Willet, Andrew, *Hexapla in Genesin, A Sixfold Commentarie upon Genesis* (London: 1632) (STC 25687) [Microform]
- Williams, John, *A Sermon of Apparell* (London: 1620), in *EEBO* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:1934> [accessed 21 May 2011]

Secondary Sources

- Adelman, Janet, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays* (New York: Routledge, 1992)
- Anderson, Judith H., 'Flowers and Boars: Surmounting Sexual Binarism in Spenser's Garden of Adonis', in *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual XXIII*, ed. by William A. Oram, Anne Lake Prescott, and Thomas P. Roche, Jr (New York: AMS Press, Inc, 2008), pp. 103-118
- Artaud, Antonin, *The Theatre and its Double*, trans. by Victor Corti (Richmond: Oneworld Classics, 2010 [1938])
- Bainton, Roland Herbert, *Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1950)
- Baker, Christopher, *Religion in the Age of Shakespeare* (London: Greenwood Press, 2007)
- Barton, John, and John Muddiman, ed., *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)
- Bataille, Georges, *Eroticism, Death and Sensuality*, trans. by Mary Dalwood (San Francisco: City Lights, 1986)
- Bawcutt, N. W., 'Introduction', in *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. xi–xcviii
- Berger, Harry Jr, *Making Trifles of Terrors: Redistributing Complicities in Shakespeare* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997)
- Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC; Penguin, 1972)
- Bloch, Chana, *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985)
- Bohde, Daniela, 'Skin and the Search for the Interior: The Representation of Flaying in the Art and Anatomy of the Cinquecento', in *Bodily Extremities: Preoccupations with the Human Body in Early Modern European Culture*, ed. by Robert Zwijnenberg and Florike Egmond (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 10-39
- Bogosian, Eric, *Pounding Nails in the Floor with my Forehead* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1994)

- Bradshaw, Graham, *Shakespeare's Scepticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987)
- Brinkworth, E. R. C., *Shakespeare and the Bawdy Court of Stratford* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1972)
- Brown, Carolyn E., 'The Wooing of Duke Vincentio and Isabella of *Measure for Measure*: "The Image of It Gives [Them] Content"', *Shakespeare Studies*, 22 (1994), 189-219
- Bryan, Jennifer, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008)
- Burkhardt, Louis, 'Spectator Seduction: *Measure for Measure*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 37.3 (1995), 236-63, in *JSTOR*
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40755073>> [accessed 16 November 2012]
- Bynum, Caroline Walker, 'The Female Body and Religious Practice', in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body Part One* (New York: Zone, 1989), pp. 160-219
- Cameron, Euan, *The European Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991; repr. 2012)
- Carey, John, *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981)
- Carithers, Gale H. Jr, ed., *Donne at Sermons: A Christian Existential World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972)
- Carr-Gomm, Philip, *A Brief History of Nakedness* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010)
- Cavell, Stanley, *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)
- Chandos, John, ed., *In God's Name: Examples of Preaching in England from the Act of Supremacy to the Act of Uniformity 1534-1662* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1971)
- Claridge, Faye, 'RSC Romps into the Roaring Forties', *BBC Coventry and Warwickshire*, 5 May 2003 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/coventry/stage/stories/2003/05/measure-for-measure-review.shtml>> [accessed 12 October 2013] [Online review]
- Clark, Kenneth, *Civilization: A Personal View* (London: BBC Books, 1991 [1969])
- , *The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art* (London: Penguin Books, 1960 [1956])

