"Farre fetched and deare bought" : cosmetics and Englishness 1570-1625

Marta Josie Schoel
University at Albany, State University of New York, josie.schoel@gmail.com

The University at Albany community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/legacy-etd

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/legacy-etd/2374

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the The Graduate School at Scholars Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Legacy Theses & Dissertations (2009 - 2024) by an authorized administrator of Scholars Archive. Please see Terms of Use. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@albany.edu.
“FARRE FETCHED AND DEARE BOUGHT”: COSMETICS
AND ENGLISHNESS 1570–1625

By

Marta Josie Schoel

A Dissertation
Submitted to the University at Albany, State University of New York
In Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of English

2019
Abstract

This study examines cosmetic practice, discourse, and material to explore the ways in which face paint, often made from a mixture of foreign and domestic ingredients, challenges the emergent notion of a pure English identity. Within a broader discourse found in recipe books, anti-cosmetic treatises, public and private documents, and plays for public spectacle—as well as court masques—I examine how early modern performances use cosmetic mixtures as theatrical devices to stage, represent, and negotiate anxieties about England’s increased engagement with the nascent global economy. Worn on the permeable surface of the skin, cosmetic material, such as alum, mercury, and mummia, penetrates both the national economy and the individual body; I thus interpret the spectacle of the cosmeticized face as a site of incorporation, a site that represents, and produces, individual and cultural hybridities. I posit, therefore, that the early modern cosmeticized body exists in a state of flux, continuously reconstituted by foreign materials of adornment and beautification. Reading cosmetics through a range of source materials and contexts, I reveal not one or even a few isolated types, but multiple overlapping and sometimes conflicting signifying functions of the early modern cosmeticized face, which becomes, then, a face that both stabilizes and undoes the construction of English whiteness.
Acknowledgements

This project would not be possible without the consistent guidance of my advisor, Ineke Murakami. Thank you for taking a chance on my work all those years ago when I first became obsessed with the “artificial shine” of “bought complexions” in Thomas Middleton’s *Revenger’s Tragedy*. You always encouraged me to take the time to truly enjoy the process of “diving into the wreck,” as Adrienne Rich writes, and perhaps more importantly, you always let me know when it was time to surface. Thank you, also, to Lana Cable, whose *Empire and Drama* seminar gave me permission to write about race, nationhood, and materiality. And thank you to Helene Scheck, who, in my darkest moments of self-doubt, offered not only thoughtful comments on my work, but a steady presence, and with it, a sense of solace.

I would also like to thank the English Department at The University at Albany for the support throughout the years. And for the Richard Thorns Dissertation Fellowship, which gave me the opportunity to spend a blissful summer deep in the archives, researching and writing.

Scholarly work so often demands long hours spent in solitude. My fellow scholars Darcy Mullen and Jonah Richards served as the antidote to the creep of loneliness. Thank you, Darcy, for writing with me, for memeing me, for the gifts large and small, and for knowing all the things before I do. Jonah, you brought a sense of levity to our seminars, and, in turn, to our mutual work on early modern drama. Thank you also to Martha Rozett for joining me for all those wonderful sushi dinners. And I can’t forget Carey and Sally Cummings for offering me a place to stay during the semester, or Karen Williams, who wrote with me when the writing got tough.

I would also like to thank my sister-in-law Holly, who took such excellent care of our baby girl during the final arduous months of finishing this dissertation. You are truly divine-sent.
And thank you Mom and Dad for your boundless encouragement—and for never once asking when I was going to be done with the Phd—or what I was going to do with it after I finished.

Finally, I thank my partner and husband Jonathan Ratcliff. You were the first one to take me seriously when I mentioned (on our first date, no less) the seemingly impossible dream of pursuing my doctorate. You quite literally supported me throughout this long process in all possible ways. You are always there, curious and knowing, when I come up for air. Thank you for everything.

*I came to explore the wreck.*

*The words are purposes.*

*The words are maps.*

*I came to see the damage that was done*  
*and the treasures that prevail.*

For Zoey
**“Farre fetched and deare bought”: Cosmetics and Englishness 1570-1625**

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Chapter 1: “Bought, Borrowed, and Sold Complexions”: Cosmetics and Anglo-Ottoman Traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Chapter 2: Maculate Bodies on the Early Modern Stage: De-facing Lady Conscience in Robert Wilson’s <em>Three Ladies of London</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Chapter 3: “Lyke unto a lyvely thing”: Animate Statues, Corpses, and Effigial Bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>Chapter 4: “Master Fashioners”: Counterfeit Egyptians and English in Ben Jonson’s <em>The Masque of Gypsies Metamorphosed</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

“Farre fetched and deare bought”: Cosmetics and Englishness 1570-1625

examines how cosmetic practice and discourse in early modern England both support and challenge emergent notions of a white English identity.¹ My analysis begins in 1570 when Elizabeth I was excommunicated from the Catholic Church and ends in 1625, at the height of Jacobean cosmopolitanism. The 1570 papal bull excommunicating Elizabeth I opened up trade relations between the English and the Ottoman Empire, resulting in a sudden influx of exotic foreign goods in England’s capital, many of which were used as ingredients in cosmetic mixtures. Within a broader discourse found in recipe books, anti-cosmetic treatises, public and private documents, and plays for public spectacle—as well as court masques—I examine how early modern performances use cosmetic mixtures as theatrical devices to stage, represent, and negotiate anxieties about England’s increased engagement with the nascent global economy. This study investigates the multiple overlapping and sometimes conflicting signifying functions of the early modern cosmeticized face, a face that both stabilizes and undoes the construction of English whiteness.

The symbolic economy of the painted face became a site upon a which fears and desires about class and gender fluidity, emergent capitalistic models dependent on variable international and domestic market forces, and invasive foreign goods infecting the body politic could be negotiated. Described in such varied terms as “counterfeiting,”

“painting,” “slibbersaucing,” and “surphuling,” early modern dramatic and non-dramatic texts, such as sermons, treatises, conduct manuals, broadsides, and travel literature demonstrated a sustained preoccupation with the use and misuse of cosmetics.² Just as instructional manuals seeking to manage and standardize beauty ideals proliferated, so did the anti-cosmetic literature that sought to curb self-adornment practices.³ While anti-cosmetics moralists railed against the dangers of artificial beautifying practices infecting the individual and collective English body, the increased consumption of early modern beauty manuals and the ingredients they advertised contributed to the growth of London’s economy. By the seventeenth century, as Farah Karim-Cooper notes, both manuscript recipe books and printed manuals grew in popularity, suggesting that, “beautification had not only demonstrated its commercial viability, but also its aesthetic appeal.”⁴ It is no surprise then, that cosmesis, to borrow Frances Dolan’s useful term to describe how early modern women used face paint to establish agency, became fraught with anxiety about the relationship between self and other.⁵ By examining plays and other textual forms that

² Both “slibbersaucing,” defined as a “compound or concoction of a messy, repulsive, or nauseous character, used especially for medicinal purposes” and “surphuling” deriving from the term surfle, meaning “to wash or tint the face with cosmetics” are most often found in vitriolic attacks on face-painting. We see this, for example, in Phillip Stubbes’s Anatomy of Abuses, where Stubbes attacks women who “colour their faces with slibbersawces” (25). OED Online, s.v. “slibber-sauce, n.,” sense 2, March 2016, s.v. “surfle, v.,” sense 1b, March 2016, OED Online.

³ See, for example, Phillip Stubbes’s Anatomy of Abuses; Thomas Tuke, A Discourse against Painting and Tincturing of Women [. . .] (London, 1616); and Barnabe Rich, My Lady’s Looking Glass (London, 1616).

⁴ Farah Karim-Cooper, “‘This Alters Not Thy Beauty’: Face-Paint, Gender, and Race in The English Moor,” Early Theatre 10, no. 2 (2007): 140.

treat *cosmesis* in the time frame of this study, I reveal shifting attitudes about English identity, whiteness, notions of becoming, and theatricality.

**“The Art of Decoration, Which Is Called Cosmetic”**

The relationship between cosmology, cosmetic, and cosmopolitan, a network of words derived from the Greek root *kosmos*, meaning world, universe, and order, provides a useful historical narrative of self-beautification practices and materials. This word cluster helps to ground my argument about cross-cultural practices of cosmesis. As Patricia Parker and others have made abundantly clear, the thinking of early modern writers is imaginatively connected to etymologically-linked word clusters.⁶ The history of the term cosmetic, therefore, reveals the ways in which the material and practice of artificial embellishment relates to ideas about cultural and material transfer.

Cosmetic materiality has traditionally been dismissed as an artificial, and thus superfluous façade. When placed in relation to kosmos, or cosmic, however, we can begin to understand how surfaces were not at all superfluous in early modern thought, as exteriors were thought to provide useful information about interior states of being. Indeed, as Peter G. Platt observes, “the ancestral relation between cosmic and cosmetic is not coincidental: both have to do with pleasing arrangement . . . whatever the difference in scale and significance might be.”⁷ The term cosmetic, then, is related to the notion of the universe as a well-ordered system, which, in the early modern imagination, conveyed

---


⁷ Peter G. Platt, *Wonders, Marvels and Monsters in Early Modern Culture* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 64.
a sense of harmony and beauty. This connection, between the “pleasing arrangement” of bodily surfaces and the notion of the body as a well-ordered system mirroring the cosmos can be found in Francis Bacon’s *Advancement of Learning* (1605), where the term cosmetic first appears.

Published in the first decade of the seventeenth century, Bacon’s treatise is predominately studied as the seminal text on empirical philosophical science. Yet this pioneering work also reflects subtle cultural shifts concerning cosmetic self-fashioning. Bacon, who had a keen understanding of the concordances of a healthy mind and body, reflects this shift in his *Advancement of Learning*. He compartmentalizes the knowledge necessary to maintain the “good of man’s body” into four categories: “Health, beauty, strength, and pleasure: so the knowleges are Medicine, or art of Cure; art of Decoration, which is called Cosmetic; art of Activity, which is called Athletic; and art of Voluptuary, which Tacitus truly calleth *eruditus luxus*.” He instead differentiates between two forms of self-beautification: the immoral, which he refers to as “effeminate,” and the necessary, or “civil” means of augmenting the surface of the body.8

Writing in a period when sartorial excesses were becoming increasingly visible on the bodies of courtiers and middling citizens alike, Bacon dismisses effeminate beautifying practices, or “artificial decoration,” as a vain indulgence that is “neither fine enough to deceive, nor handsome to use, nor wholesome to please.” Conversely, unlike the “deficiencies” of painting,” the “civil” use of cosmetics is associated with the “cleanness of body,” which is “ever esteemed to proceed from a due reverence, to God to

society, and to ourselves.”9 This second designation, which denotes the proper public use and display of the corporeal decorative arts, recalls the etymological root of cosmetic as deriving from the Greek word for cosmos and suggests that Bacon may consider cleansing agents such as tinctures and washes, rather than paints and fucuses as material that can be used to visually create a harmonious, and beautiful system. For Bacon, ornately decorated skin and sartorial excess invites chaos while the public display of the civilized body aids in the creation and maintenance of an ordered social cosmos. This subtle development from the blanket condemnations about cosmetic self-fashioning seen in anti-cosmetic tracts, I suggest, can be attributed to the ways in which non-aristocratic women were beginning to normalize cosmetics by more readily adopting cosmetic practices and circulating cosmetic materials.

My understanding of the function and meaning of cosmetic is also directly related to the former’s allusive link to the term cosmopolitan, or citizen of the world. Margaret Jacob describes cosmopolitanism during the early modern period as “the ability to experience people of different nations, creeds and colors with pleasure, curiosity and interest . . .”10 The early modern cosmopolite’s process of self-fashioning was just as dependent on exotic material goods such as perfumes, silks, and other ingredients that might be used to decorate the English body, as it was on the importation and adoption of

---

9 Bacon’s 1623 additions to the Latin translation of “Advancement of Learning,” known as De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum, borrows from the attacks on face-painting seen in anti-cosmetic treatises of the period. In the Latin translation, Bacon refers to “effeminate” beautifying practices as the “depraved custom of painting,” and “adulterate decoration.” Francis Bacon, De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum (Wurceburgi: Stahel, 1780), 394.

foreign customs, traditions, and practices. We might, therefore, consider Bacon’s
differentiation between “civil” and “effeminate” beautification practices as a covert
means of advocating for a controlled form of cosmopolitanism, one that is advertised
through the cultivation of worldly knowledge about, at least in part, the restoration and
management of bodily of surfaces rather than the conspicuous displays of foreign
commodities such as heavy face paint.11 We can thus imagine cosmetics, the ingredients
of which are often derived from international sources, as having the power to “make up”
the wearer’s complexion and contested cosmopolitan identity.

Most scholarship concerned with the signifying function of the painted face has
focused on the anxieties found in anti-cosmetic discourse, including foreign ingredients
infecting the individual and collective English body, immorality, and dissimulation. In
Modern England,” for example, Dolan addresses how moralists, concerned with the ways
in which face paint alters nature, promulgate the notion that dangerous artificial
beautifying practices recreate the female self. Annette Drew-Bear relies on similar anti-
cosmetic sentiment during the period to examine the “moral significance” of the painted
face as it appears on the early modern stage. With a new emphasis on theatricality, Tanya
Pollard’s Drugs and Theater investigates the analogous relationship between the
poisonous components of paint and the perceived dangers of the infectious theater.
Focusing on the material properties of face paint on the early modern stage, Farah Karim-

11 In “The New Atlantis,” Francis Bacon advocates for the cultivation of a kind of worldly
discourse and “inter-knowledge” between “nations of the world.” In “Of Travel,” however, he notes, that
the results of this knowledge should only “appear” in his “discourse,” and not in his “apparel or gesture.”
Cooper also addresses the ways in which the materiality of face paint invokes and responds to anxieties about dissimulation, prostitution, and infection. While these studies are concerned with the vitriolic attacks on tinctures, fucces, and paints found in the anticosmetic literature of the period, I explore the construction of whiteness and Englishness in relation to cosmetic self-fashioning and materiality. Also diverging from the previous scholarship, which focused primarily on the moral implications of artificial adornment, Kimberly Poitevin investigates the ways in which English “women played an active and essential part in determining racial meaning.” My research intersects with Poitevin’s scholarship, but while her attention remains on the material properties of face paint, I extend this focus by analyzing the cross-cultural trade of cosmetic manuals and recipes to explore how cosmetic practices and discourse serve as productive processes dependent on hybrid cultural forms.

I draw upon a variety of compatible theoretical methodologies, including cultural materialism, postcolonialism, critical race theory, and psychoanalysis to examine the formation of English cultural identities in relation to the foreign material properties of face paint. My understanding of the emergence of whiteness as a constructed ideal for Western Europe draws from critics such as Arthur Little, Peter Erickson, Kim Hall, Ania


Loomba, and more recently, Geraldine Heng. As Heng writes, the fictions of race are “a structural relationship for the articulation and management of difference rather than substantive content.” In the following pages, I argue that the use and dissemination of face-whitening cosmetics during the early modern period aided in the construction and maintenance of this fiction.

The examination of the material properties of cosmetic self-fashioning and trade troubles the emergence of whiteness as a static category. By using the notion of “becoming,” as formulated by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, I challenge ideas of pure unadulterated Englishness and whiteness, positing instead the idea that notions of Englishness emerge from and within more fluid states of becoming-other. In addition to this concept of becoming, my examination of the cosmeticized face is also informed by Wolfgang Welsch’s idea of the transcultural network, defined by, he writes, “entanglement, intermixing and commonness.” We see this, for example, when an ingredient imported from the East is used in an English recipe, thereby transforming the raw material, cosmetic concoction, and visage of the wearer. The transcultural flow of information and goods is, as Welsch observes “multi-meshed and inclusive.” Nothing, he continues, is “absolutely foreign,” nor is anything “exclusively own.” The painted face, I suggest, emblematizes early modern transculturality.

---


15 This definition of transculturality has points of contact with Homi K. Bhabha’s older, and somewhat less fluid concept of hybridity. Wolfgang Welsch, “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. Scott Lash and Mike Featherstone
While the term “makeup” was not yet in the English lexicon, the use of paint as a means to constitute or “make” the wearer was emergent in the Renaissance imaginary.\(^\text{16}\) The notion of “deep wearing,” which is terminology Hal uses in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV, Part II*, is extended by Anne Jones and Peter Stallybrass to analyze clothing as “materials of memory” that help to constitute identity. Using the etymology of “fashion,” which derives from the Latin *facere* or “making” identity as a point of departure, they begin their analysis by noting that prior to the Renaissance, vestments made identity, where “the putting on of clothes . . . quite literally constituted a person as a monarch or a freeman of a guild or a household servant.”\(^\text{17}\) As a consumable commodity, makeup does not maintain or “hold” the memory of previous owners like the fabric of clothing, which can in turn “imprint” the wearer. However, the idea that face paint could have the power to shape the body is echoed throughout early modern cosmetic discourse, travel literature, and drama. A pamphlet about the customs of Brazil from 1601, for example, claims that “to make themselves gallant, Brazilians use divers inventions, painting their bodies with a juice of a certain fruite wherewith they remaine blacke.”\(^\text{18}\) Despite the ephemerality of the painted face, stage plays, anti-cosmetic treatises, and travel literature that focuses on

---


\(^{18}\) Samuel Purchas, “A treatisise of Brasil, written by a Portugall which had long lived there,” in *Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed. Hakluytus (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1905), 422.
artificial adornment all telegraph anxieties about cosmetics as having the power to permanently transform the human figure.

As early modern anti-cosmetic moralists were quick to observe, cosmeticized surfaces are superficial, falsifying, masking, beautifying, material, and symbolic. Simultaneously concealing and revealing, the painted visage can be interpreted as a site of resistance and subterfuge, or as an advertisement of vanity and conspicuous consumption. A kind of palimpsest, the embellished face is a canvas where meaning is inscribed and superimposed, where white identity is “made-up” and made visible through the hybrid combination of foreign and domestic ingredients and influences.

Chapter 1: “Bought, Borrowed, and Sold Complexions”: Cosmetics and Anglo-Ottoman Traffic

Chapter one examine a series of letters and gifts exchanged between Elizabeth I, Melike Safiye Sultan, the principle consort to the Ottoman Sultan Murad III, and her kira, or serving woman, Esperenza Malchi. Written between the years of 1592 and 1599, the letters, I argue, extend beyond traditional patriarchal diplomacy. The chapter is concerned with the final letter in the series, wherein Malchi attempts to procure English cosmetics from Elizabeth I. Reading the letter alongside beauty manuals such as the medieval Trotula and the popular English translation of Girolamo Ruscelli’s Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont, I illustrate the degree to which the formation of early modern cosmetics culture depended on transcultural contact between aristocratic and non-aristocratic women. By examining the Ottoman-English cosmetics trade and its

---

19 Monica Helen Green, trans., The Trotula: An English Translation of the Medieval Compendium of Women’s Medicine (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); and Girolamo Ruscelli, The
relationship to the construction of Elizabeth’s famous whiteness, manufactured from a combination of domestic staples and foreign imports, I reveal the hybridity that was ever a part of the construct of Englishness. The final section of the chapter turns to the early modern stage to examine this hybridity in what I refer to as a cosmetic baptism of the Turkish princess in Phillip Massinger’s *Renegado*.

**Chapter 2: Maculate Bodies on the Early Modern Stage: De-facing Lady Conscience in Robert Wilson’s *Three Ladies of London***

Robert Wilson’s 1580 *The Three Ladies of London* uses the theatrics of the morality play genre and the materiality of cosmetic ingredients to stage the risks and potentials of transnational trade. When the allegorical white face of London’s conscience is abstracted and disordered by a random scattering of dots—markings that are created with imported ingredients and recall descriptions of overseas bodies—the face becomes a visible site on which to negotiate and explore the ways in which foreignness might transform personal and national identity. Engaging Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s notion of faciality, I argue that Conscience’s spotted visage is a spectacular and shocking emblem of both individual and national dissolution and openness, one that challenges emerging taxonomies of cultural difference and constructions of autonomous English identity. Scenes in which characters are transformed by the invasive and foreign properties of cosmetic material suggest an interpenetrative relationship between the

---

playing subject and material prop, one that both stages and reifies individual and cultural hybridity. I read these moments as a kind of material becoming, where the performance of English subjectivity is one of hybridization and fluidity. The early modern cosmeticized English body exists, therefore, in a state of flux, continuously reconstituted by foreign materials of adornment and beautification.

Chapter 3: “Lyke unto a Lyvely Thing”: Animate Statues, Corpses, and Effigial Bodies

Absented through the Reformation’s attack on Catholic mourning rituals, the corpse, positioned by Protestant reformers as a putrefying object to be hidden from public view, reappears in a significant number of theatrical productions throughout the Elizabethan and Jacobean period, suggesting a considerable sustained interest in the ontological status of the dead. Along with the corpse, early modern England was also interested in the extent to which memorial statuary serves as a means to maintain hierarchical power. Elizabeth I’s effigy, for example, which was painted with white skin and red lips, much like her face when living, continued the project of solidifying the connection between Englishness and whiteness, even after her death. This chapter considers two Jacobean stage plays: Thomas Middleton’s Second Maiden’s Tragedy and Shakespeare’s Winter’s Tale, both of which explore the complex relationship between the corpse and memorial statuary through the figure of a painted heroine. By examining the performance, treatment, and display of the two painted heroines through Julia Kristeva’s concept of abjection, I reveal the ways in which Middleton and Shakespeare use face
paint to negotiate and telegraph the loss of the materiality of death in a post-Reformation England.

Chapter 4: “Master Fashioners”: Counterfeit Egyptians and English in Ben Jonson’s The Masque of Gypsies Metamorphosed

Chapter four focuses on The Masque of Gypsies Metamorphosed to examine how Ben Jonson mobilizes the trope of the counterfeit Gypsy, also known as the “English Gypsy,” to investigate the problematic relationship between London’s burgeoning market, theatricality, and the Jacobean court. The falsification of Gypsy identity borrows from, and is in conversation with, the kinds of theatricality found on and off the early modern stage, from the market stalls and theaters to private courtly entertainments. As Tracy C. Davis and Thomas Postlewaite note, the critique of theatricality characterizes performance as “illusory, deceptive, exaggerated, artificial, or affected.”20 Drawing from this definition, I reveal how Jonson’s masque functions as a response to London’s emergent ideology of market exchange and unrestrained consumption, which both relies on and perpetuates theatricality. Performed by The Duke of Buckingham and other courtiers who, perhaps ironically, engage in various kinds of theatrical performances for purposes of social mobility both on and off the stage, Jonson’s band of face-painting and thieving counterfeit Gypsies serves as a critique of such increased theatricality at the court.

20 Tracy C. Davis and Thomas Postlewait, Theatricality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4.
Chapter 1: “Bought, Borrowed, and Sold Complexions”: Cosmetics and Anglo-Ottoman Traffic

Between the years of 1593 and 1599, Elizabeth I and Melike Safiye Sultan, the principle consort to the Ottoman Sultan Murad III, later to become Valide Sultan, or legal mother, of Mehmed III, engaged in a unique epistolary relationship. The letters between the two women were written more than ten years after the Ottoman Empire granted trading rights to the English, an act that allowed Elizabeth to authorize the official charter for the Turkey Company, which had merged with the Venice Company to become the Levant Company in 1592. As evidenced by the luxury goods flooding the banks of London by the time the first letter was sent, English commerce and overseas trafficking had expanded considerably. By the last decade of the late sixteenth century, as John Stowe writes in his *Annales of England*, England was “plenteously abounding in Free Trade and Commerce with all nations, richly stored with gold, silver, pearle, spice, peper, and many other strange commodities. . . Oyles from Candy, Cyprus, and other places under the Turkes dominion.”

The correspondence between Elizabeth I and the Sultana of the Ottoman Empire began as a strategy to promote continued “pure mutual confidence and abundance of amity” between trading nations; the letters and gifts exchanged, however, extended far beyond traditional diplomatic negotiations.

---


As England continued to experience unprecedented economic expansion, the transactions between Elizabeth I and the Sultana became increasingly intimate. With each letter they offered seemingly confidential words of mutual admiration accompanied with personal luxury gifts such as jewels, perfumed gloves, embroidered handkerchiefs, gilded glass bottles, crowns, and headdresses. In the final known letter in the series, the Sultana’s *kira*, or intermediary, requests that Elizabeth send “rare” English cosmetics to the Ottoman harem. The Sultana’s interest in procuring English oils, unguents, and other beautifying preparations is noteworthy because the very ingredients used to make the desired cosmetics were originally imported to England from the East via the very trade agreements they were attempting to buoy.

Speculating that the recipe was borrowed and transformed from the popular *Secrets of the Reuerend Maister Alexis of Piemont*, which, in turn, may have borrowed from the medieval *Trotula*, which was translated and reprinted for Elizabethan audiences, I reveal how English writers incorporated, advertised, and eventually erased overseas contributions. While household texts offering recipes and tips for women would often capitalize on England’s growing taste for exotic goods by highlighting the overseas origins of the various ingredients required to mix the featured tinctures, washes, and paints, they tended to elide the foreign origins of the actual recipes. Anticipating the capitalist expansion of later empires, early modern beauty manuals and advertisements tend to suggest that raw materials and labor derives from the exotic elsewhere, such as Africa and Constantinople, while expertise and innovation are domestically born.

---

23 Esperenza Malchi to Elizabeth I, November 16/26, 1599, in Skilliter, “Three Letters,” 143.
The rhetorical shifts in the beauty manual, from the medieval *Trotula* to those printed in the late seventeenth century mirror the epistolary relationship between Safiye Sultana, Elizabeth I, and Esperenza Malchi. While the letters extend the kind of transcultural exchange and mutuality demonstrated in *The Trotula*, Malchi’s reference to Elizabeth’s “rare” cosmetics also prefigures the erasure of the Eastern origin of supposedly English recipes. Recovering and rematerializing the overseas origins of Elizabeth’s cosmetic recipes reveals new information about how the beauty industry formed through complex, and at times contradictory, processes of erasure, appropriation, and mutual exchange.

Moreover, this cross-cultural exchange of beautifying goods and practices reveals the ways in which knowledge is mutually constituted and shared between trading nations. Examining how the return of luxury exports, transformed from raw ingredients to cosmetic products, disrupts emerging differentiations between England and Turkey and collapses the two nations into a larger network of associations, I reveal the inadequacy of current models for viewing Anglo-Turkish relations in this era. I then turn to the early modern stage to analyze the conversion scene in Phillip Massigner’s Turkish set Jacobean play, *The Renegado*. I hope to suggest that the scene, which stages the baptism of the Turkish princess Donusa, evokes ideas about the construction of whiteness through cosmetic transformation.

The written correspondence between Elizabeth I and Safiye Sultana has previously been studied as a source of information about early modern female sovereignty. By focusing primarily on women’s agency, especially the ways in which Elizabeth I and the Sultana used early modern gender norms to their advantage, both
Leslie Pierce and Bernadette Andrea offer a great deal of information about the cultural implications of the correspondence, including the ways in which the letters shaped and influenced a sense of mutuality between England and the Ottoman Empire. Andrea, for example, reminds us that while brokering trade deals and maintaining economically productive cross-cultural relations, the Sultana and Elizabeth, both women of power writing from within patriarchal societies, occupy the “negotiated subject position” of a “socio-historically constructed female space” rather than the “oppositional” space created via male-sanctioned diplomacy. The exchange of women model from which Andrea draws to assert that the letters “subvert the paradigm whereby women are circulated as objects between men so as to secure patriarchal relations” is certainly a pertinent and useful theoretical lens through which to examine the cultural function and resonance of the correspondence.24 Indeed, the letters, which began with the clear intent of securing mutually productive trade networks and conclude with the exchange of beauty secrets, demonstrates, as Leslie Pierce notes, a “special communication as women.”25

My examination of the epistolary relationship between Elizabeth I, Safiye Sultana, and Esperenza Malchi builds upon the important feminist historicist work by Pierce and Andrea by adding a cultural materialist perspective. Rather than focus on the women as “objects that speak” I consider the agency of the objects they exchange, the unguents and fucuses that move through time and space, constituting a sense of shared

---


knowledge and transforming personal and cultural identities. Rematerializing the beautifying washes and oils discussed in the kira’s letter, the ingredients of which were most likely imported to England from the East by the English merchants of the Turkey Company only to be sent back to Turkey as a gift, reveals new information about the complex network of exchange between England and the Ottoman Empire at the end of the sixteenth century. In this chapter, I take up the notion posited by Terence Turner that the surface of the body is “not only the boundary of the individual as a biological and psychological entity but the frontier of the social self as well.” As an ephemeral consumable that is worn on the skin, a contested boundary line separating the self from the world, cosmetic materiality breaks down divisions between self and other, and possesses therefore the potential to undo emerging differentiations between the East and West. The first part of the present chapter will explore how cosmetic materiality functions in the private sphere, through the relationship between the two sovereigns and a third woman, the Sultana's kira. The second part will shift the focus to the public space, to explore how cosmetic materiality enabled the rehearsal of Anglo-Ottoman relation, and anxieties about them, on stage.

26 While the absence of the cosmetic object sent overseas can be seen as problematic, it serves as a kind of generative lack for me, wherein that which is not there, such as the alum I discuss later in the chapter, can used as a space to explore possibilities and potentialities of exchange. As Derrida notes, lack, as related to the supplement, can produce copious imaginative material. Furthermore, the absence of the object can be reconfigured through textual material exchange, giving—and making—absence matter. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 153–170.

Elizabeth I and the Sultana’s Cosmetic Correspondence

The cultural and political significance of the harem within Ottoman society is an intrinsic component to understanding and conveying the import of the exchange between the Sultana and Elizabeth I. As Pierce and Andrea explain, the possibility of this unique correspondence was largely due to Safiye’s position with the Ottoman harem as well as with the function and status of the harem itself. In her study, which serves as a corrective to Western assumptions about the seraglio as a state-supported repressive mechanism of female subjugation, Pierce argues that due to Ottoman expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the women of the Imperial harem were allotted considerably more agency than in earlier eras. By addressing the ways in which Imperial women were increasingly participating in politics and diplomacy, Pierce undoes the false notion that power was consolidated solely by and in the Sultan.

