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Ecologies of the Passions in Early Modern English Tragedies

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ECOLOGIES OF THE PASSIONS IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH TRAGEDIES

by

ROYA BIGGIE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

Ecologies of the Passions in Early Modern English Tragedies

by

Roya Biggie

Advisor: Tanya Pollard

Ecologies of the Passions recovers a neglected model for understanding early modern relationality, one that turns the seemingly inward experience of emotion outward toward the environment. Drawing on early modern medical texts, I argue that the period's dramatists imagine bodies as humorally vulnerable to other bodies, both human and nonhuman, within dynamically affective environments. As such, my project illustrates the intimate configurations of human and nonhuman life in early modern tragedies. Building upon recent work in the emerging fields of ecocriticism and affect theory, I argue that the period's dramatic literature exposes the porous fluidity of the Galenic body—its embeddedness within ecologies composed of material objects, plant life, and other bodies. More specifically, through readings of tragedies by Thomas Kyd, William Shakespeare, John Webster, and John Ford, I show that early modern playwrights dramatize a bodily fragility that is simultaneously dangerous and productive. While scholars have drawn attention to the disciplinary and gendered implications of Galenic theories of embodiment, I argue that the period's tragedies depict bodies extending beyond their contours and transforming through intimate entanglements with human and nonhuman life. As bodies open unto one another, forming affective channels through which the liquid passions move, they expose themselves to the sometimes tender and sometimes risky touches of the world and its inhabitants.

Each chapter focuses on a different arrangement of bodies and examines how private

experience brings individuals into contact with larger social and ecological networks. At the same time, I argue that the period's medical texts, including Helkiah Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia* and Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Minde*, present the body as precariously and productively open to the exterior world. My first chapter orbits around questions of itinerant passions and disembodied sorrow in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. I suggest that a disembodied understanding of sorrow inspires empathetic bonds, allowing the bereaved to merge with the deceased. In my second chapter, I argue for a conception of ecological sympathy in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* through a focus on the elements, sylvan life, and interpersonal relations. Through examining the play's interspecies relationships, I consider the possibilities and limitations of feeling for and with nonhuman life. Chapter Three explores the generative effects of mobile organs and parts in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. While the play acknowledges the risks involved in the lovers' exchange of bodily parts, Webster illustrates the productive fertility of such openness by suggesting that moving organs culminate in the creation of hybrid flesh. My final chapter on Ford's *The Broken Heart* focuses on the dangers of ecological invasion. I argue that Ford engages with theories of infection and emotional contagion by dramatizing the affective movement of melancholy and the threat of corporeal permeability.

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Introduction: Affective Embodiment in Early Modern Tragedies

The speaker of William Shakespeare's Sonnet 31 imagines the beloved's chest as a grave, "endeared with all hearts," where he encounters "all love's loving parts / And all those friends which I thought buried."¹ As the poet discovers "trophies of my lovers gone, / Who all their parts of me to thee did give," these companions live on beyond their deaths.² The speaker depicts a strange transfer of bodily organs and parts. While he finds the material remnants— hearts, trophies, and parts—of previous lovers, he also locates his own body within this scene of mass internment: "Their images I loved I view in thee, / And thou, all they, hast all the all of me."³ The speaker alludes to prior transplants, reminiscing upon having given his body to lost loves, and in doing so, he describes a corporeal ecology. Transferrable organs move between bodies and reappear within a fleshy mausoleum. In reference to this sonnet, Valerie Traub writes, "Having been absorbed into the body of the friend....the 'lovers gone' of a previous time, metonymized through their body parts, mingle promiscuously and with extraordinary equanimity in the beloved's body, as well as in the poet's mind."⁴ While Traub suggests that this "fantasized erotics [defies] the bounded singularity of both self and other," I would add that the speaker envisions a surprising interchange, composed of itinerant body parts.⁵ For Traub, these parts are mere metonymic devices for previous lovers, but I suggest that they reveal an early modern mode of relationality, in which the transfer of organs from one body into another creates an intimate and affectively charged ecology.

¹ William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 31," *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, eds. Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braummuller (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), lines 1, 2-3, p. 74.

² *Ibid.*, lines 10-11.

³ *Ibid.*, lines 13-14.

⁴ Valerie Traub, *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns* (Philadelphia: U of Penn P, 2016), 250.

⁵ *Ibid.*

As we see in Sonnet 31, corporeal permeability compels the interpenetration of body parts. Organs crowd the beloved's chest, and the poet not only revives lost loves, but merges flesh with flesh. The sonnet illustrates a model of early modern affective embodiment that I refer to throughout this project as "ecologies of the passions." Gail Kern Paster coins this phrase in *Humoring the Body* to emphasize the period's conception of the body as a microcosm of the world at large. By way of illustration, she points out that early moderns understood breath and wind, both of which share the classical Greek word *pneuma*, as coextensive; *pneuma* is corporeal as much as it is atmospheric, trespassing the borders of the body.⁶ Building on Paster's term, I pursue the implications of an ecological model in ways that intersect with recent ecocritical approaches to the period, taking seriously human bodies' transactions with elements of the natural world including plants, rocks, and sea.

Through readings of tragedies by Thomas Kyd, John Webster, William Shakespeare, and John Ford, I recover a neglected model for understanding early modern affective embodiment by turning the seemingly inward experience of emotion outward toward the environment. I draw on two critical discourses to inform my readings of affective embodiment in early modern tragedies: the first is ecocriticism, and the second is affect theory. I begin by discussing how ecocriticism informs my research on nonhuman agents, and I then explain how the joining of ecocriticism and affect theory offers new ways of revisiting issues of early modern embodiment. I argue that the body's receptivity creates dynamic ecosystems, in which human and nonhumans develop affectively charged ecologies of exchange. In moving across human and nonhuman ecologies, affective circuits form strange interspecies and interelemental alliances that oftentimes result in the metamorphoses of diverse bodies. From these intimate transactions, hybrid bodies emerge.

⁶ Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 4.

Sympathetic Ecologies

Scholars of early modern embodiment have focused on the body's susceptibility to the environment. While I draw on this work, I emphasize the productive benefits of kinship across species divides. Unlike our contemporary understanding of sympathy—and its corresponding associations with compassion and moral philosophy—sixteenth century definitions of the word referred to inexplicable bonds between human and nonhuman bodies. Mary Floyd-Wilson writes, “Sympathies and antipathies were thought to inhabit all animals, minerals, plants, and people. Their occult energies attract and repel other fauna, flora, and minerals, uniting and dividing an endless array of strange couples.”⁷ She cites the sixteenth century natural philosopher, William Fenner who explains:

The Philosphers call them occultae qualities, hidden qualities, no reason can be given of them. No man can be given a reason why the load-stone should be so deeply affected with iron, as to draw unto it. It hath a sympathie with it; the wilde Bull hath a sympathy with a figgetree; nothing can tame him but it; the Elm hath a sympathy with the Vine: the Vine hath a sympathy with the Olive.”⁸

As Fenner suggests, early moderns attributed unusual interspecies alliances to sympathetic bonds. While Fenner acknowledges that such attractions exceed explanation, he implicitly sheds light on the affective vitality early moderns ascribed to nonhuman agents. Moreover, he proposes that these sympathetic alliances have affective and physical consequences; lodestone is “affected” by iron and “draw[s] unto it,” and fig trees “tame” wild bulls. He associates these attractions with movement as he alludes to the magnetism of the lodestone and iron, and the wandering climb that ascends an elm. Fenner describes what I refer to as an affectively charged

⁷ Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 7.

⁸ William Fenner, *A Treatise of the affections, or The souls pulse whereby a Christian may know whether he be living or dying: together with a lively description of their nature, signs, and symptoms: as also directing men to the right use and ordering of them* (London, 1650), 62.

ecology or circuit. Human and nonhuman bodies draw unto one another, and as Fenner suggests, these attractions physically and affectively alter diverse bodies. Through tracing sympathetic circuits, I illuminate the dynamic interchange between bodies and what Jane Bennett refers to as “the vital materialities that flow through and around us.”⁹ In the tragedies I discuss, trees suffer grief, sylvan-human hybrid bodies command pity, and touching organs compel love and melancholy.

My suggestion that early modern dramatists attribute affective vitality to nonhuman agents shifts the field’s prior interest in subjectivity toward more recent discussions of nonhuman materiality and affect. In the preface to *Vibrant Matter*, Bennett explains that her aim is to “present human and nonhuman actants on a less vertical plane” by “highlight[ing] what is typically cast in the shadow: the material agency or effectivity of nonhuman or not-quite-human things.”¹⁰ Following Bennett, I draw on the conceptual framework of an ecosystem—a network of interdependence—to destabilize human-nonhuman hierarchies. In addition, through focusing on interspecies attractions in both literary and nonliterary discourses, I show how early moderns imagine feeling across ontological borders.

I argue that early modern dramatists engage what Timothy Morton refers to as “ecological thought.” According to Morton, ecological thought involves acknowledging:

a vast, sprawling mesh of interconnection without a definite center or edge. It is radical intimacy, coextensive with other beings, sentient and otherwise... The ecological thought fans out into questions concerning cyborgs, artificial intelligence, and the irreducible uncertainty over what counts as a person.¹¹

Morton urges readers to look beyond the natural world and consider messy

⁹ Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), x.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, ix.

¹¹ Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2010), 8.

interconnections that defy categorization. Throughout this project, I attempt to recognize the “sprawling mesh of interconnections” by blurring the distinction between human and nonhuman bodies. Through tracing interspecies and interelemental exchanges, I show how affective intensities move, sometimes unequally and sometimes riskily, between bodies. Specifically, I examine human interchanges with botanic life and elemental forces in Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*, in addition to the contact and exchange of organs in Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* and Ford’s *The Broken Heart*. While Morton implies that the “sprawling mesh of interconnection” is one that we cannot entangle, I argue that unraveling affective threads allows us to recover a historicized understanding of early modern affect. For early moderns, affect is not solely predicated on human interchanges; rather, affect moves across bodies and transforms human and nonhuman bodies alike.

Critics such as Floyd-Wilson, Garrett Sullivan, Vin Nardizzi, and Jean Feerick have paved the way for innovative ecological scholarship in the field; however, as of yet, none have examined how sympathetic attractions create affective circuits of exchange. In their collection, *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*, Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan identify three models of ecological relations: one based on similitude, the body’s likeness to its environs; the exchange model, based on the “ebb and flow exchange between body and environment”; and the counteractive model, which “references the idea that the body’s complexion is formed in opposition or through resistance to the environment.”¹² What Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan identify as the “exchange model,” in particular, is helpful in that they suggest that, because of the body’s humoral openness, human interactions with the environment are not one-sided. That is, environments transform human bodies, and similarly, humans shape the environments they

¹² Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett Sullivan, *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 4-5.

inhabit. Their discussion of the exchange model, however, primarily focuses on the human body's physical processes. They write, "Food is ingested and excreted, air is inhaled and exhaled, fluids are taken in and expelled."¹³ While Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan provide useful groundwork for thinking through ecologies of exchange, I contribute to their discussion of ecological relations in several ways. First, I suggest that the "ebb and flow" we see between the human body and the environment has affective as well as physical implications. Beyond alimentary and evacutory processes, affective circuits move across bodies, and draw the human and nonhuman within dynamic ecologies, characterized by the exchange of affective intensities. Second, my focus is not limited to transactions between humans and the environment. I argue that the period's tragedies dramatize the movement of affect across species and elemental divides. Humans care for other species, and sea, wind, earth respond to different elemental forces.

Feerick and Nardizzi's more recent collection, *The Indistinct Human*, challenges the assumption of human exceptionalism by attending to human-nonhuman overlaps. They propose that the collection's essays "track dynamic networks between human and nonhuman entities that confuse" the division between species."¹⁴ I take as a starting point Feerick and Nardizzi's suggestion that early modern discourses blur ontological boundaries even as they seek to distinguish the human from other forms of life. More radically, I argue that in obscuring species divides, early modern tragedies dramatize cross-species mergings. Bodies transform in and through the ecologies of which they are a part. The tragedies I discuss draw attention to the body's fragile borders and suggest that such fragility compels vital metamorphoses.

¹³ Ibid., 4.

¹⁴ Jean E. Feerick and Vin Nardizzi, Introduction to *The Indistinct Human in Renaissance Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 5.

The Affective Turn

Just as ecocriticism informs my approach, so too does the affective turn in literary scholarship. In recovering a specifically early modern form of affective embodiment, I argue that the body's vulnerability compels new alliances and forms of feeling. As critics such as Gail Kern Paster and Michael Schoenfeldt have discussed, early moderns understood emotions as material, embodied states that were susceptible to the influence of environmental factors.¹⁵ The body's interactions with the outer world had the capacity to stir the soul, thus altering the passions or affections, what Thomas Wright defines as the "perturbations of the minde."¹⁶ In *The Passions of the Minde in Generall*, he explains, "They are called Passions (although indeed they be actes of the sensitive power, or facultie of our souls)...because when these affections are stirring in our minds, they alter the humors of our bodies, causing some passion or alteration in them."¹⁷ Humoral fluctuations were of particular concern to early moderns because they influenced one's ability to act with reason and sound judgement. Wright suggests that the passions are "called perturbations for that...they trouble wonderfully the soule, corrupting judgement and seducing the will."¹⁸ However, he also notes that these humoral ebbs and flows were not wholly unfavorable: "also named affections, because the soule by them, either affecteth some good, or

¹⁵ See Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993) and Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 15. Paster argues that increased expectations of physical and emotional refinement "worked to lower thresholds of shame at the same time they promoted what Foucault and others have seen as a reform movement directed toward inculcating self-discipline (14). Michael Schoenfeldt diverges from Paster and New Historicist scholarship to suggest that, rather than promoting a regime of shame, humoralism empowered individuals to manipulate their interior complexions.

¹⁶ Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (London, 1604), 7.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

for the affection of some good, detesteth some ill.”¹⁹ As Wright proposes, the stirring of the passions had both dangerous and generative consequences. I extend Wright’s discussion of such ambivalence to the affective ecologies we see in the period’s tragedies; while sympathetic attractions may result in compassionate hybrid bonds, they can also lead to the devastation of human and arboreal life.

In examining the equivocal consequences of sympathetic attractions, I differ from Paster and Schoenfeldt in that my project moves beyond studying the relationship between the self and the environment; instead, I draw attention to larger, diverse ecologies of human and nonhuman bodies. I too emphasize the affective effects of corporeal permeability; however, rather than focusing on issues of subjectivity, I argue that the body’s openness compels sympathetic attractions between human and nonhuman life.²⁰ By drawing attention to interspecies and interelemental alliances, I suggest that the body’s porousness—its susceptibility to the environment—creates relational ecologies, in which affect moves across human and nonhuman bodies. Through these hybrid bonds, human and nonhuman bodies engage in new forms of feeling and transform in often reciprocal and irrevocable ways.

Affective circuits of exchange illustrate what Teresa Brennan refers to as an “ongoing affective persona.”²¹ Brennan writes, “the transmission of affect means that we are not self-contained in terms of our energies. There is no secure distinction between the ‘individual’ and

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ For recent work on early modern *dispersed* subjectivities, see Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2002); Nancy Selleck, *The Interpersonal Idiom in Shakespeare, Donne, and Early Modern Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); and Allison Hobgood, *Passionate Playgoing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014).

²¹ Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004), 8.

the ‘environment.’”²² While Brennan acknowledges that affective dispositions are potentially altered by atmospheric stimuli, she dedicates her attention to the movement of affect across human bodies; her conception of the environment excludes the vital materiality of nonhumans. In my readings of *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*, I trace human interactions by following the movement of travelling organs and passions; however, I also propose that, for early moderns, the transmission of affect occurs across species and elemental borders. Thus, I argue that because affect moves across ontological divides, early modern playwrights dramatize “ongoing” human and nonhuman affective bodies.²³ That is, it is not only the human body that is susceptible to its environment. Both human and nonhuman bodies transform as affective circuits embed bodies within dynamic ecologies of exchange and interdependence.

When considering how exactly affective ecologies shape bodies, I find it useful to refer to Sara Ahmed’s discussion of “impressions” in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Ahmed writes:

To form an impression might involve acts of perception and cognition as well as an emotion. But forming an impression also depends on how objects impress upon us... *We need to remember the ‘press’ in an impression.* It allows us to associate the experience of having an emotion with the very affect of one surface upon another, an affect that leaves its mark or trace.²⁴

Ahmed’s suggestion that affective impressions leave a “mark or trace” speaks to the materiality of early modern ecologies. She acknowledges the physical implications of impressions or affectively charged encounters; however, I would add that early modern tragedies envision these encounters as leaving more than a mere mark. Female bodies become human-tree hybrids; trees shed their leaves as they grieve for another’s loss; and organs invade bodies. Studying early modern affect demands that we attend to the impressions, both subtle and violent, these

²² Ibid., 6.

²³ I hesitate to use Brennan’s phrase “affective persona” here because I emphasize that early modern tragedies include *nonhumans* within dynamic ecologies of feeling.

²⁴ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 6.

interchanges incite. Throughout this project, I show how sympathetic attractions metamorphose bodies in intensely affective and physical ways.

The period's medical discourses and anti-theatricalist tracts, in part, recognize these relational "impressions" in their discussions of sensation. Wright and Helkiah Crooke in *Mikrokosmographia* emphasize the deeply physical experience of sensation by conceiving of all five senses as a "kinde of touching."²⁵ While early moderns viewed the heart as the "very seate of the Passions," the senses were thought to "[stir] vp" the passions "in every part of the body."²⁶ Wright suggests that both pleasure and pain, "being Passions of the Minde, are evermore felt in that part of the bodie, where Sense exerciseth her operations."²⁷ In addition to the period's medical discourses, anti-theatricalist tracts, such as Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse* and Philip Stubbes's *Anatomie of Abuses*, warn readers of the potential dangers of sensual experience. In attending the theater—in viewing and listening to the action on stage and in making contact with fellow playgoers—early modern audiences became vulnerable to the effects of sensual stimuli. While these discourses suggest that early moderns conceived of sensual experience as a network of ongoing impressions, they emphasize the effects of sensual exchanges on human bodies. By considering interspecies and interelemental alliances, I illustrate the ways in which affective circuits impress or transform both human and nonhuman bodies.

²⁵ Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia* (London, 1615), 648. Crooke explains, "the Tast never should discern of sapours except the gustible matter were touched by the spongie body or pulple of the Tongue; neither could the Organ of smelling receive any odours unlesse the perfume of odoriferous things should touch the same" (648). For more on early modern theories of touch, see Elizabeth Harvey, *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (Philadelphia: UPenn P, 2003); and Joe Moshenska, *Feeling Pleasures: The Sense of Touch in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014).

²⁶ Wright, 34.

²⁷ *Ibid.* In discussion of sensual arousal, Wright suggests that when "we taste delicate meates, smell muske, or heare musicke, we perceybe, not onely that the heart is affected, but that also the passion of joy delighteth those partes of our sences" (34).

I find the joining of affect theory and ecocriticism particularly helpful here in that, together, these conceptual frameworks allow us to consider early modern affective exchanges across species and elemental divides. While Brennan and Ahmed's discussions of affective circuits exclusively focus on human dynamics, the vital materialism Bennett attributes to the nonhuman suggests other possibilities. In taking seriously affect theory's focus on emotional vicissitudes in addition to the vibrancy ecocriticism attributes to the nonhuman, I argue that early modern tragedies ask that we consider the affective force of nonhumans, which 21st century scholars of early modern embodiment do not take into account. I show how early moderns imagined dynamic ecologies in which both human and nonhuman bodies become subject to the affectively charged forces of their environments.

I propose that studying early modern embodiment requires that we consider hybridity to attend to the ways in which early moderns conceived of affective alliances across species divides. I use the word hybrid or hybridity in my discussions of what I consider cross-species bodies. The consequences of affective invasion is the hybrid body, the body that is neither human nor plant, the body crowded with hearts. Affective circuits compel hybrid forms of being, metamorphosing human and nonhuman bodies in potentially risky and fruitful ways. These circuits or ecologies transform the bodies they enmesh as affective intensities travel across species and elemental divides. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, for example, Isabella becomes a hybrid body as she violently attacks her womb and ultimately resembles the devastated trees that surround her. Sympathetic attractions compel hybrid forms of being as bodies, both human and nonhuman, open unto their environments and transform alongside the bodies with which they make contact. By studying early modern hybridity, we can recover new forms of early modern feeling and being that have thus far eluded critical attention.

In the following chapters, I attempt to trace the ways in which early moderns imagined their entanglement within larger social and ecological networks. Each of my chapters evinces a different element to these ecologies. My first chapter focuses on grief dispersed through arboreal bodies in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. As Hieronimo encounters the lifeless body of his son, Horatio, hung from a tree, he does not mourn the loss inwardly; rather, he describes how his "restless passions" move beyond his body and destroy the surrounding landscape. I argue that Hieronimo locates these itinerant passions first within a stranger's face and ultimately within his son's bloodstained handkerchief. As the bereaved father imagines their bodies interwoven within the fabric's threads, he discovers an expression for his sorrow and physically merges with the spectral presence of his son. In addition, I draw attention to the plays' sylvan-human sympathies and antipathies to suggest that what begins as a sympathetic relationship between child and tree is complicated as Horatio dies amongst its branches, becoming the tree's fruit. I argue that Isabella views her relationship with the forest as a decidedly antipathetic one and desires to destroy "the fatal pine" and the trees' "loathsome boughs." She reunites with Horatio by becoming part of the destroyed landscape, declaring herself as fruitless as the surrounding trees. The play illustrates the affective and potentially dangerous ecologies grief incites. Travelling across species, affective circuits devastate natural landscapes and metamorphose human and arboreal bodies.

In my second chapter, I argue for a conception of ecological sympathy in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. The play introduces an ecosystem in which all parts—from the ruthless woods to the raging sea—participate in the affective production of emotion on the early modern stage. Amid this dynamic landscape, Lavinia rhetorically and physically transforms into a hybrid

human-tree figure. As Titus navigates what becomes an interspecies relationship with his daughter, he turns to examples of interelemental pity—between the sea and weeping sky, the land and the ocean’s tears. I argue that although Titus makes a conscious choice to emulate such forms of pity, the play dramatizes the limitations of feeling for and with a hybrid body.

From an analysis of parent-child relationships, I shift my focus to the generative effects of mobile organs and parts in Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi*. In spite of her brothers’ demand that she not re-wed, the Duchess insists that her heart penetrates her love’s body, and in making contact with his heart, she reanimates his organ and plants the seeds of new love. The lovers develop a delicate ecology in which organs, parts, and spirits leave bodies and invade other bodies. The play also engages with arboreal imagery to reflect on fruitfulness and fertility. I draw on early modern theories of tactility in texts such as Crooke’s *Mikrokosmographia*, as well as Neoplaonic theories of dual embodiment, to suggest that, through this reciprocal contact, the Duchess and Antonio merge flesh and share in a new substance. While the play acknowledges the risks involved in affective exchanges—the brothers eventually murder nearly the entire family—Webster illustrates the possibilities of interpenetrative organs and hybrid flesh.

My final chapter on John Ford’s *The Broken Heart* focuses on the risks of ecological invasion. I argue that Ford engages with theories of infection and emotional contagion by dramatizing the affective movement of melancholy and the threat of corporeal permeability. Bodies involuntarily absorb the elements of their environments; Ithocles’s spleen penetrates Penthea’s body, and undesirable sounds invade Calantha’s ears. Through these various forms of ecological penetration, melancholy travels across bodies. Food refusal and phlebotomy become a means by which characters may control the body’s precarious borders. As Penthea imagines her blood as a complex recipe and herself as a cook, she accesses an albeit limited degree of agency

by enclosing her body—and this internal recipe—from undesirable ingredients. Starvation allows Penthea to resist engaging with larger external ecologies, composed of not only human bodies, but flora and fauna. Orgilus too rejects the vicissitudes of his environment by performing his own phlebotomy and controlling his humoral output. The play's final scene visually represents the effects of emotional contagion as news of death pierces Calantha's body with a notable degree of violence. Ford's attention to ecological invasion marks a shift in the way in which early moderns conceived of bodily permeability. The play implicates bodies within an unavoidable and potentially dangerous ecology in which melancholy destroys the bodies with which it makes contact.

Together, these chapters offer a new model for understanding early modern affective embodiment. I show how experiences of suffering or grief draw bodies within intimate ecologies, characterized by human and nonhuman vitality and vulnerability. Affects move through these ecologies and transform bodies in sometimes reciprocal and sometimes asymmetrical ways. Through my readings of several tragic ecologies, I argue that we see hybrid bodies—cross-species forms that blur ontological distinctions. By examining what I refer to as early modern ecologies of the passions, I show how the body's susceptibility leads to strange alliances and interspecies and interelemental forms of feeling. The ecologies I discuss are not without their risks—body parts penetrate bodies and destroy the organs with which they make contact—however, I also suggest that these affective ecologies compel strange and occasionally generative interelemental and interspecies alliances.

Devastating Sympathies: Ecosystems of Suffering in *The Spanish Tragedy*

In the second scene of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, the General of the Spanish army recounts a victorious though bloody battle against the Portuguese. The General describes the battle as a deeply ecological event, one that both resembles and reshapes the natural world. He begins by telling the court that the armies meet where "Spain and Portugale do jointly knit / Their frontiers, leaning on each other's bound."²⁸ While the battle takes place on the Spanish-Portuguese border, the General emphasizes the interdependence of these two nations and the fiction of national borders.²⁹ The frontier is not a clear demarcation, a precise line separating two countries. Rather, as the General suggests, borders are messy areas, in which nations join together through a series of intricate knots. Knitting implies fastening (as opposed to differentiation), and in addition, suggests a sense of interwovenness—interlocking loops that eventually create a fabric. Similarly, national borders are not clearly defined, but areas in which countries lean or move towards each other's "bounds" or limits. In spite of this sense of interdependence, the frontier is both a meeting place and a site of destruction.

The General continues, likening the battle to an environmental crisis:

Their violent shot resembling th' ocean's rage,
When, roaring loud, and with a swelling tide,
It beats upon the rampiers of huge rocks,
And gapes to swallow neighbour-bounding lands.
Now while Bellona rageth here and there,

²⁸ Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. J.R. Mulryne (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 1.2.22-23. Text references are to act, scene, and line of this edition.

²⁹ Lisa Hopkins argues that early modern playgoers would have read the geographical space of the stage as "two clearly marked zones with a space between them." She cites the General's description of the Spanish-Portuguese border as one of several moments in which the play explores liminality. She proposes that the stage's two zones "figure two different countries, two different moral states, two different ontological states and two different zones of death." Lisa Hopkins, "The Symbolic Geographies of the English Renaissance Stage: The Case of *The Spanish Tragedy*," *Research on Medieval and Renaissance Drama* 51 (2012): 30.

Thick storms of bullets rain like winter's hail,
And shivered lances dark the troubled air. (1.2.48-54)

The two armies, nearly comparable in strength, stain the battlefield with the blood of their soldiers. The General compares the deafening noise of gunfire to the sound of an unruly ocean. Imagining waves crashing against stone, he suggests the sea threatens the protection these rocks provide.³⁰ The General describes an affectively charged ecosystem, in which the force of the ocean's ire nearly overpowers the land with which it makes contact. In referring to the swelling tide—the lunar movement of water—he alludes to the unavoidable interaction between land and ocean. As water draws closer to land, earth moves toward water, and though these elements often mingle in harmonious tandem, the General suggests that tide can turn to deluge. Land suffers, overpowered by its neighboring element. The General describes noticeably antipathetic (rather than sympathetic) relationships between different elemental forces as he emphasizes the devastation caused by such interactions. He, in turn, proposes that the initially reciprocal exchange of gunfire results in the victory of one army and the defeat of another.

Although the General begins by comparing the battle to a tumultuous sea, he proposes that human warfare has environmental consequences. The soldiers' lances, like a winter hailstorm, darken and trouble the atmosphere. He describes the bodies of the wounded, reimagining the battle for the court: “There legs and arms lie bleeding on the grass, / Mingled with weapons and unbowelled steeds, / That scattering overspread the purple plain” (60-62).

Severed limbs cover the battlefield along with weaponry and animal entrails. This scene of mass

³⁰ The *OED* defines rampier or rampire as “a dam, a barrier against water.” The dictionary lists some instances in which a rampier refers to a manmade structure (such as a dam) and others in which rampier refers to a natural barrier. In this case, it is unclear whether the rocks are rampiers in and of themselves or whether further fortification (for example, a wooden fence) has been built upon them. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “rampire,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://oed.com>.

suffering, in which human bodies become nearly indistinguishable from machine and animal parts, transforms the surrounding landscape. The air darkens, and the grassy frontier turns purple as it drinks the blood of human and animal alike.

In this opening scene, Kyd dwells on the intimate contact of armies, of sea and stone, of limb and land. While the General's description of the Spanish-Portuguese battle does not, at first glance, appear to convey the ecological consequences of human affect, on closer inspection, Kyd offers us a way in which we might read the environmental implications of grief as *The Spanish Tragedy's* bereaved parents mourn the death of their son. Horatio survives the battle, but is soon murdered in his family's grove. As grief alters the natural world, and even causes ecological devastation, the play concomitantly dramatizes the potential consequences of sympathetic human-nonhuman relationships. As I discuss in my introduction, early moderns understood occult sympathies and antipathies as inexplicable bonds and animosities between plants, animals, humans, and minerals.³¹ In *The Spanish Tragedy*, seemingly sympathetic bonds become dangerous, antipathetic relationships as human bodies metamorphose and become deathly botanic forms. Horatio and a pine tree's initially sympathetic relationship becomes an antipathetic one as Horatio becomes the tree's hanging fruit. To reunite with her son, Isabella believes that she too must become a ruined vegetal form as she attacks her body and the trees that surround her.

By considering Hieronimo and Isabella's embeddedness within a larger ecology of sylvan life, textile matter, and human bodies, I draw attention to what Nancy Selleck refers to as an interpersonal idiom, a vocabulary of selfhood that was predicated on interdependence rather than

³¹ See Mary-Floyd-Wilson's recent study of early modern sympathies and antipathies, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013).

a discrete conception of the self. As Selleck notes, “sixteenth-century speakers lacked a vocabulary for abstract, subjective, autonomous selfhood—terms such as individual, self, character, and identity.”³² While Selleck focuses on interpersonal human relationships, I emphasize the ways the suffering body relies on a nonhuman rhetoric, as well as contact with nonhuman bodies, to mourn the loss of the deceased. I argue that Hieronimo’s experience of loss is not as isolating as critics suggest; rather, by imagining that his grief extends beyond the contours of his body, Hieronimo believes that a vibrant ecology participates in his suffering. Hieronimo’s disembodied conception of grief allows him to reunite with his deceased son. While Isabella betrays a similar desire to engage with Horatio even after his death, she does not recognize her sorrow in her surrounding landscape. Rather, she must violently alter her environment and her own body to reconvene with her lost son.

In another iteration of the Spanish-Portuguese battle, Horatio echoes the General’s sentiments—he too believes warfare alters the surrounding landscape—however, Horatio discovers solace in imagining the deceased within a larger ecosystem. Horatio helps Bel-Imperia understand the circumstances of her betrothed’s death. He recounts how he took Don Andrea’s body to his tent and “laid him down, and dewed him with [his] tears, / And sighed and sorrowed as became a friend” (1.4.36-37). As Horatio describes his release of bodily fluid—and the movement of fluid from one body to another—he laments his inability to revive Don Andrea with his tears. Horatio’s figurative use of the word is not unusual; the *OED* notes that “dew,” in

³² Nancy Selleck, *The Interpersonal Idiom in Shakespeare, Donne, and Early Modern Culture*, (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 3.

its nominal form, is often used synonymously for the body's tears.³³ However, Horatio unusually uses dew as a transitive verb, as if to imply that dew wets Don Andrea's lifeless body. Horatio implicitly likens his friend's corpse to a botanic body, damp with dew in early morn.

In response to Bel-Imperia's pressing question—"was Don Andrea's carcass lost?"—Horatio offers the bereaved lover consolation in depicting both his own sadness and Don Andrea's embeddedness within a larger ecosystem (1.4.31). Horatio's grief entrenches Don Andrea within his surrounding landscape as the last vestiges of life escape his wounded frame. Horatio describes an ecosystem of suffering as he imagines the movement of fluid between bodies. In implying that, in death, Don Andrea becomes a dewed botanic body, Horatio alludes to an ecosystem beyond their two bodies, one in which dew evaporates, altering the air and surrounding life forms. Horatio, like the General, refers to the ecological consequences of interactions with the environment; however, he implies that rather than causing devastation, the environment offers vitality to deceased human bodies. Through his friend's sorrow, Don Andrea lives beyond his death as his body becomes a part of the field upon which he fell.

Horatio continues to approach the natural world with a sense of trust—believing that it offers not only solace, but sanctuary—as he leads Bel-Imperia to his father's bower. The lovers imagine that with the cloak of night and the grove's leafy shield, they will discover refuge from the dangers of court and relish in their mutual love. The play, however, quickly perverts the topos of *locus amoenus*—the expectation that lovers will find safety amid an Edenic bower—as Bel-Imperia senses that something is not quite right within this seemingly private plot of land. Horatio attempts to calm her worries by likening his physical strength to the support offered by circling vines: "My arms are large and strong withal: / Thus elms by vines are compassed till

³³ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "dew," accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

they fall” (2.4.44-45). In doing so, he refers to what was understood as a sympathetic relationship between the elm tree and the vine.³⁴ In referring to botanic sympathies, Horatio tells Bel-Imperia that they too share a similar attraction, making them immune to the dangers of court. While Horatio does not emphasize their embeddedness within a larger ecology (as he does when describing Don Andrea’s death), he likens their bodies to the botanic life they may encounter within the grove. Horatio turns again to the natural world for consolation, suggesting that they may find comfort in their likeness to the surrounding landscape.

Although Horatio refers to this commonly understood natural bond as a means by which he may ease Bel-Imperia’s suspicions, as J.R. Mulryne notes, he presents a “macabre inversion of the usual image” in which “vines uphold elm trees.”³⁵ Horatio proposes that his arms, or vines, will encircle Bel-Imperia, but result in her fall, or the downward collapse of an elm. In his discussion of this scene, Stephen Watt argues, “Kyd seems to be echoing the epigrams of various emblem books which describe how the elm and vine support each other in old age.”³⁶ While

³⁴ As I discuss in the introduction, in his *Treatise of the Affections*, William Fenner, in fact, refers to the attraction between these two botanic bodies as he provides his readers with an explanation of occult sympathies. Playgoers would, most likely, immediately understand Horatio’s reference to the elm tree and the vine as an example of sympathetic attraction. The image of the vine and elm appears in Virgil’s *Georgics* and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, with which audience members would have been familiar. In Ovid’s account of Pomona and Vertumnus, Vertumnus draws upon this botanic bond to convince Pomona of the mutual benefits of marriage. He explains that the vine depends on the elm for support just as the elm requires the vine for fruit. This emblematic image also appears in Geoffrey Whitney’s *Choice of emblems* (1586), followed by a short poem promoting the benefits of friendship in old age: “wee shoulde be linck’de with such a frende” as a “fructefull vine” blooming on a “rotten, drie, and dead” elm “when wee bee oulde” (3, 5, 7-8). William Fenner, *A treatise of the affections, or, The souls pulse whereby a Christian may know whether he be living or dying: together with a lively description of their nature, signs, and symptoms: as also directing men to the right use and ordering of them* (London, 1650).

³⁵ J.R. Mulryne, *The Spanish Tragedy*, 41.

³⁶ Stephen Watt, “Emblematic Tradition and Audience Response to Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*,” *Studies in Iconography* 6 (1980): 100. Watt discusses the play’s various emblematic images, primarily referring to Whitney’s *A Choice of Emblemes*. In his discussion of the elm-vine emblem, he notes that, in addition to referencing marriage and friendship, the image also

these words of affection reaffirm Horatio's love for Bel-Imperia—he suggests their attraction will persist until she dies—Horatio simultaneously describes a sympathetic attraction that is aware of its temporality, its coming downfall.

Bel-Imperia, rather astutely, resists this sympathetic bond and the collapsed sylvan image Horatio anticipates, identifying the danger of such attractions. She tells her eager lover, “O let me go, for in my troubled eyes / Now may'st thou read that life in passion dies” (2.4.46-47). Although early moderns did not neatly equate sympathetic attraction with romantic passion, Bel-Imperia recognizes that Horatio relies on this familiar bond to express his feelings of love and devotion. In asking for distance, Bel-Imperia proposes that there is danger in both passion and in sympathetic attractions. While understanding sympathetic attractions and antipathies allowed early moderns to manipulate and interact with the natural world, Bel-Imperia implies sympathetic attractions are not always desirable. Punning on the period's understanding of death as sexual climax, Bel-Imperia finds the degree of her lover's attraction to forebode danger rather than safety.

Bel-Imperia is, of course, correct in alluding to the dangers of occult sympathies; Lorenzo, Balthazar, Serberine, and Pedringano soon appear and murder Horatio, hanging his body from a tree. In death, Horatio does not rope or encircle the tree; rather, a rope (like a vine, perhaps) hangs his corpse from a tree. The play further subverts the image of an elm and vine as Horatio becomes the tree's strange and lifeless fruit. More than mere attraction, Horatio and the tree merge as his body hangs lifelessly from its branches. In light of Horatio's murder, Bel-Imperia's plea for distance becomes even more pressing. The murderers, in effect, punish Bel-

alludes to fertility because vines, supported by elms, produce grapes. Watt, however, does not consider Horatio's perversion of this image in light of the vine/elm's association with fertility. While Bel-Imperia and Horatio profess their love and stand amidst trees—common symbols of human generation and growth—their own potential for fertile productivity is quickly thwarted.

Imperia and Horatio for their passion or, to use Horatio's allusion, the strength of their sympathetic attraction. The play dramatizes the potential consequences of occult sympathies. Bodies do not simply draw unto each other; rather, human and arboreal body becomes indistinct. In a very unsettling way, Horatio too becomes incorporated within his environment. While Don Andrea's bedewed botanic body, in part, offers the bereaved comfort, Horatio's embeddedness within a larger ecology leads to his demise.