- Collinson, Patrick, *The Reformation* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003)
- , *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982)
- Coveney, Michael, ‘No Short Measures in this Contemporary Shakespeare’, *The Daily Mail*, 1 May 1998, p. 36 [Newspaper review]
- Covington, Sarah, *Wounds, Flesh, and Metaphor in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)
- Craig, John, ‘Sermon Reception’, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, ed. by Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington, and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 178-197
- Craik, Katharine A., *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
- , and Tanya Pollard, ed., *Shakespearean Sensations: Experiencing Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
- Crane, Mary Thomas, ‘Male Pregnancy and Cognitive Permeability in *Measure for Measure*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 49.3 (1998), 269-92
- Crawford, Patricia, ‘Sexual Knowledge in England, 1500-1700’, in *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (Harlow: Pearson, 2004), pp. 54-78
- Cressy, David, ‘The Adamites Exposed: Naked Radicals in the English Revolution’, in *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England: Tales of Discord and Dissension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 251-280
- , *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- Cummings, Brian, ‘Animal Passions and Human Sciences: Shame, Blushing and Nakedness in Early Modern Europe and the New World’, in *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Erica Fudge, Susan Wiseman, and Ruth Gilbert (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 26-50
- , *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Cunningham, Jim C., ed., *Nudity & Christianity* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2006)
- Davies, Catharine, *A Religion of the Word* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)

- Davies, Horton, *Worship and Theology in England 1603–1690* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975)
- De Jongh, Nicholas, ‘Recast *Measure* loses some bite and spite’, *The Evening Standard*, 16 February 2006, p. 36 [Newspaper review]
- Digangi, Mario, ‘Pleasure and Danger: Measuring Female Sexuality in *Measure for Measure*’, *ELH*, 60. 3 (1993), 589-609
- Dolan, Frances, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth-century Print Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999)
- Dollimore, Jonathan, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)
- , ‘Transgression and Surveillance in *Measure for Measure*’, in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 72-87
- Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966)
- Duffy, Eamon, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (London: Yale University Press, 2005)
- Egmond, Florike, ‘Execution, Dissection, Pain and Infamy – A Morphological Investigation’, in Robert Zwijnenberg and Florike Egmond, ed., *Bodily Extremities: Preoccupations with the Human Body in Early Modern European Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 92-128
- Falck, Claire, ‘“Heavenly Lineaments” and the Invisible Church in Foxe and Spenser’, *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 53.1 (2013), 1-28
- Fernie, Ewan, *Shame in Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2004)
- , ed., *Spiritual Shakespeares* (London: Routledge, 2005)
- , *The Demonic: Literature and Experience* (London: Routledge, 2013)
- Ferry, Anne, *The ‘Inward’ Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1983)

- Field, D. M., *The Nude in Art* (London: The Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1981)
- Flynn, Dennis, Jeanne Shami, and M. Thomas Hester, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)
- Freedman, Barbara, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* (London: Cornell University Press, 1991)
- Gardner, Helen, 'Introduction', in *John Donne: The Divine Poems*, ed. by Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952)
- Gerrish, B. A., "'To the Unknown God": Luther and Calvin on the Hiddenness of God', *The Journal of Religion*, 53.3 (1973), 263-292, in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1202133>> [accessed 13 March 2012]
- Gill, Michael, *Image of the Body: Aspects of the Nude* (New York: Doubleday, 1989)
- Gilman Richey, Esther, 'The Intimate Other: Lutheran Subjectivity in Spenser, Donne, and Herbert', *Modern Philology*, 108.3 (2011), 343-74, in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/658327>> [accessed 03 November 2011]
- , 'The Property of God: Luther, Calvin and Herbert's Sacrifice Sequence', *ELH*, 78.2 (2011), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41236545>> [accessed 03 April 2012]
- Gless, Darryl J., *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- Gough, Melinda J., "'Her Filthy Feature Open Showne" in Ariosto, Spenser, and "Much Ado about Nothing"', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 39.1 (1999), 41-67
- Green, V. H. H., *Luther and the Reformation* (London: Methuen, 1964)
- Gurr, Andrew and Mariko Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare's Theatres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Haigh, Christopher, 'The Reformation in England to 1603', in *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. by R. Po-chia Hsia (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 135-149