In addition to being a locus of power, the harem was also a space of conspicuous consumption. The notion of the Ottoman harem as a market for imported luxury goods is seen in the first known English description of the Sultan’s concubines, written by the organ-maker Thomas Dallam. In August of 1599, Elizabeth sent an organ for Murad IV and a gilded coach for Safiye, who was by then the valide sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Dallam, who accompanied his organ as it made the long journey from England to Constantinople, kept a detailed journal of his adventures, one of which consisted of a

---

28 Pierce argues that after the Ottoman state reached its limits geographically, it was forced to turn inward, becoming a sedentary Sultanate rather than a nomadic one. This, in turn, gave women more power and influence over domestic and international affairs. No longer sent to distant geographies with their sons, the women of the harem stayed closer to the center of power, allowing them to establish influential networks and associations. Pierce, Imperial Harem, 10.

brief glimpse into the harem. When afforded the rare sight of the Sultan’s concubines, he initially thinks the group is made up of young boys. He then writes that he “saw their hair hanging down their back in plaits with tassels of little pearls, and other obvious signs,” and thus “realized they were women and very pretty at that.”30 Because of this anecdote, and because he later expresses difficulty in turning away from the sight of these pretty girls playing ball, Dallam’s account has most often been read as participating in the construction of an eroticizing Orientalist gaze.31 The materialist dimension of his account, however, has largely been overlooked.

The bulk of Dallam’s description is in fact less concerned with conveying a sense of titillation and considerably more focused on offering European readers details about foreign female costume. His list of personal luxury goods include many imported from distant geographies. The concubines, he writes, were ornamented with pearls, white “woll” trousers, gold caps, jewels, and gold ankle bracelets, wore coats “like a souldier’s mandilyon, som of reed sattan and som of blew, and som of other collors, and grded like a lace of contraire color,” cordovan “buskins,” or knee-high boots, and velvet “panttobles,” which could describe either slippers or platform shoes.32 Although hidden


31 Dallam writes of the concubine’s costume: “You could see their thighs through the calf length cotton trousers, snow white and fine as muslin.” When his guide urges him to leave for fear of being caught by the Sultan and executed, he notes that he was reluctant to leave. Penetrating the both the harem walls and the fabric of the concubine’s clothes, Dallam’s gaze is certainly eroticizing, and he positions the women as passive sensuous objects of Orientalist discourse. However, while this scene positions Dallam as the audience and director of the gaze, his diary should nonetheless not be considered in terms of Said’s “one-way exchange” of the Orientalist spectator. When read as a unique episode in a larger text, it becomes obvious that the gaze is, in fact, part of a two-way exchange most of all because Dallam himself reports on being continuously gazed upon by members of the powerful Ottoman court. Dallam, 50.

32 Dallam, 74–75.
from the public eye, the harem as presented in Dallam’s account is intrinsically connected
to transnational networks of exchange. The harem as a site of conspicuous
consumption is also reiterated in Massinger’s *The Renegado*: it is filled with jewels,
luxurious foreign costumes, and other materials of self-adornment.\(^{33}\)

I read the epistolary exchange between Safiye Sultana, Elizabeth I, and the kira as
an extension of the kind of cross-cultural exchange and mutuality demonstrated in *The
Trotula*. The remainder of this section seeks to recover some of the ways in which the
East and West exchanged beautifying ingredients and recipes, mutually constructing
knowledge about bodily decoration and the performance of the self. By examining the
correspondence between Queen Elizabeth and the Sultana, much of it laden with
linguistic and material cosmetic signifiers, I seek to recover some of this valuable
information about the ways in which the East and West trafficked in material goods and
cultural knowledge. I challenge anachronistic applications of the Eurocentric binary
produced by Orientalist discourse. In the following section, I aim to move beyond such
binaries and towards a more multicultural perspective, concerned with overlapping
networks of communication, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the ways in
which cultural knowledge, such as recipes, and personal and national identity are
constituted by multiple, and at times conflicting, forces and influences.\(^{34}\)

Arden Shakespeare, 2010).

\(^{34}\) This return of luxury exports, transformed from raw ingredients to cosmetic material, challenges
anachronistic applications of Edward Said’s Orientalist model, allowing the notion of England as the
metropole and Turkey on the periphery to collapse into a larger network of associations. While Said’s work
has largely been debunked as it pertains to the early modern period, the notion of “the other,” a category for
the foreign constructed in opposition to the domestic persists in much of the work produced by cultural
The Sultana’s first letter of record came to be known by the English reading public after it was printed in the 1598-1600 edition of *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, Richard Hakluyt’s collection of English travel narratives, diplomatic correspondence, shipping inventories, and chronicles. The compendium, described by James Froude in 1852 as the “prose epic of the English nation,” demonstrates an overt interest in promoting economic and territorial English expansionism. This proto-imperialist agenda can be located in the various ways, both overt and subtle, in which Hakluyt edits Safiye’s letter. Using the homogenizing power of the printing press to absorb the letter into his larger commercial project, Hakluyt transforms it from an exotic object of beauty to a standard document of English trade negotiations.

The original letter Elizabeth received from the Sultana in 1594 was far from ordinary. It was accompanied by “a very fine case of glass bottles silver & gilt” and “ten garments of cloth of gold,” including an “uppergowne of cloth of gold very rich, an under gowne of cloth and silver, and a girdle of Turkie worke, rich and faire,” to “prove the love she bore the English queen.” It was written in an ornate naskh, an Arabic calligraphic script often used by scribes for copying books and legal documents, on parchment powdered with gold. Writing in blue, black, crimson, and gold ink, after

---


36 Richard Wrag, who accompanied the gifts on the *Ascension*, documented the gift exchange. The “very fine case of glass bottles silver & gilt,” among the gifts the sultana offers to Elizabeth could very well have been used for cosmetic jars (Haklyut, *Principal Navigations*, 6:114–118). For a discussion about glass jars once used as reliquaries that were then repurposed to mix cosmetics, see Patricia Berrahou Phillipy, *Painting Women: Cosmetics, Canvases, and Early Modern Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 130–150.

37 The term naskh means “copy.” Scholars have suggested that a woman in the harem rather than the Sultana herself wrote the letter. The letters that came after this original were, as Skilliter notes,
listing the standard invocations and introductions, Safiye uses a series of cosmetic signifiers to convey the multi-sensory experience of reading Elizabeth’s original missive, which she considers to be “full of marvels.” The English paper, she writes, was “more fragrant than pure camphor and ambergris” and Elizabeth’s ink stronger than the “finest musk.”38 Due in part to the ephemeral quality of scent, we cannot know for certain if the Sultana’s olfactory references were rhetorical flourishes or if Elizabeth did, indeed, perfume her letters with “rose” and “musk.” It seems likely, however, that Elizabeth’s letters were scented. Perfumed missives further underscore the absent presence of the writer, establishing a unique bond between correspondents. These signifiers, which highlight the multi-sensory experience of both reading and writing the letters, seem to resist Hakluyt’s attempt at domesticating the text’s original exotic and feminine qualities.39

Divided from the exotic objects that accompanied it and translated from Arabic into both English and Italian, the Sultana’s letter as it appears in The Principal Navigations is stripped of its original visual and textual Eastern signifiers. Moreover, the publisher’s paratexual mediations reveal additional information about the intended purpose and market for the compendium. The use of roman type as combined with blackletter, also known as English letter, for example, suggests an explicit agenda of incorporating the letter into England’s imperialist project. As was increasingly becoming considerably less ornate in calligraphic style, ink, and paper. This suggests a growing intimacy between the two women, as the formal style gave way to a more casual correspondence. Skilliter, “Three Letters,” 132.


the norm, roman type is seen in the introduction, the table of contents, and the various headings throughout the text, yet Hakluyt’s printer uses blackletter face, which, by the sixteenth century, was fading in popularity, for the body of each reprinted document.

This use of blackletter, a type associated with traditional English culture, rather than the more cosmopolitan roman typeface, suggests an interest in promoting a “nostalgic” vision of Englishness. Furthermore, blackletter tended to be used for ballads, hornbooks, and other genres associated with the lower sort. This dramatic shift in typography, from the calligraphic naskh of the original letter to blackletter face suggests an interest in promoting English imperialism by means of establishing print authority.40 The textual authority of The Principal Navigations is nonetheless undergirded by the existence of Safiye’s original letter. A return to cosmetic signifiers, both linguistic and material, that appear throughout the correspondence, reveals a complex network of exchange between trading nations, one that resists such easy consolidation or compartmentalization.

The written correspondence between the two nations actually began in 1576 when Sultan Murad III and Elizabeth I communicated about the establishment of trade routes between the Ottoman Empire and England. Elizabeth included a jewel-encrusted clock in one response, a gift that set the foundation for the 1580 trade agreement.41 It was not until

40 In Zachary Lesser’s study “Typographic Nostalgia” he discusses how the blackletter face is associated with combination of “Englishness” and “past-ness,” signifying “image of unity” and “common culture.” Lukas Erne also discusses the different uses of roman and blackletter during the early modern period. Zachary Lesser, “Typographic Nostalgia,” in The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England, ed. Marta Straznicky (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 99–125; and Lukas Erne, Shakespeare and the Book Trade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 115–128.

41 Ania Loomba discusses England’s practice of giving gifts in exchange for secure trade relations with the East as an “endless nightmare.” She does include some references to Turkey, but her discussion focuses primarily on gift exchange with India during the reign of James I. While it is impossible to know how the Sultana and Elizabeth “really” felt about the gifts they received, it seems as though their
1593, after multiple requests from the English Ambassador, William Harborne, that Elizabeth began to correspond directly with the Safiye Sultana. In addition to the letter, Harborne also asked the English Privy Council for a “present sent in her majesties name”: a miniature of Elizabeth I. The portrait, a “jewel of her majesties picture, set with some rubies and diamants,” meant in part to advertise the relationship between Harborne and Elizabeth, also created a sense of intimacy between the two women. Henry Lello, Harborne’s enterprising secretary who, upon recognizing Safiye’s influence over her husband and son, established a connection with the Imperial harem, later reports that the Sultana “had often sente to me to sende hir the Queen’s picture to behold.” Lello then informs the Sultana that the English monarch would like “a sute of princely attire being after the Turkish fashion” that would “for the rareness be acceptable in England.”

Safiye’s following letter expresses appreciation for Elizabeth’s gifts and confirms that she will urge her son to “act according to the treaty” signed in 1581. She concludes by apologizing for the modest gift of a ruby and diamond encrusted crown, which was to be delivered to the English ambassador Henry Lello by Esperanza Malchi, Safiye’s kira, the Jewish serving woman who mediated the Sultana’s contact with the world beyond the relationship was unique in that they felt free to request goods they both equally and personally desired. Ania Loomba, “Of Gifts, Ambassadors, Copy-Cats: Diplomacy, Exchange, and Difference in Early Modern India,” in Emissaries in Early Modern Literature and Culture: Mediation, Transmission, Traffic, 1550–1700, ed. Brinda Charry and Gitanjali Shahani (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009), 41–76.

42 Unlike Henry VIII, Elizabeth’s privy chambers were populated with women, women who, as Felicity Heal notes, could not serve as overseas emissaries. The portraits may have been used, therefore, to demonstrate the close ties between the female monarch and male ambassador in lieu of such access. Following the work of Patricia Fumerton, Julian Yates suggests that because miniatures were often worn on the body, they created a sense of closeness between the subject of the portrait and the receiver. Felicity Heal, The Power of Gifts: Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 165–170; and Julian Yates, Error, Misuse, Failure: Object Lessons from the English Renaissance (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 28–62.

harem. Malchi took this opportunity to write her own letter, which she then handed off to Lello with the other offerings. It seems that Malchi, whose duties included acquiring luxury items for the seraglio and establishing and maintaining contact with visiting ambassadors, felt that her privileged status as Safiye’s mediator and confidante opened channels of communication with foreign sovereigns.

Dated November 16, 1599, the letter, which was written in Malchi’s native Italian, a language in which Elizabeth was fluent, immediately establishes a sense of confidentiality. After rehearsing the salutations standard for the genre, Malchi’s tone shifts from the formal rhetoric of an inferior addressing a foreign sovereign to language that is surprisingly intimate. It appears as an attempt to remove the correspondence from the public sphere, a move that seemingly seeks to create a feminine space of exchange beyond the patriarchal gaze. It is at this point that Malchi, in abandoning her public rhetoric of praise, requests that Elizabeth send “rare” cosmetics to the harem, which would be, she continues, “held more dear than any jewel whatsoever Your majesty might send her.” She goes on to suggest that these personal luxury items be sent directly through her:

On account of your majesty’s being a woman I can without any embarrassment employ you with this notice, which is that there are to be found in your kingdom rare distilled waters of every kind for the face and odiferous oils for the hands. Your Majesty would favour me by sending some of them by my hand for this most serene Queen; by my hand as, being articles for ladies, she does not want them to pass through other hands.44

The letter clearly negates the need for a male intermediary, and, interestingly, seems intent on putting Elizabeth to work. Additionally, Malchi refers to “mani” or hands, four

44 Esperenza Malchi to Elizabeth I, November 16/26, 1599, in Skilliter, “Three Letters,” 143.
times in the short letter. This emphasis on hands, used here in both the abstract and concrete sense, further underscores Malchi’s interest in establishing a unique bond between the two women. Moreover, many of the ingredients used to mix Elizabeth’s “rare” cosmetics, which, by the time they were applied to her skin had already passed through any number of unknowable hands, were most likely imported from Turkey. Furthermore, we might speculate that a large portion of English cosmetic recipes and practices also derived from Eastern sources, as we shall see in my discussion of *The Trotula*. The circulation of raw ingredients, cosmetic material, and intellectual goods such as recipes for personal embellishment, illustrates a kind of mutuality between England and the Ottoman Empire during the late sixteenth century.

While this letter is the only known evidence of a kira attempting to acquire beautifying cosmetics from an English queen, Esperenza Malchi’s procurement of luxury goods was by no means anomalous. Kiras, who served as medical advisors and business agents for the Sultana, were known to purchase and transport goods such as jewels, clothing, and cosmetics to the Ottoman harem. “Certain Jewes women,” Venetian diplomat Ottaviano Bon writes in description of the seraglio, “may at any time come into

---

45 Ester Handli, Nurbanu Sultan’s intermediary, was also thought to provide both jewelry and cosmetics for the women of the harem, most of which were imported from Venice. See Maria Pia Pedani, “Safiye’s Household and Venetian Diplomacy,” *Turcica* 32 (2000): 9–23; and Ottaviano Bon, *The Sultans Seraglio: An Intimate Portrait of Life at the Ottoman Court* (London: Saqi Books, 1996), 56.

46 Jean-Christophe Agnew discusses the metic, a figure that lived beyond the boundaries of society and was without citizenship, and points to the importance of the intermediary in exchange. For Agnew, both the market and the theater evolved in the indeterminate space just beyond the town, a space in which metics performed rituals of gift exchange and other “threshold rituals.” For Agnew, however, the metic, or “resident alien,” is male. In the context of the Imperial harem, a gendered space of female seclusion, the kira/metic, who has something of an economic function, must be female. As a female metic, the kira is able to move freely through space, through the thresholds of both the harem and the marketplace. Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 26.
the Serraglio unto them . . . to shew them the art of making waters, oyles and painting for their faces.” As medical advisors, intermediaries, and negotiators, kiras were known to have multiple contacts within and without the harem. While we do not yet know exactly how it was that Malchi came to be privy to Elizabeth’s elaborate beautifying practices, we might speculate that English ambassador Henry Lello, who was close to Malchi, offered the information.

Elizabeth most likely began using cosmetic face paint so as to hide the signs of age and the ravages of two cases of small pox. While cosmetic historians such as Anna Riehl note that the queen’s extensive use of face paint was well-known throughout England, there is only one contemporary account of such use. In 1600, an anonymous source claimed that “It was commonly observed this Christmas that her Majesty, when she came to be seen, was continuously painted not only all over her face, but her very neck and breast also, and was in some places near a half an inch thick.” While the veracity of this claim cannot be proven, the comments nonetheless suggest that the queen used some kind of paint, even if it wasn’t quite as extensive as he suggests. In addition to painting her face with imported fucus and ceruse, Elizabeth was also known to have used various skin-whitening washes and tinctures.

Elizabeth’s recipe for the “fine distilled waters,” an early modern facial peel “which will make the flesh white and wel coloured” was most likely borrowed and

---


48 Reihl, 60.

49 Ceruse derives from the Latin cerussa, meaning lead. Fucus, also from the Latin for a kind of fungus, refers generally to paint or dye used for the face. OED Online, s.v. “ceruse, n.,” sense 1, February 2018; and OED Online, s.v. “fucus, n.” sense 1a, February 2018.
adapted from *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis Piemont*, a collection of recipes for cosmetics, fragrances, and medicine assumedly written by the Italian editor and writer Girolamo Ruscelli. The work of recovering connections amongst a family of related texts often leads to speculative claims about influence, transmission, and dissemination. While material evidence definitively linking Elizabeth’s whitening wash to Ruscelli’s *Secrets* has yet to be revealed, the popularity of the latter offers support to the claim that the “fine distilled waters” requested from the Kira derived from the popular beauty manual. William Eamon has previously observed that Ruscelli’s recipes “became such common currency” during the period “that it is difficult to find a medical or technical recipe book that does not include one of them.” Originally published in Italian in 1555, the book of secrets, considered the first of this genre, was translated into English in 1595 and later reprinted more than one hundred times before the nineteenth century. As evidenced by these numbers, *The Secrets* was one of the more popular books on medicine, beauty, and the management of the body printed during this period. We can speculate, then, that Elizabeth’s waiting women, or even Elizabeth herself, found the recipe for her skin-whitening preparations printed on the pages of this manual.

*The Secrets* includes an “odiferous and precious water” which will make the face “white and well-coloured” made from a mixture of borax, rock alum, ceruse Alexandria,

---


and eggs that was, as Ruscelli writes, “experimented and proved, yea and it were for a Queene.”

Positioning himself as a kind of “wandering Empiricist” to borrow Eamon’s apt descriptor, Ruscelli writes that the “collection of these secrets” was one of “intollerable pains” dependent on his “wandering almost all the world over.”

An early cosmopolite, he goes on to note that due to this “knowledge of the Latine, Greek, Hebrew, Taldei, and Arabick tongue” and his “singular pleasure in phylosophie, and in the secrets of nature,” he was able to gather secrets while traveling to the “Levant,” and “sundrie times” to “almost all other parts of the world.”

While Ruscelli certainly positions himself as the proto-imperialist collector of overseas goods, his text is nonetheless interested in offering some attribution for knowledge passed on, traded, and garnered from geographic locations other than Europe.

The multicultural amalgamation of cosmetic knowledge, practice, and raw ingredients seen in Ruscelli’s text was, in fact, advertised quite a bit earlier than the early modern period, in a set of texts on women’s health and beauty known as The Trotula. Compiled in the twelfth century, this compendium of women’s medicine, which has been attributed to Trota of Salerno, considered by some scholars to be the first known female physician, displays a mutual exchange of cosmetic knowledge between the Muslim East and the Christian West. The English translation was reprinted at least twelve different times throughout the early modern period; evidently, The Trotula continued to be of

---

53 The phrase “a very rare and excellent secret” appears ten times in Ruscelli’s text. It connotes exoticism while also pointing to issues of accessibility, where historically a particular mixture may have only been previously accessible to “great ladies and Princesses” or “queens.” Ruscelli, Secrets, 30, 57, 71, 159.

54 Ruscelli, A3.

55 Ruscelli, Don Alexis Unto the Reader, 2.
value for Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences. The compendium has most often been consulted as a source of information about medieval reproduction and other gynecological issues; *The Trotula*, however, contains an important, yet lesser-known section on self-beautification practices. Moreover, although the text was originally transcribed in the late middle ages and is thus most often studied by medieval scholars, it can nonetheless also provide a great deal of information about early modern medicine, health, and beauty practices.

Compiled in the Mediterranean port of Salerno during a period when Christians, Muslims, and Jews lived and worked in close proximity, *The Trotula*’s section on women’s cosmetics makes a point to note the varied and multicultural sources for the beautifying ingredients and recipes found on its pages. By the early modern period, this practice of highlighting sources continued with one caveat: while sixteenth and seventeenth century English beauty manuals, including a number of the English translations of *The Trotula*, tended to highlight the foreign origins of ingredients, they often erased the multicultural sources of cultural knowledge and practice. Many household texts offering recipes and tips for women, such as Hugh Plat’s 1602 *Delights for Ladies*, for example, often capitalize on England’s growing taste for exotic goods by noting the various ingredients needed to mix the featured tinctures, washes, and paints

---

56 George Kraut’s 1544 edition of *The Trotula* even worked to “erase” the medieval associations of the text, attributing the work to “the ancients.” This humanist impulse, Green argues, is in part what kept the text in circulation. In her introduction to her English translation of *The Trotula*, Green argues that Kraut, uncomfortable with the inconsistencies and “multiplicity” of the compendium, which Green argues were contributed by a variety of different authors and drawn from a multiplicity of sources, being a “humanist” “could not refrain entirely from tidying up the text” by rewriting, conflating recipes, and suggesting a single, rather than multiple international, authors. Monica Helen Green, trans., *The Trotula: An English Translation of the Medieval Compendium of Women’s Medicine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).
derived from distant geographies while eliding the foreign origins of the actual recipes. Conversely, however, anti-cosmetic tracts often cite the importation of foreign or “barbarous” knowledge and practice as one of the primary arguments against self-beautification. *The Trotula* is unique in that in addition to noting the Eastern origins of material goods, the text also cites Muslim women as a valuable source of intellectual information.

Included in the section on cosmetics, for example, is a “Proven Saracen preparation” for hair dye that includes a mixture of “pomegranates and alum,” and an ointment that “renders a person young again” called “saracenica” because of its “Saracen origins.” Moreover, Monica Green notes that the presentation of the recipes suggests that they were derived from daily informal cross-cultural contact. The book of *Women’s Cosmetics*, she writes in her introduction to her recent translation, “reflects not so much the formal, textual Arabic influence as the regular personal interactions between Christians and Muslims living side-by-side in southern Italy and Sicily.” While the collective authority of Muslim women has mostly been erased through imperialist policies and materials, including the dissemination of English texts and other various cultural practices, I argue that it is just this sort of cross-cultural contact, where knowledge is shared, transformed, and eventually recorded, that is foundational to the formation of England’s early modern beauty industry. While household texts offering recipes and tips for women would often capitalize on England’s growing taste for exotic goods by highlighting the overseas origins of the various ingredients required to mix the

57 Green, 72.
58 Green, xxii.
featured tinctures, washes, and paints, they tended to elide the foreign origins of the actual recipes.  

The alum, borax, and poppy would have all been imported to England from the East. Like so many early modern recipes for beautifying washes, paints, tinctures, and unguents, the queen’s cosmetic water was made from a mixture of domestic foodstuffs and exotic imported luxury ingredients. The materiality of her cosmetic self-fashioning underscores an increasingly pluralistic and multicultural identity, one that resists emerging dualities of subject/object, self/other, and domestic/foreign. Attention to the material properties of cosmetic oils, paints, and waters demonstrates that the queen, like the Sultana, was “made up” of foreign parts, parts that were constituted by and through Anglo/Ottoman mutuality. This exchange of material, information, and commodity is seen in the long history of the alum trade.

As a lucrative import used primarily as a mordant in the dye process of cloth production, alum was a particularly contested and coveted commodity. While scholars have previously documented the importance of alum in the textile sector, less attention has been given to the mineral’s central role in the cosmetics trade. Alum features prominently in a wide variety of self-beautification recipes, including face-physic, paint, whitening pastes for the hands, and dye for the hair. In fact, one might go so far as to

---

59 While the letters display an interest in mutuality, they also prefigure the eventual exoticization then erasure of Eastern contributions to England’s beauty industry. Early modern cosmetics culture became an industry through complex and often contradictory processes, where the dialogic exchange of ideas, which fostered mutual constitution of knowledge about rituals of beautification and adornment, eventually intersected with the appropriation and erasure of foreign ingredients and practices. While foreign knowledge sources were suppressed by the seventeenth century, in the majority of beauty manuals published traces of these networks of relationships can be found in textual fragments from the period. By patching together discordant fragments in the records, we see that “making up the English” was in fact dependent upon the enculturation and transmission of cosmetics among women from different cultures.
claim that England’s burgeoning beauty industry was, at least in part, dependent on the alum market and on unlimited and unencumbered access to this coveted mineral.

After the Anglo/Ottoman trade agreements of the 1580s, the white transparent mineral salt was primarily imported to England from Turkey and the Barbary Coast. In 1460, however, the Venetian Giovanni da Castro, the nephew of the Pope Pius II, located alum deposits in Tolfa, the discovery of which led to the monopolization of the mineral that lasted more than a quarter of a century. Claiming that it would “bring victory over the Turk,” this papal alum, as it was then called, was considered by the pope to be a “divine gift” whose profits would be “devoted to the defense of Christendom with a further crusade against the Turks.”60 The price for alum was set so high, however, that England turned to Turkey for the valuable material, a move that came with the threat of excommunication. After the discovery of alum mines in Yorkshire in the seventeenth century, James I issued a proclamation against the importation of the mineral so as to support domestic industry.61

Elizabeth’s exchange of cosmetics, then, made possible through her trade agreement with the East, occurred during an unusual period when the mineral, essential for the cosmetics trade, could be transferred back and forth across cultural and geographic borders, transforming in form and use from raw material to ephemeral luxury item. The diplomatic strategy of gift exchange was regularly practiced between nations

60 Lisa Jardine attributes a large portion of the Medici’s wealth to the discovery of papal alum. In 1465, she writes, the Medici bank and the papacy signed a contract giving the bank complete control over the mines, including distribution, which in turn, she argues, helped to give rise to Florence as a center for the arts. Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 1996), 116–117.

61 James I, *By the King, a Proclamation Prohibiting the Importation of Allome into Any His Maiesties Dominions* (London, 1614).
working to establish mutually beneficial diplomatic and trade relations throughout the early modern era; the request in this final letter in the correspondence between Elizabeth I, the sultana, and Malchi, however, offers a rare glimpse into the ways in which intellectual and material goods were exchanged between the East and West, constituting commercial, as well as social networks. The letters reveal that, as seen in *The Trotula*, the early modern beauty industry was built on such cross-cultural contact.

The examination of this cultural artifact of Anglo-Ottoman trade relations in its nascent stage invites us to imagine the two women marveling over the gifted objects, and to imagine Elizabeth in her Turkish girdle and the sultana applying the “rare” beautifying waters from England. The image, a small yet important episode in the foundation of England’s emergence onto the international stage, is one that undoes anachronistic applications of Orientalist models of nascent English exceptionalism built on fictionalized dualisms.

**Baptismal Cosmetics: Face-Physic as Conversion in Phillip Massinger’s *Renegado***

Perhaps an even more visible site of Anglo-Ottoman relations for the English public was the theater. The Mediterranean captured the imagination of London playwrights and audiences throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Plays featuring Turkish and/or Moorish characters such as Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great*, Shakespeare’s *Othello*, Thomas Heywood’s *Fair Maid of the West*, Robert Daborne’s *Christian Turn’d Turk*, and Phillip Massinger’s *Renegado* use the foreign space of the East, both real and imagined, to explore new streams of cultural knowledge
and to interrogate both anxieties and potentialities about Mediterranean commerce and Anglo-Ottoman contact.\(^{62}\)

Elizabeth Tavares has recently discussed the ways in which this burgeoning interest in the East informed not only the subject of the plays but the playhouses themselves: her fascinating study of the evolution of purpose built theatrical spaces investigates the relationship between the painted Heavens on the roof of the stage and geographic expansion. Phillip Henslowe’s diary of payments for the renovation of the Rose Theater between the years of 1592 and 1595 supports her claim that the roof over the stage did not originally include a painted moon and constellations. Under this cosmeticized and artificial space of the heavens, Tavares argues, geographical and imaginary space is compressed, making cultural otherness about “moral and religious” difference rather than “geographical alterity.”\(^{63}\) For playwrights that position setting as a central defining feature of their plays, however, it seems probable that emphasizing geographical distance from England allows for a certain freedom of exploration about fluid identity formation.

\(^{62}\) Referring to plays that are set on the Mediterranean as “adventure plays,” Jean Howard notes that they all tend to depict “the triumphs of the English in their encounter with dangerous foes like the Turks and the Spanish.” Massinger’s The Renegado, however, features Venetian, rather than English, heroes. This is perhaps, Howard suggests, due to the Eastern source of Venetian wealth, as Italian merchants were trading with the Ottoman Empire long before the English. Jean E. Howard, “Shakespeare, Geography, and the Work of Genre on the Early Modern Stage,” Modern Language Quarterly 64, no. 3 (2003): 299–322; Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine, Parts I and II, ed. David M. Bevington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); William Shakespeare, Othello: the Moor of Venice, ed. Michael Neill. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; Thomas Heywood, The Two Parts of The Fair Maid of the West (London: Methuen, 1986); and Massinger, Renegado.

The Tunisian setting of *The Renegado* allows Massinger to explore and negotiate anxieties and potentialities of such fluid identity formation. In the final pages of this chapter, I examine the ways in which Massinger uses cosmetic signifiers and material as tools through which to examine and test new ideas about transnational identity formation. Massinger stages a number of cosmetic transformations in his play. One such cosmetic transformation is, I argue, embedded in the religious trope of baptism. Unlike in the letters, which display a degree of mutuality through the exchange of cosmetics, Massinger’s whitening cosmetic baptism seeks to solidify the relationship between Englishness and whiteness. The conversion scene, which invokes the process of blanching, or whitening the skin with cosmetic tinctures and washes, highlights the emerging connection between becoming English and becoming White, revealing the constructedness of white English cultural, national, and personal identity.

Phillip Massinger’s Tunisian-set *Renegado, or a Gentleman of Venice*, first performed at the Cockpit Theater by Lady Elizabeth’s Men in 1624 and later published in 1630, features a striking number of intersectional racial and religious transfigurations, including conversions, re-conversions, false conversions, and potential conversions. Vitelli and Paulina, the play’s Venetian brother and sister duo, both become embroiled in cross-cultural inter-faith marriages; Grimaldi, the renegade for which the play is named, converts to Islam only to be redeemed by the end of the play; Gazet, Vitelli’s servant, comes close to castration, the embodied sign of “turning turk”; and finally, the Turkish princess Donusa is transformed into a virtuous Christian wife. This complex matrix of performed and near-performed conversions, where identities and bodies, both Christian and Muslim, are transformed, fragmented, dismembered and “healed” by the sacramental
rite of baptism points to England’s paradoxical relationship with the Ottoman Empire.