As Hieronimo and Isabella encounter their son's corpse, the play continues to consider the ecological effects of grief upon the environment. Isabella hopes that the porousness of her body will conjure a storm, an elemental expression of her rage. She cries out, "O, gush out, tears, fountains and floods of tears; / Blow, sighs, and raise an everlasting storm." (2.5.43-44). Isabella commands her tears to surge forth from her eyes, forming fountains and floods. She draws attention to the porousness of her body—imagining that this openness will create an eternal storm—and in doing so, she suggests that her grief will reshape the environment.

Although Isabella considers the environmental consequences of her sadness, she concomitantly emphasizes the isolating experience of her loss. Notably, she does not call upon the elements for help in creating this tempest and instead imagines the force of her own liquid fluidity. In addition, unlike Horatio—who, through his tears, draws Don Andrea within a larger ecosystem—Isabella does not imagine the contact of tears and corpse. She implies she suffers alone as she wills her body to effect ecological devastation.

In spite of his son's murder, Hieronimo emphasizes his sense of inter-connectedness with his son by seizing Horatio's handkerchief and corpse. He declares:

See'st thou this handkerchief besmeared with blood?
It shall not from me till I take revenge.
See'st thou those wounds that yet are bleeding fresh?
I'll not entomb them till I have revenged. (2.5.51-54)

As Hieronimo draws attention to his son's blood and wounds, he proposes that Horatio will, quite literally, remain by his side as he mourns and avenges the murder.³⁷ Hieronimo's focus on the visual faculties—his repetition of “see'st”—alongside the palpable materiality of bloody handkerchief and bleeding corpse suggest that, for him, grief is a sensual, communal experience. Not only does he ask Isabella to “help [him] lament,” but he plans to touch and gaze upon his son's body and handkerchief (2.5.36). Unlike Isabella, who focuses on the singularity of her suffering, Hieronimo mourns with textile matter.

As the play progresses, Hieronimo grieves by establishing a relationship with his environment. Though he regrets that heaven has not revealed the identity of his son's murderer, Hieronimo finds solace in knowing that the night, the “sad secretary to [his] moans,” records his vocalized sounds of sorrow (3.2.12). He appears to desire a record of his grief and finds comfort in knowing that the night recognizes his sadness, recording his woes, perhaps upon a darkened or starry sky.

In moving beyond his interior feelings of loss, Hieronimo desires that this mournful openness will not leave him unchanged. Addressing the night, he asks that it “with direful visions wake [his] vexed soul, / And with the wounds of [his] distressful son / Solicit [him] for notice of his death” (3.2.12, 13-15). Hieronimo hopes that as the night listens to his mournful cries, it will trouble his soul with disturbing dreams or images. He asks that the night remind him

³⁷ Thomas Rist suggests that Hieronimo seeks to give Horatio the funerary honors of which he was initially deprived. Revenge, according to Rist, becomes tied with commemorative ritual. Similarly, Ariane M. Balizet argues that vengeance allows Hieronimo to “reassert paternity” in spite of the loss of an heir. While I agree that, as Balizet suggests, the handkerchief, serves as a “visual reminder of the blood bond between Hieronimo and his son,” I argue that, more than simply a visual reminder, the blood-soaked cloth allows Hieronimo to reunite with his son even after Horatio's death. Thomas Rist, *Revenge Tragedy and the Drama of Commemoration in Reforming England* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 36.

of Horatio's death by way of his son's wounds. While it is unclear whether Hieronimo desires the vivid image of a pained body or wounds upon his own person, he wishes to be changed by this ever-attentive confidant. He anticipates that, as he gives voice to his sorrow, a non-human and non-heavenly audience will respond by encouraging him to avenge his son's murder.

Beyond seeking justice from heaven, Hieronimo implores the court to avenge his son's murder, but when he finds that his pleas are met with silence, he turns to his surrounding landscape. Though frustrated, Hieronimo's experience of sorrow is distinctly different from that of his wife. Unlike Isabella, who draws attention to the singularity of her suffering—particularly as she suggests that her porous body alone will cause ecological ruin—Hieronimo views his grief as situated within the environment:

Where shall I run to breath abroad my woes—
 My woes, whose weight hath wearied the earth—
 Or mine exclaims, that have surcharged the air
 With ceaseless plaints for my deceased son?
 The blust-ring winds, conspiring with my words,
 At my lament have moved the leafless trees,
 Disrobed the meadows of their flowered green,
 Made mountains marsh with spring tides of my tears,
 And broken through the brazen gates of hell.
 Yet still tormented is my tortured soul
 With broken sighs and restless passions,
 That, winged, mount, and, hovering in the air,
 Beat at the windows of the brightest heavens,
 Soliciting for justice and revenge.
 But they are placed in those empyreal heights
 Where, countermand with walls of diamond,
 I find the place impregnable, and they
 Resist my woes, and give my words no way. (3.7.1-18)

Hieronimo proposes that he must seek new lands in which he can unburden his woes and itinerant passions. His grief travels beyond the contours of his body and, conspiring with the elemental force of wind, devastates the environment. Declaring that his grief moves leafless trees, he implies that these sylvan bodies both feel for him and shed their leaves as they

encounter raging winds and disembodied passions. Meadows cast off their flowers, and mountains, overwhelmed with his tears, turn to marshland. Hieronimo discovers that the hardened walls of heaven are impregnable and implicitly wishes that his passions had the generative force to affect heaven and, ultimately, avenge Horatio's death. Although heaven is deaf to his words and unshaken by his moving passions, the environment—an ecosystem of which he is intimately a part—suffers alongside him. While critics such as Scott McMillin and Peter Sacks emphasize Hieronimo's feelings of isolation, I argue that Hieronimo views the surrounding landscape and the attentive night as active respondents to his frustrations and sorrow.

As Hieronimo recognizes a shifting landscape—of flora, rock, and water—he theorizes the grief-stricken body. He imagines that exhaled breath, uttered words, and moving passions travel beyond his frame, making the environment vulnerable to the affective intensity of the human body. Early modern medical texts, similarly, trouble our interior/exterior distinction. In *The Passions of the Minde*, Thomas Wright explains that the passions operate between two “extremes,” the “internal” “acts of our wits and wills” and the “external” “acts of our senses.”³⁸ The passions, while situated within the mind, also interact with the sensory outer world. Wright adds, “when these [passions] are stirring in our minds, they alter the humours of our bodies.”³⁹ While Hieronimo draws attention to his flighty passions, he focuses not on his own humoral change, but on the environment's transformation, its vulnerability to his sadness.⁴⁰ He describes the very physical interaction between the landscape and his breath, words, and passions, noting

³⁸ Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (London, 1604), 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁰ I do not want to disclose the possibility of Hieronimo's humoral transformation here; rather, I suggest that Hieronimo offers a distinct humoral model that deviates from (or, perhaps, contributes to) those described by early modern physicians.

how they “move,” “disrobe,” and “beat” upon the world. His despair situates him within a dynamic ecosystem. Hieronimo suggests that the body does not grieve alone, but in extending beyond its contours, suffers in the company of a wretched landscape.

Hieronimo also describes the ruinous effects of his disembodied passions, noting that he has “wearied the earth” with sadness. His concern for leafless trees and flowerless meadows stems, I argue, from his horticultural background. We learn, in the fourth addition of the play, in a scene intended to follow act three, scene twelve, that Hieronimo nurtured the tree from which his son was hung.⁴¹ Hieronimo explains:

This was the tree, I set it of a kernel,
And when our hot Spain could not let it grow,
But that the infant and the human sap
Began to wither, duly twice a morning
Would I be sprinkling it with fountain water.
At last it grew, and grew, and bore and bore,
Till at length
It grew gallows, and did bear our son.
It bore thy fruit and mine: O wicked, wicked plant. (63-71)

As Hieronimo describes the effects of Spain’s climate on the tree’s growth, he curiously explains that “the infant and the *human* sap / Began to wither” (emphasis mine). While “sap,” as the *OED* in its first definition of the word notes, most often refers to “the vital juice or fluid which circulates in plants,” a plant’s sap is often considered analogous to human blood.⁴² For example, in *The Country Housewife’s Garden* (1618), William Lawson writes, “sap is like bloud in man’s body, in which is the life.”⁴³ In specifying that infant *and* human sap began to wither, Hieronimo

⁴¹ Printed in 1602, “the additions” are extra scenes added to *The Spanish Tragedy*, possibly by Ben Jonson. I specifically discuss the play’s fourth addition, in which Hieronimo first describes the tree’s monstrous growth and then commissions a painter to depict Horatio’s murder.

⁴² *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “sap,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

⁴³ William Lawson, *The Countrie Hovsewife’s Garden* (London: 1618), 24.

seems to discuss the vitality of both the tree and his human son.⁴⁴ He describes a symbiotic relationship, in which both human and tree suffer during the early stages of their lives. By suggesting that Spain's heat affects both a young child and tree, Hieronimo introduces the possibility of a sympathetic relationship, in which the infant tree and young Horatio suffer similar sicknesses. Hieronimo implies that, even prior to son's murder, the tree's development was deeply tied to the growth of his son. Although Vin Nardizzi does not comment on what I view as a sympathetic relationship between human and tree, he argues that Hieronimo conveys a paternal attachment to both his son and the tree: "Hieronimo narrates a deep emotional investment and a lengthy commitment to the seed's uncertain growth... The tree with the 'human' sap is Horatio, and so both the plant and the son... constitute Hieronimo's family tree."⁴⁵ Hieronimo views the tree and Horatio as generated from his own seed, thus aligning human and sylvan body in a symbiotic and sympathetic relationship.

While Hieronimo initially emphasizes the tree and Horatio's mutual suffering, he goes on to refocus his attention and describes the tree's growth alone. He recounts a routine of botanical care, in which through careful cultivation, he was able to bring "it" back to life. Though Hieronimo regrets that his words lack the generative force to sway the heavens, his early horticultural care for the tree proves to be monstrously generative; the repetition of "grew" and then "bore" suggests that the tree rose to unexpected and even undesirable heights. Viewing its branches as "gallows," Hieronimo suggests that the tree bears not only seed, but also

⁴⁴ While "infant" typically refers to a young human child, Hieronimo seems to use the word as an appositive to describe a young tree. The *OED* defines infant in its appositive form as "in its earliest stages, newly existing, ungrown, undeveloped, nascent, incipient." The *OED* lists botanical examples of the word's use such as "infant blossom" and "infant fruit." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "infant," accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

⁴⁵ Vin Nardizzi, *Wooden O's: Shakespeare's Theaters and England's Trees* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 93-94.

technologies of death—Horatio becomes the tree’s fruit.

Echoing Bel-Imperia’s concerns regarding the danger of sympathetic attractions, Hieronimo dwells on the perverse sympathetic bond between Horatio and the deadly tree. Although the tree and Horatio wither together, the tree surpasses Horatio, bearing his body upon its branches. In referring to the sap of two different species—“the infant and the human sap”—Hieronimo also alludes to the practice of grafting. Jean Feerick explains:

Sap, the substance understood to pass between stock and scion in the grafting process and therefore the central site of exchange, was analogized to blood. The process of grafting, as Leonard Mascall carefully described for would-be horticulturalists, involved the ‘meeting of the two sapses,’ an idea that Hugh Platt would substantiate in his *Floraes Paradise* by envisioning the technique as ‘ioyning sap to sap’ until they are ‘well knit.’⁴⁶

By focusing on the care he affords the tree (rather than that which he offers his young son), Hieronimo proposes that his “green-thumb accomplishment” results in the grafting of human sap or blood upon the tree.⁴⁷ And, of course, we encounter a bleeding human corpse hanging from a tree in the play’s second act. What begins as an innocuous sympathetic relationship transforms into a fatal meeting of two saps as tree and human body merge or “knit” together. However, what Hieronimo describes is not the mutual becoming of human and sylvan bodies—that is, the Horatio and the tree do not equally constitute the “wicked plant” Hieronimo describes. Instead, the generative effects of agricultural labor create a dangerous sympathetic relationship (perhaps even an antipathetic relationship), in which the tree overpowers Horatio and produces inanimate

⁴⁶ Jean Feerick, “Botanical Shakespeares: The Radical Logic of Plant Life in *Titus Andronicus*,” *South Central Review* 26.1-2 (2009): 98. See Leonard Mascall, *A Book of the Arte and maner how to Plant and Graffe all sorts of Trees* (London, 1590) and Hugh Platt, *Floras Paradise, Beautified and adorned with sundry sorts of delicate frutes and flowers* (London, 1608). As Feerick notes, the gardener in *Richard II* draws attention to the analogous relationship between sap and blood when he “worries that the King has allowed the plants of his political world to grow ‘over proud’ in sap and blood” (98).

⁴⁷ Nardizzi, *Wooden O’s*, 93.

human fruit.⁴⁸ As Hieronimo alludes to the potential dangers of sympathetic bonds, the play emphasizes humanity's precarious and potentially devastating embeddedness within a larger ecology.

Immediately following his plaint against the tree, in a scene that also appears in the play's fourth addition, Hieronimo obsessively seeks representations of his suffering as he commissions a famed artist, Bazardo, to give his sorrow and the scene of Horatio's murder permanence through art. He begins by asking Bazardo, "Canst paint me a tear, or a wound, a groan, or a sigh? ... Canst paint a doleful cry?" (111, 125). Hieronimo expects that the painter will depict the sonorous and physical manifestations of his grief. Turning to art, he implies that the natural world cannot fully express emotion and desires the permanence of paint upon canvas. While his sighs and tears move meadows and mountains, Hieronimo understands, particularly in his experience with the seemingly wicked tree, the vicissitudes of natural landscapes. Depicting loss as a deeply sensual experience, he expects that Bazardo will illustrate even the sounds of pain and suffering.

In asking Bazardo to paint Horatio's murder, Hieronimo demonstrates a desire visualize violence through the permanence of art. He directs the artist to "Let the clouds scowl, make the moon dark, the stars extinct, the winds blowing, the bells tolling, the owl shrieking, the toads croaking, the minutes jarring, and the clock striking twelve" (143-146). Hieronimo's sensually vibrant description of this scene—and his particular attention to the grove's soundscape—conveys a curious desire to reimagine and recreate Horatio's murder. As Marguerite Tassi proposes, "Hieronimo, in effect, desires to give the moving pictures of drama the constancy and

⁴⁸ Nardizzi likens the cord around Horatio's neck to an asphyxiating umbilical cord. He argues that the play's attention to generation and infancy evokes the image of a stillborn child, strangled in the womb. While I agree that the play engages with such images, I draw attention to the rope's likeness to the vine (to which Horatio refers just moments before his death). *Ibid.*, 95.

iconic power of static images that one might gaze upon in awe in order to learn the truth.”⁴⁹

While I agree that Hieronimo demands vivacity and permanence, I argue that he commissions the painting as a means by which he can better understand the disorder of violence and the complexity of loss. Moreover, in demanding a sensually vibrant painting—in which the wind blows and a clock strikes—Hieronimo betrays a desire to re-experience the affective force of his son’s murder. He seems to believe that recreating this scene will mobilize his response and compel him to avenge his son’s death.

As Hieronimo demands that Bazardo depict, with precise detail, his son’s murder, he repeatedly focuses on the tree upon which Horatio was hung. In doing so, he expresses simultaneous feelings of paternal attachment and vehement suspicion towards what he, just moments earlier, refers to as a “wicked, wicked plant.” He says to Bazardo, “Canst paint me such a tree as this?... Would I have you paint me this tree, this very tree” (111, 125). The specificity with which he regards the tree—his repeated wish that the artist paint “this very tree”—further demonstrates his anthropomorphic regard for the tree. That is, he does not simply request that the artist depict the grove or a tree of the same genus. Rather, he requires that Bazardo visually represent the very tree he nurtured. In wishing to include this specific tree in the painting, Hieronimo again suggests that the tree was complicit in his son’s murder. Through art, he wishes to immortalize the tree, preserving the plant and controlling the extent of its dangerous growth.

In a moment of madness, Hieronimo beats the painter and, in doing so, he seems to turn away from the dangerous ecosystem he initially desired to see upon canvas. Rather than reliving

⁴⁹ Marguerite A. Tassi, “‘Stretch thine art’: Painting Passions, Revenge, and the Painter Addition to *The Spanish Tragedy*.” *The Scandal of Images: Iconoclasm, Eroticism, and Painting in Early Modern English Drama* (Cranbury: Susquehanna University Press, 2005), 159. Tassi argues that the play develops the connection between painting as dramatic representation and painting as visual art. She notes that Elizabethan discourses use the term painting to refer to cosmetics, rhetoric, and behavior.

his loss through art, Hieronimo pursues new means by which he may observe his suffering. In doing so, he turns to the human world, specifically attempting to view his image within Bazulto, an old man who, like Hieronimo, grieves the loss of his son. Bazulto seeks Hieronimo's aid, believing that Hieronimo, as Knight Marshal, may help him avenge his son's murder. The old man holds a leaf of paper that states, "The humble supplication / Of Don Bazulto for his murdered son" (3.13.78-79). Seizing the paper, Hieronimo exclaims:

No sir, it was my murdered son,
 Oh my son, my son, O my son Horatio!
 But mine, or thine, Bazulto, be content.
 Here, take my handkercher, and wipe thine eyes,
 Whiles wretched I in thy mishaps may see
 The lively portrait of my dying self. (3.13.80-85)

Hieronimo immediately insists that the paper must refer to Horatio rather than Bazulto's murdered son. He claims possession of the loss as he repeats "my son" and finally names his murdered child. Initially, Hieronimo cannot quite fathom that Bazulto, whom he regards as a "silly man," could suffer a similar form of bereavement (3.13.67). Ariane Balizet points out that Hieronimo "almost accepts the solace of shared grief, hinting that the similarity of their pain makes their sons interchangeable—"But mine, or thine, Bazulto"" (104). While Balizet reads this line as a brief moment of communal mourning, I argue that, rather than recognizing the similarity of their experiences, Hieronimo views Bazulto as a simulacrum of his own suffering, "the lively portrait of [his] dying self." Although Hieronimo recognizes that he is not the only father who has lost a son, he cannot quite distinguish Bazulto's loss from his own. That is, he views Bazulto's mishaps as a "lively portrait," a moving image or reflection of his own dying self. Hieronimo turns from a vibrant though suffering ecology—through which his passions, breath, and words moved—to the suffering of another and, in doing so, identifies a representation of his grief that exists beyond his body. While it is tempting to read this encounter

as a moment of empathetic identification, Hieronimo does not quite acknowledge that Bazulto's experience is similar to, though separate from, his own; rather he views Bazulto as an uncanny portrait, one that moves and breathes, but ultimately reflects his pain. Hieronimo's self-reflexive gaze renders Bazulto a strange object or even an art piece in which he may see his own reflection.

As Hieronimo hands Bazulto his son's handkerchief—appearing to console Bazulto—Hieronimo begins to address his deceased son. He again fails fully to acknowledge Bazulto's presence as he speaks to Horatio rather than the old man standing before him. He implies that he views Bazulto as the spectral presence of his deceased son. Although Hieronimo initially offers Bazulto the handkerchief so that he may dry his tears, Hieronimo seems to forget the intention behind this gesture. Reappearing on stage, the cloth instead reminds Hieronimo of his promise to avenge his son's death. He exclaims:

See, see, O see thy shame, Hieronimo!
 See here a loving father to his son!
 Behold the sorrows and the sad laments,
 That he deliv'reth for his son's decease!
 If love's effects so strive in lesser things,
 If love enforce such moods in meaner wits,
 If love express such power in poor estates—
 Hieronimo, whenas a raging sea,
 Tossed with the wind and tide, o'erturneth then
 The upper billows, course of waves to keep,
 Whilst lesser waters labor in the deep,
 Then shamest thou not, Hieronimo, to neglect
 The sweet revenge of Horatio? (3.13.95-107)

Hieronimo recognizes the old man's sadness, but more acutely sees his own shame. As Hieronimo commands himself to be sensually aware—telling himself to “see” and “behold”—he takes note of the old man's grief. He appears to acknowledge Bazulto's presence in this moment as he recognizes the signs and sounds of sadness. Simultaneously, he differentiates himself from

Bazulto by noting the old man's status and class. Katherine Maus argues that Hieronimo "cross[es] class boundaries and commiserate[s] with Bazulto" and understands that the fellow feeling he shares with the old man is not a matter of status or wits.⁵⁰ His repetition of the conditional phrase, "if love," emphasizes the universality of their filial devotion and thirst for revenge.

While I agree that Hieronimo engages in communal mourning as Maus suggests, he finds communality in the natural, rather than human, world. As Hieronimo resolves to alter his behavior, he turns to the exertion of a tumultuous sea and compares Bazulto to the sea's lower waters. The sea, he suggests, when faced with the strength of wind and tide, strives to maintain the rhythm of its waves. Lesser waters and upper billows labor together, sustaining their liquid cadence. Though Hieronimo does not view his grief amid the environment, as he does in act three, scene seven, he deems the sea's rage as an appropriate affective expression. Toiling like the sea's upper and lower waters, he and Bazulto will avenge their sons' deaths. While Hieronimo recognizes class difference, he also crosses ecological boundaries as he identifies a similarity between the labor and exertion of lower and upper waters. Hieronimo suggests that he understands shared grief as an ecological event. In imagining Bazulto as the sea's lower waters, Hieronimo again renders Bazulto as other than himself, an inhuman element. Hieronimo addresses their shared positions as bereaved fathers; however, he still cannot see Bazulto, viewing him instead as his portrait, his son, and now as the sea. As he continues to objectify Bazulto, Hieronimo cannot console the old man and focuses instead on his own feelings of despair and shame.

Hieronimo's inability to acknowledge fully Bazulto's humanity and his increasingly

⁵⁰ Katherine Eisaman Maus, "Machiavels and Family Men," *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago P, 1995), 68.

outward gaze—which shifts from Bazulto’s face to raging waters—leads to his hallucination. He believes that he is not in the presence of an elderly man, but just steps away from his son. As he looks upon Bazulto’s withered features, he remarks how his “sweet boy” is “changed in death’s black shade” (3.13.146). Addressing first his son and then fate, he laments, “Horatio, thou art older than thy father. / Ah, ruthless fate, that favor thus transforms!” (3.13.150-151). What is curious is that Hieronimo does not imagine a spectral figure, but instead believes, for a moment, that Bazulto—“the lively portrait of his dying self”—is his son’s ghost. He suggests that Bazulto, embodies both his portrait and Hortatio’s specter. Even after having recovered from the hallucination, Hieronimo affirms, “Thou art the lively image of my grief. / Within thy face, my sorrows I may see” (3.13.162-163). Again, Hieronimo fails to recognize Bazulto’s own loss and instead looks upon what he views as his own grief.

Hieronimo reunites with his son through Bazulto, on two levels. Most obviously, Hieronimo believes that he is just steps away from his son as Bazulto becomes, for him, his son’s ghost. More curiously, the play reunites the deceased son and his father as Hieronimo imagines that they both, though at different moments and in different ways, occupy Bazulto’s body. In addition to his inability to recognize Bazulto’s suffering on its own terms—that is, without viewing it as a representation or portrait of his own—Hieronimo cannot distinguish his own personhood from that of his son. He sees both himself and Horatio within Bazulto’s anguished expression.

As Hieronimo recognizes his grief amid the trees and upon the old man’s face, the play dramatizes the ambivalent effects of such identifications. Hieronimo does not grieve alone; however, his surrounding landscape becomes subject to ecological devastation, and in spite of his position as Knight Marshal, Hieronimo ignores Bazulto’s plea for help. As Hieronimo looks

outward and attempts to recognize his grief amid a human and nonhuman landscape, he allows himself to be changed by that which he encounters. That is, his grief does not simply ruin the environment, nor is it simply a portrait brimming with vitality. By imagining his sorrow within a larger ecosystem of suffering, Hieronimo hallucinates and envisions reuniting with his son. The reunion deepens Hieronimo's thirst for revenge—he believes that Horatio has come to seek justice—however, as Hieronimo converses with his son, he continues to ignore Bazulto's sadness and loss. Bazulto emphasizes Hieronimo's inability to understand the similar though separate grief of others as he declares, "I am not your young son...I am a grieved man, and not a ghost" (3.13.152, 159).

It is not until Hieronimo takes a closer look—and sees that Bazulto's "eyes are gummed" and his "forehead troubled"—that he attempts to offer Bazulto comfort (3.13.164, 165). Hieronimo's detailed description of Bazulto's face marks a subtle shift in the scene. Instead of viewing Bazulto as his portrait or as the lower waters of a wild sea, Hieronimo finally sees Bazulto's humanness.⁵¹ Although Hieronimo declares that Bazulto feels "the selfsame sorrow" he feels for his son, he understands that Bazulto's grief is similar rather than a simulacrum of his own. He offers Bazulto comfort, lending the old man his arm and promising that, with Isabella, they will sing together. This scene ends with the hopeful possibility of compassion; however, the play primarily emphasizes the destructive force of Hieronimo's grief within a human and nonhuman ecology.

This father and son reunion occurs not only within the contours of the old man's face, but in the folds and threads of Horatio's handkerchief. The handkerchief becomes an affectively

⁵¹ Hieronimo's attention and detailed description of Bazulto reminds us of the tripling of the word "see" and Hieronimo's inability to do so at the scene's start.

dense object as it changes hands and enweaves bodies by taking on the fluids of those who possess it. We learn that Bel-Imperia initially gives Don Andrea the cloth as a love token; Horatio then carries it to remember his deceased friend; and finally, after discovering his son's corpse, Hieronimo promises to carry the handkerchief by his side until he has avenged his son's death. Andrew Sofer argues that the handkerchief becomes a palimpsest, pointing out that each time the handkerchief changes hands it changes meaning.⁵² Similarly, John Kerrigan proposes the handkerchief helps “build up a chain of remembrances...uniting the play around the relationship between remembrance and revenge.”⁵³ In contrast, Allison Hobgood claims that the object “more forcefully enacts a series of substitutions in which each earlier possessor of the scarf is as good as forgotten in the face of new ownership.”⁵⁴ While I agree in part with Hobgood—Hieronimo seems unaware of the cloth's history—and I draw on Sofer's points about the palimpsestic accumulation of meanings, I focus on the way in which the handkerchief merges Hieronimo and Horatio's bodily fluids and accordingly represents their shared identities.

Hieronimo treasures the cloth—swearing that it will remain against his chest—not simply because it belonged to his son, but because the handkerchief is soaked in Horatio's blood. Each

⁵² Much of the scholarship on *The Spanish Tragedy* has focused on religious symbolism of Horatio's handkerchief. Andrew Sofer regards the handkerchief as a palimpsest, noting that each time it changes hands it changes meaning. Sofer ties the bloody handkerchief to Catholic mass, arguing that “Kyd exploited spectators' residual faith in magic handkerchiefs and longing for 'ocular experience' by transforming the handkerchief from a token of all believers' salvation into a personalized fetish that embodies the principle of personal vengeance.” Marion Lomax similarly touches on the Catholic resonances of Horatio's bloodstained cloth, specifically relating it to the Holy Shroud or Veronica's napkin. While I agree that the handkerchief may allude to the loss of Catholic rituals, I argue that the handkerchief becomes a way in which Hieronimo may physically and psychically engage with his deceased son. Andrew Sofer, “Absorbing Interests: Kyd's Bloody Handkerchief as Palimpsest,” *Comparative Drama* 34.2 (2000): 138; Marion Lomax, *Stage Images and Traditions: Shakespeare to Ford* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987).

⁵³ John Kerrigan, “Hieronimo, Hamlet and Remembrance,” *Essays in Criticism* 31 (1981): 107.

⁵⁴ Allison Hobgood, *Passionate Playgoing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014), 74.

time the handkerchief appears in his possession, Hieronimo draws attention to his son's blood. For example, when first grasping the cloth, Hieronimo tells his wife: "See'st thou this handkercher besmeared with blood" (2.5.51). This line suggests that, upon encountering his son's corpse, Hieronimo takes hold of the cloth and bemoans that it is drenched in blood. Yet curiously, in the following act, Hieronimo claims:

...Horatio, this was thine,
And when I dyed it in thy dearest blood,
This was a token 'twixt thy soul and me.
That of thy death revenged I should be. (3.13.86-89)

Here, Hieronimo explains that he dyed the cloth "in [Horatio's] dearest blood," suggesting that he attempted to clot Horatio's wounds by holding the handkerchief against his son's body (3.13.87). This seemingly insignificant textual discrepancy, I suggest, demonstrates Hieronimo's deepening relationship to the fabric. While he first suggests that the cloth will compel him to avenge Horatio's death, by the third act, the handkerchief seems to be more than simply an emblem of revenge; this is most obviously apparent in Hieronimo's startled reaction as he mistakenly offers Bazulto the handkerchief. By suggesting that he intentionally held the cloth against Horatio's wounds, Hieronimo reclaims his paternal role. He implies that, even after Horatio's violent demise, he will continue to care for his son in spite of his inability to sustain (or, perhaps, even cultivate) Horatio's life.

That the handkerchief is soaked in blood, rather than another bodily fluid, is significant in that it reaffirms not only Hieronimo's paternal role, but Hieronimo and Horatio's genealogical bond. Patricia Crawford explains that, for early moderns, blood was a "central symbolic concept for the kinship structure of early modern England."⁵⁵ She writes, "blood was also a metaphor for

⁵⁵ Patricia Crawford, "Blood and Paternity," *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (Great Britain: Longman, 2005), 2.

a social relationship, invoked to represent a ‘natural’ kinship link, different from the social bonds of affinity created through marriage.”⁵⁶ The *OED*’s secondary definitions of blood relate primarily to family and lineage: “Ties of birth or heredity, especially those connecting a person to his or her parents or ancestors”; “persons of a specified family or lineage collectively; and “a family descended from a common ancestor.”⁵⁷ The handkerchief, soaked in blood, becomes a physical artifact that represents Hieronimo and Horatio’s shared bloodline. By carrying the handkerchief and repeatedly drawing attention to the blood upon it, Hieronimo attempts to maintain an almost living kinship bond with his son, in spite of Horatio’s death.

Hieronimo grieves the end of a small ecosystem composed of himself and his son; however, he finds solace in proposing that that the cloth is stained with Horatio’s blood as well as his own. At the conclusion of his play, performed at court, Hieronimo reveals both his son’s corpse and the bloody handkerchief as he declares:

But hope, heart, treasure, joy, and bliss
 All fled, failed, died, yea, all decayed with this.
 From forth these wounds came breath that gave me life;
 They murdered me that made these fatal marks...
 And here behold this bloody handkercher
 [He draws forth the handkerchief from his breast.]
 Which at Horatio’s death I weeping dipped
 Within the river of his bleeding wounds.
 It, as propitious, see, I have reserved,
 And never hath it left my bloody heart,
 Soliciting remembrance of my vow
 With these, oh, these accursed murderers,
 Which, now, performed, my heart is satisfied...
 He runs to hang himself. (4.4.94-97, 122-128)

Hieronimo imagines his decay as contemporaneous with that of his son’s corpse. As Horatio

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁵⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “blood,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>. While these understandings of the word are still in use, blood as kinship or lineage was more commonly used prior to the twentieth century.

decays in death, Hieronimo decays in life. He also emphasizes their kinship bond as he implies that what pours forth from Horatio's wounds—that is, Horatio's blood—once gave Hieronimo life. Though he references his son's wounds in this line, Hieronimo seems to remember a past in which his son's body was unharmed, and Horatio's blood had a generative force. Hieronimo describes a symbiotic relationship as he inverts their roles as caregiver and child. He reminisces upon the vital effect of Horatio's blood, claiming that he drew breath or life from his son's vitality. The murderers disrupt this intimate ecology between father and son as they wound both Horatio's body and effect a second assault upon Hieronimo. The fatal marks—and the blood that pours forth from Horatio's body—kills the bereaved father and, as Hobgood notes, the promise of “biological sustainability.”⁵⁸

While Hieronimo mourns the generative vitality of this small ecology as well as the continuation of his bloodline, he attempts to recreate another ecology of sorts as he confronts Horatio's corpse. In a moment that recalls Horatio's description of Don Andrea's death in act one, Hieronimo describes weeping beside his son as he dips the handkerchief in the bloody “river” of Horatio's wounded body. Moving the cloth from Horatio's wounds to his heart, Hieronimo holds the bloodied handkerchief against his own bleeding heart. While Hieronimo does not specify whether his tears wet Horatio's corpse, this image—of a weeping father positioned above his bleeding son—suggests an exchange of bodily fluids. The movement of tears and blood create the appearance of an intimate ecology; however, Hieronimo does not admit to feeling comforted by this exchange as he depicts his son's death and his subsequent

⁵⁸ Hobgood, *Passionate Playgoing*, 78. Hobgood does not explicitly consider the ecosystemic relationship between father and son; however, her analysis of this scene comments on the ecological implications of Horatio's murder. She writes, “His son's corpse, rife with ‘wounds that yet are bleeding fresh’ (53), no longer preserves his father's seed but instead both literally and figuratively oozes Hieronimo's immortality into the earth” (78).

feelings of grief. His lack of solace implies that he is acutely aware that Horatio's wounds will eventually cease to bleed and his tears will eventually dry.

Understanding that this ecology is not sustainable, Hieronimo seeks new means by which he may engage with his son even long after Horatio's demise. The culturally specific uses of the early modern handkerchief make the handkerchief an appropriate if not ideal cultural object through which Hieronimo may reunite with his son. Proposing that he held the cloth against his own bloody heart, Hieronimo imagines that his blood stains the handkerchief and, presumably, merges with the blood of his son. Critics such as Will Fisher and Stephanie Dickey shed light on the handkerchief's various uses during the early modern period. Dickey proposes that, though handkerchiefs were typically made from costly material, "its implicit function [was to] absorb bodily fluids, foul odors, and other indignities the bearer is by implication too civilized to deal with in a more casual fashion."⁵⁹ Fisher discusses the handkerchief's transferability; he notes that handkerchiefs were popular love tokens and, unsurprisingly often moved between hands.⁶⁰ Although Horatio does not give his father the piece of cloth, the handkerchief absorbs and fuses the bodily fluids of both father and son. Through its threads, Hieronimo and Horatio merge physically as their blood becomes indistinguishable.

Given the period's understanding of the blood and spirits, the bloodied cloth would have allowed Hieronimo and Horatio to merge spiritually as well as physically. In his

⁵⁹ Stephanie Dickey, "Women Holding Handkerchiefs in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraits," *Image and Self-Image in Netherlandish Art, 1550-1750*. eds. Reindert Falkenburg, Jan de Jong, et al. (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 1995), 336.

⁶⁰ Will Fisher, "Handkerchiefs and Early Modern Ideologies of Gender," *Shakespeare Studies* 28 (200): 199-207. Drawing on Dickey's work, Will Fisher also considers the handkerchief as an instrument of self-fashioning. In his discussion of the handkerchief as an incongruous artifact, Fisher comments, "on the one hand, the handkerchief is associated with purity (with clean, white linen), but on the other it is also associated with impurities (like 'base' bodily fluids)" (205). For more on clothing and detachable objects (rings, gloves, handkerchiefs, for example), see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass's *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*.

Mikrokosmographia, Helkiah Crooke explains “the Soule doth not execute hir offices without the helpe of the Spirits: the matter and the substance of the Spirits is blood.”⁶¹ Crooke stresses the “movable” quality of these vapors, explaining that the blood cannot be “conteyned, nor cannot be concluded within a little and small body.”⁶² Much like the passions, the spirits (composed of blood) travel beyond the body. These spirits carry out the soul’s “offices” or duties and, in doing so, establish a connection between the soul and the outer world. Although Horatio bleeds upon the cloth (and Hieronimo imagines that he does as well), early modern medical texts such as Crooke’s associate the body’s blood with the soul. In proposing that the handkerchief exists between his soul and that of Horatio, Hieronimo anticipates his later suggestion that the handkerchief fuses their blood. In imagining the handkerchief as dyed with their blood, Hieronimo implies that the cloth provides a means by which they may spiritually reunite through the fabric’s threads. Although he initially claims to keep the handkerchief until he has avenged Horatio’s death—thus linking it with his desire for vengeance—the fabric becomes more than a mere emblem of revenge as it joins father and son in both body and soul.

In addition to revealing the handkerchief, Hieronimo reminds his audience of their shared bloodline by attempting to die in the same manner as his son. He reiterates his earlier point that he too suffers from the fatal wounds upon his son’s body as he attempts to hang himself. He tries to embody his son’s pain, almost as if to suggest that he suffers from both wounds and asphyxiation. Moreover, Hieronimo’s determination to hang himself conveys a larger desire for reunion and directly relates to his disembodied view of grief. In Hieronimo’s encounter with Bazulto, similitude allows Hieronimo to engage in a hallucinatory reunion. That is, by viewing his grief within Bazulto’s face, Hieronimo then psychically believes he stands just steps away

⁶¹ Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (London, 1615), 10.

⁶² *Ibid.*

from his deceased son. His desire for similitude takes another form as he attempts to embody his son's pain. He seems to entertain the question: If I can reunite with Horatio by viewing my grief in another's face, what might happen if I feel Horatio's pain? In hoping to endure his Horatio's suffering by becoming hanging fruit, Hieronimo seems to attempt a more lasting reunion.

While Hieronimo engages in moments of communal mourning—by first suffering with the surrounding landscape and then with Bazulto—Isabella does not imagine her pain amid sylvan or human life; she instead turns to plant life as a means by which she may ease the agony of grief. Speaking to her maid, she says:

So that, you say, this herb will purge the eye,
And this the head?
Ah, but none of them will purge the heart:
No, there's no medicine left for my disease,
Nor any physic to recur the dead.

She runs lunatic (3.8.1-5)

The fact that this conversation occurs between two women reflects the period's association between domestic remedies and women's knowledge. Floyd-Wilson notes that "while many medical writers condemned the ignorance of wise-women and herb women, others held that they were the best sources for understanding medicinal plants."⁶³ In consultation with her maid, Isabella discusses which herbs offer therapeutic effects to specific body parts; however, she concludes that no herb will relieve the pain produced by loss.