- Hamilton, A. C., ed., *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990)
- Hampton-Reeves, Stuart, *The Shakespeare Handbooks: Measure for Measure* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
- Hankins, John E., 'Spenser and the Revelation of St. John', *PMLA*, 60.2 (1945), 364-381, in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/459078>> [accessed 17 April 2012]
- Hanks, Robert, 'Measure for Measure: National Theatre, Lyttelton, London', *The Independent*, 17 February 2006, p. 40 [newspaper review]
- Hanson, Elizabeth, *Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Harvey, Elizabeth D., *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003)
- Heale, Elizabeth, *'The Faerie Queene': A Reader's Guide*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- Hendrix, Scott, 'Luther', in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. by David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 39-56
- Hooper, Wilfrid, 'The Tudor Sumptuary Laws', *The English Historical Review*, 30.119 (1915), 433-449
- Houlbrooke, Ralph, *Church Courts and the People during the English Reformation 1520-1570* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979)
- Hsia, Po-chia R., ed., *A Companion to the Reformation World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006)
- Hume, Anthea, *Edmund Spenser: Protestant Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)
- Ingram, Martin, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)
- Jackson, Ken, and Arthur F. Marotti, 'The Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Studies', *Criticism*, 46.1 (2004), in *Project MUSE* <<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/criticism/v046/46.1jackson.html>> [accessed 04 March 2014]

- Jardine, Lisa, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1983)
- Jones, Emrys, *Scenic Form in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971)
- Kass, Leon R., 'Seeing the Nakedness of his Father', *Commentary*, 93.6 (1992), 41-47, in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30040989>> [accessed 02 April 2011]
- King, John N., *Spenser's Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990)
- Knight, G. Wilson, *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1977)
- Knoppers, Laura Lunger, 'Engendering Shame: *Measure for Measure* and the Spectacles of Power', *English Literary Renaissance*, 23.3 (1993), 450-71
- Koenigsberger, H. G., George L. Mosse, and G. Q. Bowler, ed., *Europe in the Sixteenth Century* (Longman: New York, 1968; repr. 1982)
- Laqueur, Thomas, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (London: Harvard University Press, 1992)
- Leggatt, Alexander, 'Substitution in *Measure for Measure*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39.3 (1988), 342-59
- Leonard, John, 'Introduction', in John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Christopher Ricks (London: Penguin Books, 2000), pp. vii-xliii
- Lewalski, Barbara Kiefer, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979)
- Lewis, C. S., *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936)
- Lohse, Bernhard, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to his Life and Work*, trans. by Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986)
- , *Martin Luther's Theology*, trans. by Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999)

- MacCulloch, Diarmaid, *Building a Godly Realm: The Establishment of English Protestantism 1558-1603*, New Appreciations in History Series, 27 (London: The Historical Association, 1992)
- , *The Later Reformation in England 1547-1603* (London: Macmillan, 1990)
- MacDonald, Ronald R., 'Measure for Measure: The Flesh Made Word', *Studies in English Literature*, 1500–1900, 30.2 (1990), 265-282
- Mackinlay, Shane, *Interpreting Excess: Jean-Luc Marion, Saturated Phenomena and Hermeneutics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010)
- Maltby, Judith, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Manlove, Colin, *Christian Fantasy from 1200 to the Present* (London: Macmillan, 1992)
- Manning Stevens, Scott, 'New World Contacts and the Trope of the "Naked Savage"', in *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth Harvey (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 123-140
- Martz, Louis L., *The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954)
- Marx, Steven, *Shakespeare and the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Maus, Katherine Eisaman, 'Proof and Consequences: Inwardness and its Exposure in the English Renaissance', *Representations*, 34 (1991), 29-52, in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928769> [accessed January 15 2012]
- , *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)
- McKim, Donald K., ed., *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- Meinhold, Peter, *Luther's Sprachphilosophie* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1958), reproduced by Lohse in *Martin Luther's Theology*, trans. by Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), p. 191
- Miles, Margaret R., *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Tunbridge Wells: Burn & Oates, 1992)