“The realm of the Turks,” Daniel Vitkus writes, “was exciting and alluring: it was a place where huge profits could be made from a single successful voyage, but it was also replete with risks, both imaginary and real, of conversion and contamination.”64 Massinger’s play responds to this complex dynamic in part by participating in the production of a fixed schema of cultural, racial, and religious difference. Nonetheless, while the play text at times differentiates the Muslim Turk from the Christian European, the inclusion of so many turns and counterturns speaks to the increasingly porous boundary between East and West.

*The Renegado*’s multiple overlapping conversions and re-conversions are drawn from real-life anxieties arising from England’s involvement in the increasingly multicultural climate of the Mediterranean marketplace. The Barbary Company, founded in 1551 and given a monopoly by Elizabeth I in 1585, led to extensive trade along the Barbary Coast, allowing for spices, silks, sugar and other luxury objects to be imported more cheaply into England without having to pass through Venice.65 By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman protectorate was a bustling space of cross-cultural contact and exchange. Presented as a hub of commercial and cultural exchange in the

---


65 Sugar, an important ingredient in cosmetic recipes, was primarily imported by the Barbary Company. A recipe for adding color to a pale face, for example, calls for “boiled pigeons” alembic, and “half a loaf of sweetened bread,” to make “the most perfect water to give color to a pale complexion.” Recipes for exfoliating chemical peels often used a mixture of sugar, alum, lemon, and quicksilver. Ruscelli, *Secrets*, 48. See Nabil Matar on early English trade along the Barbary Coast regarding the exchange of cloth for sugar. Nabil I. Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 60.
play, Massinger’s Tunisian marketplace is, as the Basha of Aleppo Mustapha states in the first act, a “confluence of nations.”

In addition to Turks, Jews, and pirates, Tunis was also inhabited by Christian merchants who had, either through force, coercion, or choice, converted to Islam: In his 1614 captivity account, William Davies writes that “there are more renegades in Turkie and Barbary then of natural Turkes.” These Christians most often converted as a means to escape the class-bound system in England as The Mediterranean littoral offered Englishmen greater freedom of movement through geographical space as well as the potential for upward social mobility. But this “voluntary self-fashioning” of underclass merchants and travellers who “chose to superimpose Muslim on English,” Nabil Matar writes, caused “deep anxiety” in “their home communities.” Massinger allays this anxiety in part by creating Christian characters that resist the seemingly ubiquitous temptation to convert to Islam. He also alleviates anxiety about Anglo/Ottoman contact by erasing Donusa’s Muslim identity through the spectacle of a lay baptism, the only one of its sort to occur on the early modern English stage.

Massinger’s dramatization of religious conversion has recently been the subject of multiple scholarly studies. Critics such as Jonathan Gil Harris, Valerie Forman, Daniel Vitkus, and Jean Howard have written at length on The Renegado’s Christian characters and the moments in which they come into contact with Islam. This collection of

---

66 Massinger, Renegado, I.ii.12.
68 Matar, Turks, Moors, and Englishmen, 95.
scholarly work, centered on the trope of “turning Turk,” is concerned with Massinger’s engagement with the discourse of conversion affiliated with the defilement and emasculation of white European Christian male identity. Indeed, the relationship between literal emasculation and conversion to Islam figures prominently in the play: In the opening act, the comic servant Gazet states, “Live I in England, Spain, France, Rome, Geneva, / I am of that country’s faith.” Vitelli then asks, “And what in Tunis? Will you turn Turk here?” He replies in the negative only to later come dangerously close to becoming a eunuch. Moreover, Donusa’s servant Carazie, the single English character in the play, has been “libbed in the breech.”\footnote{Massinger, \textit{Renegado}, I.i.35–40, 2.i.5.} As Jean Howard notes, the castration trope signifies a “grotesquely hideous warning of the dangers of going native.”\footnote{Howard, “English Lass,” 115.} Relating the trope of the eunuch to economic theory, Forman and Harris both discuss the real and imagined threat of castration as a metaphor for economic anxiety about trade, exchange value, expenditure, and investment.\footnote{Forman analyzes the way in which early modern playwrights experiment with genre to inform their audiences about the logic of investment: The genre of tragicomedy is read in relation to the narrative of \textit{felix culpa}, or fortunate fall, which claims that good is understood best by knowledge of evil.} In the English imagination, “turning turk,” as these critics discuss, was associated both with the literal dismemberment of English corporeality as well as the deterioration of individual and national identity.

\footnote{The Conversions Project (http://earlymodernconversions.com) also offers a great deal of historical information about early modern conversions.}
Turning, however, can describe a wide range of transfigurations, including the transformation of religious, cultural, and physical identities. As Daniel Vitkus writes, during the seventeenth century, the Mediterranean was a space in which "turning" was common and in which Christians, Muslims, and renegades “worked cooperatively and shifted identities as they negotiated for places in the multicultural Mediterranean's violent marketplace.” Yet while *The Renegado’s* engagement with the trope of “turning Turk” has received a great deal of critical attention, considerably less has been written about Donusa’s counter-turn away from her native Islamic East. This chapter extends Vitkus’ notion of transformed and transforming identities to examine Donusa’s baptism episode, a scene that seeks to erase her Muslim identity while it invokes cosmetic culture and England’s relationship to commerce.

Donusa’s baptism occurs late in the play, after she seduces Vitelli and subsequently fails to turn him Turk. Thereafter, when Vitelli persuades Donusa to convert to Christianity, she announces “I spit on Mahommet!” The majority of scholarly work on Donusa’s conversion tends to be concerned with this scene in which she decides to convert. These studies often focus on the ways in which the text tames the sexually promiscuous and unruly Turkish woman, a trope reiterated throughout dramatic and non-dramatic writing of the period. By regulating and managing Donusa’s dangerous sexuality, which these critics read as a metaphor for the East in general, it is argued that Vitelli also brings the Muslim East under his control. Donusa certainly undergoes a transformation from seductive Muslim woman to dutiful Christian wife. Yet, in focusing on the scene in which Donusa decides to convert rather than on the actual conversion

scene, critics often elide any in-depth discussions of the baptism scene. Those who do
direct the baptism episode, such as Judy A. Hayden, tend to situate it in general
discussions about the play’s materialist Christian iconography—which also includes the
relic Paulina wears around her neck to protect her chastity and the cope worn by the
Jesuit priest—to support biographical claims about Massinger’s Catholic sympathies.74

Donusa’s transformative baptism scene is, as Michael Neill writes in his recent
introduction to the play text, “unparalleled in theater for the period.”75 While a number of
Middle English plays and conversion narratives, such as The Croxton Play of the
Sacrament, stage the theatrical spectacle of baptism, the secular performance of the
sacrament was rarely seen in early modern drama.76 This is in part because of
prohibitions, such as Elizabeth’s 1559 Proclamation for licensing plays, which
condemned the performance of religious rituals. Building on the 1559 Proclamation, the
1606 Act to Restrain Abuses of Players made it a crime for actors to “jestingly or
prophanely speake or use the holy Name of God or of Christ Jesus, or of the Holy Ghoste
or of the Trinitie.”77 In his analysis of this intersection between theatrical drama and

74 Critics such as Thomas Dunn, for example, have argued that the combination of the miraculous
baptism, along with the relic Paulina wears as a protective charm against her Muslim captor and the central
role of Francisco, the Jesuit Priest, are used as evidence to support the claim that Massinger had Roman
Catholic sympathies. More recently, Jane Hwang Degenhardt has argued that Massinger’s investment in the
transformative power of Christian materialism portrays the necessary union of Catholic and Protestant so as
to defeat the Muslim East. Thomas Alexander Dunn, Philip Massinger, the Man and the Playwright
(London: University College of Ghana, 1957); and Jane Hwang Degenhardt, Islamic Conversion and

75 Massinger, Renegado, 21.

76 The anonymous Croxton Play of the Sacrament, for example, features four Jewish skeptics
purchasing a consecrated wafer so as to test the truth of transubstantiation, and when realizing their folly
convert to Christianity and are baptized. The Croxton Play of the Sacrament, in The Oxford Handbook of

77 Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells, The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford
sacred performance, Greenblatt suggests that staged performances of sacraments were emptied of religiousity. He posits the notion of “evacuation” and “transmigration” whereby a “sacred sign, designed to be displayed before a crowd of men and women, is emptied, made negotiable, traded from one institution to another . . . leaving only vivid but empty ceremonies.”

Building on Greenblatt’s analysis of staged Catholic ritual, I argue that the baptism scene in *The Renegado* is “evacuated” and “filled” with traces of the burgeoning early modern beauty industry and the cultural climate of self-fashioning, which Massinger in turn uses to erase Muslim identity. However, although the scene certainly performs the absorption of Donusa’s Muslim identity into English religious and cultural practices, his invocation of cosmetic transformation also inadvertently stages the possibility of porous identities, or ones that are both shifting and transnational.

After her Christianization, it is notably Donusa who requests material proof, or assurance, of her conversion. When Vitelli asks “Are you confirmed?” Donusa responds by stating that “I would be-but the means / That may assure me?” Vitelli then makes the mark of a cross on her forehead. A primary function of the mark here is to visually signify her conversion to the audience with the recognizable sign of the cross while also illustrating how outward signifiers are used to emphasize, mask, and alter inward identity. Vitelli claims that after she comes into contact with the baptismal waters, which will heal her internal moral blemishes, the presentation of Donusa’s fair skin will be both

---

stabilized and elevated: “Then you shall / Look truly fair, when your mind’s pureness answers / Your outward beauties.” Here, Vitelli equates Donusa’s fair skin with her character, one that becomes, after her baptism, an example of transformed Christian morality. The performance of the spectacle of lay baptism, which occurs a few scenes later, echoes recipes for beautifying physic, a practice where internal health is aligned with outward beauty.

The practice of beautifying physic and baptism are both agents of internal transformation that purport to be exhibited on the external surface of the skin. Yet while the relationship between inner transformations and outward whitening is explicit in cosmetic recipes, the instructions for the baptismal ritual in the Book of Common Prayer do not address potential corporeal changes. Psalm 51:7, a text even today associated with baptism in the Church of England however, draws a clear correlation between ritual ablution and whitening: “Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.” This psalm most certainly uses the trope of metaphorical whitening to communicate a purification of the soul, but there are a number of episodes of literal baptismal whitening throughout literary and non-literary texts produced between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In The Middle English King of Tars, for example, the Saracen Sultan of Damascus is blanched upon converting to Christianity. During his baptism, the Sultan’s “hide” undergoes a miraculous transformation, from ‘blac and lothely to “Al white.” Alonso de Andrade, a seventeenth century Portuguese Jesuit priest and missionary,

---

79 Massinger, Renegado, IV.iii.145–47.
80 Ps. 51:7 (Authorized [King James] Version).
records a similar transformation in his description of a Turkish pirate’s vision of the Virgin Mary. After seeing the miraculous image, the pirate asked to be baptized. Andrade writes of the baptism that, “having an ugly and bad complexion, the Turk’s skin became whitened and more beautiful as a result of the waters of baptism. His face and complexion became white and seemly. This external beauty mirrored that of his inner soul, received by virtue and grace of the sacrament of baptism.”81 These dual examples, one fictional, the other most certainly a fictionalized account, of skin whitening baptism run counter to the popular visual trope of women attempting to wash and erase blackness with cleansing waters seen in multiple early modern emblem books. An image of both vain labor and the immutability of dark skin, the latter emblem is, in a sense, undone by the skin-whitening cosmetic waters. Phillip Massinger’s staged baptism of the Turkish Donusa subtly recalls this previously recorded relationship between the newly baptized soul and the external presentation of whiteness.

Before further discussing the ways in which the performance of the baptismal rite recalls the practice of face-physic it is important to first address the ways in which Donusa’s skin functions as a multivalent and indeterminate sign. Neither white nor dark, fair or black, Donusa occupies a liminal subject position in the world of play. Described at different times in the text as “sullied,” “dark,” and “fair,” she defies easy categorical binaries of fair/dark or white/black.82 In her brief discussion of the play Ania Loomba notes that in English drama “Muslim princesses are extremely fair, and their skin color facilitates their assimilation into their new families.” She goes on to claim that “Dark-


skinned women . . . cannot be whitened, and cannot be invited to join the Christian family.” Yet Donusa, positioned in opposition to Paulina, the “fair Christian virgin” that the Venetians must rescue from the “black destruction” of Islam, is seemingly impossible to categorize.

The issue of Donusa’s ambiguous skin color can be located in the unveiling scene of the first act. When proclaiming the worth of a portrait, which is actually a picture of a courtesan he is trying to sell as a painting of a European princess, Vitelli declares that even Pygmalion himself would have opted to “have given it life” over his “carved ivory figure.” After he exclaims that the portrait is “nowhere to be equaled,” the stage directions note that Donusa “Unveils herself” while asking “Can you match me this?”

Massinger’s source for this scene was most likely an episode in Miguel de Cervantes’ Los Banos de Argel where the Turkish princess Zahara unveils herself in a public marketplace. In Cervantes’ version, when Zahara places the veil back on her face the Spanish hero Don Lope states that “The sun’s eclipsed; all her brightness has vanished.” The fantasy of hidden whiteness is reiterated by travel writer George Sandys: The act of veiling, he explains in his 1614 account of travelling through the East, allows Turkish women’s complexions to remain “smooth as polished ivory, never being ruffled by the weather.” This trope of whiteness hidden beneath a black veil is ubiquitous, appearing throughout the dramatic and non-dramatic literature of the period.


85 Quoted in Massinger, *Renegado*, II.81.

While Massinger certainly evokes this trope in his play, he initially refrains from confirming Donusa’s skin color as white. Vitelli, for example, makes no mention of light, sun, or fairness: He responds to Donusa’s unveiled face by stating “What a wonder look I on!” The elision of whiteness in this scene is thus all the more complex in *The Renegado*, indicating Massinger’s potential interest in maintaining a sense of ambiguity about the possibility of reading the surface of Donusa’s skin. Massinger uses his cosmetic baptism scene as a means to stabilize Donusa’s ambiguous subject position, a position that causes anxiety in the English imagination.

Donusa’s baptism occurs after she has been imprisoned for engaging in sexual relations with the Christian Vitelli. Because she has been sequestered from the public, it is Vitelli who must perform the sacrament. After a brief discussion with Francesco, who lets him know that lay baptisms are legitimate in extenuating circumstances, Vitelli requests that Gazet fetch him water from a nearby spring. Upon his return he “throws” the water on Donusa’s face while stating,

The clearness of this is a perfect sign  
Of innocence, and, as this washes off  
Stains and pollutions from the things we wear,  
Thrown thus upon the forehead, it hath the power  
To purge those spots that cleave upon the mind  
If thankfully received.  

While her previous unveiling could be read as a kind of whitening, here, we can speculate that Donusa is not only metaphorically whitened, but that her ambiguous skin color is

---

87 The term wonder further underscores Donusa’s indeterminate skin color as it was associated both with Christian miracles and exotica. See Steven Greenblatt on the shifting definitions of “marvel” and “wonder” in the age of exploration. Stephen Jay Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2003); and Massinger, *Renegado*, I.i.138.

stabilized as white as well. As Vitelli notes, She is both externally and internally cleansed: the baptismal waters transform Donusa’s previously “sullied” soul to one that is “truly fair.” While this purging of spots denotes cleansing of a soul, Massinger would have counted on the soul’s invisibility to sustain imagination of a whitened body as well. This cosmetic baptism, then, follows Frances Bacon’s definition of “civil” cosmetic usage, a form of beautifying cleansing associated with civility and social order.

The relationship I trace between contemporaneous notions of Englishness, health, fairness, and the practice of face-physic is, as Scott Shershow Cutler writes of alternative or “far fetched” readings of play texts, “an inescapably plausible meaning outside of authorial intention.” That the baptism takes place in Tunis, and, additionally, we can assume the baptismal waters derive from a local source, which is also the source of many cosmetic materials imported into England, including alum, underscores this connection.

Massinger’s alignment of cosmetic self-fashioning, fairness, somatic performance, conversion, and the erasure of Muslim identity can also be found at an earlier moment in The Renegado. Donusa’s rejection of her suitor Mustapha illustrates an awareness of the ways in which clothing and cosmetics “make” the man. While clearly tongue-in-cheek, Donusa’s comment on cosmetic self-fashioning nonetheless points to the play’s interest in the plasticity and performance of cultural, racial, and religious identities. Her scathing rebuff is primarily concerned with his dark corporeality, a characteristic she deems much “too rough” for a princess like herself:

I have considered you from head to foot,
And can find nothing in that wainscot face
That can teach me to dote; nor am I taken

---

With your grim aspect or tadpole-like complexion.\textsuperscript{90}

Her reference to his “wainscot face,” a metaphor aligning his complexion with dark, deeply lined oak paneling, suggests the actor playing Mustapha was most likely darkened with black-face makeup such as burnt cork. The term “tadpole” appears much less frequently in early modern literature, but is seen in Shakespeare’s \textit{Titus Andronicus}, when Demetrius refers to Aaron’s baby as a “tadpole,” a term he understands as a reference to his child’s dark skin, as evidenced by his response: “Coal-black is better than another hue / In that it scorns to bear another hue.”\textsuperscript{91} In response to shifting attitudes about the performance of blackness, a later version of \textit{The Renegado}, printed during the Restoration, replaces Donusa’s racially inflected insults with her disdain for Mustapha’s “soldierlike complexion.”\textsuperscript{92}

After verbally attacking Mustapha with a litany of racial insults, Donusa then lists a number of ways in which he could cosmetically transform his somatic presentation in order to, as she states, “make a new you.” She suggests that he “purge and take physic,” tells him to “purchase perfumes,” to visit a “barber,” and to “wash your (his) face.”\textsuperscript{93}

Associated with early modern cosmetic culture and concern with outward show and vanity, barbers often played multiple roles, including pharmacist, beautician, and

\textsuperscript{90} Massinger, \textit{Renegado}, III.i.46–50.

\textsuperscript{91} Tadpole might also refer to “pollywog” or “wog,” a derogatory British term for people of Middle Eastern descent. The \textit{OED} notes that the term was not in use until 1929, but we might speculate that it has its origins in the earlier racial slur “tadpole.” William Shakespeare, \textit{Titus Andronicus}, ed. Thomas L. Berger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), IV.ii.85; and \textit{OED Online}, s.v. “tadpole, n.,” October 2018.

\textsuperscript{92} Michael Neill, Introduction, \textit{Renegado}, 63.

\textsuperscript{93} Massinger, \textit{Renegado}, III.i.50–55.
doctor. Both physicians and barber-surgeons administered cosmetic cleansing waters to their clients; Moreover, often aware of new botanical discoveries and imported drugs and other cosmetic ingredients, they were also known to practice the art of distillation, thus mixing and making waters and other drugs for clients. Barbers, barber-surgeons, and physicians provided services to clients such as washing, exfoliating, skin-lightening, and the removal of marks and blemishes so as to sustain and promote the health of their clients. As if reflecting back on her diatribe about the potential of cosmetically transforming Mustapha’s somatic deportment, Donusa refers to Vitelli as her “physician” immediately after he throws the water onto her face.

Unlike face-paint, which carried connotations of immoderate consumption, prostitution, immorality and vanity, face washes and waters, considered a form of face-physic, were increasingly considered a necessary component of the early modern toilet

94 The York Pageant 21 featured a play called “Baptism” which was, compellingly, put on by the Barber’s company. Also, in Ben Jonson’s Epicoene, when Morose discovers that Epicone is his nephew Dauphin dressed in the trappings of femininity, he exclaims: “that I should bee sedue’d by so foolish a deuill, as a barber will make!” Epicoene, in Ben Jonson’s Plays and Masques, ed. Richard Harp (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), IV.iv.3–4.

95 Eleanor Decamp offers a detailed definition of each profession, but also notes that due to a lack of disciplinarity, there was a great deal of overlap between the roles while they were undergoing professionalization. As E. Decamp notes, while the titles “barber,” “surgeon,” and “physician” have “the illusion of stability” they were in fact “unstable” and “prone to misinterpretation and misuse, much like the practices themselves.” Eleanor Sian Decamp, Civic and Medical Worlds in Early Modern England: Performing Barbery and Surgery (New York: Springer, 2016), 15.

96 Decamp discusses William White of Midhurst, Sussex, an “enterprising surgeon” who owned both surgical instruments as well as “distilling equipment, apothecary drugs, a considerable library of books, a stock of wine, and tobacco.” There is also the case of a London physician who practiced medicine as well as other “curious arts.” This diversification of the barber-surgeon and physician skill set was due in part to a lack of centralized structure in London concerning the medical profession. Decamp, 25.

97 There are multiple examples of physician-cosmeticians on the early modern stage. Edumus in Jonson’s Sejanus, for example, is a “good physician” who supplies Livia with a “light fucus.” Paulina, who enacts the cosmetic restoration of Hermione in Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale, is also referred to as a physician. Ben Jonson, Sejanus, ed. Jonas A. Barish (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965), II.i.72, 75; and William Shakespeare, The Winter’s Tale, in Norton Shakespeare, 2: II, iii, 66.
for both men and women. Cosmetic waters and washes, which often included many of the same ingredients as paint, were linked to internal health. Edith Snook’s important study of early modern beautifying rituals and materials examines beautifying physic rather than the more usual focus on the vitriolic attacks on the painted face found in anti-cosmetic literature. The “beautifying part of physic,” she notes, was related to humoral balance, health, and outward beauty: “A woman’s concern for the appearance of her face,” she writes, can “be a way of caring for her body as a whole and constituting identity, not just performatively or theatrically, as facilitated by paint, but inwardly and physiologically.” We can speculate, therefore, that Elizabeth may have advertised her use of skin-whitening washes for purposes beyond that of beauty and youth. As sovereign, and thus as representative of England itself, Elizabeth may have painted her face white as a means to telegraph the health of the nation as well as the consolidation of Englishness and whiteness.

Thus, the stabilization of Donusa’s whiteness also carries associations with health, allowing us to trace a relationship between her baptism and humoral balance. The baptismal waters seem to erase Donusa’s Muslim identity by balancing her humours. Described as a “roarer” with “fire in her blood,” Donusa embodies the Western fantasy about the intemperate and lustful Ottoman female. When in the throes of a self-diagnosed case of “love-sickness” for Vitelli she asks, “What new fire burns up / my scorched

---

98 Annette Drew-Bear and Farah Karim-Cooper both consider cosmetics primarily in terms of face paint and thus tend to interpret early modern work featuring cosmetic scenes as moralist diatribes against vanity. Annette Drew-Bear, Painted Faces on the Renaissance Stage: The Moral Significance of Face-Painting Conventions (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1994); and Farah Karim-Cooper, Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

These continued references to heat in her body can also be interpreted through the lens of Galenic medicine. According to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century manuals on cosmetic adornment and face-physic, an excess of heat such as this might manifest as a reddening, which can be construed as a kind of darkening, of the skin. Physician Levinus Lemnius writes that there “is no surer way certainly to knowe the humours and juyce in a Creature, then by the colour and outward complextion.”

Frances Catchmay’s Booke of Medicines also offers recipes for “medicins to coole and repell the redness of the face that proceedeth of heate in the liver” and “to make the face fayre and to take away heat.” The cure for this ailment of excess heat, these writers and physicians note, is to wash the face with various beautifying waters and exfoliates, most of which include some combination of alum, poppy, and borax.

Massinger, who noted Donusa’s “fire” multiple times in the text, makes no mention of Donusa’s heat after Vitelli throws the baptismal water on her face. Indeed, after her conversion, Donusa, who was previously given the lengthiest and most passionate speeches in the play, speaks only a handful of clipped lines, all of which announce her newfound temperate acquiescence. While the stage performance of the conversion functions as a means to incorporate Donusa into the fold, we should note that the baptismal water Vitelli uses is never consecrated. The baptismal water used to stabilize Donusa’s whiteness is, like the alum in Elizabeth’s skin-whitening cosmetic wash, fetched from a Tunisian source. In this way, we might speculate that the baptismal

---

100 Massinger, Renegado, I.iii.12, II.i.35–38.
102 Frances Catchmay, Book of Medicines (London, 1625), 184.
water may recall Elizabeth’s face-whitening wash for some members of the audience. Furthermore, like the baptismal Tunisian water, the alum used in Elizabeth’s cosmetic water serves as both a fixative and an agent of water purification.

Phillip Massinger uses the space of the stage to negotiate and allay growing tensions about the adulteration of English identity due to increased Anglo-Ottoman relations. While his play seeks to differentiate the Muslim Turk from the Christian European, thus stabilizing English identity, the multiple turns and counterturns performed during the space of the play speak to the plasticity of social, racial and religious identities within and without England. While the baptismal scene serves an attempt to establish fixed racial and religious identities, analysis of the baptismal water in relation to cosmetic washes suggests a counter movement, which is the destabilization of such emerging notions of fixed cultural and religious difference by turning, counterturning, and transforming their identities.

As London’s economy continued to develop, so did English curiosity about and interest in distant geographies. The letters sent between Turkey and England during the last decade of the sixteenth century and the portrayal of the Barbary Coast in Massinger’s Renegado on the seventeenth century English stage both illustrate the complex ways in which England and the Ottoman Empire negotiated, celebrated, and absorbed cultural difference. The epistolary exchange between the Safiye Sultana, Elizabeth I, and Esperenza Malchi demonstrates the ways in which the East and West shared and constituted knowledge while exchanging raw materials and luxury commodities. Almost half a century later, Massinger attempts to eradicate this mutuality. His deployment of cosmetic signifiers undergirds the play’s efforts at differentiating social and cultural
groups. Rematerializing ephemeral and often textually absent or absented beautifying waters and other forms of cosmetic adornment and decoration reveals some of the ways in which early moderns, some perhaps unintentionally, may have engaged and performed a kind of productive cultural and corporeal hybridity.
Chapter 2

Maculate Bodies on the Early Modern Stage: De-facing Lady Conscience in Robert Wilson’s *Three Ladies of London*

*Yes, the face has a great future, but only if it is destroyed, dismantled.*

In Robert Wilson’s 1581 morality play *The Three Ladies of London*, Lady Lucre, a Venetian born vice figure, defaces the allegorical personification of London’s conscience. Corrupted by invasive foreigners and imported luxury goods, the virtuous Lady Conscience mutates from a fair-skinned broom-selling beauty to a spotted bawd before the viewing audience. As the elaborate stage directions note, Lady Lucre “dips her finger into” a “painted box of ink” Wilson describes as “little and round, painted with divers colors” and “pretty to the show,” and proceeds to “spot” Lady Conscience with “all abomination.” The face-spotting episode, which occurs after Conscience is bankrupt by Lucre and has agreed to transform her abode into a “house of assignation,” makes visible Conscience’s fall from cynosure of English virtue to a “filthie, corrupt, defiled, spotted sinner,” as anti-theatricalist Stephen Gosson exclaims in his *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (1582).3 While, as Gosson notes, Conscience’s marked skin certainly represents vice, a deeper understanding of the spots as having a polyvalent, rather than univocal, signifying function arises when considering them in relation to a wider set of

---


55
historical, textual, and theoretical contexts. When used as a dramatic convention on the early modern stage, the painted spot engages immediate social, cultural, and political anxieties. This chapter investigates how the theatrical spectacle of face spotting participates in, and at times resists, emerging and residual early modern discourses of personal and national identity formation.

Appearing in works such the anonymous morality play *Wisdom Who Is Christ*, Barnabe Barnes *Devils’ Charter*, Thomas Heywood’s *Love’s Mistress, or the Queen’s Masque*, as well as Wilson’s *Three Ladies of London* and his 1588 sequel, *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, the stage spectacle of the spotted visage conjures a complex set of overlapping, and at times competing, associations. My analysis of the painted spot is grounded in Robert Wilson’s work because he is representative of the professional player-playwright who came to prominence just prior to Shakespeare. Known as a learned wit, prolific playwright, and sought-after actor, Wilson, who was first a member of Leicester’s Men, the most prominent acting company of the 1570s, and later a member of The Queen’s Men, uses cosmetic signifiers to alert the theater-going audience to the threats posed by England’s increased contact with foreign others.4

By examining the staged spectacle of the spotted face, reveal how Wilson engages contemporary cosmetic discourse as a means to negotiate and examine emergent ideas about the formation of English identity. The abstract pattern of black dots challenge emerging notions of a coherent essential self. Performed by The Earl Leicester’s Men in

---

4 Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean emphasize that while The Leicester Company was associated with The Theater, a fixed public playhouse, they also travelled the countryside and should thus be considered as actors “in circulation.” Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen’s Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 4, 5.
1581 and published in 1584 as the first known printed theatrical work performed by an adult acting company, *The Three Ladies of London* offers insight into the ways early Elizabethan playwrights used the space of the stage to negotiate the social and political upheavals experienced by 1580s Londoners.

In addition to appearing on the early modern stage, the trope of the facial spot appears throughout beauty manuals and travel literature. The mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries witnessed an outpouring of cosmetics discourse. As exotic ingredients such as camphor, alum, quicksilver, ceruse, coral, and mercury imported from Africa, China, Malabar, and Constantinople, or as seventeenth century scholar Robert Burton writes in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, from “Africa, Asia, America, sea, land,” became more accessible to the English lower classes, instructional manuals seeking to manage and standardize beauty ideals proliferated, as did the anti-cosmetic literature that sought to curb the proliferating practices, ingredients, and technologies for self-beautification.5 Additionally, the global circulation of goods and England’s increased involvement in overseas trade also saw a proliferation of travel literature by merchants, colonialists, and proto-ethnographers, many of whom use the beautification practices such as face-painting of overseas inhabitants as a source of information about cultural difference. While beauty manuals, advertisements, and medicinal recipe books were broadcasting information about materials and techniques of painting, cleansing, exfoliating and otherwise transforming the visage into a “Face most Fair and Clear,” the

---

cosmeticized face increasingly became a site of epistemological anxiety for moralists.⁶ “Artificial facing,” or the painting of a “second face,” they argue, disrupts the previously straightforward connection between outward show and inward self.⁷ Once a legible map of identity, artificially embellished faces can no longer be read for information about virtue, vice, gender, class, and race.⁸ Borrowing this rhetoric from manuals on virtuous bodily deportment, encounter literature often uses descriptions of foreign corporeal markings to demonstrate a barbarism and vice inherent to overseas cultures and geographies.

The cutaneous spot, I argue, can be read as a locus of this heightened concern about artificial somatic transformations. Household beauty manuals offer countless

---

⁶ The bill, which advertises the secret knowledge of an English woman who has travelled abroad, features a collection of face enhancing products, all of which are imported from non-domestic spaces. Anonymous, *In Great Suffolk-street near the Hay-market, at a jewelers house, with a red balcony, lives a gentlewoman* (London, s.n. 1690).

