

REFORMING CORPOREALITY:
EUCCHARISTIC SEMIOTICS IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH DRAMA

BY

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CHRIST'S BODY: STAGES, STAKES, AND SIGNIFICATIONS

In *De Coena Domini* (1588), Theodore de Beza claims that one could define the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist as "either transubstantiation or a trope."¹ That is, either ordinary bread is changed substantially into Christ's fleshly body or that the bread is not the true body of Christ but a memorial symbol of Christ's historical body instead. But the Eucharist does not so much clearly separate these two conceptions of bodily presence as it implicates them within an extended exchange. In *Reforming Corporeality: Eucharistic Semiotics in Early Modern Drama*, I argue that the Eucharist produces a program of reading that draws on theological conceptions of Christ's body to produce an aesthetic relationship between trope and body, word and flesh. By "Eucharistic semiotics" I suggest that the debates over the identity of Christ's body in the Eucharist participate within an ongoing conversation about signs, sacraments, and representation that characterized much religious controversy and disputation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

At the most basic level, the Eucharist produces a debate between sacramental sign and sacramental presence. In addition, the Eucharistic controversies that comprise some of the major writings of Thomas More and John Frith, Martin Luther and Andreas Karlstadt, and Jean Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli emerge not only as theological discussions about the nature of Christ's body in the Eucharist, but also as inquiries about semiotics and aesthetics. As I show in this project, early modern writing about the Eucharist

¹ Theodore de Beza, *De Coena Domini* (1588), qtd. in Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition, Volume 4: Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 201.

provides language indigenous to the period for thinking about both the function of linguistic signs and the formulation of bodily presence. By accounting for both corporeal experience and literary representations of the body, a Eucharistic semiotics invites us to reconsider both early modern theories of embodiment as well as early modern conceptions of language. In particular, the Eucharist provides a way of conceptualizing the early modern body not as an essentially corporeal entity, but as that which crosses the planes of fleshly materiality and literary metaphor.

As flesh and sign, the Eucharist exposes both the body's saturation within sign systems and figural representations and the body's capacity to elude such linguistic mediations. Definitions of the Eucharist depend on the religious system by which it is contextualized. Both Catholicism and Protestantism reveal complex relations between word and body with respect to their Eucharistic theologies. In the Catholic imagination, Christ's transubstantiated body -- his real, physical flesh and blood made present in the host during the Mass -- suggests how the body's materiality outlasts and outworks itself as figure, pointing to significant ruptures between signifier and signified. The Protestant view, by contrast, suggests that the host appears as a flat, round disc and can never really look like the human body of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus the body of Christ is also a figurative and symbolic body that cannot be separated from systems of mediation and representation.

In addition to theorizing Eucharist as a semiotic as well as a theological problem, *Reforming Corporeality* posits Eucharist as a theory for early modern aesthetics, particularly with respect to stage drama. At a thematic level, *Reforming Corporeality* exposes and problematizes the theological, liturgical, and aesthetic lives and afterlives of

the Eucharist on the English stage.² The dramatists I study in this project -- Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Middleton -- contemplate a medieval Eucharistic past at just that moment when reformers initiate a representational mode of sacramentality.³ In this respect, the early modern public theatre is not an essentially Protestant institution as Huston Diehl and others have argued. Diehl contends that early modern drama is both a “product of the Reformation” and a “producer of Protestant habits of thought.”⁴ And yet the historical coincidence of the rise of the theatre and the rise of religious reform does not cancel or evacuate the aesthetic potential of a Catholic religious and liturgical lexicon, especially with regard to the Eucharist. Before and after the Protestant Reformation, English drama appropriates the language and iconographies of the Eucharist in acts of literary imitation. While I agree with Jean Howard that early modern drama was not “overtly homiletic, committed to the straightforward promulgation of dogma” as were the medieval mystery

² Drama provides a cultural analogue to liturgy, a point taken up in the 1960’s by O.B. Hardison, and more recently by Sarah Beckwith and Andrew Sofer. These critics have regarded the suggestive points of intersection (in the cases of Hardison and Beckwith) and departure (in the case of Sofer) between the theatre and the Mass. The relationship of drama to liturgy has been pervasive since the time of the Medieval mystery plays, a point I take up in Chapter One, and it has also characterized anti-Papist critique as evidenced by the popular reformation characterization of the Mass as *Hocus pocus* (troping on the Latin *Hoc est corpus meum*, or “This is my body”). To the extent that I am invested in this question, I contend that both the Catholic and reformed liturgies are inherently acts of performance; both are versions of a drama that takes as its central theme the relationship of Christ’s body to humanity and the meeting of the earthly and the heavenly.

³ My aim is not to argue that early modern dramatists or the theatre itself endorsed any religious system, Catholic or Protestant. Rather, I am interested in surveying the multiple ways in which English dramatists make use of the language and ritual actions of both Catholicism and Protestantism with a particular emphasis on Eucharistic theology. For a more pluralist account than Diehl’s of how religion impacted the institution of the early modern theatre, see Jeffrey Knapp, *Shakespeare’s Tribe: Church, Nation, and Theater in Renaissance England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Knapp contends that while “English theology and ecclesiology shaped the drama at a fundamental level, in helping to determine the conceptualization of the player and the playwright as professions and of the theatre as an institution,” the players and playwrights did not “passively absorb[] the religion saturating their culture and then, as it were, leak[] that religion into their plays” (9-10).

⁴ Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1996), 1. Cf. Paul Whitfield White, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) and Timothy Rosendale, *Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007).

and morality cycles, I contend that dramatists remain interested in the theological and aesthetic energies of liturgy, ceremony, and sacrament, both Catholic *and* Protestant.⁵

Beyond the appropriation of Eucharist by early modern drama at a thematic level lies a theoretical point of intersection related to the idea of bodily presence and theatrical representation. Theatre is somatic and semiotic, and as such, provides a cultural and aesthetic space in which to mark out the relation between word and flesh, image and body. Anthony Dawson has persuasively argued that drama, as both written text and performative act, evokes the relationship between real and virtual bodies. Dawson regards theatrical “participation” as inherently Eucharistic: he finds in the “virtual presence” of Christ’s body in the Mass a cultural analogue for the actor’s body on stage. “The theological idea of virtual presence matched the experience of ‘person’ in the theatre,” he writes, suggesting that “the presence of the theatrical person is simultaneously real and unreal.” For Dawson, theatre, like Eucharist, engages the problems and paradoxes involved in “the interplay between real and represented presence.”⁶ What Dawson regards as “participation” contextualized by an audience’s

⁵ Throughout the project, I use the terms “Catholic” and “Protestant” to denote the two major strands of religious thought in the early modern period. However, the terminology is hardly that simple, a point I wish to elaborate at this juncture. What one person would regard as “Catholic” another would regard as “traditional religion” (to evoke Eamon Duffy’s famous phrase) while still another would see as “Papist” or “Roman.” Even finer are the lines that must be drawn among the various sects of Protestantism, which encompass not only the formally codified designations like “Lutheran” and “Calvinist” but also “evangelical,” “reformist,” and “puritan.” For example, no two “Protestantisms” are the same. The ‘Protestantism’ of the Henrician reforms is very different from the ‘Protestantism’ of Edward’s reign, which itself is different from the ‘Protestantism’ of the Laudian episcopacy.

At the same time, however, the assertion that Catholicism and various reformed Protestantisms exist with comfortable synergy, historical concomitance, and theological and devotional reciprocity is equally problematic, for many aspects of Reformed liturgy and devotion have Catholic antecedents and for as much as a movement like iconoclasm threatens the integrity and spiritual vitality of religious images its fervent objection to them testifies to the powerful cultural pressures they exert. On the multiplicity of nomenclature and the variability of religious allegiances, see Peter Marshall, *Religious Identities in Henry VIII’s England* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006).

⁶ Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare’s Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001) 27.

perception of staged character-bodies I see as an offshoot of Eucharistic semiotics characterized by the historical debates over the language and theology of Christ's body in both Catholic and reformed understandings of liturgy and sacraments.

Despite these affinities between drama and Eucharist, critics have been reluctant to regard liturgy and sacramental theology as important forces in early modern dramatic production. By contrast, critics of medieval literature and culture have readily acknowledged the social, aesthetic, and religious influence of Eucharistic devotion and iconography, and it is my position that such studies must be carried across the Medieval-Renaissance divide. Nearly three decades ago, Caroline Walker Bynum invited us to consider the devotional, cultural, and physiological lives of sacred food in the context of gender and piety in the Middle Ages. As Bynum noted, "Fast and feast defined the Church...To receive the bread and wine of communion was not only to be mystically and individually fed with the bread of heaven, it was also to be present at a sacrifice that was the victory and triumph of the church, a death that was simultaneously glory and resurrection."⁷ In subsequent years, critics of medieval literature and culture, namely Miri Rubin, Sarah Beckwith, and David Aers have argued for the influence of the Eucharist in terms of affective piety, the development of medieval drama, and the formation of the social body.⁸

⁷ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 33.

⁸ Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992); Sarah Beckwith, *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003); see also Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture, and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); David Aers, *Sanctifying Signs: Making Christian Tradition in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004) and Aers and Lynn Staley, eds. *Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1996).

The notion of a culture so steeped in Eucharistic iconography and Eucharistic devotion may be hard for contemporary readers of early modern literature and culture to contemplate because it is hard for those who live in a dominantly secular age to imagine a culture and society founded on such questions of religious belief and devotion. With critics assuming (however problematically) that the Reformation, along with early modern drama, eradicated all popish tricks and icons, the attention paid to Eucharist as a significant aesthetic and historical problem in readings of early modern literature remains scant. With the publication of two essays in *Practicing New Historicism* (2001), Stephen Greenblatt gestured toward the problematic identity of Christ's body in the host, but such arguments were displaced onto another set of religious concerns elaborated in *Hamlet in Purgatory*.⁹ Literary critics who have raised questions about early modern Catholicism -- namely Alison Shell, Richard Rambuss, Frances E. Dolan, and Arthur Marotti -- have focused largely on the engagement of religion and politics, sexuality, gender, and aesthetics but have left the question of the Eucharist and its discontents untouched.¹⁰

Reforming Corporeality responds to these silences by positioning the Eucharist as a formative theological, semiotic, and theatrical player in English culture both prior to,

⁹ Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), esp. chs. 3 and 5; Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2001).

¹⁰ Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1999); Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1999); Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth Century Print Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1999); Arthur Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame UP, 2005). Cf. also Jean-Christophe Mayer, *Shakespeare's Hybrid Faith: History, Religion and the Stage* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave, 2006) and David Coleman, *Drama and the Sacraments in Sixteenth Century England: Indelible Characters* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave, 2007).

Rambuss's *Closet Devotions* is a unique case, for it both addresses the body of Christ in early modern art and literature and fails to account for the Eucharistic aspect of this discussion. Rambuss addresses in revealing detail the relation between eroticism and sacrality with respect to representations of Christ's body in early modern poetry and art. And yet, the study does not bring these discussions into the context of the Eucharist in both its Catholic and Protestant formulations.

during, and after the Reformation. At stake in this project is an examination of what happens to the body of Christ in its various religious (namely liturgical) and literary (namely dramatic) instantiations over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Taking its cue from these theological and literary representations of Christ's Eucharistic body, *Reforming Corporeality* demonstrates how the relationship of word to flesh, regarded as reciprocal and complementary by traditional Catholicism and the cultures it shaped, changes in the wake of religious reform. The Protestant Reformation drove a wedge between these two terms and reformed (if not also replaced) corporeal devotion with a greater emphasis on immaterial faith and the poignancy of the word. The doctrines of *sola scriptura* ("scripture alone") and *sola fides* ("faith alone") that emphasized the immaterial and intangible identity of the divine as opposed to a Eucharistic model grounded in flesh and blood were hardly theological interventions alone; rather, they provided a foundation on which to erect a new narrative of embodiment, one that placed assessments and appreciations of the body's semiotic constitution in frustrated conversation with discourses of its somatic constitution. While a number of other models of embodiment have prevailed in the critical discourse of the past two decades -- namely figurations of the body politic, the Bakhtinian grotesque body, the one-sex body, the humoral body, and most recently, the "excremental body" emerging out of queer theory -- the iconographical importance of Christ's body to both early modern drama and its cultural reformations remains a footnote at best and an afterthought at worst.¹¹

¹¹ The criticism on early modern embodiment has become so profuse that it is not possible to record every important study here, but the most foundational accounts remain the following: on the body politic, Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: Studies in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957); on the one-sex body, Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the*

The Eucharist remains a source of harnessed theological, literary, and epistemological energy that can lend fresh insight into studies of both early modern drama and early modern embodiment, and in what follows, I endeavor to unleash some of these energies.¹² At once the very bread of life and a symbolic memorial meal, the Eucharist may be said to beggar all description at the same time that it incites volumes of disputation. Christ's Eucharistic body undergoes significant theological, liturgical, and aesthetic reformations from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, and English drama emerges as a formative participant in them. Far from an empty emblem of medieval Catholicism wiped away by a Protestant theatre, the Eucharist looms large in the dramatic imaginations of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Ford, Webster, and Middleton, not to mention its crucial place in the poetry of Donne, Herbert, and Crashaw. Moreover, the Eucharistic controversies over the essence of Christ's body, its spiritual efficacy, and the devotional

Greeks to Freud (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992); on the grotesque body, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986); on humoralism, Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1993) and *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999); on the "excremental body," Will Stockton, *Playing Dirty: Sexuality and Waste in Early Modern Comedy* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). See also Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) and David Hillman and Carla Mazzio, eds. *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

¹² My argument for the continuity of Eucharistic iconography in Reformation drama is inspired by the revisionist historiography of the Protestant Reformation, which challenges both the expediency and the popularity of the reformist movements and argues for the interrelation of the traditional religion of the past and the reformed religion of England's present in the sixteenth century. These studies include: Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society Under the Tudors* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1993); J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1992). A very good overview of the revisionist debate and its implications for an "English Catholic historiography" is offered by Ethan Shagan in his introduction to *Catholics and the Protestant Nation: Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England*, ed. Ethan H. Shagan (Manchester, UK: Manchester UP, 2005): 1-21. Against these revisionist accounts stand the more conventional histories of the Reformation as an ecclesiastical and epistemological rupture, including A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 2nd. ed. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1989); Roland Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952); and most recently, Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Penguin, 2003).

practices it organizes engage us in a contemporary reformation of the early modern body. The Eucharistic body of Christ and the semiotic system it organizes provide salient sites through which to approach the early modern body not as either flesh or figure, transubstantiation or trope, but as the problematic dialectic between them.

Only Spilled Wine?

So as not to overdetermine the relationship of Eucharist to early modern drama and culture, I disclose from the outset of this project that not every mention of bread and wine, shadow and substance, or body and blood in a Renaissance play is necessarily Eucharistic; likewise, not every banquet, feast, or act of eating operates as a memorial of the Last Supper. However, in a charged symbolic environment like the early modern theatre, which is also positioned historically in the wake of religious reformation, spilled wine can also never be *only* spilled wine.¹³ Even when terms such as those I have delineated above do not denote Eucharist, they potentially hit powerful Eucharistic nerves, registering the voices and visions of a Catholic world. For centuries prior to the Reformation, the iconography of Christ's Eucharistic body shaped thought not only about the human and the divine and the sacred and the profane, but about nearly every social, political, and spiritual fiber of medieval life. And during the Reformation, the controversies over the theological definitions of this body kept the Eucharist alive as a potent signifier even as reformers reacted against it. These disputations, which not only occasioned theological polemic but also sent many to their deaths, suggest that even if

¹³ This line of inquiry was inspired by the skepticism of Ruth Morse, who intimated to me that in Shakespeare's plays, "Sometimes spilled wine is only spilled wine; it is not a parody or analogue of the Eucharist." The Eucharist, I contend, is an important aesthetic crux for early modern literature, and I suggest that it is as fitting a cultural discourse as any other (perhaps in this period of religious change and liturgical anxiety, even more so) to read in conjunction with early modern literary texts.

they are not literally Christ's body and blood, bread can never be *only* bread and wine never *only* wine. In addition, Henry VIII's separation from the Roman Church, the institution of a reformed, vernacular liturgy, and the topsy-turvy slippage between modes of reformed Protestantism and Roman Catholicism witnessed in the ensuing reigns of Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth provides sufficient historical bedrock on which to base an argument for drama's interest in appropriating Eucharistic materials. As Brian Cummings argues, in the early modern period "writing was produced in the context of a religious crisis which overwhelmed political and social culture." Against the claims of those who wish to regard religious topoi as irrelevant or marginal to such cultural productions, Cummings continues: "Only by an odd prejudice of literary history can such matters be regarded as peripheral to literary production."¹⁴ Only by a similarly odd prejudice of literary and religious history, it seems, can the Eucharist be regarded as peripheral to the artistic productions of the early modern stage and page.

The cultural prohibitions against staging religious materials -- an injunction leveled on religious grounds that also initiated a major aesthetic shift in the public morality and mystery plays that defined English drama to the sixteenth century -- make it lawful (if not easy) to dismiss the body of Christ from the stage altogether. And despite these legislations, early modern dramatists draw on the language and imagery of the Eucharist with energetic consistency. In his study of the dissolution of the religious drama in England, Harold Gardiner cites a letter dated 27 May 1576, in which the authors declare that "no Pageant be used or set furthe wherein the Ma[jes]tye of God the Father, God the Sonne, or God the Holie Ghost or the administration of either the Sacramentes of

¹⁴ Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2002), 5.

baptisme or of the Lordes Supper be counterfeyted or represented.”¹⁵ Even if early modern playwrights were not permitted outright to stage scenes from the life of Christ as did their medieval forbears, they drew on the language and imagery of Christ’s body and its devotional permutations even when their intended subject was not itself religious. As the Reformation suggested departures with the superstitions of popery, the mystical opaqueness of Latin liturgy, and the corporeality of the traditions of affective piety and mysticism, early modern drama remained fascinated with the language of Eucharistic ritual. This is not to suggest that dramas endorsed or promulgated Eucharistic theology, but that Eucharistic iconography remained a potent archive for literary imitation despite the reformations of the sixteenth century.

In Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, for example, the Ghost of Hamlet’s father cites his lack of Eucharistic nourishment as one of the damning characteristics of Claudius’s fratricide. After saying that Claudius poisoned him “with juice of cursed hebona in a vial / And in the porches of my ears did pour / The leperous distilment,”¹⁶ the Ghost provides additional details of the murder:

Thus was I sleeping by a brother’s hand
Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched,
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled,
No reckoning made but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head. (1.5.74-9)

¹⁵ Harold Gardiner, *Mysteries’ End: An Investigation of the Last Days of the Medieval Religious Stage* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1946), 78. The suppression of religious materials on the early modern stage is taken up in greater detail by Mervyn James, “Ritual Drama and the Social Body in the Late Medieval Town,” *Past and Present* 88 (1983): 3-29; Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Poetics of the Elizabethan Theater* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Michael O’Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theatre in Early-Modern England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2000).

¹⁶ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Ard. 3), ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Thomson, 2006). 1.5.62-4. All references are taken from this edition and will be cited parenthetically hereafter.

When the Ghost refers to himself as “unhouseled” and “unaneled,” he directly references the fact that he died without Eucharist, absolution, and final anointing, which leaves him inadequately prepared for death. By administering to his brother a vial of crippling poison, Claudius turns the terms of holy food into those of regicide, sealing Hamlet Senior’s fate with a most unsacramental death. This imagery is taken up again in the famous prayer scene later in the play. When Hamlet decides not to kill Claudius on account of the fact that he has confessed his misdeeds, he remarks, “Why, this is base and silly, not revenge. / ‘A took my father grossly full of bread / With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May” (3.3.79-81). Here, “bread” connotes not Eucharist but gross fullness, an earthly appetite that was never remedied through final communion and the attendant rites of confession and unction that were necessary to ensure the salvation of one’s soul according to Catholic teaching.¹⁷ Finally, it is not insignificant that Hamlet ultimately murders Claudius and Gertrude with poison from a goblet. Granted, this goblet is not the same as a priest’s chalice, which held the consecrated wine that became the blood of Christ during Mass, but it recalls the liturgical prop all the same. At the end of *Hamlet*, this goblet of poisoned wine emblemizes a profaned Eucharist, a final meal that unhouses both Claudius and Gertrude and signifies not mystical communion but a poisonous “union” (5.2.310). Hamlet’s final action thus works as a triple revenge that works across political, genealogical, and spiritual planes. Not only does Hamlet avenge

¹⁷ “Fullness of bread,” as Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor point out in their gloss in the Arden 3 edition, “is listed as a state of sin in Ezekiel 16.49” (332). Though its full implications lie outside the scope of this project, it is worth mentioning that Hamlet’s decision not to kill Claudius on account of his confession points to the play’s own duality regarding Catholic and Protestant theologies. The play opens with Hamlet’s father suggesting that because he died in a state of sin and did not receive the official sacraments of the church from the hands of a priest (*ex opere operato*) he was unprepared for Heaven. And yet, by the third act, Hamlet recognizes that Claudius’s personal confession -- that is, his dialogue with God in the absence of priest or ecclesiastically-sanctioned rite -- would be effective enough to win him remission of sin (what he calls “the purging of his soul” [3.3.85]) and final salvation.

his father's murder and his uncle's usurpation of his position as heir, but he also redresses the sacramental deprivations that marked his father's death.

Macbeth also encodes murder with Eucharistic language, this time focusing on the semiotics of blood and feasting. Lady Macbeth introduces the banquet during which the ghost of Banquo appears by saying, "To feed were best at home; / From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony; / Meeting were bare without it," at which point Banquo's Ghost enters and occupies Macbeth's place at the table.¹⁸ Macbeth exclaims, "Sweet remembrancer!" and later, after he says, "Give me some wine. Fill full" (89), the Ghost reappears. Here, the entrance of Banquo's Ghost, a reminder to Macbeth of his slaughter of the innocent Duncan, coincides with the preparation of a stately banquet, one whose ceremonial practices allude to the liturgical performances of Eucharistic ritual. What is more, this banquet, which begins and ends with references to Banquo's blood,¹⁹ is both meal and memorial. As "sweet remembrancer," the ghostly presence of Banquo situated in the context of a meal, calls to mind the language of Christ's words of institution, which in the Anglican communion service are, "Do this in remembrance of me." Communion, in the reformed imagination, is itself a "sweet remembrancer" insofar as it is a memorial signifier of Christ's body. With that said, Banquo's ghost becomes a specter of bodily presence that would not accord with Protestant Eucharistic theology, and thus *Macbeth* draws on both Catholic and reformed thinking about the Eucharist in staging its acts of ritual eating.

¹⁸ William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. William C. Carroll (Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 1999). 3.4.35-7. All references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically hereafter.

¹⁹ At the beginning of the scene, Macbeth says to the Murderer, "There's blood upon thy face," to which he replies, "'Tis Banquo's then" (3.4.13-14). Toward the end of the scene, Macbeth says of the Ghost, "It will have blood, they say; blood will have blood" (3.4.123).

The harrowing connotations of fleshly sacrifice wrapped up in political ambitions are also evident in *The Merchant of Venice*, where Shylock demands an explicitly Eucharistic bond from Antonio.²⁰ By asking for a pound of flesh, Shylock travesties the foundation of Christian belief: Christ's institution of his body and blood at the Last Supper followed by the bodily sacrifice of his crucifixion. This point is further evidenced by his refusal to eat with Christians in Act One: "I / will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, / and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, / nor pray with you."²¹ For all his associations with usury and profit, Shylock does not want literal money; rather, he wants to cut from Antonio the central emblem of Christianity itself and so fights for a uniquely Eucharistic currency, the pound of flesh. While Shylock travesties the fleshly (and specifically Eucharistic) foundations of Christianity, his Eucharistic inversions are ultimately reversed through Portia's courtroom plots, which allow Antonio to keep his flesh and force Shylock to become a Christian. His bond is thus reversed as his religious identity is translated.²²

In some cases, early modern dramas appropriate Eucharistic language and imagery even when the subject matter is decidedly not religious. For example, following Alice Arden's infamous murder of her husband in *Arden of Faversham*, Alice asks her servant, Susan, to wash away the blood, but Susan replies: "The blood cleaveth to the

²⁰ The fleshly bond has also been read in connection with stereotypical Jewish crimes such as the blood libel, host desecration, and usury, all of which are discussed at length by James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996), esp. ch. 3. In his study of *Merchant*, Shapiro reads the pound of flesh in the context of circumcision but does not mention Eucharist (see ch. 4).

²¹ William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (New York: Norton, 1997). 1.3.29-32. All references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically hereafter.

²² In a very recent production of *Merchant* starring F. Murray Abraham as Shylock, Antonio plucks Shylock's yarmulke from his head following the announcement of his forced conversion and throws it on the ground. This powerful religious signifier remains onstage through the end of the play and is bandied about between characters until Jessica stoops down, picks it up, and kisses it before withdrawing with Lorenzo. In this detail of production, the yarmulke can be said to replace the pound of flesh as the object of religious and economic exchange.

ground and will not out.”²³ And Alice soon recognizes that her husband’s blood regenerates, providing a fleshly reminder of her treasonous misdeed: “But with my nails I’ll scrape away the blood. / The more I strive the more the blood appears!” (14.253-4). At the end of the play, the Mayor gazes upon Arden’s blood on the floor and echoes the language of Eucharistic devotion, which often emphasized viewing the elevated host or even beholding a host bleed before one’s eyes: “See, see! His blood! It is too manifest” (14.399). And although Alice attempts to identify the blood as spilled wine, Franklin cites it as incriminating evidence: “It is this blood which, strumpet, thou has shed” (14.402). The blood clings to the very space of the murder as a permanent relic of Arden’s body. As I shall show in the ensuing chapters, devotion to relics as well as accounts of Eucharistic miracles, in which the consecrated host was said to shed blood or cleave to the tongue of a doubtful recipient, proliferated in the medieval and early modern periods, and it is quite possible that Arden’s blood recalls these popular narrative and devotional traditions.

Another kind of dramatic performance also keeps the body of Christ circulating within the early modern cultural imagination. This drama does not occur on the public stage, but takes place in the sacred space of the English church, where the reformed liturgy actually retains many of the performative features of the Catholic Mass that it seeks to replace. The “Administration of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, or Holy Communion,” as it is called in the *Book of Common Prayer*, is a liturgical variation on a Biblical theme, that of Christ’s Last Supper. Though reformed theologically, this liturgy maintains many of the words, material props, and ritual actions of the Roman liturgy,

²³ Anon., *Arden of Faversham*, ed. Martin White (London: A&C Black, 2007). 14.252. All references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically hereafter.

including: a table with cloths, an offering box, bread and cup, a book, a priest, as well as many familiar liturgical movements, including prayers of praise and confession, epistles, collects, prefaces, a creed, prayers of intercession, and the rite of communion itself, as well as the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, collects, prefaces, a creed, a gloria, and various benedictions.²⁴ As a religious performance, then, the reformed liturgy continues to circulate the principal tropes and props of its Roman ancestor. Even as the theological function of this liturgy is to insist on the symbolism of the communion meal rather than on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, by preserving the language and ritual actions associated with the Catholic Mass, the reformed communion service keeps the body of Christ and its attendant iconographies alive in the cultural memory even as it strives to radically change its meaning and spiritual function. Thus, the dramatic appeal of Christ's body and its liturgical performances did not vanish when the name of the Pope was scraped out of the Mass books and replaced with the name of the king; even as its theological identities were debated and ultimately changed, the Eucharist remained iconic and influential.

²⁴ Take, for example, the description of the communion table, which replaces the Catholic altar from the 1559 Book of Common Prayer, ed. John Booty (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005):

The Table having at the Communion time a fair white linen cloth upon it, shall stand in the body of the church, or in the chancel, where Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer be appointed to be said. And the priest standing at the north side of the Table shall say the Lord's Prayer with this Collect following. (248)

This stripped-down version of the Catholic altar is no less a table placed in a central location within the sacred space of the church. Moreover, bread and wine are still placed upon it, and it functions as the principal stage on which the memorial of the Last Supper is set. Though a common, rather than a consecrated, table, its work as a ritual prop is not all that different from the role of the altar in the Mass.

Types and Truths: Figuring the Eucharistic Body

In its theological formulations and its theatrical appropriations, the Eucharist crosses the planes of substance and accident, skin and sign, representation and presence. As both a body problem and a language problem, the Eucharist also forces us to grapple with the body's saturation within textual representation as well as with the moments at which the flesh upsets or even transcends the mediation of the word. The Eucharistic body on the early modern stage functions as a problematic signifier, one that frustrates both somatic and semiotic claims and one that stands uneasily on the threshold of the critical topoi of the word and the flesh. These categories, it should be understood, are not indicative of a polarization between a Catholic, flesh-based religious system and one that is Protestant and word-based but instead suggest the uneasy oscillation of Christ's body (and the body more generally) between these theoretical and theological poles.

A Eucharistic semiotics helps us to understand this relationship between word and flesh by relating sacraments like the Eucharist to debates about signs and signification that guide some of the major theological reforms in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Whereas critics like Debora Shuger, Brian Cummings, Ramie Targoff, and Barbara Lewalski focus questions of religious interpretation on scripture alone, they neglect the powerful linguistic debates that steer discourses on the sacraments in the period.²⁵ Such an omission proceeds from the assumption that the Reformation does away with sacraments and sacramental theology. But this is a false assumption: reformers do not reject sacraments but redefine them theologically, if not also

²⁵ Debora Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity* (Waco, TX: Baylor UP, 2010); Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2002); Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton and London: Princeton UP, 1984).

aesthetically. A Eucharistic semiotics thus depends on some engagement with sacramental theology, which operates in the period as a form of sign theory.²⁶

Sacraments are, to paraphrase the familiar Augustinian definition, visible signs of an invisible grace; as such, they are intimately tied to the mechanisms of representation. They are a linguistic, as well as a theological, matter. Catholics and Protestants agree that sacraments are signs; however, their disagreements arise over what these signs represent, how they represent, and to what extent the sacramental signifier is itself sacred or “real.” To put it slightly differently, Catholicism sees sacraments as both figurative sign and literal event while reformers focus on sacraments as signs whose potential for grace is activated by faith. Sacraments are legitimate in the reformist view so long as the sacramental signifier points toward and does not replace the divine referent.