- , 'The Virgin's One Bare Breast: Female Nudity and Religious Meaning in Tuscan Early Renaissance Culture', in *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by Susan Rubin Sulieman (Cambridge; Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 193-208
- Mohr, Melissa, 'Defining Dirt: Three Early Modern Views of Obscenity', *Textual Practice*, 17.2 (2003), 253-75
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0950236032000094836>> [accessed 12 March 2014]
- Moore, Rosemary, *The Light in Their Consciences: The Early Quakers in Britain 1646-1666* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000)
- Munro, Lucy, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- Nead, Lynda, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (Oxon: Routledge, 1992)
- Neill, Michael, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)
- Niesel, Wilhelm, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. by Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956)
- Norton, David, *The King James Bible: A Short History from Tyndale to Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)
- Nuttall, A. D., *Overhead by God: Fiction and Prayer in Herbert, Milton, Dante and St. John* (London: Methuen, 1980)
- O'Connell, Michael, *Mirror and Veil: the Historical Dimension of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene'* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1977)
- Owens, Margaret E., *Stages of Dismemberment: The Fragmented Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Drama* (Newark: Delaware University Press, 2005)
- Palfrey, Simon, *Doing Shakespeare* (London: Arden, 2005)
- Parker, T. H. L., ed., *English Reformers* (London: SCM Press, 1966)
- Paster, Gail Kern, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993)

- Pendergast, John S., *Religion, Allegory, and Literacy in Early Modern England, 1560 – 1640: The Control of the Word* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)
- Quiller-Couch, Arthur, in 'Introduction', *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, ed. by John Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), pp. vii-xliii
- Rambuss, Richard, *Closet Devotions* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998)
- Reeves, Troy Dale, *An Annotated Index to the Sermons of John Donne. Volume I, Index to the Scriptures* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1979)
- Richey, Esther Gilman, 'The Property of God: Luther, Calvin and Herbert's Sacrifice Sequence', *ELH*, 78.2 (2011), 287-314
- Rothman, David J., Steven Marcus, and Stephanie A. Kiceluk, *Medicine and Western Civilization* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1995)
- Rupp, Gordon E., and Philip S. Watson, ed., *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* (London: Westminster Press, 1969)
- Ryan, Kiernan, 'Measure for Measure: Marxism before Marx', in *Marxist Shakespeares*, ed. by Jean E. Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 227-244
- Sawday, Jonathan, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995)
- Scarry, Elaine, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)
- Schoenfeldt, Michael C., *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- , *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991)
- Schroeder, John W., 'Spenser's Erotic Drama: The Orgoglio Episode', *ELH*, 29.2 (1962), 140-59
- Schwartz, Regina M., *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism: When God Left the World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008)

- Scruton, Roger, *Sexual Desire: A Philosophical Investigation* (London: Phoenix, 1994)
- Shaheen, Naseeb, *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Plays* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1999)
- Shannon, Laurie, "'His Apparel Was Done Upon Him": Rites of Personage in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*', *Shakespeare Studies*, 28 (2000), 93-98
- Shirilan, Stephanie, 'Francis Bacon, Robert Burton, and the Thick Skin of the World: Sympathy, Transmission, and the Imaginary Early Modern Skin', *English Studies in Canada*, 34.1 (2008), 1-25, in *LION* <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:rec:abell:R04182177> [accessed 20 February 2012]
- Sietze Bergsma, John, and Scott Walker Hahn, 'Noah's Nakedness and the Curse on Canaan (Genesis 9:20-27)', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 124.1 (2005), 25-40, in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30040989>> [accessed 06 April 2011]
- Stachniewski, John, 'John Donne: The Despair of the Holy Sonnets', *ELH*, 48.4 (1981), 677-705, in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2872957>> [accessed 15 June 2012]
- Steinberg, Leo, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996 [1983])
- Steinmetz, David C., 'The Theology of John Calvin', in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. by David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 39-56
- Stirling, Kirsten, 'Liturgical Poetry', in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, ed. by Jeanne Shami, Dennis Flynn, and M. Thomas Hester, pp. 233-241
- Strier, Richard, *Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983)
- Stringer, Gary A., 'The composition and dissemination of Donne's writings', in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, ed. by Jeanne Shami, Dennis Flynn, and M. Thomas Hester, pp. 12-25
- Strohl, Jane E., 'Luther's Spiritual Journey', in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. by Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 149-164