⁷ In his well-known invective against cosmetics, Thomas Tuke writes “And what is a woman painted, but a certain kind of hypocrite, resembling that in show, which she is not truly . . . and what is this artificial facing but a true deceit and a deceitful truth.” Thomas Tuke, *A discourse against painting and tincturing of women Wherein the abominable sines of murder and poysoning, pride and ambition, adultery and witchcraft are set forth & discovered. Whereunto is added The picture of a picture, or, the character of a painted woman* (London, 1616), 26–27. For more on the debate about cosmetics and the legibility of the face, see Frances E. Dolan, “Taking the Pencil out of God’s Hand: Art, Nature, and the Face-Painting Debate in Early Modern England,” *PMLA* 108, no. 2 (1993): 224–240.

⁸ While race was not yet a fixed category in this period, facial features and physical distinctions such as skin pigmentation were used to identify groupings of people. Moreover, as Sujata Iyengar observes, “English slave traders produced tribal ethnographies that rapidly produce what is already a version of racialism—a hierarchical ordering of human beings that depend on skin color and labor, especially slavery.” My work examines how early modern cosmetic discourse and material helped to solidify, constitute, and maintain such racial taxonomies. As Kim Hall, Ania Loomba, and Kimberly Poitevin have previously discussed, cosmetics participated in the racing of skin and thus in the formation of racial difference and hierarchy. Frances Bacon writes in his *Sylva Sylvarum* that, “Generally barbarous people that go naked do not only paint themselves, but they pounce and race their skin.” Kimberly Poitevin’s argument about the connection between cosmetic practice and the formation of racial taxonomies is supported in part by Bacon’s reference to “racing” the body. Kimberly Poitevin, “Inventing Whiteness: Cosmetics, Race, and Women in Early Modern England,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 11, no. 1 (April 1, 2011): 59–89; Frances Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum* [. . .] (London, 1635), 577; and Sujata Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 200.
recipes for removing or covering freckles, pox, and other dermatological macules; anti-
cosmetic tracts adhere to the moralist biblical notion of spots as visible signs of internal
sin; and travel writers tend to describe both indelible body modifications such as
“pouncing,” “razing” or tattooing and ephemeral cosmetic practices like painting as a
form of mottling or spotting the skin. 9 English inventor, botanist, and alchemist Sir Hugh
Plat’s wildly popular Delights for Ladies (1600), for example, which was reprinted more
than twenty times, offers at least ten different concoctions and techniques “to take away”
freckles, pimples and a variety of other dermatological spots. Faces mottled with freckles
and pimples could be exfoliated and peeled with beautifying cosmetic waters and masked
with paint, the ingredients of which included imported luxury ingredients like mercury,
alum, borax, and lead, thus capitalizing on the increasing allure of the exotic and foreign
in the English imaginary. 10 Experimenti (1500) Caterina Sforza’s compilation of
alchemical, medicinal, and beautifying secrets and experiments, for example, claims that
talc, or the “star of the earth,” from the geomythical “isle of Cyprus,” associated with
Aphrodite, can make even dark “women beautiful” by removing “all spots or marks from
the face, such that a woman of sixty will appear to be twenty.” 11 Furthermore, the
period’s increase of syphilis and small pox outbreaks, both of which left the skin pitted

9 The connection between visible spots and vice derives from Jeremiah: “Can an Ethiopian change
his skin, or the leopard his spots?” The line suggests the impossible task of transforming the sinful nature of
the other. Jer. 13:23 (AV).

10 The tract was reprinted in 1602, 1605, 1608, 1609 and eighteen more times until 1656. See
Malcolm Thick, Sir Hugh Plat: The Search for Useful Knowledge in Early Modern England (London:
Prospect Books, 2010), 58; and Hugh Platt, Delights for ladies to adorn their persons, tables, closets, and
distillatories: with beauties, banquets, perfumes and waters (London, 1608), 95, 90.

11 Compiled before 1500 and reprinted at least 102 times, Experimenti, is a unique text written by
a woman in male-dominated field. On the popularity of the text, see Meredith K. Ray, Daughters of
Alchemy: Women and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2015),
15–25.
and scarred, also helped to create the market for cosmetics as consumers sought new ways to mask the face-ravaging diseases.\textsuperscript{12}

While these facial imperfections could appear on the skin in a variety of colors, they are consistently referred to as black spots. Physician William Bullein’s \textit{Bullenis bulwarke of defense} (1579), for example, features a recipe for beautifying water made from “Lettice,” “Oxe gaule” and “allum” that erases “blacke spottes specifically.”\textsuperscript{13} The allure of the exotic embedded in such cosmetic practices later became an object of ridicule: In John Webster’s \textit{Duchess of Malfi} (1612), Bosola tells a story about a “lady in France” who “Flay’d the skin off her face . . . After she resembled an abortive hedgehog.”\textsuperscript{14} A year later, Ben Jonson also satirizes London’s fascination with imported cosmetics in \textit{The Devil is an Ass} (1616) where the gallant Wittipol masquerades as “the Spanish Lady” and imparts false knowledge about foreign cosmetics such as “carrnuacins, pipitas, soap of Cyprus” which “preserves the skin from wrinkles, warts, spots, moles, Blemish, or sun-burnings” to the gullible female onlookers.\textsuperscript{15}

Offering readers information and advice about ingredients that smooth, polish, scrape, and lighten the skin, early modern beauty manuals, which prefer the fair to the swarthy, contributed to the consolidation of Englishness, virtue, and whiteness. It should be noted, however, that the elevation of English whiteness was by no means a new

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{13} William Bullein, \textit{Bullenis bulwarke of defense} (London, 1562), 25.
\bibitem{14} John Webster, \textit{The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays}, ed. Rene Weis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), II.i.30–34.
\end{thebibliography}
occurrence in this period. In her recent study on race-making in the Middle Ages, Geraldine Heng argues that racial practices and forms are varied and flexible, and that race must be understood as “a structural relationship for the articulation and management of difference.” Her study, she continues, “points to a racializing momentum” that “manifests unevenly, and nonidentically in different places, and at different times to sketch the dynamic field of forces within which miscellaneous instances of race-making can occur under varied local conditions.” Yet while the process of race-making and the valuation of whiteness was occurring at earlier points in history, the early modern period began to witness, as Ania Loomba notes, a “growing obsession with defining the white English self,” not least of all due to England’s increased contact with cultural others.

Examining the perennial interest in mottled skin during the early modern era reveals new and important ways of understanding how cosmetic discourse and material participated in, and at times challenged, the consolidation of whiteness and English identity, and the formation of cultural and racial taxonomies. In this chapter, I examine how the invention of whiteness relied on a variety of different means, including the staged practice of cosmesis.

16 A number of medieval works, such as the anonymous thirteenth-century allegorical dream vision Pearl, which tells the story of a man’s mourned daughter, a “precious perle wythouten spotte” comparable to those “Oute of oryent” who is lost and transmogrified into a wise and beautiful pearl-maiden certainly works to stabilize linkages between whiteness, Englishness, and virtue. Anonymous, The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), ll 36, 3.

17 Geraldine Heng, The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 16, 19, 33.

When the allegorical white face of London’s conscience is abstracted and disordered by a scattering of dots—markings that are created with imported ingredients and recall descriptions of overseas bodies—the face becomes a visible site on which to negotiate and explore the ways in which foreignness might transform personal and national identity. Conscience’s spotted visage, I argue, is a spectacular and shocking emblem of both individual and national dissolution and openness, one that challenges emerging taxonomies of cultural difference and constructions of autonomous English identity. Furthermore, Robert Wilson’s dual professional experience as playwright and highly sought after professional clown substantiates my insistence on the play’s interest in, and anxiety about, porous identity formation. Described as a “quick, delicate, refined, extemporal wit” in Stowe’s *Annals of London*, and appearing at the top of a list of Queen’s players licensed to play in the city of London on 26 November of 1583, Wilson was one of the most sought after professional clowns in the early stages of the public theater. We can thus assume that he had garnered a unique and intimate understanding of the performative value of face paint, both as an attention-grabbing spectacle and as a means to subvert audience expectation.19 As a figure that traditionally disrupts boundaries between audience and actors, we can imagine Wilson, as clown, playwright, and learned

---

19 While evidence about the face painting practices of stage clowns is scarce, it seems safe to assume that Wilson was accustomed to cosmetic alternation in the form of prosthetics such as masks and beards. We can make two additional assumptions about how his many roles as a clown may have impressed upon his writing: As clown figures serve as intermediaries between the stage and the audience, he most likely had a unique understanding of the self-reflexive power of theater. The clown, as Robert Weimann notes, “traditionally invited theatrical intimacy between actor and viewers.” His habitual position in the platea, the downstage acting space, already permitted the clown close actor-audience contact, establishing a “flexible, relationship between the play world and the real world.” Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 173.
schorlar, as being compelled to explore, and at times challenge, emerging differentiations, hierarchies, and definitions of subjectivity.

New historicists and materialists typically located the birth of individualism in the early modern period. Jacob Burckhardt’s nineteenth century thesis about the triumphant humanist self in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* is later reformulated as Stephen Greenblatt’s widely accepted notion of “self-fashioning,” a model of identity formation that depends on the dialogical interaction between anything outside or beyond the scope of the individuated—and seemingly essential—self.20 The early modern period certainly participated in and witnessed an increasingly enclosed and autonomous self, arising in part as a result of the proto-capitalist means of production, the growth of literacy due to access to the printing press and the subsequent dissemination of printed material to the masses, and increased contact with foreign geographies, among other social, economic, and cultural changes. More recently, however, scholars have been challenging the myth of early modern individualism and the critical tradition of historicizing the formation of individuated subjectivity as a linear progression from the communal identity of feudalism to the autonomous self, born of proto-capitalism. As critics such as James Kuzner and Cynthia Marshall have noted, the history of the self is far less linear, progressive, or neat: while the English were certainly interested in consolidating the humanist subject, they argue, a residual opposing force was also active in the cultural imaginary.

---

Problematizing the narrative of the rise of the autonomous self, these critics borrow from psychoanalysis, humoral theory, and other historical and social contexts to argue that while the boundaries of the English subject are indeed fortified during this period, their emergence competed with pre-established notions of the self as permeable, open, and fluid. Cynthia Marshall, for example, draws on Freud and Lacan to argue for a model of “paradoxical subject formation,” wherein the early modern self was formed through opposing drives toward autonomous subjectivity and dissolution. Addressing the function of violence in early modern literature and theatrical texts such as Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*, Marshall introduces the notion of “shattering” the self, which is a pleasurable “undertow that pulls against” autonomous subject formation.²¹ For Marshall, Lavinia’s rape, torture, and dismemberment, for example, creates space for audiences to simultaneously identify with a shattered subject while also being “scandalized and morally outraged by events portrayed on stage.”²² Similar to Marshall’s self-shattering drive, James Kuzner argues for a more nuanced understanding of vulnerability as an open, productive, and positive model of early modern subjectivity.²³ The dual movement of consolidation and dissolution constituting early modern identity formation as seen in Marshall’s shattered self and Kuzner’s vulnerable and open subject can be located, I argue, in early modern representations of the face. A highly visible signifier, the face was increasingly considered a fixed and legible map in the sixteenth and seventeenth

---


²² For Marshall, the dual responses of moral outrage and identification with Lavinia’s shattered self function as a kind of pleasurable fantasy, one that helps to form audience subjecthood. Marshall, 108.

centuries, telegraphing information about internal identity and participating in the constitution of static categories of class, gender, and race. When the face is disordered, abstracted, or even destroyed in front of a viewing audience on the early modern stage it thus suggests a move away from legibility, and, I argue, towards a radical deterritorialized cartography of the self.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s notion of faciality provides an additional theoretical lens through which to examine how playwrights negotiated the contradictions of early modern subjectivity. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they discuss the face as a site that encodes and telegraphs meaning. According to their theory of faciality, the face of power is a “machine” or an “assemblage” of signs and ideas connected to other machine-like constructions. This “machinic assemblage” is called “the faciality machine” because, as they write, “it is the social production of face, because it performs the facialization of the entire body and all its surroundings and objects, and the landscapification of all worlds and milieus.”24 Furthermore, this “unconscious and machinic operation” of faciality consolidates static subjectivity by resisting heterogeneity. The machinic operation of faciality produces hierarchies of power by codifying other faces as legible: it absorbs difference and outlaws traits, characteristics, and attributes that resist homogenization. “At every moment,” Deleuze and Guattari continue, “the machine rejects faces that do not conform, or seem suspicious.”25 The machine of faciality thus produces discernable

24 Deleuze and Guattari interpret the unconscious as a productive machine that functions in relation to other machines or assemblages. Rather than read the unconscious as a “theater” for individual dramas, the unconscious is thought to be process-oriented and productive. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

signifying elements so as to codify aggregates of power. We see this in the white face of Christ, for example, as well in political regimes such as Elizabethan England.

The opposing movement of defacialization, or the process of disassembling the face’s legibility, therefore, dismantles and escapes such aggregates of power. Defacialization is thus an aim of schizoanalysis, Deleuze and Guittari’s theoretical method invented to resist what they see as the inevitable binarizations of traditional psychoanalysis. Schizoanalysis, like Marshall’s model for the early modern shattered self, draws attention to two flows of identity formation: the forces that work towards consolidating the subject and the desiring process of undoing the individuated self. A form of resistance against the homogenizing processes of faciality, de-facialization, or the act of “dismantling the face,” is done by producing “lines of flight” or movements of destratification. For Deleuze and Guattari, the line of flight moves beyond the apparatus of the assemblage to connect to that which is beyond itself. It is a line from the apparatus to new ideas, possibilities, and spaces.

Film critics and art historians have previously used the concept of faciality to examine how representations of the face either constitute or dissolve stable subject

---

26 Schizoanalysis, first defined in Anti-Oedipus, moves away from previous forms of psychoanalysis that focus on individual subjectivity and looks instead to the potentialities of rhizomatic assemblages and becomings that take into account relations between individuals. It breaks from static dynamics and posits the body without organs (BwO), a pre-subjective fluid body in process. BwOs are fluid de-subjective desiring machines. For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is not fostered through lack, as Freud and Lacan suggest, but is a creative and productive process. Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus.

27 Deleuze and Guattari, Thousand Plateaus, 204, 209, 211

28 Deleuze and Guattari explain the mutual dependence between the wasp and the orchid as an example of the assemblage and the line of flight going beyond that assemblage: A certain species of orchid reproduces the colors of a kind of female wasp so as to attract the male pollinator. For Deleuze and Guattari, rather than read this as imitation, it is interpreted as line of flight, connecting wasp to orchid. Deleuze and Guattari, 31.
identity, but the theoretical methodology has yet to be used as a tool to interpret the constructions and deconstructions of the face on the early modern stage. Furthermore, while critics such as Maria Loh locate the codification of faciality in the early modern period, they tend to turn to the post-modern world for examples of de-facialization. Conversely, this chapter argues that the impulse to destroy the face arises in tandem with its constitution as a locus of power. Although Deleuze and Guattari discuss processes of effacement as a liberatory mechanism that resists codification by dominant signifying regimes, I suggest that it can also arise from anxieties about processes of subjectivity and meaning making. In Wilson’s play, I argue, the spotted visage is a site where the playwright and the spectators can explore collective unease about new discourses of English national identity arising in response to the increasingly multi-cultural climate of 1580s London. By decentralizing the signifying power of the face as a locus of static homogeneity and subsequently interrupting the machine of faciality, the spotted face of London’s conscience engages fluid processes of becoming-foreign.

---

29 Judy Codell, for example, uses faciality to explore blackface in 1930s empire films. Analyzing “blackfaciality,” a term she coins to describe the theoretical analysis of blackface with Deleuze and Guattari’s faciality, Codell argues that blackface denies agency, creating instead a “projected Face” that aids in the organization of power. Focusing more on film editing techniques, such as pixilation and distortion, Anna Powell employs faciality to examine Richard Linklater’s A Scanner Darkly (2006) as a means to explore the potential of cinematic facial mutations to break down audience defences and invite “new growths of sensation.” The close-up, she argues, for example, depersonalizes the face by rendering it a collection of connected parts. She also suggests that the drug state, portrayed in A Scanner Darkly as a “scrambled face” emblemmatize Deleuze and Guattari’s interest in dismantling of the face. Judy Codell, “Blackface, Faciality, and Colony Nostalgia in 1930s Empire Films,” in Postcolonial Cinema Studies, ed. Sandra Ponzanesi and Marguerite Waller (London: Routledge, 2012), 40; and Anna Powell, “Off Your Face: Faciality and Film,” in Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Cinema, ed. Ian Buchanan and Patricia MacCormack (London: Continuum, 2008), 127.

Before we address the question of faciality and de-facialization as a means to negotiate the opposing forces of identity formation on the early modern stage, I want to first clarify the notion of faciality through a more concrete, because well-known, example. Briefly turning to early modern portraiture, a medium in which, as Dana Bentley-Cranch states, “interest in the human face became paramount,” will help to elucidate the usefulness of Deleuzian faciality in discerning the early modern consolidation and disruption of the humanist self. Elizabeth I’s Armada portrait, which was painted in 1588 by George Gower to commemorate the defeat of the Spanish Armada, bears out the qualities of the “landscape” or “maritime face,” which Deleuze and Guattari describe as a face that is “authoritarian,” “reflexive,” and “passional.”

Collapsing time and space, and reading, as Roy Strong has previously observed, “like a comic strip,” the painting contains two windows into the different points in the immediate past: one shows the arrival of the Spanish ships while the other depicts English fireships defeating the invading fleet. Positioned between the two windows, Elizabeth’s red and white painted face framed by an outward radiating ruff resembling the rays of the sun, sits at the horizon line. Deleuze and Guattari describe the maritime face as one that “follows the line separating the sky from the waters, or the land from the waters.” While they do not specifically address the portraits of Elizabeth I, it is clear that her painted countenance in the Armada Portrait exemplifies their description of the maritime face.


Her eyes run parallel to the oceanic horizon line and her pearl hair ornament rises just above it.\textsuperscript{34} The image could be an emblem of Deleuze and Guattari’s description of the “Christ-face that follows the wanderer in the desert across the waters” that is “always on the encircling horizon.”

The Armada Portrait actually features two faces: In addition to Elizabeth’s countenance, the painting also displays the face of a mermaid statue in profile. Unlike the “terrestrial signifyng despotic face,” which looks forward at the audience, the maritime face, Deleuze and Guattari note, might look like “faces that cross glances” and are “turned away from each other, seen half-turned or in profile . . . their sidelong glances drawing multiple lines, integrating depth into the painting itself.”\textsuperscript{35} The vectors of The Armada Portrait’s dual gazes indeed cross: Elizabeth’s face is at a slight angle, eyes fixed on an unknown point in the middle distance beyond the world of the painting while the mermaid seems to be looking at the globe upon which Elizabeth’s hand rests. Moreover, as Catherine and Andrew Belsey have previously recognized, the mermaid has a striking resemblance to the sovereign. Because of their similar facial characteristics—especially the shared “aquiline nose”—and the position of Elizabeth’s body, they conclude that the mermaid is a “parody of the image of the Queen” that Elizabeth rejects. This second

\textsuperscript{34} Another large pearl, Elizabeth’s signature jewel and a symbol of chastity, sits where a codpiece would be on a male sovereign. Louise Montrose argues that the “The paradoxical iconic strategy of these paintings is to embody a collective assertion of national strength and imperial ambition in the Queen’s virginal self-containment.” Kim Hall discusses the relationship between the pearl and the construction of whiteness: “Coral and pearl are not just metaphors. They appear prominently in both domestic manuals and art treatises: the acquisition of these items at times figured prominently in the English trade practices. Often the very materials that made women “fair” like the perfumes that made them sweet, are the fuel for colonial trade.” Louis Adrian Montrose, \textit{The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 145; and Kim Hall, \textit{Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England} (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 251.

\textsuperscript{35} Deleuze and Guattari, \textit{Thousand Plateaus}, 206–7.
Elizabeth, which is positioned below the window that depicts the defeat of the Spanish Armada, seems to suggest that Elizabeth has jurisdiction over sky, earth and sea, not, as Catherine and Andrew Belsey argue, that the queen rejects the “dangerous sexuality” represented by the mermaid. Furthermore, the similarities between the sovereign and the mermaid can be read as resulting from the codification enacted by the abstract machine of faciality, which can spill out from the actual face onto inanimate objects, creating the sense of facialization everywhere: “Even a use-object may be facialized,” Deleuze and Guattari write, “you might say a house, utensil, or object, of clothing, etc., is watching me, not because it resembles a face, but because it is taken up in the white wall/black hole process.”

Faciality occurs when the face acts allegorically and is thus no longer organized by corporeality. Instead of the body and the face existing as undifferentiated parts of the same continuum, they posit, the body becomes overcoded by the face. We might then think of the mantle draped across Elizabeth’s left shoulder in the Rainbow portrait as a literal representation of the abstract machine of faciality. Embroidered with the eyes, ears, and lips of the all-seeing, all-knowing sovereign and “those who,” as Roy Strong suggests, “watched and listened to purvey their intelligence to her,” the portrait depicts facial features as multiple connected sites of power. Furthermore, as Peter Stallybrass

---


37 Deleuze and Guattari, Thousand Plateaus, 166, 193.

38 Marcus Gheeraerts, The Rainbow Portrait, 1600, painting.

39 These ears and eyes, which also reference the ears and eyes on fama mala—or bad fame or rumor—from Virgil’s Aeneid, it should be noted, also appear on the cover of Sir Walter Raleigh’s History of the World in the form of a spotted angel. The spots on the angel suggest a move back to corporeality as the spots cover the face, body, wings, and clothing of the angel. Annette Drew-Bear uses this image to support
and Anne Jones have argued, Elizabeth’s use of the mantle, which she appropriates from the Irish, depicts an image of cultural assimilation wherein the queen absorbs the traditionally Irish garment to display her rule over the nation.⁴⁰ As seen in the Armada portrait, the depiction of Elizabeth in the Rainbow portrait is once again one that illustrates the sovereign’s surveillance of all that falls under the regime of power and absorption and codification of all that deviates from, and resists, the constructed norm. In both portraits, the threat of the foreign other, whether it is Spain or Ireland, is assimilated and contained by Elizabeth’s all-powerful rule.

The static image of the impermeable and transcendent sovereign is the product of state-sanctioned labor practices, most of which greatly limited any liberties an artist might take in painting the likeness of the queen. Elizabeth controlled her image through a 1563 proclamation that announced that those compelled to paint her likeness must copy a circulated pattern made from a previously painted portrait. The use of such a pattern, Strong writes, “explains how so many different hands could produce the same face-mask.”⁴¹ Artists would thus affix this face-mask, or prototype, to the blank canvas and details such as facial lines and features were then mapped by a series of pinpricks and later rubbed with chalk, creating a tracing of the original. The pricking process used to

---


⁴¹ Strong, Gloriana, 60.
reproduce the face-pattern might be considered an extension of Deleuze and Guattari’s white wall/black holes system of organization: they define faciality as a symbiotic system of “white walls” and “black holes” that constitute meaning and social organization. The white wall, or in this case, the blank canvas, would be the “center of significance” to which signs “affix themselves.” The black holes, which can be likened to the artist’s constellation of pinpricks, become a readable map in which meaning resides, one that is later telegraphed to viewers in the form of the finished portrait. This methodology reminds us that while portraiture has largely been considered an important and influential means of producing the ideal of the individuated humanist self, portraits did not, in fact, reproduce an exact representation of the subject.

Elizabethan portrait painting was a means of creating a system of legible signs: as Deleuze and Guattari write, it is “not the individuality of the face that counts but the efficacy of the ciphering it makes possible, and in what cases it makes it possible. This is an affair not of ideology but of economy and organization of power.” They explain how the sovereign’s painted face, which I read as an example of Deleuze and Guattari’s “Icon proper to the signifying regime,” spills out from the canvas to the body politic, overcoding differencing and calcifying hierarchical power structures. Promoting a relationship between individual containment and national strength, Elizabeth’s portraits, which exemplify her motto, “Semper Eadem” or “always the same,” work to consolidate a static and hermetic image of English subjectivity. Whereas portraiture has been interpreted as participating in and celebrating the formation of the autonomous subject, Wilson’s face-spotting scene challenges these understandings of selfhood and subjectivity: the disruption of the

42 Deleuze and Guattari, Thousand Plateaus, 168, 193.
smooth plane of the allegorical face of London’s conscience deterritorializes the emerging triumphant model of the early modern individual.

*The Three Ladies of London* is a play deeply invested in the question of how English identity might be maintained, shaped, and potentially dissolved as it comes into contact with the foreign. First performed in 1581, the same year Elizabeth authorized the official charter for the Turkey Company, which merged with the Venice Company to later become the Levant Company in 1590, the play stages contemporaneous anxieties about the emergence of the static English subject and the opposing force of dissolution resulting from contact with foreign bodies and goods. While English merchants and traders were increasingly coming into contact with overseas foreigners, at home, Londoners struggled with the problems of imported labor and overpopulation due, in part, to the settlement of aliens in London. This influx of the foreign, both in the workforce and the marketplace, which was suddenly flooded with imported exotica, provided fodder for playwrights, inviting, as Lloyd Kermode writes, “the staging of both the excitement and the fear of international intercourse.”

Drawing attention to the collective of late sixteenth-century London, Wilson departs from the traditional morality play genre by defining his virtues and vices in terms of national identity. Lady Conscience and Lady Love are natives of England while the

---


44 Recent genre studies on the morality play have argued that it is more flexible than previous scholars allowed, and that the genre could use convention to critique, rather than merely uphold, the social and political climate. “Once formal expectations were established around moral drama,” Ineke Murakami, for example, writes, “players and playwrights could articulate social and political messages through minute changes to conventions of stage and page.” Ineke Murakami, *Moral Play and Counterpublic: Transformations in Moral Drama, 1465–1599* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 8.
multitude of vices that populate the world of play, as Conscience bemoans, “come from countries strange and far.” Opposing the native Englishness of the two virtues, Dissimulation, who is visually marked as foreign with his “beard painted motley,” his “strange fashion” and “face like a black dog” is a half-Dutch/half-Italian “mongrel,” while the corrupt merchant Mercadorus, Usury, and Lady Lucre, the principle vice figure who acts as a leader to the other vices, are all of Italian descent. Alan Stewart argues that Wilson’s negative portrayal of Italy derives in part from England’s increased access to international trade routes. No longer reliant on intermediaries to facilitate trade with overseas geographies, the Italian merchant, once a necessary staple in the English economy, became superfluous. However, while Mercadorus is certainly proven to be corrupt and unreliable, England’s fascination with Italy, a space figured in the English imaginary as ostentatiously sumptuous and inordinately incontinent and thus both threatening and enthralling, nonetheless permeates the world of the play. Lady Lucre is positioned as a dangerous yet compelling alien to England, whose rejection is deemed necessary for the continued formulation of an unadulterated English identity. Yet, while “Englishness required its supplements, its sinister outsiders and sites of banishment for threats to the imperialist that consolidated, from the center, the self-representations of that “green and pleasant” land,” as Ann Rosalind Jones writes, those supplements also “threatened . . . to throw off balance the concepts of legitimacy and self-identity which


nationalist discourse sought to establish.” While Lucre’s representation as a dangerous Italian outsider at times fortifies the notion of Englishness as discrete and closed, the nature of her corruption of the English Lady Conscience also destabilizes emerging discourses of English nationalism.

Recalling the figure of the Venetian courtesan, Lady Lucre, the granddaughter of “the old Lady/Lucre of Venice,” allegorizes the dangerous allure of Venice. In Coryate’s Crudities (1611), a text documenting a tour of Europe, the English Jacobean Thomas Coryate muses on how Emiliana, one such Venetian courtesan, uses artificial adornment and language to captivate her audience: “In her cheeks thou shalt see the Lilly and Rose strive for supremacy,” he writes, but “thou maist easily discerne the effects of those famous apocothery drugs . . . stibium, cerussa, and purissum.” Indeed, women flocked to the English marketplace to purchase Italian ceruse, used in skin-whitening pastes, as it was thought to be the best of its kind. If the heavily painted face fails to entice, Coryate continues, the courtesan will use language: “if she cannot move thee with the aforesaid delights, shee will assay thy constantcy with her Rhetorical tongue.” Coryate’s travelogue includes an engraving depicting Emiliana, who is adorned with dramatic eye shadow and a sumptuous breast-baring dress, attempting to seduce the seemingly reticent and shamefaced author, an image that emphasizes the threat of the

47 See Jones for a more detailed discussion of the function of Italy as a setting in early modern theater. Jones also discusses Coryate’s description of the courtesan but her focus is on how she is used to define English identity. Anne Rosalind Jones, “Italians and Others,” in Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama, ed. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York: Routledge, 1991), 260, 251.

48 Wilson, Three Ladies of London, 250.

49 Coryate estimated there to be twenty thousand courtesans occupying Venice in the early seventeenth century. Thomas Coryate, Coryate’s Crudities [. . .] (London, 1611; repr., Glasgow: J. MacLehose, 1905), 433.
Venetian courtesan while simultaneously heightening the underlying eroticism of his
textual description. Referring to her as a “second Cleopatra,” Coryat’s Venetian
courtesan embodies anxieties about the erotic foreign other who threatens to collapse the
contested boundaries of the differentiated self and to adulterate England’s national
identity.  

Lady Lucre uses the courtesan’s tools of seduction—her face-paint and alluring
language—as mediums of moral corruption. Whereas Coryate’s courtesan is accused of
making her skin “ivory white with ink,” Lady Lucre uses black ink from her cosmetic
box of abomination to dismantle the already artificially constructed ivory white face of
the actor. Meanwhile, what is so striking about the face-spotting scene is its visual and
aural paradox: Lucre recites a traditional Petrarchan blazon while spotting Conscience,
henceforth marring the beauty she celebrates. After dipping her finger into the paint box,
Lucre states,

Hold here, my sweet; and then over to see if any want.
The more I do behold this face, the more my mind doth vaunt:
This face is of favor, these cheeks are red and white,
These lips are cherry red, and full of deep delight.
Quick rolling eyes, her temples high, and forehead white as snow,
Her eyebrows seemly set in frame with dimpled chin below:
O how beauty hath adorned thee with every seemly hue,
In limbs, in looks, with all the rest, proportion keeping dew:
Sure I have not seen a finer soul in every kind or part,
I cannot choose but kiss thee with my lips that love thee with my heart.  