Rather than seeking other herbs or remedies that might quicken the purgation of melancholic humors, Isabella is quick to conclude that the pain from which she suffers is incurable. Her lack of confidence in herbal remedies, I argue, reflects a larger mistrust of botanic

⁶³ Mary Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 12. See also Katherine Park's *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection* (2006) and Deborah E. Harkness's "A View from the Streets: Women and Medical Work in Elizabethan London" (2008).

life. To our contemporary sensibilities, the ability to cure grief through medicinal remedies may seem unusual; however, as Tanya Pollard suggests, “in response to her grief, Isabella seeks purgation, the standard form of cure in the established Renaissance medical tradition inherited from the Greek physician Galen...As much a material substance as a mood, Isabella’s grief can—at least potentially—be forcibly purged from her heart.”⁶⁴ Plant life, in Isabella’s most recent experience, hurts rather than heals the human body. By additionally noting that physic cannot enliven the dead, Isabella alludes to Horatio’s death within the grove. She implicitly associates botanic forms with technologies of death rather than those that may offer restorative effects.

Like Hieronimo, Isabella recognizes the fatal consequences of a seemingly innocuous sympathetic bond between human and sylvan life. Her rejection of botanic forms becomes increasingly impassioned as she actively takes vengeance on the grove and specifically the “fatal pine” upon which Horatio was hung (4.2.7). We learn here that the murderers hung Horatio from the branches of a pine, a tree early moderns believed had surprisingly restorative effects. In his herbal, John Gerard explains that the tree’s kernels were believed to cure an “old cough” and remedy the “long infirmities of the chest.”⁶⁵ “Boyled with sugar,” these kernels also cure indigestion, kidney stones, and the “frettings of the bladder.”⁶⁶ In addition to treating various respiratory and urological ailments, pine tree kernels inflame “fleshy lust” because they increase the body’s production of seed and milk.⁶⁷ By suggesting that these kernels provoke feelings of sexual desire, Gerard associates the tree with regeneration. Sylvan iconography is often used to

⁶⁴ Tanya Pollard, “A Kind of Wild Medicine: Revenge as Remedy in Early Modern England,” *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* 50 (2005): 60.

⁶⁵ John Gerard, *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plants* (London, 1597), 1357.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

denote family genealogy and government durability; however, the pine is unique in that its kernels or fruit represent and create the emergence of new human life. While humans and pine trees appear to have a sympathetic relationship, Isabella wishes to ensure the grove's barrenness.

As she destroys the arbor, she declares:

I will revenge myself upon this place
 Where thus they murdered my beloved son.
 Down with these branches and these loathsome boughs
 Of this unfortunat and fatal pine:
 Down with them, Isabella, rent them up
 And burn the roots from whence the rest is sprung.
 I will not leave a root, a stalk, a tree,
 A bough, a branch, a blossom, nor a leaf,
 No, not an herb within this garden-plot.
 Accursed complot of my misery,
 Fruitless forever may this garden be! (4.2.4-14)

Although Isabella admits that “they”—presumably the murderers—killed her “beloved son,” she views the forest and fatal pine as active participants in Horatio’s murder. Determined to rid the entire grove of life, she not only destroys the branches and boughs, but she also ensures that neither root, nor stalk may produce new life. More specifically, she demands that the garden be forever fruitless. If we consider this wish in light of the play’s fourth addition, Isabella, much like her husband, appears to regard fruit or, in this case, human bearing trees with extreme suspicion. She ignores the potentially therapeutic and generative effects of pine trees upon the body and instead focuses on their potential to destroy rather than create human life.

Implicitly, by targeting all parts of the tree, Isabella rids the tree and, to an extent, herself of the capacity to bear fruit. The pine’s kernels can no longer stir feelings of lust and lead (possibly) to new sylvan and human forms. In addition, by attacking the tree’s boughs, Isabella ensures that the pine cannot bear its own fruit or, for that matter, human fruit.⁶⁸ If we consider

⁶⁸ In his discussion of this scene, Sacks argues that Isabella demonstrates her distrust of language

this scene alongside the play's fourth addition—in which Hieronimo describes his care for the pine—the play proposes that humans and trees participate in the creation and destruction of sylvan and human life. That is, just as Hieronimo cultivates tree life, pines can participate in the production of new human life. Isabella rejects this seemingly sympathetic bond and, in destroying the forest, attempts to ensure that trees and specifically the fatal pine cannot help generate (and later destroy) human offspring.⁶⁹

As she continues her plaint against the grove, she enlists the aid of the elements and fauna. She declares:

An eastern wind commixed with noisome airs
 Shall blast the plants and the young saplings;
 The earth with serpents shall be pestered,
 And passengers, for fear to be infect,
 Shall stand aloof, and, looking at it, tell,
 'There, murdered, died the son of Isabel.' (4.2.17-22)

Isabella conspires with the wind and imagines that atmospheric change—"noisome airs"—will destroy the grove's botanic life. She specifically targets newly emerging life as if to suggest that she will avenge herself on all botanic life in the garden however young or old. In doing so, she anticipates the garden's future and ensures that even potentially fledgling life cannot thrive given

by literalizing her curse against the forest. He writes, "Isabella's rampage is a literal enactment of the elegiac verbal curse against nature, or of the pathetic fallacy which asserts nature's suffering. For Isabella has none of the elegist's necessary trust in words. She has heard and said enough ... Her destruction of the pastoral setting is followed by her own suicide, another actual performance of the kind of 'breast-wounding' or 'piercing' that we encounter only figuratively in elegies." Peter Sacks, "Where Words Prevail Not: Grief, Revenge, and Language in Kyd and Shakespeare" *ELH* 49.3 (1982): 581-582.

⁶⁹ In "Wooden Subjects," Tzachi Zamir argues that "Kyd utilizes the tree image and Isabella's assault on the tree to play up the duality of nature as both creative and destructive." While I agree with Zamir, I would add that, given early moderns engagement with ideas of sympathy and antipathy, the play more specifically dramatizes the dangers of sympathetic attractions, particularly if we consider Horatio and the tree's shared history. In part, the play responds to the question: What happens when sylvan-human sympathies go awry? While pine trees may lend a hand in human reproduction, suggesting a sympathetic relationship, they also bear and destroy human fruit. Tzachi Zamir, "Wooden Subjects," *New Literary History* 39.2 (2008): 283.

the garden's atmospheric conditions. A plague of serpents will corrupt the earth, further ensuring the grove's destruction. Isabella envisions that this plot of land will eventually evoke fear. Her references to noisome airs and infection allude to the period's understanding of infectious disease. Early moderns believed that infection spread through the attraction of the body's humors to contaminated air.⁷⁰ Floyd-Wilson explains that, "unlike modern understandings of infection, contagion in the early modern period was commonly marked as a sympathetic response, which meant that the victim possessed a predestined affinity with the invasive element."⁷¹ Floyd-Wilson points out that the air's ubiquity would suggest that anyone exposed to bad air could contract the plague; however, she notes that early moderns believed infection arose through the attraction, "an inherent compatibility," of particular elements and bodies.⁷² As Isabella imagines the threat of contamination, the play again alludes to the potentially dangerous effects of sympathetic attractions.

In addition, Isabella describes a perverse memorial of sorts as she declares that those passing by the plot will remember it as the place in which Horatio was murdered. While memorials typically involve an act of creation—for example, an architectural structure or a newly planted tree—the memorial Isabella depicts is marked by destruction and a lack of vitality. Although Christopher Crosbie does not discuss Isabella's desire for remembrance or memorialization, he proposes that, "Isabella's whole project here is the creation of absence...she seeks the continual reinforcement of negation, the perpetual remembrance that this is a barren

⁷⁰ In his work, *A Treatise of the Plague* (1603), David Lodge writes, "Plague procéedeth from the venemous corruption of the humors and spirits of the body, infected by the attraction of corrupted aire, or infection of euil vapours, which haue the propertie to alter mans bodie, and poyson his spirits after a straunge and daungerous qualitie, contrary and mortall enemy to the vitall spirits, which haue their residence in the heart." David Lodge, *A Treatise of the Plague* (London: 1603), 11.

⁷¹ Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge*, 47.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 55.

space that must remain barren.”⁷³ While I agree that Isabella wishes to rid the land of life in the fullest sense possible, she imagines a scene of frightful remembrance. She notes that while fear will compel passersby to avoid this piece of land, they will pay tribute to her son as they recall his untimely murder. In referring to Horatio as the “son of Isabel,” she suggests that onlookers will concomitantly remember *her* as Horatio’s mother. She reaffirms her position as a maternal figure, but also rejects this role as she desires the destruction of even the land’s youngest sapling.

Isabella embraces her own barrenness more explicitly as the scene continues:

And as I curse this tree from further fruit,
So shall my womb be cursed for his sake;
And with this weapon will I wound my breast.
The hapless breast that gave Horatio suck. (4.2.35-37)

As Isabella curses the pine and its potential to regenerate, she targets her own reproductive organs, first cursing her womb and then wounding her breast. She again aligns her body—and its potential to create life—with the tree’s potential to reproduce and bear both botanic and human fruit.⁷⁴ Crosbie comments that Isabella destroys the “two sites of Hieronimo’s fruitful reproduction in which his seed(s) took root and expanded his household.”⁷⁵ While the play does not specify her weapon of choice, she may use the very same weapon with which she destroyed the forest to injure her chest. In his discussion of this scene, Zamir points out that Isabella “choose[s] a mode of suicide that entails the destruction of the most physical manifestation of

⁷³ Christopher Crosbie, “‘Oeconomia’ and the Vegetative Soul: Rethinking Revenge in *The Spanish Tragedy*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 38.1 (2008): 29-30.

⁷⁴ Christopher Crosbie discusses the concept of *oeconomia* or household management and argues that, once Isabella’s destroys her womb and the pine tree, Hieronimo engages in another kind of reproductive activity as he avenges Horatio’s death. While I agree that the play links the pine and Isabella’s womb by drawing attention to their reproductive potential, I emphasize the ways in which Isabella becomes a destroyed tree-human figure.

⁷⁵ Crosbie, “Oeconomia,” 30.

maternal nurturing.”⁷⁶ In effect, she rejects the careful cultivation of tree and human life that Hieronimo describes in the play’s fourth addition. Referring to her breast as “hapless,” Isabella further compares her body to the “unfortunate” pine. The *OED* defines hapless, now largely out of use, as “destitute of or lacking good fortune; unfortunate, unlucky.”⁷⁷ The *OED*’s first definition of unfortunate also emphasizes a lack of luck.⁷⁸ Isabella suggests that, even prior to her violent curse, both the tree and her body are marked by misfortune. Allowing herself and the tree to live would only produce further suffering. Notably, she dedicates her curse to Horatio, as if to suggest that the misfortune of the tree *and* her reproductive organs contributed to her son’s demise.

In this scene, we see another human-tree metamorphosis that results in the devastation of human and botanic life. While Horatio become the pine’s fruit as his murderers hang him from its branches, Isabella enacts her own transformation. Wishing to resemble the trees she has just destroyed, she wounds her chest and curses her womb from further fruit. She becomes a wounded botanic body, one that, like the forest’s trees, can no longer bring forth new life. As Adrienne Redding suggests, “She is the garden itself, now cursed, barren and devastated. She completes these final images by staving herself, cutting down her own body in the same way she has been cutting down the arbor in which the product of her body was likewise destroyed.”⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Zamir, “Wooden Subjects,” 283.

⁷⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “hapless,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

⁷⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “unfortunate,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

⁷⁹ Adrienne Redding, “Liminal Gardens: Edenic Iconography and the Disruption of Sexual Difference in Tragedy,” *Comitatus* 46 (2015): 150. Redding discusses what she views as the gendered and Edenic iconography in both *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*. She views Isabella’s violent attack on the garden and herself as a means by which she may “maintain the binary opposition grounding masculine and feminine identity that ironically finds such reinforcement in the Edenic narrative of creation as male and female” (150-151). While I agree

Moments before stabbing herself she exclaims, “Ay, here he died, and here I him embrace” (4.2.23). This image of physical entanglement draws us back to the sympathetic attraction Horatio describes in the play’s second act. As I discuss, Horatio wishes to wrap his arms around Bel-Imperia just as a vine encircles an elm. In wishing to embrace her son and in enacting her sylvan metamorphosis, Isabella implicitly envisions the physical entanglement of botanic life. Similar to Horatio, she perverts the emblematic image of an elm and vine. As a wounded tree, Isabella embraces dead or rotting fruit. Rather than presenting an image of growth or cultivation, such as those found in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Virgil’s *Georgics*, Isabella alludes to an image of botanic decay. Metamorphosed through violence, Isabella and Horatio reunite as ruined vegetation.

Like her husband, Isabella yearns to reunite with her deceased son; however, this reunion occurs through the self-violation of her body and reflects the isolating experience of her grief. Isabella does not see her sorrow amidst a vibrant, suffering landscape, nor does she view her sadness in the brow and eyes of another’s face. Chris McMahon argues that “motherhood is constructed in *The Spanish Tragedy* as a fiercely private condition.”⁸⁰ Both parents in this small family unit imagine the release of their tears and sighs; however, for Isabella, it is not conceivable that human and nonhuman life may feel the gravity of her loss. While Hieronimo describes an ecology metamorphosed by his grief, Isabella wishes to destroy that which surrounds her, first through a storm of tears and sighs and later with the aid of the elements and

with Redding’s points regarding Isabella’s sylvan-human transformation, I suggest that she enacts this metamorphosis allows her access to engage in vengeance and, perhaps most significantly, reunite with her son.

⁸⁰ Chris McMahon, *Family and the State in Early Modern Revenge Drama: Economies of Vengeance* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 57. McMahon argues that Isabella rejects the current social order and believes that social equilibrium “demands a holocaust” (58). Although McMahon suggests that Isabella reunites with Horatio through wounding her body, he does not consider the ecological implications of Isabella’s suicide.

fauna. What pains the heart has no remedy or cure. By recognizing his suffering within a larger human and nonhuman ecology, Hieronimo is able to imagine a reunion with his son, specifically as he views his grief within Bazulto's face. In contrast, Isabella's grief does not transform her environment; she does not view herself within a larger ecosystem of suffering as does her husband. To reunite with Horatio, she must transform her own body and become, like him, a decayed plant.

To conclude, *The Spanish Tragedy* conceives of humanity's embeddedness within a larger ecology as both deeply dangerous and a source of consolatory relief. Through drawing attention to the risks of human-sylvan sympathies, the play suggests that such attractions compel fatal metamorphoses. Although Horatio grows with the pine, sharing in its illnesses and health, the intensity of their sympathetic bond leads to the young man's death as he becomes the tree's hanging fruit. At the same time, the play dramatizes a lively ecosystem that participates in the production of grief on the early modern stage. Kyd proposes that sorrow is a shared rather than isolating experience as Hieronimo's disembodied grief establishes his presence within a vibrant ecology. As he views his suffering amongst plant life, an old man's face and even textile matter, Hieronimo experiences a series of transformations—not only do these interactions reinvigorate his desire for revenge, but they also allow the bereaved father to merge with his deceased son. Although Isabella rejects the environment Hieronimo embraces, she too relies on a larger ecology to reunite with her son. In staging the interdependence of human and nonhuman bodies—particularly during moments of suffering and experiences of loss—*The Spanish Tragedy* reveals an extraordinarily entangled landscape, one that consoles and grieves with its inhabitants.

**Inter-Elemental Sympathies and Cross-Species Compassion:
Caring for the Hybrid Body in *Titus Andronicus***

In *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare introduces us to an affectively charged natural world. Lions feel pity, the woods are ruthless, and even the sea feels the wind's rage. Though Lavinia transforms from a young woman to sylvan-human figure, her streams of sorrow and the expressive gesticulation of her branches show that hybrid bodies in this world are capable of deeply human feelings. Amidst this landscape, the play engages with earlier understandings of sympathy—as occult or hidden affinities—to model the ways in which characters may care for those whom they are unlike. Natural sympathies teach Titus to respond to his daughter with compassion; however, the play also dramatizes the dangers of empathy or pity based on similarity and likeness. Titus is deaf to Tamora's pleas for pity, though she argues for their similar positions as both parents and patriots, and his attempt to embody Lavinia's suffering leads to a solipsistic focus on his own anguish.

Unlike our contemporary understanding of sympathy as feelings of pity or compassion, sympathy for early moderns referred to occult or hidden affinities in the natural world. The *Oxford English Dictionary's* first definition of sympathy defines the word as “a (real or supposed) affinity between certain things, by virtue of which they are similarly or correspondingly affected by the same influence, affect or influence one another (especially in some occult way), or attract or tend towards each other.”⁸¹ The definition emphasizes a sense of reciprocal influence—that is, things that both affect and are affected—and reflects sympathy's Latin root, “*passio*” or suffering. The word's sense of movement and correspondence primarily referred to occult and physical processes rather than fellow-feelings or a shift in one's emotional

⁸¹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “sympathy,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

state. As discussed, sympathetic attractions were not visually knowable; instead, early moderns relied on experiential knowledge to understand, for example, which particular plants and trees could remedy specific illnesses and pains.

Our more contemporary understanding of sympathy, as corresponding feelings or emotions, appears in the word's third definition: "the quality or state of being thus affected by the suffering or sorrow of another; a feeling of compassion or commiseration." While the *OED* cites an early 17th century use of the word in which sympathy denotes pity, according to the *OED*, this definition did not gain traction until the eighteenth century. Richard Meek complicates the etymological history the *OED* presents. He writes, "When we turn to literary texts from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries we can see the gradual emergence of the more 'modern' usages of the term considerably earlier than the *OED* suggests. This more complex usage of sympathy grows out of, and extends, an earlier fascination with ideas of pity and compassion."⁸² Meek argues that, in spite of early modern understandings of occult sympathies or affinities, *Titus Andronicus* characterizes sympathy as an imaginative and cognitive activity. He proposes that the "characters...are not simply presented as passive bodies, affected by external climates or analogical forces, but rather as thinking and feeling human beings, capable of putting themselves imaginatively into the position of others."⁸³

While I agree that the play dramatizes the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries' shifting meanings of sympathy, specifically by drawing attention to inter-species and inter-elemental forms of pity, I propose that Shakespeare does not deviate from earlier conceptions of sympathy as Meek suggests. Although as Meek claims, characters attempt to imagine the experience of

⁸² Richard Meek, "'O, what a sympathy of woe is this': Passionate Sympathy in *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Survey* 66 (2013): 290.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 289.

others, occult sympathies serve a crucial role in modeling the ways in which we may respond appropriately to the body in pain. Although Titus cannot initially empathize with Tamora as she pleads for her son's life, he reacts to Lavinia's mutilated body by likening her experience to his own. He engages in a model of pity based on similarity while disregarding the particularity of her experience. Throughout this piece, I use the word "empathy" to convey Titus's belief that he can "understand and appreciate another person's feelings [and] experience."⁸⁴ Titus's attempt to appropriate Lavinia's suffering—by severing his own hand—causes him to abandon an empathetic model of pity. Through observing the ecological receptivity of different elemental forces, he discovers a way in which he may respond to his hybrid daughter. For Titus, identifying inter-elemental sympathies—that is, the affective interaction among sea, sky, and land—compels him to respond to Lavinia's pain without attempting to appropriate her suffering as his own.

Unlike the dangerous attractions we see in *The Spanish Tragedy*, sympathetic affinities in *Titus Andronicus*, specifically those amongst the elements, offer a useful model for responding to the hybrid body in pain because such bonds do not rely upon similarity—that is, earth responds not to earth, but to sea. As texts such as Fenner's *A Treatise of the Affections* and the play's inter-elemental sympathies suggest, the attraction of bodies to other bodies, both human and nonhuman, is not predicated on physical similarity nor does it depend upon shared experiences. The play takes seriously what Jane Bennett refers to as the "vital materialities that flow through and around us" and ascribes an affective dimension to the interaction of *different* (rather than similar) elemental forces. Inter-elemental sympathies show Titus that he may simply respond to Lavinia's pain without having to appropriate the complexity of her suffering. As Titus turns to

⁸⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "empathy," accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>. While the *OED* notes that empathy did not come into circulation until the early twentieth century, the Greek term, *empathēia*, appears in 16th century neo-Latin texts.

the elements, he attempts to engage in a cross-species form of pity by modeling his relationship with his daughter after those he views in the natural world. The play proposes an ethos for responding to the body in pain. Our response to the pained body should not be mediated by our feelings of likeness or a belief that we may somehow understand the pain of the sufferer. Rather, through recognizing our difference rather than our similarity to the body in pain, we may respond with compassion and perhaps offer the sufferer ease. Thus, I argue that while the play draws on earlier conceptions of sympathy—as occult affinities or bonds—the play simultaneously suggests that such attractions may teach us forms of compassion.

Titus seeks to offer his daughter what the elements or the lachrymose “silent stones” cannot. In wishing to ascribe language to Lavinia’s gestures and signs, Titus betrays a desire to seek revenge and implies, once again, that he can understand the intricacy of his daughter’s suffering. In doing so, he turns his attention away from Lavinia and preoccupies himself instead with acts of self-care. The play proposes that ascribing language to the sufferer’s pain suggests an understanding of that pain, and like empathy, risks a focus on the self rather than the pain of the suffering body. In dramatizing inter-elemental sympathies and cross-species compassion, the play suggests that we care for what we cannot understand, sensations and pains we cannot conceive.

Empathetic Pleas

In the play’s opening act, we encounter a model of pity based on empathetic identification. After returning from war, Titus presents the Roman people with the remains of his unburied sons. His son, Lucius, demands that they seize “the proudest prisoner of the Goths” and

“hew his limbs and on a pile / Ad manes fratrum sacrifice his flesh.”⁸⁵ This sacrifice will ensure that the dead will not remain “unappeased,” nor will they “hover on the dreadful shore of Styx” (1.1.7, 103). Tamora, the Gothic queen, interrupts this ritual. Pleading for the life of her eldest son, she specifically presses Titus to feel her loss as he has felt the loss of his own sons:

Victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed,
 A mother’s tears in passion for her son:
 And if thy sons were ever dear to thee,
 O, think my son to be dear to me!
 Sufficeth not that we are brought to Rome
 To beautify thy triumphs and return,
 Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke,
 But must my sons be slaughtered in the streets
 For valiant doings in their country’s cause?
 O, if to fight for king and commonweal
 Were piety in thine, it is in these. (1.1.108-111)

Tamora attempts to inspire Titus’s empathy by drawing on their common positions as parents, loyal to their children and country. She asks Titus to “rue” or feel her tears as if they were his own. Using the imperative, Tamora requests that Titus feel her sorrow and consider his own feelings towards his son. Mary Laughlin Fawcett proposes that Tamora tries to make Titus “exercise his imagination”;⁸⁶ yet for Titus, this is not purely an imaginative activity. He knows, as he reminds us, what it is to lose “one and twenty valiant sons” to war (1.1.198). Tamora suggests that her own offspring are similarly “dear” to her and assumes that Titus would feel (and perhaps has felt) equally distressed when confronted with his children’s deaths.⁸⁷ By asking

⁸⁵ William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ed. Russ McDonald (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 1.1.99-101. Text references are to act, scene, and line of this edition.

⁸⁶ Mary Laughlin Fawcett, “Arms/Words/Tears: Language and the Body in *Titus Andronicus*,” *ELH* 50.2 (1983): 267.

⁸⁷ Although Tamora strives to eliminate the differences between the Goths and Romans (or prisoners and victors), Titus, just moments later, illustrates that he does not hold his son’s “dear” in quite the same way. He murders his own son, Mutius, for defending Bassianus’s claim to Lavinia’s hand and, when questioned by his children, disavows “any sons of mine” willing to “dishonor” him (1.1.297, 298). Titus first appears on stage with tears rolling down his eyes, but

Titus to empathize with her plight, she urges him to see her not as a Goth, nor as one of “his triumphs,” but more simply as a mother—a parent who, like him, mourns the loss of her kin.⁸⁸

Tamora, rather deftly, does not stop here, but reminds Titus that, like his own flesh, her sons were merely defending their “country’s cause.” She attempts to establish a sense of equanimity amongst their clans, drawing on Titus’s sense of duty to the Roman state. If for Titus defending one’s empire is a marker of loyalty and reverence, then those are precisely the qualities her sons have exhibited by protecting their own.

While Tamora appeals to Titus’s sense of Roman honor, her use of “piety” also asks Titus to show pity and reconsider his demand for sacrifice. Though the *OED* lists definitions relating to devotion, faithfulness to one’s kin, and reverence, it also tells us that “piety” can mean “senses relating to the quality or feeling of showing pity.”⁸⁹ Tamora’s reference to piety charges Titus not only with devotion and faith, but also with pity, with which the word shares its etymology. She suggests that he ought to understand her sons’ patriotism and allow her eldest to live.

The play, however, illustrates the failure of empathetic identification as Titus rejects Tamora’s pleas, preferring instead his interpretation of Roman tradition to the possibility that Roman and Goth may suffer similar feelings of bereavement and loss. Like Hieronimo—whose

these tears are not for his deceased sons. Rather, these are “tears of true joy for his return to Rome” (1.1.79).

⁸⁸ In his article, “Revenge as Reverent: Titus Andronicus and the Rule of Law,” Kenji Yoshino argues that Tamora’s plea “rests on symmetry.” He notes that “the syntax and meaning of the only lines with end-rhymes—‘And if they sons were ever dear to thee, / O, think my son to be as dear to me’—shore up the rhyme between ‘thee’ and ‘me,’ underscoring Tamora and Titus’s common status.” Somewhat similarly, Mary Laughlin Fawcett suggests that Tamora’s repeated “O’s” “try to invoke identity of kinship claims.” Kenji Yoshino, “Revenge as Reverent: *Titus Andronicus* and the Rule of Law,” *Yale Journal of Law and Humanities* 21.2: 210; Fawcett, “Arms/Words/Tears,” 267.

⁸⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “piety,” accessed [date], <http://www.oed.com>.

empathetic identification with Bazulto leads him to focus on his own suffering rather than the old man's plight—Titus ignores Tamora's desperate implorations and instead reiterates his demand for vengeance. He insists that Alarbus must be sacrificed to appease the “groaning shadows” of the underworld and refuses to account for the similarity Tamora identifies between Roman and Gothic soldiers (1.1.129). He points to the Roman “brethren” who “for their brethren slain / Religiously...ask a sacrifice” (1.1.126-127), arguing that religious sanctimony and Roman tradition demand Alarbus's sacrifice. In response, Tamora cries out, “O cruel irreligious piety!” (1.1.133), proposing that Titus's heartless dedication to Roman law and tradition is not the least bit religious. Jennifer Waldron remarks: “The play opens with a bifurcated view of a religious sacrifice. Titus believes the sacrifice is justified ‘religiously,’ while Tamora suggests that Titus's Rome is a barbarous, lawless land masquerading as the paragon of civilization.”⁹⁰ As critics such as Heather James and Nicholas R. Moschovakis have suggested, Titus's strict adherence to custom and lack of empathetic imagination call into question the superiority of Roman civilization.⁹¹ Tamora proposes that Titus's insistence that he sacrifice the “proudest prisoner of the Goths” is excessive (1.1.99)—the Romans have not only won the war, but taken the Gothic queen and her clan as prisoners. While the play initially presents the Romans and, in particular, Titus's clan as the dominant group, Tamora questions this difference by suggesting that both groups possess similar feelings of filial love and patriotism; however, she ultimately concludes

⁹⁰ Jennifer Waldron, “Shakespeare and Revenge: Anthropologies of Sacrifice in *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*,” in *Reformations of the Body: Idolatry, Sacrifice, and Early Modern Theater* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 156.

⁹¹ Heather James, “Cultural Disintegration in *Titus Andronicus*: Mutilating Titus, Vergil, and Rome,” in *Violence in Drama*, ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991); Nicholas R. Moschovakis, “‘Irreligious Piety’ and Christian History: Persecution as Pagan Anachronism in *Titus Andronicus*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53.4: 462. Moschovakis argues that, for early modern audiences, Roman paganism would have recalled “Protestants’ denunciation of idolatry in the Roman Catholic Church—or even in the Church of England.”

that Rome is a cruel and ungodly land. Titus's refusal to respond to the Gothic queen's implorations, of course, establishes Tamora's motives for retribution and very quickly we see empathetic identification slip into a desperate desire for "sharp revenge" (1.1.140).⁹²

Immediately following these sacrificial rites, Titus demonstrates that he does not regard filial bonds in quite the same way, setting himself apart from the rest of his clan. As Mutius defends Bassianus's right to Lavinia's hand, Titus responds in a fit of violent rage and murders his son amid the Roman court. Lucius declares that his father's actions are "unjust," thus distinguishing his father's sense of honor from that of his clan (1.1.295). Titus does not seem to follow a distinctly Roman code, but works within his own understanding of justice (or perhaps a more extreme form of Roman law that is not practiced by most).⁹³ He declares that his true sons "would never so dishonor" him and disavows any family member who would so disagree with him (1.1.297). His brother Marcus insists, "O Titus, see, O see what thou hath done, / In a bad quarrel slain a virtuous son" (1.1.344-345). Marcus's repetition of "see" in these lines suggests that Titus not only lacks imaginative empathy—that is, he cannot see how another's plight may be similar to his own—but he also cannot see or recognize what others can. Unlike Marcus and Lucius, Titus is incapable of recognizing a "virtuous son," and instead, like Lear, Titus is blinded

⁹² As Lucius "hews [Alarbus's] limbs till they be clean consumed" (1.1.32), Tamora's sons pray that the gods will favor the Goths and "quit the bloody wrongs upon her foes" (1.1.144). Like empathy, revenge, in part, relies on similarity—Tamora hopes to hurt Titus just as he has hurt her. Since she could not convince Titus that Goths and Romans are more equal than their respective prisoner/captor positions might suggest, revenge becomes a leveling tool.

⁹³ Jean Feerick, "Botanical Shakespeares: The Radical Logic of Plant Life in *Titus Andronicus*," *South Central Review* 26.1-2 (2009): 89. Jean Feerick's reading of Titus is more generous. She argues that Titus's willingness to kill his own son shows his desire to "move beyond a narrow notion of 'kind' as flesh and blood to a broader identification, one where the differences between himself and the royal Saturninus will be sidestepped on the path to forging a collective identity of Romans"

by an extreme code of filial honor and loyalty.⁹⁴

Although Titus eventually allows his family to perform Mutius's burial rites, he does so unwillingly, unable to empathize with the clan's communal loss. Marcus reminds Titus that he is a Roman, telling him to "be not barbarous," and again distinguishes Titus's form of filial loyalty from that of the Roman court (1.1.381). In part, Marcus confirms what Tamora and her sons suggest. Titus's strict adherence to law is not civilized, nor is it, according to Marcus, Roman. Rather, the laws Titus follows (and insists others do as well) are "barbarous" and, as Marcus reminds him, do not follow the traditions of earlier generations.⁹⁵ As Waldron explains, "the play of course deconstructs [the] distinction [between Romans and Goths]: the extremes to which Titus will go to defend his sense of honor—which include killing his own son and daughter—suggest the potential for barbarism of strict adherence to the laws of 'meed for meed, death for deadly deed' (5.3.65)."⁹⁶ Yet I would add that in this moment, the play characterizes Titus as distinctly separate from both Roman and Goth. Though his own practices may stem from Roman traditions of filial loyalty and honor, his brother and sons are shocked by his murderous rage and lack of remorse. Titus remains both blind and deaf to the appeal of his kin. He instead laments that he has just experienced the "dismal'st day" that "e'er [he] saw," not because he has murdered a worthy son, but because he believes that he was "dishonored by my sons in Rome"

⁹⁴ Brecken Rose Hancock, "Roman or Revenger? The Definition and Distortion of Masculine Identity in *Titus Andronicus*," *Early Modern Literary Studies* 10.1 (2004): 1-25. In "Roman or Revenger?" Brecken Rose Hancock touches on Titus's inability to hear the reasoning of others. She contends, "It is not a coincidence that the son Titus executes is named 'Mutius.' Not only does Shakespeare recall Mutius Scaevola, who demonstrated the bravery of young men in Rome by unflinchingly burning off his own hand in the face of his enemy, but he alludes to a strong of associated words that are intricately linked with the matter of the play; Mutius's death prefigures 'muteness' and mutilation' that will plague the Andronici."

⁹⁵ Marcus reminds Titus that "The Greeks upon advice did bury Ajax, / That slew himself; and wise Laertes' son / Did graciously plead for his funerals" (1.1.382-384).

⁹⁶ Waldron, "Shakespeare and Revenge," 158.

(1.1.87-88). In spite of Marcus and Lucius's attempt to make him realize the extremity of his actions, Titus is fixated on what he views to be an act of dishonor. For him, any form of disagreement—whether about marital or burial rites—is an act of betrayal that is justly met with violence.

As Mutius's body is lowered into a tomb, Titus again isolates himself from the ideals of his clan, exclaiming "Well, bury him, and bury me the next" (1.1.389). A tender moment quickly follows, which emphasizes the inappropriateness of Titus's remark. Lucius promises "sweet Mutius" that they will "adorn thy tomb" with "trophies" (1.1.390, 391), and the family (Titus excluded) proclaims, "He lives in fame that died in virtue's cause" (1.1.393). While his brother and children conclude that Mutius died trying to protect virtue, Titus ties his own livelihood to his perceived sense of honor. His son's burial, he proposes, causes him to experience a death of sorts, and rather than mourning his son, Titus mourns his lost honor. The desire to sacrifice Alarbus (and, therefore, appease those "brethren" who were lost at war) initially bonds the Andronici clain; however, this sense of unity is soon disrupted. Titus's lack of pity for his kin—his inability to grieve his son's life—prevents him from joining the mourning rituals that bond communities and, in particular, families together.⁹⁷

Feeling Trees/Treeless Forest

The play quickly brings us to a world of affectively charged sylvan matter. Prior to the hunting excursion, Aaron reassures Demetrius and Chiron that they may both violate Lavinia's body. He recommends that the brothers take advantage of the royal hunting excursion and

⁹⁷ In *Shakespeare's Rome*, Robert Miola notes that the Roman family was considered the "basic unit of the city." As such, Titus's "attack on Mutius is an attack on Rome itself." Miola argues that Titus follows the principles, which served him successfully on the battlefield; however, Titus's refusal to stray from these "abstract ethical principles" has severe consequences within Rome's city walls. Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare's Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004).

explains that the woods are prime for such deeds:

The forest walks are wide and spacious,
 And many unfrequented plots there are,
 Fitted by kind for rape and villainy.
 Single you thither then this dainty doe,
 And strike her home by force, if not by words...
 The emperor's court is like the house of fame,
 The palace full of tongues, or eyes and ears:
 The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull,
 There speak and strike, brave boys, and take your turns. (2.1.114-118, 126-129)

Aaron's reasoning as to why the woods are the ideal locale for such violence is curious. He does not suggest that the boys take cover in the shadows cast by the overhead branches and leaves, but rather he notes that the forest walks are wide, open spaces.⁹⁸ Explaining that the woods these secluded plots of land are "fitted by kind" for violence, Aaron raises several possibilities. On the one hand, he draws on an understanding of kind, now largely out of use, as "birth, origin, descent" to suggest that the forest was originally created (perhaps, by some higher power) in order to serve villainous deeds.⁹⁹ Kind's close etymological relationship with "kin," however, suggests that kin or those of those connected by blood, such as Chiron and Demetrius, fit or tailor the woods as a stage in which they may play out their malevolent crimes. While act one exposes the limitations of kinship and likeness (those of a similar "kind")—particularly as Titus cannot express pity for both Tamora and his family—Aaron implies that kin may transform the environment to a setting that befits rape and villainy. The woods, he suggests, are malleable spaces. Aaron offers the brothers the forest's spacious landscape; he implies that this

⁹⁸ William Stowell Mills's dramatic monologue, "The Lure of the Open" (1914), draws attention to this sense of openness. Mill introduces his work by explaining the piece is composed of "Shakespeare's allusions to nature on land and sea"; however, Mills reassures his readers that what they are about to read is "something more than a list of quotations." Julie Taymor's 1999 film, *Titus*, captures Lavinia, after her mutilation and rape, amid a dusty plot of land rather than in the depths of a green forest. William Stowell Mills, "The Lure of the Open" (New Lenox: The Lenox Press, 1914).

⁹⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "kind," accessed, [date], <http://www.oed.com>.

environment opens itself unto the brothers and empowers the pair to interpret its wide plots of land as they see fit.

Aaron introduces us to a forest that is apparently lacking sylvan life. As Allan Folkestad suggests, Aaron transforms the woods into a “willing accomplice,” designed for villainy; but Folkestad does not account for Aaron’s description of the woods.¹⁰⁰ This forest is not thick with trees, but characterized by its openness. In its third definition of walk, the *OED* defines the nominal form as “a place suitable or set aside for walking; a path, especially, a broad path in a garden; a footway” and, in another definition, “an avenue bordered by trees.”¹⁰¹ The lack of trees in this passage may reflect the consequences of deforestation. Vin Nardizzi explains that, by the end of the sixteenth century, England experienced a rise in the cost of wood products. Aaron’s description of the forest’s “wide and spacious” walks may be a result of the country’s reliance on timber as the “chief support of infrastructure and the primary source of thermal energy.”¹⁰² Nardizzi contends that, in referring to imagined trees while gesturing towards the theater’s wooden framework, Shakespeare’s characters blur the distinction between “‘nature’ (living wood) and ‘culture’ (lumbered wood)” and, as a result, conjure the theater’s past vegetal vitality.¹⁰³ Theatrical references to trees, woods, and forests typically remind spectators of “the woodland spot where trees were once lumbered to supply the carpenters with materials for erecting the theater’s frame.”¹⁰⁴ Unlike Shakespeare’s Quince and Rosalind, Aaron emphasizes the forest’s openness and thus draws spectators to imagine a potentially devastated plot of land

¹⁰⁰ Allan Folkestad, “The Rhetoric of Evil: Metamorphoses of the Forest in William Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*,” *Nordlit* 6 (1999): 33. See also “Theory from the Fringes: Animals, Ecocriticism, Shakespeare” by Simon C. Estok.