The twinned identity of Catholic sacrament as both signs and actions is upheld in the Catholic Counter Reformation, as evidenced by the Tridentine decrees of 1547. The Council of Trent disassociates sacramentality and mere figuration under penalty of excommunication: “If anyone says that the sacraments do not contain the grace which they signify; or do not confer that grace on those who place no obstacle in the way, as if they were only external signs of grace or justice received by faith and some kind of mark...let him be anathema.”²⁷ Catholic teaching locates grace materially in the sacramental signs themselves. By contrast, see sacraments as functional signs that point toward God, the source of grace; the signs themselves are not sanctified. Reformers thus

²⁶ Sacraments are also related to contemporary philosophies of language, as evidenced by the recent work of the philosopher Giorgio Agamben who, in *The Signature of All Things: On Method*, trans. Luca D’Isanto (New York: Zone Books, 1999), develops his “theory of signatures” based on a theological understanding of sacraments as a “sacred semiology” (43). See esp. ch. 2.

²⁷ Council of Trent, Session 7 (3 March 1547), First decree, canon 6 [On the sacraments]. Qtd. in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, trans. and ed. Norman P. Tanner, S.J. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 684.

divest sacraments of their own material holiness and insist instead on their reference toward an intangible source of holiness, God Himself.²⁸ Reformed sacraments, like a reformed Eucharistic theology, see the mediation of divine grace through earthly referents, suggesting that the spiritual benefit of sacramental action lies in its orientation of the believer toward the divine rather than in the believer's literal enactment of the sacrament itself. Sacraments, in turn, act as seals, marks, and signs of God's grace: they make divinity perceptible to the lowly human senses.

Let us consider a few excerpts from such reformist discourses on sacraments. Philip Mornai regards the Eucharist as "a sacrament, in that God there presenteth unto us bread and wine as visible signes, and yet not withstanding exhibitors of an invisible grace." Moreover, he reiterates the semiotic properties of the Eucharist by regarding it as "a signe of our Redeemer his innocencie...it serveth us for a signe of his death and passion; in that it is eaten it is a signe to us of that life and nourishment which we draw from his death."²⁹ Moreover, in *Institutes of Christian Religion*, Jean Calvin upholds sacraments as material signs of God's grace and denounces any who regard them as "frigid, empty figures."³⁰ For Calvin, sacraments are linked to God's word and are "external sign[s] by which the Lord seals on our consciences his promises of good-will toward us" and thus they become a "testimony of the divine favour toward us" (IV.xiv.1).

²⁸ By emphasizing the semiotic function of sacraments and divesting them of their own material sanctity, reformers insist upon the adequacy of the word itself to mediate holiness and spiritual healing. As Robert N. Watson claims of Protestantism more generally, "Protestantism may thus be viewed as less a fast flurry of the falling empire of the word than a prophecy of a future in which the word would declare itself independent and self-sufficient, pushing aside the material connections of the traditional Christian belief-system and eventually establishing its autonomous state." Watson, *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 46.

²⁹ P. Mornai, *Fowre Bookes of the Institution, Use, and Doctrine of the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist in the Old Church* (London: 1600), p. 2.

³⁰ Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), Bk. IV, chap. xiv, sec. 7. All references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically hereafter.

Sacraments are not sacred in and of themselves; they “confer nothing, and avail nothing, if not received in faith” (IV.xiv.17).

By contrast, the Catholic Eucharist emerges as the most literal sacrament: its sign is also a real body, its type is also a divine Truth. In his Eucharistic poem modeled on Aquinas, “Lauda Sion Salvatorem, The Hymn to the Blessed Sacrament,” Richard Crashaw parses this difference in sacramental identity. Himself a late convert from Anglicanism to Catholicism, Crashaw issues some fourteen stanzas in praise and defense of Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist. In doing so, he characterizes the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper and its permutations on the altar during the Mass as the completion of a typology that sees Christ’s sacrifice in the New Testament as the fulfillment of the Old Testament:

Lo the new LAW of a new LORD
With a new Lamb blesses the Board.
The aged Pascha pleads not yeares
But spyes love’s dawn, and disappeares.
Types yield to TRUTHES; shades shrink away;
And their NIGHT dyes into our Day. (IV.1-6)³¹

The “types” that Crashaw sees as becoming “TRUTHES” reflect this typology, with the suggestion that through the “new LAW of a new LORD” the Old Testament prefigurations of sacrifice and salvation -- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the genealogy of Jesse -- are achieved in Christ’s passion, which itself brings the “Day” of resurrection. In addition to rehearsing the theological ramifications of Christ’s Paschal Mystery, however, Crashaw also gives us the word pair “type” and “truth,” which establishes a working lexicon through which to contemplate the mystery of divine presence as well as the aesthetic and theological work of Christ’s body in the Eucharist.

³¹ Richard Crashaw, “Lauda Sion Salvatorem. The Hymn for the Blessed Sacrament,” in *The Complete Poetry of Richard Crashaw*, ed. George Walton Williams (New York: Anchor Books, 1970), 181.

Crashaw's terms "type" and "truth" give rise to multiple sets of terms for theorizing a Eucharistic semiotics as it reveals the cultural import of Christ's body both to the literature of the early modern period and to the critical constructs we presently use to interpret it. The relation between "type" and "truth" -- not to mention trope and truth -- can be extended to a consideration of several points of contention between Roman Catholic and reformed understandings of the liturgy and its sacramental theology. For example, Catholics regard the consecrated host as a physical truth: it *is* Christ's human and divine body couched within the edible form of bread. For reformers like Cranmer who are influenced by the writings of Calvin and Zwingli, this act of physical communion is wholly "type": its function is symbolic and any truth it claims lies in its capacity to signify materially the invisible and intangible divinity of Christ who does not make Himself present in bodily form during the service. To take another example, one could see the various devotional acts, such as meditating on the wounds of Christ, creeping to venerate the cross on Good Friday, participating in Corpus Christi processions, venerating relics, and going on pilgrimage, as religious "types" or topoi that are granted the status of "truthes" within a Catholic liturgical and devotional system but are recognized -- if they are recognized at all -- as nothing more than "types" within a reformed understanding.

By pursuing this connection between type and truth with respect to the status of the body in Eucharistic theology, my project moves beyond an intervention within studies of literature and religion and also contributes to twenty years of criticism on the early modern body. Since the publication of Gail Kern Paster's *The Body Embarrassed* in 1993, critics like Michael Schoenfeldt, Bruce Smith, and David Hillman have urged us to

think about the body in psychosomatic, physiological, anatomical, and phenomenological terms.³² As a result, “the body” has been fettered to the definite article as a standalone entity, an essentially material “thing” that apparently transcends mediation in language. The most extreme example of this tendency comes from David Hillman’s 2007 book, *Shakespeare’s Entrails*, where he writes, “If it seems strange to speak of Shakespeare’s imagination as reaching so intensely into the inmost parts of the human body, this is largely because of the increasingly metaphorical ways in which the language of the plays has been apprehended over the past four centuries.”³³ Here we have an argument for substance privileged over, or studied at the expense of, sign. In response to this contention, I must ask at what point metaphor became the enemy to literary practice? How can we access an early modern body outside some kind of mediation? By studying the early modern body in the context of Eucharistic controversy and liturgical reformation, we can arrive at a reformed narrative of embodiment, one that does not define or delimit “the body” as either a fleshly or textual construct but one that, like the host itself, works between word and flesh, sacrament and sacrifice, image and body, substance and sign, Catholic and Protestant.

I elaborate these claims in a series of four chapters and a coda, where I take up a number of the theological, historical, and aesthetic aspects of Christ’s body as they are imagined by early modern drama. In my first chapter, I develop the idea of a Eucharistic semiotics in greater detail, first drawing on the discursive materials of Eucharistic controversy, particularly the theological writings of Thomas More, Martin Luther, and

³² Cf. Paster, *The Body Embarrassed* and *Humoring the Body*; Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*; Bruce R. Smith, “Premodern Sexualities,” *PMLA* 115.3 (2000): 318-29; and David Hillman, *Shakespeare’s Entrails: Belief, Skepticism, and the Interior of the Body* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave, 2007).

³³ Hillman, 1.

Jean Calvin, and then demonstrating how a Eucharistic semiotics works in two English plays separated by time, taste, religious thematics, and theatrical institutions: the fifteenth-century Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* (c. 1461) and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1594). These plays draw on the language of Eucharistic doctrine, specifically transubstantiation, to depict the body as a problematic signifier, one that moves uneasily between bodily violence and textual mediation, and one that frustrates claims to definitive interpretation.

Succeeding chapters extend the discussion of the Eucharist beyond the liturgical space of the Catholic altar and the doctrinal space of transubstantiation in order to account for various liturgical, devotional, and theatrical permutations of the Eucharistic sacrament. Chapter Two focuses on the body and the liturgy in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1604, 1616), a play commonly read as a rehearsal of the Protestant drama of Calvinist predestination and salvation anxiety. My reading of the play excavates Marlowe's reliance on both liturgical actions and liturgical texts, and it suggests that Faustus's attraction to magic and necromancy tropes his unspoken attachment to priestly power. Body and word come together in a specifically liturgical praxis in this play, one that questions our comfortable assumptions that Faustus the character is definitively damned and that *Faustus* the play is unproblematically Protestant.

In Chapter Three, I account for "Eucharistic afterlives," my term for extensions of the Eucharistic sacrament -- in particular images and relics -- that make equally problematic, yet poignant, claims to bodily presence. In a reading of Middleton and Rowley's tragedy, *The Changeling* (1622), I demonstrate how discourses of visual devotion and relic worship are reworked, manipulated, and ultimately profaned in this

drama that centers on the attempt of a heroine to rewrite her body as a signifier of her own sexual will.

In my final chapter, I suggest how Shakespeare's romance, *The Winter's Tale* (1611) re-imagines the Catholic sacraments of penance, marriage, and Eucharist not as corporeal events that produce grace in themselves (*ex opere operato*) but as semiotic inventions that displace the power of the priest onto the work of the actor and the magic of the Mass onto the illusion of the stage play. Here I make the claim that the body in *The Winter's Tale*, particularly the body of Hermione, is not the product of incarnation, resurrection, or transubstantiation but is instead produced through the magic of Paulina's language. The body in this play approximates an aesthetic production and stands as a fabrication of rhetorical tropes and stage directions. As transubstantiation becomes theatrical play, we witness how the English stage renders the Eucharistic body more problematic, more tropological, and more representational than medieval writers, theologians, and worshippers imagined it to be. In this play, as in *The Tempest* (1611), which provides the focal point for a brief coda, the Eucharistic body seems to disappear, a phenomenon troped in the theatre by the figure of Ariel's disappearing banquet. In *The Tempest*, the Mass slides steadily toward the masque, as drama reformulates sacrament in terms of aesthetic, rather than physical, incarnation.

EUCHARISTIC SEMIOTICS

The Body of Christ and the Play of Signs in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* and *Titus Andronicus*

Body is certitude shattered and blown to bits. The anxiety, the desire to see, touch, and eat the body of God, to *be* that body and *be nothing but that*, forms the principle of Western (un)reason...For us, the body is always sacrificed: Eucharist.
Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*¹

In its Catholic and Protestant inflections, the Eucharist moves between physical corporeality and rhetorical figuration, between a certain fracturing of the consecrated host and a shattered certitude regarding the divine presence housed therein. The host was for centuries understood by Catholics as the literal, fleshly body of Christ miraculously produced by the power of the priest during the sacrifice of the Mass. However, beginning with Lollard challenges to Eucharistic presence in the fourteenth century and continuing well into the seventeenth century across the continent, reformed Eucharistic theology contended that the host was not a fleshly body but rather the central symbol and memorial sign of the Lord's Supper.

In this chapter, I explore a "Eucharistic semiotics" through which I argue for the mutual constitution of the following oppositions: flesh and figure; image and body; substance and sign; presence and memorial. In both theological and aesthetic contexts, the Eucharist provokes questions about the relations between the signifier and the signified, and interrogates the limits of linguistic representation. As Stephen Greenblatt

¹ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, trans. Richard A. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 5.

argues, the Eucharist encourages “significant and sustained thinking...about the nature of linguistic signs, and particularly about figuration, centered on or deeply influenced by Eucharistic controversies.”² For example, the doctrine of transubstantiation holds that bread shifts from a sign of Christ’s body to the very substance of that body. By conflating sign and signified, it problematizes the very understanding of linguistic referentiality itself. Eucharist is both the figure of all figures and the body that transcends figuration, and it uniquely partakes of linguistic systems even as it asserts a somatic identity that appears to transcend the arbitrariness of mortal language.³

I demonstrate this claim in a reading of two English plays separated by time, genre, and taste: the late medieval Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* (c. 1461) and Shakespeare’s early tragedy, *Titus Andronicus* (1594). Both plays demonstrate how a Eucharistic semiotics can be expressed both through the linguistic and material problems posed not only by the sacrament itself (not least of which is the signification of *Hoc est corpus meum*, or “This is my body”⁴) but also through cultural appropriations of these discourses, which I characterize as similarly multiplicitous and contradictory. The former text is a mystery play that features the seizure and torture of a host at the hands of

² Stephen Greenblatt, “Remnants of the Sacred in Early Modern England,” in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, eds. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1996), 342.

³ On the dense symbolism of the Eucharist, Sarah Beckwith provides perhaps the clearest explanation in the context of her work on Crucifixion piety: “Christ’s body performs a double dislocation as a cultural symbol. It removes the most ordinary of objects, the human body, into a sacred sphere. Conversely, it takes that most extraordinary of objects, divinity, and transposes it to the banal domain of the human body. As a symbol, then, its double dislocation makes it doubly effective. It becomes the vehicle of ‘strong allusion’ in its mobile and continuous dislocation of spheres and condensed interaction of incongruous, incommensurable domains.” See Beckwith, *Christ’s Body* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 60.

⁴ In her introduction to *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), Lee Palmer Wandell argues that “the anguish of the sixteenth century centered on these two words [*my body*].” Summarizing the major inquiries of Catholics and reformers alike, she asks: “What did it mean for Christ to have a body? What kind of body? How was Christ ‘present’ among the community of Christians? Could he be known physically to his followers or did they simply have a disembodied memory of him?” (6). As will become evident throughout this chapter, theological disputation concerning the Eucharist stems largely from such a linguistic crux.

a Jew, its subsequent transformation into Christ's body on stage, and a concluding Eucharistic procession that catalyzes the conversion of the Jews.⁵ Whereas the play was regarded as an object lesson in Eucharistic doctrine, it also demonstrates how the body of Christ crosses the theological and tropological boundaries of *imago Christi* and *corpus Christi*. Over the course of the play, Christ's body functions as both image and essence. In the latter text, Shakespeare appropriates a Eucharistic iconography in writing the body of Lavinia as well as in staging the memorable pie-eating plot at the play's end. Shakespeare's play, an early experiment in Senecan blood tragedy, does not endorse Eucharistic theology. But in it Shakespeare draws on Eucharistic language, tropes, and themes to represent the body as a problematic signifier.

Paul Strohm argues that the Eucharist, as both sacrament and sign, is a "symbolic surplus" that extends beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries of the church. "The work of consecration was never, and could never, be done," he argues, claiming that "the Eucharist's robust plenitude is...founded on what might be called the problematic circumstances of its productivity."⁶ Moreover, Sarah Beckwith maintains that theatre in particular activates the Eucharist's corporeal elusiveness and semiotic polysemy by rendering "the body of Christ as a dramatic process of relation and not a static object of

⁵ The dating of the Croxton play is complex. Critics agree that it was first performed in the village of Bury St. Edmunds in East Anglia in 1461. Yet Tamara Atkin has recently argued that while the play was performed in the late fifteenth century, its manuscript was not printed and circulated until the mid-sixteenth century, rendering it more an early modern play that gave expression to both Catholic and reformist sides of the Eucharistic controversies. Atkin, "Playbooks and Printed Drama: A Reassessment of the Date and Layout of the Manuscript of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, 60.244 (2008): 194-205.

⁶ Paul Strohm, "The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*: Commemoration and Repetition in Late Medieval Culture." In *Performances of the Sacred in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. Susanne Rupp and Tobias Döring (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 36.

perception.”⁷ She also maintains that theatre, like the Eucharistic body itself, is “constantly caught at the boundary between its phenomenality and its terms of reference.”⁸ Saturated in conundrums of representation and excesses of interpretation, then, the Eucharistic body places into relief the fraught conflict between artistic *materia* (that is, words, tropes, figures, and theatrical illusions) and corporeal matter (flesh, blood, bones, and sinews) across the periodic divide normally cast between the Middle Ages and Renaissance -- a conflict registered both in the sacred space of the church and the secular venue of the public theatre.

Reading Eucharistically: Flesh, Figure, and Signification

Before proceeding to the aesthetic implications of the Eucharistic controversies I wish to briefly sketch its major theological strains. It is a misconception that Henry VIII’s break with Rome, which can be understood as a religious divide motivated by his rejection of the Roman papacy, enacted immediate theological changes. Liturgically speaking, the Church of England actually retained much Catholic ritual and theology, and it is not until the reign of Edward VI, as Timothy Rosendale has shown, that Calvinist and Zwinglian influences on England began to change liturgical practice.⁹ Henrician theology thus adhered to a conservative understanding of Eucharistic presence, which

⁷ Sarah Beckwith, “Ritual, Church, and Theatre: Medieval Dramas of the Sacramental Body,” in *Culture and History 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities, and Writing*, ed. David Aers (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 81.

⁸ Sarah Beckwith, *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 64.

⁹ Timothy Rosendale, *Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

would gradually dissipate during the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth with a brief reintroduction during the intervening reign of Mary.¹⁰

Broadly speaking, Catholic Eucharistic theology emphasizes Christ's corporeal presence manifested in a real and palpable manner in the host. The doctrine of transubstantiation, modeled on Aristotelean notions of form and matter, introduced by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, and upheld by the Council of Trent in the sixteenth, maintains that upon the utterance of the words of consecration, *Hoc est corpus meum*, Christ's body becomes physically present. The bread and wine function solely as appearances, or *accidents*, in which is contained the *substance* of Christ's body. Bread and wine thus lose their agency as bread and wine and function solely as repositories for the literal body of Christ. This theological privileging of presence also acknowledges that Christ's existence in the host occurs simultaneously and unproblematically with the existence of his divine body in Heaven. Christ's body is thus multilocal and multitemporal. By contrast, Ulrich Zwingli and Jean Calvin understand Christ's Last Supper as a historical event that cannot be repeated in future historical time. In turn, the Mass becomes for them not a literal sacrifice but a symbolic memorial. Zwingli denies claims to Christ's Eucharistic presence and assigns to the bread and wine a purely representational function. Calvin, who extends the greatest influence on English reformed worship, holds a more nuanced symbolic position, claiming that the Eucharist exists not as a corporeal presence, but as Christ's spiritual presence activated in the believer by his good, sincere faith. Bridging the literal and symbolic interpretations is

¹⁰ Cf. Peter Marshall, *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). On the reintroduction of Catholicism to England during the reign of Mary, see Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England Under Mary Tudor* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2009).

Martin Luther, whose idea of consubstantiation maintains that bread and wine exist as bread and wine along with Christ's body and blood.

As these divergent theologies demonstrate, the Eucharist produces a polysemous semiotics. My intention here is not to repeat the work of critics who have traced Eucharistic controversy from the Lollard movement in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries through the institutionalization of the *Book of Common Prayer* in England in the mid-sixteenth.¹¹ Instead I extrapolate from these broad histories three points that relate to the literary and historical narratives of the Eucharist in early modern England. First, even as they question the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharistic sacrament, those who debate transubstantiation reaffirm the cultural and aesthetic importance of Christ's physical body. Secondly, the Eucharistic debates provide iconographic material appropriated by English dramatists in the liturgical themes, events, and actions they stage well into the seventeenth century. Finally, the debates intersect with what Peter Harrison regards as "a renewed fascination with all things physical," which first emerged in the eleventh century.¹² In doing so, they inflect the period's understanding of the body more generally, exposing how the Eucharistic controversies

¹¹ The most comprehensive history of Eucharistic theology, iconography, and practice is Miri Rubin's, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). On Eucharistic theology and its Catholic, Lutheran, and reformed contexts, see Wandell, *The Eucharist in the Reformation* as well as the introduction to Thomas More's *The Answer to a Poisoned Book* in *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, volume 2, ed. Stephen Merriam Foley and Clarence H. Miller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), xvii-lxi.

The Eucharist and more specifically transubstantiation have also been taken up in literary and historical contexts of late medieval and early modern Europe. See Rosendale, *Liturgy and Literature*; Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000, esp. chs. 3 and 5; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Lives of Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Tracey Sederberg, "'And yet wolle I steill saye that I am I: *Jake Juggler*, The Lord's Supper, and Disguise," *ELH: English Literary History* 74 (2007), 239-69; and Julia Houston, "Transubstantiation and the Sign: Cranmer's Drama of the Last Supper," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 24 (1994): 115-30.

¹² Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 35-6.

provoke aesthetic inquiries into the body as both a rhetorical and a corporeal construct. To delimit the body as either the former or the latter is to miss the point that the Eucharistic controversies, as well as a Eucharistic semiotics, startlingly illuminate: it is both.

As much as the Eucharistic controversies suggest problems with identifying the body, they also make more specific interventions with regard to early modern understandings of language and signification. Despite centuries of theological and ideological differences with respect to the Eucharist, Catholics and reformers agree that the transubstantiated host collapses the signifier, or figurative device (the white piece of bread) and the divine referent (the fleshly body of Christ housed in said host). For Catholics, this coordination of seemingly separate semiotic functions endows the Eucharist with a sacramental quality that is inherently fleshly. The decrees of the Council of Trent maintain, “Immediately after the consecration, the true body of our Lord and his true blood exist along with his soul and divinity under the form of bread and wine. The body is present under the form of bread and the blood under the form of wine, by the power of the words.”¹³ This conciliar ruling confirms the doctrine of transubstantiation as the means by which bread and wine become Christ’s real body and blood. Here the theological debate also emerges as a semiotic debate that focuses on the referent assigned to “hoc” (does Christ refer to the bread or to his body when he uses

¹³ We also read the decrees of the same session, “By the consecration of the bread and wine, there takes place the change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord.” Council of Trent, Session 13, “Decree on the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist” (11 October 1551), qtd. in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (2 vols.), ed. Norman P. Tanner, S.J. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 694-5.

these words at the Last Supper?) and the definition of “est” (does “is” denote literal presence or does it work figuratively as *significat*, which Zwingli famously argues?).¹⁴

The principal non-Catholic defender of real presence -- of *hoc est* as a literal pronouncement of “This is” -- is Martin Luther, who argues against the symbolist positions of Zwingli, Andreas Karlstadt, and Johannes Oecolampadius. Responding to challenges leveled against Eucharistic presence, which asserted that Christ often referred to himself metaphorically as vine, door, light, and salt and could easily compare himself to bread, Luther argues that the reading of *Hoc est* as “This signifies” cannot be evidenced by Scripture that it violates the Latin conception of *figura* as bodily form (*gestalt*) rather than trope.¹⁵ Arguing for the complementary reception of Christ’s Eucharistic body as both word and flesh, Luther maintains, “I have taught and still teach that Christ’s flesh is not only of no avail but actually is poison and death if it is taken without faith and the word...To eat Christ’s flesh is salutary, necessary, and useful if it is

¹⁴ There is, of course, the added complication, proverbial to much anti-Eucharistic polemic, that Christ Himself never spoke the literal words, *Hoc est corpus meum*, for his words at the historical Last Supper were rendered not in Latin but likely in Aramaic.

¹⁵ In *This is My Body* (1527), Luther condemns his opponents as faulty translators and interpreters. He describes their misreading as follows: “They misinterpret God’s Word and follow their own fancy...They wish first of all to change the natural words and meanings of the Scriptures into their own words and meanings, then they boast that we do not have Scripture, in order that the devil may make a laughingstock of us...They should produce Scripture which reads, ‘This represents my body,’ or ‘This is a sign of my body.’” *Luther’s Works*, vol. 37, ed. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), 29, 32.

For his definition of *figura*, Luther relies on Tertullian’s definition: “We say that Tertullian employs the word *figura* in accordance with proper usage in the Latin language, where it means a form or figure in the mathematical sense -- stating whether a thing is long, thick, broad, round, white or black, which one can see, feel, and handle, as we Germans also say about the sacrament that Christ’s body is present under the form of bread and his blood under the form of wine. Exactly that which we call *gestalt*, ‘form,’ Tertullian calls in Latin *figura*...I think that Tertullian does not understand *figura* here in Oecolampadius’s manner as a type or sign, but as a form, and he calls it the form of the body of Christ because Christ’s body is in and under it” (*This is My Body*, 109, 112).

The Lutheran defense of presence has recently been taken up in an excellent essay by Richard Strier, who argues for Luther’s sacramental view of nature and his “vision of God’s immanence in the physical world” as revealed in his Eucharistic theology. See Strier, “Martin Luther and the Real Presence in Nature,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37.2 (Spring 2007), 272-303.

eaten physically in connection with the word and with faith.”¹⁶ Luther emerges as the most corporeally-minded reformer, though he subscribes to a notion of Christ’s real, non-figurative presence in the sacrament without either claiming to know how this presence appears or maintaining that the accidents of bread and wine disappear, hence his use of the term *consubstantiation* as opposed to transubstantiation.¹⁷

Despite his defense of the fleshly presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Luther has much to say about the function and character of language with regard to the sacrament. Luther claims that a metaphorical reading of Christ’s body muddies Scripture and introduces ambiguity into a text that should be left “unambiguous, simple, sure, and certain in every word, syllable, and letter.”¹⁸ In his responses to Zwingli in particular, Luther focuses at length on the nature of linguistic utterance with regard to the Eucharist. Reading Zwingli’s own accounts of the language of the Last Supper, Luther suggests that Zwingli divides the texts into two parts: “action words,” which constitute events through their utterance, and declaratives and indicatives, which merely report events. Luther regards “action words” as what we recognize as performatives in J.L. Austin’s sense of the term.¹⁹ Luther charges that Zwingli fails to recognize the *est* in *Hoc est corpus meum* as an action word that makes something happen. For Zwingli, “where action-words

¹⁶ Luther, *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper* (1528), in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 37, ed. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), 238. Luther does not regard “word” as immaterial language opposed to material body but instead regards the two as mutually constitutive.

¹⁷ The clearest differentiation of the two positions is offered by Luther himself in his *Tischreden* or *Table-Talk* (1531): “In the sacrament of the altar Thomas [Aquinas] invented transubstantiation. I think that the bread and wine remain, just as the water remains in baptism and just as the human voice remains when I preach. Yet it is in truth the power of God, as Paul calls it.” *Luther’s Works*, vol. 54, ed. Theodore C. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 12.

¹⁸ Luther, *Confession*, 167.

¹⁹ Austin’s definition of the *performative* utterance addresses the kinetic capacity of language to *do*, or effect, something substantial. Set against the *constative*, or declarative, utterance, the performative “indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action -- it is not normally thought of as just saying something.” J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962, 1975), 6-7. It is worth noting that Austin speaks of sacramental rituals, namely marriage and baptism, with regularity.

occur...it does not follow that the action will take place when we speak them, but the words remain a simple description of an action that has taken place.”²⁰ By contrast, Luther regards *Hoc est corpus meum* as a literal action word, arguing that “for everything that the words declare does take place, by the power of this divine imperative through which they are spoken.”²¹

Whereas the Catholic position grants that the priest’s speech act transforms bread into Christ’s body, the reformed position sees the priest’s words as a memorial reflection of Christ’s Last Supper rather than a performative recreation. The change in somatic identity effected by transubstantiation coexists with a reciprocal change in semiotic identity. Once the priest utters the words *Hoc est corpus meum* and extends his hands over the host, not only does bread become body, but the host changes in function from sign to soma. The words of consecration evacuate metaphorical identity (but not metaphorical function) from the host.²² The word itself transubstantiates into flesh as Eucharist becomes what Herbert McCabe calls “the creative language of God, his eternal Word made flesh.”²³ Transubstantiation, it follows, is a semiotic event as well as a sacramental miracle. It does not only change bread into body, but also unites sign to

²⁰ Luther, *Confession*, 181-2.

²¹ Ibid, 182-3. Luther later qualifies his statement by suggesting that words do not automatically manufacture Christ’s physical body out of mere bread. He says, “Nor do I say that [Christ’s] body comes into existence out of the bread. We say that his body, which long ago was made and came into existence is present when we say, ‘This is my body.’” Later, Luther says, “With the word, ‘Thus (or this) do,’ Christ commands not the eating of the bread alone but the whole ordinance of the supper” (187, 190).

²² I distinguish the Eucharist’s “metaphorical identity” from its “metaphorical function” here. When I speak of Eucharistic identity, I mean the capacity of Eucharist to exist substantially as the body of Christ, sacrificed anew on the altar at every Mass. There, the identity of the host ceases to be figurative after the words of consecration are pronounced. This change, however, does not eliminate the metaphorical function of Eucharist, which enables the host to inspire a range of political, devotional, aesthetic, and social debates and practices, such as the plays I read in this chapter. Even when the host is Christ’s body, it can still signify other kinds of relations, but, according to Catholic dogma, its identity or essence remains non-metaphorical.

²³ Herbert McCabe, O.P., “The Eucharist as Language,” in *Catholicism and Catholicity: Eucharistic Communities in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Sarah Beckwith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 20.

referent. The utterance, *Hoc est corpus meum*, functions as a privileged linguistic unit tied to Christ's non-linguistic and substantial Eucharistic body.²⁴ As such, these words are regarded differently than other iterations of *Hoc est*, like those in a grammar textbook, poem or political treatise.