- Sugg, Richard, *Murder After Death: Literature and Anatomy in Early Modern England* (London: Cornell University Press, 2007)
- Tadmor, Naomi, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society, and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- Targoff, Ramie, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001)
- , ‘The Performance of Prayer: Sincerity and Theatricality in Early Modern England’ *Representations*, 60 (1997), 49-69, in *JSTOR*
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928805>> [accessed 25 June 2012]
- Thaxter, John, ‘Measure for Measure: William Shakespeare, Complicite, RNT Lyttelton, 2006’, *The British Theatre Guide*
<<http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/compliciteMforM-rev>> [accessed 11 August 2013] [online review]
- Toulalan, Sarah, *Imagining Sex: Pornography and Bodies in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Traub, Valerie, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- Turner, Joan, ‘Clothes Divide’, in *Nudity & Christianity*, ed. by Jim C. Cunningham (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2006), pp. 71-75
- Veith, Gene Edward Jr, *Reformation Spirituality: The Religion of George Herbert* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1985)
- Wain, John, quoted by Marliss C. Desens, in *The Bed-Trick in English Renaissance Drama: Explorations in Gender, Sexuality and Power* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1956)
- Walden Johnson, Dale, ‘Marginal at Best: John Knox’s Contribution to the Geneva Bible, 1560’, in *Adaptations of Calvinism in Reformation Europe*, ed. by Mack P. Holt (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 241-48
- Walker, Garthine, *Writing Early Modern History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005)
- Waller, Gary, *Edmund Spenser: A Literary Life*, ed. by Richard Dutton (London: Macmillan, 1994)

- Wall, John N., *Transformations of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, Vaughan* (London: University of Georgia Press, 1988)
- Waters, D. Douglas, *Duessa as Theological Satire* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1970)
- Watkins, Owen C., *The Puritan Experience* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972)
- Watson, Robert N., 'False Immortality in *Measure for Measure*', in *Shakespeare's Comedies: A Guide to Criticism*, ed. by Emma Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 54-80
- Wheeler, Richard P., *Shakespeare's Development and the Problem Comedies: Turn and Counter-Turn* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981)
- Whitaker, Virgil K., 'The Theological Structure of the *Faerie Queene*, Book I', *ELH*, 19.3 (1952), 151-164
- Wiesner, Merry E., *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (London: Routledge, 2000)
- Wilcox, Helen, 'Herbert, George 1593–1633', in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press: 2004)
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13025>> [accessed 7 November 2013]
- Wilson, Richard, "'Prince of Darkness": Foucault's Renaissance', in *Shakespeare in French Theory: King of Shadows* (London: Routledge, 2007)
- Witmore, Michael, *Shakespearean Metaphysics* (London: Continuum, 2008)
- Wofford, Susanne L., 'The *Faerie Queene*, Books I-III', in *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 106-123
- Wood, Richard, 'Review of *Measure for Measure*', *Early Modern Literary Studies* 9.3 / Special Issue 12 (2004), 15, 1-5 <<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/09-3/measrev.html>> [accessed 12 October 2013]
- Wood, Rufus, *Metaphor and Belief in the Faerie Queene* (London: Macmillan, 1997)
- Wriedt, Markus, 'Luther's Theology', in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. by Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 86-119

Young, R. V., 'The Religious Sonnet', in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, ed. by Jeanne Shami, Dennis Flynn, and M. Thomas Hester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 218-232