¹⁰¹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “walk,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

¹⁰² Vin Nardizzi, *Wooden O’s: Shakespeare’s Theaters and England’s Trees* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 9.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

rather than one lush with sylvan life. Rather than offering visibility, making the boys vulnerable to suspicion, these spacious paths are the perfect spot for “rape and villainy.” If we consider Aaron’s description of the forest as a moment of implicit eco-commentary, the play compels audience members to associate England’s decline in woodlands with moral depravation.

Moreover, Aaron’s emphasis on the spaciousness of the forest is compelling given his description of the woods as “ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull.” If this is a forest characterized by its lack of trees, Aaron’s diction, here, suggests that it is not necessarily the trees themselves that are “deaf and dull.” That is, the woods are void of sense and perception (therefore, becoming “ruthless” and “dreadful”) precisely because they are void of trees. He suggests that the sylvan world may be perceptive and, perhaps, empathetic—after all, he insists Chiron and Demetrius carry out their plan within the forest’s unfrequented open paths, not hidden behind an arboreal shield.

As explained in my introduction, early moderns linked the senses to the emotions and the imagination. Helkiah Crooke claims that, without the “outward senses,” there is no “perception of any such vision or imagination.”¹⁰⁵ In *Shakespearean Sensations*, Katherine Craik and Tanya Pollard explain that the imagination was the faculty “most closely allied to sensory appetite.”¹⁰⁶ Empathy requires one to imagine the emotional livelihood of another being. To feel for another, that is, to feel with another, one must imagine, at least to some degree, another’s emotional experience. We see this in the play’s first act as Tamora asks Titus to imagine what it is like to lose a child. In addition, in a later scene, Lavinia believes that sensual openness may allow for the emotional receptivity she seeks as she insists that Tamora “open thy deaf ears” and save her

¹⁰⁵ Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia a description of the body of man* (London, 1615), 3.

¹⁰⁶ Katherine A Craik and Tanya Pollard, *Shakespearean Sensations: Experiencing Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 5.

from Chiron and Demetrius's threatening grasp.¹⁰⁷ Characters are empathetic because, to use Crooke's language, they can, through the senses, "apprehend" and "understandeth" the external inwardly. To return to the unfeeling forest walks, Aaron suggests that the woods are ideal for violence because of their lack of sentience and, by extension, their lack of empathy. Because they are "deaf and dull," the woods lack the sentience that can stir the imagination and inspire feelings of empathy; instead, the forest is "ruthless," unfeeling and untouched by the events which occur.

The parallel between empathy and sylvan life is less strange than we might first think. Early modern herbals and husbandry manuals regularly made comparisons between plant and human characteristics. Not only were botanical parts understood as "versions of human anatomy," but they were often endowed with human characteristics: "bastard Daffodils," "wilde Saffron," "drunken Date tree," for example.¹⁰⁸ As Jean Feerick points out, unlike contemporary taxonomies in which the human world is distinctly separate from the natural, early moderns viewed the boundary between the social and natural worlds to be far more permeable. Feerick argues that Shakespeare, like many of his contemporaries, "navigates human difference by

¹⁰⁷ Here, Lavinia associates Tamora's lack of pity with her lack of sentience, her "deaf ears." Although Lavinia asks her to consider Titus's decision to spare her as an act of mercy, Lavinia reminds the Gothic queen of her son's sacrifice. She declares that: "Hadst thou in person ne'er offended me, / Even for his sake am I pitiless" (2.3.161-162). As Nancy Paxton suggests, Tamora's lack of pity becomes her primary mode of revenge. Paxton writes, "Since she cannot strike directly at the men who oppress her, Tamora chooses to revenge herself on Lavinia." Though the play characterizes pity as a female attribute, a lack of empathy becomes a way in which women can enact revenge without directly engaging in physical violence. Tamora leaves Lavinia in the hands of her sons, proclaiming, "the worse to her, the better loved of me" (2.3.167). She encourages her sons to express their devotion by violating Lavinia's body. Nancy Paxton, "Daughters of Lucrece: Shakespeare's Response to Ovid in *Titus Andronicus*," *Classical Models in Literature*, ed Zoran Konstantinovic, Warren Anderson, and Walter Dietze (Innsbruck: AMOE, 1981), 222.

¹⁰⁸ Feerick, "Botanical Shakespeares," 84. Feerick quotes from John Gerard's *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plants*.

reference to botanical discourse.”¹⁰⁹

Tamora similarly suggests that this particular plot of land lacks arboreal vitality, as Bassianus and Lavinia mock Tamora for “joy[ing] her raven-colored love” (2.3.83).¹¹⁰ When questioned by her son as to why she appears so “pale and wan” (2.3.90), Tamora attributes her fear to both her present company and their precise location. She explains that:

These two have ticed me hither to this place,
A barren detested vale you see it is;
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,
Overcome with moss and baleful mistletoe.
Here never shines the sun, here nothing breeds,
Unless the nightly owl or fatal raven. (2.3.92-97)

Tamora describes a forest that is diseased and dangerous. In this moment, this stretch of forest is spared from the sun’s light and overgrown with “moss and mistletoe.” While her description of this plot differs from Aaron’s “wide and spacious walks”—Tamora’s forest is marked by darkness rather than its openness—both describe an area that lacks an abundance of arboreal life. The trees that do grow are sickly; “forlorn and lean,” they are not thick with summer’s green leaves, but are instead overcome by “baleful” ground-creeping plant-life, which hurts rather than nurtures the forest’s trees. Although Tamora notes this overgrowth and the “thousand fiends” which populate the area, she still refers to it as “barren” and as an area in which “nothing

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 83. Feerick argues that Tamora and Aaron’s attack on the Andronici clan is “waged across [a] botanical register” (91). They work to disrupt Titus’s ideal of Rome as a collective body and instead “impose” “images of botanical descent” on Titus and his family (92).

¹¹⁰ This, of course, is in contrast to the image of the forest at the start of act two. Alone with Aaron, Tamora describes the woods as a place where “everything doth make a gleeful boast” (2.3.10). Once her sons approach, Tamora claims that the woods can deafen the ear with unintelligible and chaotic sounds; however, in this earlier moment, she urges Aaron to “possess a golden slumber, / Whiles hounds and horns and sweet melodious birds / Be unto us as is a nurse’s song / Of lullaby to bring her babe asleep” (2.3.26-29). As Joseph M. Ortiz proposes, Tamora interprets the forest’s sounds to her own advantage as she transforms an amorous landscape into one that is gravely dangerous and chaotic. Joseph M. Ortiz, “‘Martyred Signs’: *Titus Andronicus* and the Production of Musical Sympathy,” *Shakespeare Journal* 1.1 (2005): 53-74.

breeds.”

Tamora’s use of “barren” to describe forest’s arboreal sickliness associates the trees with maternity and, by extension, pity. While “barren” is occasionally used to describe a tree or plant that is “without fruit or seed,” it more commonly refers to human infertility. The *OED*’s first definition of the word states, “of a woman: bearing no children; without issue, childless.”¹¹¹ The *OED* cites Shakespeare’s 1600 use of “barren” in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in which Hermia is threatened with the prospect of “liv[ing] [as] a barren sister” in a “shady cloyster.”¹¹² While Aaron proposes that the woods lack empathy precisely because they lack trees, Tamora here seems to suggest that the barren trees that populate the forest lack a motherly, fruitful quality—one she earlier associates with empathy. At the play’s start, Tamora specifies that her tears are a “mother’s tears in passion for her son,” asking Titus to feel her pain. Not only does Tamora associate maternity with protection, but she also aligns herself with Titus by drawing attention to their similar positions as parents who have both lost sons to war. As Tamora notes the forest’s “barren” trees, she seems to propose that they do not offer a mother’s protection and empathy. Rather, they may be more like Titus, “ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull.”

Aside from the forest’s “forlorn and lean” trees, Tamora only mentions one tree specifically, a “dismal yew” (2.3.107).¹¹³ She tells her sons that Lavinia and Bassianus plan to

¹¹¹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “barren,” accessed 19 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

¹¹² William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, (1.1.74, 73).

¹¹³ Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher also draw on the herbal lore surrounding the yew tree in *The Maid’s Tragedy* (ca. 1608). In act two, Aspatia sings, “Lay a garland on my hearse / Of the dismal yew; / Maidens, will branches bear; Say I dièd true.” (2.1.72-74). Interestingly, Aspatia also imagines herself surrounded by barren trees. She asks Antiphilia, “Strive to make me looks / Like sorrow’s monument, and the trees about me, / Let them be dry and leafless” (2.2.73-75). In John Webster’s *The White Devil*, Vittoria dreams that her husband and Isabella find her under a churchyard yew and attempt to bury her alive (1.2.231-255). Francis Beaumont and John

“bind” her body unto its trunk, leaving her to die a “miserable death” (2.3.108). Editors typically note that yew trees were often associated with death and graveyards. John Gerard, in his herbal, *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plants*, explains that they grow in “Church-yards where they have been planted,” and his description of the tree is equally melancholy. He explains that the yew tree:

is of a venomous qualitie, and against mans nature. Dioscorides writeth, and generally all that heretofore have dealt in the facultie of Herbarisme, that the Yew tree is very venomous to be taken inwardly, and that if any doe sleepe under the shadow thereof it causeth sicknesse and oftentimes death. Moreover, they say that the fruit thereof being eaten is not onely dangerous and deadly unto man, but if birds do eat thereof, it causeth them to case their feathers, and many times to die.¹¹⁴

Gerard presents the tree as not only unfit for consumption, but dangerous even at close proximity. Given early modern beliefs about the tree’s infectious quality, Tamora may die a “miserable death” by being so physically close to such a “venomous” tree (never mind the added threat of being left alone in the woods). While the “dismal yew” adds a sense of—albeit fabricated—danger to the scene, the tree’s presence further marks this stretch of the forest as a place where life is unsustainable.

While Tamora’s forest is deaf and unfeeling, it is not entirely without sound. She tells her sons that Lavinia and Bassianus have shown her a nearby pit, which, though horrific, is abundant with dynamic life. In this pit, snakes “hiss,” toads “swell,” and urchins “cry” out (2.3.100, 101,

Fletcher, *The Maid’s Tragedy*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Random House, 2005); and John Webster, *The White Devil*, ed. Christina Luckyj (London: Bloomsbury, 2008).

¹¹⁴ John Gerard, *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plants*, (London, 1597), 1371. Gerard ultimately concludes that Dioscorides and other herbalists are incorrect based on his own childhood experience: “When I was yong and went to schoole, divers of my schoole-fellowes and likewise my selfe did eat our fils of the berries of this tree, and have not only slept under the shadow thereof...without any hurt at all.” Although Gerard believes that the tree is not in the least bit harmful, this passage suggests that yew trees were commonly regarded as deadly and poisonous.

102). Though the forest's arboreal life suffers, creaturely life in this earthly depression thrives, so much so that the noise of these ground-dwelling critters induces madness in those who encounter their dwelling within the forest. Tamora attests that these "fearful and confused cries" would make "any mortal body heading it / ...straight fall mad, or else die suddenly" (2.3.102-104). Joseph M. Ortiz points out that Tamora "intensifies this image of the 'deaf' forest" in her description of the "deafening" pit. He argues that the "'fearful and confused cries' Tamora describes suggest chaotic sound that has been radically detached from its origin and rendered illegible."¹¹⁵ Ortiz suggests that, unlike the "palace full of tongues, of eyes and ears," the forest is a place where "articulate speech cannot be heard or produced."¹¹⁶ Though I agree with his suggestion that Tamora envisions a landscape in which articulate sounds are lost or ignored, what I would add is that Tamora, like Aaron, also depicts a forest bereft of tree-life and, as a result, empathy. Although Ortiz equates articulation with understanding (and, perhaps, sympathy as well), Titus soon discovers that the palace, though "full of tongues," is as deaf and dull as the treeless forest Tamora and Aaron describe. The play illustrates the limitations of articulate speech in both the woods and court while suggesting a correlation between empathy, understanding, and sylvan life.

Cross-Species Sympathy

In the following act, we see Lavinia attempt to arouse Tamora's feelings of empathy as the sons of the Gothic queen threaten Lavinia's chastity and life. Lavinia reminds Tamora that like her she "bearest a woman's face," and she urges Tamora to "show a woman's pity" (2.3.136, 147). In many ways, Lavinia's pleas mirror Tamora's in act one. The play again considers how particular identities (parent, woman) predispose individuals to inhabiting particular affective

¹¹⁵ Ortiz, "Martyred Signs," 62.

¹¹⁶ Ibid..

states. Yet, as Titus and Tamora both demonstrate, the desire for sacrifice and revenge can supersede empathetic identification. Like Tamora—who reminds Titus of their similar positions as parents—Lavinia asks Tamora to consider their mutual identity as women and their supposedly natural inclination for empathy and compassion. However, as Bernice Harris points out, Tamora “refuses the comparison between them...[and] Lavinia’s claims for an essential womanhood.”¹¹⁷ Tamora, not unlike Titus and Hieronimo, rejects the similarity Lavinia identifies and refuses to acknowledge the young woman’s pleas for pity.

As Tamora ignores her initial pleas, Lavinia turns to an alternate model of pity, one based on difference rather than similarity:

’Tis true the raven doth not hatch a lark:
 Yet have I heard—O, could I find it now!—
 The lion, moved with pity, did endure
 To have his princely paws pared all away.
 Some say that ravens foster forlorn children
 The whilst their own birds famish in their nests:
 O, be to me, though thy hard heart say no,
 Nothing so kind, but something pitiful. (3.2.149-156)

Lavinia admits that one species cannot give birth to another—a “raven” cannot “hatch a lark”—but, in the examples that follow, she points to inter-species relationships in which two different species form a mutual bond. She first recalls the fable of the lion and the slave, in which a slave, having wandered into a cave, encounters a lion that suffers from a thorn stuck inside his paw. Grateful for the slave’s help, the lion acts more like a loyal dog than a wild beast. As Lavinia recounts, the lion pities the slave’s condition and returns the favor by bringing food to his new master. She also remarks that ravens care for lost children, prioritizing these wards over their kin. Rather than emphasizing their similarities, Lavinia relies on these stories and, in doing so,

¹¹⁷ Bernice Harris, “Sexuality as a Signifier for Power Relations: Using Lavinia, of Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*,” *Criticism* 38.3 (1996): 392.

underscores their presumed differences. Fawcett points out that Lavinia tries to support her pleas for mercy with textual evidence. She writes, “Lavinia finally turns to literature as an alternative method of argument and rational persuasion; she looks for some guarantee of efficacy in what has been written rather than in what can be spoken.”¹¹⁸ While critics such as Fawcett have commented on her dependence on literary allusion, they have not noticed her particular interest in inter-species relationships. By describing these affinities, Lavinia draws attention to her and Tamora’s different backgrounds —she and Tamora are not kin, nor are they related to one another through marital ties. She proposes that pity for another is not limited to one’s own clan or even species. Pity, in these instances, emerges because of difference. According to Lavinia, difference, rather than similarity or kinship, is the best source of compassionate alliances.

Lavinia does not ask Tamora for the inter-species kindness she describes, but for inter-species, or put more precisely, inter-clan pity: “Be to me...Nothing so kind, but something pitiful” (2.3.155-156). While early moderns used the word “kind” to refer to benevolence, they also used it, as mentioned, to denote kinship. The *OED*, in a second definition of “kind” states, “a class, group, or division of things” and specifies that in this branch “the senses of kind originally ran closely parallel with those of kin.”¹¹⁹ More specifically, in this second definition, the *OED* defines “kind” as “the family, ancestral race, or stock from which one springs” and cites a Shakespeare’s 1609 use of the word in *Pericles*, “If she came of a gentle kinde, and noble stock.” As Feerick points out, “the language of ‘kind’ dominates plays centrally concerned with

¹¹⁸ Fawcett, “Arms/Words/Tears,” 268. According to Fawcett, Tamora’s reply—“I know not what it means, away with her!” (2.3.157)—shows her unfamiliarity and exasperation with Lavinia’s textual references. Lavinia, of course, relies on a text again (Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*) as well as her own writing in 4.1 as she reveals the identity of her rapists and the extremity of the crime enacted upon her. While Lavinia’s own clan understands this textual allusion and her written words, Tamora’s inability or refusal to acknowledge Lavinia’s meaning further emphasizes the differences between the two clans.

¹¹⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “kind,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

identifications rooted in blood... both [kin and kind refer] to identifies believed to be materially and metaphysically conjoined in and through lines of blood.”¹²⁰ Lavinia’s use of “kind” conflates both the senses of generosity and kin; one acts with “kindness” towards one’s own “kind.” That said, the relationships Lavinia depicts are not between species of the same “kind,” but instead those between creatures of different “kinds.” According to Lavinia, such acts of kindness are not determined by kinship ties, and perhaps, having just watched her father slay his own son, Lavinia understands this in extremely personal ways. Lavinia, however, rather astutely, draws upon two models of kindness at once. While Tamora may not fully comprehend inter-species kindness—or in this case, kindness towards a member of a different clan—Lavinia assumes that she does understand familial kindness.¹²¹ She thus tells Tamora that she does not have to treat her as if they were of the same “kind” or stock, nor does Tamora have to play the raven. Instead, Lavinia frames her request as a modest one. What she asks for is not kindness, but pity. Pity, according to Lavinia, is a mere form of kindness and, as the scene progresses, we learn that she wishes to

¹²⁰ Feerick “Botanical Shakespeares,” 87-89. Feerick argues that the “near obsessive return to this term in the histories and tragedies... suggest a category under mutation” (87). According to Feerick, Titus advocates for a more “expansive” Roman identity (88). She notes that Saturnius distinguishes himself as the “peerless” emperor of Rome and embraces Tamora “not as an alien ‘kind,’ as Titus does because she is a Goth, but as someone more proximate to himself as a prince than the lesser Roman warriors of the Andronicus clan” (89). The play represents the differences between Titus and Saturnius’s respective clans through the “use of botanical forms” (89).

¹²¹ The link between kinship and kindness here recalls the play’s first scene in which Tamora attempts to arouse Titus’s feelings of empathy: “And if thy sons were ever dear to thee, / O, think my son to be dear to me!” (1.1.110-111). Tamora’s effort to ignite feelings of empathy in Titus rests on the assumption that Titus does, in fact, hold his sons “dear” to him because of their kinship ties. While we cannot equate feelings or acts of kindness with feelings of dearness, what this scene reveals and Lavinia’s diction suggests is that Tamora and Titus regard their children quite differently. By drawing on the double meaning of kindness and kinship, Lavinia recognizes that Tamora treats those related to her with affection.

preserve her chastity rather than her life.¹²²

Lavinia's Hybridity

After Chiron and Demetrius rape Lavinia, severing her tongue and hands, the play underscores the affective potential of tree-life as Lavinia transforms from a speaking body—a woman determined to deride and then plead with the new empress of Rome—into a speechless sylvan/human figure (2.4.8). Though her rape and mutilation are not enacted on stage, she appears in the company of her captors, bereft of her hands and tongue. Chiron and Demetrius taunt her, bidding her to “go tell, an if thy tongue can speak, / Who ’twas that cut thy tongue and ravished thee” (2.4.1-2). The play, of course, self-consciously recalls the Ovidian tale of Tereus and Philomel, in which Tereus rapes Philomel, his sister-in-law, and severs her tongue in an attempt to secure his innocence.¹²³ Marcus refers to this tale when he first encounters Lavinia: “But sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee...A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met, / And he hath cut those pretty fingers off / That could have better sewed than Philomel” (2.4.26, 41-43). Unlike her Ovidian counterpart, Lavinia cannot weave her sorrows into the threads of a tapestry, and the brothers feel confident that they have rid her of language entirely, telling Lavinia, “Write down thy mind, bewray thy meaning so, / An if thy stumps will let thee play the scribe” (2.4.3-4).¹²⁴ Though the *OED* defines “stump” in the word’s first entry as “the part remaining of an

¹²² For female chastity in *Titus Andronicus*, see “Sexuality as a Signifier for Power Relations: Using Lavinia, of Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*” by Bernice Harris.

¹²³ While the play most obviously draws from the Philomel narrative, Marcus compares Lavinia to other tragic Ovidian figures (2.4.11-57), including Daphne, Pyramus, and Orpheus. Cora Fox, “Grief and the Ovidian Politics of Revenge in *Titus Andronicus*,” *Ovid and the Politics of Emotion in Elizabethan England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 110-111.

¹²⁴ In his article, “Amputation, Phantom Limbs, and Spectral Agency in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* and Normand Chaurette’s *Les Reines*,” Shawn Huffman suggests although the play directly refers to Ovid’s Philomel, Shakespeare’s “tree-body parallel...creates other intertextual weavings...Her rape is, in fact, an assemblage of the many rapes that occur in *The Metamorphosis*, but especially that of Daphne.” Shawn Huffman, “Amputation, Phantom Limbs,

amputated or broken-off limb or portion of the body,” the *OED* also notes the word’s arboreal definitions (in the word’s second entry): “the portion of the trunk of a felled tree that remains in the ground” and “a standing tree-trunk from which the upper part and the branches have been cut or broken.”¹²⁵ Shakespeare paints Lavinia as both human and tree, severed of limbs in the corporeal and arboreal senses of the term. As the brothers propose, she is both human and non-human in her desire and inability to express her suffering.

While their taunts serve as a bitter reminder of the violence that was just enacted upon her, the brothers acknowledge, though cruelly, Lavinia’s humanness. Demetrius recognizes that she most likely desires to “tell” her story to others (2.4.1). The brothers emphasize precisely what Lavinia can no longer do. Demetrius says to Chiron, “See, how with signs and tokens she can scrawl,” and Chiron responds by telling Lavinia to “Go home, call for sweet water, wash thy hands (2.4, 5, 6). By reminding her that she does not have the necessary limbs to express or care for herself, the brothers further suggest that she is a hybrid and mutilated tree-human. Katherine Rowe remarks that “Lavinia, as Chiron and Demetrius note, loses the ability to *do* for herself: to wash or even hang herself. Loss of these *means* represents a contingent loss of self-representation, of the capacity to ‘betray’ her own meaning.”¹²⁶ While Lavinia’s stumps suggest that she is the victim of trauma, they cannot (at least at this point in the play) elucidate the crime, transforming her from a speaking body to a body to be read.

By drawing attention to her physical form—her stumps—the brothers further suggest that Lavinia is now a hybrid and damaged human-tree. Like Isabella, she becomes a human-tree

and Spectral Agency in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* and Normand Chaurette’s *Les Reines*,” *Modern Drama* 47.1 (2004): 71.

¹²⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “stump,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

¹²⁶ Katherine A Rowe, “Dismembering and Forgetting in *Titus Andronicus*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45.3 (1994): 295.

hybrid through physical violence; however, unlike *The Spanish Tragedy*'s bereaved mother, Lavinia does not engage in an act of self-mutilation. As a devastated sylvan-human body, Lavinia does not have the physical capacity to express herself through human means—that is, through written and spoken language and expressive gesticulation—nor does she have the arboreal limbs so often associated with human feeling. In his article on human-tree metamorphoses, Tzachi Zamir suggests that trees “stand for sadness or grief” because of an “anthropomorphic tendency to impose (for example, on willows) a visual similarity between branches and arms raised or lowered in lament,”¹²⁷ Zamir’s comments suggest that Lavinia lacks the bodily media by which she may externalize her suffering through both language and physical expression. Hands not only allow one to “play the scribe,” but they can also convey extreme sadness, anger, even joy. Her severed limbs no longer mark the direction of the wind, nor can their leaves change in shape and shade with the seasons. While Lavinia may appear on stage as an amputee, Chiron’s diction as well as their location within the woods further suggest her hybrid status.

Lavinia further transforms from a young woman to a hybrid human-tree as she encounters her uncle soon after Chiron and Demetrius abandon her in the forest. As Marcus mourns Lavinia’s lost beauty, he remembers her as a once burgeoning tree:

Speak, gentle, niece, what stern ungentle hands
 Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare
 Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments
 Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in...
 O, had the monster seen those lily hands
 Tremble like aspen leaves upon a lute
 And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,
 He would not then have touched them for his life. (2.4.16-19, 44-47)

Notably, Marcus views Lavinia as a botanic body *after* her mutilation and rape. That is, he does

¹²⁷ Tzachi Zamir, “Talking Trees,” *New Literary History* 42.3 (2011): 442.

not use simile to express how she was once like a tree. Rather, he describes Lavinia's bare body in botanical terms once it is bereft of "two branches" and "aspen leaves." Marcus draws on horticultural rhetoric and imagines Lavinia's body as a tree trunk whose branches have been "lopped and hewed," words used to describe the act of trimming branches or leaves off a tree. Though we do not know whether Marcus observed Lavinia's likeness to a living, growing tree prior to the violence enacted upon her, his immediate reaction suggests that he is only able to make such comparisons once Lavinia appears to him as no longer fully human. He cannot aestheticize or memorialize Lavinia's body in fully human terms after she no longer embodies normative humanness.

Rather inappropriately, Marcus proposes that if her captors had been able to see her likeness to a tree—as he can now—they would have saved her from such brutal violence. Like Lavinia in her interaction with Tamora, Marcus recognizes the potential of cross-species pity and, in addition, cross-species desire. As Marcus equates Lavinia's hands to the branches of an aspen, he describes a cross-species form of desire, in which men long to "sleep in" the shade and comfort of her branches or hands. He also imagines the "silken strings" of a lute taking pleasure in the "kiss" of Lavinia's "aspen leaves" or "lily hands." As critics have observed, Marcus responds to his niece by aestheticizing her pain and performing a Petrarchan blazon of sorts as he repeatedly describes her lost limbs in botanical terms.¹²⁸ Marcus claims that had her captors felt the desire that a lute once felt for her "aspen leaves," thus seeing her as a tree rather than a human woman, they would have paused before violating her body.¹²⁹ Lavinia's captors should

¹²⁸ See Cynthia Marshall and Katherine A. Rowe on the Petrarchan blazon Marcus performs as he first encounters his niece's body. Cynthia Marshall, "The Pornographic Economy of *Titus Andronicus*," *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2002); Rowe, "Dismembering and Forgetting," 279-303.

¹²⁹ Marshall suggests that Marcus's insistence on sexualizing Lavinia's body recalls "how

have viewed her body in this way—and had they, according to Marcus, her chastity would have remained intact. He proposes that a tree-like woman may incite the pity of violent rapists.

As Marcus reflects on his niece's damaged body, his use of botanic rhetoric suggests that he cannot view her or even remember her as fully human. By mourning Lavinia as a tree-like body, Marcus suggests that she only embodies treeness after her rape and mutilation. At first glance, Marcus's image of hands as "sweet ornaments"—presumably material objects—seems unusual or even out of place in a passage so fraught with natural imagery. And yet, the use of "ornament"—what the *OED* defines, in the word's first entry, as an "accessory or adjunct"—infuses Lavinia's lost hands with an unnecessary or unessential quality.¹³⁰ As Zamir notes, "the arms Lavinia has lost are figuratively metamorphosed into external ornaments and, like branches, are merely appended to her."¹³¹ Marcus's choice of botanic imagery suggests that Lavinia's arms are mere ornaments—branches are easily torn from the trunk of a tree; leaves fall with the coming of winter; and lilies tend to wither not too long after their bloom. He proposes that had her captors sexualized her hands as vivacious branches or leaves, they would have not mutilated such "sweet ornaments." Rather than considering the utilitarian function of her hands, Marcus reiterates the potential for cross-species pity.

Bereft of her lily-hands or ornamental branches and leaves, Lavinia is, I would argue, both tree and woman—a hybrid figure in which tree and human merge as one. It is through or because of her rape and mutilation that Marcus is able to recognize her treeness. While her hands

images of martyrs in the early modern period frequently conjoined mutilation with eroticism"—and, Lavinia is, of course, referred to as a martyr by both her uncle and father (3.1.81, 3.2.36). Marshall argues that, though many critics acknowledge Marcus's comments about Lavinia's former sexual appeal, they do not read her as an object of desire after her mutilation. Marshall argues that "by 'lopping' her limbs, the attackers have rendered Lavinia useful, appropriate, and thus in their eyes perversely attractive." Marshall, "The Pornographic Economy," 109.

¹³⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "ornament," accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

¹³¹ Zamir, Tzachi. "Wooden Subjects." *New Literary History* 39.2 (2008): 280-281.

are no longer anatomically comparable to the branches or leaves of a tree—though Marcus remembers them as such—her “stumps” suggest a way in which she embodies both the figure of the amputee and the image of a “lopped and hewed” tree. Moreover, her aphasia also literalizes her tree-ness—rid of her voice, Lavinia cannot fully relate her suffering, but must instead allow her severed arms to speak for her.

Though Lavinia cannot fully express her suffering, as a hybrid human-tree figure she incites pity from her family. Titus confronts his daughter’s ruined body, noting the “fresh tears [which] / [Stand] on her cheek, as doth the honey dew / Upon a gathered lily almost withered” (3.1.111-113). Titus too views her body and the physical signs of her suffering—her “fresh tears”—in botanical terms while suggesting that, after her mutilation, Lavinia is a ruined or “almost withered” vegetal body. Yet, while he appears to aestheticize his daughter’s pain, we see a way in which Lavinia’s hybridity draws feelings of pity from her shocked father. Gazing upon his daughter’s wounded frame, Titus recognizes both her treeness as well as the lost *and* remaining markers of her human form. He exclaims, “Thou hast no hands to wipe away thy tears, / Nor tongue to tell me who hath martyred thee” (3.1.106-107). He notices her tears, her sorrow, commenting on his daughter’s personal experience of sadness and pain. While Titus comes to terms with his daughter’s loss of agency—her inability to speak or, for that matter, even brush away her tears—he concurrently acknowledges her ability to respond affectively. To him, she is both a vegetal body and one capable of deeply human feelings. The play more explicitly proposes that while human-human pity is limited, cross-species pity has the potential to save and nurture life in all its forms. To Titus, Lavinia is “almost withered,” but not quite. Titus admits that Lavinia still feels; he sees her react viscerally with “fresh tears...on her cheeks” as he “name[s] her brothers” (3.1.111). By dramatizing the affective-potential of hybrid life—

and the moving reaction of a father to his now sylvan-human daughter—the play proposes that pity emerges through cross-species interactions.

Responding to the Pained Body

Given the period's more flexible taxonomies, as well as the emotional receptivity Aaron attributes to tree-life, it is not surprising that Lavinia is still considered a feeling body by those around her. As the Andronici clan confronts the extremity of Lavinia's pain—and her inability to express that pain—the play explores the possibilities of feeling with and for a hybrid body. Though Titus is at least initially concerned with "eas[ing]" his daughter's suffering, both Marcus and Titus relate Lavinia's pain to their own. The play devotes nearly fifty lines to Marcus's first encounter with his niece—a choice that further draws attention to Lavinia's silence and the violence enacted upon her body—but the bulk of his speech does not address Lavinia directly. Rather, Marcus describes her pain in nearly picturesque terms and wonders how exactly he should respond to Lavinia's suffering. He asks, "Shall I speak for thee? Shall I say 'tis so? / O that I knew thy heart, and knew the beast, / That I might rail at him and ease my mind!" (2.4.33-35). In a speech addressed to himself as much as to Lavinia, Marcus questions the appropriateness of speaking for a silenced body. He wishes to understand fully Lavinia's experience so that he may "ease" his own "mind"—and, in doing so, Marcus decides that, yes, it is appropriate for him to speak for those who cannot. Douglas Greene suggests that "Marcus begins the process of articulating Lavinia's meaning" by shedding light "upon the Ovidian myth as an explanation."¹³² Though Greene points out that Marcus's explanation is "never entirely

¹³² Douglas E Greene, "Interpreting 'her martyr'd signs': Gender and Tragedy in *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40.3 (1989): 324. Fox argues that, by referring to the Ovidian myth, Marcus creates a "link between his own grief and Lavinia's, solidifying that empathetic bond through intertextual reference." While I agree with Fox's assertion that these tales provide a means by which the characters can respond to grief—that is, the *Metamorphosis*

certain,” he fails to account for the fact that Marcus’s attempt to elucidate Lavinia’s meaning is self-serving.¹³³ As Marshall suggests, Marcus’s crudely long speech illustrates that “narrative ordering must occur for Lavinia’s plight to become the occasion for sympathy...once the narrative of rape is deployed, Marcus...can construct coherent responses to Lavinia.”¹³⁴ Marcus refers to the popular tale to understand Lavinia’s pain and to bring himself a sense of peace. It is not until the speech’s final couplet that he realizes Lavinia’s need for comfort: “Do not draw back, for we will mourn with thee: / O, could our mourning ease thy misery!” (2.4.56-57). But even these last lines are only a hope for what may or may not transpire; Marcus offers Lavinia the comfort of communal grief, but admits that their shared mourning may not “ease” her “misery” at all.

As Marcus leads Lavinia to her father, he further rids her both of her agency and her position within the Andronici clan. He exclaims, “This was thy daughter,” as if to suggest that Lavinia, as a pained and potentially hybrid body, is no longer the daughter of the famed general; rather, as a human-tree hybrid, she is now an outsider, hoping that this clan, to which she no longer belongs, will offer her inter-species or inter-clan kindness. Marcus enacts a second

does more than teach violent examples of revenge—Marcus’s allusions to these Ovidian tales seem to be more self-serving than Fox suggests. As we see in the following act, Marcus is quick to distance himself from his niece—he presents Lavinia to her father and exclaims, “This was thy daughter” (3.1.63). For him, Lavinia becomes his former or ruined niece, not quite a member of the Andronici clan. Marcus seems less interested in developing an “empathetic bond,” but more invested in easing his own mind. These allusions serve to explain what he cannot fully understand. Fox, “Grief and the Ovidian Politics of Revenge,” 112.

¹³³ While Marcus’s reference to the Ovidian tale is not an entirely incorrect, his ability to translate Lavinia’s suffering falters in the proceeding act: “Perchance she weeps because [her brothers] killed her husband, / Perchance because she knows them innocent” (3.1.114-115). Greene argues that, unlike Marcus, Titus attempts to “[dispel such ambiguities by establishing a ‘sympathy of woe’ between himself and his daughter.” Although Titus recognizes the “otherness” of Lavinia’s suffering—committing himself to interpreting her “signs and tokens”—he “claims the power to determine their meaning.” Greene, “Interpreting ‘her martyr’d signs,’” 324.

¹³⁴ Marshall, “The Pornographic Economy,” 127-128.

violence upon Lavinia, stripping her of the identity and privileges afforded to her at the play's start. Peter Sacks adds that, although Marcus compares Lavinia to Philomel, the play does not provide Lavinia with the consolation Philomel finds in her transformation from a woman into a nightingale. He argues that "the irremediable nature of her suffering, together with her dismemberment, gives her a statuesque, immutable pathos—almost the stillness of an allegorical figure."¹³⁵ Sacks, however, does not account for Lavinia's metamorphosis and her potential, as a hybrid figure, to command pity from those who are unlike her. Although Marcus strips Lavinia of her identity as a member of the Andronici clan, the play suggests that her now hybrid and foreign status is advantageous. As we see in the play's preceding acts, humans cannot feel pity for other humans (even for those whom they are most like); rather, pity occurs across species.

Lavinia's hybridity inspires Titus's pity and draws her closer to her father. Titus's reaction, in some ways, reflects that of his brother; however, he reaffirms Lavinia's position within the family by his use of the present tense: "Why, Marcus, so she is" (3.1.63). Lavinia is simultaneously a foreign body and a member of the Andronici clan. This hybrid—outsider and insider position—compels Titus to try and understand Lavinia's suffering by imagining the physical amputation of his own hand. He tells her:

Give me a sword: I'll chop off my hands too,
 For they have fought for Rome, and all in vain...
 Now all the service I require of them
 Is that the one will help to cut the other.
 'Tis well, Lavinia, that thou hast no hands,
 For hands to do Rome service is but vain. (3.1.72-73, 77-80)

As Titus offers to dismember his hand, he attempts to reassure his daughter that hands only serve the state in vain. Rowe argues that the play disrupts our typical semiotics of the hand as a sign of

¹³⁵ Peter Sacks, "Where Words Prevail Not: Grief, Revenge, and Language in Kyd and Shakespeare," *ELH* 49.3 (1982): 590.

“political and personal agency.”¹³⁶ According to Rowe, Titus “learns...that the only effective service his hand can offer is to excise the sign of effect—or capability—from his body.”¹³⁷ Titus, however, assumes that Lavinia’s hand is similarly ineffectual and, in doing so, ignores the particularity of her loss. As Rowe points out, “Lavinia thus conveniently represents to her family nothing more than their own experience.”¹³⁸ Again, like Hieronimo who cannot distinguish his loss from Bazulto’s, Titus ignores Lavinia’s very immediate physical suffering and instead expresses his own pain and frustrations. While we do not know what hands most readily represent for Lavinia, Titus does not consider quite how meaningful Lavinia’s hands may be to her; in fact, it is not until several moments later that he realizes, after asking his daughter to speak, that she has also lost her tongue. Titus’s blindness in this moment represents his inability to fully comprehend Lavinia’s suffering—he only sees Lavinia as a reflection of his own failure to effect change (and sway the opinion of the Roman tribunes). As Titus dwells on his own dismemberment, Titus does not feel pity for his daughter and focuses instead on his own frustrations with the state. The play again suggests that pity is not felt between those of the same clan, species, or physical condition.

Titus, however, begins to approach pity as he asks himself, “What shall I do / Now I behold thy lively body so?” (3.1.105). He desires to respond to Lavinia’s pain, and rather than seeing her as nearly dead or inert, he remarks upon her “lively” body, as if to suggest that her new physical form has the affective charge to induce change in those she encounters. He responds to his own question by focusing on Lavinia’s suffering rather than his own:

Thou hasn’t no hands, to wipe away thy tears

¹³⁶ Rowe, “Dismembering and Forgetting,” 280. Rowe turns to Galen’s *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* as well as sixteenth century heraldry and emblem books.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 291.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 295.