If Catholic Eucharistic theology organizes an aesthetic that conflates signifier and signified, the Reformist response introduces a counter-aesthetic that rejects such semiotic unity. For Zwingli, *Hoc est* on the altar functions like *hoc est* in any other discourse, which supports his notion that the sign of Christ's body in the Eucharistic sacrament is theologically and ontologically different from his historical body.²⁵ This point is evident in an Anglican catechism, *The First Principles of a Christian*, which states: "Is the bread turned into Christ's body and the wine into his blood in the Sacrament?": "No. We should destroy the nature of the sacrament by taking away the outward sign."²⁶ A similar text, *Short Questions and Answers*, suggests that Christ's body "cannot be both signe and

²⁴ Here my work intersects with that of Bruce R. Smith, whose theory of "historical phenomenology" asks us to think through the lens of early modern bodily experience, which cannot be comfortably reconciled to an essentially logocentric position. Smith regards historical phenomenology as a hermeneutic whose focus lies "on the nexus between body and language" and which sees language as indicative of sensory experience. Epistemology depends on sensation, for in the early modern period, "coming-to-know may have started as something external and material and ended as something internal and immaterial, but in between was something that partook of both." Smith's attention to the "in-betweenness" of phenomenology, the uneasy location between bodies and language, is in my view Eucharistic. In a liturgical milieu that emphasized visual perception as well as hearing and, in the case of receiving the Eucharist, taste, it is not so easy to dismiss the host as a simple symbol or signifier, for it is infused not only with the purportedly divine body of Christ but as such, it organizes a wider network of corporeal experience. See Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (New York: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), 28, 35. On historical phenomenology more generally, see Smith, "Premodern Sexualities," *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association* 115.3 (May 2000), 318-29.

²⁵ As Stephen Greenblatt argues, "Most of the significant and sustained thinking in the early modern period about the nature of linguistic signs centered on or was deeply influenced by the Eucharistic controversies" (*Practicing New Historicism*, 141). And Judith Anderson is more explicit: "The crucial difference is that for conservatives [Catholics], the translation [of bread into body] is objective and real, whereas for the reformers, transubstantiation occurs merely in language." Anderson, "Language and History in the Reformation: Cranmer, Gardiner, and the Words of Institution," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54.1 (Spring 2001), 29.

²⁶ *The First Principles of a Christian* (London: 1630), sig. C3r.

thing signified.”²⁷ To see the signifier as the signified is to mistake the vehicle of representation for the immaterial referent. This is why, in Zwingli’s assessment of transubstantiation as tropological and of the Eucharist as a figurative representation, the words of consecration are ordinary figures of speech.

While the theological details of these Eucharistic controversies are dense indeed, they elucidate a major point: the Eucharist does not unilaterally precipitate theological conflict, but it also drives a wedge between words and bodies. In doing so, it opens up broader questions about language and referentiality. Even in the Catholic Mass, the body of Christ emerges through the power of the priest’s words, but these words are endowed with the capacity for substantial change; they are not just arbitrary language. When we enter the language of the Catholic Eucharist, then, we enter a different semiotic system than that of the Protestant communion service. In this semiotic system, language works not only as an arbitrary system of signs and tropes but as an animating incarnational power. The doctrine of “real presence” thus marks the shift from language that signifies to language that substantiates -- from language that figures Christ’s body in a representative fashion to language that produces it as a real physical entity. Situated within a historical period during which Christians regarded it as both substance and symbol, the Eucharist becomes a body that surmounts metaphor and, at the same time, is regarded as a metaphor itself. It functions simultaneously as both flesh and image and in doing so, provides not only theologians, but also literary writers, with a lexicon through which to tease out various representations of the body onstage.

²⁷ *Short Questions and Answers* (London: 1621), p. 12.

Imago Christi and Corpus Christi: The Croxton Play of the Sacrament

Such semiotic and theological cruces occupied the cultural imagination of English drama from the turn of the fifteenth century, and can be witnessed in no more fitting a place than the elusive *Play of the Sacrament*, a drama that foregrounds Eucharistic semiotics by placing the body of Christ at the center of a quest for interpretation and proof. Bearing witness to the complex relationship between liturgy and theatre, it also calls into question the very definition of “sacrament” in both Catholic and reformist understandings of the term. Is “sacrament” a sign, a substance, or both? The relationship between dramatic “play” and liturgical “sacrament” evoked in the title of this fifteenth-century play can be best ascertained by posing a series of questions. What is the relationship between Christ’s body and images of Christ’s body? Moreover, what happens when art (or theatrical “play”) and liturgical devotion (or holy “sacrament”) converge? Is the result devotional artifice (that is, theatre used for spiritual purposes) or artificial devotion (that is, a Black Mass or theatrical travesty of liturgical practice)?

These questions lie at the heart of the Croxton play, which features the seizure of a host by a Jew, an episode of host abuse, a series of engineered miracles including the transformation of the abused host into an image of Christ’s body, and the ultimate baptism and conversion of the Jews to Catholicism.²⁸ Recent criticism of the play can be

²⁸ In this sense, the Croxton play reminds us that every performance of the Lord’s Supper -- whether Catholic Mass, reformed communion service, or dramatic episode -- is somehow related to a parody of Christ’s initial institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The ur-text for all subsequent communions, Christ’s first Eucharist remains the real, definitive event. Permutations of this event throughout history can then be regarded as literal reenactments during which this initial sacrifice is physically reinstituted (the Catholic view) or as symbolic memorials that represent, but do not physically reproduce, Christ’s offering of His body and blood (the reformed view). My point is that any liturgy of the Eucharist is somehow imitative of the Last Supper. Reformers regarded the Catholic Mass as a dangerous parody, and recognized in it a form of magic that stripped it of its theological integrity and devotional efficacy. Defenders of the old religion, by contrast, see the Mass’s reenactment of the Last Supper as sacrificial in that it institutes

separated along religious lines. One critical trend, represented by Gail McMurray Gibson and Cecilia Cutts, sees the play as a defense, if not an endorsement, of Catholic theology, especially the doctrine of transubstantiation.²⁹ Another critical movement, exemplified by the work of Michael Jones, David Lawton, and Andrew Sofer disassociates sacramentality from theatricality, seeing the play's metatheatrical investments as threatening to its Eucharistic sympathies.³⁰ Sarah Beckwith articulates a third, mediating position: the metatheatrical investments of the play do not threaten or evacuate its theological investments, but theatre and sacrament work together as forms of representation. Acknowledging the interpenetration of liturgy and theatre in the play, Beckwith claims that "ritual and theatre hybridise each other, embarrassing the distinction between them."³¹ Central to Beckwith's reading of the play is a necessary link between dramatic and devotional forms. "The sacramental relation between form and grace," Beckwith maintains, is "*best realized in theatre.*"³²

anew the offering of Christ's body and blood as the bread, making the sacrifice repeatable across space and time.

²⁹ Cf. Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theatre of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989). Gibson reads the play a "careful, polemical answer to Lollard heresy, staunchly if somewhat ingeniously affirming the miracle of Real Presence." 35. Cecilia Cutts also reads the play as a conservative refutation of Lollard objections to transubstantiation in "The Croxton Play: Anti-Lollard Piece," *Modern Language Quarterly* 5.1 (1944): 45-60). Cf. Heather Hill-Vasquez, *Sacred Players: The Politics of Response in the Middle English Religious Drama* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), esp. ch. 3. Hill-Vasquez suggests that the play works toward "a celebratory reassertion of belief, empowered by a tactile intimacy with the sacred object that is the host" (92).

³⁰ Cf. Michael Jones, "Theatre and History in *The Croxton Play of the Sacrament*," *ELH* 66.2 (1999): 223-60; David Lawton, "Sacrilege and Theatricality: The Croxton Play of the Sacrament," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33.2 (Spring 2003): 282-309; and Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003). See also Seth Lerer, "'Representyd now in yower syght': The Culture of Spectatorship in Late-Fifteenth-Century England," in *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, eds. Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 29-62.

³¹ Sarah Beckwith, "Ritual, Church, Theatre," in *Culture and History 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1992), 79.

³² Sarah Beckwith, *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 59.

I would like to suggest that the Croxton play widens, and indeed complicates, our understanding of the relationship between theatrical play and sacramental action by staging *both* Catholic and reformed understandings of Eucharistic sacramentality, and hence Eucharistic semiotics. The play invites the audience to experience sacramental piety as well as revel in sacramental parody. It also exposes the body of Christ as both the flesh-and-blood entity that believers are to perceive in the Eucharist at Mass and, by means of its inherent theatricality, as a staged image of that body. In doing so, it forges competing definitions of sacrament as both substance and sign that I discussed at length in my introductory chapter.

As Huston Diehl suggests, reformers did not do away with sacraments but used them to “teach worshippers to see the visible elements of the sacraments as divine signs that can lead them to an invisible God.”³³ The Croxton play works between Catholic and Protestant understandings of sacraments as events holy in themselves and signs that point toward the holy. In its sacramental polysemy, the play demonstrates the crucial duality of Christ-as-image and Christ-as-body that constitutes the play’s central hermeneutic problem and organizes the set of theological proofs it so artfully dramatizes.³⁴ The play makes Christ’s body, as both *imago* and *corpus*, a pivotal player on the English stage, a role it assumes well into the seventeenth century. In doing so, it coordinates the theatrical and the sacramental, the parodic and the pious, and the physical and the representational.

³³ Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1996), 102.

³⁴ The cultural place of Christ’s body within the context of the English drama is noted by David Coleman in *Drama and the Sacraments in Sixteenth Century England: Indelible Characters* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave, 2007). Coleman reads the Croxton play as indicative of the “sacramental investments of English culture at the border of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,” attending to its “competing representations and interpretations of the rituals” (12). Coleman’s analysis focuses largely on the social implications of a “sacramental community,” which the play attempts to achieve by its final scene of penance, baptism, and conversion.

The Croxton play opens by staging an *unholy* communion and eventually ends with a more traditional Eucharistic procession that restores Christ's consecrated body to the holy space of the church and converts the Jews to the Catholic faith. The dramatic action consists in two related sequences, both of which focus the audience's attention on the host. The first reads as a parody or travesty of the Eucharist, while the second corrects these abuses and restores the host to its proper spatial and theological domains. Between these two sequences occurs a chain of staged miracles during which the host bleeds, dismembers Jonathas's arm, and eventually turns into an image of Christ. The play thus corrects its Eucharistic parodies as it moves toward an episcopal conversion that affirms the presence of Christ in the sacrament and affirms the institutional powers of the clergy and church.³⁵

The play's opening scenes arguably denounce Eucharistic theology through a chain of offensive replacements. The play uses an unconsecrated host and passes it off as the body of Christ; this host is stolen from the sacred space of the church and brought to the secular space of Jonathas's home; the role of the priest is supplanted by that of the Jew; and the customary veneration of the host is offset by the "newe passion" during which Jonathas and the Jews stab, beat, and prick the host, ultimately nailing it to the wall. In this respect, the play approximates the folk dramatic tradition of the "Black Mass," a theatrical-liturgical event dating to the seventh century during which lower ranks of clergy prayed the Divine Office in church with such accoutrements as braying

³⁵ In her discussion of a mock baptism reported in William Prynne's *Histriomastix* Elizabeth Williamson accounts for the propensity of dramatic parody of Catholic rituals to turn into pious conversion. See Williamson, *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 17-20.

donkeys, masks, vestments depicting animals, a choir singing gibberish, and an orchestra of clanging pots and pans waiting outside the church building.³⁶

Doubting, if not outrightly mocking, the idea that Christ's body can inhere in a piece of bread, Jonathas performs his own Black Mass. He becomes the mouthpiece for Lollard critiques of transubstantiation, themselves the seeds of sixteenth-century Protestant reform. "But this bred I wold might be put in a prese" (442), he says, while Jason, his companion, expounds upon this need for proof: "Iff that this be he that on Calvary was made red, / Onto my mind, I shall kenne yow a conceit good: / Surely with owr daggars we shall ses on this bredde, / And so with clowtys we shall know if he have eny blood" (449-52).³⁷ The clause, "we shall ses on this bredde" establishes a linguistic connection between Jonathas's initial seizure of the host and this recreated crucifixion scene, for both involve the physical attachment to and debasement of Christ's sacramental body.

³⁶ Richard Cavendish provides a comprehensive survey of the black Mass tradition in *The Black Arts: A Concise History of Witchcraft, Demonology, Astrology, and Other Mystical Practices Throughout the Ages* (New York: Putnam, 1967). In *The Medieval Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), E.K. Chambers offers an extensive survey of the Feast of Asses, a related tradition customarily celebrated on New Year's Day. Chambers reads this tradition not as outright satire but as a form of festive release whose principal goal was the "inversion of status." The feast offered low-ranking clerics "an ebullition of the natural lout beneath the cassock," suggesting that it was "almost an obvious sport to burlesque the sacred and tedious ceremonies with which they were already too familiar" (325).

Chambers offers this description as representative of the kinds of parody involved in the feast:

A pretty girl, with a child in her arms, was set upon an ass, to represent the Flight into Egypt. There was a procession from the cathedral church to the church of St. Stephen. The ass and its riders were stationed on the gospel side of the altar. A solemn Mass was sung, in which *Introit, Kyrie, Gloria, and Credo* ended with a bray. To crown all, the rubrics direct that the celebrant, instead of saying *Ite, missa est*, shall bray three times...and that the people shall respond in similar fashion. (287)

³⁷ *The Play of the Sacrament* (Croxtan), in *Medieval Drama*, ed. David Bevington (Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1975), lines 200-204. All references to the play are from this edition and will be cited hereafter parenthetically in the text.

On the one hand, this ritual profanation of the host -- a key element in the black Mass tradition -- debases both Eucharistic liturgy and the sacrament itself. On the other hand, Jonathas's "newe passion" is leveled in the name of theological proof, suggesting the hermeneutic quandaries precipitated by Eucharistic theology. The quest for proof is not essentially negative, for the apparent desecration of the host could have been regarded by late medieval audiences as a lesson in Eucharistic piety. Again, the play's dramatic structure provides the pivotal evidence, for Jonathas's initial transportation of the stolen host to his home anticipates, as both a narrative and liturgical act, the final procession that restores the host to the church. When he obtains the host, Jonathas says, "Now in this clothe I shall thee covere, / That no wight shall thee see" (382-3). By placing the host under a cloth, Jonathas imitates a liturgical action, for whenever the host was carried in public procession, it was either placed in gold vessel and covered with a veil or housed in a monstrance, which was carried by a priest or bishop beneath a large, umbrella-like canopy.³⁸ Though parodic, Jonathas's seizure of the host intimates a liturgical detail that anticipates the procession through which the play corrects this initial violation.

Similarly, when Jonathas says he desires to "know or undertake" the corporeal identity of the host, he echoes the language of Christ's institution narrative through which He gives his flesh and blood to his apostles prior to his death:

On thes wordys there law growndyd hath he,
 That he sayd on Shere Thursday at hys sopere:
 He brake the bread and sayd, "*Accipite*,"
 And gave hys dyscyplys them for to chere.
 And more he sayd to them there
 Whyle they were all togethere and sum,
 Syttyng at the table soo clere:
 "*Comedite, [hoc est] corpus meum.*" (313-24)

³⁸ Cf. Rubin, 251-3.

Jonathas's term "undertake," by which he means, "ascertain," also echoes the familiar phrase, "Take this," a signifier of Christ's bodily presence whose confirmation Jonathas seeks. Jonathas then repeats the word, *accipite*, in his rehearsal of Christ's own words from the Last Supper. Pointing to the host, Jonathas says, "They say that this is Jhesu that was attayntyd in owr lawe, / And that thys ys he that crucefyed was" (311-12). By repeating "This is," or *Hoc est*, Jonathas demonstrates how the play's Eucharistic travesty inheres in the exact language of Catholic Eucharistic liturgy.

What is the effect of Jonathas, surrounded by his Jewish companions just as Christ was surrounded by his apostles at the Last Supper, repeating the words of consecration? In one sense, the play parodies the Catholic Mass by putting in the mouth of the Jew the words of Christ's Last Supper narrative, commonly regarded as the "institution narrative." In another sense, the play demonstrates how easily liturgical language and action lend themselves to dramatic play as forms of religious instruction and aesthetic experimentation.

By drawing attention to the theatricality inherent to liturgy, the play points toward the complicated identity of the host, which circulates within the play as the consecrated body of Christ but outside of the play as mere unconsecrated prop. By figuring the host as *both* the body of Christ and the prop of Christ's body, the *Play of the Sacrament* continually stresses the slipperiness of the host as an inscrutable sign/body.³⁹ While the host is literally unconsecrated it occupies the dramatic part of a consecrated host. Andrew Sofer distinguishes between the host's literal status as *oble*, or unconsecrated stage

³⁹ As Andrew Sofer argues, "Theatrical performance is not a religious rite in which the actor stands in for the priest; no matter how effective the acting, objects on stage do not change their material substance" (52). Sofer brilliantly extrapolates from various Eucharistic theologies different ways to theorize performance. These include the Catholic view of transubstantiation, the Lutheran notion of consubstantiation, and the Zwinglian idea of memorial representation. Cf. Sofer, 50-55.

property, and its function within the play as the consecrated body of Christ. He accounts for the play's reception by a conservatively-minded audience, however, and suggests that "some faithful might have distinguished between the sacred host of the Mass and the obble-property of the stage but perceived no dissonance in the use of the latter to represent the former" and also notes that "we cannot tell precisely to what extent the appropriation by the stage of an obble "stolen" from the church would have registered as powerfully transgressive."⁴⁰

The identification of the host as a sign/body persists in the play's staging of Eucharistic miracles, which center on the supernatural actions ascribed to this purloined wafer. These staged Eucharistic miracles make the host the primary actor in the play and they suggest that the host, as Christ's body, can act upon and react against the flesh of its perpetrators.⁴¹ The bleeding host displaces the torments of Christ's passion onto Jonathans's body. For example, while Jonathas inflicts "newe passion" upon the host, he nail the host to the wall. At this point, the host frustrates his mock crucifixion scene and seizes Jonathas's hand, thus turning the terms of the dramatic action from a parody of the passion to an experience of affective piety by which Jonathas experiences the wounds of Christ himself.

Following this episode, Jonathas's companions follow the advice of a quack doctor who recommends throwing the host/hand into a hot oven, which subsequently explodes only to reveal the image of the bleeding Christ. The stage direction reads: "*Here*

⁴⁰ Ibid, 43.

⁴¹ On the historical referent of the Eucharistic miracles, see Gibson, esp. pp. 36-8. On Eucharistic miracles and the cults of worshippers that they drew, see Rubin, esp. pp. 108-29. Rubin categorizes Eucharistic miracles into three types: visions and apparitions of the divine as "a reward for faith and piety" or to "counter trivial doubt"; unusual behavior in nature due to reverence for the Eucharist; and the appearance of Christ out of the elements which would be proverbially abused by "a Jew, witch, thief, or negligent priest" (118). The miracles in the Croxton play correspond to the third type.

the ovyn must ryve asunder and blede out at the cranys, and an image appere owt with woundys bledyng" (712 s.d.). The play refers to this miraculous apparition of Christ's body as "*an image*," a telling word choice for a discussion of Eucharistic semiotics that endeavors to coordinate representation and corporeal experience. Does this event give stage presence to *imago Christi* or *corpus Christi*? Does the play use "image" to mean "body," or is the play suggesting that Christ can ever only appear as "image" since his real presence lies somewhere else? The play suggests that we cannot decide, and the ambiguous definition of "image" at this moment in the play is exactly its point.⁴²

By staging the apparition of the "*image of Christ*," the Croxton play makes its theatricality a means through which to explore the relation between image and body that is crucial to a Eucharistic semiotics. We have already seen a version of this debate in the status of the host as both unconsecrated *oble* and the consecrated body of Christ. The host's paradoxical identity shows how the play negotiates corporeality and artistic representation, enacting a topsy-turvy relationship between figure and flesh, presence and absence. In figuring the body of Christ as image, the play suggests the figurative dimensions of the Eucharistic enterprise; conversely, by embodying this image onstage, the play also suggests the corporeality of the image itself, which suggests the need to consider the relation between image and body within the historical and devotional contexts of the Middle Ages.

⁴² That Croxton's reference to Christ as "image" is deliberately ambiguous can be supported by contrasting the play to one of its contemporaries, the *N-Town Passion Play*. The N-Town play identifies Jesus as an actor who handles the host as follows: "Here shal Jhesus take an oble in his hand, loking upward in hefne to the Fadyr." The N-Town passion cites the host as outrightly fake; the Croxton play, however, renders the dramatic representation more ambiguous by using the term *image* rather than *oble*. The N-Town *Passion Play I*, in *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, ed. David Bevington (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), 693 s.d.

In a religious context, images (especially those of Christ's body) are not inimical to the corporeally-minded worship of Catholicism but are its counterpart, in that they act with bodily force on those who behold them. If images were not so powerfully affective, the iconoclasm of the reformation would not have taken as firm a hold as it did. Moreover, because in Catholic devotional and liturgical traditions images and bodies function in tandem rather than in opposition, the relationship of *imago Christi* to *Corpus Christi* may be regarded as supplementary in the Derridean sense. That is, the host-as-body and the host-as-image always exist in counterpoise, one standing in for the other at various points in space and time. For Derrida, a *supplement* is an addition that "intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of*."⁴³ The image of Christ that emerges from the oven in the Croxton play suggests that this theatrical image supplements the bodily referent that it indicates. Moreover, the play also draws out the supplemental qualities of any consecrated host with respect to the real body of Christ. The host takes the place of Christ's body even as it (according to Catholicism) claims to be that body itself. Derrida, again:

Compensatory and vicarious, the supplement is an adjunct, a subaltern instance which *takes-(the)-place* [*tient-lieu*]. As substitute, it is not simply added to the positivity of a presence, it produces no relief, its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness. Somewhere, something can be filled up *of itself*, can accomplish itself, only by allowing itself to be filled through sign and proxy. The sign is always the supplement of the thing itself.⁴⁴

Because the *Play of the Sacrament* can never offer the real presence of Christ that the Catholic Mass produces (it is not "added to the positivity of a presence"), it offers a supplemental image instead. But even as image -- as theatrical *supplement* to

⁴³ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 145.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

transubstantiated substance -- the play's "image of Christ's body" works in the name of "the thing itself."

To a late medieval audience, this supplementary "image of Chryst" that bursts out of the oven in the Croxton play provides a perceptible link to Christ's body through visual experience, a point emphasized in the Council of Trent's decree on religious images. The Council declares that "the honor showed to [images] is referred to the original which they represent: thus, through the images which we kiss and before which we uncover our heads and go down on our knees, we give adoration to Christ and veneration to the saints, whose likeness they bear."⁴⁵ Images extend a corporeal hold on the bodies and minds of worshippers; in this respect, *imago Christi* and *Corpus Christi* work together, a point that can be further clarified when we think a bit more closely about the relationship between body and image in a Eucharistic context. The Eucharist, as body and sign, provides the foundation for the corporeality of images in the Middle Ages; reciprocally, the spiritual power granted to these images always extends back to the power of the Eucharist itself as the *ur*-image of religious devotion. Working within this paradigm, the "image of Christ" that appears in the play is not dichotomized against bodies or flesh, but acts in a fashion complementary to them.⁴⁶

The corporeal power of images spurred iconoclastic reactions such as those lauded by John Foxe in his influential *Book of Martyrs*. Huston Diehl contends that

⁴⁵ Council of Trent, Session 25, 3-4 December, 1563, qtd. in Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 775.

⁴⁶ As Joseph Leo Koerner argues in *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), "*Sola scriptura* was a rallying cry in a territorial war between rival communicative media. On the one side stood the word, that which (to its partisans) was apostolic and is now, once more, 'special dispensation' of truth. On the other side stood the image, instrument and emblem of the Roman Church's deceit" (46-7). Koerner aligns the "clutter of images" that characterizes reformation paintings of the Roman Church with the "clutter of deeds" that comprises the corporeal forms of worship I have been discussing.

writers like Foxe portrayed iconoclasts as “heroic men” or martyrs who, in one particular instance who, “moved by the Holy Spirit and presumably aided by a divine gesture of clear skies and bright moonlight, bravely defy the magical power popularly believed to reside in an image called the Rood of Devon-court.”⁴⁷ For Diehl, Foxe’s enthusiasm for the iconoclastic agenda -- the demystification, degradation, and disavowal of images -- emerges from his recognition of the power of images, which emerges from the bodily hold and phenomenal experience they extend to those who worship them. The vigor of the iconoclastic program suggests that for Catholics, images are not opposed to corporeal presence, but codetermine such presence. If the theatricality of the Croxton play frustrated its liturgical and doctrinal affirmations, it would celebrate Jonathas’s actions in a manner that anticipates Foxe’s enthusiasm for image desecration. But it does not. The Croxton play is not the *Book of Martyrs*; it neither advances iconoclasm nor hails the work of iconoclasts. Instead, it uses initial episodes of parody only to set up the more theatrically powerful transformations that inscribe its narrative of Catholic piety. The *Play of the Sacrament* uses Jonathas’s parody of the host as a narrative pivot for the ensuing actions that correct these Eucharistic abuses. The play thus borders on Eucharistic travesty only to indoctrinate its audience about the power of Christ, as body and image, to satisfy the human quest for proof. By resorting to theatrical play, it affirms the theological practices of Eucharistic piety and devotion.

In its final sequence of actions, the *Play of the Sacrament* redirects the initially profaned Eucharistic procession toward a more conservative liturgical ritual. In doing so, the play capitalizes on the pageantry intrinsic to the Corpus Christi feast such that the theatrical Eucharistic procession becomes indistinguishable from, if not uncannily

⁴⁷ Diehl, 27.

identical to, its liturgical counterpart.⁴⁸ Whereas Jonathas begins the play with a procession of the stolen host to his kitchen table, the play's final scene puts the host in both its proper liturgical form and its customary sacred space: "*Here shall the merchant and his prest go to the chirche, and the bisshop [attended by the procession] shall entre the chirche and lay the host upon the autere*" (865 s.d.). This stage direction introduces a series of substitutions that enact the play's conclusion: bishop substitutes for Jew; the Church altar replaces Jonathas's table; the liturgical procession redirects the seizure of the host; and the adoration of the host at the play's end counters the host desecration at its beginning.⁴⁹ Again, the play uses theatrical action to self-translate liturgical parody into an affirmation of Eucharistic piety and ecclesiastical power.

The narrative actions outlined above complement the play's physical movement toward the literal sacred space of the church, which critics speculate may be the church in Bury-St. Edmunds.⁵⁰ As a town drama, the play may have literally moved toward the exterior of the building, moving from the imaginary dramatic space of the play to the real consecrated space of the church -- a space that itself was believed to have witnessed a

⁴⁸ Rubin characterizes Corpus Christi as a "processional feast" and an "orthodox Eucharistic pageant." She notes that the processions emerged as early as 1320 and were themselves liturgical dramas that staged the body of Christ: "The heart of the procession was the Eucharist, the vessel containing it, those carrying it, the canopy over it, and the dignitaries, lay and ecclesiastical, who surrounded it" (251). She also recognizes the social dimensions of the procession, noting that one's proximity to the processed Eucharistic was often reflective of one's social strata. She regards the "iconography of power" that developed in the Corpus Christi procession as a key feature and suggests that it shapes a narrative of disorder, "of law-suits generations long, of disputes over precedence, and riots" (263).

⁴⁹ The social stakes of religious conversion are taken up by David Coleman, who regards the procession and conversion scene as the play's manifestation of "sacramental community." In Coleman's reading of the play, Jonathas's public confession shows how "penance functions as a system of social reintegration, such that the deployment of sacramental ritual suggests social relation and social act (23). What he later calls "sacramental sociology" suggests "the communal character of the sacraments, the ways in which communities are imagined to function through an ordered system of lifecycle rituals" (33).

⁵⁰ As Coleman suggests, the play uses the church as a literal playing space that registers spatially "the way in which the text understands the relationship between drama and ritual" (15-16). On the play's spatial registers, see Donnalee Dox, "Theatrical Space, Mutable Space, and the Space of Imagination: Three Readings of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," in *Medieval Practices of Space*, eds. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michael Kobialka (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000): 167-98.

Eucharistic miracle. Gail McMurray Gibson cites an account of a fire at Bury St.-Edmunds in 1464. The fire raged through the nave but left the church's exterior, as well as the host in the tabernacle, "miraculously intact."⁵¹ According to this account, the host survived natural disaster just as, in the Croxton play, the host transcends human torture.

By propelling its action toward the corrective measures of sacred space and liturgical form, the Croxton play suggests how drama in the Middle Ages points toward a literal devotional end. On the point of the play's return to church, Beckwith contends, "The play must return us to the consecrated space of the church, as it forms into an episcopal procession, its Jews and merchants, and its actors converted and banished or transformed into the participants of ritual, its theatricality dispelled." Moving forward, she reads the final scene as canceling theatrical art with liturgical ritual, replacing *imago Christi* with *Corpus Christi*: "The body of Christ is back in a Mass, not in a play; the sacrament has become a real presence again."⁵² This argument presupposes that theatre performs some kind of transubstantiation, which we know it cannot achieve. Whereas Beckwith suggests here that the theatrical identity of Christ's body is lost at the end of the play, I argue that *Play of the Sacrament* does not oppose Mass to theatre or liturgy to sacrament but extends its play toward liturgical performance. The host used in the play is never actually the body of Christ, and despite its theological correction, the play does not literally transubstantiate *oble* into consecrated host but instead stages a final scene in which a bishop re-consecrates the tortured wafer and restores it to church. Even so, the theatrical valences of the play's theological lessons remain. What is remarkable about the play is not that it places the body of Christ back in a Mass (for, the play does not

⁵¹ Gibson, 36.

⁵² Beckwith, *Signifying God*, 143.

conclude with an actual Mass but with a theatrical representation of a liturgical rite, the Corpus Christi procession) but that it resignifies the sacrament as a holy object. Literary form and liturgical form come together not to cancel the dramatic properties of the body of Christ but to push them toward a theological signification.