The scholarly interpretations of this scene tend to focus on either the spots or the blazon,
leaving a gap in our understanding of how the two movements work together: arguing

---

50 Coryate, 435.
51 Coryate, 435.
52 Wilson, *Three Ladies of London*, 337.
that the blazon figures as Lucre’s erotic domination of Conscience, Denise Walen overstates the significance of the final line of Lucre’s speech, reading the suggestion of a kiss as a spectacular moment of lesbian eroticism, all while eliding the effacement so central to the scene; conversely, Jonathan Gil Harris’ study of the face-spotting scene, wherein he suggests the macules be read as the palimpsest, of syphilis, does not adequately address the signifying function of the blazon. The remainder of this chapter will be an attempt to fill this lacuna in the critical work on Wilson’s morality play by producing a Deleuzian account of the performative event of on-stage face-spotting wherein the spots are read as an abstraction and disruption of static identity formation. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the face must first be made visible to the spectator before any ruptures can occur. The blazon, I argue, does this while also working to reterritorialize the visual havoc wreaked by the scattering of spots.

Lucre’s blazon about Conscience’s red-and-white beauty borrows from the Petrarchan sonnet, a courtly form that contributes to the codification and glorification of the ideal face of feminine English virtue. In so doing, the sonnet participates in England’s “nationalist project,” as Kim Hall has suggested, of defining “itself politically, 

---

53 Walen argues that the spotting scene could suggest female-female desire because “The playhouse was an imaginative space where two female bodies erotically positioned in the narrative could signify sexual practice.” Denise A. Walen, Constructions of Female Homoerotics in Early Modern Drama (New York: Springer, 2005), 8; and Jonathan Gil Harris, “How to ‘Read’ Early Modern Syphilis,” in Sins of the Flesh: Responding to Sexual Disease in Early Modern Europe, ed. Kevin Patrick Siena (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 109–32.

54 The fragmentation of the absented and imagined female body has previously been read by Nancy Vickers and others as a form of “lyric mastery,” where describing serves as a means of control. While this may be the case in lyric poetry, where the male sonneteer can be read as “dismembering” the absent female body so as to protect and formulate the male ego, the stage blazon, which describes a real body circulating through the space of the stage, cannot be fit into this schema of male possession. On stage, the dismembering rhetoric is frustrated by the concrete reality of the unified character/actor. See Vickers on the dismembering function of the blazon. Nancy Vickers, “Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme,” Critical Inquiry 8, no. 2 (1981): 265–79.
culturally, and to establish itself as a dominant force on the world stage.” Moreover, Conscience’s “reddy and white” cheeks bring to mind not just the sonnet ladies, but Queen Elizabeth, who, both in her state-sanctioned portraiture and her real-life cosmeticized face, used color to, as Suzy Beemer has noted, “establish the supremacy of whiteness and English nationhood.” Through the use of white and red paint, she created a symbolic system where fairness, virtue, class, and Englishness were inextricably linked. With her eyebrows, as Lady Lucre notes, “set in frame” and her limbs “set in proportion” this aural construction of Conscience is part of the machine of faciality, spilling over from Queen Elizabeth’s own made-up face and onto the early modern stage, as each fragmented body part is overcoded and made legible by the dominant regime. While the blazon works to fix projected social identity, the spots disrupt the landscape of the face.

The spotting scene is a multi-layered theatrical set piece composed of a network of overlapping, and at times contradictory, associations. For one, the frightful spectacle clearly references the very real dangers of face paint, which, as the cosmetic moralists warned, contained ingredients that could potentially create, rather than eliminate, spots and other facial deformities. In Richard Haydocke's translation of Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo’s *A Tracte Containing the Artes of curious Paintinge* (1598) use of mercury sublimate, found in both skin-whitening paints and exfoliating agents, is said to “make


56 Suzy Beemer draws a connection between the reds and whites of Elizabeth’s face the red-and-white Tudor emblem, thus illustrating the joining of the red and white roses of the York and Lancaster houses: “Elizabeth I’s face, then, may have bespoken not only her English femininity but also her national power.” Suzy Beemer, “Masks of Blackness, Masks of Whiteness: Coloring the (Sexual) Subject in Jonson, Cary, and Fletcher,” *Thamyris* 4, no. 2 (Autumn 1997): 219, 234.

57 For a description of the Tudor adoption of Aristotle’s definition of beauty as form, balance, symmetry, and proportion, see Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 18–32.
the tongue dry and rough.” Users are afflicted with “black teeth, standing far out of their gums like a Spanish mule with offensive breath, with face half scorched and an unclean complexion.”58 Yet despite the well-known invasive and transformative properties of paint, previous studies on the theatrical device tend to rely on the metaphorical understanding of the spotted countenance as representing internal sin. In his 1954 study on costume and stage props in the Tudor interlude, for example, Thomas Craik writes that painted spots “always signify moral corruption.” More recent studies on staged cosmetic signifiers tend to rely on anti-cosmetic tracts such as Thomas Tuke’s widely circulated Treatise against Painting and Tincturing of Men and Women (1616) to arrive at the same conclusion: staged representations of face-spotting must always be read as a sign of moral decay. Annette Drew-Bear collects a varied set of medieval and early modern cosmetic scenes only to conclude that on the stage, “Face blackening and face-spotting is used to symbolically transform the face to indicate sin.”60 Indeed, the trope of the metaphorical spot pointing to internal sin is repeated countless times on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage: Shakespeare’s Gertrude sees “black and grained spots” on her soul; Lady Macbeth’s guilt is transformed into an imagined spot of blood on her hand, impossible to clean; recognizing her sinful and lecherous nature, Thomas Middleton’s Gratiana states “Take this infectious spot out of my soul / I’ll rinse it in


60 Drew-Bear, Painted Faces, 60.
seven waters of mine eyes” in *The Revenger’s Tragedy*.Yet, its signifying potential changes when the spots are painted on the surface of the skin in the concrete space of the theater; while the spectacle of the mottled face certainly suggests sin, it cannot be contained in a univocal reading: the marked skin also references syphilitic pustules while simultaneously recalling the metaphorical as well the real dangers of face paint, all of which point to a pervasive cultural anxiety about invasive foreigners adulterating and transforming the English body.

Reading the spots as a textual palimpsest, Jonathan Gil Harris introduces the term *pathotext* as a means to address the polyvalency of what he interprets as Lady Conscience’s syphilitic face. Defined as a “diachronic assemblage of competing forms” the pathotext is constituted by readings that include biology, history, and economics. Conscience’s spots, which he refers to as both “pox” and “cankers,” “participate just as much within putatively medieval literary traditions of representing the sinful soul and Elizabethan understandings of transnational commerce.” Indeed, the spotted visage serves as a site upon which the playwright, the actors and the viewing audience can negotiate and explore the increasingly complex relationship between Englishness and the rise of a cosmetics culture predicated on foreign trade. My reading of the spots builds on Harris’s palimpsest by suggesting that the de-facialization mobilized by the spotting also engages ideas about the paradoxes in competing discourses about English identity formation as both enclosed and porous. I read the spots, which are constructed with

---


imported cosmetic material and recall descriptions of overseas bodies in travel literature, as lines of flight that disrupt fixity and engage “corporeality and rhizomatic spacialities” and fluid states of becoming-other. 63 Wilson’s black-spotted face is an image that inadvertently rejects static identity formation and moves towards becoming-other.

While early modern beauty manuals and texts on somatic deportment contained recipes that promised the removal of dark spots and anti-cosmetic literature worried over the ways in which obscuring such spots would render the face illegible, descriptions of overseas bodies often characterize artificial body modifications as actually producing spotted skin. When appearing in this context, the term spot, which is used here to signify moral corruption, barbarism, and cultural difference, contributes to the emerging drive to racialize the foreign body by positioning it as a deviation from the white English body. In his narrative about Virginia, for example, John Smith describes the skin markings on the natives as “cunningly embroidered with divers works” and “artificially wrought into the flesh with black spots.” 64 Additionally, the ingredients used to construct the spotted visage are usually highlighted and advertised in these narratives, only later to appear in the English marketplace and on the pages of beauty manuals and advertisement bills. Therefore, in addition to establishing categories of difference, descriptions of the spotted foreign body are thus also used as a vehicle to manufacture English desire for imported exotica. Sir Walter Raleigh advertises the potential commodities found on Guiana through descriptions of the painting practices of the female natives: “Brown and tawny

63 Deleuze and Guattari, Thousand Plateaux, 105.

64 In describing the markings as “embroidered” Smith suggests that the natives are civilized, a rhetorical move that might decrease any anxiety settlers and colonizers might feel about the Virginian inhabitants. John Smith, Generall Historie of Virginia (London, 1624), 108.
women spot themselves and cloud their cheeks” with the “divers berries that dye a most perfect crimson and carnation; and for painting, all France, Italy, or the East Indies yield none such.” Robert Wilson incorporates this fascination with exotic imported goods into his play: In the scene prior to the face-mottling episode, Mercadorus discusses England’s consumption of foreign goods with the Jewish merchant Gerontius. When Mercadorus requests “pretty knacks to send to England” Gerontius responds by saying that Turkey is a “great store” of gems and ingredients for perfumes and other cosmetic material, including “musk, amber, sweet powders, fine odours, pleasant perfumes, / and many such toys.” He goes on to note, “Oh no, lack some pretty fine toy, or some fantastic new knack;/ For da gentlewomans in England buy much tings for fantasy.” Indeed, advertisements for cosmetic material oftentimes underline the exotic origins of the saleable goods. One handbill advertising an “Italian wash” “which takes away all . . . Dark and Swarthiness of the Skin,” proffers the knowledge of a woman who has travelled the world and has “attained the most rare Secrets in the world for beautifying the face” to underline the quality of the cosmetics.

Emphasis on corporeal spotting appears in writing about East-West encounters as well: English merchant William Finch writes that the native “Socotorans,” who have a

---


66 This point is so crucial, in fact, that he repeats another four times in the play. Upon meeting Lady Lucre he is told to export “good commodities” such as “wheat, pease, barley, oats. . . beef, bacon, bell-metal” in exchange for “trifles” acquired “in Barbary and in Turkey,” “for every day gentlewomen of England do ask for such trifles. . . they care not to have it profitable.” Among the “new toys” he is to import are “bugles to make bables, coloured bones, glass beads to make bracelets withal” and “amber . . . coral, and crystal,” all of which were used in practices of self-beautification and adornment. Wilson, Three Ladies of London, 10, 25, 40, 56.

67 Anonymous, In Great Suffolk-Street.
“great number of civet-cats” for musk but “adulterate all their commodities,” are “loathsome to behold” when “painting their faces with yellow and black spots.”68 The spotted foreign body described by Finch also appears on the early modern stage: In Shakespeare’s Titus Andronicus, Aaron, characterized as a vengeful and licentious Moor, is described as a “swarthy Cimmerian. . . of his body’s hue/ spotted, detested, and abominable.”69 A more complex explication of the foreign spotted body is provided from the perspective of a Europeanized foreigner, scholar and converted Moor, Moor al-Hasan Ibn Mohammed al-fasi, rechristened Leo Africanus. Drawing a correlation between cultural geography, national identity, and bodily decoration, Africanus claims that the Tunisian practice of painting “faces, breasts, armes, hands, and fingers” with “counterfeit color” was a “fashion first brought in by those Arabians. . . for before then, they never used any false or glozing colours.” While his text certainly constructs a binary of exotic other and purchasing subject, it also collapses the very dualism it purports to substantiate. As Ania Loomba notes, critics tend to interpret Africanus’ “narrative as “consolidating ideas of difference between Africans and Europeans by establishing his authority as an eyewitness who was once of ‘them’ but now has crossed over to “us.” However, she continues, Africanus also destabilizes these dichotomous oppositions by “presenting Africans as a heterogeneous group of people with different lifestyles, achievements, and attributes.” He does, however, “create a color-coded hierarchy” within Africa, some of which rely on descriptions of cosmetic practices and materials.70 Moreover, rather than


69 Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus, II.iii.70–74.

70 Loomba, Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism, 107–9.
merely offer an empirical description of foreign painting practices, Africanus, whose authority, as Kim Hall notes, “comes from both his indigenous status and his seeming absorption of European values,” his description is paired with sentiments anti-cosmetic moralists already made familiar to English audiences. In Barbary, Africanus continues, while the women “contenting themselves only with their natural hew. . . regards not such faine ornaments” they occasionally “temper a certain color with hen’s dung and saffron wherewithal they paint a little round spot on the balls of their Cheekes, about the breadth of a French Crown . . . and this custom is very highly esteemed of by the Arabian poets and by the gentlemen of that countrie.” Africanus goes on to note that such practices are limited because cosmetically adorned women “think themselves more trim and beatifull” and “seeme to bee great allurement into lust.” By metaphorically placing European currency on the surface of the foreign body, Africanus positions the foreigner as an object of exotic fascination, one that is sold to, and consumed by, the English reading audience. Africanus positions Frenchness as alluring in the context of Barbary, thus making the European seemingly exotic.

---

71 Hall, Things of Darkness, 32. Belonging to two discreet cultures, Leo Africanus is an exemplar of Mediterranean hybridity. Born in Islamic Granada, Spain, his family was transplanted to Morocco and later settled in Fez where he served the Sultan as a diplomat. During his travels in the eastern Mediterranean, he was captured by pirates and gifted to Pope Leo X. Converting to Christianity, he was renamed Joannes Leo de Medici. See also Natalie Zemon Davis, Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

72 Leo Africanus, The History and Description of Africa and of the Notable Things Therein Contained (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010), 1:159.

73 The correlation between licentiousness and cosmetic practice is well documented, where cosmeticized woman is portrayed as having consumptive desire for both foreign goods and men. Drew-Bear explains how the Latin word fucus, a term for face paint, “itself implies deceit” and is “sometimes used to mean whore.” Drew-Bear, Painted Faces, 53, 74.
As tools used to construct traditional Tudor beauty, these imported cosmetic materials contributed to the faciality machine. Used in the play, however, the foreign cosmetic material renders the traditionally beautiful and beautified face a spotted monstrosity. Just as the image of the spotted overseas body suggests the allure of the exotic, it also participates in the regime of faciality by positioning the foreigner as a deviation from the white English norm. However, while the descriptions of the spotted foreign bodies populating the pages of travel literature contribute to the stabilization of cultural and racial taxonomies, Conscience’s spots suggest an alternative “production of subjectivity.” The spots, which disrupt the organization of the legible face, move from faciality to a collection of diverse Deleuzoguattarian “probe-heads” which are lines of flight that escape the dominant signifying system.  

Rather than differentiate the spotted body from the white English body, Conscience’s visage collapses, rather than supports, emergent binarizations. The spots,

---

74 Conscience’s vocation as a “poor broom-wife,” associates her with both public and private forms virtue, for as Ineke Murakami notes, the broom is a “a symbol of domestic huswifely virtue.” While brooms are not mentioned again after the corruption scene, we might imagine her broom transformed into the Deluzian witches broom: “Toward what void,” they ask, “does the witch’s broom lead?” Deleuze and Guattari, Thousand Plateaus, 270; and Murakami, Moral Play and Counterpublic, 84.  

75 Yet, moments of rhetorical transparency, where foreign modification practices are clearly described as a means to reveal the fictions inherent in binary opposition, can also be located in this genre. Thomas Harriot’s Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia, for example, illustrates the painting practices of native Virginians, which he describes as having “their faces marked or painted with small blewe spots” alongside detailed descriptions of the British Picts. As William Camden had previously noted, the ancient Britons were “painted people” who were identified by ‘their staining and colouring of their whole bodies with woad, and their cutting, pinking, and pouncing of their flesh.” Camden goes on to suggest that the name “Britain” derives from painting practices, practices that helped to formulate national, cultural, and geographical identity:  

Seeing . . . that our countrey men . . . had no marke whereby they might be distinguished and knownen from the borderers better than by that maner of theirs to paint their bodies, . . . what if I should conjecture that they were called Britans of their depainted bodies? For whatsoever is thus painted and coloured, in their ancient countrey speech they call brith. . . . For Brith and Brit doe passing well accord: and that word brith among the Britans implieth that which the Britans were indeed, to wit, painted, depainted, died, and coloured . . .
which on one hand signify her transformation from virtuous broom-woman to bawd, can thus also be read as de-territorializing the face and negating notions of emerging individuated subjectivity. In this way, they are Deleuzian lines of flight that engage the fluid subjectivity of becoming-Italian, a desiring process that shifts away from standardized and dominant forces. This is due to the fact that while Conscience’s spots reference the cosmetic practices of the foreign other she never becomes foreign, which would calcify her fluid in-between state of being within the hierarchical order.

Having outlined the ways in which the blazon and the spots function independently, we can now turn to the paradoxical relationship between these two competing systems of representation. The spots de-territorialize homogenous constructions and suggest heterogeneous states of being while the blazon works to re-territorialize her heterogeneous face into the codifying system of faciality. This double-movement between deterritorialization and reterritorialization is, as art critic Maria Loh writes, “at the heart of schizoanalysis.” She goes on to further described the dual forces: “deterritorialization is the process of coming undone and reterritorialization describes the inevitable entropic shift back towards knowledge and order that had to be constantly questioned or otherwise kept in motion.”76 Just as the face begins to escape the regime of faciality, the blazon attempts to organize it into a system of knowable signs.

76 Loh, “Renaissance Faciality,” 345.
This interplay of faciality and defacialization emblematizes the dual forces of emerging individualism and dissolution that form early modern identity. For Deleuze and Guattari, drawing such lines of flight is a radical act of liberation from state-imposed systems of static subjectivity. In the world of the play, Conscience’s dissolution of fixed allegorical identity however, functions as a means through which Wilson and his audience can negotiate anxieties about the ways in which the foreign might undermine and disrupt emergent and pre-existing notions of English selfhood. Deleuze and Guattari propose the idea of engaging in a constant state of fluidity as a means to escape this static subjectionhood. Conscience, however, is not allotted this opportunity in the play; she does not appear again until the end of Wilson’s production where she, along with Lady Love and Lady Lucre, faces trial for corrupting the citizens of London. The judge, described as “thou spotless magistrate” and called Nemo, meaning No One in Latin, expels the three ladies from London, forcing them to spend the remainder of their days in the “place of darkness,” a phrase which, although used to describe hell, also recalls descriptions of foreign and unknown/unknowable geographies. As Deleuze and Guattari write, “at every moment the machine rejects faces that do not conform, or seem suspicious.” Here, Lady Conscience, previously transformed from broom-seller to bawd, is re-territorialized, abjected to “the darke place,” and coded by the dominant signifying regime.

The legibility of Conscience’s once heterogeneous visage is reiterated in The Three Ladies and Three Lords of London, Wilson’s 1588 sequel to The Three Ladies of

77 Wilson, Three Ladies of London, 368, 404.
78 Deleuze and Guattari, Thousand Plateaus, 215.

87
London and the Queen’s Men’s first published play. The play shifts its focus from aliens within, as seen in Three Ladies of London, to aliens without. Produced the year of the Spanish Armada, rather than concerning itself with the foreigners who had already infiltrated London, the primary threat to England in Wilson’s sequel is presented as the invading Spanish. Midway through the play, Conscience is released from her subterranean prison with a clear complexion. The scene also reveals that the spots migrated from Lady Conscience to Lady Lucre and Lady Love as well, suggesting additional lines of flight: Upon her release, it is Lucre who first exclaims, “My spots are gone: My skin is smooth an plain.” Lucre and the wayward virtues are finally contained in the marriage economy: Judge Nemo marries them to Pleasure, Pomp and Policy, all “native country men,” their mutable bodies contained by marriage and once again defined as English.79

Robert Wilson continues to engage cosmetic signifiers to negotiate emerging ideas about foreignness and national identity in Fair Em, The Miller’s Daughter of Manchester. Turning from the contemporary London of Three Ladies to the medieval past, he examines the relationship between England and its foreigners by drawing on the history and collective memory of the Danish and Norman conquests. The play, which derives from the popular ballad Bessie off Bednall, is constructed as a double plot: One storyline features Em, a noble Saxon forced to masquerade as a miller’s daughter, while the other plot centers around William the Conqueror’s misplaced infatuation with an image of a beautiful woman emblazoned on a shield. The final scene, which is set at the

English court, sees the two plots joined, ending with the Saxon Em convincing William to marry Blanche, the princess of Denmark. Performed a year after King James I married Anne of Denmark, who later explores ideas about the English absorption of difference through tropes of darkness in Ben Jonson’s *Masque of Blackness*, the play anticipates James’ rise to the English throne as well as his notoriously cosmopolitan court.80

Most of the critical work on *Fair Em* has consisted of philological investigations about source material and authorship.81 Curtis Perry, however, diverges from this precedent to investigate the ways in which the play engages with contemporaneous discourses and beliefs about English nationalism. Contrasting the play to the teleological structure of Shakespeare’s triumphalist history plays, which telegraph the consolidation of England’s monarchy and national identity, he writes that *Fair Em* dramatizes a “resistance to centralizing cultural imperialism.” The “essence of Englishness,” he continues, is “located not in its insularity, conquering might, or heroic monarchy” but in its “ability to resist conquest by absorbing external threats.” By accepting Em’s worldview, Perry argues, England absorbs Saxon virtue, which also “triggers reconciliation between Saxons and Normans.”82 The play certainly privileges cultural absorption over violent subjugation, yet Perry’s salutary reading of the play as portraying

---


81 Once considered a work of Shakespeare, due to the fact that it was included in a collection titled *Shakespeare, Vol. 1*, critics now generally attribute the play to Wilson in part due to H. S. D. Mithal’s analysis of internal stylistic evidence. See H. S. D. Mithal, “The Authorship of *Fair Em* and Martin Mar-Sixtus,” *Notes and Queries* 7.1 (January 1960): 8–10. See also George W. Mannel, “The Source of the Immediate Plot of *Faire Em*,” *Modern Language Notes* 28, no. 3 (1913): 80–82.

an open and accommodating England does not sufficiently consider the significance of the Danish princess’s process of assimilation. Attention to Wilson’s cosmetic signifiers allows us to see how the play incorporates the foreign other into the dominant national project of England by erasing difference.

Wilson’s deployment of cosmetic signifiers used to investigate the question of national identity is evidenced in the first scene of *Fair Em*: William the Conqueror falls in love with “true counterfeit of lovely Blanche / Princess and daughter to the King of Danes” emblazoned on a shield.\(^83\) Perhaps referencing the anxiety anti-cosmetic moralists express about how the “counterfeited” falsifies beauty and masks internal sin, William later mistakes the beautiful Marianne, a Swedish princess held hostage at the Danish court, for less conventionally attractive Blanche. While gawking at Marianne, whom he thinks is Blanche, he recites a blazon similar to the one seen in *The Three Ladies of London*:

\begin{verbatim}
A sweet face, an exceeding dainty hand;
A body were it framed of wax
By all the cunning artists of the world,
It could not better be proportioned. \(^84\)
\end{verbatim}

William’s description of her “sweet face” and well-proportioned limbs both work to incorporate the Swedish Marianne into the English ideal of beauty. His first sighting of the real Blanche, however, causes shock and disappointment: she looks nothing like the image on the shield. Having fallen prey to the machinations of false representation, he

---


\(^84\) Wilson, I.iii.10–16.
exclaims bitterly that Blanche is “worse featured, uncomely, nothing courtly / Swart and ill fauoured, a Colliers sanguine skin / I never saw a harder favour’d slut.” 85 Because of her dark skin, Blanche is defined in opposition to the members of the English court, who, either through artificial enhancements or the gifts of nature, presumably display traditional Tudor beauty. Once she reaches English shores, however, any visible traces of differentiation are regulated, whitewashed, and absorbed by England.

Unwilling to settle for the swarthy Princess of Denmark, William hatches a plan to abscond to England with the fairer skinned Swede. Marianne and Blanche come up with their own identity-swapping trick to stymie William’s plan. Once in England, William discovers that his Marianne, who insisted on wearing a veil while they crossing the ocean, is in fact Blanche. After bemoaning his fate and proclaiming the evil nature of all women, William begrudgingly accepts his new bride. Her assimilation into the English court is telegraphed by William’s description of her transformed visage: “Blanch is fair: Methinks I see in her / a modest countenance, a heavenly blush.” 86 Here, William uses the rhetoric of the courtly sonneteer to blanch the Danish princess. In Kim Hall’s discussion about the Dark Lady of the sonnet tradition, she notes the ways in which male sonneteers assert their rhetorical power by presenting “relations between the white European male and the foreign female through a metaphoric politics of color.” 87 Like the sonneteer, William paints Blanche’s skin white, highlighting the power of language as a tool of assimilation as well as England’s dominance. Yet because theater is a medium

85 Wilson, I.iii.5–8.
86 Wilson, V.i.53.
87 Hall, Things of Darkness, 69.
that engages both aural and visual rhetoric, the audience is able to see that although Blache is whitened through language, her actual skin color remains the same, thus leaving the issue somewhat unresolved. However, by first marking the foreign-born Blanche as a deviation from the English norm only to assimilate and erase her differences, *Fair Em* participates in the stabilization of the signifying regime and thus the consolidation of the English humanist subject.

The face fascinated early moderns. Increasingly read as a map of identity, the face came to be seen as a collection of discernable signs offering information about class and gender and constituting emerging taxonomies of race. While portrait making and other processes of early modern cultural production participate in understandings of the face as representing an internal static individuated self, stage plays consistently offer a dynamic and flexible representation of the face. Plays that stage elaborate effacement scenes, where audiences witness eyes being gouged out, as in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, or eyelids that are pinned open and mouths burned with poisonous paint, seen later in Thomas Middleton’s *Revenger’s Tragedy*, as well as less spectacularly violent cosmetic transformation scenes consisting of skin being mottled with an abstract pattern of black dots, all challenge emerging notions of a coherent essential self.88

In *Three Ladies of London, Three Ladies and Three Men of London*, and *Fair Em*, Robert Wilson uses the face as a site to negotiate and explore tensions about competing discourses of identity formation, the allure of international trade, and anxieties about adulterating the increasingly static and closed definition of Englishness. Produced between 1581, when Elizabeth established the Turkey shipping company, a move that

opened England to seafaring world, and 1590, two years after the Spanish Armada, a defeat that helped to expand England’s maritime power, Wilson’s theatrical works certainly alert his audience to the sustained threat of foreign infiltrations. My analysis of his cosmetic signifiers, however, reveals a subtle shift in audience attitudes towards the end of the century. For the citizens of 1590s London, the original shock of the foreign luxury goods lining the stalls of the marketplace and the continued influx of immigrant artisan labor were most likely changes that were beginning to be normalized. Wilson’s cosmetic transformation scenes suggest that Londoners negotiated this process of normalization at least in part by assimilating cultural difference. Nonetheless, as I have argued, *The Three Ladies of London* presents the audience with a striking image of process oriented subjectivity and becoming-foreign/Italian, an image that destabilizes emerging ideas about the relationship between pure English identity, whiteness, and virtue. While *The Three Lords and Three Ladies* and *Fair Em* seem to be an attempt at correcting or undoing this destabilizing image by erasing difference, the spectacular display of Conscience’s spotted face remains active in the English imaginary, offering audiences a glimpse at other-oriented identity formation. As it inspired both a sequel and a second printing, the popularity of the play cannot be disputed, suggesting that Wilson’s portrayal of identity formation had real appeal. Furthermore, because the transformation occurs on the stage in the concrete space of the theater and thus in full view of the audience, the foreign paint dually inscribes and penetrates the player’s skin as well as the collective imagination of the viewing audience. While Wilson’s intent was most likely to represent vice, the cosmetic box and paint “takes on a life of their own,” as noted by Andrew Sofer, a life that is beyond the control of the playwright, the players, and the
Simultaneously occupying the space of luxury consumer good and stage prop, these objects that populate the otherwise “bare” Elizabethan stage are in fact, to borrow from Jane Bennet, “vibrant matter” with “forces and tendencies of their own,” interacting with, and transforming, the English subject.

---


Chapter 3

“Lyke unto a Lyvely Thing”: Animate Statues, Corpses, and Effigial Bodies

On April 28th in 1603, Elizabeth I’s funeral procession made its way from Whitehall to Westminster Abbey. The convoy, as depicted in William Camden’s illustration of the event, included royal servants, ladies-in-waiting, members of the Privy Council, and countless brightly colored heraldic flags and horses trapped in black velvet.\(^1\) Flanked by banderole wielding barons, Elizabeth’s polychromatic wooden effigy, which was dressed in traditional parliamentary vestments and wearing the imperial state crown, rested atop a length of ermine draped over a lead coffin. With a red wig fashioned with strands of Elizabeth’s own hair, bright blue eyes, pink lips, and rouged cheeks, the Queen’s effigy was carved and “colored so faithfully,” Jennifer Woodward notes, “as to seem alive.”\(^2\) The striking image of the effigy certainly stirred the spectators: surveyor John Stow famously observes that when the procession passed through the streets, “there was such a general sighing, groaning and weeping went up as the like hath not been seen or known in the memory of man neither doth any history mention any people, time or place to make like lamentation for the death of their sovereign.”\(^3\)

Stowe’s description of the public expression of grief is most likely hyperbolized, as Woodward contends, perhaps even propaganda mobilized to undergird Tudor

---

1 The illustration is actually anonymous, but historians tend to attribute it to William Camden, in part because of the many similarities it shares with other illustrations of funereal processions collected in *The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth* [ . . . ] (London, 1688; repr., Charleston, SC: BiblioLife, 2011).


mythologies of fame and posterity under the new Stuart monarchy. Yet the image of a collective histrionic London citizenry gazing upon the effigy sitting atop the putrefying corpse of the dead queen nonetheless demands our attention.⁴ Noting the dramatic tension of the moment, Thomas P. Anderson suggests that the funeral procession allowed the spectators to “re-experience the sovereign’s death.”⁵ In addition to the ways in which the state funeral manufactured a second death of the queen, I am interested in exploring the extent to which the public outpouring of grief can also be interpreted as longing, not just for the living monarch, but for the materiality of loss. Without the corpse to behold, the bereaved are denied a primary means through which to access and mediate death through mortuary rites focused on the material.⁶ I suggest, therefore, that the public’s lamentation for the deceased sovereign can be interpreted as a display of the collective desire for the comforting rituals of pre-Reformation funereal rites, wherein the relationship between the living and the body of the deceased was central to the mourning process.