Nor tongue, to tell me who hath marty'd thee:
 Thy husband he is dead: and for his death
 Thy brother are condemn'd, and dead by this.
 Look, Marcus! ah, son Lucius, look on her!
 When I did name her brothers, then fresh tears
 Stood on her cheeks, as doth the honey-dew
 Upon a gather'd lily almost wither'd. (3.1.106-113)

Although Titus's focus on Lavinia's disfigured body seems crass, he draws attention to the specificity of her suffering. Titus emphasizes that Lavinia has suffered physically and that she has lost her husband and her brothers. In addition, he continues to regard Lavinia as a lively body—capable of producing and commanding an affective response—as he notes her fresh tears. He compares Lavinia to a botanic body—a gathered lily almost withered—and appears to understand his daughter as a hybrid human-tree figure. Titus's acknowledgement of her hybridity, as well as her suffering and loss, suggests that he understands the unknowability of Lavinia's experience.

Titus's acknowledgement of difference—his ability to distinguish Lavinia's suffering from his own—leads him to console his daughter. He briefly puts aside his own grief and focuses instead, though problematically, on what might comfort his daughter:

Gentle Lavinia, let me kiss thy lips,
 Or make some sign how I may do thee ease.
 Shall thy good uncle and thy brother Lucius
 And thou and I sit round about some fountain,
 Looking all downwards to behold our cheeks
 How they are stained...?
 ...Or shall we cut away our hands like thine?
 Or shall we bite our tongues, and in dumb shows
 Pass the remainder of our hateful days? (3.1.120-125, 130-132)

Titus believes he can ease his daughter's pain by offering her a vision of communal mourning. His repeated use of "our" throughout the speech—"our cheeks," "our bitter tears," "our hands," and "our tongues"—and his references to "*thy* good uncle" and "*thy* brother Lucius" again

repositions Lavinia within the clan (emphasis mine). He imagines that suffering and grieving alongside her while experiencing a similar form of dismemberment may offer Lavinia a sense of comfort. Although Titus acknowledges Lavinia's alternate possibilities for expression and offers to communicate with her exclusively through gesticulation, he does not fully explain how exactly the clan's physical dismemberment will console her. Titus again draws on a model of pity based on similarity rather than difference. In doing so, he offers an impractical and naïve means by which the clan can ease Lavinia's pain. Titus does not consider, for example, the possibility that forcible violence and self-mutilation cause different forms of emotional anguish. Pity based on similarity proves to be unproductive and self-reflexive.

Although Titus intends to ease his daughter's suffering, he presumes to know what might offer Lavinia comfort. As the scene continues, Titus more radically asserts that he comprehends her suffering as he claims to understand her gestures and thoughts. He boasts:

I understand her signs:
 Had she a tongue to speak, now would she say
 That to her brother which I said to thee:
 His napkin, with his true tears all bewet,
 Can do no service on her sorrowful cheeks.
 O, what a sympathy of woe is this,
 As far from help as Limbo is from bliss! (3.1.143-149)

Titus assumes that Lavinia's reaction to a handkerchief (intended to dry her tears) would resemble his own. He speaks for Lavinia. By claiming to read her signs, Titus denies her the opportunity to communicate her meaning and respond, on her own terms, to Lucius's offer. He again emphasizes the similarity of their suffering by crying out "O, what a sympathy of woe is this!". In this case, as I've discussed earlier, sympathy refers not to compassion, but to similarity. In reference to this line, Meek explains that Shakespeare "uses sympathy to mean

correspondence, but uses it specifically to describe a likeness of grief.”¹³⁹ Although “sympathy” is, in this passage, “associated with communication, understanding and the imagination” and Titus attempts to imagine how Lavinia may feel, his interpretation of her sorrow is based on his own feelings of grief.¹⁴⁰ He imagines how he would react to his body’s dismemberment, but he does not go so far as to imagine that Lavinia’s suffering may be different from his own. Again by focusing on the similarity of their experiences, Titus reads his daughter’s body—the tears which stream down her cheeks—as a reflection of his own pain.

Inter-Elemental Sympathy

Falling victim to Aaron’s deception, Titus sacrifices his hand with the hope of sparing his sons’ lives. Although Titus initially claims that he must undergo a physical transformation to “ease” his daughter’s pain (3.1.130), it is through this physical metamorphosis of sorts that Titus is able to realize that he cannot understand Lavinia’s suffering by relating it to his own. Titus instead commits himself simply to being touched or moved by her pain. He asks Lavinia to kneel with him in prayer and, though Marcus urges him to resist such “deep extremes” (3.1.125), Titus responds by describing sympathetic affinities, or relationships of ecological receptivity, among the elements:

When heaven doth weep, doth not the earth o’erflow?
 If the winds rage, doth not the sea wax mad,
 Threatn’ning the welkin with his big swollen face?
 And wilt thou have a reason for this coil?
 I am the sea; hark her sighs doth blow!
 She is the weeping welkin, I the earth:
 Then must my sea be movèd with her sighs,
 Then must my earth with her continual tears
 Become a deluge, overflowed and drowned,
 For why my bowels cannot hide her woes,

¹³⁹ Meek, “Passionate Sympathy,” 295.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

But like a drunkard must I vomit them. (3.1.221-231)

Titus turns to the elements as he attempts to convey his reaction to Lavinia's suffering. He explains that when heavy rains strike the earth, the land overflows; as strong winds beat the sea, the waves and waters become increasingly turbulent; as such, he too will "overflow" and "drown" because of her "sighs" and "tears," and thus, he will continue to engage in such "deep extremes" or dismal musings. Titus does not simply describe fairly predictable meteorological events. Rather, his diction is suggestively affective—the heavens "weep," the winds "rage," and the sea "waxes mad."

Notably, earth, rain, wind, and water react with such passionate intensity to different elemental forces. That is, earth responds not to earth, but to sea. By viewing Lavinia as wind and himself as the sea (and, in the next line, Lavinia as the sea and himself as the earth), Titus imagines that he and Lavinia are different species and concomitantly critiques humanity's capacity for pity. His speech evokes Lavinia's earlier description of inter-species pity (3.2.149-156)—instead of describing moments of pity among people or even similar animals or elements, both Lavinia and her father depict inter-species and inter-elemental relationships which emerge in spite or perhaps because of difference. Though Titus strips Lavinia of her human status, he acknowledges the particularity of her suffering. As Titus's own body transforms, he seems to realize that he cannot fully inhabit or access his daughter's suffering. In this moment, Titus considers a different ethos of responding to the body in pain. Rather than appropriating Lavinia's pain as his own (or, for that matter, claiming that their suffering is identical), Titus admits to their differences and simply responds to her suffering.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ As I discuss in the project's first chapter, Hieronimo too is able to offer Bazulto pity once he ceases viewing Bazulto's pain in terms of his own sorrow. Both *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus* suggest that caring for the body in pain involves acknowledging the particularity of

The reaction of the sea and earth to the raging winds and weeping skies is as emotionally charged as it is physical. Titus imagines that rain and wind, in making contact with earth and sea respectively, overwhelm their neighboring elements and generate flood and storming seas. Announcing himself as the sea, Titus describes feeling Lavinia's "sighs" or wind upon his waters. These sympathetic affinities or what I refer to as elemental touches—that is, the interplay among the sky, land, and wind—possess a physicality that Titus claims is inherently affective. Though Titus loses faith in man's capacity to touch and feel, he accesses a responsiveness that he can no longer find in Rome (or in the human world). The physical and affective language in this passage recalls the period's understanding of the sensation of touch. As discussed in my introduction, the sensation is unique because, as Elizabeth Harvey puts it, "unlike sight, hearing, taste, and smell, it is not located and identifiable with a single organ."¹⁴² Crooke explains that "touching is diffused through the whole body" and, as a result of its inherent sociality, it is the sense most associated with our affective states, most notable in expressions such as "to feel deeply" or "to be touched." Harvey specifically discusses the link between touching and suffering. She writes:

[Crooke]... suggests that 'to perceive is a kind of suffering,' for "sensation happeneth in that which is moved and suffereth." Crooke is, of course, activating the etymon of 'passive' from the Latin *passivus*, "to be acted upon," but his language offers a physiology of feeling that links the senses to the passions. Suffering turns out to be reciprocal, not unlike Merleau-Ponty's discussion of mutual touching. For Crooke, sensation happens when the sense is converted into the nature of the sensible thing, in other words, through an alteration. The sensible object changes the sense, transforming it to its own nature, and it is this conversion of essence that causes suffering.¹⁴³

the other's suffering. When Hieronimo and Titus attempt to relate to the sufferer's pain, they instead emphasize their own anguish. It is only when they acknowledge the sufferer as distinct—that is, separate from themselves—that they begin to offer the pained body ease.

¹⁴² Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia*, 648.

¹⁴³ Elizabeth D. Harvey, *Sensible Touch: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (Philadelphia: U Penn P, 2002), 388.

Reading Crooke alongside Merleau-Ponty, Harvey observes the mutually transformative potential of the sensation. She suggests that, as two objects come into contact with one another, the objects are both agents and recipients of a feeling and suffer the touch of the other in physical and affective ways. By evoking the meteorological interaction of earth, sky, and sea, Titus proposes that he will model his relationship with Lavinia after these elemental touches. Though Rome's tribunes remain deaf to his pleas for justice, Titus allows himself to be touched by his daughter's suffering. While he acknowledges that his experience of this pain will not be identical to Lavinia's—that is, tumultuous waters are quite different from raging winds—he realizes that her suffering will not leave him unchanged.¹⁴⁴

As Titus praises the sympathetic affinities he views in nature, he implicitly suggests that he will abandon his attempt to appropriate Lavinia's pain, allowing himself instead to be touched by it. Rich in its description of meteorological feeling, Titus's speech further brings us into a vibrant and affective ecology. Trees feel compassion, the sky weeps with sorrow, and winds blow with fury. The play suggests that the natural world is an interactive and receptive one—capable of the compassionate touches Titus seeks at court.

Though scholars tend to read Titus's "stone speech" at the start of act three as evidence of his frustration with the tribunes, the stone metaphor suggests that Titus identifies new possibilities for compassion. Titus cannot convince the tribunes to spare the lives of his innocent, yet condemned sons. While "bitter tears" wet "the aged wrinkles in [his] cheeks," his pleas are ignored, and he instead turns to the earth and stones:

¹⁴⁴ See also Joe Moshenska, *Feeling Pleasures: The Sense of Touch in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014). Moshenska traces the connection between touch and metaphorical expression during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He argues that, during the period, early moderns viewed the language of touch as both "necessary for human expressiveness" and as a potentially troubling "departure from literal meaning."

Therefore I tell my sorrows to the stones,
 Who, though they cannot answer my distress,
 Yet in some sort they are better than the tribunes,
 For that they will not intercept my tale.
 When I do weep, they humbly at my feet
 Receive my tears and seem to weep with me,
 And were they but attirèd in grave weeds,
 Rome could afford no tribunes like to these.
 A stone is soft as wax, tribunes more hard than stone:
 A stone is silent and offendeth not,
 And tribunes with their tongues doom men to death. (3.1.37-47)

Titus prefers the stones to the tribunes and discovers that they, “soft as wax,” are touched by his tale. In attributing palpable softness to the stones, Titus suggests that they, like wax, may transform—and thus pity his loss—through the tactile experience of feeling his tears upon their surface. The stones, he realizes, cannot interrupt his speech and, as they listen patiently, they “seem to weep,” grieving his loss. I would like to suggest that, if we consider the play’s affectively charged natural world, the stones are “better than the tribunes” because what Titus longs for is the receptive touches or sympathetic affinities he sees in nature. Just as a roaring gust may touch the sea, thereby inciting large and chaotic waves, Titus imagines that the stones suffer his pain. Yet, these stones “cannot answer [Titus’s] distress.” Though the stones may mourn with him, they are “silent” and “offendeth not,” incapable of translating his sorrow into a grief others can understand.

While Titus models his response to Lavinia on the compassionate interchanges he views in the natural world, he also acknowledges the limitations of the soft though ultimately silent stones that appear to weep before him. Titus proposes that he can offer Lavinia what the natural world cannot—unlike the stones or elements, he can give voice to her suffering. He admits that his “bowels cannot hide her woes / But like a drunkard [he] must vomit them.” On the one hand, these lines seem to suggest that Titus cannot hide his own reaction to his daughter’s suffering.

Yet as the play progresses, Titus dedicates himself to making Lavinia's "woes" visible. He proposes:

I can interpret all her martyred signs:
 She says she drinks no other drink but tears,
 Brewed with her sorrow, meshed upon her cheeks.
 Speechless complainer, I will learn thy thought.
 In dumb action will I be as perfect
 As begging hermits in their holy prayers.
 Thou shalt not sigh, nor hold thy stumps to heaven,
 Nor wink, nor nod, nor kneel, nor make sign,
 But I of these will wrest an alphabet
 And by still practice learn to know thy meaning. (3.2.36-45)

Titus reiterates that Lavinia's physical form, her human-tree status, limits her ability to communicate; yet, as the play suggests, it is her hybridity that inspires Titus's receptivity and compassion. Her newly embodied form—that is her difference rather than her similarity to her father—compels Titus to cross the species divide and offer compassion by reading Lavinia's body. By noticing her gestures and signs, Titus will learn to translate his daughter's thoughts. Titus considers Lavinia a "map of woe" that he can, through practiced study, decipher (3.2.12). His willingness to respond to a non-human body with compassion implicates father and daughter within a complex ecology in which raven and sea feel for what they are unlike. Yet as Titus commits himself to reading Lavinia's body and wresting an alphabet from her gestures and sighs, he betrays a desire to translate her pain into a language others can understand. In part, Titus departs from the ecological model by which he is initially inspired. He chooses instead to do what the silent stones cannot, giving language to his daughter's otherwise wordless suffering.

Inspired by the affinities he observes in the natural world, Titus believes ecological touches are receptive, reciprocal, and even capable of translation—though storm-ridden skies resist language, the sea, sailors, and those at shore feel their touch but may remain numb to human feelings. Unlike ecological touches, human capacity for pity is limited—even if one is

touched by another's grief, that feeling moves between those two people alone.¹⁴⁵ By invoking the natural world and imagining the possibility of translation, Titus yearns for a wider form of contact, a larger audience, and commits himself to making Lavinia's suffering known.

Rejecting the Hybrid Body

Like her father, Lavinia seems to desire a larger audience as she attempts to elucidate fully the extent of the crime committed against her. Rather than trusting Titus to read her signs, Lavinia turns to her nephew Lucius and, specifically, his edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Lucius complains that "aunt Lavinia / Follows [him] everywhere" (4.1.1-2). The urgency with which this scene begins implies that Lavinia feels a need to make her pain more fully known to those around her. Titus's promise to read and follow her signs proves to be insufficient. By drawing her family's attention to Philomel's tale, Lavinia betrays a desire to make Chiron and Demetrius's crime fully known and, perhaps, see this crime avenged. Ovid's text provides her with an alternate means by which she may tell her own tale.

While Philomel's story allows her family to understand that she was not only mutilated, but raped, Lavinia may be attracted to the tale because of Philomel's hybrid form.¹⁴⁶ After Philomel's rape and mutilation, she escapes Tereus's wrath and continues life by transforming

¹⁴⁵ As I've mentioned, Titus, of course, illustrates the very limits of human empathy in the play's first scene as he refuses to spare the lives of Tamora's sons in spite of their similar roles as parents.

¹⁴⁶ Carolyn Sale adds that Lavinia may have been drawn to Philomel's tale (as opposed to, for example, Livy's Lucrece) because the Ovidian narrative is "a tale about the effective and powerful transmission of a text between women"—not only does a nameless woman deliver the tapestry to Procne, but Procne also avenges the rape by sacrificing her son. While I agree that Titus does not consider carefully his daughter's attraction to the tale, I argue that Philomel's story allows Lavinia to show her family that a woman can, in fact, live beyond her rape and mutilation, specifically by embracing a human-nonhuman form. Carolyn Sale, "Representing Lavinia: The (In)Significance of Women's Consent in Legal Discourses of Rape and Ravishment and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*," *Women, Violence, and English Renaissance Literature: Essays Honoring Paul Jorgensen*. eds. Linda Woodbridge and Sharon Beehler (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), 20.

into a nightingale.¹⁴⁷ The metamorphosis provides Philomel with an alternate mode of existence, in which her life does not cease because of the loss of her chastity and the violence enacted upon her. Although the tale implies that after her rape Philomel can no longer live fully as a woman, the Ovidian myth proposes that death is not the sole end after the forcible violation of a woman's body. Conscious of her own body's transformation, Lavinia may refer to Philomel's tale because the story illustrates a triumph in attaining a hybrid form. By so readily referring her family to the Ovidian tale, Lavinia conveys that she too can continue life after her mutilation and rape.

Once Titus understands that his daughter was raped, he abandons his commitment to ecological receptivity. We see a regression in Titus's attempt to offer Lavinia compassion as he becomes concerned with following her signs in order to advance his own goal of revenge. He tells her to "give signs," so that he can understand "what Roman lord it was durst do the deed" (4.1.61, 62). He immediately views Lavinia's attraction to the Ovidian myth as her attempt to explain and avenge the crime. While this may be the case, Titus's refusal to acknowledge other possibilities, such as Lavinia's desire to emulate Philomel's triumphant hybridity, implies that he still cannot fully accept Lavinia on her own terms. Rather than uncovering the complexity of her suffering or simply responding to her pain, Titus is more invested in determining the crime and the names of the offenders. He thus reads Lavinia's body and her identification with the Ovidian tale in terms of his own desire for vengeance.

Like Titus, Marcus does not pause to consider why Lavinia fixates on Philomel's story, and he instead concerns himself with how he "may this treason find" (4.1.67). Notably, it is Marcus, rather than Lavinia herself, who discovers a means by which she may name her rapists.

¹⁴⁷ Philomel and her sister, Procne, feed Tereus the head of his son. They flee once Tereus discovers his unintentional act of cannibalism, and the sisters ask the gods to transform them into birds so that they might escape Tereus's wrath. The gods transform Philomel into a nightingale and Procne into a swallow.

While Marcus considers the limitations of his niece's body—and shows her how she may use her feet and mouth to guide his staff across a sandy plot—he consumes himself with helping his brother seek revenge. As instructed, Lavinia writes, “*Stuprum. Chiron. Demetrius*” (4.1.78). This act is largely motivated by her family—that is, Marcus tells her to “print her sorrows plain,” but specifies that, in doing so, she name “the traitors and the truth” (4.1.75-76). Rather than helping Lavinia convey her thoughts—as Titus proposes to do in act three—Marcus and Titus encourage her to uncover the knowledge that they desire. Marcus does not consider that this act of naming the crime and rapists may cause Lavinia trauma rather relief. In addition, as critics have suggested, by instructing Lavinia to place his staff in her mouth, he asks her to re-experience the sexual violence enacted upon her.¹⁴⁸

Although Titus appears to accept Lavinia's hybridity—he abandons trying to embody her suffering, preferring instead to emulate inter-elemental sympathies—this scene and the resulting aftermath marks a retreat to patriarchal imposition. Titus fixates on Lavinia's writing, etched upon the ground, and proposes that he “go get a leaf of brass, / And with a gad of steel...write these words (4.1.102-103). In declaring that he will find a “leaf” of steel, he continues to recognize her human-treeness. While critics tend to read “leaf” as a sheet or piece of steel, the word reflects the play's earlier and persistent use of botanic imagery. Titus implicitly suggests that the leaf serve as an appendage to Lavinia's trimmed stumps. As ancillary to her hybrid body,

¹⁴⁸ See Robin L. Bott, “‘O, Keep Me From Their Worse Than Killing Lust’: Ideologies of Rape and Mutilation in Chaucer's Physician's Tale and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*,” *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, eds. Elizabeth Robertson and Christine M. Rose (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 189-211; Cynthia Marshall, “‘I can interpret all her martyr'd signs’: *Titus Andronicus*, Feminism, and the Limits of Interpretation,” *Sexuality and Politics in Renaissance Drama*, eds. Carole Levine and Karen Robertson (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991), 193-213; and Kim Solga, “Rape's Metatheatrical Return: Rehearsing Sexual Violence in *Titus Andronicus*,” *Violence Against Women in Early Modern Performance: Invisible Acts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 29-62.

this leaf of steel would serve as a reminder of her rape and mutilation.¹⁴⁹ Although Lavinia shows her family that she can manipulate her hybrid form and communicate through language, Titus suggests that he will always view Lavinia as a devastated body. He proposes that the steel leaf will, quite literally, mark Lavinia as raped and forever tied to her rapists.

Although it is unclear whether this form of writing traumatizes or empowers Lavinia, her ability to communicate with her father and uncle—first by pointing to Ovid’s tale and then by writing—shows her family that her hybridity does not entirely prohibit communication. As Tricomi points out, in spite of her ravishers’ taunts, “Shakespeare effects a most witty poetic justice. Lavinia’s lips do speak; her handless hands, indeed, do write!”¹⁵⁰ Rowe, somewhat similarly, observes that Lavinia “redefines her mouth as an acting part in a way that complicates its earlier identification with the passive bubbling fountain and the ‘Cocytus’ mouth of the scene of rape.”¹⁵¹ The scene illustrates the possibilities of a sylvan-human body and implies that, while life, specifically communication, is different, it is not impossible. Lavinia offers her family a glimpse of what it means to live with her hybrid form; however, rather than embracing her

¹⁴⁹ Sale points out that, after discovering the crime and the names of the rapists, Titus “seeks to give her words permanent form”—he demands that they be written in brass—and, as such, the engraved brass “can be fetishized, cited, and re-interpreted at will by whoever wishes to read or make use of it, without any reference back to the ‘text’ to which it was intended to be merely ancillary.” Sale suggests that Lavinia’s words are separated from her body and instead used to fulfill Titus’s own agenda. She argues, Titus “requires [the brass text] to authenticate another [narrative], the obliteration of her ‘spotless chastity’ in a discourse of shame and pollution.” While I agree that the brass leaf helps Titus justify Lavinia’s death, I argue that his botanic rhetoric permanently and perhaps violently attaches rather than separates these words from Lavinia’s body. Sale, “Representing Lavinia,” 19.

¹⁵⁰ Albert Tricomi, “The Aesthetics of Mutilation in *Titus Andronicus*,” *Shakespeare Survey* 27 (1974): 16.

¹⁵¹ Rowe, “Dismembering and Forgetting,” 300. Rowe proposes that by taking Titus’s hand in her mouth and writing with her mouth, Lavinia converts the “figure of dismemberment into a figure of agency.” Scholars, however, tend not to read this scene as an example of Lavinia’s agency. The scene parodies the marriage ceremony, in which a father gives away the hand of his daughter—alternately, Titus’s hand in the place of Lavinia’s tongue may suggest the patriarchal origin of language. See Mary Laughlin Fawcett.

hybridity and new means of communication, Titus and Marcus turn their attention to avenging the crime. Believing that he has successfully helped his daughter translate her pain, Titus is no longer interested in “easing” her suffering or, for that matter, making true on his promise to “wrest an alphabet” out of her most delicate gesture.

This scene marks a turning point in Titus’s focus and proposes that attempting to translate the pain of the suffering body limits rather than enables human compassion. Although Titus devotes himself to responding to Lavinia’s pain by emulating elemental affinities, his simultaneous desire to translate Lavinia’s suffering undermines this earlier effort. By helping Lavinia give language to the rapists and crime (though not the nuances of her pain), Titus and Marcus seem to believe that they have successfully interpreted her suffering; the brothers abandon their attempts to care for the suffering body and instead pursue revenge. The play proposes that the elements respond with such generous affectivity precisely because weeping skies and raging winds exceed language. Natural sympathies provide a useful model for responding to the body in pain because they suggest that language is beside the point. Rather than compelling a sense of understanding or compassion, language produces a solipsistic response. Even with the most lucid prose, we can never—not fully at least—understand the experience of the suffering body.

While Titus, at least momentarily, recognizes that he should simply respond to Lavinia’s pain—just as water responds to wind—Lavinia’s words cause Titus to refocus his attention on his personal desire for revenge. The play implies that textual writing prompts violence rather than compassion. Etched in sand, Lavinia’s writing allows Titus to realize his desire for a larger audience. Yet rather than helping Lavinia convey her pain, Titus concerns himself with avenging and making visible his own suffering through a highly theatrical revenge plot. The play suggests

that translating pain—giving words to another’s suffering—is always an incomplete act and does not offer the suffering body ease. Lavinia’s words, whether drawn upon sand or memorialized upon a leaf, serve Titus’s vengeful ambitions.¹⁵² As Deborah Willis and others have suggested, Lavinia’s ability, in this moment, to narrate a silenced past merely propels the play’s revenge plot. She does not experience a moment of comfort or relief in having unburdened the crime, nor does she continue to write, giving her family a fuller account of her pain. Rather, as the clan’s attention swiftly refocuses on enacting revenge, Lavinia’s suffering—and specifically Titus’ former commitment to easing her suffering—is soon forgotten. The ease by which Titus shifts his focus implies that he was never fully invested in offering Lavinia the ecological touches he claims to admire.

Upon entering the banquet, Titus illustrates his shift in attention by first deviating from the tale of Philomel and Tereus to which Lavinia refers. He instead relates their experience to the story of Virginius and asks Saturninus to recount this particular tale. By drawing attention to an alternate narrative, one in which a father slays his daughter after she is raped, Titus rejects Lavinia’s interpretation of her experience. He implies that his daughter cannot, like Philomel, live beyond her rape and subsequent metamorphosis. As Saturninus recalls the tale, he explains, “the girl should not survive her shame, / And by her presence still renew his sorrows” (5.3.41-42). Saturninus defends the woman’s murder by proposing that her presence as a raped and shamed body would continue to cause her father grief. Rather than focusing on the daughter’s feelings of sorrow—or perhaps her own desire to die—Saturninus implies that Virginius’s sorrow alone justifies her murder. His telling of the tale ignores the suffering of the pained body

¹⁵² For scholarship on the gendering of revenge, see “Reporting on Women’s Causes Aright” by Marguerite A. Tassi and “Grief and the Ovidian Politics of Revenge in *Titus Andronicus*” by Cora Fox.

and instead emphasizes the ways in which this body affects those around her. Ultimately, Titus uses Virginius's tale—and Saturninus's retelling of it—to defend Lavinia's murder. As he slays his daughter, he concludes, "Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee, / And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die!" (5.3.46-47). Titus's determination to end his pain marks a dramatic shift from his earlier attempts at easing his daughter's suffering. He claims that by ending Lavinia's hybrid vitality he may concurrently put an end to his sorrow.

As in the model of pity based on similarity that we see at the play's start, language prohibits compassion because it compels a focus on the self as opposed to the suffering body. It is important to recognize that Lavinia's writing—though it elucidates Chiron and Demetrius's crime—does not speak to the extremity of her pain, the shape and shades of her grief. While not insignificant, "*Stuprum. Chiron. Demetrius*" betrays only a small glimpse into Lavinia's suffering. As Titus gains a fuller (though still incomplete) understanding of the violence enacted upon her, he believes that he now comprehends Lavinia's pain and desires. In her discussion of Titus's attempts to speak for his daughter, Jennifer Munroe notes, "Human language, even language that aims simply to describe the qualities of the nonhuman world, only begins to articulate its complexity; and such articulation is not the things itself."¹⁵³ While Munroe reminds us that the natural world—and specifically, Lavinia's presence—is not contingent upon "human design, conception, or language," I argue that Titus forgets what he momentarily appears to learn; he can never fully comprehend Lavinia's suffering, but he can *respond* to her suffering by emulating the sympathetic affinities he views in nature.¹⁵⁴ Once Lavinia names her rapists and

¹⁵³ Jennifer Munroe, "Is It Really Ecocritical If It Isn't Feminist?: The Dangers of 'Speaking For' in Ecological Studies and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*," *Ecological Approaches to Early Modern English Texts: A Field Guide to Reading and Teaching*, eds. Jennifer Munroe, Edward J. Geisweidt, and Lynne Bruckner (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), 46.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

the crime, Titus abandons this form of compassion, believing perhaps that he now understands the full extent of Lavinia's pain. Her words cause Titus to ignore her suffering and focus instead on alleviating his own sorrow.

Titus begins to show Lavinia compassion when he accepts her as a different kind of species; however, his reaction to Lavinia's writing implies that a fuller understanding of her experience prohibits rather than enables pity.¹⁵⁵ Titus lives with Lavinia's human-tree hybridity when he recognizes that he cannot understand her hybrid form. Beyond the obvious sexual politics of her murder, Lavinia's death reveals that, in spite of his attempt to emulate inter-elemental affinities, Titus cannot show compassion for a hybrid body once his focus turns away from the complexity of Lavinia's suffering and toward his own desires. Again, the play proposes that acting with compassion is about accepting what we cannot understand, particularly as we care for a pain that is not our own.

¹⁵⁵ Though few critics have remarked on Lavinia's resemblance to a tree, Coppelia Kahn draws attention to her liminal status and suggests that her veil may indicate that she is "neither maid nor wife." While not explicit, Kahn suggests that it is precisely this sense of liminality with which Titus cannot live. Coppelia Kahn, "The Daughter's Seduction in *Titus Andronicus*, or, Writing is the Best," *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds, and Women* (London: Routledge, 1997), 72.

How To Do Things With Organs: Moving Parts in *The Duchess of Malfi*

In the first act of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, the Duchess's attempts to woo her servant, Antonio, are met with reticence. Frustrated, she declares that Antonio has left her "heartless," imagining her organ within his "bosom."¹⁵⁶ The Duchess hopes that her heart will "multiply love there," and as she notices Antonio "tremble," she urges him to "make not [his] heart so dead a piece of flesh" (1.1.441-442). While the Duchess appears to be impatient, she is not without hope. In effect, she envisions a transplant of sorts, becoming her own anatomist as she lodges her heart in the depths of Antonio's chest. However, this role and this seemingly morbid gesture have generative effects. The Duchess insists that the touch of a displaced organ has a recuperative and affective force that will revive Antonio's dead flesh and inspire feelings of love. By proposing that movable organs can enliven the body and stir the affections, the Duchess develops an affective ecosystem, in which intercorporeal exchange merges flesh with flesh and generates not only love, but hybrid, interclass flesh.

Although early modern texts often reflect on the impact of touch, the play's depiction of an internal organ leaving one body to enter another is startlingly unfamiliar. Webster considers the transformative and unsettling nature of tactile and transferrable organs—the heart's capacity to touch and be touched—and the anatomical body's potential to create affective bonds. The touch of the Duchess's invasive organ not only has physical and affective implications, but it also leads to additional forms of generativity as she quite literally carries Antonio's flesh within her during her pregnancy. While Antonio's vulnerability to the Duchess's heart reflects early modern Galenic thought—in that it illustrates the way bodies are susceptible to exterior and, in

¹⁵⁶ John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. Brian Gibbons (London: New Mermaids, 2001), 1.1.440. Text references are to act, scene, and line of this edition.

this case, invasive forces—I argue that the play offers a distinct form of early modern emotional embodiment. The play’s recurrent interest in intercorporeal exchange embeds the Duchess and Antonio within a dynamic ecosystem, in which organs, body parts, and passions move between and penetrate the lovers’ bodies. Unlike the other ecosystems I’ve discussed thus far—in which human bodies interact and merge with botanic life—Webster illustrates the contact and merging of flesh with flesh at the internal level of the organ. Rather than dramatizing a larger ecosystem of stone, wind, and sea, Webster depicts environments within the human body. The play suggests that the sympathetic attraction of bodies as well as the exchange of bodily material has the potential to resurrect dead flesh, move human feelings, and generate new life.

Building on scholarship on gender, sexuality, and feminism, I incorporate recent approaches from ecocriticism and affect studies to argue that, the play’s interpenetrating bodily parts illustrate affectively charged circuits of exchange. I draw attention to the play’s various tactile exchanges—the lovers’ touching hearts, the exchange of spirits, and finally their clasped palms—to suggest that the play offers a neglected model of early modern relationality. As parts invade bodies, Webster incorporates the lovers within a small ecosystem, in which the exchange of bodily material compels not only affective and physical change, but the emergence of hybrid, interclass flesh. While Carla Mazzio and David Hillman’s collection, *The Body in Parts*, draws attention to the agency early modern medical and literary texts attribute to specific parts, I suggest that, by dramatizing the psychophysiological consequences of intercorporeal exchange, the play emphasizes the specifically *affective* agency of bodily organs and parts as they invade and move between diverse bodies.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Hillman and Mazzio write, “Because corporeal parts have individuated functions, locations, and differentiated relations to the body as a whole, they can become concentrated sites where meaning is invested and often apparently stabilized.” David Hillman and Carla Mazzio, *The*

Although the play acknowledges the fertile productiveness of the body's receptivity, Webster also draws attention to the dangers of intercorporeal exchange, particularly across social classes. External forces attempt to upend the lovers' delicate ecology, and the play questions the possibility of interclass unions as the Duchess's twin brother, Ferdinand, tries to disrupt the couple's circuit of exchange. Through focusing on intercorporeal exchange, I argue that, convinced of Antonio's murder, the Duchess embraces death and the figure of the "alabaster" widow in order to freeze her humoral state. In doing so, she attempts to render permanent the intermixing of bodies that she and Antonio achieve. Moreover, although Antonio and the Duchess's intimate ecosystem results in the creation of hybrid flesh, the play questions the continuation of their interclass bloodline; the Duchess and her children are murdered in the play's fourth act, and the couple's surviving son awaits a precarious future.

While the Duchess's attention to moveable organs may strike us as odd, if not grotesque, the play shows a recurrent interest in the agency of internal organs. As she courts Antonio, the Duchess relies on her heart's mobility and agency; however, her twin brother focuses on the troubling and dangerous potential of autonomous organs. Prior to this wooing scene, the Duchess's brothers, the Cardinal and Ferdinand, forbid her to remarry during their absence:

FERDINAND: You are a widow:
 You know already what man is, and therefore
 Let not youth, high promotion, eloquence—
 CARDINAL: No, nor any thing without the addition, honour,
 Sway your high blood.
 FERDINAND: Marry? They are most luxurious
 Will wed twice.
 CARDINAL: O fie!
 FERDINAND: Their livers are more spotted

Than Laban's sheep. (1.1.286-292)

The Cardinal instructs the Duchess to avoid the lure of remarriage, warning her against the movement of her blood. While “sway” implies a sense of mobility or physical oscillation, the *Oxford English Dictionary* also offers definitions that suggest a sense of rhetorical influence: “to influence in a specified direction” and “to incline or be diverted in opinion and judgment.”¹⁵⁸ The Cardinal proposes that the blood's mobility and influence would compel her to give into temptation and act against his wishes. As Theodora Jankowski puts it, the brothers' goal is to control the “biological uses” of the Duchess's body; however, they like the Duchess, concede a level of agency to the body's parts.¹⁵⁹ They betray an anxiety concerning the potential of their sister's body to cross class divides and form social relations beyond their control.¹⁶⁰ Ferdinand draws attention to the anatomical body as he attempts to frighten his sister with the image of a diseased and sickly organ. By referencing the Genesis tale of Laban's sheep, he implies that remarriage is akin to bestial and even interspecies intercourse.¹⁶¹ He suggests that intercorporeal

¹⁵⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “sway,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

¹⁵⁹ Theodora Jankowski, “Defining/Confining the Duchess: Negotiating the Female Body in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*,” *Studies in Philology* 87.2 (1990): 228.

¹⁶⁰ Jankowski acknowledges that, “[the brothers'] inquiry into the chastity of their sister's body is understandable, though grotesque, for her production of children the patriarchy considers illegitimate would decrease her value as a trade article for her family.” In a similar vein, Sid Ray considers the brothers' investment in the Duchess's chastity. She points out that, unlike married women, widows were more autonomous and could own property. Though a widow was legally permitted to marry whom she pleased, once remarried, her power and property would revert to her husband. Ferdinand and the Cardinal would have certainly been aware of the risks involved in the Duchess's second marriage; however they do not mention these consequences when speaking to her. Even in his conversation with Bosola, Ferdinand asserts, “Do not you ask the reason, but be satisfied/ I say I would not” (1.1.250-251). Scholars often cite Ferdinand's rather vague reasoning as evidence of his incestuous desire for his twin sister. Jankowski, “Defining/Confining the Duchess,” 228; Sid Ray, *Holy Estates* (Cranbury: Rosemont Publishing, 2004).

¹⁶¹ Ferdinand compares the livers of the luxurious to Laban's spotted sheep. According to Genesis 30, Laban and Jacob divided Laban's flock, so that Jacob would have ownership of all the spotted, striped, or black animals. Jacob, however, still tended Laban's flock, and in order to

exchange parallels interspecies merging and results in progeny who are visibly marked by their illicit conception. Moreover, instead of directly interrogating the Duchess's desire to wed, Ferdinand focuses on her liver—the organ that, according to Helkiah Crooke, contains “the faculty of lust and desire.”¹⁶² Just as her blood may tarnish her reputation (at least in her brothers' eyes), the Duchess's liver may similarly move her feelings of desire and compel her to remarry. While the siblings' opinions on the agency of the body's parts certainly differ—for the Duchess, it brings hope while for the brothers it is the source of acute anxiety—Webster's play introduces us to a world in which organs *do* things. The brothers propose that uncontrolled blood or an unruly liver will taint the Duchess's reputation and body—leading to spots upon her liver, a physical manifestation of condemned desire.