It may be said, then, that the *Play of the Sacrament* does not put the body of Christ back in a Mass but that it moves a staging of Catholic sacramental system by means of a concluding episode of episcopal affirmation. This point becomes definitively clear in the final procession, introduced and executed by Episcopus, the bishop, who presents nothing short of a dramatic script that both explains and assigns the roles necessary to the execution of the procession, which acts dramaturgically to bring the stage action to its logical end:

Now wyll I take thys Holy Sacrament
Wyth humble hart and gret devocion,
And all we wyll gon with on consent
And beare yt to chyrche wyth sole[m]pne processyon.
Now folow me, all and summe!
And all tho that bene here, both more and lesse,
Thys holy song, *O sacrum convivium*,
Let us syng all with grett swetnesse.
*[A singing procession escorts the host toward the
church.]* (834-41)

Word for word and gesture for gesture, Episcopus linguistically reforms Jonathas's profanation of the host. For example, he echoes Jonathas in his pronouncement, "Now wyll I *take* this Holy Sacrament" (emphasis mine). Like Jonathas's earlier mention of "undertake," Episcopus's "take" functions as the literal translation of Christ's *Accipite* and also restores the words of consecration to the mouth of the priest. Furthermore, Episcopus frames this dramatic event as an act of communal piety by casting himself as one "with humble hart and gret devocion." He projects from his liturgical posture as

bishop -- the one who can consecrate and handle the sacrament -- the deportment of humility and devotion associated not with secular drama but with sacred worship. In effect, Episcopus's staged transformation of the host into the body of Christ uses dramatic form to assert the integrity of the church's liturgical rites. Jonathas's "newe passion" becomes Episcopus's "gret devocion."

The character, Episcopus, connects the Eucharistic body of Christ to its institutional correlative, the ecclesiastical body of the church. His rehearsal of the procession route and rubrics focuses rhetorically on unity, evidenced by the word "all" repeated four times in a mere seven lines. He speaks not only to the Jews onstage but also to the audience, implicating them within a familiar Corpus Christi ritual. By directing "all and summe" to process to church "with on consent," Episcopus stages the fullness of Eucharistic community as expressed in the union of worshipers who accompany the consecrated host back to the altar.⁵³ We must read this as a literal gathering of the crowds who will join him "all and summe" in the signing of *O sacrum convivium*, a hymn traditionally used in the office of vespers for the feast of Corpus Christi.⁵⁴

⁵³ Seth Lerer extends the Eucharistic and mystical bodies evoked in the scene to the social body. Episcopus "affirm[s] again the possibilities of finding social harmony in the performance of the holy rites," says Lerer, who goes on to argue that the play itself offers "the possibility of a visiting, professional theaer to enter a community and restore the wholeness of the social body through its stagings of the rituals of torture, dismemberment, and reincorporation" (qtd. in Hanawalt and Wallace, 47).

⁵⁴ The Eucharistic hymn, *O sacrum convivium*, is attributed to Thomas Aquinas and is translated, "O sacred banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of his Passion renewed" (my translation). This hymn is one of several that were written by Aquinas, whom many think wrote the liturgical texts for the feast of Corpus Christi in or around 1264. Rubin traces the development of the liturgical texts and concludes the following: "It is an office strong in Eucharistic statements articulated in Aristotelean terms, offering a corporeal understanding of a sacramental substance, not veiled but real, which the senses cannot perceive but faith can recognize" (188). This sentiment is reflected in Aquinas's famous hymn, *Pange lingua gloriosi*, which contains the line, "*sola fides sufficit*," or "faith alone will suffice." Rubin also notes that the Divine Office for this feast (like the Croxton play, I would argue) organizes Eucharistic dogma: "There is a Christological affirmation in the first lessons for matins, a doctrinal statement on transubstantiation in the third lesson of the nocturne, a memorial of the Passion in a string of scriptural themes with sacrificial overtones, *Deus qui*, *O hostia salutaris*, and an eschatological perspective of the ever-renewed sacrament in *O sacrum convivium*" (191).

The *Play of the Sacrament* suggests that Christ can be both play and sacrament, image and body. While the play can never offer us a literal body of Christ, it labors to expose the importance of a corporeal body -- a body of Christ inhering in flesh and blood and in bodily-centered devotional practices -- to late medieval and early modern piety. One could say that the play's outlandish theatrics approximate reformist objections to Eucharist because they expose transubstantiation and Eucharistic miracles in the contexts of folly, parody, and artificiality. But the play's sequence of dramatic action urges us to understand how the representation of authentic liturgy can correct the representation of profaned liturgy. Such correction relies on the interrelation of dramatic play and liturgical sacrament and not on the replacement of one by the other.

What is more, the *Play of the Sacrament* makes an aesthetic point by proving that the body of Christ draws a crowd. And its theatrical attraction persists well beyond the onset of religious reform in England, a point demonstrated by the stage presence granted to Eucharistic imagery in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Eucharistic semiotics continues to pervade early modern drama, from the early sixteenth century interludes of John Bale and John Skelton to the institutionalization of public drama in England in the 1570's.⁵⁵ At this later moment in literary history, the violence enacted on the host by Jonathas can be linked to another display of bodily seizure, violation, and ambiguity -- that staged by Shakespeare in his first tragedy, *Titus Andronicus*. Shakespeare represents the body through the topoi of problematic signification, hermeneutic difficulty, and physical violation that structure the *Play of the Sacrament*, and while its scenes of dismemberment and cannibalism can certainly be traced to Ovid,

⁵⁵ The contributions of Bale and Skelton to English sacramental drama have been assessed by Coleman, *Drama and the Sacraments*, esp. ch. 2.

Seneca, and Aeschylus, they may also be situated within the context of the Eucharist.

Titus is by no means a Catholic play, nor does it endorse Catholic doctrine. But its representation of the body in terms of fraction, consumption, and incorporation, draw on Eucharistic language and imagery such that Shakespeare's tragedy becomes its own play of -- and with -- the sacrament.

Inscription, Incarnation, and Transubstantiation in *Titus Andronicus*

Recent critics of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* cast its representation of bodily violence in political, scientific, and psychoanalytic terms but they have been reluctant to see the play's depiction of the body as religiously inflected.⁵⁶ But to overlook the religious elements of the body is to miss a key feature of this play. *Titus Andronicus* incorporates an iconography of Eucharistic presence into an otherwise pagan play about classical Roman politics. Shakespeare's use of Eucharistic language and imagery occasions his literary *imitatio*, in that he represents scenes of bodily violation and

⁵⁶ On political bodies in the play, see particularly Coppélia Kahn, *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds, Women* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) and Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres* (London: Methuen, 1986). Gail Kern Paster addresses Lavinia's humoral body in *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), esp. pp. 97-9. Representative psychoanalytic readings are offered by Katherine Rowe, "Dismembering and Forgetting in *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45.3 (1994): 279-303 and Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). See also Mary L. Fawcett, "Arms/Words/Tears: Language and the Body in *Titus Andronicus*," *ELH* 50 (1983): 261-77; and Douglas E. Green, "Interpreting 'her martyr'd signs': Gender and Tragedy in *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 (1989): 317-26.

The play has also captured the attention of critics who address the play in terms of religion but do not do so in connection to the body or to the Eucharist. They include: Nicholas R. Moschovakis, "'Irreligious Piety' and Christian History: Persecution as Pagan Anachronism in *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53.4 (Winter 2002), 460-86; Lukas Erne, "'Popish Tricks and 'a Ruinous Monastery': *Titus Andronicus* and the Question of Shakespeare's Catholicism," in *The Limits of Textuality*, ed. Lukas Erne and Guillemette Bolens (Tubingen: Narr, 2000); and Helga L. Duncan, "'Sumptuously Re-edified': The Reformation of Sacred Space in *Titus Andronicus*," *Comparative Drama* 43.4 (Winter 2009), 425-53. Notably, Herbert R. Coursen, Jr. makes not a single mention of *Titus Andronicus* in his expansive, *Christian Ritual and the World of Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 1976). For the reference to Erne's essay, I am grateful to Helga Duncan.

ingestion in the terms of religious controversies and semiotic discrepancies regarding the real presence of Christ. Eucharistic incorporation -- the ingestion of Christ's flesh under the species of bread and wine -- structures the play's thematics of corporeal ambiguity and cannibalistic ingestion.⁵⁷ By confusing eater and eaten in the banquet scene, Shakespeare's tragedy stages not only an anthropological dilemma of cannibalism, but also a semiotic crisis regarding the confusion of signifier and signified that emerges in the Eucharistic controversies.

However horrifying and profane the cannibalism of *Titus Andronicus* may be, it illuminates the aesthetic influence of both Eucharistic semiotics and Eucharistic physics in early modern culture. The stage presence offered to these specters of eating flesh remind us of the carnality of the Eucharistic enterprise. Specifically, they demonstrate the physical underpinnings of a Catholic Eucharist, emphasizing the shared bodily relationship between a communicant and his or her God. Christ's body, like that of Tamora's sons, is physically ingested by and hence assimilated to the body of its recipient, suggesting the manner in which Eucharist involves a physiological transaction between human and divine at the most literal level. This transaction, as Gloria Olchowry notes, marks how "the physiological intermingling of the divine and the human in the

⁵⁷ The gendered politics of incorporation have been cogently established by Kahn, who reads the relationship of womb to tomb as reciprocal: "Like the daughter's virginal womb, [the tomb] is a receptacle, an enclosed cell, that stores up the joy and sweetness of successive generations...The daughter's womb is intended to produce sons for the state; the father's tomb keeps them 'in store' to generate ideological as distinct from biological *virtus*" (52).

In "The Cook and the Cannibal: *Titus Andronicus* and the New World," *Shakespeare Studies* 37 (2009), David Goldstein reads the final banquet through the lens of New World cannibalism, regarding Titus's feast as "a complex parody of communion, in which transubstantiation becomes grotesquely literal" (132). Cf. Louise Noble, "'And make two pasties of their shameful heads': Medicinal Cannibalism and Healing the Body Politic in *Titus Andronicus*," *ELH* 70.3 (2003): 677-708.

most primary physiological processes of digestion and gestation was central to salvation, since it intensified the experiences of seeing and eating Christ's body during the Mass."⁵⁸

The most obvious example of Eucharistic iconography in Shakespeare's play (and arguably in Shakespeare's corpus), the final banquet scene also works through a series of dramatic actions that focus on the body as a site of both corporeal violence and textual interpretation. Contextualized by a fraught relation between sign and referent, the play's representations of the body partake of Eucharistic semiotics. In particular, Lavinia embodies the problems of reading the flesh, and her body, which is tortured and ultimately sacrificed for the corporate body of Rome, approximates both the host and the crucified body of Christ. At an aesthetic level, the body of Christ captivates believers visually such that they behold it with a deep desire for physical incorporation. Similarly, the visual appeal of Lavinia's body provokes the gaze of the men who behold her; from Marcus's elaborate blazon of his nieces wounds to Titus's compulsion to interpret these wounds and arrest their signification, Lavinia's body entices its beholders not only to look at it but also to touch it, to violate it, and to read it.

In the related iconographical contexts of crucifixion and Eucharist, Christ's body is often associated with open orifices and bloody wounds, with the poignancy of human suffering understood as a mechanism for spiritual contemplation.⁵⁹ Christ's Eucharistic body, as we have seen in the *Play of the Sacrament*, also provokes theft, economic bargaining, and physical violence. Like Croxton's host, Lavinia is bargained for by

⁵⁸ Gloria Olchowry, "The Issue of the Corpus Christi Cycles in *The Winter's Tale*," in *Staging Early Modern Romance*, eds. Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 149.

⁵⁹ On this particular devotional iconography of the wounded Christ in the context of "colliding decorums of spirituality and carnality, sanctity and profanity," see Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions* (Durham, NC and London: Duke UP, 1999), esp. ch. 1.

Saturninus and Bassianus, seized and ravaged by Chiron and Demetrius, and ultimately sacrificed by her father. Moreover, Lavinia embodies a metaphysical body, that of the Roman polis. As “Rome’s rich ornament” and “Rome’s royal mistress,”⁶⁰ she stands for the collective body of Rome. Her capacity to incorporate an entire social body in herself intersects with the ecclesiastical understanding of the Church as the mystical (and social) body of Christ.

While differentiated from Christ’s body theologically, Lavinia’s body is like Christ’s rhetorically and iconographically, for it provokes the rapt seizure and forceful violence of its captors. Lavinia undergoes a prolonged physical violation, as described by Aaron: “Single you thither this dainty doe, / And strike her home by force, if not by words.../There speak and strike, brave boys, and take your turns; / There serve your lust, shadowed from heaven’s eye, / And revel in Lavinia’s treasury” (1.1.617-9, 630-31). The doe led to defilement, Lavinia encodes the narratives of Christ as the innocent lamb led to slaughter. In the name of political retribution, she, also like Christ, is helplessly stolen and her body ruthlessly wounded. Aaron’s imperative, “strike,” can be linked to the same verb used by the Jews in the *Play of the Sacrament*, evidenced by Jonathas’s own words: “Now am I bolde with bataile him to bleyke, / This middle part all for to prene, / A stowte stroke also for to strike: / In the middys it shal be sene! [*He strikes in the middle./ Here the host must blede.*]” (477-81).

Stolen, seized, struck, and sacrificed, Lavinia’s body, like the host in the Croxton play, occasions a protracted desecration that unfolds as dramatic spectacle. These initial parallels between the body of Lavinia and the body of Christ suggest how

⁶⁰ William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* (Ard 3), ed. Jonathan Bate (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 1.1.55, 245. All references to the play are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.

the play stages a Eucharistic semiotics through Lavinia's body. The Eucharistic controversies, we recall, emphasize the vexed relationship between body and sign, making it difficult to define the nature of Christ's presence in the host. Lavinia's body proves similarly frustrating, as it occupies the interstice between corporeal violation and rhetorical figuration and also frustrates the relation of signifier to signified. Lavinia thwarts Titus and Marcus's efforts to incorporate her within a patriarchal system of signification. Coppélia Kahn's estimation of "the problematics of Lavinia as signifier" becomes even more incisive when Lavinia is said to assume the problematics of Eucharistic signification, which the play urges upon us in the manner by which it stages her body and the scenes of reading that surround it.⁶¹

Albert F. Tricomi relates the interpretation of Lavinia's body to the incarnation, suggesting that "the most profound impulse in *Titus* is the impulse to make the word become flesh."⁶² Where the theological understanding of incarnation as "the word made flesh" emphasizes Christ's assumption of a human form at his nativity, the play broadens incarnation to also include the reverse operation: the flesh made word. Titus and Marcus strive to convert Lavinia's problematic flesh into an intelligible semiotics; they try to make words out of her wounds. Lavinia's violated body marks the antagonistic relationship between corporeality and textuality -- that is, between the symbols, tropes, and figures associated with semiotics and theories of representation on the one hand and the claims to material, corporeal, "real presence" on the other. Both a "map of woe that

⁶¹ Kahn, 60. I offer an extended analysis of the tropological fabrication of Lavinia's body and the difficulties it poses to masculine reading in my essay, "Shakespeare's Rich Ornaments: Style and Study in *Titus Andronicus*," in *Rapt in Secret Studies: Emerging Shakespeares*, eds. Darryl Chalk and Laurence Johnson (Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010: 269-86).

⁶² Albert F. Tricomi, "The Aesthetics of Mutilation in *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Survey* 27 (1974), 13.

doth speak in signs” and a bloody body inscribed with wounds, Lavinia presents a body that reads as a series of textual *aporia*. She thus works within and against normative systems of signification; so, we recall, does the Eucharist.

Lavinia’s evocation of a Eucharistic semiotics emerges thorough the efforts of both Marcus and Titus to expose and read her wounded body. In his famous blazon of Lavinia’s mutilated body, Marcus compares his niece to a tree whose “body” is made “bare / Of her two branches” and as a “crimson river of warm blood” (2.3.17-18, 22), thereby evoking the images of the crucifixion and writing Lavinia not only out of the Ovidian imagery of Daphne’s transformation into bark to flee the advances of Apollo but out of the imagery of the tortured, bleeding Christ nailed to a tree. Lavinia becomes a feminized *imitatio Christi* -- an embodiment of Christ’s body and the cross on which he died -- who attracts and eludes the interpretive mastery of her patriarchs. Lavinia’s wounded body becomes the site not of religious veneration but of textual interpretation, a point demonstrated by Titus when he casts her as a problematic body-sign:

Thou map of woe, that thus dost talk in signs,
When the poor heart beats with outrageous beating,
Thou canst not strike it thus to make it still.
Wound it with sighing, girl, kill it with groans,
Or get some little knife between thy teeth
And just against thy heart make thou a hole,
That all the tears that thy poor eyes let fall
May run into that sink and, soaking in,
Drown the lamenting fool in sea-salt tears. (3.2.13-20)

Titus claims that Lavinia “talk[s] in signs,” though the signs through which she speaks are those that he imposes upon her body. That is, Titus reads Lavinia’s body only through his self-imposed significations; he supplies signifieds for the signifier that remains otherwise inscrutable to him. The meanings Titus imposes on Lavinia all relate

to late medieval devotional practices, and all center on images and experiences of corporeality. One depicts Lavinia with her heart cut in the center and bleeding out, standing to contain the tears that he sheds. This is a portrait similar to that of Christ's Sacred Heart, a key image in late medieval devotional practice (the "Cult of the Sacred Heart" emerges in the fourteenth century) and a popular subject for the later poetry of George Herbert and Richard Crashaw.⁶³ The iconography of Lavinia's bleeding heart can also be read in the context of the devotional tradition known as affective piety, whereby a believer meditates on the wounds of Christ and, by imagining scenes of his passion, sanctifies herself through a form of contemplative, image-driven prayer. Furthermore, Lavinia's wounded body recalls the correlation of blood and ink and body and book as

⁶³ Devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus began in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and continued with fervor well into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries due to the influence of orders like the Franciscans and the Dominicans. But the most noted revelation of Christ's Sacred Heart occurs in the latter half of the seventeenth century in France, when Christ was said to reveal his Sacred Heart to Margaret Mary Alacoque, whose body is still contained in a reliquary at Paray-le-Monial in France. See Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) and Scott Manning Stevens, "Sacred Heart and Secular Brain," in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, eds. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997): 262-82.

The iconography of Christ's Sacred Heart deeply influenced the writings of mystics, such as Julian of Norwich and Teresa of Avila. It also provided subject matter for English devotional poetry written in seventeenth-century. Richard Crashaw's "The Flaming Heart," which tropes the bodily ecstasies of Teresa of Avila, is a fine example of a post-Reformation poetic presentation of the relationship between body and image with its emphasis on reading, painting, showing, and the endurance of Teresa's heart in the "conquering leaves" of his poem. The relationship between "heart" and "art" is evident in these lines:

Live in these conquering leaves, live all the same;
And walk through all tongues one triumphant flame.
Live here, great heart; and love and die and kill,
And bleed and wound; and yield and conquer still.
Let this immortal life, where'er it comes,
Walk in a crowd of loves and martyrdoms.
Let mystic deaths wait on't, and wise souls be
The love-slain witnesses of this life of thee.
O sweet incendiary! show here thy art,
Upon this carcass of a hard, cold heart;
Let all thy scattered shafts of light, that play
Among the leaves of thy large books of day,
Combined against this breast, at once break in
And take away from me myself and sin! (79-90)

expressed by Richard Rolle, who in *The Prickying of Love* describes Christ's heart as "lyke a boke written with rede inke: so is thy body al written with rede woundes."⁶⁴

Lavinia's character -- her textual body -- is a body inscribed with "red inke" and "rede woundes," making it a representation of a Christological and crucifixional body.

In the famous fly-killing scene in 3.2, which appears only in the 1623 Folio, Titus extends this exposition of Lavinia as a body/book inscribed with wounds and words as a means of proving or defining her body. This initial banquet scene, often dismissed as a frivolous interlude, not only anticipates the grandiosity of the cannibalistic meal that ends the play but also performs a Eucharistic semiotics, for it places Titus's interpretation of Lavinia's body within the context of a meal. Food, flesh, and figure come together both in the Mass and in Shakespeare's play, both in theological disputation and in dramatic innovation.

Consider how Titus, like Jonathas in the *Play of the Sacrament*, strives to extract meaning from Lavinia's fleshly signs:

I can interpret all her martyr'd signs.
She says she drinks no other drink but tears,
Brewed with her sorrow, mashed upon her cheeks.
Speechless complainer, I will learn thy thought.
In thy 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 a sign
But I of these will wrest an alphabet,
And by still practice learn to know thy meaning. (3.2.36-45)

Here Titus addresses the problem of Eucharistic semiotics, for he attempts to make sense of Lavinia's multivalent identity as body and sign. This scene is the apex of failed patriarchal reading by which, according to Kahn, "other men try to interpret Lavinia,

⁶⁴ Qtd. in Beckwith, *Christ's Body*, 62.

mistaking her meanings and appropriating her signs for their own.”⁶⁵ But the politics of Titus’s failed reading expose the problems associated with putting the body (both the body of Christ and the body of woman) into words. Lavinia does not reveal her meaning transparently; rather, Titus must “wrest” it away in a nearly violent action that figuratively duplicates her previous physical manipulation. Moreover, Titus tries to impose an “alphabet” upon Lavinia’s body; fashioning himself as a pious hermit, he tries to make her body, an otherwise elusive signifier, conform to an ordered system of signification. Insofar as he “wrests an alphabet,” Titus also aims to *rest*, or make immobile and thus inviolable, her meaning.

Like the Eucharistic body of Christ, which is itself a “martyr’d sign,” Lavinia’s body proves to be unruly flesh and unruly sign, provoking hermeneutic curiosity in those who try to read it. For all his hermeneutic work, Titus’s desire to freeze Lavinia’s text is met only with the fraught deferrals of interpretive postponement. Lavinia’s body resigns Titus to “still practice” by which he “will learn [her] meaning.” The interpretive moment is both displaced indefinitely into the future and described as continual. What Titus sees as “still,” or unchanging and temporally determinate, is redirected by the “still practice,” or continual hermeneutic labor, that Lavinia’s body demands. Lavinia titillates and torments his interpretive faculties and raises his curiosity not just about its signification, but also its substance.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Kahn, 58.

⁶⁶ In *This is My Body*, Martin Luther cautions against the compulsion to read and interpret definitively the works of God: “We also believe and teach that in the Supper we eat and take to ourselves Christ’s body truly and physically,” he says. Then, in defiance of both Aquinas and Zwingli, he adds: “But how this takes place or how he is in the bread we do not know and are not meant to know. God’s word we should believe without setting bounds or measure to it” (28-9). In this Lutheran context, Titus’s compulsion to delineate Lavinia’s body and bind her to his interpretation can be regarded as both futile and heretical.

As I have shown, “substance” is a key term in Eucharistic controversy -- a term that establishes the tense negotiation of body as sign and body as flesh. Shakespeare’s play appropriates this language to indicate the fading wits of its title character who, by the middle of the play, cannot properly distinguish “substance” from “shadow.” Following the seizure of Lavinia, Marcus says of Titus, “Alas, poor man! Grief has so wrought on him / That he takes false shadows for true substances” (3.2.80-81). Where Jonathan Bate notes that the opposition between “shadow” and “substance” is “one of Shakespeare’s favorite antitheses,”⁶⁷ Marcus’s statement stretches beyond semantic predilections and pinches the nerve of Eucharistic controversy, which itself is defined by the same language of “shadow” and “substance.” Catholics and Lutherans alike favor the latter term, which signifies the real bodily presence of Christ, while more progressive reformers see the host as figurative shadow, semblance, and sign of Christ’s body.

The terms that Marcus uses to describe Titus’s misreading situate his attempt to read Lavinia’s wounded flesh within the discursive milieu of theological and liturgical debate. Judith Anderson notes that the Latin *substantiam* was “a code word in Eucharistic debate” and one that organized the negotiation of figure and flesh -- or, to put it in Eucharistic terms, of *est* (what “is” in the flesh) and *significat* (what the host represents figuratively).⁶⁸ Moreover, the Council of Trent’s “Decree on the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist” (1551) employs a form of *substantiam* in upholding Christ’s bodily presence in the host: “The holy council teaches openly and without qualification

⁶⁷ Bate, 210.

⁶⁸ Anderson, 44. Anderson’s reading of the Eucharistic controversies from the perspective of grammar and linguistic philosophy demonstrates how reformists like Cranmer do not locate physical presence in the host itself or in the words of consecration but in what the sacrament effects in the recipient. The metaphorical reading of Eucharist becomes, in her estimation, an affective experience, which in turn satisfies the “yearning of the English people for the corporeal presence.” Anderson summarizes this as a “theology of efficacy” that is “poised between a semantics of metaphor and a psychology of imagination” (48).

professes that, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is truly, really, and substantially [*realiter ac substantialiter*] contained in the propitious sacrament of the holy Eucharist under the appearance of those things which are perceptible to the senses.”⁶⁹ Finally, Edmund Gurnay uses *substantiam* in his critique of Papistry, extending the discussion of substance and shadow to cite the misreading and misappropriation that define Catholic Eucharistic theology:

[They] must needs be passing and ranging abroad, passing and compassing seas and lands, tossing and ransacking all manner of writings whereby to find in this *His Bodie*, and other manner of matter then a remembrance; it is now at length befallen them, partly beeing confounded in their imaginations, and partly beeing perverted in their judgments... that now they cannot perceive a difference betwixt His remembrance, and His very reall presence; betwixt the signe, and the thing; the shell, and the kernell; the shadow and the substance: whereby finally by the just judgement of God, who suffreth men to beleieve lies which will not obey the truth, they have not onely lost the substance by catching at the shadowe, with the dogge in the fable.⁷⁰

Gurnay’s litany of binaries -- remembrance/presence, sign/thing, shell/kernel, and shadow/substance -- demonstrates how Catholic literalism misreads linguistic signs and misappraises Christ’s corporeal identity in the host itself, which he regards as figurative.

Titus, at least according to Marcus, such makes a hermeneutic error. He looks upon Lavinia’s body and asks what it is, but the answer -- the “This is” or “*Hoc est*” -- never comes. In this regard, Lavinia’s body becomes a figurative host, for the meaning of her physical substance presents itself to Titus only as shadow. Lavinia’s body, like Christ’s own, tantalizes the rational mind, for the confirmation of *Hoc est* is never

⁶⁹ Council of Trent, “Decree on the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist” (Session 13, Chap. 1), 11 October 1551. Qtd. in Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 693.

⁷⁰ Edmund Gurnay, *Corpus Christi* (London: 1619), sig. B2r. Earlier in the text, Gurnay opposes bodily substance to sacrament, regarding the latter as a kind of linguistic signification: “That this then is the body of our Saviour, it is without all question: Yea, not onely his body, but even Himselfe (a part beeing put for the whole) it may be affirmed; but whether it bee His body indeed, and substance; or onely by way of Sacrament, that is the terrible and unappeaseable question at this day” (sig. A4r).

granted in terms apart from those of conservative religious faith. She embodies what Paul Strohm regards as the Eucharist's "robust plenitude." Christ's body "remains a sealed and veiled mystery," Strohm argues, "always sought but completely inaccessible, an enigma which functions at once as pure symbol and pure presence, as vacant and as utterly productive place."⁷¹ Both the Eucharistic body of Christ and the dramatic body of Lavinia, though different metaphysically, are linked aesthetically as axes at which soma and sign collide and reproduce.

In addition to operating as an isolated example of the interpenetration of word and flesh, Lavinia's body connects to a larger, metaphysical body: the body politic of Rome itself. As we saw in the Croxton play, the body of Christ also points toward a larger collective, the ecclesiastical body of the Church. The only way for the body of Rome to be cured of Gothic ruin is through Lavinia's sacrifice, one that operates according to the logic of Eucharistic bodies both physical and metaphysical.

Like Episcopus in the *Play of the Sacrament*, Marcus uses physical fragmentation as a trope by which to characterize the reintegration of an otherwise broken social body. He says, "O let me teach you how to knit again / This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf, / These broken limbs again into one body" (5.3.69-71). Episcopus and Marcus, in a sense, speak to the same thing: the reincorporation of different kinds of social order rooted in the imagery of a corporate body. Comparing Rome to both fractured grain and dismembered body and thereby echoing Demetrius's earlier estimation of Lavinia as a

⁷¹ Strohm, 36. Strohm articulates, in a medieval context, what Stephen Greenblatt has regarded as "the problem of the leftover," or "the status of the material remainder" of the Eucharistic bread. What Greenblatt sees as a literal leftover Strohm sees as a hermeneutic surplus, a Eucharistic signifier that implodes with interpretive possibility. Cf. Greenblatt, "Remnants of the Sacred," in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, eds. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 337-45.

“cut loaf” from which it is “easy...to steal a shive” (1.1.587), Marcus appropriates Eucharistic imagery. His references to grain and loaves suggest bread, and given the play’s situation within a century of religious reform, these cereal images hold significant religious potential. In Marcus’s speech, the language of Christ’s body, broken sacrificially on both cross and altar so that all may be reconciled into the corporate, mystical body, the Church, is projected onto Lavinia’s body, which becomes the somatic site of sacrifice for Rome’s political salvation. In doing so, it marks how, as Lukas Erne argues, “imperial Rome and Reformation England seem to merge at the beginning of the last act.”⁷²

The relation of classical paganism and politics to early modern Christianity and religious doctrine helps us to construe the final banquet in *Titus* as figured in terms of Eucharistic controversy. Moreover, the banquet probes both the iconographic and psychological hold that the Eucharist held over early modern England from the late Middle Ages through its liturgical variations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The concluding scene of ritual eating in *Titus* does not mark the waning of the corporeally-saturated rituals of late medieval Catholicism but instead digests such iconographic materials anew. The play reminds us that one cannot entertain such a dramatic episode of digestion apart from its Eucharistic lineage. In Shakespeare’s play, the linkage seems not only viable, but also overdetermined.

The banquet scene of Act Five occasions Titus’s retributive martyrdom of Tamora’s sons as a rewriting -- and redressing -- of Lavinia’s “martyr’d signs.” Assuming the roles of both orator and cook, Titus limns the ghastly limb-lopping rhetorically before he enacts physically it onstage:

⁷² Erne, 144-5.

Hark, wretches, how I mean to martyr you:
This one hand yet is left to cut your throats,
Whiles that Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold
The basin that receives your guilty blood...
Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust,
And with your blood a coffin I will rear,
And make two pasties of your shameful heads,
And bid that strumpet, your unhallowed dam,
Like to the earth swallow her own increase.
This is the feast that I have bid her to,
And this the banquet she shall surfeit on. (5.3.181-93)

At the outset, Titus uses the language of secular cookery to describe how he will “grind” the bones of Tamora’s sons, thereby fracturing her bloodline, which he will then force her to ingest. By writing the language of domestic cookery into this scene of ritualized slaughter, *Titus* also asserts that the violation of flesh can spur conversion.⁷³ Recall that the wounding of the host in the *Play of the Sacrament* catalyzes the Jews’ incorporation into the Catholic church. In *Titus*, the slaying of Chiron, Demetrius, and Lavinia precipitates the conversion of Rome into a republic.