The corpse, suppressed through the Reformation’s attack on the materiality of Catholic sacraments and rites was positioned by Protestant reformers as an evacuated object to be hidden from public view, reappears in a significant number of theatrical productions throughout the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. From the “lively form of death” hanging in Hieronimo’s arbor in Thomas Kyd’s Spanish Tragedy (1587) and the

⁴ Woodward, Theatre of Death, 80.


⁶ Writing in 1600, Antiquarian Francis Tate, for example, notes that the custom of attending to the body of the deceased, with “candles set burning over it on a table day and night,” had “grown into disuse” as it was “being thought superstitious.” Frances Tate, A Collection of Curious Discourses Written by Eminent Antiquaries upon Several Heads in Our English Antiquities, comp. Thomas Hearne (London, 1771), 204.
dead King Edward, whose wounds “Open their congealed mouths and bleed afresh” in Shakespeare’s *Richard III* (1593), to the severed hand in *The Duchess of Malfi* (1612) and the painted skull in Thomas Middleton’s *Revenger’s Tragedy* (1606), corpses and other fragmented body parts can be found scattered throughout early modern theatrical productions. The sheer number of theatrical corpses that appear on stage during the era suggests a considerable sustained interest in the ontological status of the dead. In this chapter I consider two such Jacobean stage plays: Thomas Middleton’s *Second Maiden’s Tragedy* (1611) and Shakespeare’s *Winter’s Tale* (1611), both of which explore the complex relationship between mourning rituals, the corpse, and memorial statuary through the figure of a heroine painted with cosmetics.

The painted characters in *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* and *The Winter’s Tale*, both of which were performed at Blackfriars in the same year, have multiple overlapping signifying functions. In this chapter I am concerned with investigating the ways in which they figure as sites upon which audiences can consider receding and emergent ideas about the beliefs, rituals, and practices surrounding death. In the less well-known *Second Maiden’s Tragedy*, the heroine, known only as The Lady, kills herself to stave off the advances of the usurping Tyrant. After retrieving her dead body, The Tyrant hires a court painter, who is the avenger Govianus in disguise, to “unlock the treasure house of art” to render the corpse as a living thing. Enticed by the brightly colored yet putrefying flesh,

---


the Tyrant kisses the beautified face, an act that results in a grotesque and spectacular death. Borrowing from anti-cosmetic rhetoric printed in the period, Middleton draws a correlation between the cosmeticized face and the putrefying corpse. Where Hermione’s statue, “newly performed” by the Italian artist “Julio Romano,” miraculously awakens before the end of the play, Middleton’s Tragedy concludes with a coronation ceremony for the cosmeticized corpse. Much like Shakespeare’s Hermione statue, which echoes the collective state of longing and awe described in Stowe’s account of Elizabeth’s procession, Middleton’s play concludes with the enduring spectacle of a male actor painted to signify femininity while also invoking ideas about loss and death. While both plays present audiences with warnings about idolatry, as discussed at length by critics such as Susan Zimmerman, I am interested in examining the ways in which the playwrights engage ideas about the active corpse and the repression of other Catholic mourning rituals.

I take Kristeva’s theory of the abject as my theoretical framework to examine how the cadaver, invoked and performed in different ways in The Winter’s Tale and The Second Maiden’s Tragedy, occupied a threatening space in the early modern imagination. Repressed by the new Protestant practices yet appearing on the fictional space of the stage, the cadaver posed the risk of collapsing boundaries and dissolving order. Engaging the process of abjection, which Kristeva defines as the expelling of something for the purpose of identity formation, I argue that The Tyrant’s unmediated access to The Lady’s


deceased body results in the deterioration of boundaries: between subject and object, life and death.\textsuperscript{11} Shakespeare’s romance employs similar ideas about death and mourning; however, unlike The Tyrant, Leontes is denied access to Hermione’s corpse, resulting in a sixteen-year period of protracted melancholic grief. It is not until the final scene, wherein Hermione returns to the stage as the ambiguous figure of an animate statue or, as I propose, a re-animated corpse, that order can be restored. By examining the performance, treatment, and display of the two painted heroines, I reveal the ways in which Middleton and Shakespeare use the space of the stage to negotiate, telegraph, and mobilize the loss of the materiality of death in post-Reformation England.

Changes to public sacraments and liturgy, as well as to individual and communal mourning rituals, wholly transformed the mourner’s relationship to the deceased during the Reformation. In a classic account of the repression of pre-Reformation commemorative practices, Eamon Duffy notes that the “oddest feature of the burial rite is the disappearance of the corpse.”\textsuperscript{12} In addition to the absented body, the appropriate length of mourning was shortened considerably from anywhere between a month to an entire year to the seven days Calvinists considered sufficient.\textsuperscript{13} Stripping mortuary rites of the stain of Catholicism, which included the disavowal of purgatory, meant that the

\textsuperscript{11} The Second Maiden’s Tragedy also evokes the fears about the relationship between the “swallowing womb” and the tomb, as also seen in Shakespeare’s Titus Andronicus. See Marion Wynn-Davies, “‘The swallowing womb’: Consumed and Consuming Women in Titus Andronicus,” in The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare, ed. Valerie Wayne (New York: Harvester, 1991), 129–152.


\textsuperscript{13} Social class also influenced the mourning period: the wealthier the deceased, the longer the mourning period. See Craig Koslofsky, The Reformation of the Dead: Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450–1700 (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave, 2005), 98–99, 100.
protracted contact between the living and the dead, celebrated through such sacraments as intercessory prayers and relic worship, was severed. Duffy goes on to cite the burial liturgy in the 1552 Book of Common Prayer, where the priest’s attention was focused on the bereaved rather than the corpse, as the “final break” where the living and dead were no longer part of a “single Christian community.” With the priest no longer addressing the corpse directly, Duffy continues, the dead body was thought to be “as one no longer here, but precisely as departed: the boundaries of human community have been redrawn.”

A central component of this movement away from the dead body was the process of defining the spirit in opposition to the body, thereby positioning the dead body as inactive matter. As Sarah Tarlow observes, the body “was increasingly positioned as a cage, entrapping the soul and keeping it from its final union with the Divine.”

Reformers conceptualized the body as a mere container in order to control and suppress what Claire Gittings refers to as the “active materiality” of the dead body, exposing “an anxiety which resulted from a desire to separate the living from the dead and the increasing horror at the idea of physical decomposition.” This notion of the corpse as “active” rather than passive materiality has been discussed by a number of scholars, critics, and historians. Katherine Park, for example, notes that pre-Reformation England considered “the recently dead body” as “active, sensitive, or semi-animate, possessed of a

---

14 Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, 475; and The Book of Common Prayer (London, 1552), 245.


gradually fading life.” Northern European bodies, she writes, required coffins “to contain their powerful and dangerous inhabitants.”17 With its apprehension about idolatry, relics, and prayers for the souls of the deceased, the Reformation, Phillip Schwyzer observes, “radically transformed the status of human remains.” “The bones,” he continues, “had gone dead.”18

My understanding of the dead body as it appears on the early modern stage builds on multiple overlapping, and at times conflicting, historical and theoretical frameworks, including psychoanalysis and cultural anthropology. In his foundational work on royal funerals, Nigel Llewellyn observes that the early modern practice incorporates three distinct bodies of the deceased: the “social body,” which remains embedded in the collective memory, the commemorative body of the painted effigy, and the corpse. The royal corpse, he continues, is “lifeless, alien, used up” and thus must be hidden from view.19 However, while all corpses are indeed “used up,” the lifelessness of the common, or non-royal corpse is inconsequential while the social memory of the royal personage must be protected and insulated from the corrosive effects of death. In turning to the psychoanalytical theory of Julia Kristeva, however, it becomes clear that the “used up” thingness of the corpse can alternatively be read as a locus of undifferentiated, and at

17 Katherine Park examines the difference between the Italian treatment of the dead, which tended to see the corpse as a passive object, in opposition to the Northern ideas about the corpse, where it was more likely to be identified with the person and thus interpreted as semi-animate. Katherine Park, “The Life of the Corpse: Division and Dissection in Late Medieval Europe,” _Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences_ 50, no. 1 (1995): 115.

18 Charnel houses, or vaults for the bones of the dead, used to “provide an ongoing relationship with the dead whilst easing pressure on overcrowded churchyards,” were evacuated during the Reformation. Philip Schwyzer, _Archaeologies of English Renaissance Literature_ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 108, 110.

times threatening, matter. For Kristeva, then, the corpse is not merely “lifeless” or “used up.” Rather, it is a meaningful and productive site of power. Drawing from Llewellyn and Kristeva, I argue that Middleton and Shakespeare use the space of the stage to explore anxieties about the ambiguous status of the dead body, which is paradoxically “used up” while also threatening, “lifeless” while also potentially generative.

Having outlined the critical framework of my argument, I want to briefly shift from the theoretical realm to the material world, wherein I discuss mummy, a powdered drug popular among early modern Londoners. Originally imported from Egypt, mummia, which was manufactured within the body cavity of a cadaver through a mixture of balsam, spices, and blood, serves as an apt literalization of the metaphor of the generative corpse we see in The Winter’s Tale and The Second Maiden’s Tragedy. A brief overview of this critical, historical, and material framework will help to elucidate my argument about the ways in which Hermione and The Lady perform cultural work regarding longing, loss, and emergent forms of mourning.

“The Most Sickening of Wastes”

The corpse is primarily a referential object, as it resembles, and refers to, the deceased. The rotting corpse is thus neither an active subject nor passive object: it is abject in part because it still signifies the living person while also pointing to the uncanny absence of the person from its cadaver. Yet the cadaver also holds material power, and perhaps even a kind of agency. Through the application of Kristeva’s notion of the abject, which is “radically excluded” and cast off in order to form the identity of the living, I suggest that early modern mourners had a sense that while the process of dying undoes
the subject, subtracting identity from the body, the body itself takes on a different kind of power.20

In *The Powers of Horror*, Kristeva writes that the cadaver is “the most sickening of wastes,” the abject at the edge of the living “that has encroached upon everything.” It is that which, she continues, “does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite.”21 Cultural anthropologist Mary Douglas, who likens dead materiality to dirt, which she defines as all things that exist beyond the bounds of a symbolic system, also discusses the putrefying corpse as a “marginal, indeterminate being.”22

The abject object is anything that threatens boundaries and differentiation; it is associated with a form of human disgust and horror that arises upon encountering something that threatens to disrupt categorical meaning. The process of abjection, which derives from the French *abjeccion*, which translates to “the state or condition of being cast down” or aside, is thus necessary for the maintenance of order and individuation.23 In disrupting the categories of subject and object, the distinction between which is considered necessary for identity formation, the corpse occupies the space of the pre-symbolic, or pre-representational.


21 Kristeva, 4.


Moreover, as Susan Zimmerman has previously observed, the power of the marginal being, or the abject, is therefore associated with generation.\textsuperscript{24} In \textit{Purity and Danger}, Douglas posits a relationship between the decomposing body, dirt, waste, and the generative power of menstrual blood. Signifying death and reproduction, the corpse can thus be interpreted as occupying a space of generative abjection. The notion of the cadaver as containing a kind of vital potency is evidenced in Catholic relic worship, where the bones of saints are venerated due to their continued power, even after death. In his study on relic worship, Patrick Geary notes that relics were thought to “be alive” and were “described and treated as though they were the saints themselves, living in the community and participating in its life.”\textsuperscript{25} While relic worship was decreed false and idolatrous by Protestant reformers, the curative power of the cadaver remained embedded in the English imagination; it was absorbed and repurposed in a number of different ways, including the medicinal and cosmetic use of mummy, or mummia, a powdered substance found in embalmed corpses.\textsuperscript{26} Often used to heal bruises, lighten the skin, and stop excessive blood flow, mummy, produced through the very process of putrefaction, was used to maintain the vital energy and appearance of living bodies throughout

\textsuperscript{24} Zimmerman, \textit{Early Modern Corpse}, 5.

\textsuperscript{25} While the generative corpse of the crucified body of Jesus is central to Christian theology, the notion of the earthly corpse as maintaining vitality without the animating power of the spirit was attacked and suppressed during the Reformation. Patrick Geary, “Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics,” in \textit{The Social Life of Things}, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 175.

\textsuperscript{26} Early modern Londoners considered the best mummy to be derived from Egyptian sources. Later, however, when such sources began to run dry, mummy was harvested from domestic corpses. Oswald Croll’s medical text suggests that finest mummy can be found in the “carcass of a Red Man,” or a redheaded Englishman, without “blemishes” who has died a violent death. Oswald Croll, \textit{Bazilica Chymica and Praxis Chymiatricae or Royal and Practical Chymistry} (1609), trans. John Hartman (London, 1670), 156. See: Mummy become Merchandise.
England. References to corpse pharmacology, which, much like homeopathy, relies on the Paracelsian doctrine of like healing like, can be found throughout the early modern pharmacopoeia, as well as shipping inventories, poems, and play texts.

In *The Duchess of Malfi*, for instance, John Webster stages a speech that links curative mummy, the Duchess’ living corporeality, and an image of growth and rebirth. During one of his many anti-cosmetic diatribes, the malcontent Bosola addresses the Duchess, stating that, “Thou art a box of worm-seed, at best but a / salutatory of green mummy. What’s this flesh? A little crude milk, fantastical puff-paste.” While these lines certainly serve as reminder of mortality, both for the Duchess and the audience, they also point to the material status of the body, ironically noting that it will become dead matter, or “puff-paste” while also suggesting its generative power, both as seed for worms and as able to produce mummy. Furthermore, Webster’s inclusion of “green” as a descriptor makes the reference even more compelling. While green mummy is, on the one hand, mummy that has not fully “cured,” the color also has associations with new growth and rebirth. The human body is thus construed as not only food for worms, but as food, or medicine, for humans. Mummy, created as a means to stave off putrefaction of the corpse, is used to maintain vitality in the living body, as well.

---

27 John Webster references mummy in *The White Devil*, as well: the vengeful Isabella recites a morbid blazon about Vittoria, announcing that she will, “dig the strumpet’s eyes out” and “let her lie/ Some twenty months a-dying, to cut off / Her nose and lips, pull out her rotten teeth,” so as to “Preserve her flesh like mummy, for trophies / Of my just anger.” John Webster, *The White Devil*, ed. John Russell Brown (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), I.i.246-250.

28 Webster, *Duchess of Malfi* and *Other Plays*, ed. Rene Weis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), IV.i.120–121.

29 Examining the pictorial depiction of mummy in medieval herbals, Michael Camille observes that in a number of the illustrations of the cadaver, which is shown alongside herbs such as mint and rosemary, appear as a “sign of life.” In *Tractatus de Herbis*, for example, a wrapped cadaver is shown in a casket at the bottom of the page, below a rat, a cat, and a sprig of mint. The *Compendium Sanitarium* suggests that animate quality of mummia by depicting it alongside mandrake root, which was thought to
While dead bodies were increasingly hidden from view and relics were stripped of their power through suppression or destruction, the public spaces of the theater and the marketplace continued to engage, and profit from, a collective longing for the materiality of death. Middleton and Shakespeare use and appropriate the generative vitality of the corpse in the early modern imagination to create a sense of dramatic power on the stage. Occupying the uncertain territory between subject and object, stage prop and actor, fixity and kinesis, the painted stage corpse presents audiences with a number of overlapping, and at times competing, meanings. Whereas Middleton’s Tyrant fails to abject The Lady’s corpse, resulting in the dissolution of the order and his own “becoming corpse,” Leontes’ jealousy and resultant madness denies him the opportunity to negotiate the mourning process through the material of loss. In the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale*, however, the lost corpse returns as an animate statue, curing the body politic and restoring order. By examining the ways in which Middleton and Shakespeare stage the complex relationship between the mourner and the corpse through the theory and process of abjection and generation, I reveal some of the ways in which early modern audiences thought about the increasingly hermetic demarcations between the living and the dead. The plays discussed in this chapter blur the boundaries between life and death. They also mark a moment of a collective release from the dead bodies Catholic rituals included in daily meditation while pointing to the profound loss of being able to affect or be affected by the beloved dead.

As discussed above, the potentially active and liminal status of the corpse generated a sense of discomfort and anxiety among Protestant reformers. Newly considered under Reformation influence to be dead matter, the corpse was stripped of the vitality it possessed under Catholicism and was thereby increasingly hidden from public view. Middleton and Shakespeare use theatrical powders and paints as a means to highlight and explore the continued liminality of the corpse in a period when mourners have been denied the Catholic practices that draw attention to, and at times celebrate, the indeterminate status of the dead. Such playwrights recognize that although doctrinal changes and revised mourning practices worked to separate the living from the dead, the distinction between the two remains porous.

“The Dainty Preserved Flesh, How Soon It Moulders”: The Failure of Abjection in *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy*

The corpse in *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* undergoes more abuse than any other dead body on the early modern stage: it is disinterred, dressed in black velvet, bedecked with a string of pearls, slathered in poisonous paint, transformed into a weapon, accosted by a lusty tyrant with a propensity for necrophilia, and, in the final lines of the play, crowned the “queen of silence.”30 Focusing on the play’s pronounced necrophilia and observing that the maiden is the “object of The Tyrant’s fleshly desire,” Martin Wiggins classifies *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* as a Jacobean Sex Tragedy. Middleton’s play stages a “conflict between lust and chastity” in an “overtly Christian dimension,” as Wiggins notes, but it also addresses early modern concerns and anxieties about the active materiality of the corpse, abjection, and the loss of the material objects of

The connection between necrophilia and mourning can be seen throughout the dramatic works of the seventeenth century; however, when The Tyrant exclaims that he will “clasp the body for the spirit that dwelt in it,” Middleton is announcing a failure of abjection in mourning, one that provides commentary on the Catholic treatment of the corpse.\(^{32}\)

Mourning, as discussed by Sigmund Freud, “has a very distinct psychic task to perform, namely to detach the memories and expectations of survivors from the dead.” Successful mourning, according to Freud, demands the subject's decathexis, or “withdrawal of libido” or psychic energy from the “lost object” so it can thereby be “placed in the appropriate position in a civilization’s symbolic order.”\(^{33}\) According to Kristeva’s definition of abjection and Freud’s analysis of mourning, however, the “lost object,” or the corpse, must be released while also remaining embedded in the imagination. Abjection, she writes, occurs when there is “something rejected from which one does not part.”\(^{34}\) Both Kristeva and Freud demonstrate the importance of not-parting. The beloved must be remembered, but the bereaved must cease to invest that which is lost with vital life-force. For Middleton’s Tyrant, however, this complex process of

---

\(^{31}\) Martin Wiggins never gives a clear definition of his invented “Jacobean Sex Tragedy” genre. It should also be noted that Wiggins is a bit of a Tyrant apologist: he refers to his stalking of The Lady as “empowered” and praises him as “not so bad” because he refuses to rape her. Martin Wiggins, *Four Jacobean Sex Tragedies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), ix.


rejecting yet not parting from The Lady proves impossible. Rather than eulogizing her beauty and chastity as Govianus does later in the play, he asserts his intended mastery over the maiden’s lifeless body: “Death,” he notes, “nor the marble prison my love sleeps in / Shall keep her body locked up from mine arms”\textsuperscript{35} Unable to release the lost object of The Lady, which leads to identification with the corpse, The Tyrant begins the process of self-abjection, resulting in the complete loss of subjectivity.

Self-abjection, Julia Kristeva writes, “simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject, one can understand that it is experienced at the peak of its strength when that subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within.”\textsuperscript{36} By assimilating Freud’s mourning process and Kristeva’s abjection into the play’s treatment of the maiden’s corpse, I reveal some of the ways in which early modern audiences were working through and negotiating residual and emergent ideas about materiality, death, and loss.

The Tyrant’s failure to abject The Lady’s lifeless body dissolves the boundaries of his rule and identity, ultimately causing him to associate with, and eventually become, a figure of death himself. As he becomes increasingly connected to the corpse, previously assumed boundaries necessary for the formation of identity collapse. This collapse occurs during moments in the staged production when he comes into contact with the corpse and is “infected” by it. Decay eradicates identity for both the living and the dead within the world of the play: Before Govianus paints The Lady, the chorus sings, “One night of death makes” the face “look pale and horrid; / The dainty preserved flesh, how soon it

\textsuperscript{35} Middleton, \textit{Second Maiden’s Tragedy,} IV.ii.48–49.

\textsuperscript{36} Kristeva, \textit{Powers of Horror,} 5
moulders.” The moldering flesh of the death-face highlights the impermanence of flesh, and with it, social identity. A death-face is one that slips into obscurity, both materially and in the public imagination: “To love it living it bewitcheth many,” continues the chorus, “But after life is seldom heard of any.” Recognizing the signs of decay in the “too constant paleness of thy cheek,” The Tyrant tries to re-inscribe and impose an identity on the voided object of the corpse through the process of “facing” the mouldering and gross materiality of decay with cosmetics. Unable to engage the process of abjection, the “sickening waste,” to borrow Kristeva’s phrase, contaminates his psyche and dissolves the boundaries between his identity and that of the corpse: “I talk so long to death,” he exclaims in the final act, “I’m sick myself.”

Middleton fittingly sets the Tyrant’s initial display of disorganization and the resultant misinterpretation, a precursor to the eventual complete breakdown of order, in The Lady’s tomb. Rather than use the space of the tomb as a site of mourning and release, The Tyrant projects his desire and longing onto The Lady’s effigy: when he encounters her stony representation he cries, “The monument woos me; I must run and kiss it.” Unable to separate the deceased subject from the representational object, he imbues the monument with human characteristics, rhetorically animating it by claiming that “Twas weeping to itself.” Calling attention to the disorderly thinking on display in this scene, Middleton stages a parallel tomb scene wherein Govianus cries “Already mine

37 Middleton, Second Maiden’s Tragedy, IV.ii.17–19.
38 Middleton, IV.ii.28.
39 Middleton, V.ii.121.
40 Middleton, IV.iii.9, IV.iii.12.
eye melts” upon approaching the maiden’s monument. He goes on to say that “The monument / No sooner stood before it but a tear / Ran swiftly from me, to express her duty.” Contrary to The Tyrant, who projects his mourning onto an inanimate statue, Govianus maintains the organizational principle that permits him to distinguish between subject and object, which allows him to shed tears over the lost object rather than creating the fantasy of a weeping statue.

Despite the multiple protestations from his soldiers, The Tyrant enters the tomb, and in so doing, he begins his slow movement in the direction of becoming-corpse. He describes the space of death and decay as one of beauty and wonder: “Oh, the moon rises! What reflection / Is through about this sanctified building / E’en in a twinkling.”

This scene brings to mind Julia Kristeva’s discussion of the moment of experiencing the corpse in a morgue exposed in “full sunlight”: The corpse, she writes, “no longer matches and therefore no longer signifies anything.” In the morgue, she continues, “I behold the breaking down of a world that has erased its borders: fainting away. The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject.” Misreading the tomb as a “palace of death” made of “massy silver,” the Tyrant’s description of the moonlight reflecting off of the polished marble throughout the mausoleum also implies an increasing idealization and idolization of death.

41 Middleton, IV.v.1–3.
42 Middleton, IV.iii.81–82.
43 Kristeva, Powers of Horror, 4.
44 Middleton, Second Maiden’s Tragedy, IV.iii.83.
The Tyrant’s morgue episode presents audiences with a rupture, one that announces the annihilation of difference as The Tyrant begins his descent into the realm of death. Upon witnessing his disorderly behavior, one of the soldiers accompanying him to the vault notes, “Does fear make thee mad?” Yet fear, I contend, would protect him from the contaminating power of the corpse, as it would place clear parameters around the living and the dead. The “strange fits” that “grow upon him,” therefore, result from his uninhibited longing for, and direct contact with, The Lady’s corpse.45 Recognizing that coming into contact with the corpse is to threaten the parameters of life and to contaminate the subject, the first soldier tells the second that they must “never touch her.”46 Unlike The Tyrant, the Soldiers recognize that the unruly contaminant corpse must be contained and hidden from view if any semblance of order is to be maintained in the world of the play.

Once the corpse is disinterred and brought back into the world of the living, the Tyrant, on the borderline between life and death, disrupted and addicted to the enticements of the corpse, is displaced via longing, loss, and contact with the abject. His interest in the materiality of her body rather than her soul is highlighted when he dresses her in velvet and adorns her with jewels, observing that:

The house is hers, the soul is but a tenant.  
I ha’tasked myself but with the abstinence  
Of one poor hour, yet cannot conquer that.  
I cannot keep from sight or her so long.  
I starve mine eye too much. Go, bring her forth.47

45 Middleton, IV.ii.62.
46 Middleton, IV.iii.76.
47 Middleton, V.ii.4–7.
The Tyrant emphasizes the material power and potential agency of the corpse by noting that the “house” is still “hers” while the soul is but a temporary occupant. Moreover, in noting that “abstinence” from the dead body is impossible, Middleton suggests that the villain has become addicted to the bedecked and beautified object of his passion. Forcing his subjects to bow down to the corpse while he kisses its hand, The Tyrant, at this point in the play, has been overcome by the presence of the corpse, from which he cannot tear his gaze.

Middleton’s performance of unrestrained longing for a beloved corpse body has at least two known precursors. The first, the Talmudic story of Herod and Marianne, wherein the former preserves the latter in honey for seven years after her suicide, is referenced twice in *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy*. The more immediate predecessor for The Tyrant, however, is Christopher Marlowe’s Tamburlaine. When his wife Zenocrate dies in the second part of *Tamburlaine the Great*, he demands that her body

\[
\text{shalt stay with me,} \\
\text{Embalmed with cassia, ambergris, and myrrh,} \\
\text{Not lapped in lead but in a sheet of gold,} \\
\text{And till I die thou shalt not be interred.}\]

Much like The Tyrant after him, Tamburlaine refuses the loss of the object: he has her corpse follow in a kind of mausoleum on wheels for the duration of the play. Notably, both characters insist on remaining in constant or near-constant proximity to the decaying bodies of their dead loves. This dependence on the materiality of the corpse in both plays suggests a collective cultural anxiety during the period about the ways in which mortuary

---

48 Middleton, IV.iii.18–21.

practices that focus on the corpse can potentially erode differentiation between subject, object, and abject. Yet where Tamburlaine accepts the inevitability of corpse decay, The Tyrant attempts to preserve The Lady’s beauty through costuming and theatrical paints. Moreover, while he interprets the application of cosmetic artifice as preserving The Lady’s beauty and bringing her back to the realm of the living, the paint actually works to draw The Tyrant closer to the borderline between life and death.

Feminist scholars have previously interpreted theatrical corpse painting as a representational strategy used to control and suppress female erotic energy. First introduced by Abbe Blum and later developed by Valerie Traub, the process of “monumentalizing,” wherein the unruly feminine is metaphorically reified as a contained object, can be traced throughout early modern literature. This form of somatic containment occurs, for example, when Othello visualizes Desdemona’s dead body as a memorial statue, exclaiming that he will “not shed her blood; / Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow, / And smooth as monumental alabaster.” Traub writes that the “metaphorical displacement of sexually threatening women into jewels, statues, and corpses” demonstrates an interest in the “containment and vilification of female erotic


51 Consider, also the tableaux of statuesque figures in Thomas Campion’s Lord’s Masque. Performed with The Tempest at the marriage of James I’s daughter Elizabeth, the masque opens with a cloud that vanishes to reveal four noble women “accompanied with ornaments of architecture.” Embellished with silver paint and costumed with crowns of “flames made all of gold-plate,” the women are incorporated into the world of objects. Campion’s statue figures are made to transgress the boundary line between subject and object, or living, and thus marriageable agent and inert, or contained, sculpture. Shakespeare, Othello (London: Penguin Books, 2001), V.ii.5; and Shakespeare, Hamlet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), V.i.317.
Thus, the monumentalizing of the painted woman, Blum argues “entails the relinquishment of the woman’s voice.”\textsuperscript{53} Likewise, Andrea Stevens relies on Blum’s conception of monumentalizing to argue that Middleton’s use of theatrical paint “relies upon the ritual of containment,” which she defines as the “male fantasy of exerting ownership and authority over a woman by painting her exterior.”\textsuperscript{54} While the play certainly engages and performs this containment process, the hyper-focus on containing the unruly female body through paint overlooks the very real contemporaneous associations between cosmetic materiality and images of death.

Middleton’s death-by-cosmetic kiss motif, which he also uses in \textit{The Revenger’s Tragedy}, borrows extensively from anti-cosmetic discourse printed during the period. Scholarly discussion about the ways in which the playwright invokes anti-cosmetic discourse focuses primarily on the threat posed by early modern materials of beautification: the mercury, lead, and alum found in ceruse and fucus, for example, were indeed quite toxic. Some physicians warned of the corrosive quality of face paint, such as the French barber surgeon Ambroise Paré, who wrote that cosmetics would “devour” the skin in a “fierie fury of the poison,” eventually “rending or eating into the guts and stomach,” while others considered lead and mercury as essential ingredients of

\textsuperscript{52} Traub’s discussion of monumentalizing in \textit{The Winter’s Tale} sets up a strict dichotomy: chastity, she suggests, is always static and cold, much like the Hermione statue, whereas licentiousness is depicted as “hot” and mobile. The dichotomy between sensual, mobile, and “hot” and chaste, static and cold, she continues, is itself rigid, offering little to no nuance or middle ground. Valerie Traub, \textit{Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama} (London: Routledge, 2014), 28.

\textsuperscript{53} Blum, 100.

beautifying physic. What often goes unnoticed in discussions about the deathly cosmetic kiss, however, is the anti-cosmetic rhetoric linking the painted face to aging and decay. When The Tyrant cries, after kissing the painted corpse, “Methinks an evil scent still follows me” to which Govianus replies, “Maybe ‘tis nothing but the colour, sir / That I laid on,” Middleton, I argue, is drawing from anti-cosmetic sentiment associating cosmetics with death.

Images of cosmeticized women attempting to obscure lines and wrinkles with paint only to appear older than they actually are can be seen throughout the pamphlets and tracts decrying the use of beautifying unguents and paints. Many of these descriptions, interestingly, summon the image of the rotting corpse. Spanish physician Andreas de Laguna, for example, writes that the young women who paint themselves, “presently turn old with withered and wrinkled faces like an ape.” He goes on to paint a startling image of female abjection: “before age can come upon them,” he writes, “they tremble (poor wretches) as if they were sicke of the staggers, reeling and full of s-silver, for so they are . . . (cosmetic) dries up, and consumes the flesh that is underneath, so that of force the poor skin shrinks. . .” The grotesque image of the female body laden with mercury sublimate, staggering around with one foot in the grave is reiterated later by moralist Barnabe Rich. The application of cosmetics, he writes, causes “All the favoure of the face” to “waxeth olde, and the breath stynketh; and the tethe rusten, and an evyll

---


56 Middleton, *Second Maiden’s Tragedy*, V.ii.123.

ayre all the body over, both by reason of the ceruse, and quicke qilver.”