The Duchess responds to the brothers' negative valorization of material exchange—their perceived threat of degraded fluids and tainted parts—by imagining an alternative in which bodily exchange increases inherent worth. She proposes that, “Diamonds are of most value / They say, that have passed through most jewelers' hands” (1.1. 292-293). As the Duchess equates herself to a “diamond,” a stone of considerable value and an early modern symbol of chastity, she emphasizes that contact with different hands increases the diamond's value. Moreover, the verb “passed” is intrinsically ambiguous in that it is unclear whether the diamond or the jeweler initiates the transaction. She implies that she does not actively desire remarriage, nor does she plan to court her suitors. While the Duchess's potentially passive role may assuage

increase his own herd, he placed spotted lumbar in front of Laban's animals while they mated. By gazing on the spotted wood, the sheep would produce speckled offspring. Jacob method of breeding allowed him to trick Laban and acquire more sheep. Thus, Ferdinand's reference to the tale aligns the liver's spots and, more precisely, feminine desire with clandestine and bestial intercourse.

¹⁶² Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (London, 1615), 7.

her brothers' fears, her conclusion remains the same: contact with multiple bodies and intercorporeal exchange increase one's worth. The Duchess, in effect, attempts to unsettle or destabilize the image of a decaying liver and the risk of tainted blood by offering her brothers a positive formulation of intercorporeal exchange. Lynn Enterline proposes that, for the Duchess, "woman's 'value' is something produced through social relations rather than an inherent trait."¹⁶³ As the Duchess revises her brothers' logic, she describes a model of physiological and affective exchange that is fundamentally generative.

Ignoring her brothers' admonitions, the Duchess asks, with apparent casualness, Antonio's opinion of marriage. A self-proclaimed "melancholic," Antonio declares that marriage is little else than "the bare name / Of being a father" (1.1.391-392). His response is skeptical—he pronounces marriage a "heaven or hell" and hesitates to respond to the advances of his superior (1.1.386). As he implies that adultery corrupts nuptial bonds, Antonio's eye grows bloodshot. In spite of his retort, the Duchess seizes upon this moment:

Fie, fie, what's all this?
 One of your eyes is bloodshot; use my ring to't
 They say 'tis very sovereign: 'twas my wedding ring
 But to my second husband. (1.1.395-398)

Critics suggest that Antonio's bloodshot eye is a psychosomatic reaction to the very thought of marriage. The Duchess's choice of treatment reflects the Aristotelian belief that precious stones, especially emeralds, sooth the eye.¹⁶⁴ Webster, however, may be presenting this redness as a manifestation of both Antonio's melancholia and his love for the Duchess.¹⁶⁵ In the seventh

¹⁶³ Lynn Enterline, "'Hairy on the In-Side': *The Duchess of Malfi* and the Body of Lycanthropy," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 7.2 (1994): 88.

¹⁶⁴ Dimitris Plantzos, "Crystals and Lenses in the Greco-Roman World," *American Journal of Archeology* 10.3 (1997): 460.

¹⁶⁵ In her chapter "Lovesickness and Neoplatonism," Lesel Dawson explains that, "When affection is reciprocated, the lovers' souls begin to mingle to form a perfect and complete self."

speech of Marsilio Ficino's *Commentary on Plato's Symposium of Love*, Marsupinni explains that, the spirit's vapor (produced from the blood) "sends out rays...through the eyes" that can "extend as far as the person opposite."¹⁶⁶ Marsupinni attributes this exchange to feelings of lovesickness and proposes that "bleary and red eyes, by the emission of their own ray, force the ray of the beholder nearby to be afflicted with a similar disease."¹⁶⁷ In describing the release of spirits and the contact these spirits can make with another's eye, Marsupinni depicts what I refer to throughout this project as an affective circuit of exchange.

Travelling spirits penetrate another's body, producing both lovesickness and "bleary" eyes. In

For the Duchess and Antonio, this mingling occurs through various touches—the exchange of spirits, their clasped hands, and their touching hearts. Lesel Dawson, *Lovesickness and Gender in Early Modern Literature* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), 132.

¹⁶⁶ Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, trans. Sears Jayne (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985), 159, 160. Michael J.B. Allen explains that Ficino's *Commentary* "became the seminal text of Renaissance love theory" (xiii). Other authors, such as Pietro Bembo, Baldassare Castiglione, and Giordano Bruno, "modified [Ficino's] theory to suit the taste of their readers, transforming, for instance, the homoerotic desire celebrated by Plato and Ficino into the more acceptable heterosexual passion familiar from courtly love and Petrarchan poetry" (Kraye 382). While we do not know whether Webster read Ficino's *Commentary*, by the seventeenth century, these ideas would have certainly been familiar to English writers and audience members. Sarah Hutton notes that English readers were likely most familiar with the Latin translation of Castiglione's *The Courtier*. She writes that, "the doctrine of Platonic love was assimilated into secular love poetry, especially into the Petrarchan poetry so fashionable in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries" (72). Michael J.B. Allen, introduction to *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, eds. Michael J.B. Allen and Valery Rees (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2001), xiii; Jill Kraye, Ficino in the Firing Line: A Renaissance Neoplatonist and His Critics," *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, 382; and Sarah Hutton, "The Renaissance and the seventeenth century," *Platonism and the English Imagination*, Eds. Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 72.

¹⁶⁷ Ficino, *Commentary*, 160. Although Marsupinni does not revere this potential exchange of spirits, the *Commentary's* position regarding the metaphysical and material exchanges between lovers is ambiguous. According to the text, the exchange of bodily material leads lovers to a life in which the corporeal is privileged over the intellectual; however, the sixth speech of *Commentary* (in a portion attributed to Tommaso Benci) proposes that the "soul and the body...are joined by means of the spirit, which is a certain very thin and clear vapor produced by the heat of the heart from the thinnest part of the blood" (115). The spirit "receives the powers of the soul and transmits them to the body," joining body and soul, matter and mind. The metaphysical seems to be realized in the material here, suggesting a way in which the exchange of spirits is not merely a meeting of bodily matter, but of souls.

suggesting that invasive spirits may affect the eyes of the beholder, Marsupinni alludes to a second exchange; the afflicted may suffer from lovesickness, and thus emit spirits, piercing another's eyes.

Marsupinni also explains that melancholics cannot release their spirits or “catch” those of the beloved on “account of the thickness of [their] blood and spirits.”¹⁶⁸ Following Marsupinni, Antonio's lovesickness and melancholy prevents him from engaging in an ocular exchange of spirits. By diluting his dense blood, the Duchess enables him to capture her spirits as he releases his own. Thus, Antonio's plaint allows the Duchess to enact a gesture she is already strategizing. The ring's physiological properties and symbolic resonances allow the Duchess and Antonio's bodies to merge both physically and in holy matrimony.

As Webster again dramatizes a moment in which the Duchess initiates bodily exchange, he also illustrates the independent agency of bodies in moving towards this exchange. The Duchess imagines that, like her transplanted heart, Antonio's spirits touch her rays, compelling her to feel a similar form of lovesickness. The touching of rays or spirits, however, has more than affective implications here. As Marsupinni explains, through the exchange of spirits, lovers exhibit a “certain similarity of likeness.”¹⁶⁹ Though critics tend to read this moment as an almost one-sided marriage ceremony, the Duchess does more than equivocally wed her beloved. In a single gesture, she ensures their physical union—she initiates an exchange, characterized simultaneously by movement and constancy.¹⁷⁰ As the Duchess and Antonio's spirits converge,

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 166. Dawson points out that lovesickness was commonly associated with melancholy and illness in texts such as Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* and even in Ficino's *Commentary* (129-130).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 164.

¹⁷⁰ Though its roots were first planted in Plato's *Symposium*, reciprocal love, as an ideal, became increasingly popular during the early modern period and was not limited to male friendships. By way of illustration, Leone Ebreo's *Dialogues of Love* dramatizes a conversation between Philo

they at some level become composed of the same substance. By adopting a Neoplatonic model of vision, Webster suggests that they form an affectively charged ecosystem; organs and spirits pass between the lovers, allowing their bodies to merge. Unlike the earlier ecosystems I've discussed, in which human passions leave the body and interact with a dynamic environment of trees, sea, and wind, Webster's ecosystem dramatizes the psychophysiological consequences of bodily exchange within the interior landscape of the human body.

Like Galenic thought, Neoplatonic texts such as Ficino's *Commentary* characterize the body as permeable and vulnerable to the influence of other bodies.¹⁷¹ Webster draws on both models as the lovers refer to organs and spirits that extend beyond their frames. As Antonio and the Duchess's hearts touch or as they exchange spirits, the lovers ignite a physical and affective change in one another. However, while both humoralism and Neoplatonism emphasize the body's vulnerability to other bodies, Ficino suggests that this openness transforms lovers in such identical ways that lovers become composed of the very same stuff—so much so that they exist spiritually and physically in two bodies rather than just one.¹⁷²

While we do not see the Duchess and Antonio become literally one body (or two identical bodies), Webster engages with Neoplatonic theories of double-bodiedness by

and his lover, Sophia. Ebreo's couple discusses, in detail, the effects, manifestations, and origins of love. In the third dialogue of the work, Philo argues that a lover cannot find "pleasure" in love without "the reciprocal love of his beloved." Leone Ebreo, *Dialogues of Love*, ed. Rossella Pescatori (Toronto: Toronto UP, 2009), 355-356.

¹⁷¹ In many ways, this is unsurprising given that Galen and Plato draw on the same Greek model of humoral bodies.

¹⁷² In a somewhat similar vein, in his essay, "On Affectionate Relationships," Montaigne idealizes the "loving friendship between a man and a woman...in which not only the souls had full enjoyment but in which bodies too shared in the union." Through "involv[ing]" the "whole human being," body and soul, the "loving-friendship" flourishes, becoming full and abundant. The image of two bodies "shar[ing]" in a "union" suggests that this is an experience felt simultaneously and identically by both the lover and beloved. Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, trans. M.A. Screech (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 210.

suggesting that the exchange of bodily parts and spirits allows the lovers to live as equals in spite of their positions as master and servant. Displaced or touching organs infuse their bodies with the very same humoral matter, and as the lovers merge, their unequal positions collapse. The play visually dramatizes their mutual constitution as the Duchess insists that Antonio stand. Keenly aware of her privileged status, she tells him:

This goodly roof of yours is too low built,
I cannot stand upright in't, nor discourse,
Without I raise it higher. Raise yourself,
Or if you please, my hand to help you: so. (1.1.408-411)

The Duchess attempts to convince Antonio that his status as her servant and his lowered posture is “too low” for her to stand “upright.”¹⁷³ Guiding him upwards, to his feet, she decreases the spatial distance that divides them. The Duchess imagines status as the architectural framework of a building, which she can lower or, in this case, raise at will. She, however, does not lower her status, but instead, I would argue, develops a rhetoric of exchange that draws from both Galenic and Neoplatonic theories of the body. The lovers experience physical repercussions and transform together as their bodily material merges. While the Duchess, towering over Antonio, initially appears as the scene’s dominant subject, she urges him to embrace this physical intermixing of bodies—their shared flesh—by standing up as her equal.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ While the Duchess attempts to convince Antonio to abandon his status as her servant, she appears interested in both wedding and bedding Antonio. She insinuates that she plans to move more than just Antonio’s heart.

¹⁷⁴ The Duchess’s choice in husband also reflects the rise of Protestant companionate marriages during the period. Jankowski notes that the Duchess chooses “a man below her in estate to be, not her consort, but her husband: not a man to support her as a ruler, but a man to support her as a woman.” As I’ve mentioned, Antonio would legally gain control of the estate; however, by courting Antonio and “adopting the male prerogative, the Duchess attempts to level the social hierarchy—to live on equal footing with her husband.” Although the Duchess takes on a dominant position by courting her servant—Antonio later tells her that “these words should be mine” (1.1.464)—the Duchess disrupts the subject/object formulation as she physically raises Antonio to his feet. Jankowski, “Defining/Confining the Duchess,” 230; Ray, *Holy Estates*, 132.

Antonio, however, continues to repel her advances, fearing “ambition” to be “a great man’s madness” (1.1.412). The Duchess attempts to diffuse their perceived disparity by drawing attention to her flesh and blood—as if to suggest that she and Antonio are composed of the very same matter. To return to the moment with which I started, the Duchess urges Antonio to feel her displaced organ against his own heart:

Go, go brag:
 You have left me heartless, mine is in your bosom,
 I hope ’twill multiply love there. You do tremble.
 Make not your heart so dead a piece of flesh
 To fear more than to love me. (1.1.440-444)

It is not simply her presence or even her physical touch that will kindle feelings of love, but the flight of an organ from one body into another. The Duchess imagines that, within Antonio’s bosom, her heart touches, rubs, and perhaps, beats against her beloved’s, and it is through these interior touches that love will “multiply.” This image reflects the play’s insistence on the agency of bodily organs. By evoking the Genesis command, “be fruitful and multiply,” her rhetoric also suggests that the touch of two hearts may result in reproduction, or the emergence of new flesh. The Duchess notices her beloved “tremble,” and Antonio’s slight, but visible shudder suggests that the effects of love are not confined to the heart alone. By refusing to make his “heart so dead a piece of flesh”—by allowing himself to touch and be touched—Antonio may move beyond a “tremble” and towards love.

The Duchess’s turn to her heart as the source of her affections is not unusual; we see this focus on the heart in early modern literary and medical texts.¹⁷⁵ William Slights explains that the

¹⁷⁵ Courtly love and Petrarchan poetry focus on the heart as the site of the emotions and oftentimes imagine the possession of the beloved’s heart. Less common however is both the displacement of one heart into the body of the beloved and the contact of one organ with another.

period inherited much of its beliefs about the organ from classical texts.¹⁷⁶ Plato identified the heart as the body's "guard," which upon perceiving an exterior threat produces "heat" and the "whole power of feeling in the body"¹⁷⁷ while Aristotle argues that the organ is "the origin of life and of all movement and perception."¹⁷⁸ Slights explains that Galen, following Plato, believed "spiritual and emotive vitality" were located in the heart.¹⁷⁹ Slights proposes that, in spite of the period's medical advances, anatomists such as Vesalius, Fabricius, and even Harvey held confidence in these earlier traditions which "harmonized heart and soul."¹⁸⁰ Yet for the Duchess, the contact of two organs has an affective and physical force; it multiplies love and makes dead flesh feel.

The period's medical texts similarly conceived of touching as an encounter that alters the body's composition. In the *Mikrokosmographia*, Crooke argues that it is the "foundation" "of all the senses."¹⁸¹ He writes:

For man being born to understandeth, must apprehend those visions and fantasies which are objected eyther to the inward or outward sense; and there is no perception of any such vision or imagination, but by the ministry of the outwarde senses, which are the intelligencers between the body and soule; it was necessary that the body of man should be composed of such matter as might be capable of these senses.¹⁸²

According to Crooke, the external becomes knowable through the "ministry of the outward senses." Though he acknowledges an inner sentience, he specifies that the outward senses interpret the world, allowing man to "apprehend" and "understandeth" the external inwardly,

¹⁷⁶ William W.E. Slights, *The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008), 104.

¹⁷⁷ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Rockville: Serenity Publishers, 2009), 150.

¹⁷⁸ Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals*, trans. James G. Lennox (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004), 54.

¹⁷⁹ Slights, *The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare*, 104.

¹⁸⁰ For an even fuller discussion of the heart in classical and early modern medical texts, see Robert A. Erickson's *The Language of the Heart: 1600-1750*.

¹⁸¹ Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia*, 3.

¹⁸² Ibid.

through the soul, so to speak. In *The Passions of the Minde in Generall*, Thomas Wright explains that the passions and affections move between the “immaterial...acts of our wits and will” and the “external and material...acts of our senses.”¹⁸³ As the senses engage with the external world, the passions and affections interpret that external world and influence the immaterial body or the soul. Grounding his work in Galenic theories of the body, Wright argues, “when these affections are stirring in our minds they alter the humor of our bodies, causing some passion or alteration in them.”¹⁸⁴ The senses cause the mind’s passions to stir and, in doing so, they not only induce a changed physical condition—that is, a humoral imbalance or equilibrium—but also an altered affective state.

Although Wright suggests that touching involves an interaction with the exterior world, the Duchess describes touches that engage the body’s interior. Similarly, Crooke proposes that the sense of “touching is diffused through the whole body.”¹⁸⁵ He suggests that the sensation is felt beyond the body’s skin, potentially upon the body’s interior flesh or meat. *The Oxford English Dictionary* locates flesh on both the body’s surface as well as its interior spaces. Several definitions in the *OED* emphasize the interiority of flesh: “the soft substance, especially the muscular parts, of an animal body” and “that which covers the framework of bones and is enclosed by skin.”¹⁸⁶ Other definitions suggest that flesh makes up the body’s exterior: “the visible surface of the body, with reference to its color and appearance.” If the heart’s flesh can, in fact, touch and feel, as the Duchess suggests, sentient flesh seems to be located on the body’s surface (i.e. the skin) as well as its interior spaces—Antonio’s fleshy heart, for example.

The Duchess continues, reminding Antonio of her own “fleshiness”:

¹⁸³ Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (London, 1604), 7.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia*, 648.

¹⁸⁶ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “flesh,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

This is flesh and blood, sir;
 'Tis not the figure cut in alabaster
 Kneels at my husband's tomb. Awake, awake, man.
 I do here put off all vain ceremony,
 And only appear to you a young widow
 That claims you for her husband, and like a widow
 I use but half a blush in it. (1.1.443-449)

The Duchess resists the image of the reverent widow—a figure she aligns with the cold and distinctly lifeless touch of alabaster—or what Valerie Traub refers to as the “monumentalization” of women.¹⁸⁷ She relies on her corporeality, her flesh and blood, to speak for her physical and emotional vulnerability and generativity. The Duchess pushes Antonio to see her as more than a body within a highly structured political system by drawing attention to the “half blush” of her sexual desire.¹⁸⁸ She concurrently reminds him of her sexual experience and the vicissitudes of her own body. As a widow, she only “use[s]...half a blush” while courting Antonio; however, she proposes that, like the tremble of his heart, the faint color in her cheek betrays her openness to intercorporeal exchange. Thus, we are left with two hearts that mutually touch one another, organs that, as Ferdinand suggests just moments earlier, do things.

The play visibly literalizes these reciprocal touches as the scene progresses. As Antonio

¹⁸⁷ Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 24. Margaret Owens touches on the feminist scholarship that has discussed the monumentalization of women. Owens writes, “‘If the Duchess were to model her behavior on the pattern set by her alabaster double, she would be submitting to a form of idealization that feminist critics have identified as the ‘monumentalizing’ of the feminine, that is, the fetishization of the dying or quasi-dead good woman, a representational strategy most notoriously exemplified by Shakespeare’s Ophelia, Desdemona, and Hermione.’” Traub writes, “Confinement, monumentalization, and death are the typical, and often quite spectacular, means the drama employs to transmute illicit female desire into acceptable form” (24). Margaret Owens, “John Webster, Tussaud Laureate: The Waxworks in *The Duchess of Malfi*,” *ELH* 79.4 (2012): 869.

¹⁸⁸ Though the Duchess encourages Antonio to view her as “flesh and blood,” her marriage is not apolitical. Jankowski explains that “in challenging marriage in any way...the Duchess challenges the very essence of gender relations within patriarchal early modern society.” The Duchess chooses to ignore the legal implications of her marriage and, in doing so, “reinforces her sense of self as a political person.” Jankowski, “Defining/Confining the Duchess,” 234.

succumbs to the Duchess's rhetoric, he similarly embraces the image of their mutual touch:

ANTONIO: And may our sweet affections, like the spheres,
 Be still in motion—
 DUCHESS: Quick'ning, and make
 The like soft music—
 ANTONIO: That we may imitate the loving palms,
 Best emblem of a peaceful marriage,
 That ne'er bore fruit divided. (1.2.481-487)

As Antonio acknowledges that their passions are susceptible to forces beyond their control, he again exposes his fear of cuckoldry, the possibility that they may “[bear] fruit divided.” He suggests that their passions may be influenced by the external world—other bodies and lovers, for example—leading them to bear children with other partners. Antonio aspires to a love that is “still in motion” while the Duchess hopes that it will “quicken.” The lovers seem to desire a love that maneuvers the difficult balance of simultaneous stasis and motion. For the Duchess and Antonio, motion—hearts that tremble, spirits that navigate the distance between their eyes—allows them to intermix their bodies. And it is this strange intercourse that “quicken” to produce human life. However, amid this movement, Antonio hopes for a certain stillness. While the dialogue alludes to Antonio's concerns about marriage, it emphasizes a world of constant movement, in which the swift effects of other touches and passions may disturb the couple's intimate ecology. For Antonio, stillness is a matter of monogamy, the exclusion of other “motions.” By evoking the image of the heavenly spheres—celestial bodies, which move in tandem with one another—Antonio imagines a circuit of exchange between himself and the Duchess alone, one that excludes the interference of other body parts and passions. The moment reads as a wedding vow—Antonio donning the Duchess's wedding ring—as the Duchess insists that the Church must “echo” their union (1.1.481).

Critics often read Antonio's lines as a reference to palm trees. Yet, the phrase, "loving palms," also brings to mind the image of two hands engaged in a mutual embrace, what Juliet refers to as "holy palmer's kiss" (1.5.111).¹⁸⁹ In associating palm trees with hands, the line alludes to a living, growing, physical touch. The editors of the Oxford edition note that palm trees "were thought to reproduce only if in close proximity to one another."¹⁹⁰ Antonio's hope that they may procreate refutes his earlier thoughts on marriage and children. According to Erin Ellerbeck, in imagining his future bloodline, Antonio "envisions the complete combination of two trees" rather than the practice of grafting, "the attachment of one branch to a family stock in marriage."¹⁹¹ He instead desires what Ellerbeck refers to as "extreme grafting," the union of two entire plants.¹⁹² I suggest that the play alludes to this symbiotic relationship by developing an ecology of moving organs and parts. Just as two trees may touch, intertwine, and produce fruit, the lovers' bodily parts merge and generate new life. The play insists upon the consequences of flesh upon flesh, first in the affectively charged touch of two hearts and finally within the Duchess's womb.

Like the earlier plays discussed in previous chapters, *The Duchess of Malfi* alludes to the affective potential of tree life. Just as trees feel Hieronimo's grief and sylvan life in *Titus* commands pity, trees in Webster's play love. Moreover, like his predecessors, Webster blurs

¹⁸⁹ This phrase also refers to pilgrims who have returned from the Holy Land with palm leaves. While the Duchess and Antonio may clasp hands, the allusion also suggests that they are united spiritually as well as physically.

¹⁹⁰ John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. René Weis (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009), 391.

¹⁹¹ Erin Ellerbeck, "'A Bett'ring of Nature': Grafting and Embryonic Development in *The Duchess of Malfi*," *The Indistinct Human in Renaissance Literature*, eds. Jean Feerick and Vin Nardizzi (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 93. Ellerbeck explains that, during the period, the metaphor of grafting was often used to "signal a disruption of the social order," particularly in reference to "prohibited reproduction" (88). She writes, "the unsanctioned combination of different family lines was viewed as analogous to the practice of mixing various plants" (88).

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 93.

human-botanic divides as Antonio imagines himself and the Duchess as arboreal bodies. Yet, Webster diverges from earlier engagements with tree life in that he emphasizes the effects of *touching* trees. Webster is less interested in dramatizing the gradual human-botanic metamorphoses we see in Kyd and Shakespeare's plays. While in these earlier works human bodies open unto their environments and merge with botanic life (particularly during moments of tragedy and grief), Webster turns to trees to emphasize not only the body's receptivity, but its generative potential.

While the image of two touching trees or hands symbolizes marital unions, it also alludes to the symbiotic growth and generativity of arboreal life, particularly if we take into account Antonio's suggestion that palms "ne'er [bear] fruit divided."¹⁹³ By imagining *touching* palms, Antonio refers to a mutually felt sensation that could potentially change his and the Duchess's humoral compositions. Crooke specifies that the sensation of touch is most intensely felt in the hand: "This touching virtue or tactility...we do more curiouslie and exquisitely feel and discern...[in] the Hand than in the other parts."¹⁹⁴ As their hands touch and feel each other, the lovers' passions simultaneously stir and transform together. However, given the ambiguity of the word *palm*, Antonio's diction also refers to the mutual proximity, growth, and fruitfulness of two trees. He suggests that their clasped palms could lead to a similar form of generativity as he looks ahead to their future offspring or fruit. Unlike Lavinia and Isabella, both of whom become devastated human-tree hybrids, Antonio imagines mutual and generative growth. While Webster attributes affective vitality to tree life (as do Kyd and Shakespeare), he draws on sylvan forms to imagine generative as opposed to devastated human bodies.

¹⁹³ Early modern marital ceremonies required couples to clasp hands three times, and lovers often wore a ring on this particular finger (as married couples often do today). See also, Dale B.J. Randall's "The Rank and Earthy Background of Certain Symbols in *The Duchess of Malfi*."

¹⁹⁴ Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia*, 730.

By the play's second act, the Duchess and Antonio's openness to one another is literalized in the Duchess's pregnancy. The image of two touching hearts and trees takes another form within the Duchess's womb as their palms bear fruit. Crooke, in fact, attributes conception to the "benefit of Touching" and explains that because Nature "[aymes] at Eternity," species are endowed with the "most exquisite sense of Touching" that allows humans and animals to experience an "incredible kinde of pleasure."¹⁹⁵ In reference to this moment in the *Mikrokosmographia*, Elizabeth Harvey argues that by linking sexuality and tactility, Crooke represents the sensation of touch as a "reproductive impulse, the urge for eternity."¹⁹⁶ It is through the fleshy contact of two bodies that new flesh emerges. Moreover, Crooke explains that "in the wombe," an infant "neither seeth, nor heareth, nor smelleth, nor tasteth any thing, but yet hath absolute necessity of the sense of Touching, that he may be able to auoyde imminent dangers."¹⁹⁷ Crooke proposes that that the sensation not only produces a rare form of pleasure that compels new life, but that it also nurtures and protects this new life as it grows within the mother's womb.

As the signs of the Duchess's pregnancy become increasingly obvious, Bosola follows Ferdinand's orders to observe the Duchess, noting that she "wanes i'th'cheek, and waxes fat i'th'flank...[and] wears a loose-bodied gown" (2.1.67, 69). Though the Duchess and Antonio wish to maintain a circuit of exchange that is exclusive to them alone, Bosola's obsession with what the Duchess's loose fitting gown conceals illustrates the risks involved in such generative touching. Bosola concerns himself with making these exclusive touches public. He compels us, as audience members and readers, to gaze voyeuristically beyond the Duchess's clothing and

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 648.

¹⁹⁶ Elizabeth Harvey, ed. *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (Philadelphia: UPenn P, 2004), 84.

¹⁹⁷ Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia*, 648.

wonder, alongside him, what “her clothing might be hiding.”¹⁹⁸ Though she does not discuss the Duchess’s pregnant body specifically, Catherine Belsey argues that much of the play’s imagery is emblematic, “arresting the movement of the plot and placing emphasis on significance rather than experience.”¹⁹⁹ As the stage becomes a panopticon of sorts—drawing focus on the Duchess’s pregnant body—the play contemporaneously dramatizes the risks and generative effects of the lovers’ circuit of exchange. Bosola’s commitment to making the Duchess’s pregnancy known reveals the possibility that this circuit of exchange is susceptible to intrusion. At the same time, by first drawing attention to Antonio and the Duchess’s touching hearts and hands, and finally, to the Duchess’s body, Webster seems to suggest that these touching organs and parts find their culmination within the Duchess’s womb. Their touching flesh creates the presence of new flesh, or life—and, ultimately, the possibility that this hybrid body contains the traces of Antonio and the Duchess’s touch even after their demise.

Moreover, the Duchess’s pregnancy draws attention to the porousness of the lovers’ bodies. Tanya Pollard explains, “pregnancy... intensified the spongy, open, receptive nature attributed to the female body.”²⁰⁰ Engaging with Galenic theories of the body, Pollard writes, “inhabited and transformed by a new presence simultaneously native and foreign, the pregnant body represents the most extreme version of the openness and vulnerability understood to constitute women’s state.”²⁰¹ The fetus is quite literally intercorporeal or hybrid flesh; because

¹⁹⁸ Judith Haber, “‘My body bestow upon my women’: the space of the feminine in *The Duchess of Malfi*,” *Desire and Dramatic Form in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), 86.

¹⁹⁹ Catherine Belsey, “Emblem and Antithesis in *The Duchess of Malfi*,” *Renaissance Drama* 11 (1980): 117.

²⁰⁰ Tanya Pollard, “Conceiving Tragedy,” *Shakespearean Sensations: Experiencing Literature in Early Modern England*, eds. Tanya Pollard and Katherine Craik (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 89.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

the child is composed of both the Duchess and Antonio's bodies, it is also interclass flesh. Although pregnancy is most associated with the female body, the emblematic images of reciprocal touching that precede the Duchess's pregnancy further configure the Duchess and Antonio's bodies as open and vulnerable to each other. Mary Floyd-Wilson explains that conception was only possible if an occult sympathy existed between the male seed and female womb. She cites a late 16th century text, *The Problemes of Aristotle*, in which the author writes, "the wombe and nature doe draw the seede, as the Lodestone doth yron."²⁰² Similar to the magnetic quality associated with the lodestone, early moderns believed that, if a sympathy existed between bodies, the womb could potentially attract seed, thus leading to procreation. Though Antonio and the Duchess are not of the same social class, according to such theories, they share a particular sympathy that forms new life by drawing Antonio's seed into the Duchess's body.

While the Duchess and Antonio's bodies are figured as both sympathetic and open to each other, Webster complicates the generative effects of such open sympathies as the Duchess goes into labor. Antonio's nose begins to bleed, the blood dripping onto the child's nativity. He, however, dismisses the nosebleed and concludes, "One that were superstitious would count / This ominous, when it merely comes by chance" (2.3.44-45). As the Duchess gives birth, Antonio too engages in a sort of release. The nosebleed characterizes Antonio's body as similarly porous and vulnerable. Crooke specifies that women typically do not experience nosebleeds because their blood accumulates in the womb, either for the purpose of menstruation or to nourish an infant.²⁰³ Thus, as Crooke explains that nosebleeds were considered a male

²⁰² Mary Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 76.

²⁰³ Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia*, 195.

ailment, he inadvertently suggests that bleeding from the nose is akin to the release of blood during birth or menstruation. Other Galenic texts, however, make this analogy more explicitly. In his Lectures on Galen's *De Sectis*, Agnellus of Ravenna writes, "The flow of blood occurs not only through these [hemorrhoids] but also through the nose, and also by what is called menstruation or menstrual flow in women, from the fact that each month an evacuation of their bodies occurs."²⁰⁴ Dale B. Martin explains that, "all sorts of bleeding—through the mouth, nose, or anus—were construed by ancient medial writers as fulfilling the same corporeal function as menstruation."²⁰⁵

While ancient and early modern physicians would have regarded Antonio's nosebleed as a necessary evacuation, the moment during which this letting of blood occurs suggests other possibilities. Antonio's nosebleed may imply that he is not, like his wife, giving birth, but rather experiencing a miscarriage or abortion. Though he does not take seriously this potentially troubling sign, his recognition that the superstitious may regard the nosebleed differently foreshadows the uncertainty of the child's fate. We learn, much later in the play, that the first child survives; however, we are not given any indication as to whether he lives much beyond the play's conclusion to extend his parents' interclass bloodline. As the Duchess opens her body to make way for new life, Antonio's release implies that this life may be interrupted and short-lived. Webster further characterizes the lovers as humorally similar, but in doing so, he suggests that although their corporeal openness is generative, it is not sufficient to sustain life. Once the

²⁰⁴ Gianna Pomata, "Menstruating Men: Similarity and Difference of the Sexes in Early Modern Medicine," *Generation and Degeneration: Tropes of Reproduction in Literature and History from Antiquity to Early Modern Europe*, eds. Valeria Finucci and Kevin Brownlee (Durham: Duke UP, 2001), 124.

²⁰⁵ Dale B. Martin, "Contradictions of Masculinity: Ascetic Inseminators and Menstruating Men in Greco-Roman Culture," *Generation and Degeneration: Tropes of Reproduction in Literature and History from Antiquity to Early Modern Europe*, eds. Valeria Finucci and Kevin Brownlee (Durham: Duke UP, 2001), 102.

child leaves the womb, he becomes vulnerable to his environment, specifically, the Duchess's brothers.

Webster draws attention to the risk of intercorporeal exchange and hybrid flesh by juxtaposing the openness of the lovers' bodies with the impenetrability of the court during the Duchess's delivery. In order to avoid suspicion, Antonio announces that the Duchess's jewels are missing, and orders the court officers to "be lock'd into his chamber / Till the sun-rising; and to send the keys / Of all their chests and of their outward doors" (2.2.54-56). By collecting their keys, Antonio ensures that the officers are not just ordered to remain in their bedchambers, but that they have no way of escaping, even if they were to disobey his demands. Antonio creates a scene of imagined danger in order to ensure the secrecy of both his relationship and the Duchess's pregnancy. Moreover, the court's enforced distance from the Duchess draws attention to the peculiarity of the lovers' experience. As the Duchess tells us in act one, she will "through frights and threat'nings... assay / This dangerous venture" (1.1.339-340). She is very much aware of the risks involved in both marrying her servant and bearing his child. And as the physical enclosure makes clear, Antonio and the Duchess's interclass marriage and culminating hybrid child become immediately vulnerable to the brothers' threats once word of the birth leaves the court. It is only when the gates are shut, the doors locked, and the keys collected that the Duchess may open her body and make way for new life.

As Ferdinand learns of his sister's child, the play again reiterates the necessity of such distance and secrecy. In a state of uncontrolled rage, he tells the Cardinal:

I would have their bodies
 Burnt in a coal-pit with the ventage stopp'd,
 That their curs'd smoke might not descend to heaven;
 Or dip the sheets they lie in in pitch or sulphur,
 Wrap them in 't, and then light them like a match;
 Or else to boil their bastard to a cullis,

And give't his lecherous father to renew
The sin of his back. (2.5.66-73)

Ferdinand envisions various forms of torture and death while targeting the lovers' sexual desire and generativity. He does not simply say that he will murder or burn the couple, but he specifies that he will have "their bodies" burnt in an enclosed coal-pit. By referring specifically to the lovers' bodies, he suggests that it is their very fleshiness with which he takes issue. Ferdinand proposes that their relationship has no place in this world, let alone at court, as he declares that the lovers must be confined to an airtight hole in which not even the smoke of their scorched bodies may seep. Ferdinand envisions burning their bodies in the intimacy of their bed, perhaps as the lovers sleep or make love, and when they are at their most vulnerable and exposed. Finally, in a moment that echoes Titus's cannibalistic feast, Ferdinand targets the very fruit of their bodies by suggesting that he will boil the child and feed it to the infant's "lecherous father." Ferdinand aims to punish Antonio for his so-called lechery by killing the new life the lovers' relationship has produced. Though the lovers' imagine the generative effects of intercorporeal exchange, Ferdinand aims to punish the couple for participating in such fleshy exchanges; he threatens both the lovers' bodies and the hybrid flesh of their child. As Ferdinand imagines these gruesome deaths, he illustrates the potential risks involved in such intimate exchanges. The play suggests that intercorporeal exchange entails vulnerability to external environments. Although the lovers create an intimate ecology as they exchange parts and passions, their ecology is subject to larger networks and social expectations, specifically those of the Duchess' brothers.

By act three, the Duchess and Antonio certainly prove that lovers find little "pleasure...in sleep"—nearly three years have elapsed since the play's start, and we learn that the Duchess has borne three children with Antonio. In what appears to be a scene of domestic bliss, the lovers and the Duchess's waiting woman, Cariola, speak freely, unaware of Ferdinand's presence. The

Duchess admits to Antonio, “You have cause to love me, / I enter’d you into my heart / Before you would vouchsafe to call for the keys” (3.2.60-61). As the Duchess imagines Antonio to be inside her heart she reverses the image we have in act one, in which the Duchess’s heart is figured as within Antonio’s chest. Though the Duchess suggests that Antonio penetrates her heart, she specifies that he did not force his entry; rather she entered him inside her. Haber argues that the Duchess’s “assertion...reverses the conventional positions of male and female, placing woman on top, as active subject.”²⁰⁶ She points out that, “as she continues...the Duchess significantly complicates this formulation: she effectively positions herself (and Antonio) both as subject and object, both as penetrator and penetrated.”²⁰⁷ In doing so, the Duchess again refers to the affective agency of her heart. Though her heart does not emerge from the depths of her chest (as it does in act one), the Duchess suggests that Antonio plays the role of the anatomist as he enters the organ. This seemingly dominant position and violent gesture, however, make Antonio vulnerable to her heart and compel him to reciprocate the Duchess’s love.

As the couple continues to draw on a rhetoric of touching organs and parts, Ferdinand attempts to disrupt the exclusivity of such touches by inserting himself within the lovers’ circuit of exchange. While Cariola and Antonio momentarily steal away, Ferdinand enters the bedchamber, holding a poniard, and asks, “Virtue, where art thou hid? What hideous thing / Is it that doth eclipse thee?” (3.2.71-72). As we know from the siblings’ discussion in act one, Ferdinand equates the Duchess’s worth with what he defines as her virtue—the decision to live the single life of a widow rather than re-wed. Ferdinand and the Cardinal warn her that remarriage will rid her of virtue and taint her high blood. As Ferdinand facetiously seeks virtue in his sister’s bedchamber, he implies that virtue is metonymic of his sister’s body and that she is

²⁰⁶ Haber, *Sensible Flesh*, 76.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

not in clear sight because she has been “eclipsed” by something monstrous, presumably Antonio. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines eclipse as “to cause an obscuration of some other heavenly body, by passing between it and the spectator, or between it and the source from which it derives light” and “to cast a shadow upon, throw into the shade; to obscure and deprive of light.”²⁰⁸ Though both definitions note that an eclipse brings about a lack of light, the first implies that this obscuration can involve more than two bodies. Ferdinand imagines a cosmology or a circuit of exchange that involves himself as well as the two lovers. In doing so, he betrays an incestuous desire to engage in an intimate ecology with his sister alone. His insistence that the Duchess has been “eclipsed” by a “hideous thing” implies that she no longer bathes in what Ferdinand views as his own luster; instead, another male body darkens his twin, disturbing what Ferdinand views as the twins’ once exclusive circuit of exchange.