Titus’s culinary revenge -- his baking Chiron and Demetrius into a pie and force feeding it to Tamora -- depends on a narrative of Eucharistic presence and more specifically, on a logic of transubstantiation. Titus does not literally perform transubstantiation but his actions in this banquet scene evoke, if not require, the theological and philosophical protocols of this dogma. Titus’s revenge and the reincorporation of Rome depend on Tamora’s eating of her sons and Titus’s sacrificial killing of his daughter. Tamora cannot eat a merely symbolic pie; rather, she must physically incorporate the flesh of her sons. Therefore, in order to read Titus’s revenge as politically efficacious, we must accept that Chiron and Demetrius exist bodily within a

⁷³ On the violence inherent to cookery and housewifery, see Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002).

pie that loses its agency as an ordinary pie. To cast the problem in theological terms, only a logic of transubstantiation allows for this to happen. A Zwinglian symbolic reading or a Calvinist suggestion of spiritual, as opposed to corporeal, presence, for example, could not allow the pie to perform its political work. Thus, the pie does not represent, or symbolize, the bodies of Tamora's sons, but it literally and substantially *is* those bodies. The pie, then, operates as what Aquinas would call an "accident." Just as Christ was said to exist corporeally under or inside the host that functions accidentally as bread, so do Chiron and Demetrius exist corporeally under the species of the baked pasty. And just as Christ could not be ingested in his human bodily form and had to appear substantially under the edible form of bread, so too do Chiron and Demetrius appear to their mother in a pie, which is both recognizable as part of an aristocratic banquet and digestible as food fit for human consumption.⁷⁴

In addition to evoking the philosophical properties of transubstantiation as a condition for Titus's culinary revenge, Shakespeare deploys the trope of cannibalism in a Eucharistic context in order to suggest that ultimately, the ingestion of flesh is salutary rather than profane, for it restores the health of the Roman body politic. Tamora's subsequent ingestion of this pie may be cannibalistic on the surface, but just as Christ's body was recognized (albeit to different extents) as a form of spiritual food, so too does the baked flesh of Chiron and Demetrius become a remedy for the broken Roman *polis*.

Granted, the slaughter that concludes the play evokes the association of cannibalism with the consumption of human flesh that results in a perverse form of

⁷⁴ The placement of the actual cooking offstage is a revealing detail of staging, for it suggests another intersection with the Catholic Mass: the fact that the actual consecration of the host and the utterance of the Roman Canon would take place outside the visual and auditory ranges of congregants, thus accounting for the importance of the elevation of the host.

endogamy.⁷⁵ Titus iterates the practice when he pronounces to Chiron and Demetrius, “I will grind your bones to dust” (184). Here he registers externally the mastication and digestion of human flesh that is part of the cannibalistic enterprise. Cannibalism conjoins -- indeed, it consanguinates -- what should be kept separate, and if it was regarded as anormative in the secular realm, it was also seen as profane and heretical by Protestant reformers who used it to refute the doctrine of transubstantiation. John 6:53-56 recounts the following narrative, the cannibalistic overtones of which structured a heated debate between Catholics and reformers:

Then Jesus said unto them, Verely, verely I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Sone of man, and drinke his blood, ye have no life in you. Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hathe eternal life, and I wil raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat in dede, & my blood is drinke in dede. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.⁷⁶

Critics of transubstantiation use language similar to Titus’s in order to suggest the need to read this passage figuratively. To perceive communion as the literal flesh of Christ would subject the body of Christ to grinding and chewing and therefore to debasement. These images of grinding Christ into fleshly bits is also evident in the defenses against cannibalism offered by both Thomas More and Martin Luther, who use cannibalistic imagery in order to maintain that Christ speaks of a form of eating that transcends the mere physical incorporation of food.

Quoting Bede and Augustine, More controverts reformist skepticism with regard to Christ’s offering of his physical flesh as food:

⁷⁵ Cf. Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Mythologiques, Volume I* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983) and Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge, 1984).

⁷⁶ John 6: 53-56, *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007).

Saynt Bede sayth here, and so saynt Austayne both, that they had conceyvd a false opinyon, that our lorde wold cut out hys own body in gobettes, and make them eate it so, in such maner of dede peces, as men bye beefe or moten out of the bouchers shoppys.⁷⁷

More's visceral depiction of Eucharistic digestion is harrowing enough: even though More refutes this position, he lends significant rhetorical vibrancy to what reformers regarded as the literal grinding of Christ's body in the mouth. More undercuts these somatic details by suggesting that, at the Last Supper, Christ's institution of the Eucharist confirms for his apostles the continuity between His sacramental presence and His bodily presence. The consecrated host offered during Mass thus completes Christ's promise that He will grant everlasting life to those who eat of his flesh and drink of his blood.

Adopting the persona of Christ, Luther offers a similar estimation of eating Christ's flesh, interpreting the phrase, "the flesh is of no avail" (John 6:63) as follows:

My dear disciples, who murmur and become offended at my words, you do not understand me rightly. You seize upon the work -- the physical eating of flesh -- and you interpret it as chewing it with the teeth and digesting it in the body, like meat from the butcher shop. That is a fleshly, deadly interpretation. This flesh I do not give you to eat in that way. There must be spirit here, not flesh. My words must be understood spiritually, of the spiritual flesh.⁷⁸

Luther's image of "chewing...with the teeth" and "digesting it in the body" echoes More's phrase, "our lorde wold cut out hys own body in gobettes." But Luther takes the debate farther. He suggests that the eating of Christ's flesh in communion does not desecrate the body of Christ, as reformers suggest, but actually purifies the sins of the flesh through the act of spiritual eating. He writes, "When the body eats it physically, this food digests the body's flesh and transforms it so that it too becomes spiritual, i.e., alive and blessed forever...So when we eat Christ's flesh physically and spiritually, the

⁷⁷ More, *Answer to a Poisoned Book*, I.15, p. 58.

⁷⁸ Luther, *This is My Body*, 96-7.

food is so powerful that it transforms us into itself and out of fleshly, sinful, mortal men makes spiritual, holy, living men.”⁷⁹ In this respect, Luther construes Eucharist as an ameliorative act of eating human flesh because the spiritual function of Christ’s Eucharistic body directs and transforms the mundane process of grinding flesh in the teeth. Eucharist has healing properties, placing it in the context of what Louise Noble calls “medicinal cannibalism.” Noble reads the banquet in *Titus* in these terms, suggesting that it “mediates the disturbing contiguity between the European medical consumption of human corpses and the barbaric eating of human flesh.”⁸⁰

The thematics of Eucharistic eating and healing go a long way to demonstrate the Catholic iconography of the body that so infuses *Titus Andronicus*, but they do not solidify this argument as much as the play’s rhetorical evidence for its Eucharistic sympathies. By way of conclusion, I draw us to the specific language Titus uses to invite his victims to the banquet. These words function, in a sense, as Titus’s words of institution by which he does not give *his* body at this bloody supper but instead gives Tamora, in effect, *her* body.

Titus announces to Chiron and Demetrius, “*This is* the feast that I have bid her to” and “*this* the banquet she shall surfeit on.” Here Titus rewrites the *Hoc est* from *Hoc est corpus meum*, or “This is my body.” The scene retains this emphasis on *hoc* later when Titus reveals the identity of the pie to Tamora saying, “Why, there they are, both baked in *this pie*.” While “pie” substitutes for “*corpus*” Titus here asserts bodily presence in his secular Eucharist using the same word, *hoc*, that signifies the presence of Christ in the sacred Eucharist. Tamora doesn’t eat the body of another -- man or God --

⁷⁹ Ibid, 100-101.

⁸⁰ Noble, 688.

but eats forms of her own body. Furthermore, the phrase, “there they are,” makes Titus’s Eucharist unambiguous by identifying beyond doubt the bodily identity of his cookery. This utterance couples with “this pie” to satisfactorily rule out metaphor. Again, a Zwinglian suggestion of trope (*significat*) does not prove efficacious for a revenger who relies on bodily substance (*est*) to enact his revenge. In fact, we can even say that *Titus Andronicus* corrects Eucharistic ambiguity with Eucharistic certainty, for there is no controversy here as Tamora knows definitively what -- or whom -- she eats: her progeny and, by extension, her own body. We recall that reformers objected to the location of the signified (Christ’s divine body) within the signifier (a mundane piece of bread) and saw in this a logical and semiotic fallacy that threatened to debase Christ’s body by subjecting it to the mundane form of mere bread. Likewise, Titus makes Tamora into the signifier forced to house the signified. Once Tamora eats the pie, she confuses the normatively separate identities of creator and created: the mother reincorporates her children in a horrifying and profane act.

The bodily reciprocity between Christ’s flesh and human flesh scripts a program of bodily assimilation that also traces out a program of salvation. To eat Christ’s flesh and drink His blood is not cannibalistic (for Catholics) but salvific. It follows that the material body of the communicant becomes an integral part of the Eucharistic act. In this context, then, we can understand how the human body emerged conceptually and materially in relation to the divine body of Christ. The bodily interaction of Christ’s flesh and blood with the believers propels the mundane processes of eating, digestion, and humoral fluctuation so noted by critics of early modern embodiment toward a theological end. The host imparts a tangible proximity between communicant and Christ, which

makes possible the alignment of two different bodily schema: an earthly body defined by its imperfections and humoral imbalances and a heavenly body that stands as a model of perfect temperance.⁸¹

Titus Andronicus, as I have shown, displaces the Christian and, by extension, Catholic understanding of the Eucharistic body onto the topos of pagan Roman politics. Its thematics of political sacrifice, memorialized in the tomb of the Andronici, point to its investment in the language of Eucharistic sacrifice, generated through the complicated semiotics of Lavinia's body and the performance of fleshly ingestion in the final scene. In doing so, the play affirms the aesthetic appeal of fleshly incorporation understood in Eucharistic terms. In terms of Eucharistic semiotics, *Titus*'s "Eucharistic" banquet ultimately suggests that an apparent evacuation of or parody of Eucharistic ritual testifies to the very endurance of this ritual iconography. As Regina Schwartz argues, "Despite Reformers' consensus that the Mass does not re-enact the sacrifice of Christ, that it only

⁸¹ The literalism of the Catholic Eucharist -- that is, the belief that a lay person can take into his or her body the real flesh and blood of Christ -- can contribute much to discussions of temperament and bodily discipline. It was proverbial, as Bishop Edward Reynolds demonstrates in *A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soule of Man, with the severall dignities and corruptions thereunto belonging* (London: 1640), that Christ's body was regarded as the epitome of perfect temperance and humoral stasis:

Therefore our Saviour himselfe sometimes loved, sometimes rejoyced, sometimes wept, sometimes desired, sometimes mourned, and grieved; but these were not *Passions* that violently and immoderately troubled him; but he, as he saw fit, did with them *trouble himselfe*. His *Reason excited, directed, moderated, repressed* them, according to the rule of perfect cleare, and undistributed *judgement*. In which respect, the *Passions* of *Christ* are by Divines called rather *Propassions*, that is to say, Beginnings of Passions, than *passions* themselves; in as much as they never proceeded beyond their due measure, nor transported the Mind to undecencie or excesse, but had both their rising and originall from Reason, and also their measure, bounds, continuance limited by Reason. The *Passions* of sinfull men are many times like the tossings of the Sea, which bringeth up *mire and durt*; But the *Passions of Christ* were like the shaking of pure Water in a cleane Vessell, which though it be thereby *troubled*, yet is it not *fouled* at all. (sig. G4v-Hr)

While Reynolds compares Christ's passions to "the shaking of pure Water in a cleane Vessell," it is hard to deduce how Christ's humoral perfection can be transferred to the body of an intemperate believer. Could Eucharist, when understood from the Catholic perspective of Christ's literal body, offset intemperance? Such a question lies outside the scope of this project but would need to be considered in a fuller discussion of humoralism as it pertains to sacred bodies. I am grateful to Gail Paster for directing me to Reynolds in this context.

commemorates it, Shakespeare is clearly preoccupied with representing the *sacrifice* of the Eucharist.”⁸² Both *Titus* and the *Play of the Sacrament* grant expression to the aesthetic import of a bodily proximity with the divine -- a proximity that in this case rests on the digestion of the word made flesh in a most literal sense. What is more, they both stage in Jonathas and in Titus a central dramatic character who also assumes the role of priest in manipulating and transforming bodies that are at once physical, political, and ecclesiastical. This dramatic compulsion to play the priest becomes even more salient in a later drama of salvation, sacrament, and spiritual perplexity: Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*, to whose theologically-vexed protagonist we now turn.

⁸² Regina Mara Schwartz, *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism: When God Left the World* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2008), 17. Schwartz grounds her reading of Shakespeare’s representations of Eucharist in *Othello*, which she provides in ch. 3.

FATHER FAUSTUS?

Liturgical Bodies and Liturgical Books in *Doctor Faustus*

In Chapter One, I demonstrated how the Eucharistic body of Christ and the semiotics it produced played an important role in debates over liturgy, devotion, and representation waged from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Christ's body was not the only religious body to significantly inform sacred and secular cultures in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, however. In addition to Christ's Eucharistic body stood the body of the priest that, while not regarded as theologically equivalent to the Eucharist, exerted extraordinary social and spiritual power nonetheless. According to Catholic doctrine, only an ordained priest could administer the sacraments, which were the primary channels through which God's grace was materialized. In the popular Medieval morality play, *Everyman*, Fyve Wyttes instructs the title character in the necessity and importance of the priest as dispenser of spiritual graces:

For preesthode exceedeth all other thyng.
To us Holy Scrypture they do teche,
And converteth man fro synne, Heven to reche.
God hath to them more power gyven
Than to ony aungell that is in Heven.
With fyve wordes he may consecrate
Goddess body in flesshe and blode to make,
And hendelet this Maker bytwene his hande[s].¹

¹ Anon., *Everyman*, in *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, ed. Greg Walker (Madlen, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 732-9. The "fyve wordes" to which Fyve Wyttes refers are the words of consecration, *Hoc est enim corpus meum*.

As Fyve Wyttes suggests, the most significant priestly power is that of transubstantiation, whereby the priest can consecrate the elements of bread and wine and transform them through his words and actions into the actual body and blood of Christ. *Everyman* depicts the priest as the pivotal mediator of sacramental grace: without his bodily intervention, a lay person could not receive the spiritual benefits necessary for her salvation. The importance of the priest's *liturgical* body was separated from the priest's *human* body as early as the Donatist Controversies of the fourth century. In 1547, the Council of Trent officially decreed that sacramental grace is conferred *ex opere operato* (that is, "by the work itself"), such that the priest's humanity and moral situation do not interfere with or invalidate the spiritual integrity of the sacramental acts he performs. As the conciliar decree states: "If anyone says that grace is not conferred by the sacraments of the new law through the sacramental action itself, but that faith in the divine promise is by itself sufficient for obtaining the grace: let him be anathema."² Sacramental grace is thus communicated through the priest's actions; his body, in turn, effects the important transformations and communications of grace necessary for spiritual sobriety.

In a Catholic liturgy shrouded in mystery and inscrutability, the priest's human body acts not only as an intermediary for, but also as a visible representation of, Christ, whose body is only invisibly present in the host. As Charles Zika notes, "To hear Mass was 'to see God,' but to see God in the hands of the priest."³ The priest's body literally holds God as Zika suggests, for it maintains proximity to the consecrated elements and thus touches God in the name of the laity.

² Council of Trent, Session VII, decree 8 (3 March 1547), qtd. in Norman P. Tanner, S.J., ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Vol. II* (2 vols) (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 686.

³ Charles Zika, "Processions and Pilgrimages: Controlling the Sacred in Fifteenth-Century Germany," *Past & Present* 118 (February 1988), 31.

My reading of the priest's body as a representative of Christ's body in the host intersects the idea of a Eucharistic semiotics by again placing the theoretical poles of word and flesh in conversation if not communion. In this chapter, I look specifically to liturgical books and their uses in both religious services and the secular theatre. These books show how the priest's body is enmeshed within the linguistic and corporeal forms of both the Catholic *Missale Romanum* and the major liturgical text of the Reformation, the *Book of Common Prayer*. The representations and functions of the priest's body with respect to the Eucharist in these books open up both important liturgical differences in pre- and post-reformation worship as well as significant changes in the early modern understanding of the body more generally as it is inflected through religious reformation. Moving from liturgical discourse to dramatic performance, I then show how Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1604, 1616)⁴ dramatizes this doomed doctor's fascination with necromancy as a corollary fascination with liturgical books, rituals, and spells. Faustus continually reanimates the language of liturgical rites and actions even as he ostensibly rejects God for Satanic powers. Furthermore, my reading of Faustus's liturgical body unmoors the play from the perennial critical assessments of its Protestant leanings.⁵ I suggest that, in addition to dramatizing the

⁴ Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus: A Two-Text Critical Edition*, ed. David Scott Kastan (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004). I read across both the A-text of 1604 and the B-text of 1616, noting cruces where relevant and citing all references parenthetically in the text hereafter.

⁵ These readings include: Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985), esp. ch. 2; Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1993), esp. ch. 6; Clifford Davidson, "Doctor Faustus at Rome," *Studies in English Literature* 9, no. 2 (1969): 231-9; Marjorie Garber, "'Here's Nothing Writ': Scribe, Script, and Circumscription in Marlowe's Plays," *Theatre Journal* 36.3 (October 1984): 301-320; Angus Fletcher, "Doctor Faustus and the Lutheran Aesthetic," *ELR* 35.2 (2005): 187-209; John D. Cox, "Devils and Power in Marlowe and Shakespeare," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 23 (1993): 46-64 and "'To obtain his soul': Demonic Desire for the Soul in Doctor Faustus" *Early Theatre* 5.2: 29-46; Kristen Poole, "The Devil in the Archive: Doctor Faustus and Ovidean Physics," *Renaissance Drama* n.s. 35 (2006): 191-219; and James Kearney, *The Incarnate Text:*

spiritual angst of a Calvinist doctrine of predestination and the problems of scriptural interpretation, Marlowe's play engages the paradoxical relationship between written text and bodily action in both Catholic and Protestant liturgies, and in doing so, renders the spiritual fate of Faustus itself ambiguous. The farther we peer into Faustus's study and the more earnestly we examine not just the books he reads but also the language he speaks, we can observe that Faustus, as a dramatic character, comprises (and confuses) the language and ritual action of both pre- and post-Reformation liturgy. Faustus's attachment to the religious codings of the word and the flesh in liturgical books extends the object of his quest from secular magic to the priestly power to transubstantiate, or change the very substance of things.

A Tale of Two *Corpuses*: Liturgical Bodies and Liturgical Texts

The texts of both the Catholic Mass and the Protestant communion service display a series of rubrics, or liturgical instructions printed above the prayer texts proper, that iterate the relationship between the word and the flesh and make worship both a corporeal performance and a textual event. For example, in the Catholic Mass, the priest must elevate the host and chalice at specific moments, must look upward at the heavens while reciting the words of consecration over the bread and wine, and must also bow before the altar at various points. All of these actions, which have specific liturgical significance, are scripted in the liturgical books so that the instructions can be memorized and the actions can be performed correctly and consistently. The proper timing and execution of these actions is necessary in order for the Mass to hold validity and spiritual efficacy.

Imagining the Book in Reformation England (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), esp. ch. 3.

Reading the rubrics of liturgical books has further implications for the narrative of early modern embodiment, for the shift in emphasis from body to word in the wake of the Reformation provokes a new understanding not only of religious bodies but of physical and social bodies as well. The books used by the priest in pre-Reformation England, commonly called sacramentaries or missals, provide clear and necessary directions for the deportment of the body and the modulation of the voice, both of which are necessary to the performance of a valid Mass.⁶ The *Missale Romanum* proves that the pre-Reformation Roman liturgy is an intensely corporeal performance. While the liturgy upholds the interpenetration of word and body throughout, it clearly emphasizes the bodily actions and utterances of the priest by delineating precise instructions and providing pictorial evidence that serves as an imitable model for the celebrant's own physical actions. As we move from the Roman liturgy to the reformed liturgy in the *Book of Common Prayer*, we recognize that the emphasis granted to the physicality of the priest's body is all but effaced, leaving us with a liturgy that understands "body" more as a metaphorical incorporation of the faithful and the celebrant than as an engagement between the body of the priest and the transubstantiated body of Christ. The *Book of Common Prayer* thus reforms the Roman liturgy by writing the physical body of Christ and the physical body of the priest out of its rubrics and replacing them with legible dialogic relations between priest, congregation, scripture, and worship.

⁶ The naming of the liturgical books comprises a complex historical trajectory from approximately the sixth century to the sixteenth century. The most accessible summary of this trend can be found in Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books: From the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), esp. 21-34. *Missal* technically means a book of the celebrant that includes all music and scripture readings as well as the *ordines* and collects, or the variable prayers of the Mass that are included in the *sacramentary*. By the sixteenth century, the term "sacramentary" seems to have fallen out of use and is substituted by the term *missal*.

Before proceeding to a more thorough overview of the textual features of these books and to their important role in *Doctor Faustus*, it is worth noting that liturgy, like drama, inheres in printed word and physical action. As John Harper notes, “Liturgy embraces all the formal worship of a corporate Christian community. It embodies every aspect of that worship - the structure, the order, the text, the music, the movement, the vestments, the ornaments and vessels - and its relationship to the consecrated buildings in which it was enacted.”⁷ In both its pre- and post-Reformation manifestations, liturgy consists in some kind of physical performance. Yet, the characteristics of liturgical performance cannot be separated from the conditions of textual form, which suggests that liturgy, like drama, coordinates word and flesh, books and bodies.⁸

Liturgy is drama; it is performance; and it is as much an aesthetic as a theological act. Thus, we can see how the primary player in this drama -- the priest and his body -- is described in both the liturgical books that produce it and the material events that enact it. The books of the Mass, as linguistic and formal structures, script the embodiment of divinity in human terms. It is all but proverbial that Protestant Reformers referred to the Catholic Mass as some type of mystical drama, for they saw in this liturgy an excess of physical movement, ornament, and sensory apparatuses. In her recent study of the *Book of Common Prayer*, Ramie Targoff contends that reformers, in turn, sought to “break down the auricular barriers between the clergy and the congregation,” instantiating the

⁷ John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Harper divides liturgy into subcategories of *rite* (the “order and content,” that is what may be spoken or performed at a given time, of a liturgy), *ceremony* (the “conduct and style of an action or event”), and *use* (the specific variations of a particular rite, usually tied to a geographical location) (12).

⁸ The connections between liturgy and drama have been well established by Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933); O.B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1963); and Sarah Beckwith, *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). See also my discussion of the *Play of the Sacrament* in Chapter One.

“difference between hearing and praying.”⁹ But in the material sacramental theology of Roman Catholicism, all of these corporeal movements were sacralized in themselves. The physical actions of the priest, like his own body, were considered holy, for they enabled God’s grace to be imparted to the faithful.

Liturgical books play important aesthetic, theological, and semiotic work in Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*, which stages a number of the liturgical performances I have been describing. Faustus’s fascination with magic books suggests a corollary fascination with liturgical writing and liturgical performance that, while not cited specifically in his catalogue of texts that opens the play, emerges in his actions onstage.

Marlowe’s play appropriates the language of sacramental ritual even as it narrates the story of the conflict between sacred and profane forces. The play opens with a scene of copious reading. Faustus’s study is a humanistic storehouse of academic disciplines, even encyclopedic in its qualities, as Sarah Wall-Randell has recently claimed.¹⁰ But the sprawling catalogue of books and academic disciplines that Faustus rehearses suggests that his mastery of divinity, law, medicine, and astronomy, as well as his eventual inclination toward necromantic books, figures his attachment to another kind of text: the liturgical book. Liturgical books never appear by name in Faustus’s bibliographical and disciplinary catalogues, though they share the typographical, formal, and paleographical

⁹ Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 13-14. Targoff’s assessment of the shift from the scattered, unpredictable devotions of lay people in the pre-Reformation liturgy to the more codified, congregational posture advocated in the *BCP* is illuminating for the connections it makes between liturgical practice and the fashioning of subjectivity. Targoff suggests that the reformed liturgy promotes a more corporeal engagement between priest and congregation, shaping what she calls the “worshippers’ active engagement in the liturgical readings” (39). However, I find Targoff too ready to accede to the reformist dismissal of the priest’s actions and gestures as potentially implicated in this process of self-fashioning. Despite the private devotions of the laity that took place during the liturgy, it is hard to surmise that no worshippers attended to the motions and movements of the priest at the altar, even though most were hidden from view.

¹⁰ Sarah Wall-Randell, “*Doctor Faustus* and the Printer’s Devil,” *SEL* 48, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 259-81.

features of the necromantic books Faustus does cite. Faustus, as Wall-Randell notes, fixates on the capaciousness of the necromantic books, finding “in one volume every spell that [he] could ever need.”¹¹ The secular spells of black magic contained within these books facilitate Faustus’s ensuing rejection of divinity in the name of the occult arts. However promising, this claim only partially narrates the textual and magical underpinnings of Marlowe’s play. Rather than see these necromantic books as pat versions of demonic spells alone, I argue that they actually figure Faustus’s attraction to the liturgical spells contained in books like the *Missale Romanum*. These books were composed in Latin, were ornamented with floriated initials and elaborate illustrations, and were restricted to the use of the clergy. They codify arcane knowledge that can be mastered and materialized only by an ordained priest; like magic books and the work of magicians, these liturgical books present a series of “spells,” or specialized linguistic and corporeal formulae, including all of the prayers and gestures necessary to perform sacramental acts, the act of turning bread and wine into body and blood chief among them.

For Faustus, the magic book stands in for the Mass book just as his quest for secular transformation tropes his desire for metaphysical transubstantiation. Piero Camporesi characterizes Eucharist as “a moment of the highest magico-liturgical tension” and suggests that this “dramatic apex of divine participation and supernatural presence could also become a stage for *mutationes, apparitiones, miracula*.”¹² Moreover, Keith Thomas situates Eucharistic transformation within a medieval Church that “acted as a repository of supernatural power,” regarding transubstantiation as a “magical notion”

¹¹ Ibid, 266-7.

¹² Piero Camporesi, “The Consecrated Host: A Wondrous Excess,” in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body Part One*, ed. Michael Feher (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 225.

given that “the mere pronunciation of words in a ritual manner could effect a change in the character of material objects.”¹³ The relationship between necromancy and both the texts and performances of Catholic devotion has a long history, for as early as the fourteenth century Lollards opposed the Catholic Mass on the grounds that it consisted largely in heretical magic. In the Lollard Constitutions of 1394, for example, we read: “Exorcisms and blessings performed over wine, bread, water and oil, salt, wax and incense, the stones of the altar, and church walls, over clothing, mitre, cross, and pilgrims’ staves, are the genuine performance of necromancy rather than sacred theology.”¹⁴ Such blessings transformed the ordinary into the extraordinary; by virtue of a priest’s making the sign of the cross over objects, especially the elements of bread and wine, he could (through divine intercession granted him by his episcopal ordination) confer on them a specialized supernatural status.

Liturgical books like the *Missale Romanum* include rubrics, or textual notations and formulae, for these blessings. Insofar as they script these supernatural transformations, they can be said to function also as books of spells.¹⁵ These rubrics demonstrate how words function not only typographically, but also magically, as instructions for extra-linguistic, and even eschatological, action. Thomas argues that benedictions, relics, images, and religious objects like statues and candles acted as “ecclesiastical preservatives” that turned the church into “a repository of supernatural power” and the Mass into a magical event whereby “the mere pronunciation of words in a

¹³ Thomas, 32-3.

¹⁴ *The Lollard Constitutions* (1394), in *Documents of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., ed. Henry Bettenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 176.

¹⁵ For a survey of the genre, see Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books* and Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to Their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). On spells in early modern culture, see Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2005).

ritual manner could effect a change in the character of material objects.”¹⁶ The assimilation of liturgical blessings, rubrics, and objects to the domain of magic influences Barbara Mowat’s examination of a popular early modern fascination with a book known as the *grimoire*.¹⁷ Like the *grimoire*, which included spells and remedies, the *Missale Romanum* contains instructions and formulae for various utterances and actions, but unlike this text, it generates a very particular kind of change according to Catholic teaching: the transubstantiation of mere bread and wine into Christ’s real body and blood. The *Missale*, in short, uses language to produce a divine body in the flesh, which traditional believers regarded as the source and summit of their religious experience.

Marlowe displaces these textual and performative properties of liturgical books onto the necromantic books Faustus seeks from Mephistopheles. Having dismissed a range of other discourses, Faustus identifies with the very exorcisms and blessings of a book like the *Missale Romanum* when he admits, “These metaphysics of magicians / And necromantic books are heavenly! / Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters -- / Ay, these are the things that Faustus most desires” (A 1.1.49-52; B 1.1.48-51). Faustus “most desires” not magic tricks or magic books but the specific textual characteristics -- the rubrics -- of these books. Faustus says most patently that “lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters” attract his eye. Coding them as “heavenly,” moreover, he becomes mesmerized not simply by the materiality of the book but by the allure of a textual system that can summon supernatural spirits and work across linguistic, physical, and metaphysical domains. Like the Roman Missal, then, the necromantic book uses words and their visual presentation on the page in order to catalyze other-worldly interactions

¹⁶ Thomas, 31-3.

¹⁷ Barbara A. Mowat, “Prospero’s Book,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (2001): 1-33.

that result in worldly transformations. The Mass book, it follows, participates in the broader paradigm of Eucharistic semiotics by providing the verbal foundation for the material changes on which Catholic Eucharistic theology and devotion depend.

Critics of both Marlowe's play specifically and early modern drama more generally have been reluctant to attest to the import of such liturgical books as the *Missale Romanum*. What is more, studies of reformed devotional books, such as Ramie Targoff's *Common Prayer*, regard the English prayer book in the context of the vernacularization of the liturgy and its social forms of self fashioning but do not account in detail for the textual and corporeal properties of these texts -- the textual properties that a character like Faustus most desires. Thus, before pursuing a fuller reading of liturgical text and liturgical action in *Doctor Faustus*, I wish to offer a brief analysis of liturgical books as literary forms. Such an analysis can offer a more nuanced reading of Faustus's immersion in liturgical books and rites, and it can also introduce the possibility that liturgical reformation and its appropriations by early modern dramatists can suggest new ways of reading the body more generally.