The anti-cosmetic clergyman Thomas Tuke even goes so far as to suggest that the artificially beautified face invokes an image of the skull residing beneath the many layers of paint. Such descriptions, Laurie A. Finke observes, conjure “all the horrors, both visual and olfactory, of a putrefying corpse.” The painted face in Middleton’s tragedy echoes this nexus of death, decay, and paint produced by anti-cosmetic moralists. Indeed, As Susan Zimmerman contends, The Lady’s face would appear “ghoulish-the tyrant’s corpse-strumpet reconstructed as this primordial death-mask.”

This desk-mask, however, is nonetheless misinterpreted by The Tyrant, who reads it as evidence of her coming back to life. When Govianus steps away from his work, The Tyrant exclaims, “Oh, she lives again!” This misinterpretation of dead matter as a living subject is further underscored when he insists that, “She’ll presently speak to me.” As Sheetal Lodhia notes, “For The Tyrant The Lady’s corpse becomes progressively invested with material energy as it is increasingly modified.” The Tyrant’s inability to differentiate himself from the corpse, or the living from the dead, results in his complete disorientation, wherein his identity seems to be entirely dissolved. Borrowing from anti-cosmetic discourse that describes the painted face as decaying, stinking flesh, Middleton references an “evyll ayre” emanating from the maiden’s cosmeticized face, a “stench”

---

60 Zimmerman, *Early Modern Corpse*, 233.
that obstructs The Tyrant’s breathing. In her description of the abjection of the self, Kristeva writes of a “choking sensation that does not separate inside from outside but draws them the one into the other, indefinitely.” The Tyrant’s statement that “Methinks an evil scent still follows me” thus has two meanings: it serves as a comment on his own recognition of his diseased necrophilia while also suggesting the very real stench of death, therefore signifying the merging of his own rotting flesh as it comes in contact with the poisonous paint as well as that of The Lady’s already putrefying flesh. Unable to thrust aside The Lady’s rotting body, The Tyrant finds himself in the undifferentiated space of “becoming” corpse.

Through the continuous contact with the corpse and the inability to abject it, The Tyrant, in becoming corpse, enters the space of the abjection of the self. The play, however, cannot end with the death of The Tyrant. Govianus surprises the audience by placing the painted corpse on the royal throne and crowning it the “queen of silence” before returning it to the tomb. Critics such as Andrea Stevens, Martin Wiggins, and Susan Zimmerman all argue that the avenger suffers a similar fate to The Tyrant: infected by the image of the painted corpse, they contend, Govianus slips into idolatrous worship. Zimmerman, for example, argues that the “unvarnished exhibitionism” of the final coronation scene “accords with the tendency” to “represent idolatry and its erotic complications in a more or less literal fashion.” She goes on to note that the painted corpse is a “literal emblem of an idol, a dead thing whose final painting unequivocally


64 Middleton, *Second Maiden’s Tragedy*, V.ii.205.
confirms its sacrilegious status.” Noting Govianus’ “disintegration,” Lodhai also suggests that, “In his concern for the Lady’s body the Tyrant is mirrored by Govianus.”

However, where The Tyrant slips into necrophilia and idolatry, Govianus’ treatment of the corpse is in fact quite different. Govianus uses the trappings of theatrical performance, including paint and costume, to transform the signifying function of The Lady’s corpse into a kind of effigy to chastity before returning it to the grave, thereby restoring the order the play deems natural. In so doing Middleton highlights the flexibility of the signifying function of paint as well as the power of theatricality.

The coronation scene must occur as a means to transform the signifying function of the corpse in the world of the play. Using the flexible medium of paint and the transformative power of theatricality, Govianus presents the Lady as a dead martyr to chastity:

```
Here place her in this throne; crown her our queen,
The first and last that ever we make ours.
Her constancy strikes so much firmness in us.
That honor done, let her be solemnly born
Unto the house of peace from whence she came
As queen of silence.
```

It is not that Govianus misinterprets the cadaver as an effigy, however; rather, as image-maker and playwright, he is able to skillfully harness its flexible signifying function, using it to telegraph right order, control, and power. Moreover, where time was previously upended and “altered” by The Tyrant, Govianus reasserts the organizational structure of linear time through his reference to “first” and “last.” In order for this sleight

---

65 Zimmerman, *Early Modern Corpse*, 94.

of hand trick to work, however, and to ensure that sexual, social, and psychic order is maintained after it is reestablished, it is of utmost importance that Govianus returns the post-mortem body to the tomb.

As we know from Kristeva, the abject is that which must be “discarded for the becoming subject to become I.” The play thus concludes the ritual of the community collectively returning The Lady to her rightful place: “Lead on”!” cries Govianus in the final lines of the play, “I would those ladies that fill Honour’s rooms / Might be borne so honest to their tombs.”67 The emphasis here on the communal act of returning the corpse is profound: in distancing themselves from the abject cadaver, the boundaries of the self as well as the living community are once again demarcated. Yet rather than conclude the play with the corpse safely entombed, Middleton’s final scene merely announces the movement of return. This reminds audiences that although individual and communal identity emerges through processes of abjection, the possibility of contamination remains a constant threat.

“To Me Comes a Creature”: Female Abjection and Restoration in The Winter’s Tale

If the restoration of order in Middleton’s Second Maiden’s Tragedy is dependent on the abjection and eventual absenting of the maiden’s post-mortem body, order in Shakespeare’s Winter’s Tale is reinstated through Hermione’s miraculous awakening and re-appearance. The Tyrant’s obsessive relationship with the materiality of the corpse is countered by Leontes’ inability to see his dead wife’s body during the sixteen years between the time of her supposed death and that of her final recovery. Both plays,  

however, stage a crisis of mourning, one that threatens the coherence of subjectivity.
Without the object of the corpse upon which to centralize, manage, and contain his longing, Leontes, who at the start of the play is paranoid and manic, becomes a figure of excessive unmediated grief. Unable to fully undertake the grief-work necessary for recovery, his psychic state of melancholic stasis remains fixed for the majority of the play. It is not until he gazes upon Hermione’s body sixteen years later that the crisis is at last resolved. This resolution, I argue, is dependent in part on reading Hermione’s returned body in relation to early modern beliefs about the traditional relationship between the living Christian community and the semi-animate corpse. Anxieties about the conflicts between Catholic and Protestant rituals of the dead are thus performed through Hermione’s painted body. Through Paulina, Shakespeare telegraphs and mobilizes this tension by transforming cultural anxiety about the living dead into a sense of wonderment and awe. In so doing, she establishes a new kind of order for Sicilia, one where, I argue, women’s voices can at last be heard.

The uncertain status of Hermione’s statue has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. It is generally accepted that the unveiling and reanimation of her polychrome effigy at the conclusion of The Winter’s Tale is nothing more than an elaborate trick orchestrated by Paulina, who had secreted her mistress away as part of a master plan to control and transform Leontes’ jealousy. The stage directions, after all, say as much, stating that when Paulina draws the curtain, Hermione is found “standing like a statue,” rather than, as one might expect, having the drawn curtain reveal a statue of Hermione.\(^68\)
While her death and return as an animate statue could very well be a mere ruse, the re-

\(^{68}\) Shakespeare, The Winter’s Tale, IV.iii. 21. Italics mine.
awakening scene nonetheless summons the animate or semi-animate corpse. Thus, while she is never explicitly referred to as corpse, the “dead likeness” of the image would most likely resonate with the audience. When considered in relation to repressed relic worship and England’s active trade in, and consumption of, mummy, we can speculate that the very materiality of Hermione’s body helps to heal and restore Sicilia. In this way, it is Paulina’s presentation of Hermione as a wondrous object, as well as her material status as a generative corpse, that finally restores order to Sicilia.

After Paulina announces the death of Hermione and Mamillius, Leontes requests to see the corpses: “Prithee,” he says, “bring me to the dead bodies of my queen and son.” Yet the scene ends before he sees the bodies, announcing Paulina’s sixteen-year manipulation of his grief, a manipulation that depends on denying him access to Hermione’s dead body. Denied access to the corpse, Leontes announces his intention to erect a shared monument for his family, one that he will visit for the daily practice of mourning and penance:

One grave shall be for both: upon them shall The causes of their death appear, unto Our shame perpetual. Once a day I’ll visit The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there Shall be my recreation.

Shakespeare’s pun on “recreation” and “re-creation” suggests that Leontes plans to restore his identity and power by engaging in public grieving and deriving vitality through close proximity to the corpses. As Michael Schoenfeldt observes, the double meaning suggests that the “performance of grief will indeed restore in part some of the

---

69 Shakespeare, IV.iii.15.

70 Shakespeare, III.iii.234–40.
excruciating loss.”\textsuperscript{71} This interest in “recreating” the self through close proximity to death arouses Catholic ideas about the semi-animate corpse and the vitality of the sacred relic, as well as the secular use of mummia, or corpse medicine ingested to restore vitality. Yet, if we are to believe that Hermione is alive and well and merely hiding out with Paulina, it becomes clear that Leontes “recreates” beside a partially empty tomb. Without Hermione’s body to mourn he remains fixed in the liminal status of longing and melancholy.

We might even consider the king’s performance of grief for the absent and absented object in relation to Mamillius’ interrupted “winter’s tale” as told to Hermione. The tale, I suggest, foreshadows Leontes’ attempt to “recreate” his subjectivity through occupying the space that marks the borderline between life and death.\textsuperscript{72} Prompted by his mother to “fright me with your sprites,” Mamillius reluctantly begins his tale, stating, “There was a man . . .” only Hermione immediately interjects, finishing his line with a request that he “sit down” and “then on.” He goes on to say that the man, like his father later in the play, “Dwelt by a churchyard.”\textsuperscript{73} Like his young life, the story, which foreshadows his father’s actions, is cut short by Leontes jealous ravings.\textsuperscript{74} The audience


\textsuperscript{72} T. G. Bishop, \textit{Shakespeare and the Theater of Wonder} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 129.

\textsuperscript{73} Mary Ellen Lamb reads this Mamillius’ as replicating the young boy’s transition from the feminine world of the nursery to the masculinizing schoolroom. Mary Ellen Lamb, “Engendering the Narrative Act: Old Wive’s Tales in \textit{Winter’s Tale}, \textit{Macbeth} and \textit{The Tempest},” \textit{Criticism} 30, no. 4 (September 1998): 533.

\textsuperscript{74} On the play’s lack of elegy for Mamillius, see Donovan Sherman, “The Absent Elegy: Performing Trauma in \textit{The Winter’s Tale},” \textit{Shakespeare Bulletin} 27, no. 2 (2009): 197–221.
is thus left with a strange lacuna, wherein the man in the truncated story and the object of his loss are never defined and thus never reunited. Unable to successfully mourn the loss of his wife, Leontes seemingly becomes the unnamed man in Mamillius’ story, suspended in time at the perimeter between the realm of the living and the dead.

With Paulina’s continued manipulation and perpetuation of his sorrow, Leontes’ uncontained mourning soon spills out, infecting the body politic and haunting the other characters in the play. The overflow of grief spilling from his psyche and into his court is most notable in the case of Antigonus, Paulina’s husband and eventual victim of the ever-famous stage direction, “He exits, pursued by a bear.”\(^75\) Just prior to his death-by-bear, he describes an elaborate dream vision experienced while sailing from Sicilia to Bohemia. With only the young Perdita for an audience, Antigonus, who has not yet heard of Hermione’s death, claims that her ghost visited him in the night:

\[
\ldots\text{To me comes a creature} \\
\text{Sometimes her head on one side, some another;} \\
\text{I never saw a vessel of like sorrow,} \\
\text{So fill’d, and so becoming: in pure white robes,} \\
\text{Like very sanctity, she did approach} \\
\text{My cabin where I lay: thrice bow’d before me,} \\
\text{And, gasping to begin some speech, her eyes} \\
\text{Became two spouts.} \ldots \\
\text{And so with shrieks,} \\
\text{She melted into air.}^{76}
\]

The striking fantasy of Hermione’s materialized rage is often read as a projection of Antigonus’ shame about his participation in the plot to abandon Perdita. Stephen Greenblatt, for example, argues that the audience is meant to read the vision with

\(^{75}\) Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale*, III.ii.64.

\(^{76}\) Shakespeare, III.iii.19–36.
skepticism, noting that there is “no weeping, shrieking woman in pure white robes, there is only Antigonus’ guilt.” Yet, Greenblatt continues, though “the audience is amply warned not to credit the ghost of Hermione, it is at the same time strongly induced to do so.” Moreover, “the material of haunting” such as the “pure white robes” Hermione’s ghost wears, Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones have observed, has “the ability to conjure up the dead and to materialize them upon the stage.” Indeed, the apparition, as Justin Kolb contends, is as “real and consequential an agent as any other in the play.” I read the vision of Hermione’s ghost as an image of female abjection, one that is grotesquely pregnant, “filled” and “becoming” “other” through the opposing processes of childbirth and death.

A threshold figure, the ghost materializes as potentially generative force, with its “filled’ and “becoming” body and weeping eyes likened to fountains. As with The Lady’s corpse in The Second Maiden’s Tragedy, this image threatens to collapse boundaries between self and other, as well as the line separating the living from the dead. Shakespeare highlights the ambiguous nature of the scene by setting Antigonus’ relaying of the dream on the coast of Bohemia under stormy skies. The liminality of the setting, the uncertain status of the apparition, and the shockingly grotesque image of the spouting

---


80 Not much attention has been given to the terms “becoming” and “filled.” While Hermoine has already had Perdita, as Antigonus, who addresses the babe knows full well, the image nonetheless invokes pregnancy and with it multiple conflicting kinds of “becomings.”
eyes, all suggest a deep anxiety about the ways in which the female abject lurks at the border of the culture, threatening to collapse differentiation. The abject, as Kristeva writes, “has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to I.” The threat of abject devouring the male subject becomes all too real for Antigonus who, directly after reciting his dream vision, exits, as it were, pursued by a bear.

Hermione’s “becoming” continues until the end of the play, as she transforms once again from pregnant wife, to grotesquely abject apparition, to her final incarnation as an ambiguous figure that suggests both an animate statue and a re-animated corpse. The image of Hermione as an abject ghost is thus replaced with one that is generative and animate, finally allowing Leontes to be “recreated.” Yet his re-creation, and that of Sicilia, is not merely a return to the old order. Rather, the recreated and restored world of Sicilia is one of shared rule and mutuality, where the voices of Paulina, Perdita, and Hermione can no longer be drowned out by that of the jealous king. Using the trope of theatrical paint, Paulina, exclaiming that “the statue is but newly fixed / the colors not dry,” maintains a sense of distance between Hermione and Leontes, ensuring that his sexual jealousy will not once more overcome her. Paulina transforms ideas about the image of the painted woman as abject and deathly, as seen in the anti-cosmetic rhetoric discussed in the previous section, to an image of wonderment and awe, thereby demonstrating the transformative potential of cosmetic materiality while also pointing to its fluid symbolic use.

81 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 34

82 The image is grotesque, generative, and unknowable. We might imagine, therefore, that Antigonus is torn apart and fragmented soon after this vision as a result of his inability to compartmentalize it. Instead, the image haunts him, shatters him, until finally he is torn apart, bit by bit, by a bear, who leaves only scraps of his body behind.
This final transformation and restoration depends on multiple overlapping modes of theatricality and wonderment. The success of the final scene, and that of the plot’s restoration, relies on Paulina’s skillful manipulation of the court’s perception of Hermione: using music, setting, and incense, she presents a new kind of order through the traditional trappings of religious awe. Due to the religious imagery in the unveiling scene and the awe it inspires in the onlookers, Shakespeare’s treatment of the Hermione statue has previously been likened to idolatry. Huston Diehl, for example, contends that the scene “arouses anxiety about the idolatrous nature of statue.”\(^83\) Likewise, Julia Lupton argues that the statue, which she reads as “tainted” by Catholicism, participates in the “iconography of idolatry.”\(^84\) While Shakespeare clearly engages anxieties about idolatry in his final unveiling scene, Paulina’s performance of wonder elicits attention, providing closure as Paulina and Perdita are given husbands, while also awakening the audience, both on-stage and off, to the new hierarchy wherein women’s voices can be heard.

The success of Paulina’s theatre of wonderment is immediately evidenced by Leontes’ silence. Recognizing the value of this wordlessness displayed by the previously verbose ruler, whose violent, jealous language caused the death of his son and the supposed death of his wife, says as much; Paulina says, “I like your silence, it the more shows off / Your wonder.” The sense of wonder in the scene, which “stirs” the hearts of onlookers, “awakening their faith,” establishes what Jill Delsigne has referred to as a

---


“community of affect” where “audiences both on stage and off merge into one.” The
“communion of wonder,” as I have suggested here, derives in part from a collective
longing for, and release from, the materiality of loss. Indeed, Paulina makes a subtle
reference to Leontes’ performance of grief before Hermione’s empty grave, noting, after
the statue is revealed, that she will “fill your grave up.” At the end of the play, both
Leontes and the audience can re-create themselves upon witnessing the transformed
Hermione.

Shakespeare’s use of the trope of the theatrical corpse points to ideas about the
early modern post-mortem body as semi-animate and generative. While Protestant
consoling rituals sought to refocus attention on the living Christian community rather
than the passage of the dead, the erased materiality of loss nonetheless remained
embedded in England’s cultural imagination. In both The Winter’s Tale and The Second
Maiden’s Tragedy, Shakespeare and Middleton telegraph and negotiate contemporaneous
ideas and anxieties about the paradoxical power of the vital yet absented corpse. Both
plays use paint to highlight the power of the corpse, offering extended meditations on the
Reformation’s interest in containing the grotesque corpse-body, controlling mourning and
theatricality, while also using the dual ambiguous painted bodies as sites upon which to
negotiate and mediate the collective loss of Catholic rituals.

85 Jill Delsigne, “Hermetic Miracles in The Winter’s Tale,” in Magical Transformations on the
Early Modern English Stage, ed. Lisa Hopkins and Helen Ostovich (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2014),
91.

86 Shakespeare, The Winter’s Tale, V.iii.102.
Chapter 4

“Master Fashioners”: Counterfeit Egyptians and Theatricality in Ben Jonson’s *The Masque of Gypsies Metamorphosed*

When Jackman first enters Ben Jonson’s *Masque of Gypsies Metamorphosed* (1621), he announces a desire to procure “bacon” and “rinds of walnuts” from the audience in return for “Sleights of hand that will invite you / To endure our tawny faces.” Later in the masque, when advising the curious townspeople about the materials needed in order to transform into a Gypsy, Patrico, or the “hedge-priest” played by King

---

James’ favorite courtier, The Duke of Buckingham, notes that “To change your complexion” one must apply a “noble confection” made from “walnuts and hogs grease.” The use of various face-staining concoctions made from walnuts as a means to “turn Gypsy” can be located throughout the early modern pharmacopeia. Swiss physician Johann Jacob Wecker, for example, includes a recipe for face darkening in his *Eighteen books of the Secrets of Art and Nature* (1660): “From the green shells of walnuts the Chemists of France draw a pure water. If you wash your hands and face with this you will be as black as Gypsie by degrees.” This professed ability to falsify identity and turn gypsy through the application of a simple and attainable concoction of walnuts and water both fascinated and frightened early modern Londoners.

Anxieties about the use of cosmetic material and other forms of theatricality as a means for the English to perform gypsy identity are well documented in the plays, pamphlets, and other texts printed throughout the period. Multiple literary sources, from theatrical texts, including Jonson’s *Masque of Gypsies*, Thomas Middleton’s *The Spanish Gypsy* (1621) and Richard Brome’s *A Jovial Crew* (1630), to name a few, to popular ballads, emphasize the ways in which the “English Gypsy” engages in theatricality to perform the exotic and alluring identity for social or economic gain.

---


We see this emphasis on cosmetic practice in *The Brave English Gypsie*, (1625), an anonymous popular ballad set to the tune of another ballad called *The Spanish Gypsy*. As the ballad notes, a band of English Gypsies are able to survive, and even thrive, outside of the normative strictures of Jacobean society due to their use of skin disguising cosmetics:

> With Painters we can paint;  
> Our dye is not in vaine,  
> For we doe dye in graine:  
> The Walnut tree supplies our lacke,  
> What was made faire, we can make black.  


Through the transformative power of paint, the collection of English travellers metamorphosize into foreign “others,” which allows them to live and travel freely. Frances Timbers has previously suggested that English criminals darkened their skin to “frighten” their victims into handing over their money and goods. 92 However, skin darkening in this context can also be read as a kind of theatrical performance that engages, embodies, and appeals to the well-documented popular interest in the mysterious and foreign. Sujata Iyengar argues that the walnut dye in the ballad has the potential to not only alter external appearance, deceiving onlookers and patrons through outward show by rending that which was once “fair” “black,” but to potentially, and permanently, transform the inward self, as well. 93 Iyengar’s contention about the threat of contact with such paint creating a permanent transfiguration of both race and morality is


in line with contemporaneous anti-cosmetic treatises that express anxiety about beautifying cosmetics impacting both outward and inward characteristics. Yet the ballad seems to be considerably more concerned about the very threat of changeability through disguise rather than a kind of non-reversible shift in the presentation of self. This becomes more clear near the second half of *The English Gypsy*, which underscores the use of paint as a “prosthetic of race”: “We can paint when we command/ And looke like Indians that are tand.”94 The emphasis on “looking” like “Indians” rather than actually becoming Indians is essential, suggesting the ability to use the mechanics and materials of performance, including paint and costume, to engage in a potentially endless stream of alterations and transformations of identity.

Playwright and pamphleteer Thomas Dekker’s rogue-catching pamphlet *The Lantern and Candlelight* (1608) also features a lengthy section about criminal culture that focuses specifically on the cosmetic practices of the counterfeit Gypsy. After introducing this nomadic subset of English vagabond culture as “Moon men,” because, as he notes, “moon man signifIES an English mad man” and Gypsies are akin to the moon in that they are “never in one shape two nights together,” Dekker then turns his attention to paint. They achieve this changeability, Dekker observes, through the theatrical device of face paint. Gypsies, he continues, are not born with a “filthy complexion . . . but they are painted so . . . They are not good painters either: They doe not make faces, but marre faces.”95 This scathing commentary about the counterfeit Gypsy as dirty, mad, and

94 *Braue English lipsie*, lines 23–27.

malleable announces a sense of cultural anxiety about artifice and the plasticity of self-representation.

The artificial Gypsies in *The Masque of Gypsies Metamorphosed* embody this cultural anxiety about artifice while also, I argue, telegraphing the dangers of a complete loss of self as springing from excessive engagement with London’s burgeoning consumerism. The masque, which features the “tattered nation” of gypsies played by five members of James’ court met with considerable success: Considered the king’s favorite theatrical court production, he requested that it be performed three separate times during the summer and early fall of 1621, which was more than any singular masque was staged during James’ reign. The popularity of the masque, it seems, was intrinsically related to England’s fascination and fetishization of the Gypsy, a figure that elicited feelings of allurement, fear, and anxiety. Jonson capitalizes on this fascination by deploying the Gypsy trope to illustrate the dangers of limitless self-representation, especially when used for personal gain.

In the following pages, I hope to demonstrate how Jonson uses the trope of the counterfeit Gypsy, also known as the “English Gypsy,” to stage some of the problems and potentialities of theatricality and its corruption of the Jacobean court. Jonson’s plays are often concerned with exploring multiple overlapping connections between

---


97 Ian Smith uses the term “prosthetics of race” to describe the “additions to white actors” that make them visually signify blackness. The attention to material also denotes, Smith writes, the ways in which such prosthetics participated in the trade of English goods. Ian Smith, “White Skin, Black Masks: Racial Cross-Dressing on the Early Modern Stage,” *Renaissance Drama* 32 (Spring 2003): 42.

London’s growing interest in consumerism and the erosion of English identity. As an “acute observer of nascent capitalist forms,” as Susan Wells writes, he highlights vulgar consumption through his theatrical performances, itself a consumable medium. Indeed, Jonson’s canon demonstrates the risks involved in the immoderate consumerism of the luxury goods increasingly made available through transnational trade and the public marketplace. In *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), for example, he uses the metaphor of contagion to stage the negative effects of the market on the mind and body of the English consumer. In placing *Gypsies* in conversation with the complex nexus of London’s burgeoning capitalistic economy and the performance of amphibious personal, cultural, and national identity, my investigation builds on a long tradition of market and theater studies as focused on the Jonsonian canon. However, scholarly work on the relationship between Jonson and the market often fails to adequately address the masque genre. Moreover, the critical work on early modern court masques has tended to focus on the genre’s interest in the instantiation of monarchical power, thus overlooking any potential relationships between the masque form and London’s growing market. This chapter addresses this critical lacuna by reading Jonson’s court masque as engaged in conversation with, and critiquing, London’s market economy.

Jonson uses the “prosthetics of race,” to borrow Ian Smith’s apt construction, to address and critique what he perceives as the increasingly troublesome connection between theatricality, the market, and the court. Cosmetic face-darkening practices had, of course, a long history. They were deployed for Medieval Mystery Plays and English

---

99 Here, Susan Wells paraphrases LC Knights’ well-known contention that Jonson’s primary topic in his public theatrical works was the disapproval of the market. Susan Wells, “Jacobean City Comedy and the Ideology of the City,” *ELH* 48, no. 1 (1981): 37.
mumming festivities, both of which featured players who used soot and burnt cork to obscure identities and signify evil.¹⁰⁰ Early modern public theatrical performances such as Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* (1591) and *Othello* (1603), George Peele’s *The Battle of Alcazar* (1589), and John Webster’s *The White Devil* (1611), to name a few, began to feature face-paint and other prosthetic devices not just for the purpose of signifying morality, but to perform various kinds of racial cross-dressing.¹⁰¹ Jonson’s *Masque of Blackness* (1615), however, which features Queen Anne and eleven of her ladies covered in black body paint so as to appear as “the daughters of Niger” was the first known masque to feature blackface paint instead of the masks, visors, or gloves used to signify racial difference in traditional court performances.¹⁰² While *The Masque of Blackness* is considered the first English masque to use race-altering cosmetics, Andrea Stevens notes

---

¹⁰⁰ For an example of a Medieval Mystery Play that uses blackface, see the Wakefield Mystery Cycle *The Creation of the Angles and the Fall of Lucifer* (1460), wherein the fallen angels bemoan their loss of whiteness: “We, that were angels so far,/and sat so hie aboue the ayere,/Now ar we waxen black as any coyll/and vgly tatyd as a foyll.” Robert Hornback notes the binary addressed and perpetuated by critics such as Dymphna Callaghan, who subscribes the “limiting logic” of “White-Good and Black-Evil.” Robert Hornback, *Racism and Early Blackface Comic Traditions: From the Old World to the New* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 74; Dymphna Callaghan, “Othello Was a White Man: Properties of Race on Shakespeare’s Stage,” in *Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. Firstname Lastname (London: Routledge, 2003), 2:192–215; and Martin Stevens and A. C. Cawley, eds., *The Creation*, in *Towneley Plays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), vol. 2, lines 132–37.

¹⁰¹ Claire Sponsler and Robert Clark explore “racial cross-dressing” in medieval drama: They observe that “the frequency which cross-dressing is not just transgender but also . . . a transracial masquerade.” “the very definition of cross-dressing,” they continue, “should be expanded to included instances of dressing across boundaries of race and class.” Ian Smith later uses the term racial cross-dressing in his examination of blackface on the early modern stage. Clark and Sponsler, “Othered Bodies: Racial Cross-Dressing in the *Mistere de la Sainte Hostie* and *The Croxton Play of the Sacrament*,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29, no. 1 (1999): 62. See also Smith, “White Skin, Black Masks,” 42.

that the *Masque of Gypsies* is largely thought to be the first known production “in any venue” to use theatrical paint to visually signify not just foreignness, but on-stage corporeal transfiguration of race.\(^\text{103}\) Jonson renders the materials and processes of gypsification transparent as a means to critique theatricality.

The falsification of Gypsy identity borrows from, and is in conversation with, the kinds of theatricality found on and off the early modern stage, from the market stalls and theaters to private courtly entertainments. As Tracy C. Davis and Thomas Postlewaite discuss, the definition of theatricality in this period is quite complex and multiple, making it impossible to attach to any single meaning. While it invokes the positive power of the theater, it also carries negative connotations, as it is associated with “role-playing, illusion, false appearance, masquerade, façade, and impersonation.”\(^\text{104}\) This problem of theatricality as mere façade vexed Jonson throughout his career. Jonas Barish famously characterizes Jonson’s relationship to theatricality in predominately negative terms: “Wherever we look,” he writes, “within the plays or outside them, in structure or in moralizing comment, we find a distrust of theatricality, particularly as it manifests itself in acting, miming, or changing, and a corresponding bias in favor of the “real”—the undisguised, unacted, and unchanging.”\(^\text{105}\) The possibility of using and transforming different forms of self-representation was both anxiety-inducing and filled with


\(^{104}\) Tracy C. Davis and Thomas Postlewait. *Theatricality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

potentialities for early modern Londoners. Theatricality is particularly problematic for Jonson when such facades are used for personal gain.