By offering the Duchess the poniard, Ferdinand enacts a counter-eclipse that inserts himself within the lovers’ circuit of exchange; the poniard becomes a reminder of his presence within this circuit. While the astrological imagery in this scene recalls the lovers’ prior reference to the heavenly spheres, Ferdinand imagines a much darker cosmology. His obsession with the Duchess’s sexual life, as well as the poniard’s status as a symbolically phallic object—and one that represents forced rather than reciprocal penetration—confirm Ferdinand’s incestuous desire for the Duchess. He wishes to disturb the lovers’ affective ecology—and their exchange of bodily material—by replacing Antonio’s “poniard” or phallus with his own. The Duchess pleads with him and asks, “Why should only I / Of all the other princes of the world / Be cased up like a holy relic?” alluding to the specter of the alabaster widow in act one (3.2.136-138, 139). Cast in stone, the Duchess’s body would not be susceptible to her beloved’s fleshy touch. Though this

²⁰⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “eclipse,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

scene echoes the siblings' discussion, Ferdinand is less interested in secluding the Duchess here and more in inserting himself into her relationship as a source of sexual control. In doing so, he begins to disrupt the reciprocal and characteristically exclusive touches between the lovers.

Once he has imprisoned the Duchess, Ferdinand attempts to disturb the physical fusion of her body with that of her beloved. He demands that they speak entirely in darkness, claiming that he has come to "seal [his] peace" (4.1.42). He declares:

Here's a hand
To which you have vowed much love: the ring upon't
You gave.
...Bury the print of it in your heart.
I will leave this ring with you for a love token,
And the hand, as sure as the ring; and do not doubt
But you shall have the heart too. When you need a friend
Send it to him that owned it: you shall see
Whether he can aid you. (4.1.42-44, 45-50)

As Ferdinand exits and the room is again lit with torches, the Duchess discovers that what she grips is not her brother's palm, but a dead man's hand, which she mistakes for the hand of her husband. Unlike the play's former and mutually felt touches, the Duchess experiences a touch that is felt by her alone. Ferdinand's grotesque gift recalls the Duchess and Antonio's "loving palms" and wedding vows in act one. Katherine Rowe argues that this scene "literalizes the gift of hands and hearts that [the Duchess] and Antonio rehearse in the wooing scene."²⁰⁹ She notes that "its prosthetic, disembodied form challenges the fiction of marital *couverture*, or single person, that that symbolic gift is meant to sustain."²¹⁰ Similarly, Albert Tricomi comments,

²⁰⁹ Katherine Rowe, "'That Curious Engine': Action at a Distance in *The Duchess of Malfi*," *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999), 94. Rowe argues that, in many of the period's plays, consensual agreements, particularly between a master and servant, are dramatized through the clasp of hands. Oftentimes, this handclasp is "ironized and interrupted" as a means of suggesting the "potentially disastrous results...ratified by...voluntary gestures of consent" (88, 95).

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

“Read iconographically, this purported severing of the ringed hand from the body exhibits Ferdinand’s desire to revoke, untie, disassociate, his sister from a marital union he will not approve.”²¹¹ As Rowe suggests, the dead hand disrupts the physical and affective similarity the lovers have attempted to sustain thus far in the play. Rowe and Tricomi, however, are not concerned with the consequence of the dead hand’s touch, how the Duchess may be changed or shaped by its feel against her palm.²¹² I would argue, however, that Webster’s play, with its focus on the mutual touch of both lovers, asks, what are the consequences of a touch that is felt by the Duchess alone? Ferdinand, to an extent, responds to this question as he instructs the Duchess to “bury the print of it in your heart.” He suggests that by feeling the dead hand, the Duchess may transform in presumably physical and affective ways. While the lovers engaged in a mutual imprinting of hearts, the potential impression left by the dead hand would only alter the Duchess’s heart while leaving her supposedly deceased beloved unchanged and unmoved.

To further frighten the Duchess, Ferdinand instructs Bosola to reveal the “artificial figures of Antonio and his children, appearing as if they were dead” (4.1.52).²¹³ Though the

²¹¹ Albert Tricomi, “The Severed Hand in Webster’s *Duchess of Malfi*,” *SEL* 44.2 (2004): 355.

²¹² Rowe instead focuses on how the hand dramatizes concerns over consensual “relations of office and duty” while Tricomi focuses on Henry Boguet’s *Discours exécration des sorciers* (1590) as a possible source text for Webster’s play. Though peripheral to my argument, Albert Tricomi argues that Webster may have been inspired by Henry Boguet’s *Discours exécration des sorciers* (1590), specifically the chapter, “De la Metamorphose d’homme en Bestes & specialement des Lycanthropes, ou loups-garoux” (in addition to Painter’s *Palace of Pleasure*). Boguet’s text tells the story of a hunter who chops off the paw of a wolf. When removing the paw from his sack, the hunter discovers that it has transformed into a woman’s hand with a ring on it. The hunter then discovers that the hand belongs to the wife of a local lord. Tricomi notes that, unlike the *Arcadia* text to which the play is most often attributed, Boguet’s narrative “treats a cut-off hand bearing a wedding ring in an explicit relationship to lycanthropy.” Rowe, “That Curious Engine,” 95; Tricomi, “The Severed Hand,” 351.

²¹³ Mary Floyd-Wilson argues that Ferdinand’s various torments illustrate the period’s blurry demarcation between “legitimate and illegitimate forms methods for producing natural knowledge” (111). She writes, “Part of what drives Ferdinand’s experimentation is his foolish conviction that he can maintain divisions between witchcraft, theatrical trickery, and mere

Duchess believes that she has, in fact, viewed the dead corpses of her family, we later learn that these bodies and, perhaps, the dead man's hand are "presentations...but framed in wax" (4.1.109). During the period, wax was commonly used to create anatomical models that were studied by medical students and represented the body's "inside and exposed surfaces."²¹⁴ It was the preferred medium for such representations because of its malleability and likeness to human flesh. Harvey writes, "Wax is like flesh in its responsiveness to touch: it warms and changes shape, it seems almost to respond to touch as if it were flesh. It is, then the ideal medium to which fashion bodies made to be touched."²¹⁵ Following Harvey, the heat of the Duchess's palm or the chill of her fingertips could alter the shape and temperature of the waxen hand. As the Duchess grasps the dead hand, both hands—wax and flesh—are touched and potentially changed; yet, while there is an element of reciprocity in this exchange, the wax hand lacks the sensation that allows the Duchess to perceive the feel of the waxen form against her hand. By sensing the shape and temperature of the wax, the Duchess could experience a touch that changes her bodily composition—specifically, the humors she and Antonio share. As I will show, it is precisely this one-sided feeling or sensation that the Duchess refuses.

Having gazed upon what she believes to be the corpses of her husband and children, the Duchess responds:

There is not between heaven and earth one wish
I stay for after this: it wastes me more
Than were't my picture, fashioned out of wax,
Stuck with a magical needle, and then buried
In some foul dung-hill. (4.1.60-64)

As she alludes to a form of witchcraft, or wax magic, akin to voodoo, the Duchess claims that

experiment" (121). Floyd-Wilson suggests that these efforts to "plague his sister with 'art'" lead to Ferdinand's lycanthropy (111). Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge*, 111, 121.

²¹⁴ Harvey, *Sensible Flesh*, 96.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 101-102.

viewing this horrific scene is more detrimental to her than if her waxen likeness were buried in dung. She implies that she is concerned with how and the extent to which the deaths of her husband and children may affect her. By envisioning her own waxen form, the Duchess excludes herself from other potential circuits of exchange or intercorporeal touches that may cause a change in her humoral composition. Lynn Maxwell explains that sympathetic magic or wax magic “includes any magical act that uses an object to impact a subject across a distance on the basis of shared qualities or characteristics.”²¹⁶ Although the Duchess, as Susan Zimmerman notes, “appropriates the very devices” of her tormenters, her preference to “waste” away via wax magic illustrates a recognition of her own waxiness—her own potential to change affectively and physically while separated from Antonio’s side.²¹⁷ Maxwell explains that, during the period, wax was often employed as a “philosophical model and literary metaphor that figured the heart and mind, and particularly the female heart and mind.”²¹⁸ According to her analysis, “the mind, heart, and womb [were] understood as locations that can be imprinted and [were] susceptible to manipulation,” which “link[ed] those organs to wax figures.”²¹⁹ The Duchess betrays her desire to die, telling Bosola that she does not want to “stay after this.” However, she specifies that she would prefer to die through sympathetic magic because, unlike the effect of the corpses, this form of death may cause a less dramatic “wasting” or change within her. The *OED*’s definitions of “waste,” though various, suggest that “wasting” is a process, a gradual occurrence, so to

²¹⁶ Lynn Maxwell, “Wax Magic and *The Duchess of Malfi*,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 14.3 (2014): 32.

²¹⁷ Susan Zimmerman, “Invading the Grave: Shadow Lives in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* and *The Duchess of Malfi*,” *The Early Modern Corpse and Shakespeare’s Theater* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2005), 149.

²¹⁸ Maxwell, “Wax Magic,” 33.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

speak.²²⁰ As the Duchess touches the waxen hand and then views the deceased bodies of her family, she suggests that, much like a figure “framed in wax,” her mind and heart, in particular, may be imprinted and, thus, changed by the sensational experience of these forms. This said, by dying in another way—through wax magic—the Duchess insists that she may leave this world slightly less “wasted” or changed than if she were to continue to confront the dead bodies of her family. By avoiding other experiences that may touch and change her, the Duchess maintains the exclusive circuit of exchange she shares with her beloved.

The Duchess almost immediately expresses another way in which she may preserve their intermixing of bodies. She tells Bosola that she wishes her brothers “would bind [her] to that lifeless trunk / And let [her] freeze to death” (4.1.66-67). In freezing, or arresting her current bodily composition, she hopes to avoid other touches and the consequential changes these touches may incite. The Duchess’s use of the word “freezing” raises the possibility that she plans end her experiment with humoral openness in favor of a more closed model, in which she is not altered by other touches, including that of her beloved. Her urge to freeze herself suggests that she desires to capture permanently the reciprocal exchange she has achieved with Antonio. Although the Duchess initially seems to emulate a more closed model of social relations, she proposes that she would like to die as she was wed—her body engaged in an intimate embrace with her beloved. She evokes the image of two identical but separate palms, growing together, as she imagines her body bound to Antonio’s trunk. During the period, the word trunk was used to refer to both the body and the main stem of a tree. While in this case the Duchess refers to

²²⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “waste,” accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>. By way of illustration, the *OED*’s definitions for “waste” include: “to consume, use up, wear away, exhaust, diminish (a thing) by gradual loss”; “to consume or destroy (a person or living thing, his body, strength) by decay or disease”; and, “to consume one’s strength or faculties.”

Antonio's body, the word's double meaning evokes the earlier image of two clasped palms or entwined trees. Like Isabella, the Duchess imagines her death in arboreal terms; however, the Duchess does not imply that she will become a devastated human-tree body. Instead, even in envisioning a sylvan death, the Duchess embraces the play's earlier image of two fruitful trees in close proximity. Moreover, the *OED*'s arboreal and corporeal definitions of "trunk" emphasize the segment of a tree or human body that is distinct from the branches and limbs.²²¹ Though the Duchess does not envision a death as gruesome as these definitions might suggest, her use of the word trunk draws focus on the body's chest and heart. Subtly, Webster directs us back to the image of two touching hearts. By freezing herself upon him, the Duchess suggests that she would like to touch Antonio in death as she did in life. At the same time, she hopes to avoid other touches that may alter her humoral composition.

As Ferdinand torments his sister with a consort of madmen, the Duchess reiterates her unwavering commitment to maintain or freeze her humors and affectations. She tells Cariola that this form of torture does not incite madness; rather, the madmen's cacophony and foolish behavior will serve as a distraction, allowing her to keep her "right wits" (4.2.6). The Duchess does not turn to the idea of suicide as means of freezing her bodily state as she does in the previous scene; however, she implies that she takes comfort in knowing that she is not swayed by her brother's tortures. She even tells Cariola, "I'll tell thee a miracle, / I am not mad yet, to my cause of sorrow" (4.2.23-24). In addition, the Duchess is able to withstand her primary reason for sorrow—that is, what she takes for the dead bodies of her husband and children. She considers her sanity a "miracle," implying that the soundness of her mind is both unexpected and

²²¹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "trunk," accessed 16 April 2016, <http://www.oed.com>. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines trunk as, "the main stem of a tree, as distinct from the roots and branches; the bole or stock" and "the human body, or that of an animal, without the head, or especially without the head and limbs."

appreciated. Her sanity allows her to take solace in knowing that, though apart, she and Antonio are still composed of the same bodily humors. The Duchess seems to characterize their love by the reciprocity and exclusivity of their touches in spite of their physical separation and Antonio's supposed death.²²²

Grieving the loss of her husband and children, the Duchess is neither dying nor becoming mad—rather she is “freezing” herself, as she puts it in 4.1, resisting Ferdinand's mental tortures, and maintaining the physical and affective interpenetrability to which the lovers commit. The Duchess asks Cariola, “Who do I look like now?” as if to suggest that her physical appearance may be a sign of her internal or humoral state. Cariola responds:

Like to your picture in the gallery,
A deal of life in show but none in practice;
Or rather like some reverend monument
Whose ruins are even pitied. (4.2.31-34)

Cariola tells the Duchess that she resembles her portrait; she exhibits vitality in show but not in the ways she moves through life. According to Cariola, she is much like a monument: a stone figure of her former self, resistant to the world's touch. Although the Duchess rejects the image of the “alabaster” widow in act one (1.1.446), she appears pleased by this assessment, exclaiming “Very proper” (4.2.34). By resembling art, or living like art—that is, barely living at all—the Duchess is able to “freeze” herself, as if dying alongside her husband. In reference to this moment, Maxwell argues that the Duchess resembles not only her portrait, but the waxen forms,

²²² Enterline also recognizes the Duchess's resistance to her brother's torture. Enterline, however, proposes that the Duchess “for the briefest of moments...surrender[s] to the force of theatrical contagion” when she views the wax figures of Antonio and their children. Enterline argues that the Duchess's reaction “defines a melancholic reaction not as madness but as something else—as a collapse or, or failure in, the system of representation.” Enterline, “Hairy on the In-Side,” 100-101.

thus transforming her from “sovereign to subject and from subject to object.”²²³ Maxwell’s analysis of this scene is useful in that it reminds us that what the Duchess viewed was not the bodies of her children and husband, but waxen figures; her misrecognition of these art objects suggests the Duchess is, in fact, influenced by Ferdinand’s various forms of torture. However, Maxwell’s reading rids the Duchess of agency. She proposes that Ferdinand’s art objects have transformed the Duchess into this statuesque state. In contrast, I argue that the Duchess consciously chooses this freezing as an alternative to being affected by the external world and, more specifically, the cruelty of her twin. While she does not reject the circuit of exchange between herself and her beloved, she recognizes that other affectively charged exchanges and ecologies could reshape her humoral composition. By becoming a trace or a portrait of her former self, the Duchess ensures that her suffering, Ferdinand’s tortures, and more broadly, the outer world do not alter the intermixing of bodies that she and Antonio achieve.

In her final moments, the Duchess again embodies the image of the reverent monument or alabaster widow. She reminds Bosola, her executioner, that she is the “Duchess of Malfi still” (4.2.134). Though the Duchess urges Antonio to forget her political position at the play’s start, she describes herself here as a political body, rather than one composed of flesh and blood. With Bosola, she is unfailingly “still” the Duchess of Malfi. She instructs Cariola to take care of her children, giving her little boy “syrup for his cold” and reminding her daughter to “say her prayers ere she sleep” (4.2.195, 196). While most critics tend to read this moment as a reminder of the Duchess’s maternal and non-political body, Wendy Wall argues that the Duchess “alludes to her supervisory role and to the female knowledges that provide a domestic infrastructure for her

²²³ Maxwell, “Wax Magic,” 47.

identity.”²²⁴ Wall explains that, as a ruler, the Duchess would have been “the person who most visibly and routinely controlled bodies and ruled over rituals of preservation.”²²⁵ As a political body, and one that is distinctly not open to the world’s touch, she ensures that the circuit of exchange she and Antonio establish remains exclusive to their small family alone.

Although the Duchess makes a point of reminding Bosola of her political position, she concurrently proposes that, in death, she and Antonio are equals, and heaven will not resent their illicit marriage. As Bosola places a cord around her neck, she tells him, “heaven gates are not so highly arched / As princes’ palaces” (4.2.222-223). The Duchess implicitly alludes to act one, in which she urges Antonio to stand before her as her equal. Michael Neill observes, “heaven gates” here are literally the portals of the grave, the tomb which the Duchess must exchange for the high-roofed palace to which she once elevated her steward-husband.”²²⁶ She suggests that while their marriage is not tolerated in this world, in heaven she and Antonio will live together, unhindered by her brothers’ expectations. While the Duchess is anxious to leave the world of the court, unchanged and unmoved by her brothers’ tortures, she looks forward to the next one, in which social position is of no importance. She tells Bosola that she would find no “pleasure” to her “throat cut / With diamonds” or “to be shot to death with pearls” (4.2.206, 206-207, 208). In spite of her high social status, she does not aspire to die assaulted by material riches. The Duchess proposes that heaven will accept the sense of equal partnership the lovers have established through their shared humors and bodily parts.

The Duchess does not remain as untouched as she might like, nor does she move swiftly

²²⁴ Wendy Wall, “Just a Spoonful of Sugar: Syrup and Domesticity in Early Modern England,” *Modern Philology* 104.2 (2006): 163.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 165.

²²⁶ Michael Neill, “‘Fame’s best friend’: The Endings of *The Duchess of Malfi*,” *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997), 341.

into death; like Desdemona, she stirs, and Bosola, regretting the murder, notices “She’s warm, she breathes: / Upon thy pale lips I will melt my heart / To store them with fresh colour” (5.2.333-335). He then proceeds to kiss her, hoping that this gesture may bring vitality to a body straddling life and death. The touch of his melted heart, he hopes, might have a generative effect, restoring color to her lips and presumably returning life to her frame. In effect, Bosola attempts to engage the Duchess in a circuit of exchange, in which the displacement and contact of his heart will enliven her nearly dead lips. He appears to learn, perhaps by observing the lovers’ fleshy interchanges, that passions and body parts can *do* things. The touch of other bodies, however, is exactly what the Duchess resists. For a moment, Bosola’s kiss seems to alter the Duchess’s humoral composition; she wakes to whisper her beloved’s name and appears to be restored by Bosola’s mobile heart (4.2.339). However, this seemingly generative effect is short-lived; as Bosola confesses that Antonio is alive, the Duchess cries “mercy” and dies. Although the Duchess discovers that her husband still breathes, she does not attempt to live as one might expect. Webster presents us with a somewhat puzzling moment and leaves us to ask: Why is the Duchess ultimately immune to Bosola’s intentionally generative kiss?

While the play dramatizes the risks involved in interclass corporeal openness, Webster proposes that the lovers are unwilling to accept the penetrating force of other bodies. The play again emphasizes the independent agency of organs and passions, particularly as the Duchess’s body chooses which affectively charged touches to accept or reject. Bosola’s inability to reanimate the Duchess’s lips and body shows that he cannot engage the Duchess in a mutual touch that may change them both—even if this change could reunite her with Antonio. Moreover, as Bosola’s melted heart illustrates, not all organs possess the sympathetic attraction of the Duchess and Antonio’s touching hearts. Floyd-Wilson explains that early moderns

“attributed certain behaviors to . . . hidden sympathetic and antipathetic potencies”; drawing on Desiderius Erasmus’s writings on friendship, she notes that people turned to beliefs in hidden sympathies to explain “the enigmatically close connection one may feel with another person.”²²⁷ While the sympathetic attraction between the lovers’ organs has psychophysiological consequences, Bosola’s lips, pressed against the Duchess’, cannot revitalize her body. Bosola tells Ferdinand that he and the Cardinal have “a pair of hearts are hollow graves / Rotten, and rotting others” (4.2.309-310). While the brothers’ hearts are not entirely ineffectual—that is, their organs do things—the change they bring about is not at all generative. Rather, Bosola associates their hearts with “hollow graves” as if to suggest that the organs lack the sentient flesh that can form bonds, enliven the dead, and create new life. Unlike their sister’s heart, the brothers’ same organs cause destruction and decay.

Although the Duchess dies in act four, her presence haunts the play’s final act, further aligning the lovers in a sympathetic bond that exceeds the bounds of class and the limits of life and death. Before attempting to make peace with the Cardinal, Antonio and Delio make their way through a ruined abbey that is haunted by a spirit. Antonio reflects upon the disintegrating stones and concludes, “all things have their end: / Churches and cities, which have diseases like to men, / Must have like death that we have” (5.3.17-19). His remark describes the mortality of both humans and the material world; even manmade creations, built of stone, eventually experience death and devastation. Though Antonio appears to be inspired by the ruined structure, he anticipates his own demise. The ambiguity of the phrase, “all things have their end,” suggests that he is not simply speaking of human life and crumbling architecture; rather, he implies that his interclass relationship and, perhaps, his experiment with intercorporeal openness have come

²²⁷ Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge*, 7.

to a close. The voice he hears, however, complicates his rather dismal view, as it repeats his last few words, “Like death that we have” (5.3.19). If we assume that it is the Duchess’s voice we hear—Antonio later tells us “’tis very like my wife’s voice” (5.3.26)—the phrase suggests that death is something shared between the lovers, that which “[they] have” together, instead of something experienced alone. In this scene, the Duchess certainly seems to live beyond her death as she selectively echoes her husband’s words. In “hav[ing]” death together, the Duchess and Antonio continue to share a sympathetic bond that is unaffected by the Duchess’s strangulation in act four. As her voice haunts the ruined abbey, the play suggests that the Duchess has not fully died. Just as the lovers share bodily parts, they also seem to share death. The Duchess implies that this abstract experience moves through their circuit of exchange. Like their mobile hearts, death can penetrate and transform their bodies.

Bereft of the Duchess’s affectively charged touch, Antonio too refuses other circuits of exchange. He tells the voice, “Echo, I will not talk with thee / For thou art a dead thing” (5.3.37-38) to which the echo (or Duchess) responds, “Thou art a dead thing” (5.3.38). Though the Duchess appears to be dead while Antonio still appears to walk and breath, this moment and the repetition of the phrase suggest that the lovers will die or have already died together. Antonio soon decides to leave the ruins, concluding, “For to live thus is not indeed to live: It is a mockery and abuse of life” (5.3.46-47). In doing so, he reiterates what the echo has just told him: without the Duchess, he cannot fully live; rather he walks through life merely mimicking a former existence. Though Antonio recognizes his wife’s voice in an echo that both is and is not his own, he admits that living with “halves”—or traces of the Duchess—is no life at all (5.3.48). He would prefer to “lose all, or nothing” (5.3.49). The play asks: What happens when intercorporeal exchange is no longer possible? Such exchanges revive flesh and create life; however, the

Duchess and Antonio's suicidal thoughts reveal the risks of intercorporeal vulnerability. Once the lovers can no longer engage in these intimate exchanges, they recognize that being apart involves changing separately and living incompletely. Ultimately, they conclude that sharing in death outweighs the consequences and risks involved in their separation.

While death is not typically associated with generativity, it allows the Duchess and Antonio to reject the affective and physical consequences of other ecologies. Moreover, the play's image of two intertwined trees suggests that the lovers leave behind a fertile site, in which new life may flourish. Compost, the remnants of dead botanic matter, often provides generative ground for new botanic bodies. The play implies that while the Duchess and Antonio's experiment with intercorporeal exchange has come to an end, they may live beyond their deaths in the hybrid flesh of their son.

Webster's treatment of interclass and sympathetic circuits of exchange, however, is ambivalent. While the play proposes that merging flesh, though initially generative, is dangerous given the lovers' environmental circumstances, the play ends with the prospect of a hopeful future for the couple's hybrid son. With their first-born son in tow, Delio imagines that the child will found a legacy in his parents' honor:

Let us make noble use
 Of this great ruin; and join all our force
 To establish this young hopeful gentleman
 In's mother's right. These wretched eminent things
 Leave no more fame behind 'em than should one
 Fall in frost and leave his print in snow:
 As soon as the sun shines, it ever melts,
 Both form, and matter. I have ever thought
 Nature doth nothing so great, for great men,
 As when she's pleased to make them lords of truth:
 'Integrity of life is fame's best friend,
 Which nobly, beyond death, shall crown the end'. (5.5.108-120)

Delio recommends that the dukedom establish this child "in's mother's right." He imagines a

political future in which the son will continue his mother's legacy, presumably as duke, while concurrently erasing the land's collective memory of Ferdinand and the Cardinal. Delio presents the play's final couplet as "truth," bestowed upon him by nature. As editors note, these final lines are an allusion to a commonplace with which educated audience members would have been familiar.²²⁸ While some viewers may have ignored the play's last lines—as is often the case with maxims and clichés—the placement of these lines compels us to consider the saying within the work's larger context. Once separated from Antonio's side, the Duchess becomes increasingly concerned with her affective and physical integrity. She desires death in an attempt to avoid other touches, which may alter her humoral composition. While more puritanical audiences and readers may argue that this line condemns the Duchess's sexual behavior, Delio proposes the Duchess will live beyond her death through the political future of her son. He does not rebuke her actions, but instead praises her integrity while looking ahead. Although the child's fate is uncertain, Delio's speech proposes that, even between people of different classes, intercorporeal openness does more than the play initially suggests. It creates posthumous legacies, replacing devastation with renewed hope. The generative effects of the lovers' ecology—their exchange of bodily material—are realized in the potentially promising future of hybrid, interclass flesh.

The play dramatizes the generative potential and the risks involved in the exchange of bodily parts. As the Duchess's heart "quicken[s]" her beloved's pulse, as rays emanate from the lovers' eyes, and as they clasp hands, the lovers engage in a tactile intercourse that changes their bodily humors and affections. Their openness results in procreation, and perhaps most significantly leads to the physical and affective fusion of the lovers' bodies. Although drawing his cue from philosophers such as Ficino, Webster allows the Duchess and Antonio to found

²²⁸ *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. Brian Gibbons. The couplet alludes to Horace's phrase, "integer vitae."

another Platonism—one which allows the lovers to merge their flesh through the exchange of bodily material. The lovers touch, feel, and change together, though participating in this intimate contact as two separate bodies. The play, however, dramatizes the consequences of such openness and proposes that intercorporeal exchange across social classes cannot fully thrive. Though the Duchess and Antonio establish an exclusive circuit of exchange, the brothers attempt to disrupt this circuit, murdering the lovers and two of their children. Delio imagines the political future of their eldest, surviving son; however, this future is not certain and is overshadowed by Antonio's final wish that his son "fly the courts of princes" (5.4.72).

Although the brothers police the lovers' exchange of bodily material, the Duchess and Antonio ultimately prefer death to the interruption of this circuit. The Duchess, in particular, identifies a very real way in which she may be changed by other potential touches after Antonio's death. In his article, "Doubtful Arms and Phantom Limbs," James Krasner considers both literary representations and neuroscientific theories of grief and recognizes that grief is both an "emotional state" and an "embodied condition."²²⁹ He argues that as we mourn the passing of a loved one, we not only feel their loss affectively, but our bodies must physically adjust to the absence of the deceased. We may, for example, enter a room in a particular way, anticipating the presence of a second body, or we may curl up in bed, expecting to feel the curve of another's back. It is precisely this form of physical and affective readjustment that the Duchess hopes to avoid. The Duchess mourns her loss by wishing to rid herself of life and, more precisely, of tactility, the sensation that bonds her with her beloved. She does not wish to be touched by the external world if Antonio cannot experience these same touches. It is Antonio's touch alone that she desires. By dying, she may perhaps "freeze" both her affective and physical states—as if

²²⁹ James Krasner, "Doubtful Arms and Phantom Limbs: Literary Portrayals of Embodied Grief," *PMLA* 119 (2004): 218.

photographing the final moments of a loving marriage—so that, in death, she and Antonio may still engage in an exclusive and reciprocal circuit of exchange, ideally emulating “the soft music” “of the spheres.”

The Infectious, Alimentary, and Organistic Ecologies of *The Broken Heart*

Throughout John Ford's *The Broken Heart*, Penthea grieves her severed engagement and forced marriage. While Calantha, Sparta's princess, tells Penthea that she "feed[s] too much [her] melancholy," Penthea explains that "troubled passion" can "make assault / On the unguarded castle of the mind."²³⁰ Much of Ford's play focuses on the excessive melancholy of its protagonists; however, this exchange between the bereaved lover and the Spartan princess draws our attention to the play's concern with invasion. Drawing on the language of ingestion, Calantha proposes that Penthea voluntarily "feeds" or nurtures her melancholy. Penthea revises this diagnosis as she rejects Calantha's food metaphor and instead imagines her mind as an unprotected fortress, vulnerable to invasion. As Penthea suggests that melancholy is a disease of the mind, a common association during the period, she emphasizes that she cannot control the assault of troubled passions.²³¹ In this moment, Penthea and Calantha introduce us to two distinct views of the humoral body. While the princess ascribes to the physical and emotional self a sense of agency, Penthea draws attention to the body's porousness and vulnerability. The play does not

²³⁰ John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and Other Plays*, ed. Marion Lomax (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995). Text references are to act, scene, and line of this edition..

²³¹ As Calantha scolds Penthea for over nurturing her melancholy "too much," she implicitly raises the possibility that melancholy should not be wholly avoided. In doing so, she draws attention to the early modern distinction between Aristotelian or genial melancholy—that is, the desired disposition of scholars and poets—and Galenic melancholy, a pathologic humoral imbalance. In his recent study of early modern melancholy, Drew Daniel argues that these two conceptions of the disease did not exist in easy harmony as Lawrence Babb suggests in his *The Elizabethan Malady*. Daniel explains the tension surrounding Aristotelian and Galenic melancholy "disorganizes the concept [of melancholy] but also paradoxically introduces a secondary kind of consistent incoherence, or generative interdeterminacy, into the expression of melancholy itself." As Daniel shows and Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* demonstrates, early modern melancholy included a multiplicity of symptoms and expressions. Taking my cue from Daniel, I recognize throughout this chapter that melancholy resists definition. While characters describe one another as melancholic or admit to feeling melancholic, Ford does not offer a discrete conception of the disease. Drew Daniel, *The Melancholic Assemblage: Affect and Epistemology in the English Renaissance* (New York: Fordham UP, 2013), 17

offer a conclusive portrait of the Galenic body, but instead dramatizes the tension between voluntary and involuntary models of the body's absorption of external elements.

While this exchange focuses on melancholic humors, *The Broken Heart* dramatizes a larger concern regarding what penetrates the human body. Specifically, in its attention to digestion, pernicious plant life, and invasive organs, the play focuses on anxieties about corporeal permeability. David Hillman argues that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we see a shift away from the Galenic model, in which the body was “accepted, *embraced* even, as...being part of nature.”²³² Hillman writes, “By the late sixteenth century the inevitable permeability of the body had become a matter of high anxiety, a vulnerability to the invasions of ‘evil agents’.”²³³ Although I argue in my preceding chapters that early modern dramatists celebrated the humoral body's fertile openness, Ford's play, written nearly two decades after *The Duchess of Malfi*, illustrates a move toward *homo clausus*, a more closed conception of the body. While Hillman emphasizes the physical boundaries of the body, I turn toward affective boundaries. Hillman acknowledges the period's antitheatricalist tracts—and the potential for theater to transform actor and audience bodies—his discussion of tragic openness concerns bodies that are “dismembered, tortured, pierced, raped, flayed; in general: spectacularly destroyed.”²³⁴ In contrast, I examine the play's representations of bodily openness—for example, Ithocles's travelling spleen and Calantha's open ears—and the ways in which porous bodies create intimate and affectively charged social and environmental networks. Like the earlier tragedies I discuss, *The Broken Heart* features a series of intimate ecosystems; however, rather

²³² David Hillman, “Homo Clausus at the Theater” in *Rematerializing Shakespeare: Authority and Representation on the Early Modern Stage*, ed. Bryan Reynolds and William N. West (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 166.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 170.

than illustrating the generative effects of such intimacy, the play focuses on the threats to these networks. Bodies in Ford's world are susceptible to the invasive agents of their environment. Poisonous plants take over sylvan life. Infectious air enters and departs the respiratory system. Willful organs travel beyond their membranes and into the bodies of others.

By drawing on emerging theories of infection, I suggest that Ford stages affective contagion; through the invasion of the body's interior, melancholy infects and moves across bodies, thus impelling psychophysiological change. Penthea's self-starvation and Orgilus's phlebotomy, while different modes of suicide—that is, one involves the body's enclosure while the other involves purgation—dramatize a desire to control the body's precariously porous borders. I argue that the play's final act, in which Calantha dances across stage while invaded by the news of death, visually represents melancholic contagion and draws attention to the devastating assault upon her unwilling though ultimately permeable body. Like the other plays I discuss, *The Broken Heart* stages an intimate ecosystem at risk of assault; however, Ford's play focuses on the ways in which the body involuntarily absorbs invasive and affectively charged elements.

Sympathetic Attractions and Taste

Dwelling on his broken engagement to Penthea, Orgilus turns to the language of food consumption to suggest that sympathetic attractions produce different tastes or appetites. He laments, "We had enjoyed / The sweets our vows expected, had not cruelty / Prevented all those triumphs we prepared for" (1.1.33-35). Although "sweets" may refer to the joys of marriage, the *Oxford English Dictionary* links the word to sustenance and experiences of taste; for example,

“that which is sweet to the taste; something having a sweet taste” and “a sweet food or drink.”²³⁵

Orgilus suggests that he looked forward to tasting or consuming sweetness, and in doing so, he alludes to the psychophysiological effects of that which enters the body. In explaining that cruelty thwarted their union, Orgilus implies that an external force—presumably, Bassanes and Penthea’s brother, Ithocles—prevented the couple from consuming nourishing foodstuffs. As Orgilus alludes to the effects of digestion, he imagines his former relationship as a self-sustaining ecosystem. He reflects on the generative potential of this ecosystem as he suggests that their bond could have produced sweets. Invasive forces, however, prevent the couple from enjoying the nourishment such sweets provide.

While Orgilus longs for sweetness, Bassanes does not share his rival’s appetite.

According to Orgilus, Bassanes “is now so yoked / To a most barbarous thralldom, misery, / Affliction, that he savours not humanity” (1.1.53-55). Orgilus villainizes his beloved’s husband, imagining Bassanes in a sympathetic bond with barbarity and suffering. This perverse attraction to misery tellingly reveals that Bassanes does not have a taste or appetite for humanity. By simultaneously drawing on the language of consumption and sympathetic attractions, Orgilus does more than simply reinforce the age-old adage that you are what you eat. Rather, he proposes that what we are drawn to—whether it be misery or another’s soul—shapes what we crave. In turn, that which we ingest has material consequences. Bassanes’s inability to taste humanity leads to his barbarity while Orgilus’s unfulfilled desire for sweetness leads to his suffering.

Moreover, Orgilus further draws on an ecosystemic model of interpersonal relations as he imagines himself and Penthea as plants within a garden. He likens their forced separation to the pernicious effects of aconite or wolf’s bane. Orgilus explains that after the death of Penthea’s

²³⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “sweets,” accessed 10 June 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

father, “sprouted up that poisonous stalk, / Of aconite, whose ripened fruit hath ravished / All health, all comfort of a happy life” (1.1.36-38). While Penthea’s marriage to Bassanes prevents the lovers from fertile reproduction, aconite produces ripe and highly poisonous fruit. In his herbal, John Gerard writes, “The plant tooke his name of the Greek word...signifying corruption, poison, or death, which are the certaine effects of this pernicious plant; for this they use very much in poisons, and when they meane to infect their arrow heads, the more speedily and deadly to dispatch the wilde beasts.”²³⁶ The effects of aconite, according to Gerard, are so strong that its juice can destroy both man and beast. Ithocles becomes a perverse gardener who by “nourish[ing] closely / The memory of former discontents,” cultivates aconite. As the fruit of this deadly plant ripens, it devastates the couple’s potentially self-sustaining ecosystem. Destroying the couple’s sweets, the nourishing effects of their ecosystem, aconite additionally compromises the generative potential of other plants. In this initial scene, the play alludes to the devastating effects of invasive elements. Bassanes—with the help of Penthea’s brother, Ithocles—invades an otherwise blissful garden and prevents Penthea and Orgilus from bearing fruit or creating new life.

The play returns to the generative potential of sylvan life in a seemingly insignificant scene in the play’s fourth act. Having competed with Ithocles for Calantha’s attention, Nearchus comments on Orgilus and Penthea’s thwarted marriage and concludes:

...For affections injured
By tyranny, or rigour of compulsion,
Like tempest-threatened trees unfirmly rooted
Ne’er spring to timely growth. (4.2.205-208)

Nearchus focuses on the vulnerability of the separated lovers by imagining them as storm-struck trees. Like aconite, mercurial weather denies the successful growth of botanic species. With their

²³⁶ John Gerard, *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plants* (London, 1597), 966.

roots exposed to the elements, these trees suffer, even after the passing of an unruly storm. They cannot grow to full capacity, and like Orgilus and Penthea, they cannot sustain their own growth, nor can they generate new life in the form of ripened fruit. While Nearchus does not explicitly rely on the language of alimentary consumption—as Orgilus does in act one—he draws on botanic imagery to allude to generative growth and reproduction. Thwarted love prevents the emergence of new life, but perhaps, most significantly, it devastates separated lovers. While grafted souls engage in a symbiotic relationship of mutual nourishment, enforced separation causes physical vulnerability. Nearchus blurs the distinction between the body’s interior and exterior. Just as a tree’s roots—typically protected beneath the earth’s soil—become susceptible to the elements, the interior body experiences a similar form of vulnerability. What should remain protected by bone, flesh, and skin undergoes upheaval. Whether it be a tempest’s raging winds, or the proclivity of an uncaring brother, external forces uproot and expose sylvan and human bodies. Like the *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, Ford’s play draws on botanic metaphors to convey the interdependence of networks, specifically those between lovers. However, in the play’s focus on invasive plant life, Ford emphasizes that these intimate ecologies are vulnerable to wider social and environmental forces.