The *Missale Romanum* is divided into several sections containing the various antiphons, collects, prefaces, and benedictions for all major church feasts. The most important section, located near the center of the book, comprises the *Canon Missae*, or "Order of Mass," which is the climax of the Roman liturgy. It is during this set of prayers that transubstantiation is said to occur. Therefore it is no accident that this section of the missal also contains more rubrics and illustrations than the others. The textual layout of the *Canon* coordinates the printed words of the priest and his accompanying bodily gestures such that what the priest says, along with what he does, are mutually constitutive

in enacting the transformation of bread and wine into Christ's body and blood.

Furthermore, the text of the *Canon* begins with a folio-sized portrait of the crucified Christ flanked by scenes from the Old and New Testaments and depictions of the evangelists.¹⁸

As this illustration of Christ's corporeal sacrifice makes clear, the *Missale* is a discursive platform for physical action: visually and linguistically, it is a book that represents both the body of Christ and its relationship to the body of man. Throughout the text of the *Canon Missae*, rubrics instruct the priest to speak, hover, and place his body over the host and chalice. In this sense, the *Missale* writes the body of the priest as an essential physical implement for the efficacy and validity of the Mass itself. Consider, as a representative example, the following rubric, which occurs just before the elevation of the host: "*Tenens ambabus manibus Hostiam inter indices & pollices, profeit verba consecrationis secrete, distincte, & attente: Hoc est enim corpus meum.*"¹⁹ The entire rubric may be translated, "He holds [takes] the host in his hands between fingers and thumbs, says the words of consecration secretly, distinctly, and attentively: This is indeed my body." The final clause, which comprises Christ's own institution narrative, is centered on the page and presented in large typeface. The rubric marks out the physical intimacy between the priest's body and the wafer that becomes Christ's body, depicting even the minute bodily detail of placing the host between the thumb and fingers. A similar rubric used for the consecration of the wine instructs the priest: "*Super calicez*

¹⁸ Such an illustration can be found in several versions of the *Missale*, including the *Missale ad co[n]suetudinem ecclesiae Sarum*, or "Sarum Missal," which was used in England during the reign of Henry VIII.

¹⁹ *Missale Romanum Ex Decreto Sacrosancti Concilii Tridentini Restitutum* (Antverpiae, B. Moreti, 1700), p. 286.

dices, ” or “He speaks over (above) the chalice.”²⁰ Thus, as the bread and wine become Christ’s body and blood in the Mass, the priest holds and speaks to the elements, achieving a direct correspondence with the newly consecrated body and blood of Christ. The *Missale* thus uses the written word to produce the priest’s bodily actions which, in turn, manifest the body of Christ. Thus the drama of the Mass enacts the theology of the Mass, for the rubrical sequence of scripted actions and linguistic formulae instantiates the transformation of bread and wine into Christ’s flesh and blood.

The rubrics of the *Missale* make the relationship between the body of the priest and the body of Christ explicitly tangible. Their spell-like quality inheres in their capacity to instruct the priest to conjure metaphysical change. By speaking the right words, carrying his body in a certain manner, and making the sign of the cross over bread and wine and raising it up to the heavens, the priest makes Christ become flesh immediately by his command and literally (that is, physically) in his hands. The rubrics of the *Missale Romanum* mark out the interrelation of textual characters and bodily action and in doing so, define the Mass as simultaneously verbal and corporeal. The rubrics suggest that the text of the missal surpasses ordinary prose; rather it holds supernatural significance in its capacity to enact a real and physical transformation of mundane bread and wine into divine flesh and blood.

In his necromantic books, Faustus finds an extra-linguistic identity similar to that attributed to the words of the *Missale*. The fact that “lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters” can produce supernatural effects conditions his appetitive investigation into the occult arts. Throughout the *Missale*, we witness these same typographical features, including elaborate floriated initials, such as the “T” in the *Te igitur*, which is the first

²⁰ Ibid.

prayer of the *Canon Missae*. In several editions of the *Missale*, the large, illustrated “T” circumscribes a detailed sketch of a priest facing the altar and elevating the host.²¹ Moreover, a crucifix is depicted above the altar as well as on the back of the priest’s vestment as well as on the host itself. The initial offers a trinity of crucifixes in perfect symmetry so as to suggest the correspondence between the icon that faces the priest on the altar, the host the priest elevates, and the clothing the priest wears. The densely illustrated initial represents both the action the priest should take as well as the scene observed by any number of congregants attending the Mass. The preponderance of representations of the crucified Christ, coupled with the much larger depiction of the crucifixion on the facing page, all suggest that the body of Christ, joined to the body of the priest, occupies center stage in this liturgical drama.

Moreover, the illustrated “T” enacts a Eucharistic semiotics in miniature, for it functions as both a linguistic element of the text -- a single moneme, to be exact -- and a visual template depicting how the priest should convey his body during the important actions of the Mass. The initial materializes a textual correspondence between the physical person of the priest and the grammatical person of God; it clinches this connection by providing a visual representation of the body couched within the linguistic unit spoken by the priest himself. What is more, the initial, which portrays the priest holding the body of Christ in his hands, also begins the word “Te,” the second-person pronoun used in the canon to refer to “God.” It begins the word referring to God, but it

²¹ Cf. *Missale Romanum Ordinarium* (Mexico: 1561). John Carter Brown Library, Providence, RI. Eric Palazzo notes that the “T” of the *Te igitur* was illustrated with more consistency in missals from the tenth century on. Prior to that, only few sacramentaries were so elaborately decorated. Palazzo notes further that some illustrations, especially those depicting events from the life of Christ, hold only a “tenuous” relationship with the text they accompany. The Sarum Missal, the Mass book used during the Henrician reforms, does not include such an elaborately illustrated “T.” I am grateful to Aude de Mézerac-Zanetti for her assistance on this point.

also depicts the body of the priest, thereby yoking the priest's words and actions in a form of direct address to the person of God, whose power is then mediated through the priest as he utters the words of consecration. Far from mere ornamentation, this particular initial theorizes the correspondence of textual and corporeal actions that subtends the liturgical performance of the Mass itself.

In addition to this illustrated "T," the book also includes colored crosses that signal to the priest the places at which he must make the sign of the cross on his body, over the altar, or over the elements of bread and wine as he recites the accompanying text. Themselves typographical symbols that suggest a bodily gesture, these crosses figure prominently in the text of *Canon Missae*, where the words of consecration are broken apart by a red or blue cross.²² In particular, the words denoting "body" and "blood" -- *corpus* and *sanguinis* -- are rendered on the page as *cor ✠ pus* and *san ✠ guinis*, such that the priest's bodily gesture intersects with the words of consecration he speaks. The movement of the priest's hands in the form of a cross must accompany the movement of his lips, which speak the words of the text in order for the consecration to occur. Words without gestures or gestures without words will not achieve a complete and valid transformation: both are necessary.

When Faustus speaks of the power of necromantic books, he acknowledges the capacity of a mundane object to generate supernatural transformation. Likewise, the crosses of the *Missale* transcend their obvious function as printed characters and enact non-printed, and even otherworldly, actions. In this respect, the crosses interrupt and

²² This is another point in the Mass text on which the Sarum Missal and Roman Missal differ, for the former divides *corpus* with a red cross and *sanguinis* with a blue cross, while the latter uses red crosses exclusively. In the particular Sarum Missal I have consulted (British Library Lansdowne 432, f. 64a), red and blue crosses are used interchangeably and consistently throughout the *Canon Missae*. The fact that the colored crosses are used in the text is ultimately more significant than the specific color of ink.

perhaps defy the grammatical and syntactical structure of the Latin prose that constitutes the text of the canon. Working both within and outside scripted language, they also mark places in the text where the priest's body interrupts – both on the page of the book and in the ritual action – the spoken and written texts. As the priest reads the liturgical book, he witnesses this link between text and body. We can conclude, then, that in the rhetorical world of the *Missale Romanum* specifically and the Roman liturgy more generally, the physical breaking of the body depends on the typographical fracturing of the word.

Cor ✠ *pus* and *san* ✠ *guinis* work not just as arbitrary linguistic signs but also as textual iterations of Eucharistic sacrifice. The vibrantly-colored crosses literally break open the Latin words for “body” and “blood” on the page. In doing so, they enact in the missal text the fracturing of Christ's body on the altar, an action that follows the *Canon Missae* and occurs just prior to the priest's reception of the Eucharist.²³ During the fractioning, the oblatinal identity of the Mass becomes clear: the breaking of Christ's body on the altar is united to the breaking of his body on the cross, which stands as the supreme promise of human salvation in the Catholic tradition. The typographical features of the missal anticipate this ritual action, for they represent visually on the page, and at the level of the word itself, the salvific fragmentation of Christ's body. These crosses encapsulate what was, for a host of Catholic believers, the fleshly indicator of their salvation. Moreover, these crosses interrupt otherwise ordinary words, printed in black type on a folio leaf, and elevate them to a supernatural status. By virtue of the bodily gesture of making the sign of the cross that they indicate, these crosses blur the

²³ The fractioning of the host figures the Mass as a sacrifice implicated within the dynamic of social union and division, as explained in detail by John Bossy, “The Mass as Social Institution,” *Past and Present* 100, no. 1 (1983): 29-61.

distinction between word and body and render the two forces mutually constitutive of the Eucharistic act, which itself crosses somatic and semiotic planes.

By contrast to the Catholic *Missale Romanum*, the reformed *Book of Common Prayer* edits out these floriated initials and crosses and also changes the content of its rubrics.²⁴ Not only does the *BCP* change the theological context of Christ's corporeal reality in the Eucharist, then, but it also re-scripts, through its revision and compression of rubrics, the dramatic movements, theological significations, and liturgical functions of the priest's body in public worship. What is more, the *BCP* is a printed text used jointly by priest and people whereas the *Missale Romanum* is a highly illuminated, and hence very expensive, book used only by the priest.²⁵ By putting the prayer book in the hands of the congregants, reformers achieved the linguistic transparency that the Roman liturgy could not provide. Shifting its emphasis from the individuated body of the priest to the corporate body of the people, the *BCP* moves toward a liturgy that emphasizes dialogic worship as opposed to dramatic worship. The revision of the Mass book thus engages a reorientation of the body in theory and in practice as articulated by Jean Calvin in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, when he argues for an eradication of "all this Mass of

²⁴ This is not to say that no editions of the *BCP* were decorated, for as William H. Sherman notes in *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) there are prayer books that display "countless examples of added color, in the form of rubrication and limning" (91) but these are later additions rather than those endemic to the original printings and are the exception rather than the rule. Sherman devotes an entire chapter to reading the pictorial details and marginalia of what he calls "an uncommon book of common prayer," a 1562 edition of the *BCP* that displays "recycled medieval initials," including "a small O with a bust of Christ displaying his wounds." Sherman argues that "the most uncommon feature of all in the volume" is "the illuminated initials harking back to the aesthetic and devotional models of the medieval manuscript prayer book," suggesting that such textual decorations are rarely evident in Protestant devotional texts (101).

²⁵ If Catholic lay worshipers were to use a book during the Mass, it would be something like the *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, which provided outlines for the general rite of confession as well as the order of the Mass, in addition to prayers for devotional use. The Mass Book also included marginal notations, such as "Continue thy prayers until the priest concludes his" and "When the priest continues, listen to him." *The Lay Folks' Mass Book*, Early English Text Society Original Series, No. 71, ed. Thomas Frederick Simmons (London and New York: Oxford UP, 1968), 44, 46.

ceremonies” so that “the sacrament might be celebrated in the most becoming manner.”²⁶ Calvin’s insistence on purging the liturgy of unnecessary ceremony becomes, in effect, a stripping away of the corporeality of the Lord’s Supper. In doing so, he raises a broader hermeneutic question of how the reformed liturgy reorients an understanding of the body, both human and divine.

In his capacious study of the *Book of Common Prayer* and the making of the English nation, Timothy Rosendale summarizes the linguistic and liturgical progression from Catholic to Protestant liturgy as a movement from “the transubstantiatory rite in a foreign language (1547), to a limited vernacular participation in that rite (1548), to a doctrinally ambiguous but inclusive and fully English service (1549), to the forthright Protestantism and heightened subjective emphasis of the Second Book of Common Prayer (1552), and finally...to a sacrament whose meaning is individually inscribed upon its deliberate ambiguity (1559).²⁷ Rosendale contends that the 1549 prayer book limits the role and power of the priest within the liturgy given that it redefines the Eucharist not as an actual sacrifice reenacted on the altar of every Mass but as a remembrance of an event that happened only once in historical time.

For all its substantial revisions, Rosendale argues, the earlier printings of the *BCP* retain some of the corporeal emphases on both the Eucharist and the body of the priest. One such Catholic remainder in the 1549 prayer book is the use of a blessing

²⁶ Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), Book IV, chap. xvii, section 43, p. 599.

As Lee Palmer Wandell puts it in *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Liturgy and Incarnation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), for Calvin, “the meaning of the ceremony lay not in ‘externals’ -- all those details that had become so significant for some -- because the ceremony was not a reenactment of Christ’s gestures, nor of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. It was neither historical nor mnemonic” (165).

²⁷ Timothy Rosendale, *Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 102.

cross during the prayers of consecration. While these characters resemble those in the *Missale Romanum* in appearance and overall function, they differ in color (they are black instead of red) and theological import, specifically in that they are not used for the act of transubstantiation. The crosses no longer sever the words *corpus* and *sanguinis* but are placed at “bl ✠ esse” and “sanc ✠ tifie” instead, a move that Rosendale suggests “highlights an *activity* (bless and sanctify) rather than the elements themselves.”²⁸ The theological function of the rubric is benediction not transubstantiation: the crosses enact a spiritual blessing but not a physical change.

The *Book of Common Prayer*’s repositioning of both the cross in the text and its attendant gesture in the liturgy suggests that the priest may ask God to render the elements holy, but that he no longer possesses the power to reproduce the body and blood of Christ upon the altar. The removal of physical capacity here signals the diminished role of the priest in the reformed service oriented around common prayer. From a textual perspective, moreover, an economic and sparsely decorated text replaces the ornamental text of the Roman canon. We have no decorated initials and no series of words in black type broken on the page by red crosses. The reformed black crosses become momentary exceptions to an otherwise undecorated Mass book. The text of the liturgy no longer communicates visually the physical breaking of body and blood as sacrifice; instead, it corresponds to an act of remembrance that pushes back against the corporeality of both Christ and the priest.²⁹

²⁸ Ibid, 95. The 1549 text of the complete prayer appears as follows: “Heere us (O mercyfull father) we beseche thee: and with thy holye spirite and worde, vouchesafe too bl ✠ esse and sanc ✠ tify these thy gyftes and creatures of bread and wyne, that they may bee unto us the bodye and blood of thy moste deerly belove sonne Jesus Christe.” *Book of Common Prayer* (London: 1549), sig. Ti r.

²⁹ Rosendale provides support for this claim, suggesting that “The Protestant sacrament [of communion] factors out this physical presence and thus turns this central figure of identity and its attendant organizational orientation back toward community” (115).

While the 1549 *BCP* paves the way for a more de-corporealized liturgy, its indebtedness to the rubrics of the Roman Missals proves that the residues of Catholic liturgy inhere in the text of the reformed rite. We know from the rubrics of the *Missale Romanum* that instructions for the carriage of the priest's body accompanied the words of consecration, and that after consecrating both bread and wine the priest was instructed to physically handle the elements and elevate them for the people to behold and adore. While the *BCP* sought to eliminate any ritual action of venerating the host, the 1549 edition instructs the priest, "Heere the priest must take the bread into his hands" and "Heere the priest shall take the cup into his hands."³⁰ While the elements in question are re-signified as memorial reconstructions of Christ and not as his physical body and blood, the corporeal proximity between priest and element, or "creatures" as the *BCP* calls them in all its major editions, remains. However, the editions of the *BCP* after 1549 remove this instruction, leaving us with a prayer of institution that requires no gestural action and prohibits public viewing of the elements: "These wordes before rehersed, are to be said, tyrnynge styll to the alter, without any elevation, or shewyng the sacrament to the people."³¹ This instruction not only guards against the exposure of the elements by the priest and the adoration of them by the people, but it redefines the ritual action as a quick recitation of a premeditated text that dismisses any contact between priest and elements. The theological reforms of the *BCP* manifest themselves as hermeneutic reforms as well, for liturgy has now become almost exclusively verbal, and the sacrament of Eucharist has become a memorial paraphrase rather than a literal sacrifice.

³⁰ *BCP* (1549), sig. Cii v. Rosendale casts the 1549 prayer book as "an ambivalent articulation of eucharistic theology" and focusing on its instantiation of the elements as figures. They come to suggest "not transubstantiation, but *trope* -- a *metaphorical* (and thus interpretive) understanding of the elements of the body and blood of Christ" (95-6; italics his).

³¹ *BCP* (1549), sig. C.lxi v.

The changes to the nature of Eucharistic sacrifice as outlined in the prayer book relate, finally, to the broader shift to a de-corporealized and dialogic worship service that emphasizes language rather than sacralizes action. Whereas the *Missale Romanum* focused almost exclusively on the bodily deportment of the priest as a necessary correlative to the body of Christ made present in the Mass, the *Book of Common Prayer* offers instructions pertaining to the recitation of the prayers and the creation of a dialogue with the congregants. A brief catalogue of the *BCP*'s liturgical tropes may look like this: "Then shall the priest say"; "Then shal be sayde"; "The minister shal make the exhortacion"; "Here the priest shall rehearse"; "Then shall follow the Collect of the daye"; "And the Epistle and Gospel being ended, shall be said the Crede."³² This catalogue of rubrics proves instructive for the analysis of a reformed liturgy because the instructions do not only apply directly to the words spoken by the priest but they also remove the priest from the grammatical and liturgical subject positions of the sentences themselves. For example, the last rubric makes "Epistle," "Gospel," and "Crede" the compound subjects of the verbs "ended" and "shall be said"; likewise, in the previous rubric, "Collect" is the subject of "shall follow."

By creating a dialogic worship service, the *BCP* removes both the corporeal and rhetorical emphasis that the *Missale Romanum* places upon the priest and transfers it to the joint prayer of priest and people. The effect of this shift is that the recitation of prayer texts supersede their corporeal enactment. The words of the prayers and not the deportment of the bodies praying them now become the focus of the reformed liturgy. This rubrical focus on language rather than on physical action results in what Ramie

³² These specific rubrics are taken from the 1552 edition but their use remains consistent across the major editions of the *BCP*.

Targoff cites as the creation of “the proper relationship between laity and clergy” defined by “an explicit delegation of devotional voice from one body to the other.” As she puts it, “The efficacy of the priest’s prayers could be measured only by the extent to which the worshippers felt adequately represented.”³³ While the rubrics of the *BCP* continue to focus on the act of speaking, the prayer book’s emphasis remains on the words and not the speaker.

These revisions to the rubrics and *mise-en-page* of the *Book of Common Prayer* provide a case study in the nature of liturgical reform more generally. In place of bicolored text adorned with illustrations, we have spare prose set in black type in the prayer book; in place of a rood screen and altar we have a plain communion table; in place of jeweled vestments and altar linens, we have plain white cloths. The revision of these rubrics suggests the reformers’ efforts to disassociate the liturgy from the realm of the magical, the supernatural, and the occult and, moreover, the prayer book’s commitment to an unadorned liturgy that shifts emphasis from illustrations of the body to the word itself. Ultimately, the *BCP* institutes a practical and linguistically accessible liturgy in place of a sacramental and theologically mysterious (not to mention linguistically elite) liturgy. In doing so, it establishes a direct dialogic connection between priest and people that dismantles the symbolic functions of incense, relics, and candlelight processions. By promoting a codified liturgy set in common language, the *BCP* seeks to resolve the English nation of all liturgical ambiguities.

³³ Targoff, 26.

“Bell, book, and candle, candle book and bell”: Faustus’s Liturgical Attachments

My consideration of the rubrics of the *Missale Romanum* and the *Book of Common Prayer* provides a theoretical framework for investigating a similar conflation of word and body, of liturgical text and bodily action, in three specific scenes from Marlowe’s play. Faustus’s initial spell over the conjuror’s circle in Act One partakes of liturgical language insofar as it evokes the sacramental actions of baptism, as well as the language of the Mass and the doctrine of the Trinity. Secondly, his conjurations during the interlude at Rome, often dismissed as trivial comedy, emerge as the religious bedrock of the play, for the scene suggests not only Faustus’s ability to make Pope Adrian’s dish and cup disappear, but also his attachment to the vessels that act metonymically for the Eucharist itself. Finally, Faustus’s signing the deed of gift by cutting into his flesh, coupled with his final vision of Christ’s blood streaming in the firmament, suggests his saturation within a Catholic culture of corporeal piety. By reading these scenes from the perspective of Catholic devotion, we can appreciate Faustus less as one who, in Catherine Belsey’s terms, “perform[s] the ceremonies and Latin invocations which constitute a travesty of the signifying practices of Christian knowledge,” and more as one whose outwardly verbal travesty of Catholicism also reveals his implicit fascination with the Roman liturgy itself.³⁴ As my examination of these scenes will show, the character of “Doctor Faustus” sometimes slides into the character of “Father Faustus,” the scholar

³⁴ Belsey, 73. Belsey suggests that the play “is poised between two problematics, a discursive knowledge which does not lead to power, and an empirical knowledge which is not yet certain of its own project or its authority” (73). She recognizes Faustus’s desire to combine these discourses as that which prevents him from becoming a coherent subject. I would suggest that the play is also poised between the more specific discursive problematics of Catholicism and Protestantism and that Faustus cannot break from the Roman rituals as definitively as Belsey suggests. In a more recent investigation, Angus Fletcher reads Faustus’s psychological trauma, which stems from his inability to fully know the “otherness” of God and life after death, as an indication that Faustus “feels trapped in a world of doubled perspective, where the repeated reversal of viewpoint [with regard to salvation] endlessly confirms his distance from a place of genuine satisfaction” (203).

who is fascinated with the priestly powers, especially that of transubstantiation, that he desires but does not yet possess.

Faustus's attachment to the Catholic liturgy, demonstrated in these scenes, prompts us to consider his relationship to theatre, magic, and religion more broadly. One could make the argument, as Belsey does, that Faustus's attention to Catholicism is meant satirically, thus exposing the corruption of the papacy. It would follow, then, that Faustus sympathizes with reformist agendas. But even when Faustus appears to reject sacrality in the name of magic, he actually activates a performance of sacred ritual. Faustus gives Catholic liturgical language and action theatrical attention by dramatizing sacramental rites before the audience. In doing so, Faustus prompts us to ask whether he is not so much trying to play the occult conjurer but trying to play the ordained priest. What if Faustus performs a profaned sacrament because he cannot enact a valid one? Faustus's appropriation of sacramental language points, in part, to the theologian's recognition of his limited sacerdotal power, and it is this power – the power to conjure God's presence through liturgical instruments and texts – that Faustus most seeks. Though he ostensibly defies God in the name of Lucifer and displaces Christianity onto paganism, Faustus imitates liturgical language and action.

Faustus's spell constitutes a reverse exorcism, for instead of using scripted words and gestures to remove a demonic spirit from a believer, Faustus replaces the sacred with the profane:

Now that the gloomy shadow of the earth,
Longing to view Orion's drizzling look,
Leaps from th'antarctic world unto the sky,
And dims the welkin with her pitchy breath,
Faustus, begin thine incantations,
And try if devils will obey thy hest,

Seeing thou hast prayed and sacrificed to them.
 Within this circle is Jehovah's name,
 Forward and backward anagrammatized;
 Th'abbreviated names of holy saints,
 Figures of every adjunct to the heavens,
 And characters of signs and erring stars,
 By which the spirits are enforced to rise.
 Then fear not, Faustus, but be resolute,
 And try the uttermost magic can perform.
Sinit mihi dei Acherontis propitii! Valeat numen
triplex Jehovahae! Ignei, aerii, aquatici, terreni
spiritus salvete! Orientis princeps, Belzebub inferni
ardentis monarcha, et Demogorgon, propitiamus vos ut
appareat et surgat Mephasophilis. Quid tu moraris?
Per Jehovaham, Gehennam, et consecratum aquam quam nunc
spargo, signumque crucis quod nunc facio, et per vota
nostra, ipse nunc surgat nobis dicatus Mephastophilis.
 (A&B 1.3.1-22)

Like Jehovah's name "forward and backward anagrammatized," the conjuror's circle works according to the rhetorical principle of *copia*, or linguistic plenitude. The circle also circumscribes points of intersection between sacred and profane, evidenced by its coordination of astrological information and necromancy along with the hallowed name of Jehovah and "th'abbreviated names of holy saints," a likely reference to the long catalogue of saints' names included in the text of the *Canon Missae*.³⁵ The circle's polysemy also pertains to its circumscription of traditional and reformed religious rituals, which is best evidenced by the juxtaposition of English and Latin in Faustus's speech. Faustus describes the circle in English, but speaks the spell in Latin, the language of liturgical texts such as the *Missale Romanum*. The conjunction of English and Latin in the conjuror's circle intersects with the debate over vernacular prayer that lies at the

³⁵ The names of saints, including the patristic fathers and various doctors of the church, were included as a litany within the Canon and read prior to the words of consecration: "*Communicantes & memoriam venerantes in primis gloriosae semper virginis Mariae, genitricis Dei & Domini nostri Jesu Christi: sed & beatorum Apostolorum ac Martyrum tuorum, Petri & Pauli, Andreae, Jacobi, Joannis, Thomae, Jacobi, Philippi, Bartholomaei, Maththaei, Simonis, & Thaddei: Lini, Cleti, Clementis, Xysti, Cornelli, Cypriani, Laurentii, Chrysogoni, Joannis & Pauli, Cosmae & Damiani, & omnium Sanctorum tuorum*" (*Missale Romanum*, pp. 285-6).

center of liturgical reform. As Targoff notes, clerical texts like the *Missale Romanum* were not owned or read by the laity, which led to the publication of companion texts like the *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, which included “not translations from the clergy’s Missal, but instead...separate if often compatible texts for occupying the worshipper’s attention.”³⁶ The Latin liturgy, reformers concluded, disengaged the congregation from the liturgical action, such that one of the major interventions of the *Book of Common Prayer* was its de-Latinization of the liturgy. “The Protestants,” says Targoff, “wanted the congregation not only to hear, but also, more crucially to understand the prayers of the priest,” such that Cranmer’s reformed liturgy “was designed to connect the faculty of hearing to its cognitive and spiritual counterparts.”³⁷ On the one hand, Faustus’s prefatory remarks concerning the spell insist on the vernacular reform of otherwise arcane liturgical movements and rituals. On the other, he can only effect the spell by resorting to Latin, the language of the Roman church.

In addition to performing the spell that conjoins Latin and English languages and sacred and profane rites, Faustus also incorporates two other signs into his spell: holy water and the sign of the cross, both of which are used in Catholic and reformed baptismal rites where the priest pours water over a child’s head and invokes the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Echoing the action of pouring water and the tripartite linguistic formula, Faustus exclaims, “By Jehovah, Gehenna, and the holy water that I now sprinkle, and the sign of the cross that I now make, and by our vows, may Mephistopheles now rise to serve us” (20-21). Holy water is a distinct marker of Catholic baptism, which itself was seen as a kind of exorcism, for it released its recipient

³⁶ Targoff, 20.

³⁷ Ibid, 23.

the bond of original sin. The *Book of Common Prayer* also calls for the use of water in baptism, but not holy water. In Marlowe's play, Faustus states explicitly that the water he uses is holy (*consecratum aquam*) as opposed to unblessed, or common, water. While mere water could sufficiently evoke baptismal imagery, Faustus's specific mention of *consecratum aquam* signifies and even overdetermines the Catholic sacramental undercurrent of his purportedly occult act.

In addition to *consecratum aquam*, Faustus also mentions *signum crucis*, or the sign of the cross. He refers to the practice of tracing cross on the body or over an object or person as a way of invoking the aid of the Trinity and imitating the passion of Christ. For Catholics, the action is supernaturally efficacious: it marks physically the manifestation of divine assistance or saintly intercession. For reformers, however, the action is less corporeal and more symbolic, as evidenced by the following instruction from the *BCP*'s baptismal ritual: "Then the priest shall make a cross upon the child's forehead saying, 'We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.'"³⁸ Where the reformed rite makes use of the *signum crucis*, it does so only once and it emphasizes the gesture as a representation or sign. Moreover, the action is practical and unadorned. By contrast, the Catholic ritual uses both *consecratum aquam* and *signum crucis*, for it includes a series of crossings, especially during the blessing of the water, which calls for the priest to place his hands in the water and divide it four times by making the sign of the cross in it. We see, then, how

³⁸ *The Book of Common Prayer 1599*, ed. John E. Booty (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 275.

both sacramental rituals involve some kind of bodily signature, for the priest imparts a material sign onto the child thus marking him out as a member of Christ's body.

If both Catholics and Protestants recognize baptism as a ritual initiation into an ecclesiastical body, the church, Faustus redesigns this ritual to mark his initiation into the occult arts. By using the rhetoric of sacramental ritual to conjure devils, Faustus may profane sacramental rites, but he also situates such liturgical words and actions at the center of Marlowe's drama. His actions onstage, along with the words he speaks, manifest to the audience the very rituals he claims to eradicate. In this sense, we recognize that in this scene, Faustus's "spell" is a rhetorical assemblage of sacramental language. Faustus's apparent rejection and revision of Catholic sacramentality becomes nothing short of a performance of sacramental action. Faustus may mock the ritual events of baptism and the Mass, but he also performs them onstage. As a result, those attending Marlowe's play do not simply witness a theologian-become-magician lose his soul in a risky wager; they also witness a theologian performing the role of priest in a dramatic enactment of liturgical activity.