Jonson’s concern about theatricality replacing the old values of the court can be seen in To Penshurst, the Stuart Country house poem written in honor of Robert Sidney, First Earl of Leicester. Written in 1612, Jonson’s pastoral—a genre that discusses non-rural issues and subjects through the lens of rural settings—praises the hospitality and order of the Penshurst estate.106 As Leah Marcus notes, the poem “redeemed courtly arts by planting them in a more wholesome soil,” thus celebrating “the mode of life that royal policy aimed to restore.”107 By the time The Gypsies was performed for James, however, these older values were receding as market values such as competition and commodification of offices were emerging in tangible ways. This dramatic shift is perhaps best exemplified through James’ implementation of the practice of selling nobility, which Jonson satirizes in Eastward Ho and Every Man Out of His Humour, in which the characters reduce courtiership to theatrical technique and a strong credit line.108 Critiquing the pervasive striving for upward mobility, Every Man Out of His Humour, for example, features the country fool Sogliardo who moves to London and claims to

---


have purchased a coat of arms, stating, “I’ faith, I thank god I can write myself gentleman now Here’s my patent. It cost me thirty pound by this breath.”¹⁰⁹

This act of “writing” oneself a “gentleman” by purchasing good favor with the king is exactly the kind of theatricality Jonson witnesses in the Jacobean court and then critiques in *The Gypsy Metamorphosed*. Yet he does so by performing the inverse scenario: his masque characters, who eventually reveal themselves to be courtiers, mark their skin with cosmetic material, in turn “writing” or rewriting the self into Gypsy identity. In fact, the plot of the masque is deceptively uncomplicated. A group of Gypsies with “tawny faces” appear at court to engage in some trickery only to be eventually transformed into “fair” courtiers.¹¹⁰ After a brief introduction, the gathered band of gypsies sing a number of bawdy ballads, read the palms of the king’s men, and pick the pockets of the townspeople. After returning the thieved goods, they reappear on stage without the face-darkening cosmetics, revealing themselves to the audience as courtiers. Diverging from the standard masque format, wherein the sovereign restores order by enacting a transformation and overturning vice for virtue, Jonson’s counterfeit Gypsies are not transformed by the pervasive power of the king. Their mutability is due entirely to the power of theatricality as they engage in the performance of identity for personal gain through the self-fashioning tools of cosmetics and borrowed language. This suggests, in

¹⁰⁹ Critiquing the pervasive striving for upward mobility, Jonson’s play features the country fool Sogliardo, for example, who moves to London and claims to have purchased a coat of arms. He states, “I’ faith, I thank god I can write myself gentleman now Here’s my patent. It cost me thirty pound by this breath.” Ben Jonson, *Every Man out of His Humour*, ed. Helen Ostovich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), III.i.213–15

¹¹⁰ Jonson, *Gypsies Metamorphosed*, lines 130, 1492.
turn, the potential for a series of endless transformations and mutations, ultimately revealing the courtiers to be mere performers.

This gypsification is all the more striking as one of the primary functions of the masque, for Jonson, was creating characters that would allow courtiers to play their best selves. *Gypsies*, on the other hand, critiques the collapse between nobility and commoner and shows courtiers using the tools of theatricality, in particular cosmetics and borrowed language, for personal gain. Historian Keith Wrightson observes that the gentry, the class unto which Buckingham was born, “stood for tradition and hierarchy,” yet they were also “thoroughly imbued with the values of the market,” including, but not limited to, competition and accumulation, rendering them “nothing if not culturally amphibious.”

By the time *Gypsies* was first performed in 1621, London had become a bustling center of international trade and commerce. As a result of the growth in population and increased internal and international trade under James I, the market activity in and around the capital expanded exponentially. English chronicler Edmund Howes, who continued John Stow’s chorographical description of London after the latter’s death, describes London’s fascination with luxury goods and subsequent commercial ideology. London, he writes in 1618, is a “citty filled more abundantly with all sorts of silkes, fine linnen, oyles, wines & spices, perfect of arts, and all costly ornaments and curious workmanship,

---


112 London’s population grew from 60,000 in 1500 to 200,000 in 1600; On the increase of internal trade, the linking of domestic economy and international trade, and population growth in the Jacobean era, see Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 173; and Ian Archer, “Material Londoners?,” in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 176.
then any other province, so as London well deserves to beare the name of the choicest storehouse in the world.”

Theatrical works both responded to, and participated in, market exchange. The theater, as critics such as Jean Howard, Jean-Christophe Agnew, Douglas Bruster, and others have previously shown, served as a space of exploration for playwrights and their audiences to test ideas about these emerging market forces and influences. The theater, writes Agnew, ‘bestowed an intelligible albeit Protean human shape on the very formlessness that money values were introducing into exchange; for such an achievement, spectators were alternatively grateful and horrified.’ The emerging “protean social world,” he writes, was “one in which the conventional signposts of social and individual identity had become mobile and manipulable reference points.” Like the new abstract money form, identity, according to Agnew and others, became increasingly “liquid” rather than static and essential. This rise of money as a universal abstract medium through which goods could be bought and sold is related to the cultural


114 Douglas Bruster, for example, emphasizes material developments over the ideological rather than reading them as necessarily dialectical and constantly influencing the other. In this way, he sees the drama as “springing from” the market rather than reading them as developing in conversation with one another. Early modern drama, he writes, is “a product of early modern market forces which shaped dramatic commodities to answer the various forces of social desire.” Douglas Bruster, Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3.


116 Agnew, 9.

117 Shift from medieval theatre, where “types” aligned with God’s plan to more complex identities and protean mutability, as characters on stage explore the shifting identities of the marketplace.
understanding of the professional actor, who could in essence, play, or be anyone, if only for a few nights. It seems, therefore, that if merchants and professional actors can be considered “boundary crossers,” both manufactured by, and producing the early modern market, we must extend that appellation to the “counterfeit Gypsy,” whether appearing on the London streets, the public theater, or on stage at court as such. Mutable and heterogeneous, the Gypsy, which was most often associated with groups of people who travelled nomadically, had dark skin, and performed a variety of different entertainments, living beyond and between the bounds of traditional societal roles and geographic borders. Much like the professional actor, the counterfeit Gypsy performed a multitude of different characters, including fortuneteller, palm reader, juggler, and dancer.

The important foundational studies about the intersections between market and theater tend to dismiss the ways in which many courtly theatrical performances are imbued with ideas, questions, and theories about London’s interest in the commercial. Agnew writes that court entertainments were “not the negotiable, promissory agreements about identity that so deeply yet obliquely implicated the playhouse audiences in their performance.”118 Masques, the thinking goes, do not engage or test contemporaneous ideas and anxieties about the fluidity of identity, ideas so often performed in theaters such as Blackfriars or other private playhouses. While Agnew and others recognize the relationship between the public theater, identity, and London’s consumer ideology, the court masque has largely been positioned as separate from the concerns of the public market.

118 Agnew, Worlds Apart, 49.
Just as much of this important foundational work on the complex relationship between the market and the early modern theater dismisses the masque genre as separate from London’s changing social and market values, critics of the masque have tended to overlook market influence. As Roy Strong and Steven Orgel have observed, masques consistently served ritualistic, or even ceremonial purposes to instantiate monarchical and aristocratic power. Orgel claims, for instance, that such court performances bring about the “reappearance” of Divine Right theory: in the masque form, the theatrical devices of costume and elaborate set designs, along with the conventions of anti-masque, are put into the service of honoring and reiterating the all-pervasive rule of the king.  

More recently however, critics have reminded us that court performances are not isolated events. Rather, the masque form responds to, examines, and, at times, transforms wider political, social, and cultural concerns and anxieties. James Knowles, for example, places the masque “in a broader political culture” and analyzes the ways in which “political ideas are represented, communicated, and debated across society.” More recently however, critics have reminded us that court performances are not isolated events. Rather, the masque form responds to, examines, and, at times, transforms wider political, social, and cultural concerns and anxieties. James Knowles, for example, places the masque “in a broader political culture” and analyzes the ways in which “political ideas are represented, communicated, and debated across society.”

“What has emerged” from revisiting the genre, suggests Ineke Murakami, “is a masque more internally conflicted, variable, decentered, and politically contentious than previously imagined: a genre that is less of a reflection of Stuart monarchical power than a means of... asserting conflicting interests.” Rather than examine the masque as a device to promulgate monarchical power and interests, or, on the contrary, as a means to question the legitimacy, reach, and dissemination of such authority, these critics claim that the

---

genre resonates on multiple levels. These conflicted interests extend to the growing market and how it impacted not just the people of London, but the court as well.  

The theatricality of the English Gypsy is advertised in the opening scene of Jonson’s masque. From the moment the Gypsies appear on stage, they assert their fluid identity. We see this when Jackman, the “educated beggar,” arrives at court leading a group of Gypsy children, which he refers to as “the five princes of Egypt, mounted all / upon one horse.” Francine Timbers notes that Gypsies were often presented as a “group” or “fraternity,” reinforcing the “idea of an organized and threatening underworld.” However, by comparing the five children mounted on the single horse to the “four sons of Aymon,” drawn from the medieval romance *Chanson de Geste*, Jackman legitimizes the presence of the “tattered nation” at court through likening them to medieval nobility. We might also consider the reference to the medieval romance as a veiled threat to the King’s authority: in one version of the story, the four sons of Duke Aymon revolt against Emperor Charlemagne. Any positive comparison between the

---

122 Additionally, over the past many years, there has been an abundance of scholarly attention to the transgressive and subversive performance of transvestism on the early modern stage and its potential relationship to emerging ideas about early modern identity as formed through and around the burgeoning market. Less attention, however, has been given to the reasons behind, or implications, of racial cross-dressing. See, for example, Jean E. Howard, “Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1988): 422, https://doi.org/10.2307/2870706.

123 Jonson, *Gypsies Metamorphosed*, lines 130, 1492. The ballad *The Brave English Gypsy* is accompanied by a woodcut depicting six female gypsies dressed in hybrid costuming consisting of Elizabethan ruffs and hats that appear to be of Eastern origin, on the back of a single horse led by a male holding a staff. “The brave English lipsie,” (about 1630) *Roxburghe Ballads*, vol iii (Hereford 1875), 329. Reproduced from the original ballad in the British Museum.


court aristocrats and the Gypsies, is further destabilized by Jackman’s subsequent line, wherein he announces the origin myth of their miniature Gypsy nation.

Jackman all but eradicates the portrait of noble/Gypsy distinction by claiming that the horseback riding children are in fact the offspring of “Ptolemy” and “several Cleopatras,” or Egyptian prostitutes. This reference to whoredom completely undoes Jackman’s carefully cultivated image of medieval nobility, creating instead a group of liminal hybrid figures that are at once noble and lower class, European and Eastern. In Jonson’s masque, therefore, the Gypsies resist categorization in part through garnering control over their own origin narrative. The collapsing of the social categories of Gypsy and courtier is seen later in the masque when Puppy, a clown and townsman who initially insists he could “neer endure / the sight of one of these rogue gypsies . . . ,” inquires about what “might a man do / to be a gentleman of / your company, Sir?”

While the townspeople remain differentiated by class, Puppy’s reference to the gentleman Gypsy suggests a collapse of the demarcation between the travelling band of Gypsies and the aristocratic audience. Underscoring the Gypsy interest in cultivating an image of non-static identity and intrigue, Patricio responds by claiming that: “I only must tell ye / Yet aim at a mystery / Worthy of history.”

The actual history of the arrival of the Gypsy in England is, in fact, something of a mystery. Most scholars cite 1514 as the date of first arrival due to story written about by Sir Thomas More, in his Dialogue Concerning Heresies, wherein a Gypsy fortune-teller offered advice to Richard Hunne, who died in the Tower of London. But account records

---

126 Jonson, Gypsies Metamorphosed, lines 718–19.
127 Jonson, lines 1234–36; 1242–44.
noting payment to Gypsy entertainers, such as Sir John Arundell of Lanhere’s, show their arrival to be earlier in the sixteenth century. Gypsy identity, constituted in part through the performance of liminality, was thus a source of both fascination and anxiety for early modern England. English traveller and physician Andrew Boorde’s 1542 *Itinerary of England* illustrates the paradoxical status of the Gypsy: “The people of Egypt be swart and doth go disguised in theyr apparel contrary to other nacyons,” Boorden writes, “they be lyght fyngerd and use pyking. . .,” “they have ill manners,” he continues, yet, “they be pleasant daunseurs” Additionally, in *The Art of Juggling or Legerdemain*, a manual professing to expose the supposedly magical arts of juggling, palmistry, and card play as legerdemain, or sleight-of-hand tricks, Samuel Rid refers to the Gypsies as “pestiferous carbuncles in the commonwealth.” However, before offering the details revealing Gypsy “magic” to be mere trickery, Rid acknowledges their allure for English audiences. They were, he writes, “esteemed and had in great admiration” been “spoke of farre and neere” due to the “strangenessee of their attire and garments, together with their sleights and legerdemaines.” England’s early interest in Gypsy entertainment is also demonstrated in the pages of gentry payment records: In 1504, for example, Sir John Arundell of Lanhere, Cornwall paid 20d to “the Egyptians when they danced afore me.” Aristocratic account books from Gloucestershire and Suffolk from 1510 and 1520 also feature analogous references to payments made to performing “Gypsions.”

---


However, while Gypsies continued to spin a profit from palm reading, dancing, and juggling throughout the early modern era, the historical record shows a radical shift in their status. Increasingly seen as a threat to the social order, Gypsies, no longer merely occupying the space of alluring and exotic entertainers, began to be likened to vagabonds and criminals. The change was codified in 1531, when Henry VIII attempted to solve the Gypsy problem by issuing a parliamentary act demanding that all “outlandish people calling themselves Egyptians” be banished from England. In the act, the Gypsies were charged with false palmistry and, by travelling “place to place in great company,” with living at the margins of social and economic order. Criminal behavior, performance of hybridity, and allurement, all defining features of the “English gypsy,” are on display in The Brave English Gypsy. The ballad begins with an enticement to the English audience to join the travelling and thieving band:

Come follow, follow all,
‘Tis English Jipsies call;
All you that love your lives,
Heres those for profit strives.
We fare well when thousands lacke,
None of us can credits cracke.
We fare well, etc.

The ballad’s use of “we” presents an image of a welcoming well-established community, one that could potentially involve the audience, as well. Moreover, the reference to profit,

---

131 Brian Reynolds go so far as to argue that that “there were few, if any, gypsy immigrants in early modern England,” and that those that referred to themselves as such “were not only actually disguised English rogues and vagabonds, but were also a major component of a greater criminal culture.” Brian Reynolds, “Becoming Gypsy, Criminal Cultural, Becoming Transversal,” in Becoming Criminal: Transversal Performance and Cultural Dissidence in Early Modern England (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 26.

132 Egyptian Act, 1530, 22 Hen. 8, c. 10.

133 Braue English Iipsie, lines 1–6.
lack, and credit, all economic terms, suggest that the gypsies borrow the language, habits and attitudes from, yet live beyond, the traditional bounds of the buying and selling market.

A subsequent parliamentary act passed by Mary I in 1554 declared the expulsion, incarceration, and execution of those identifying as, or appearing to be, Gypsies. This act, however, noted that if the accused gave up their nomadic lifestyle and settled into a respectable profession, all charges would be dropped.\textsuperscript{134} By 1563, English peoples who worked or otherwise associated with the nomadic travellers were also marginalized, often subject to the same punishments allotted to those thought to be Gypsies. By turn of the century, the line demarcating foreign Gypsies and England’s underground vagabond culture, which included rogues, vagrants, and other “masterless men,” had become quite porous.\textsuperscript{135}

When Jonson’s \textit{Gypsies Metamorphosed} was first performed in 1621 for James and his court, the affiliation between English vagabonds and the foreign Gypsy population was nearly impossible to differentiate. Existing simultaneously within and outside English culture, Gypsies troubled categorizations such as domestic and alien. For example, in his 1610 pamphlet \textit{Martin Mark-All, Beadle of Bridewell}, Samuel Rowlands writes that “Those that call themselves Egyptians are rogues . . . Who lie by cozening and


\textsuperscript{135} Patricia Fumerton disputes the universality of the rise of a fixed subjectivity during the era as promulgated by Jacob Burkhart and others, noting instead that for “masterless men” “subjectivity is in fact mobile and even inconsistent.” Occupying space instead of place, Fumerton describes the “unlocalized social experience” as a kind of “low” subjectivity. While she does not address the figure of the gypsy directly, her study of London’s Vagrant Economy is applicable to my work here. Fumerton, “London’s Vagrant Economy: Making Space for ‘Low’ Subjectivity,” in Orlin, \textit{Material London}, 222.
deceit . . . Delighting . . .” the people “with the strangeness of the attire of their heads . . .
And practising palmistry.”¹³⁶ English vagabond culture, positioned by state officials as a
disruptive and unruly force resulted from, as A.L. Beir argues, London’s rapid increase in
population, creating, in turn, both vagrancy and poverty.¹³⁷

This also precipitated the collapsing of the English rogue into the foreign Gypsy,
which produced the popular figure of the counterfeit Gypsy, or the English rogue
performing as a Gypsy for the purpose of attaining certain social and economic capital.
Often making a living through fortune-telling, juggling, dancing, and, if we are to believe
the records, pick-pocketing, the “counterfeit Gypsy,” also referred to as the “English
Gypsy” was often seen as a “rogue with quasi-magical powers.”¹³⁸ A “strange and
illegitimate hybrid, neither Egyptian nor English, neither black nor white,” as noted by
Sujata Iyengar, the “counterfeit Gypsy” collapsed demarcations between self and other,
domestic and stranger.¹³⁹ When appearing in literary texts and on the early modern stage,
the English Gypsy “often served,” writes Mark Netzloff “to represent a general lack of
social control and national unity.”¹⁴⁰ Additionally, Gypsy identity threatens because it is
performed through the use of various theatrical devices, including face paint, costume,
and canting, meaning that anyone can take it on or off at any given moment.

¹³⁶ Samuel Rowlands, Martin Mark-All […] (London, 1610).
¹³⁷ A. L. Beier, Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England, 1560–1640 (London:
Methuen, 1987).
¹³⁸ Blank, Broken English, 61.
¹³⁹ Iyengar, Shades of Difference, 183.
¹⁴⁰ Mark Netzloff’s study of the masque explores Jonson’s the nomadic gypsy figure in
relationship to national borders, claiming that the gypsy undermined James’ attempted Union of the Realms
of England and Scotland. Netzloff, “‘Counterfeit Egyptians’ and Imagined Borders: Jonson’s The Gypsies
The Gypsy interest in resisting taxonomies and binaries through the theatrics of costuming, painting, and retelling conflicting origin narratives is reiterated through their use of canting language. After describing a tale of a young Judge’s daughter running off with the Gypsies and getting pregnant, Jackman ends his speech with a sung rhyme:

With the convoy, cheats and peckage,
Out of clutch of Harman-beckage,
To their libkens at the crackman’s
Or some skipper of the blackman’s.

What is so compelling about this is that Jackman, the learned member of the group, speaks in canting language, a form of communication ostensibly used by English criminals, vagabonds, and, as chorographer William Harrison writes, “Egyptian rogues,” or Gypsies. Created to exclude those who exist beyond the bounds of London’s ever-shifting underworld society, cant, Harrison writes, is a hybrid “mingled” lexicon “without all order or reason,” constituted by Latin, French, Dutch, Spanish, French, English, and “a great number of odd words of their own devising.”¹⁴¹ In Masterless Men, a book length study of the issue of vagrancy plaguing London during the years of 1560-1640, A.L. Beir examines the relationship between canting discourses, which he defines as a kind of secret language or jargon that “contained the terms and tools essential for criminal activity” to conclude that the lexicons for Gypsies and vagabonds coalesced to form a single, if constantly evolving and mutating, language.¹⁴² Meant to be impenetrable and thus impervious to translation so as to establish and maintain an anti-society counter-poised to the dominant one, cant, or, as Michael Alexander Kirkwood


¹⁴² Beier, Masterless Men.
Halliday calls it, “Elizabethan anti-language,” is limitless in its mutating and mutable theatricality.\textsuperscript{143}

Jackman, acknowledging the cryptic nature of the language, notes that “If we here be a little obscure, it is our pleasure; for rather than we will offer to be our own interpreters;/ We are resolved not to be understood.”\textsuperscript{144} Yet if any onlookers seek a translation of the evolving hybrid language, he directs them to the “third volume of reports set forth by the learned / in the laws of canting and published in the gypsies’ / tongue.”\textsuperscript{145} Indeed, canting dictionaries such as Samuel Rid’s precursor to The \textit{Art of Juggling} (1612), \textit{Martin Markall, Beadle of Bridewell} (1610), were popular in the period. The dictionary attempted to compartmentalize and stabilize a language that was, as Reynolds writes, “evasive, bountiful, and fast evolving.”\textsuperscript{146} It also offered readers a glimpse into the secret underground society, “shedding light,” to borrow Linda Woodbridge’s phrase, which was modified and adapted from the rhetoric of rogue literature such as Dekker’s \textit{Lantern and Candlelight}, on “dark places.” Jonson’s Jackman, while offering some insight as to where and how to acquire canting manuals, nonetheless insists on excluding the King and his court from the Gypsy lexicon while also, inversely, offering a voyeuristic glimpse into their mode of communication.\textsuperscript{147}


\textsuperscript{144} Jonson, \textit{Gypsies Metamorphosed}, 105–7.

\textsuperscript{145} Jonson, \textit{Gypsies Metamorphosed}, 109–11. For the most popular cony-catching manual, or cant translation, see Thomas Harman and Robert Greene, \textit{A Caueat or Warening for Commen Cursetors vulgarely called Vagabones [. . .]} (London, 1592).

\textsuperscript{146} Reynolds, “Becoming Gypsy,” 69.

\textsuperscript{147} Blank notes that the Gypsies are also privy to a second kind of language understandable only to them: palm reading. Blank, \textit{Broken English}, 64.
Yet Woodbridge also questions the authenticity of cant. She suggests that the claim of direct observation made by the writers of rogue literature actually resulted from an increased anxiety about the status of interiority and social mobility. Moreover, this refusal to be understood, which is certainly a calculated form of theatricality, is contrary to Jonson’s belief about the ways in which language should function in society. For Jonson, language should be uncomplicated, for, as he writes in Discoveries, “Pure and neat language I love, yet plain and customary.” He then suggests that language offers a window into the speaker: “Language most shows a man: Speak, that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired and inmost parts of us, and is the image of the parent of it, the mind. No glass renders a man’s form or likeness so true as his speech.” Through the use of cant, which is extremely difficult to decode, Jonson’s counterfeit Gypsies are able to remain hidden behind a multitude of endlessly transformable veils.

This veil is ostensibly lifted in the final scene of the masque when the face paint is removed to reveal the “fair” faces of the courtiers, the jumble of canting language is replaced with clear and concise rhyming verse, and the stolen goods are returned to the townspeople. Typically, the masque-antimasque-masque structure allows a kind of stylized battle to be staged. Here, interestingly, that battle occurs inside of Buckingham and the other transformed courtiers. Steven Orgel contends that in Jonson’s masques, the characters always represent, in some regard, an aspect of the aristocratic Performer:

\[148\] Linda Woodbridge notes that the “language of empiricism” used in rogue literature has misled scholars into thinking writing is produced through direct observation. Yet, as she goes on to note, the proliferation of such literature nonetheless arose from some base in reality. Woodbridge cites this as an anxiety about social mobility, or “people who are concealing the fact that they have strayed out of their proper social station.” Linda Woodbridge, “Impostors, Monsters, and Spies: What Rogue Literature Can Tell Us about Early Modern Subjectivity,” Early Modern Literary Studies 9 (January 2002): 2–3.

\[149\] Jonson, Gypsies Metamorphosed, line 1326.
unlike the professional actor, who can “assume all personalities because he has none of his own,” the roles for members of the court are a “representation of the courtier beneath. He retains his personality and hence his position in the social hierarchy.”

Andrea Stevens also argues that the transformation from swarthy Gypsy to fair courtier in the final scene underscores the immutability of true, or inherent, Englishness. Therefore, for Orgel, Stevens, and others, The Duke of Buckingham’s seemingly dangerous transformative play with Gypsy identity as seen through his role as Patricio, only serves to fix his identity as courtier as he remains, as Stevens writes, “decidedly English.”

Buckingham, considered to be “most powerful subject in England,” as Kristen McDermott writes, can remain unadulterated despite the gossip surrounding his rise from wealthy gentry to peer due to his close relationship to James.

While the return to courtier status at the end of the performance does indeed suggest the possibility of an incorruptible aristocratic English identity for the courtiers, Jonson’s masque also draws attention to the theatricality of such aristocracy. Therefore, while The Masque of Gypsies Metamorphosed draws attention to Buckingham’s seemingly untouchable status as the King’s favorite, the performance also explores some of the potentialities and problematics concerning the relationship between market values and the fluidity of identity. While the transformed gypsy characters might indeed be “decidedly English,” the play reveals the very definition of Englishness as undergoing a radical process of change.

150 Orgel, Jonsonian Masque, 117–118.


152 Jonson, Masques of Difference, 54.
The transformation at the end of most masques occurs due to the pervasive and magical power of the sovereign. Jonson, however, makes it clear that the turn from Gypsy back to courtier is material rather than divine. In fact, Jonson also manages to hide his critique of the court behind something of a veil. The Windsor court performance of the masque includes an epilogue that offers rich detail about the materials and methods used to cosmeticize the courtiers. The epilogue, which was most likely spoken by Buckingham, also names the court apothecary responsible for creating the face staining “ointment.” After the reveal scene, wherein the Gypsies are shown to be fair-skinned courtiers, Buckingham concludes the masque with details about the materials of the performance, underscoring how cosmetic paint can be used as a prosthetic instrument of self-fashioning used for social and economic advantage:

. . lest it prove like wonder to the sight,  
To see a gypsy, as an Ethiop, white,  
Know that what dyed our faces was an ointment  
Made and laid on by Master Wolf’s appointment,  
The court lycanthropos, yet without spells,  
By a mere barber, and no magic else.  
It was fetched off with water and a ball. . .

Here, it is further reiterated that the transformation from dark to white was not due to the miraculous power of the king; rather, it was merely cosmetic. As previous scholars have suggested, Jonson disassociates himself from the cosmetic process and places blame on the court apothecary Wolfgang Rumler, also referred to as “The Wolf,” thereby, Stevens suggests, transferring “responsibility of the racial transformation from himself to Rumler.” Furthermore, this transfer of blame also seems to absolve Buckingham for

---


154 Stevens, “Assisted by a Barber,” 5.
his interest in performing an alternative identity. By emphasizing the process of painting, Jonson demystifies the racial transformation of the courtiers, emphasizing the material, and thus reversible, transformation.

The early modern stage offered playwrights and their audiences the space to explore and test new questions about identity construction, the power of performance, and the influence of England’s consumer ideology. Recognizing the Gypsy as a contested and alluring sign of immorality, malleability, and intrigue in the imagination of early modern audiences, Jonson turns the fetishized figure into a metaphor for the increasing changeability of the parameters of identity and the transformative power of self-representation. Jonson, I argue, mobilizes the popular figure of the counterfeit Gypsy to explore ideas about the complex relationship between London’s burgeoning capitalist market, Englishness, and emerging ideas about the relationship between theatricality and identity. For Jonson, I contend, the Gypsy figure serves as a kind of warning about the excesses of the market allowing for, and creating, a self that identifies with nothing and everything. The fluidity of the self threatens individual English identity, which, ultimately, has the potential to erode Englishness. Jonson mobilizes the symbol of the Gypsy, an endlessly transformative and transformable sign, to explore the limits and potentialities of individual transferrable and reproducible identities as springing from England’s burgeoning market capitalism, even at Court. The sign of the English gypsy, a fetishized figure of liminality, fluidity, and nomadism, is a symbol for emerging ideas about English identity formation, especially in relation to the complex nexus of the market, theatricality, and identity. In *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, Jonson stages the immodest, excessive, licentious, and sexually alluring English Gypsy to telegraph
anxieties about the ways in which the early modern market has the potential to eradicate difference. The gypsy signifies a loss of self when in contact with the excesses of London’s consumerism, wherein both individual and cultural identity is eroded through unmediated involvement with the uncontrolled space of the market.
Bibliography


———. The Trotula: an English Translation of the Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine. Translated by Monica Helen. Green. Philadelphia: University of


———. In great Suffolk-street near the Hay-market, at a jewelers house, with a red balcony, lives a gentlewoman, who, by much travelling and many years study, practice, and experience has attained the most rare secrets in the world for beautifying the face. London: s.n., 1690.


———. “Of Travel.” In The Major Works, 120–299.

———. De Dignitate Et Augmentis Scientiarum. Wircburgi: Stahel, 1780.


Baudier, Michel. The History of the Imperiall Estate of the Grand Seigneurs Their Habitations, Liues, Titles ... Gouernment and Tyranny. Translated out of French


Coryate, Thomas. *Coryat's Crudities; Hastily Gobled up in Five Moneths Travells in France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia Commonly Called the Grisons Country, Helvetia Alias Switzerland, Some Parts of High Germany and the Netherlands; Newly Digested in the Hungry Aire of Odcombe in the County of Somerset, and Now Dispersed to the Nourishment of the Travelling Members of This Kingdome*. London, 166. Reprint, Glasgow: J. MacLehose, 1905.


Harman, Thomas, and Robert Greene. *The Groundworke of Conny-Catching, the Manner of Their Pedlers-French, and the Meanes to Vnderstand the Same, with the Cunning Slights of the Counterfeit Cranke.: Therein Are Handled the Practises of the Visiter, the Fetches of the Shifter and Rufflar, the Deceits of Their Doxes, the Deuises of Priggers, the Names of the Base Loytering Losels, and the Meanes of Euyery Blace-Art-Mans Shifts, with the Reproofe of All Their Diuellish Practises.* Printed at London: by Iohn Danter for William Barley, and are to be sold at his shop at the vpper end of Gratious streete, ouer against Leaden-hall, 1592.


James I. By the King, a Proclamation Prohibiting the Importation of Allome into Any His Maiesties Dominions. Imprinted at London: By Robert Barker ..., 1614.


---. “The Gypsies Metamorphosed.” In Masques of Difference: Four Court Masques, 141–204.


Kolb, Justin. ""To Me Comes a Creature"," In The Automaton in English Renaissance Literature, edited by Wendy Hyman, 45-60. London: Routledge, 2016.


Lamb, Mary Ellen “Engendering the Narrative Act: Old Wive’s Tales in Winter’s Tale, Macbeth and The Tempest,” Criticism 30, no. 4 (September 1998): 529-553


Lodhia, Sheetal. "'The House Is Hers, the Soul Is but a Tenant': Material Self-Fashioning and Revenge Tragedy." *Early Theatre* 12, no. 2 (2009).


Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, The Rainbow Portrait, 1600.


Pugh, Syrithe. “‘Rosmarine’ in the Masque of Blackness: Jonson's Herbal Medicamina Faciei?” *Notes and Queries* 52, no. 2 (2005): 221–23.

Purchas, Samuel. “A treatise of Brasil, written by a Portugall which had long lived there,” in *Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed. Hakluytus (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1905), 422.


Rid, Samuel. *Martin Mark-All, Beadle of Bridevvell; His Defence and Answere to the Belman of London. Discovering the Long-Concealed Originall and Regiment of Rogues, When They First Began to Take Head, and How They Have Succeeded One the Other Successiuely Vnto the Sixe and Twentieth Yeare of King Henry the Eight, Gathered out of the Chronicle of Crackeropes, and (as They Tearme It) the Legend of Lostels. By S.R. London: Printed for Iohn Budge, and Richard Bonian, 1610.*