Monstrous Organs

While Ford draws on botanic metaphors to convey human ecologies of interdependence, he also depicts, like Webster, affective ecologies within the human body. Ford’s depiction of internal landscapes differs from Webster’s in that *The Broken Heart*’s affective networks have destructive rather than generative consequences. Ithocles attributes his decision to end Penthea’s engagement to the actions of an unruly organ: “My rash spleen / Hath with a violent hand plucked from thy bosom / A lover-blessed heart, to grind it into dust” (3.2.43-45). While he may

propose that the stirrings of his spleen have caused his hand to reach into his sister's chest, the line also brings to mind the image of a spleen with a monstrous hand. This hand, sprouted from the spleen, reaches beyond Ithocles's torso and, penetrating Penthea's chest, makes contact with her heart.²³⁷ In his discussion of the spleen, Helkiah Crooke refers to the organ as the "receptacle of melancholike humors" and explains that the spleen assisted the body in purging such humors: "The stomack as a seruant ministreth meate unto him, the bladder of Gaul purgeth away the Choller from that meate, the Spleene drayeth away the Melancholy juice."²³⁸ A sickly spleen would, thus, cause excessive melancholy. Although Ithocles specifies that his spleen is rash rather than ill, the spleen's association with melancholy suggests that his actions result from humoral imbalance. He relieves himself of blame by implying that organs can act independently of the body in which they are housed.²³⁹ In doing so, Ford presents a perverse ecosystem of

²³⁷ As Katherine Rowe reminds us, hands were the bodily part most often associated with human action. Rowe traces this topos to Aristotle's *De partibus animalium*, in which Aristotle defines the hand as the "instrument of instruments." During the early modern period, this definition of the hand appears in Galen's widely available *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*. Galen explains that the hand is the "of all instruments [is] the most variously serviceable." Katherine Rowe, *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999), 5.

²³⁸ Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (London, 1615), 7, 43. Crooke describes the process by which melancholic humors move from the spleen to the stomach. Those with an excess of melancholy tend to experience stomach pain or indigestion. According to Crooke, melancholy travels through "the vessel called Vas breue or the short vessel, wherby the melancholy passeth out of the Spleen into the stomack, & this is the reason why melancholy people haue always crasie stomackes" (100). In addition, the presence of melancholy affects the color of the organ; melancholics tend to have unusually colored spleens: "[the spleen] is more russet toward black; for such is the naturall colour of the Melancholy humor. But in those that are diseased in their Spleenes, such as is the humor that offends, such is the colour of the Spleene, Liuid, Leaden, Ashy or Leeke greene" (125).

²³⁹ In act three, scene five, Orgilus targets Ithocles's spleen and blames Ithocles for Penthea's unhappiness and loss of chastity. He tells Crotolon that Ithocles "Too humbly hath descended from that height / Of arrogance and spleen which wrought the rape / Of griev'd Penthea's purity" (3.5.25-27). In reference to this moment, Lisa Hopkins writes, "Here the spleen seems credited almost with independent agency of its own, controlling functions of the mind which one would hope would be guided by more rational forces, and thus effectively governing human behavior."

bodies, in which travelling organs invade bodies and destroy the organs with which they make contact.

Moreover, the play emphasizes the affective force of invasive organs as Ithocles proposes that his spleen grinds Penthea's heart to dust or earth, melancholy's complementary element. Like the Duchess's heart, the organ instigates affective change within another body; however, while Webster underscores the generative potential of invasive organs, Ford suggests that foreign body parts cause devastation. Picturing his sister's heart as dust, Ithocles implies that his sickly spleen has spread melancholy.²⁴⁰ As Noga Arikha explains, black bile "in its most pathogenic manifestations...gave birth to *adust*, or burnt, melancholy."²⁴¹ In focusing on the affective force of invasive organs, the play draws the brother and sister within a dark ecology, in which organs penetrate other bodies, but in doing so, destroy the parts with which they make contact.

As Ithocles reminds Penthea that they "had one father, in one womb took life, / were brought up twins together," he suggests that they share a sympathetic bond (3.2.34-35). As Floyd-Wilson explains, "twins were understood to have a particularly strong sympathetic connection, much like the lodestone and iron...for many early modern writers, twins epitomize

While I agree with Hopkins, I point out that Ithocles further emphasizes the independent agency of his spleen as he describes the organ's outstretched and penetrative hand. Lisa Hopkins, "Women and History: *The Tragedy of Mariam*, *The Broken Heart*, and *The Concealed Fancies*," *The Female Hero in English Renaissance Tragedy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 173.

²⁴⁰ For a fuller discussion of the humors and their corresponding elements, refer to the introduction.

²⁴¹ Noga Arikha, *Passions and Tempers: A History of the Humors* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 115. The *OED*'s first definitions of *adust* relate specifically to the body's humors and, in particular, melancholy: "Designating any of the humours of the body when considered to be abnormally concentrated and dark in color, and associated with a pathological state of hotness and dryness of the body" and "affected with, or having a temperament determined by, *adust* humours. In later use: having a melancholy character or appearance; gloomy; sallow." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "*adust*," accessed 10 June 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

the wondrous effects of nature's secret sympathies."²⁴² As discussed, early moderns oftentimes attributed emotional contagion to sympathetic attractions. Although Penthea catches her twin's melancholic disposition, Ford complicates theories of occult bonds, particularly those between twins, by drawing attention to Ithcoles's invasive and monstrously shaped spleen. The play implies that their sympathetic attraction results in not only melancholic contagion, but the interpenetration of bodily organs. While Kyd suggests that human-nonhuman sympathies can metamorphose the human body in potentially fatal ways, Ford too sheds light on the dangers of sympathetic attractions and proposes that these bonds lead to the destruction of vital organs.

In dramatizing the affective bond between twins, the play also refers to the internal landscape of the mother's womb; Ithocles reminds his sister of their kinship bond as he notes that they began life together within their mother's womb. According to most early modern medical theories of conception, multiple births, conjoined children, and superfluous body parts were the result of excessive bodily matter.²⁴³ Physicians believed that the womb's movement divides prenatal matter, thus creating same or opposite sex twins. In his section on multiple births, Ambroise Paré does not mention an instance of a twin with an additional or extraordinary part; however, in his discussion of single child births, he writes that an "abundance of matter" can also result in a "monstrous child having superfluous and useless parts, such as two heads, four arms,

²⁴² Mary Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 79, 80.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 79. Physicians, following Aristotelian notions of reproduction, believed that in the process of procreation women provide the matter while men provide the soul and form. In contrast, the Hippocratic two-seed theory posits that both men and women could contribute seed; however, the more dominant seed would determine the child's traits. Floyd-Wilson draws attention to William Gilbert's *De Magnete* (1600), in which Gilbert compares lodestone and iron, both of which he points out are generated in the earth, to siblings. William Gilbert, *De Magete*, (London: 1600).

four legs, six digits on the hands and feet, or other things.”²⁴⁴ In the case of Penthea and Ithocles, excessive flesh within the womb produced not only twins, but an unusually shaped spleen. The play again alludes to a risky internal ecosystem. An abundance of flesh as well as the womb’s movement may create twins; however, too much matter or abnormal movement can also form destructive bodily parts.

While the play conceives of the pregnant body as both a dangerous and generative ecology, in an earlier moment alone, Ithocles imagines lethal animal life penetrating the womb as he regrets the consequences of ambition: “Ambition? ’Tis of viper’s breed, it gnaws / A passage through the womb that gave it motion” (2.2.1-2). Ithocles describes a venomous snake creeping into his mother’s body and poisoning that which it encounters. His desire for political recognition, he suggests, stems from this invasive creature. By focusing on the body’s susceptibility to invasion, as well as the affective force of intrusive parts and species, Ithocles again alludes to a potentially harmful ecosystem. Just as his spleen penetrates Penthea’s body, causing melancholy, this toxic serpent compels dangerous feelings of ambition. While Ford embeds bodies within intimate ecosystems, he simultaneously implies that such intimacy has destructive consequences.

As Ithocles laments the risks of perverse ecosystems, Penthea imagines an alternative, in which she is only subject to the fluctuations of her own body:

The handmaid to the wages
Of country toil drinks the untroubled streams

²⁴⁴ Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1982), 8. In addition, Paré writes, “if the seed is lacking in quantity, some limb will be lacking [such] as [a person’s] having only one hand, no arms or feet or head, or [having] some other part missing” (8). While Penthea is not born bereft of a heart, the play suggests that Ithocles’s abundance of bodily matter causes her to lose this vital organ. Paré does not discuss malformed twins; however, he explains that “hermaphrodites or androgynes” are the result of a “superabundance of matter” (26).

With leaping kids and with bleating lambs,
 And so allays her thirst secure, whiles I
 Quench my hot sighs with fleetings of my tears. (3.2.54-58)

Pentheia lauds the bucolic harmony of country life while describing a maiden who, accompanied by livestock, drinks from a peaceful stream with little hesitation. The young woman “allays her thirst secure,” trusting the cool waters to which she opens her mouth and throat. As Pentheia describes this ecosystem of running water, woman, and livestock, she draws a contrast between her own bodily conception and the simpler symbiosis of pastoral life. Unlike the handmaid, Pentheia quenches her thirst on her own tears alone. Implicitly, she admits that she is attentive to what enters her body. She does not engage with a larger ecosystem—that is, she does not drink water to quench her thirst—but she instead relies on the release and flow of her tears. More than merely a lamentation on lost love, these lines suggest a way in which Pentheia may reclaim possession of her body. As the play draws on the language of consumption—while anticipating Pentheia’s later decision to refuse food—Ford engages with a concern regarding what enters and leaves the human body.

The pastoral ecosystem Pentheia idealizes serves as a contrast to the destructive internal landscape Ithocles describes just moments earlier. The handmaid benefits from her ecosystem, finding nourishment in its running waters and abundant livestock. In shifting from the human body’s internal landscape to an ecosystem of fauna and water, the play draws attention to the generative potential of the natural world. At the same time, this vision of pastoral life contrasts the deadly garden Orgilus depicts in act one. Yet, notably, Orgilus draws on botanic rhetoric to convey the destructive effects of *human* interactions. Pentheia implies here that human-elemental or human-fauna transactions provide sustenance; that is, ecologies found in the natural world do not have the destructive potential of exclusively human networks.

Ithocles too draws on the language of consumption as he expresses his own sorrow; however, unlike his sister, he does not disengage with the outer world:

The labourer doth eat his coarsest bread,
Earned with his sweat, and lies him down to sleep,
While every bit I touch turns in digestion
To gall, as bitter as Penthea's curse. (3.2.59-62)

Like Penthea, who envies peasant folk, Ithocles praises the simple pleasures of the lower classes—the laborer who, despite eating coarse bread, drifts off to sleep contented. Ithocles admits that he cannot delight in food consumption as everything he digests turns to gall or bile.²⁴⁵ While he refers to alimentary digestion, his use of the word “touch” (as opposed to, for example, taste) suggests that he is not solely referring to the digestive processes, but instead to a broader form of contact with the external world. Bread turns to bile just as organs turn to dust. As Michael Schoenfeldt might suggest, for Ithocles, the digestive tract entangles him within a larger ecology because “the exigencies of the stomach require the individual to confront on a daily basis the thin yet necessarily permeable line separating self and other.”²⁴⁶ His hunger and the food he attempts to consume remind him of his contact and dependence on larger ecological networks. Unlike Penthea, Ithocles does not attempt to isolate himself from other bodies and foodstuffs; however, he admits that he devastates what is both within and beyond his frame.

Sympathetic Infection

²⁴⁵ The *Oxford English Dictionary*, in its first entry for gall, defines the word as “the secretion of the liver, bile.” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “gall,” accessed 10 June 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

²⁴⁶ Michael Schoenfeldt, “Fables of the Belly in Early Modern England,” *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, eds. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), 244. Schoenfeldt explains that, for early moderns digestion was “a continual process of liquefaction and rarefaction, with each stage producing a purer form of nutrition by expelling what is not useful and converting what it.” That Ithocles turns food to gall would imply that his body cannot discern nourishment from dross.

In spite of her brother's cruelty, Penthea agrees to court Calantha on his behalf, but warns that her grief may prevent her from fulfilling this promise. She tells Ithocles, "If sorrows / Have not too much dulled my infected brain, / I'll cheer invention for an active strain" (3.2.115-117). Penthea views her sadness as an infection that has specifically targeted her mind. Jonathan Gil Harris points out that, during the period, "infection" was "often used to refer to the pollution of the body by ill or superfluous humors."²⁴⁷ In addition, physicians, such as Fracastoro and Paracelsus, used "infection" to describe the spread of disease.²⁴⁸ Harris explains that Fracastoro "deviated...from Galen in asserting that epidemic diseases could be spread over distances by miniscule agents of infection which he called *seminaria prima*, or primary seeds, of contagion. These seeds...would seek out and adhere to the humor for which they felt a natural affinity."²⁴⁹ Paracelsus similarly characterized the seed of disease as a foreign invader that, having penetrated the body's pores, would gravitate "towards the organ to which it was related by a predestined sympathy."²⁵⁰ Floyd-Wilson explains that "contagion in the early modern period was commonly marked as a sympathetic response, which meant that the victim possessed a predestined affinity

²⁴⁷ Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England* (Philadelphia: U of Penn P, 2004), 96. Harris notes that "infect" had "retained the connotations of its Latin etymological root, *inficere*, to dye, color, stain, or pollute" (96).

²⁴⁸ The *Oxford English Dictionary* specifies that "infection" was originally used to denote a "infectious or communicable disease" or "an epidemic" rather than a disease caused by the "invasion and growth of microorganisms or other parasitic organisms within the body." The *OED* also tells us that the word was used to describe the "corruption or morbid condition of the blood, another humor, or a body part" and, in another definition, the "contaminated condition or unhealthy quality (of air, water, etc.)." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "infection," accessed 10 June 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

²⁴⁹ Johnathan Gil Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 23. Somewhat similarly, in *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1590), Thomas Harriot conceives of disease as "invisible bullets" that were "in the aire," but "invisible and without bodies" (29).

²⁵⁰ Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic*, 24.

with the invasive element.”²⁵¹ Contagion arises through the attraction, “an inherent compatibility,” of particular foreign elements and bodies.²⁵²

Early modern theories of communicable disease imagine bodies within an ecology, in which infection moves between bodies and affects the body part or humor with which it shares a sympathetic affinity. Although it is unclear whether Penthea suffers from a humoral imbalance or a communicable disease, she characterizes sorrow as a penetrative force that dulls cognition as it acts upon her mind. By likening sorrow to an invasive foreign element, Penthea draws on proto-microbiological conceptions of disease; she suggests that sympathetic attractions weaken and destroy the body’s organs.

As the play progresses, Ford more explicitly develops a theory of infection by emphasizing the dangers of physical proximity. Shortly after Penthea’s conversation with Ithocles, Orgilus reappears at court after a feigned trip to Athens. As audience members, we know that Orgilus, disguised in scholar’s clothes, has remained in Sparta; however, he claims to have left Athens for “care...of [his] health” (3.4.40). He tells his father that in Athens “a general infection / Threatens a desolation” (3.4.41-42). Unimpressed by his son’s vigilance, Crotolon rebukes Orgilus’s decision:

...And I fear
Thou hast brought back a worse infection with thee,
Infection of thy mind; which, as thou say’st,
Threatens the desolation of our family! (3.4.42-45)

By leaving Athens, Orgilus follows commonly accepted advice found in the period’s plague tracts; in his 1603 treatise, David Lodge recommends that if faced with an outbreak of the plague, it “behooeth euery man to haue speciall care that he frequent not any places or persons

²⁵¹ “Sympathetic Contagion in *Arden of Faversham* and *A Warning for Fair Women*,” *Occult Knowledge*, 47.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 55.

infected, neither that hee suffer such to breath vpon him.”²⁵³ Although Orgilus flees from a general infection—rather than the plague—he recognizes that his proximity to infected bodies may impact his health. Crotolon too raises the possibility that, through close contact, Orgilus may infect his family. Crotolon does not name the infection from which his son suffers; however, as I mention, melancholy was commonly considered the mind’s disease.²⁵⁴ The troubled father implies that Orgilus will spread melancholy, thus causing their family’s ruin.²⁵⁵ By drawing on emerging theories of infection, the play again positions bodies within intimate ecologies; however, Ford also dramatizes the potentially dangerous affective and physical consequences of both close proximity and sympathetic attractions. As bodies draw unto other bodies, they destroy internal organs and cause melancholy to spread.

Food Refusal and Phlebotomy

The Broken Heart frames food consumption as a way in which the body may exclude or embed itself within larger external ecologies. The plays I’ve discussed thus far illustrate the way in which sympathetic attractions draw bodies within larger human and nonhuman networks. While Ford’s play recognizes such attractions—particularly in its focus on invasive organs and melancholic contagion—it also presents an alternative conception of ecological engagement through bodily processes of ingestion. The play conceives of ingestion and starvation as a way in

²⁵³ David Lodge, *A Treatise of the Plague* (London, 1603), 11.

²⁵⁴ Robert Burton cites Galen’s definition of the disease: “a privation or infection of the middle cell of the heart.” He also explains, “Most are of opinion that it is the brain: for being a kind of dotage, it cannot otherwise be but that the brain must be affected.” Thomas Elyot, in *The Castle of Health*, describes melancholy as “heuvynesse of mynde.” Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London: 1621), 169; and Thomas Elyot, *The Castel of Helth* (London: 1534), 75.

²⁵⁵ While S. Blaine Ewing does not develop this claim, he begins to suggest that Ford develops a theory of melancholic contagion. He argues that the play dramatizes a “mysterious uncontrollable plague which blasts the lives of all those who come close to Bassanes and Ithocles.” S. Blaine Ewing, *Burtonian Melancholy in the Plays of John Ford*. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1940), 97.

which characters may choose to engage with larger external environments. Food production and consumption entails a sustained ecological engagement with the natural world; while the play only alludes to the material practices involved in food production and consumption, digestion by its very nature involves an engagement with the external world. Through eating, the body participates in a larger ecology of flora and fauna; the body quite literally ingests and internalizes the external world. Moreover, given that food consumption is often a communal activity, the act of eating typically involves participating in human networks and communities.²⁵⁶ Unlike the sympathetic networks I discuss, alimentary ecologies involve the willful decision to allow or exclude foreign materials from entering the body.

The sympathetic bond the twins share results in corporeal invasion; however, food refusal provides a means by which Penthea may control what enters her body. As her family, husband, and former lover grieve her imminent death, Penthea refers to herself in the third-person and explains:

But since her blood was seasoned by forfeit
Of noble shame, with mixtures of pollution,
Her blood—’tis just—be henceforth never heightened
With taste of sustenance. Starve, let that fullness
Whose pleurisy hath fevered faith and modesty—
Forgive me. 4.2.149-154)

Penthea proposes that her decision to starve herself is a reaction to her polluted blood. Although she refers to her moral corruption in these lines, she simultaneously alludes to corporeal pollution. According to the *OED*, “pollution,” for early moderns, would have referred to spiritual or moral corruption and impurity; “sometimes also with an implication of physical impurity

²⁵⁶ For more on the ecological implications of food consumption, see Amy Tigner, “The Ecology of Eating in Jonson’s ‘To Penshurst,’” *Ecological Approaches to Early Modern English Texts: A Field Guide for Reading and Teaching*, eds. Jennifer Munroe and Edward J. Geiswedit (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

conveyed by bodily contact.”²⁵⁷ The *OED* suggests that pollution—as environmental contamination—did not gain traction until the late eighteenth century. Yet Penthea draws on both physical and moral understandings of the word as she grieves her self-proclaimed contamination. In implying that external forces corrupted her interior, Penthea describes an ecosystem, in which her blood is vulnerable to invasive elements. In addition, considering theories of systemic circulation, Penthea may imagine a wide-spread form of contamination as her blood travels across her capillaries and veins.²⁵⁸

In addition, she draws on the language of food preparation as she declares that her blood has been “seasoned” by shame. Penthea views her blood as a dish, comprised of several elements. While she may contribute to this internal cuisine through “sustenance” or eating, she desires to abandon the contaminated concoction by refusing food. Although, as Wendy Wall points out, recipe books often included instructions for both food preparation and medical care, blood was not typically regarded as food.²⁵⁹ In imagining her blood as a dish, Penthea draws on the culinary arts to reclaim control over her body’s interior. Just as a cook may decide which foodstuffs to include when preparing a meal, Penthea manipulates her interior—this internal recipe—by refusing to eat. Given the period’s intimate link between diet and humoral physiology, it is not as strange as we might suspect that Penthea envisions her blood as a recipe composed of several elements. Yet Penthea’s use of the passive voice in the passage’s first line implies that other forces, beyond her control, have contaminated this dish. Penthea manipulates

²⁵⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “pollution,” accessed 10 June 2016, <http://www.oed.com>.

²⁵⁸ See William Harvey’s *De motu cordis* (London, 1628). Harvey’s work on the circulatory system placed the heart at the center of this intricate network.

²⁵⁹ Wendy Wall, *Recipes for Thought: Knowledge and Taste in the Early Modern English Kitchen* (Philadelphia: U Penn P, 2015), 7.

her blood through self-starvation.²⁶⁰ While critics tend to read Penthea's food refusal as the sign of a deteriorating mind, I argue that she attempts to regulate what enters her body.²⁶¹ Again, although the play suggests that the body may be vulnerable to unruly forces, including invasive organs and melancholic infection, Ford proposes that food consumption and self-starvation allow a degree of control over environmental and external vicissitudes. Nancy Gutierrez argues that by refusing to eat, Penthea resists participating in a communal activity—thus distancing herself from the Spartan state.²⁶² While I certainly agree that Penthea attempts to enclose her body from

²⁶⁰ For more on the female domestic agency, see Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002). Wall writes, "The conjoining of preservation and destruction evident in cooking and confectionery carried over into the job of managing flesh in all of its incarnations. Since each food was thought to contain properties that affected the balance of humors in the body, the housewife manipulated diet as part of medical care" (3).

²⁶¹ We see this association between fasting and madness in characters such as Hamlet and Cynthia in George Chapman's *The Widow's Tears* (Gutierrez 15-16). In regards to Penthea's madness, Gutierrez writes, "Penthea's stage appearance and language typify the conventional attributes of the madwoman...her hair 'is about her ears', and her speech seems distracted." Somewhat similarly, Cynthia Marshall argues that play's prolonged forms of suffering—starvation and phlebotomy—cause "calamitous death in which consciousness slowly slips away." Hopkins too proposes that Penthea "go[es] quietly and irreversibly insane." While I agree that Penthea may take on the attributes of the early modern madwoman, I argue that her food refusal is a calculated form of retaliation against corporeal invasion. Patricia Cahill is unique in suggesting that Penthea does not fully act the role of the madwoman. Cahill argues that Penthea anticipates her own death as she makes "it clear that she is merely going through the motions of living." Nancy Gutierrez, "*Shall She Famish Then?*": *Female Food Refusal in Early Modern England* (New York: Ashgate, 2003), 70; Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2002), 146; Lisa Hopkins, *The Female Hero in English Renaissance Tragedy*, 182; and Patricia Cahill, "Going Through the Motions: Affects, Machines, and John Ford's *The Broken Heart*," in *Historical Affects and the Early Modern Theater*, eds. Ronda Arab, Michelle Dowd, and Adam Zucker (New York: Routledge, 2015), 17.

²⁶² Gutierrez, "*Shall She Famish Then?*" 71. In addition, Gutierrez also posits, "If we view Penthea's marriage to Bassanes as she does, as a kind of adultery, her fleshy asceticism in food refusal can be seen as a corrective for her sin of sexual excess." While Penthea certainly believes she has sinned through her forced marriage to Bassanes, I suggest that her decision to starve herself is borne out of her desire to enclose her body from the external world. In her study of female food refusal, Gutierrez notes that, during the early modern period, fasting was discouraged because it could "point toward Roman asceticism...[or] an individualistic proclivity

larger external ecologies, I argue that she draws on the language of food preparation to exert a form of feminine agency.

Like his beloved, Orgilus discovers a sense of prideful agency in manipulating his own death. After Calantha condemns Orgilus to death for his murder of Ithocles, Orgilus requests that he perform his own phlebotomy. He tells those around him that he is “skilled in letting blood” and then draws on medical discourse as he directs Bassanes to bind his other arm (5.2.101).²⁶³ Carving into his skin, he declares, “Thus I show cunning / In opening a vein too full, too lively” (5.2.121-122). As he suggests that an abundance of blood courses through his body, he appears to take pride in his skill as an amateur barber-surgeon.²⁶⁴

Orgilus’s decision to bleed himself to death would have signaled to early modern audiences a desire to purge the body of corrupt matter. As Nancy Siraisi explains, phlebotomy was a fairly common practice during the middle ages and early modern period.²⁶⁵ Medical practitioners believed that bloodletting allowed one to release undesirable, corrupted humors and

that would challenge the authority of the established church.” Instead, the church encouraged spiritual rather than physical self-denial.

²⁶³ Although I argue that the play emphasizes the ways in which the self can and cannot manipulate the anatomical body, Orgilus’s repeated reverence for his own skills as an amateur barber-surgeon may be a way for him to avoid the common association between leakiness (specifically, through bleeding) and feminine porousness. In reference to Mutius’s bleeding body in *Coriolanus*, Paster argues that the wounded soldier seeks to suggest that bleeding is “voluntary and therapeutic.” Paster writes, “The evident fact of permeability can be effaced through the assertion of personal control in a therapeutic idiom... Such blood is voluntary in two senses; it is shed as a result of action engaged in freely, and it is shed virtually at will.” Somewhat similarly, Orgilus resists feminizing his body by repeatedly noting that he desires to die through bloodletting. Gail Kern Paster, “‘In the Spirit of Man there is no Blood’: Blood as Trope of Gender in *Julius Caesar*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (1989): 288.

²⁶⁴ During the twelfth century and onward, physicians were restricted from engaging directly with blood. A barber-surgeon rather than a physician would have performed the phlebotomy. Ariane M. Balizet, *Blood and Home in Early Modern Drama: Domestic Identity on the Renaissance Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 15. During the early modern period, a barber-surgeon rather than a physician would have performed the phlebotomy.

²⁶⁵ Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 140.

thus regain stable health.²⁶⁶ Lesel Dawson notes that phlebotomy was occasionally used to treat lovesickness and, in reference to this scene, Dawson argues that “Orgilus’s death functions as both a punishment for his murder of Ithocles and a purging for his lovesickness.”²⁶⁷ While I agree that bloodletting would have had symbolic and ethical resonances for early modern playgoers—as Dawson suggests, phlebotomy “purges the body politic of bad blood” and noxious fluids—I would add that Orgilus discovers joy in negotiating and manipulating his undoing. The play celebrates the individual’s capacity to control the body; however, Ford suggests that such control is only possible when the individual is willing to exclude himself from social and environmental networks.

In addition to the alacrity with which Orgilus performs the phlebotomy, Bassanes finds aesthetic pleasure in watching the grieved lover die. In associating Orgilus’s blood with aesthetic and experiential pleasure, the play complicates the assumption that bloodletting was used to purge the body of contaminated or sinful blood. As Bassanes relishes in helping Orgilus release blood from his veins, he notes:

It sparkles like a lusty wine new broached;
 The vessel must be sound from which it takes issue...
 ...This pastime
 Appears majestic. Some high-tuned poem
 Hereafter shall deliver to posterity
 The writer’s glory and his subject’s triumph. (2.5.125-126, 131-134)

In perhaps his most lyrical lines in the play, Bassanes compares Orgilus’s spilt blood to a

²⁶⁶ In his work, *The English Phlebotomy*, Nicholas Gyer explains, “for the bloud contained in the veines is not simple, or of one kind, as hath beene said; but consisteth of flewme, blacke & yellow choler, and pure blood mingled together, which humors notwithstanding so mingled by common agreement and continuall use of speaking: we commonly call bloud...Bloud therefore faulteth in quantitie when the humors being settled in just proportion, do passe and exceede the agreeable measue of Nature: for then the whole frame of the bodie swelleth. Nicholas Gyer, *The English Phlebotomy* (London: 1592), 6.

²⁶⁷ Lesel Dawson, *Lovesickness and Gender in Early Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), 165.

particularly vibrant wine and concludes that the jewel-like quality of his blood must be a sign of good health. As he declares that bloodletting warrants the ink of poets, Bassanes discovers a grotesque pleasure in watching the body's interior drip forth. The notion that Orgilus's blood may be an emblem of health, rather than corruption, emphasizes Orgilus's desire to control his own death. Orgilus may not be purging Sparta and his body of what Dawson refers to as "bad blood." The play raises the possibility that, in spite of his melancholy and his murderous acts, Orgilus may be ridding Sparta, a larger social ecology, of extraordinarily vigorous blood and a potentially desirable bloodline.

Contagious Choreography

While suicide allows Penthea and Orgilus to manipulate their own bodies—and ultimately achieve their desired ends—Ford emphasizes the body's inescapable penetration. The play dramatizes an ecology of bodies and sounds as Calantha learns of her father, Penthea, and Ithocles's deaths in the midst of her wedding dance. The play's stage directions specify that, even after Calantha learns of each death, she "dance[s] again" (5.2.13, 16). Although Calantha continues to dance on, as if to suggest that she is unaffected by the news, her body is ultimately vulnerable to such dismal events. She initially appears to resist what Heather James identifies as the feminized figure of the attendant listener.²⁶⁸ Those around her comment that it is "strange" that "these tragedies should never touch on / Her female pity" and conclude that she has a "masculine spirit" (5.2.94-95). While the court implicitly commends Calantha for her resilience, they simultaneously express surprise that the events do not alter the princess's disposition.

²⁶⁸ Heather James, "Dido's Ear: Tragedy and the Politics of Response," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52.3 (2001): 360-382. James argues, "serious attention from the pitying heart may lead modest daughters [such as Desdemona and Miranda] to the threshold of rebellion" (368). *The Broken Heart* does not dramatize a rebellion as explicit as Desdemona and Miranda's; however, Calantha rebels or retires from the Spartan state as the news touches her so deeply that she cannot fulfill her position as Sparta's queen.

Calantha notes that a “murmur / Pierced [her] unwilling ears”; however, she appears to be so emotionally immune to the troubling events that she asks Orgilus to repeat the news of her husband’s death (5.2.39-40). In characterizing her ears as unwilling participants in the drama unfolding around her, Calantha attempts to resist the powerful potential of auditory experience as she moves through the motions of a courtly dance. As she notes that multiple voices invade her ears, she seems to recognize her unavoidable embeddedness within an ecology of human bodies and sounds.

While scholars tend Calantha’s determination to dance as another example of Spartan stoicism, I argue that rather than exploring affective repression, Ford visually choreographs emotional contagion. Alan Brissenden suggests that plays such as *The Broken Heart* and Martson’s *The Malcontent*—in which dance is interspersed with dialogue—would most likely have staged a *pavane*, a slow, stately dance.²⁶⁹ As we know from the scene’s stage directions and dialogue, the actors danced with a partner and completed a series of “changes” or figures. Marion Lomax notes that “Calantha’s comments ‘To the other change’ and ‘Lead to the next’ suggest a formal patterned movement.”²⁷⁰ Throughout the scene, messages of death punctuate each change. As Calantha steps through a series of presumably prescribed movements, news of death bombards her unwilling ears. The contrast between choreographed movement and undesirable auditory experience exposes the body’s inability to resist invasion. In her discussion of Hamlet’s *The Mousetrap* and the play’s unseen poisoning, Tanya Pollard points out, “while

²⁶⁹ Alan Brissenden, “Jacobean Tragedy and the Dance,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 44 no. 4 (1981): 261.

²⁷⁰ Marion Lomax, *Stage Images and Traditions: Shakespeare to Ford* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), 179. Lomax also points out that “there is a remote echo of the Dance of Death (known to have been represented as an actual dance in 1393), where, one by one, members of the dance leave the floor and do not return... The various messages which come, one after the other can be equated to the actual bodies leaving the dance floor in the dance of Death” (179-180).

we can choose whether or not to eat a given substance, ears remain open, and receptive, regardless of intent.”²⁷¹ More specifically, Gina Bloom argues that, for women in early modern drama, “aural vulnerability is figured as a particularly fraught state.”²⁷² She writes, “It is through their resistance to aural subjugation, rather than their surrender to it, that female characters...emerge as agentive subjects.”²⁷³ While Bloom proposes that female characters may assert agency through their resistance to undesirable sounds, Calantha’s ears become susceptible to auditory penetration. While she tries to escape this sonic assault by continuing to dance, sound ultimately seeps through the ear’s openings.

The play again dramatizes the invasion of the body’s interior as Calantha becomes vulnerable to the events that unfold. Although she initially convinces the court of her resilience to such tragic events, she later admits:

...O my lords,
I but deceived your eyes with antic gesture,
When one news straight came huddling on another,
Of death, and death, and death. Still I danced forward;
But it struck home, and here, and in an instant.
Be such mere women, who with shrieks and outcries
Can vow a present end to all their sorrows,
Yet live to vow new pleasures, and outlive them.
They are the silent griefs which cut the heartstrings. (5.3.67-75)

Calantha attributes a physicality to this aural experience as she describes a kind of auditory huddling or crowding. The tripling of death—“of death, and death, and death”—draws attention to the experience of auditory assault. These various pieces of dismal news struggled to enter her ear’s cavities. That she *still* danced forward as the news repeatedly and physically bombarded

²⁷¹ Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), 124.

²⁷² Gina Bloom, *Voice in Motion: Staging Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: U Penn P, 2007), 115.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 117.

her suggests that Calantha attempted to withstand this auditory attack.

Considering that Calantha would have danced in close proximity to her partner and may have even made physical contact with him, the play visually represents further corporeal contagion; that is, as the news of death moves through Calantha's ears so too does it move through the ears of those around her. Other members of court comment on the news as the dance proceeds, allowing us to assume that the messages would have been audible to Prophilus, her dance partner, however unwilling his ears may be. By making contact with Calantha, or at least sharing the air she breathes, Prophilus would become vulnerable to the physical and affective dimensions of her loss, particularly if we consider Ford's sustained interest in melancholic contagion. As Calantha completes each change or figure—moving across the stage while repeatedly confronted with the news of death—she miasmically spreads melancholy. The play alludes to melancholic contagion as Bassanes notices a change in a fellow bystander's disposition. Once the dance ends, Bassanes advises a state counsellor, Armostes, “rend not / Thine arteries with hearing the bare circumstances / Of these calamities” (5.2.54-56). Although Bassanes claims to withstand such calamities, he suggests that melancholic news travels through Armostes's interior (5.2.64). Through staging a dance in this crucial scene and by emphasizing the psychophysiological effects of morbid news, Ford implies that melancholy is not a self-contained experience. Calantha spreads the physical and affective repercussions of loss as she dances from one choreographed change to the next.

As she reflects upon her experience as an unwilling listener and a determined dancer, Calantha offers a theory of melancholic contagion. Though she wishes to enclose her body, she explains that the news “huddles,” “strikes,” and finally “cuts” her interior. She differentiates herself from most women, not because of her ability to withstand grief, but because of her deeply

physical vulnerability to it. Calantha describes the process of heartbreak, or death by grief, in which mournful news penetrates the body and tears it apart. In reference to the play's earlier scenes, Cahill argues that "Ford's play traffics in emotional perturbations...but, by turning to machines and slow motion, it also offers a compelling and thoroughly materialist investigation of how theater operates, including how it works on the bodies of playgoers."²⁷⁴ Following Cahill, I argue that Calantha emphasizes the mechanistic and coercive process of grief. If we consider the experience of playgoers, *The Broken Heart* suggests that dramatic representations of sorrow may move us, even if our bodies are unwilling. While Cahill focuses on the affective experience of specific bodies by attending to the Ford's use of technological devices and mechanistic gestures, I argue that the play also dramatizes affective contagion. By focusing on the ways in which the body *cannot* give consent, Ford leaves us with the possibility that Calantha's sorrow may spread. Just as the news penetrates her unwilling ears and destroys her pierced heart, her grief may similarly infect and infiltrate the bodies with which she makes contact.

To conclude, as with the other plays I discuss, *The Broken Heart* depicts a series of affective networks; however, Ford's attention to ecological invasion suggests a shift in the way in which early moderns conceived of bodily permeability. While affectively charged organs penetrate the body—as they do in *The Duchess of Malfi*—these ecological networks have destructive rather than generative effects. Organs do not merge to create new life; rather the contact of organs results in corporeal ruin. By drawing on emerging theories of infection, Ford conceives of melancholy in particular as an affective channel that moves across bodies, piercing the bodies with which it makes contact. While the play illustrates the dangers of ecological intimacy—and the potential for corporeal invasion—it also offers a dismal alternative to the

²⁷⁴ Patricia Cahill, "Going Through the Motions," 24.

body's forced penetration. For Penthea and Orgilus, starvation and bloodletting provide a means by which these characters may exclude themselves from the ecological networks of which they were once a part. By refusing to eat, Penthea resists engaging with an external landscape of not only other bodies, but flora and fauna. While Orgilus's mode of suicide differs, he too in releasing his blood seeks to control his humoral output, refusing to participate in his ecology's natural progression of decay and death. By drawing attention to the dangers of sympathetic attractions and affective networks, *The Broken Heart* signals a turn toward a more closed conception of the humoral body. While bodies draw unto other bodies, and while affective channels embed bodies within intimate ecologies, Ford emphasizes the risks of corporeal contact. The play's dismal conception of bodily enclosure belies its embeddedness within an ecology; this ecology, however, is what Timothy Morton might characterize as "dark" insofar as it emphasizes the humoral body's vulnerability to forced penetration.²⁷⁵ Invasive agents exploit the cracks of *The Broken Heart*, as Ford's tragedy exposes the widening ideological rifts of humoral medicine during the seventeenth century.

²⁷⁵ Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence* (New York: Columbia UP, 2016).

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