The saturation of the conjuror's circle within liturgical discourses anticipates Faustus's later inclinations toward the material objects used in the Catholic Mass. Faustus's liturgical sympathies become more evident during the interlude at Rome and his signing the deed of gift, two episodes that move us toward his eleventh-hour monologue during which he experiences a vision of Christ's blood streaming in the firmament. At the end of a winding tour-de-force through Prussia, France, and Italy, Faustus lands with Mephistopheles in the pope's "privy chamber" (A 8.24) in Rome, where the two "take some part of holy Peter's feast" (50). On the dramatic surface,

Mephistopheles and Faustus insert themselves invisibly into the private banquet attended by the ecclesial hierarchy – a banquet whose decadence signifies and also satirizes the corruption of the papacy. The pope’s emphasis on the ornamentation and display of his “dainty dish” (64) suggests the ease with which he moves from the altar, on which he prepares the sacred food of Eucharist, to his banqueting hall, where he enjoys more secular and more lavish fare.³⁹

Such a presentation of the scene explains its conventional interpretation as a parody of Catholicism, as elaborated by Clifford Davidson, who argues that “Marlowe’s portrait of Pope Adrian is consistent with contemporary Protestant statements on the Papacy.” Consequently, he reads Faustus’s liberation of Pope Bruno, who defies Pope Adrian’s authority, as “a victory for Protestantism.”⁴⁰ In another reading of the scene, Marjorie Garber nuances Davidson’s reformist interpretation by tracing Marlowe’s appropriation of the Corpus Christi plays, which often coordinated church and stage by presenting theology and scripture in the form of a play or *ludus*. Yet Garber concludes that Faustus’s invisible theatrics in Pope Adrian’s chamber enact an “anti-Mass” that shows how the Pope “approaches the meat and wine in an epicurean rather than a sacramental manner,” and that “he is physically prevented from partaking of the ‘troublesome banquet’ (80) by Faustus’s prankish intervention.”⁴¹

³⁹ The B text elaborates the parody by placing the papal feast after a papal procession that culminates in Faustus and Mephistopheles’s assuming the role of the cardinals of France and Padua and incriminating the rival Pope Bruno (a character omitted in the A-text) as a Lollard. During this scene, the Pope establishes his authority over his rival saying, “To me and Peter shalt thou groveling lie / And crouch before the papal dignity. / Sound trumpets, then, for thus Saint Peter’s heir, / From Bruno’s back, ascends Saint Peter’s chair” (B 3.1.94-7). At the end of the scene, the Pope casts the feast as a celebration of *his* political victory over Bruno: “Go presently and bring a banquet forth / That we may solemnize Saint Peter’s feast / And with Lord Raymond, King of Hungary, / Drink to our late and happy victory” (B 3.1.198-201).

⁴⁰ Davidson, 234-5.

⁴¹ Garber, 315. Garber reads the scene at Rome as a correlative to Faustus’s desire to turn his blood into ink and thereby resignify, or to use her term, “superscribe,” the covenant Christ authors in making bread

While the play coincides in many respects with the defiance of papal authority leveled by early Lollard reformers and later Calvinists and Lutherans, we must question whether the scene does not evoke something other than a critique of the papacy. I suggest that Faustus's participation in the papal banquet, like his spell over the conjuror's circle, parodies Catholic ritual only to witness its hold on England's cultural imagination well after the onset of the Reformation. Transgressive though it may be, Faustus's conjuration at Rome grants stage presence to the Mass itself by dramatizing Faustus's attraction to, and ultimate possession of, the "magical" instruments he seeks to possess: the dish and cup that, in the Catholic Mass, hold the consecrated body and blood of Christ.

By parodying the Eucharist during the interlude at Rome, Faustus identifies the Eucharistic context of the feast itself. For Faustus to "take some part of holy Peter's feast" is for him to become a participant – both an actor and a communicant – at the pope's table. Faustus's attraction to feasting underwrites the interlude at Rome, and in this short scene, Faustus aligns himself with holy food. After all, he takes the dish and cup into his possession. Nowhere in the play does Marlowe suggest that Faustus desecrates or disposes of the vessels. Faustus's seizure of the vessels can be interpreted in terms of his attachment to the Eucharistic sacrament and the props of its liturgical enactment.⁴²

and wine into the body and blood of a new testament. While Garber upholds the significance of the Eucharistic events in Marlowe's play, she too sees the scene as primarily parodic. On Corpus Christi drama, see Rubin, and especially V.A. Kolve, *The Play Called Corpus Christi* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1966).

⁴² Bynum attests to the denial of the chalice to the laity, indicating that the priest receives the precious blood on behalf of the congregants, a practice that remained at the forefront of the reformist critiques of Catholicism. Faustus's snatching of both dish *and* cup may also be read as an indication of such an objection, as he wrests from the seat of papal authority itself that which would ordinarily be refused him at Mass.

The pervasive iconography of holy food within medieval and early modern culture confirms that Marlowe's parodic Eucharist, despite its bite, gives the Eucharist dramatic attention. As Caroline Walker Bynum has suggested, food signifies sacramental experience not only for lay believers but especially for clerics. "By the thirteenth century," she argues, "the eucharist, once a communal meal that bound Christians together and fed them with the comfort of heaven, had become an object of adoration. The physical appearance of food on the altar was in fact a veil through which holy flesh was spiritually or mystically seen."⁴³ Taking part in the feast, Faustus partakes of the meal and then seizes the pope's dish and cup. Why would the conjurer who five scenes earlier renounced God fixate specifically on purloining a dish and cup? One answer lies in the observation that Faustus's thievery admits a fundamental attraction to the Eucharistic vessels, if not to the Eucharist itself. The dish and cup function as secular analogues to the paten and chalice, which are used solely by the priest for holding the bread and wine during the Mass. After the consecration, they hold not bread and wine but Christ's real body and blood. Given their physical proximity to the consecrated elements, then, the dish and cup also operate metonymically for the Eucharist itself. By stealing them, Faustus imparts his desire not only to take, but also to *make*, Christ's body and blood. In this regard, he is attracted not only to the sacrament but also to power a priest uses to produce it. By seizing the vessels, Faustus indicates his desire for the power that they signify -- a power that a theologian can write about but cannot possess.⁴⁴

⁴³ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 53.

⁴⁴ Here Marlowe also stages an episode in which the Eucharistic vessels are stolen, thereby suggesting their vulnerability to profanation. Rubin describes how the consecrated hosts were safeguarded "in lockable vessels [called *pyxes*, both before and after consecration." She quotes William of Blois, a thirteenth-century bishop who states that churches should possess "two pyxes, one of silver or ivory or enamel...or some other suitable pyx, in which the hosts are to be kept, and are reserved in due safety in locked custody" (45).

The Eucharistic scene at Rome anticipates a second sacramental episode, Faustus's writing of the deed of gift. As he gives his soul to Lucifer, Faustus uses his own body and blood -- his own *corpus* and *sanguinis* -- to author a demonic sacrifice. The entire episode turns upon the relationship between Faustus's words and his body, and the primary condition for effecting the contract is an act of bloody inscription. Providing his own rubrical instruction, Mephistopheles directs Faustus, "Then stab thine arm courageously / And bind thy soul, that at some certain day / Great Lucifer may claim it as his own" (A 2.1.49-51; B 2.1.48-50). Mephistopheles situates the demonic pact in the contractual contexts of Hebrew and Christian scripture. The Old Testament trope of "cutting a covenant" -- that is, of sealing an agreement between two parties with the blood of a sacrificed animal -- finds its New Testament analogue in Christ's sacrificial offering of his own body and blood on the cross.⁴⁵ Moreover, Christ's body and blood, offered as food during the Mass, embody his sacrificial passion. The blood of the lamb shed on the cross is outpoured, according to Catholic teaching, when the bread and wine are transubstantiated. In a recent study of the religious significations of blood, Bynum suggests that late medieval and early sixteenth century writers saw the shedding or spilling of blood as sacrifice, suggesting, "The characteristics of *cruor*, which can pour out yet remain (at least for a little while) red and living, are appropriate representations of

Rubin also sheds light on the fact that the Eucharistic vessels were provided for each church through the contributions of the laity, who bore financial responsibility for the ornate and usually expensive containers for the host. With this economic context in mind, we see how Faustus's stealing of dish and cup also scrutinizes both the Catholic emphasis on liturgical ornament and the suspect practice of obtaining luxury goods with the people's money.

⁴⁵ I have learned much about the old testament traditions of cutting a covenant from Michael D. Coogan's lectures on Hebrew scripture, as well as his text, *The New Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), esp. pp. 138-53.

Christ the *hostia* who both remains with God and yet spills onto humankind. But the blood of sacrifice...is an act – a ‘something done.’”⁴⁶

Bynum’s emphasis on *doing* – on the kinesis of contractual activity – enables us to see Faustus’s bodily signature as a deed in the senses of both agreement and action. The deed is signed and executed in blood, suggesting the necessary congruence of verbal promise and its corporeal enactment. The scene also dramatizes the rupture of signifier from signified central to Eucharistic semiotics, for Faustus’s flesh puts up a fight, resisting his intended pact with Lucifer. As Faustus cuts into his flesh and begins to write the deed, he says, “Ay, so I will. [*Writes.*] But, Mephistopheles, / My blood congeals, and I can write no more” (A 2.1.60-61).⁴⁷ The discrepancy between word and flesh is marked out by the linguistic transition from “Ay, so I will,” which signifies confirmation, to “but,” which signifies reconsideration and departure. Faustus’s “but” redirects his “ay”; it introduces both a corporeal complication and a verbal contradiction of the contract. The conjunction “but” also ruptures word from body. Not only does Faustus’s blood physically (and physiologically) stop the agreement, but his language also redirects his actions. Faustus’s attempt to use the tradition of blood sacrifice to sign his pact with the devil fails both corporeally and linguistically. As Faustus’s blood congeals, his language changes. The affirmation of “Ay, so I will” becomes the hesitation of “But.../My blood congeals, and I can write no more.”

This linguistic translation of “ay” into “but” raises an important point about the ultimate aim of Faustus’s contract. It brings us closer to ascertaining Faustus’s desire for the power of transubstantiation, which is what he really seeks in signing the deed of gift.

⁴⁶ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 224-5.

⁴⁷ The B-text substitutes “do” for “will,” such that Faustus says, “Ay, so I do” (B. 2.1.58-60).

It is significant that Faustus says to Mephistopheles, “Ay so I will,” for *will* can be regarded as Faustus’s signature verb. “Ay” becomes “I” in the first part of Faustus’s accession such that the speaking subject embodies the signifier of consent. Faustus’s pronoun, “I,” signifies his affirmation of the demonic pact. Prior to the grammatical completion of this sentence, however, “Ay so I will” is translated into “I’ll,” the contracted, and thus abbreviated, form of Faustus’s will.

The contraction, “I’ll,” connects the contract scene to an earlier speech, during which Faustus details the transformations that magic will enable him to perform. Having looked upon the necromantic books, he exclaims:

How am I gluttred with conceit of this!
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
I’ll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates.
I’ll have them read me strange philosophy
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings.
I’ll have them wall all Germany with brass
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenburg.
I’ll have them fill the public schools with silk,
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad.
I’ll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the Prince of Parma from our land,
And reign sole king of all the provinces.
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp’s bridge
I’ll make my servile spirits to invent.

(A 1.1.78-97; B 1.1.76-95)

The entire speech hinges on this single contraction, “I’ll.” By reiterating what Faustus “will” do, the speech is hypothetical, for it casts the efficacy of his magic in the future tense. More importantly, the repeated contraction, “I’ll,” urges us to consider the aims of

Faustus's magical powers. As the catalogue of projected actions unfolds, we recognize that Faustus desires to both amass goods like Indian pearls, learn occult philosophy and kingly secrets, and most importantly, to effect physical and metaphysical transformations. When Faustus hypothesizes that he will wall all of Germany with brass or will alter the natural flow of the Rhine so that it surrounds Wittenburg, he suggests that magic enables him to change the physical composition of things. Such logic can be gleaned in his earlier suggestion that he will erect a "bridge through the moving air / To pass the ocean with a band of men" and connecting "the hills that bind the Afric shore / And make that country continent to Spain" (B 1.3.103-6). At each of these moments, Faustus speaks of changing the natural, architectural, and geographical *substances* of specific phenomena. He desires to transform the mundane into something otherworldly. In short, Faustus finds in these magical transformations a secular analogue for the priestly power to perform substantial change. This power is the same power he located in the pope's dish and cup: transubstantiation.

Faustus's desire for transubstantiation also emerges through linguistic compression and revelation; that is, the grammar and syntax of his utterances reflects his attachment to the powers of substantial transformation. The contraction, "I'll," conceals Faustus's literal and visible "will" by assimilating the subject ("I") to the verb ("will"). By contracting Faustus and his will, the linguistic sign binds him semantically and grammatically to the promise of transformation that magic purports to give him. Moreover, the specific desire to change the substances of geography, architecture, and knowledge remains hidden beneath this most puzzling of words. The contraction approximates a deeper, inaccessible knowledge. "I'll" thus works as a kind of host. It

becomes the visible sign of a hidden reality, understood here as Faustus's penchant for occult transformation. To put it in the terms of transubstantiation, the substance of Faustus's "will" lies hidden beneath the accident, "I'll," such that Faustus's literal will -- his quest for priestly power and divine transformation -- is always concealed beneath the appearances of his attachments to profane magic and demonic spells. In the same way, the magic book functions as an accident for the liturgical book, which remains the textual substance of Faustus's acts.

In rhetorically litanizing his hypothetical desires, Faustus projects his plan of transforming ordinary geographical, political, and architectural substances into other realities. This transubstantiational agenda extends deeper into the contract scene, for in it Faustus uses his body and his blood to sign the deed of gift. The signature of Faustus's will, we could say, depends on his own blood sacrifice. But for Faustus, the signing of the deed of gift occasions the reaction of his body and blood against his words. It is no accident that the materials required to sign the deed are body and blood, or *corpus* and *sanguinis*. As in the *Missale*, both substances are implicated within an act of linguistic and corporeal rupturing. Faustus desires to cut a contract into his flesh and by so doing, hopes to achieve the powers of transformation that magic will provide. And Faustus, sensitive theologian that he is, follows the quasi-liturgical form of this contract, for he cuts into the flesh after he pronounces the deed verbally. "View here the blood that trickles from mine arm / And let it be propitious for my wish," he says (B 2.1.56-7). Faustus then elevates his bloody arm for Mephistopheles's observation. In this sense, his instruction to "view" elicits the practice of elevating the host, for Faustus has made a pronouncement, effected a change in his flesh, and now presents it to the gaze of another.

But the difference here is that Faustus's body does not correspond to the intention of his words, for his blood stops. "Is it unwilling I should write this bill? / Why streams it not, that I may write afresh" (B 2.1.63-4), he inquires. Despite his inclinations and attractions to the demonic pact, Faustus's body works outside Mephistopheles's stated rubrics and stops the first writing of the deed of gift. Faustus becomes bound to his own blood as his bodily gesture refutes his intended verbal promise.⁴⁸ His attempt to follow the demonic rubrics is stymied by his body and blood.

Given all we have said about the shifting liturgical and sacramental emphases that accompany the Reformation, it is possible to read this scene as the play's negotiation between a flesh-based sacramental regimen and a text-based scriptural program. For example, the contract scene ends with Faustus saying, "*Consumatum est*," or "It is finished," thus echoing the words of the crucified Christ. Here Faustus joins his demonic blood sacrifice to the divine blood sacrifice that organizes late medieval crucifixion piety. James Kearney resolves this paradox by saying, "Both the congealed blood and the inscribed flesh seem to be examples of divine intervention, and both interventions are equally ineffective in persuading Faustus to turn away from the contract." Relying on the notion that scripture itself embodies God's word in material form, Kearney suggests that Faustus's writing of the contract remains consistent with Protestantism, while his

⁴⁸ The physiological implications of this scene have not been fully assessed. A brief sketch of such an interpretation could account for the drying of Faustus's blood in the terms of humoral imbalance. That is, the blood congeals at this moment due to some disproportionate relationship among the body's fundamental fluids, notably a lack of blood. Fire brings the missing heat into Faustus's body and thus starts the flow of blood again. One might relate the apparent humoral imbalance to some kind of spiritual or theological confusion, though the implications of this reading lie outside the scope of my analysis. The landmark study of humoral physiology as it relates to early modern drama is Gail Kern Paster's *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993). Though Paster's study does not account for *Doctor Faustus* or the religious inflections of humoral theory, it has much to say about the scientific, sexual, and political contexts of blood in the period. On blood, see also Bynum, *Wonderful Blood* as well as Jean E. Feerick, *Strangers in Blood: Relocating Race in the Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

bleeding flesh evokes the “signs and wonders” associated with Catholicism.⁴⁹ Poised between the conflictual wills of word and flesh, Faustus embodies competing religious systems, emerging as a character defined by both the textual program of the Reformation and the blood piety of late medieval devotion.

Marlowe exposes this duality of word and flesh in the play’s final scene, where Faustus says in a psychosomatic frenzy, “See, see where Christ’s blood streams in the firmament” (A 5.2.74), a line omitted from the B-text. Faustus then says, “One drop would save my soul, half a drop. Ah, my Christ” (A 5.2.75), which is reproduced in the B-text as follows: “One drop of blood will save me. O, my Christ!” (B 5.2.145). Faustus recognizes that Christ’s blood can win him salvation and finally cries out, “I’ll burn my books” (A 5.2.116; B 5.2.185). It seems that at the end of the play, Faustus exchanges word *and* body for the redemption of his soul; that is, he offers two corpuses, both his library and his inscribed body, in exchange for Christ’s redemptive Eucharistic blood. Faustus’s blood, which initially stopped his signing of the deed of gift, connects to Christ’s blood, which he recognizes as salvific. Furthermore, if we read “books” as a broader metonymy for the Protestant program of *sola scriptura*, Faustus’s gesture can perhaps be regarded as his rejection not of the Catholic rituals he debunks earlier, but of the text-based program of salvation adopted by Protestant reformers. Encouraged by the promise of sacred blood, Faustus stands to relinquish his secular books.

“Due Burial” and Faustus’s Return to Church

If at the start of the play Marlowe places his protagonist in a literary milieu, he ends by subjecting him to a scene of de-corporealization. The rhetorical plenty that

⁴⁹ Kearney, 170.

Faustus embodies at the play's beginning gives way to his own devilish destruction: "See, here are Faustus' limbs / All torn asunder by the hand of death," remarks the Second Scholar (B 5.3.6-7). Faustus's death is unmistakably violent, limned as it is in the terms of a ruptured genealogy: "Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight" (B Ep. 1). If Faustus desired the clerical powers of transubstantiation so that he could change the substance of things, his death scene evokes an ironic inversion whereby Faustus becomes the body broken and the blood outpoured. This inversion generates the following questions: Is Faustus's death a damnable punishment or does it extend the contract scene such that Faustus's body and blood now become the means of his redemption? Does Faustus's recognition of Christ's blood in the firmament implicate him within an episode of affective piety focused on the crucifixion? And, by means of this *imitatio Christi*, can Faustus be saved?⁵⁰

The Second Scholar provides at least one piece of evidence for Faustus's salvation through Christ's physical and ecclesiastical bodies, a piece of evidence that has a liturgical antecedent. He says, "We'll give his mangled limbs due burial, / And all the students, clothed in mourning black, / Shall wait upon his heavy funeral" (B 5.3.17-19). The liturgical rites of "due burial" and "heavy funeral" will right, or put back together, Faustus's scattered limbs, as his body stands to be reassembled through ritual action. It is significant that the Second Scholar intimates that Faustus will be given "due," or proper, burial. This admission complicates readings of Faustus as necessarily damned, for those

⁵⁰ Following Christ's crucifixion, many of his apostles saw crucifixion as an *imitatio Christi*, or imitation of Christ. Saint Peter, for example, asked to be crucified upside down because he did not deem himself worthy of the same kind of death endured by Christ. Saint Andrew, moreover, was crucified with arms extended vertically for much the same reason. All I am suggesting in this reading of the final scene is that damnation may not be the end of the story. Given that dismemberment is such an iconic trope in the crucifixion narrative, it is possible to see representations of Christ's death in Faustus's demise and hence to argue for some kind of salvation even in the midst of apparent spiritual degeneracy.

who die in a serious state of sin would be denied proper burial, as is evident in the controversy surrounding Ophelia's burial in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.⁵¹

Marlowe's play ends with a scene of apparent damnation, but Faustus's demonic dismemberment is punctuated by the prospect of salvation offered through liturgical action. We cannot say where Faustus goes at the end of time, but at the end of the play, we know his body will be brought to church, where it will be subjected to the prayers, petitions, and rituals of the requiem Mass. Ironically, this ritual includes the same instruments that Faustus mocked a few scenes earlier: "Bell, book, and candle; candle, book, and bell, / Forward and backward, to curse Faustus to hell!" (B 3.2.93-4). Inscribed within the language and gestures of ritual performance throughout the play, Faustus's body is finally returned not to his study, but to the sacred space and liturgical rites of the church. The play's conclusion reaffirms its central paradox, for not only do we find Faustus situated between the forces of sacredness and profanity (emblemized by the Good and Bad Angels of the morality tradition) but we also find him poised

⁵¹ The suspicion that Ophelia took her own life is enough evidence for the priest to deny her the complete burial rites as prescribed by the church. The Priest says:

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful;
And but that great command o'ersways the order
She should in ground unsanctified been lodged
Till the last trumpet: for charitable prayers,
Flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.
Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial. (5.1.215-23)

Later, the priest favors expediency and admits, "No more be done. / We should profane the service of the dead / To sing a requiem and such rest to her / As to peace-parted souls" (224-6). The priest here expresses the seriousness ascribed to funeral ceremony sanctioned by the church and he provides sound evidence for the fact that the promise of a "due funeral" to Faustus cannot be taken lightly. It seems that a "due funeral" is exactly what is denied to Ophelia and, if we follow the priest's words here, it would include the requiem Mass and the consecration of the burial ground. Quotations from *Hamlet* are taken from the Arden 3 edition, eds. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Cengage, 2006).

between the verbal affirmations of Protestant textuality and the corporeal devotions of Catholic ritual.

Marlowe's play thus raises questions about the relationship of the body to the liturgy and, in a broader sense, about the interpenetration of conflicting liturgical languages and forms in the period's drama. The conflict between Faustus's bodily actions, which align themselves with Catholic ritual performance, and Faustus's verbal promises, which intersect with Protestant emphases on *sola scriptura* and papist critique, demonstrates how almost a century after the Reformation, the liturgical tropes of the Roman church extend their hold on English culture, at least in the aesthetic space of the theatre. Even after the *Book of Common Prayer* introduces a de-corporealized liturgy to England, Marlowe's play stages with keen intensity the corporeal sacramental rituals of the Roman church. Faustus's attraction to sacramental ritual and liturgical props suggests that magic marks out his ultimate desire to transubstantiate. Where John Cox argues that Faustus's "triumph over the Pope is profoundly ambiguous, for he succeeds only by the means that Protestants invariably attribute to the Pope himself: demonic power," I conclude that Faustus the demoniac cannot be separated from Faustus the pseudo-priest.⁵² Faustus's bodily actions speak louder than his words, for all of his ostensible conjurations take their root in the Roman liturgy. Finally, by granting such attention to Faustus's gestures, the play demonstrates how even in the midst of an emerging hermeneutic of the body as a rhetorical creation, the body can still upset such textual rubrics.

⁵² Cox, 56.

EUCCHARISTIC AFTERLIVES

Relics, Images, and Bodily Dissimulation in *The Changeling*

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* shows how, even at the turn of the seventeenth century, the body and the word exist in frustrated tension with respect to their figurations and functions in both Catholic and Protestant liturgies. While the Eucharist is the paradigmatic realization of these tensions, other devotional and aesthetic forms, namely relics and images, participate in the broader program of Eucharistic semiotics in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. While not the literal body and blood of Christ, relics and images extend the semiotic and somatic logic of Christ's physical presence to ordinary objects, whether crosses and clothing or bones and pieces of skin. They sanctify the ordinary, endowing it with a spiritually efficacious materiality. In addition to their devotional function as agents of spiritual intercession between the living and the dead, relics and images also make memorial and corporeal claims to the body. They keep the bodies of holy men and women alive in the devotional imaginations of those who use them in prayer and worship. Insofar as relics and images instate forms of bodily presence, they emerge as "Eucharistic afterlives," a term I use to describe the devotional practices that both stem from a Eucharistic theology of real presence and extend the iconography of Christ's body in space and time. These Eucharistic afterlives comprise what Eamon Duffy terms the "traditional cultus" of Roman Catholicism, and include such actions as

“the observation of fasts and holidays, the invocation of saints, the veneration of images and relics, pilgrimages, and the cult of intercession on behalf of the dead in purgatory.”¹

As Eucharistic afterlives, relics and images memorialize the body through figurative representation, but relics in particular also keep the dead materially present among the living. Even if the bodily remains of a saint are purportedly “dead,” they still possess the power to answer prayers and perform miracles. It is this questionable relationship of the bodily fragment to the body itself -- that is, the synecdochic figuration of the whole body in terms of its constituent parts -- that makes relics and images aesthetically appealing as well as theologically controversial. Images look like the bodies they portray and can spur affective responses in those who gaze upon them, but they are not bodies in and of themselves. Similarly, relics posit a trace of the material body, but do so through substitution and approximation. Relics and images thus skew the relationship between sign and referent, implicating them within the complex semiotics regarding sign and substance that governed the Eucharistic controversies.

As I will show in my reading of Thomas Middleton and William Rowley’s *The Changeling* (1622), early modern dramatists draw on the language of relics and image worship in order to depict bodies both sacred and profane as polysemous, unreliable, and even false signifiers. If an earlier text like the *Play of the Sacrament* redirected Eucharistic parody by concluding with a liturgical procession that reinstated the host in the sacred space of the church, Middleton and Rowley provide no such sacramental or episcopal correction. Instead, they recast the language of relic worship and visual devotion in order to manipulate sacramental signs and their referents, suggesting how

¹ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1992), 379.

religious iconographies can be travestied onstage and used toward ends that are anything but heavenly.

“Christ in Every Crumme”: A Theology of the Fragment

Relics and images work in concert insofar as they make both figurative and literal claims to bodily presence.² They conjoin promises of devotional intercession and human salvation to the body as a visual, tangible, and fragmented entity. But they also differ with respect to quality of the bodily presence they trace: whereas images are figurative representations of the body, relics are literal bits of the body left behind. Even the tiniest fragment of bone, the scarcest piece of flesh, or an object touched to a saint’s body transcends its identity as mundane artifact and assumes the other-worldly power to work miracles and answer prayers. Additionally, relics expose the body as a fragmented entity, engaging relations between the whole and the part on semiotic and somatic levels.³ In this regard, relics relate to the Eucharistic doctrine known as *pars pro toto*, which suggested that the entirety of Christ’s physical body consisted in every part of the

² Religious images have occasioned a number of excellent studies within the disciplines of medieval religion and reformation iconoclasm, including: Margaret Aston, *England’s Iconoclasts* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1988); Sarah Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Jeremy Dimmick, James Simpson, and Nicolette Ziemann, eds., *Images, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm in Late Medieval England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2002); Carlos M.N. Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1989); John Dillenberger, *Images and Relics: Theological Perceptions and Visual Images in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1999); and Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Studies of relics are fewer, but include: Dillenberger; Ronald Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave, 1995); Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981); and Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991).

³ In this respect, relics in particular participate within what David Hillman and Carla Mazzio term a “new aesthetic of the part” in their introduction to *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), xiv. Relics are given but a passing reference in this discussion, however.

consecrated host even down to its crumbs. Like the consecrated host, the bones of a saint and even the objects touched to those bones comprise the essence of the saint's entire body.⁴ As Caroline Walker Bynum has noted, relics claim wholeness through partition: "Every part [of the body], like every morsel of Christ's body eaten at the altar, was a whole."⁵ The poet Richard Crashaw says it best when referring to Christ as "he / Who, howsoe're clad, cannot come / Less then whole CHRIST in every crumme."⁶

Crashaw's depiction of the host as a crumb that contains the whole Christ suggests that it is the relic of all relics: it is the bodily fragment (whether as crumb or hand-held wafer) that contains the full essence of Christ's body. The Eucharistic logic of *pars pro toto* -- "whole CHRIST in every crumme" -- enables worshipers to meet their God flesh to flesh and bone to bone when the host is placed on the tongue and, upon consuming the wafer, experience full intimacy with Christ in both spiritual and physical terms. Because Christ's body was said to exist totally in every part of the consecrated bread, the communicant recognized not only a correspondence between the bread and the body but a full and reliable assimilation of Christ to a visible, tangible, and edible form.

Like the host, relics claim to comprise the entire essence of a body in a single part. In this regard, relics are not mere objects, trinkets, or fetishes because they also transcend the "irreducible materiality" that William Pietz has ascribed to the fetish proper: they are not simply objects that acquire power or value in and of themselves, but

⁴ It is not mere coincidence that relics were the literal foundation of the Mass, for Catholic altars were regarded as sacrificial edifices because they contained within them relics of the saints in contrast to reformed communion tables, which were utilitarian objects divested of any traces of physical presence. In *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2009), Elizabeth Williamson notes, "Relics were embedded in [altars] to sanctify them as the holiest places in the church" (73).

⁵ Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia UP, 1995), 108.

⁶ Richard Crashaw, "Lauda Sion Salvatore. The Hymn for the Blessed Sacrament," in *The Complete Poetry of Richard Crashaw*, ed. George Walton Williams (New York: Anchor Books, 1970), 183.

they are either objects that posit a direct link to a physical body or parts of that body themselves.⁷ Sarah Stanbury marks out the distinction among relic, fetish, and image in terms of visual devotion in the Middle Ages, suggesting that the “materiality” of relics is “crucial to their efficacy, such that the relic, unlike the image, “contains matter and spirit in a miraculous fusion that exemplifies the resurrection of the body.”⁸ In addition, relics activate corporeal presence and the spiritual benefits that accompany it. In Peter Brown’s terms, they bring down to earth “the physical presence of the holy, whether in the midst of a particular community or in the possession of particular individuals.”⁹

If Catholics understood relics as the material bridge between an earthly worshipper and a heavenly body, reformers saw such a claim to reliable and real presence as a fleshly distraction from the spiritual imperatives of worship. Relics are dangerous to the reformed imagination because their claim to bodily presence is specious at best and blasphemous at worst. As Alexandra Walsham notes, “The notion that the body parts and the possessions of Christ and the saints were sources of supernatural power and conduits of heavenly grace ostensibly flew in the face of a system of faith that powerfully

⁷ William Pietz, “The Problem of the Fetish, I,” *Res* 9 (Spring 1985), 7. As Pietz claims, “The truth of the fetish resides in its status as a material embodiment; its truth is not that of the idol, for the idol’s truth lies in its relation of iconic resemblance to some immaterial model or entity” (7). I would extend Pietz’s distinction to suggest that the fetish is also unlike the relic, for it does not possess an inherent claim to, or trace of, a literal body; rather, it is an object that itself acquires power from its cross-cultural exchanges and uses.

Contrasting relics with pagan ruins, C. David Benson distinguishes secular remains from sacred body parts. One works in the name of memory, the other in the name of action. “Instead of simply providing the impetus for the memory of former magnificence,” he says, relics “grant tangible rewards: the hope of eternal salvation rather than the melancholy recollection of ruin.” Cf. Benson, “The Past, the Present, and the Future in Medieval Surveys of Roman Relics,” in *Medieval and Early Modern Devotional Objects in Global Perspective*, eds. Elizabeth Robertson and Jennifer Jahner (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2010), 125.

⁸ Stanbury, 117.

⁹ Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 88.

re-emphasized the transcendence of the sacred and the incorporeality of the divine.”¹⁰

Reformers deplored such practices as the digging up of corpses for the perceived spiritual benefits of praying to, gazing upon, and touching the dead; adoration of relics and bodies; and the seeking of miraculous cures from relics. Such corporeal fixations led people to misconstrue the proper relationship between a spiritual or sacramental sign and its divine referent.

Such objections work within the overarching paradigm of Eucharistic semiotics because they instate a discrepancy between sign and referent, thus provoking reformist objections that do not differ all that much from similar rejections of transubstantiation. No matter how authentic a relic or how lifelike an image, both are always approximations or substitutes of the body they claim to represent. As Carlos M.N. Eire suggests, both Jean Calvin and Martin Bucer “charged that the miracles attributed to the departed saints were false because they detracted from the true mediatorship of Christ and made people believe that Mary and the saints could help in his place.”¹¹ Because relics are parts that stand in for wholes and likenesses that claim to represent the real, they are only specters of the body. Relics and images enable one to identify a tangible object with a divine reality. The object makes divinity accessible in material terms and, in the Catholic tradition, can obtain favors and impart graces. On the other hand, relics and images show how the material practices of traditional religion, many of which uphold material actions and notions of presence, always-already depend on figurative linkages that reveal

¹⁰ Alexandra Walsham, “Skeletons in the Cupboard: Relics after the English Reformation,” in *Relics and Remains*, ed. Alexandra Walsham. *Past and Present Supplements* 5 (2010), 121-2.

¹¹ Eire, 90. Williamson corroborates the claim, noting that “English Calvinists held that men and women would inevitably succumb to superstitious thoughts when confronted with material representations of religious subjects. Consequently these reformers underscored their reliance on the word of God rather than on false images of his divinity” (6).

themselves as fictional presences and thereby suggest the dissolution of the fleshly body itself.

“Plagued in Art”: An Aesthetics of the Fragment

The reformists’ theological objections to relics and images also evoke their aesthetic richness, for the grounds of these objections lie principally in the discrepancy between a representation of a divine body and the body itself. From the reformist standpoint, images and relics define the body through substitutions, approximations, attachments, and traces. An approximate body is not a real body, just as a finger bone of a saint is not literally the same as the saint’s body itself. It follows, then, that relics and images provide a lexicon for thinking about how bodies can signify falsely, a point taken up with enthusiasm by Jacobean dramatists. With that said, the regularity with which these dramatists refer to and reinvigorate relics and images suggests that the crash of the iconoclast’s hammer cannot definitively shatter the influence images extend over people nor can it attenuate the sensory attractions and responses they provoke. The opposition to relics and images, like the rejection of transubstantiation and the more systematic program of aesthetic minimalism in houses of worship, does not result in a large-scale eradication of their influence; quite to the contrary, it extends their cultural hold deep into Reformation England.¹²

In Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi*, for example, a scene of bodily forgery unfolds according to the Eucharistic language of substance and sign, body and

¹² James Simpson contends that even amidst the systematic iconoclasm that sought to purify Catholic churches of their imagistic ornamentation, “The very act of iconoclasm reaffirms and reactivates, even if it imprisons, the imaginative power of the image and the saint it represents.” Simpson, “The Rule of Medieval Imagination,” in Demmick, Simpson, and Ziemann, eds., *Images, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm*, 23.

representation. In Act Four, the Duchess gazes upon the waxen heads of her husband, Antonio, and their children. The dismembered heads are simulacra, but they successfully stand in for real bodies and deceive the Duchess into believing that her family is now dead, a point confirmed by her brother, Ferdinand:

Excellent; as I would wish; she's plagued in art.
These presentations are but framed in wax
By the curious master in that quality,
Vincenzio Lauriola, and she takes them
For true substantial bodies.¹³

Like Shakespeare in *Titus Andronicus*, Webster appropriates the Eucharistic language of substance and symbol in order to comment upon the complex relationship between model and copy -- between "true substantial bodies" and their "presentations...framed in wax." In the same play, moreover, the pernicious Cardinal kills his concubine, Julia, by presenting her with a "book of devotion" and inviting her to kiss it, after which he proclaims, "Thy curiosity / Hath undone thee. Thou'rt poisoned with that book" (5.2.290-5). This particular episode demonstrates how, with increasing frequency, English dramas appropriate devotional iconographies in order to destroy them. Here the unspecified "book" becomes a polysemous textual object that stands for a range of liturgical books including the Bible, the *Book of Common Prayer*, the breviary, and the missal. Used as a material object in the hands of the Cardinal, the word of God is sullied, signified as it is through a profaned religious object. The Cardinal's devotional book becomes not the means of grace or the hope of glory but but the agent of death.

Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* performs a similar travesty of religious imagery. In the final act, Giovanni enters with Annabella's heart skewered on a spear and

¹³ John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. Leah S. Marcus (London: Methuen Drama, 2009), 4.1.113-17.

“trimmed in reeking blood,”¹⁴ the emblem of Annabella’s sexual pollution wrested from her body by Giovanni with appetitive force. Giovanni’s gesture parodies devotions to the Sacred Heart of Christ, which became popular in seventeenth-century France, by making the bleeding heart into a sign of murder. By bringing Annabella’s eviscerated heart onstage, Giovanni recasts an image of religious devotion as one of erotic perversion: he moves us from *sacre coeur* to sullied core. Moreover, he situates Annabella’s heart in the context of a malignant banquet, one that recalls both Eucharist and crucifixion and conjoins it to the horrid act of plundering her body: “You came to feast, my lords, with dainty fare; / I came to feast too, but I digged for food / In a much richer mine than gold or stone” (5.6.25).

Perhaps the most poignant staging of the body’s semiotic and somatic manipulations is Middleton and Rowley’s *The Changeling*, a play set in Catholic Spain. Critics like A.A. Bromham and Zara Bruzzi, Annabel Patterson and Cristina Malcolmson have noted that the play registers the historical anxieties of James I’s proposed marriage of Prince Charles to the Spanish Infanta. This prospective union was unpopular, for with it loomed the threat of England having a Catholic queen even as it promoted English-Spanish relations.¹⁵ In addition to these political conditions of a mixed religious

¹⁴ John Ford, ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore, in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, eds. David Bevington, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Eric Rasmussen (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 5.6.10. All references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically hereafter.

¹⁵ The most detailed account of *The Changeling*’s social and political scaffolding is Bromham and Bruzzi, *The Changeling and the Years of Crisis, 1619-1624: A Hieroglyph of Britain* (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1990). They claim that “*The Changeling* encodes comment on contemporary issues,” which provides “a unity to the whole that it has hitherto lacked” (1). These “contemporary issues” include not only the Spanish marriage but also the so-called “Somerset Scandal” that involved divorce of Frances Howard, Countess of Essex from Robert Devereaux so that she could marry Robert Carr, the Earl of Somerset.

In a fine introduction to *The Changeling* in Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino’s *Thomas Middleton: The Complete Works* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2008): 1632-6, Annabel Patterson appropriately qualifies the position held by Bromham and Bruzzi by citing “ethical undecidability” as a heuristic more suitable than political allegory. She suggests that “the most that can be argued from this collage of internal

marriage, the play can also be situated in the history of liturgical reformation, for its performance in 1622 predates by just a few years the tenure of William Laud, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1629. Archbishop Laud reintroduced some aspects of Catholic liturgy, such as the use of incense and elaborate vestments for the clergy, demonstrating that even in the seventeenth century, elements of the traditional religious past resurfaced. Moreover, the Laudian reforms suggest the heightened variability of various strands of “Protestantism” or “reformation” in the period.

But the fictional setting and historical situation of the play in Catholic contexts should not be overdetermined, for Middleton and Rowley ultimately appropriate the religious discourses of relics and images to describe the false body of Beatrice-Joanna, who manipulates her body’s signification in the execution of her sexual will that defies the mandates of her father, Vermandero; her lover, Alsemero; and her servant-turned-master, DeFlores. Beatrice-Joanna’s defiance of patriarchy has been regarded by critics like Malcolmson, Michael Neill, and Maurizio Calbi in terms of Jacobean sexual politics.¹⁶ Such critical readings focus on the play’s “fiercely material world [where]

signposts and stage historical details is that *The Changeling* permitted its original audiences to intuit a connection between Spanish/Catholic interests, crimes of violence, and sexuality out of control” (Taylor and Lavagnino, 1635).

Cristina Malcolmson is particularly comprehensive in her treatment of the anxieties over Prince Charles’s marriage to the Spanish Infanta as it contextualizes the play. She treats the popular opposition to the Spanish marriage as indicative of the play’s construction of individual sexual will in the face of standing political constraints: “When Parliament petitioned James to stop negotiations for the Spanish match in December 1621, James’s imprisonment of members of Parliament and his published declarations enforced the difference between king and subject, the ruler and the ruled. He defined the petition as an attack on his royal prerogative and an example of insolent disrespect for ‘what appertaineth to the height of a powerful Monarch.’” Malcolmson, “‘As Tame as the Ladies’: Politics and Gender in *The Changeling*,” *ELR* 20.2 (1990): 320-39.

¹⁶ Michael Neill, “Hidden Malady: Death, Discovery, and Indistinction in *The Changeling*,” *Renaissance Drama* n.s. 22 (1991): 95-121; and Maurizio Calbi, *Approximate Bodies: Gender and Power in Early Modern Drama and Anatomy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), esp. ch. 2. While criticism on *The Changeling* is admittedly scarce when compared to other early modern tragedies, see also Deborah Burks, “I’ll want my will else: *The Changeling* and Women’s Complicity With Their Rapists,” *ELH* 62.4 (1995): 759-90; and Sara Eaton, “Beatrice-Joanna and the Rhetoric of Love in *The Changeling*,” *Theatre Journal* 36.3 (October 1984): 371-382.

carnal occupation is all” and its iteration of the “intimate connection between sexual transgression and the pollution of aristocratic blood.”¹⁷ While Beatrice-Joanna’s body registers the social and sexual anxieties that define power relations in Jacobean England, it is also represented through the deeply religious language of relic worship and visual devotion. At various junctures, Beatrice-Joanna’s body works as a false image and a forged relic, for the heroine manipulates the relationship between the signs her body inscribes and the referents to which they point. For her, relics and images work as the means toward semiotic manipulation, as her body becomes a point of deception for the male characters who view it only as an object of their sexual devotion. In her hands, these religious objects become tools of rhetorical dissimulation, not dissimilar to the tropes of metonymy, synecdoche, and metaphor, by which she makes her body an unreliable -- and downright false -- signifier. And yet, Beatrice-Joanna cannot escape visual devotion. She is ultimately reinserted into the collective gaze of the theatre as an image of sexual defilement and social pollution. Exposed as a signifier of unchastity, her body, once described as a holy object situated within a temple, soon becomes the image of profanity, cast into the sewer of defilement and desecration.

“I shall change my saint”: Beatrice-Joanna and the Devotional Speculum

Characterized as both relic and image, Beatrice-Joanna attempts to redress the male gaze by distancing herself from it and thus removing her body from the devotional speculum defined by Alsemero and DeFlores. In this regard, Beatrice-Joanna is both icon and iconoclast: her body provokes the gazes of the men around her and thus occasions their idolatry, while at the same time she frustrates and deludes their visual responses.

¹⁷ Neill, 97; Calbi, 33.

The play opens with a description of Beatrice-Joanna as a sacred image positioned within a holy space. She captivates the eyes of Alsemero, whom she will eventually marry and then cuckold, such that he makes her into the object of his visual devotion:

‘Twas in the temple where I first beheld her,
And now again the same -- what omen yet
Follows of that? None but imaginary.
Why should my hopes of fate be timorous?
The place is holy, so is mine intent;
I love her beauties to the holy purpose,
And that, methinks, admits comparison
With man’s first creation -- the place blest,
And is his right home back, if he achieve it.
The church hath first begun our interview,
And that’s the place must join us into one,
So there’s beginning and perfection too.¹⁸

Fixated on her body, Alsemero recalls how the image of Beatrice-Joanna pierces his eyes and settles in his heart. Alsemero’s speech renders her both objectified beloved and animate image; as a figuration of both Petrarch’s Laura in the *Canzoniere* and Dante’s Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova*, she precipitates Alsemero’s *latria*, or idolatry.¹⁹ Moreover, the sacredness of the space, Alsemero argues, sanctifies his sexual “intent.” Because he first gazed upon Beatrice-Joanna in a “temple,” he concludes not only that such an act is

¹⁸ Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Changeling* (New Mermaids), ed. Michael Neill (London: Methuen Drama, 2007), 1.1.1-12. All references to the play are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically hereafter.

¹⁹ *Latria* is short for *idolatria*, a term used to suggest the practice of idolatry, or treating images as though they were the divine beings to which they refer. Sir Thomas More uses this term in his defense of images, when he says

So that yf latria, that is the specyall honoure due to god stode in suche thyngs /
than were we greve ydolaters / not in our worshyp done to sayntes onely and
theyr ymages / but also to men / one to another among our self. But all be it
that god ought of duty to have with our body the most humble and lowly
reverence that we can possyble devyse / yet is not the bodyly worshyp
latria / but if we so do it / that in our mynde we consydre and knowledge
hym for god / and with that consyderacyon and intende do hym that worshyp.
And so doth as I thynke no crysten man to ymage or saynt eyther. And so is
avoyded the parell [peril] of ydolatrye.

Sir Thomas More, *A dialogue of syr Thomas More knyghte: one of the counsayll of our soverayne lord the kyng and chauncelloure of hys duchy of Lancaster* (London: 1539), sig. lxxvii v.

a legitimate form of worship but also that his pursuit of her is an act of grace.²⁰ As he says, “The church hath first begun our interview, / And that’s the place must join us into one” (1.1.10-11). “Interview,” of course, suggests not only a meeting or interrogation but also an exchange of gazes -- an “inter-viewing” by which the visual faculties of lover and beloved, image and worshiper, interpenetrate.

Visual devotion was one of the most formative spiritual mechanisms in the years leading up to the Protestant Reformation, and the experience of sight was foundational to the experience of prayer. In her revealing account of visuality and religion in late medieval England, Sarah Stanbury argues, “The drive to *see* was one of the great passions and great myths structuring medieval representation” and she notes that “the desire to see fuels some of the most important prose and poetry of the late Middle Ages.”²¹ The most provocative and pervasive conjunction of sight and religious devotion is evident in the practice of Eucharistic gazing, which maintained that simply looking upon the consecrated host was enough for a layperson to obtain the spiritual privileges associated with actually receiving the host. In late medieval Catholicism, to see the elevated host was to taste the goodness of the Lord. As Eamon Duffy describes this cult of Eucharistic visuality, “To see the Host, however fleetingly, was a privilege bringing blessing,” for “grace came by seeing the Host: to see it was to be blessed.”²² Caroline Walker Bynum describes the process of Eucharistic gazing as a shift in the devotional patterns of medieval worship that occurred in the thirteenth century. She writes: “The

²⁰ In his introduction to the New Mermaids edition of the play, Michael Neill includes a photograph of a 1988 production by the London National Theatre, which shows as elements of the *mise-en-scene* a life-sized crucifix, ornate candles, a rood screen, and alcoves on either side such that the stage resembles a sanctuary. But in spite of the Catholic iconography, this “sanctuary” contains no altar. See Neill, ed., *The Changeling*, xxxvii.

²¹ Stanbury, 6 (*italics in original*).

²² Duffy, 101-2.

Eucharist, once a communal meal that bound Christians together and fed them with the comfort of heaven, had become an object of adoration...whether or not one held or tasted the wafer, one could meet Christ at the moment of his descent into the elements -- a descent that paralleled and recapitulated the Incarnation.”²³ Bynum suggests that through this shift from taste to sight one could incorporate Christ’s body and its attendant graces visually. The eye, like the mouth, is a portal through which an intensely physical and profoundly literal communion between Christ and lay person is said to occur.

I pause over these historical and theological contexts for devotional gazing because it is this very language that Alsemero uses to figure his sexual pursuit (the desirous gaze) of Beatrice-Joanna as a sacred pursuit (the devotional gaze). The deformed servant, DeFlores, continues this metaphorical pattern at the beginning of Act Two, where he sharpens the connection between visual devotion and erotic desire:

Yonder’s she.
 Whatever ails me, now alate especially
 I can as well be hanged as refrain seeing her;
 Some twenty times a day -- nay not so little --
 Do I force errands, frame ways and excuses
 To come into her sight. (2.1.27-31)

There is something physically penetrating about Beatrice-Joanna’s image, for DeFlores admits that his need to gaze upon her has become an appetite if not an addiction. He effectively transposes Beatrice-Joanna from the register of an image to that of an idol. As Julia Reinhard Lupton suggests, while images and icons suggest representation of a deity through a particular medium, an idol is treated like the deity itself. Tracing the difference etymologically, she contends, “The word *eidolon* in Jewish and early Christian polemics tended to emphasize the representation of false gods (*OED* I.1), whereas *eikon* was used

²³ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 53.

to refer to representations of all kinds, including but not limited to images of the true God.”²⁴ By directing his everyday movements toward opportunities to come into her line of sight, DeFlores makes Beatrice-Joanna into the subject of his idolatry, a point he reiterates a few lines later: “She turns her blessed eye upon me now, / And I’ll endure all storms before I part with it” (50-51). In the next scene, he consolidates this conceit by saying simply, “I must see her” (2.2.66). DeFlores figures Beatrice-Joanna as an living agent of grace: for him to gaze upon her is to receive what she dispenses from “her blessed eye.” The image of Beatrice-Joanna offering DeFlores a form of visual benediction corresponds to the practice of gazing upon the elevated host with the intention of receiving its graces. In this respect, DeFlores transforms Beatrice-Joanna into nothing other than a version of that host: her body dispenses blessings simply by his gazing upon it and his visual communion with her stokes his desire for sexual consummation. Whereas Alsemero situates Beatrice-Joanna within the sacred space of the temple, which he construes as a portent of their sacramental marriage, DeFlores elevates Beatrice-Joanna to the sacramental and salvational position of the consecrated host itself. She is the host he venerates, the real presence he seeks.

But the play allows these Eucharistic refashionings of Beatrice-Joanna’s body to go only so far because Beatrice-Joanna resists the male gaze and the sacro-sexual idolatry it precipitates. What is more, her own position relative to the gaze is complex. Beatrice-Joanna is never singularly icon, idol, or iconoclast; even as she precipitates optical attraction she resists the male gaze she inspires. Conversely, this resistance to the gaze does not preclude her own visual attractions. We can ascertain the heroine’s visual

²⁴ Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996), 183.

duality by examining a pair of her contrasting attitudes toward sight. During their first onstage meeting, for example, she qualifies Alsemero's reliance on visual perception, saying: "Our eyes are sentinels unto our judgments... But they are rash sometimes, and tell us wonders / Of common things, which when our judgments find, / They can check the eyes, and call them blind" (1.1.67-72). Over the course of the play, Beatrice-Joanna similarly resists the male gaze, and in doing so attempts to strip away the sensory pleasures of images and sensory devotions.

At the same time, however, she admits her own visual attractions and the gazes she uses to exert her sexual and political will. For example, at the beginning of 2.2., Beatrice-Joanna addresses Alsemero by drawing on the same religious imagery of his opening speech, and in doing so, rescripts the relation of gazer to the object of the gaze. She now asserts visual agency:

I have within my eyes all my desires:
Requests that holy prayers ascend heaven for,
And brings 'em down to furnish our defects,
Come not more sweet to our necessities
Than thou unto my wishes. (2.2.8-12)

On the surface, Beatrice-Joanna appears to use the same language of visual idolatry used and understood by Alsemero; in this sense, she complicates the iconoclastic characterization I have outlined previously. However, it can be argued that while Beatrice-Joanna expresses her physical attraction to Alsemero -- her union with him, after all, drives the murderous plot that ensues -- she also baits him with the religious conceits that he has already used. In this sense, she uses religious iconographies of the body and the gaze to first invert the sexual political hierarchy by asserting her erotic will over the commands of her father and secondly turn the terms of the gazer-gazed relationship such

that she now holds Alsemero as well as DeFlores within *her* sight. She may be the object of their veneration, but she is an object that hinders rather than heeds their orisons.

Beatrice-Joanna's intention to twist prayers toward the fulfillment of her will betrays her intention to deceive and dissimulate, an intention she speaks earlier when she says to her father, Vermandero, who has betrothed her to Piracquo, "I shall change my saint, I fear me: I find / A giddy turning in me" (1.1.148-9). This language clinches the manner by which Beatrice-Joanna engineers bodily and rhetorical transformations, sliding from the role of saint to that of sinner with unproblematic ease. Likewise, Beatrice-Joanna moves from Piracquo to Alsemero with few scruples; as the play unfolds, we see how her scheme to make this erotic transition grafts her to DeFlores through the complicated terms of an erotic transaction. Beatrice-Joanna, as we know, is a changeling: she moves from man to man, from caprice to caprice, from one sexual peccadillo to another. By framing these slippages of the will in terms of sainthood, she suggests that for her, the term "saint" functions less as a marker of heavenly intercession, relic worship, or pious devotion and more as a slippery term of exchange and a signifier of her canny dissimulations. Her sainthood, then, is changeable; it is rhetorical more than it is theological, and it draws men toward her by means of physical gestures only to render those gestures incomplete and misleading. Beatrice-Joanna's "giddy turning" provokes her to "change [her] saint"; what appears to DeFlores and Alsemero as a "blessed eye" and a "holy purpose" is, by means of Beatrice-Joanna's propensity to change and exchange identities, a cause for suspicion -- a suspicion raised by Tomazo de

Piraquo when he cautions his brother Alonzo, “Your faith’s cozened in her, strongly cozened” (2.1.127).²⁵

“I could not get the ring without the finger”: Gloves, Hands, and Bodily Dissimulation

Beatrice-Joanna cozens faith by manipulating the signification of her body so as to frustrate DeFlores and Alsemero in their respective claims to inscribe her as the object of their devotion. In doing so, she rejects not only Jacobean political norms, but also relic worship and idolatry, by presenting her body as a tropological construct -- that is, as a system of signs intended to frustrate and falsify the claims to possess her physical body made by her father, her husband, and her lovers. Middleton and Rowley cast their heroine as one who regards her body’s physical properties as rhetorical tropes through which she skews truths about her chastity and manipulates her body’s significations in order to assert her sexual will. In particular, the tropes of synecdoche, metonymy, and metaphor enable Beatrice-Joanna to distance her male worshippers from her body, albeit temporarily, by imposing on them a bodily substitute that delivers false information. All three tropes center on some form of substitution or approximation, with synecdoche positing the most direct relationship between part and whole and metaphor the most abstract. Metonymy functions as a kind of middle term, working between the poles of synecdoche and metonymy, forging a relationship based on approximate similitude that does not require a literal inherence of the part within the whole.²⁶

²⁵ This characterization of Beatrice-Joanna as an ethical changeling is elaborated by Christopher Ricks in “The Moral and Poetic Structure of *The Changeling*,” *Essays in Criticism* 10 (1960), an excellent essay in which Ricks traces the polysemy of words like “service,” “blood,” “act,” and “deed,” words through which the play exposes “both the smooth facade of Beatrice’s virtue, and the crude facts of her lust” (292).

²⁶ Marjorie Garber aptly distinguishes between metaphor and metonymy when she regards metaphor as “the seeming-to-be-one; metonymy is the linkage, the chain of associations, the joint.” Garber, “Out of Joint,” in *The Body in Parts*, ed. Hillman and Mazzio, 42. An even more poignant distinction is offered by

Throughout the play, Beatrice-Joanna fashions her body as false image and false relic, attempting to deny Alsemero and DeFlores the real presences they seek. She presents a version of Eucharistic semiotics that points toward dangerous sacramentality (not to mention devious sexuality), for she relies on the discrepancy between signifier and referent not only to cozen faith, but also to provoke murder. The best example of Beatrice-Joanna's bodily dissimulation pivots on a series of moral undoings set into motion by the her compulsion to marry Alsemero, which frustrates her father's arrangement of her marriage to Alonzo de Piracquo. Beatrice-Joanna employs the deformed servant, DeFlores, in the murder of Piracquo but this mismanaged exchange ends with DeFlores insisting upon a sexual reward. Beatrice-Joanna enlists DeFlores to her service by enacting a form of bodily sublimation that relies upon the logic of relic worship insofar as it endows a sartorial accessory -- a glove -- with bodily presence and sexual potency. One act later, however, DeFlores turns the terms of the relic-body relationship by presenting Beatrice-Joanna with the ringed finger of Alonzo de Piracquo. This relic implicates Beatrice-Joanna within the murder and defines her as "a woman dipped in blood" and ultimately, "the deed's creature" (3.3.126, 137). Here Beatrice-Joanna emerges as complicit in a crime, her blood the marker of a sexual will that obligates her to copulate with DeFlores, thereby becoming the embodiment of *misdevotion* to her husband, Alsemero.

Middleton and Rowley deploy the relic as a heuristic for bodily substitution, thereby displacing a cult of religious devotion associated with body parts onto an agenda of sexual and social appetites that rests on a murder in cold blood. In the case of

Barbara Johnson, who writes, "In metaphor, the substitution is based on resemblance or analogy; in metonymy, it is based on a relation or association other than that of similarity." Johnson, *A World of Difference* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1987), 155.

Beatrice-Joanna, the relationship between an aura of physical presence and a body part becomes crucial to her first manipulation of DeFlores, which occurs in a pair of related scenes (1.1.222-35 and 2.2.57-155). In her hands, relics do not link up to bodily presence but become false markers of a body that he cannot fully access. In the play's first scene, Beatrice-Joanna uses a discarded glove to reject DeFlores, who then treats the glove as a real body. The glove and the fantasy of physical presence it inscribes substitutes for Beatrice-Joanna's real body an article of clothing that carries a physical trace -- a point of bodily access -- to its fleshly antecedent. DeFlores's handling of the glove likewise inscribes presence in the midst of bodily absence and confuses the signifier for the signified, for he finds in an article of clothing the bodily closeness of Beatrice-Joanna. Just as pilgrims flocked to pray before or even touch a piece of clothing worn by one of the saints, DeFlores approaches the gloves and touches them as though he were touching the body of his beloved. The glove houses presence, yes, but it is a deferred and incomplete (and incoherent) presence, one that cannot grant him the sexual reward he insists upon later in the play.

After Beatrice-Joanna drops the glove and DeFlores bends down to retrieve it, she retorts, "Who bade you stoop? They touch my hand no more" (1.1.226). DeFlores's physical repugnance alters even the accessory to Beatrice-Joanna's body, causing her to cast off the remaining glove: "There, for t'other's sake I part with this - / Take 'em and draw thine own skin off with 'em" (1.1.226-7). The glove relates as much to DeFlores's touch as it does to Beatrice-Joanna's hand, so by defiling the container of her hand he threatens the body part housed therein. In turn, Beatrice-Joanna's "parting" with the

gloves disjoins them -- and, by extension, DeFlores -- from her body and divides DeFlores's body into parts.

As Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones suggest, the gloves mark the dissolution of DeFlores's corporeality. "On DeFlores's hands," they claim, "[Beatrice-Joanna] wishes that they will be a physical reminder of her hatred for him, eating his skin like poison, so that when he takes them off, he will strip off his own skin."²⁷ This suggestion of anatomical disfiguration makes the gloves into phantom body parts, and in Beatrice-Joanna's hands, they act as a false skin that separates DeFlores from the real contours of her flesh. Beatrice-Joanna implies that DeFlores can access her body only through its artificial members, the gloves, which she transforms into agents of an epidermal mutilation.

But on *DeFlores's* hands, the glove functions as a relic of Beatrice-Joanna and thus acquires for him the status of a real body. In this scene, then, the play translates the spiritual identity of relics into signifiers of perversion, in this case, the marker of the socially-polluted sexual transaction that is to come. The logic of the glove, like that of the relic, is both indexical and supplementary: it marks presence in absence and threatens to stand in for or replace an actual living body. DeFlores exaggerates the trace of Beatrice-Joanna's bodily presence by making the glove into an actual hand, and then taking the hand as a substitute for Beatrice-Joanna's body itself. As representations of Beatrice-Joanna's corporeality, the gloves function as metonymy and synecdoche; once DeFlores construes them as her specific sexual part, they operate metaphorically. The metaphorical and metonymic dimensions of the gloves manifest the fundamental sexual

²⁷ Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, "Fetishizing the Glove in Renaissance Europe," *Critical Inquiry* 28.1 (Autumn, 2001), 127-8.

lack that characterizes DeFlores's associative knowledge of Beatrice-Joanna, for each device conveys the meaning of Beatrice-Joanna as something other than herself. Its synecdochic function, moreover, makes the glove into first a fake hand and then a fake vagina, and thereby signifies the literal emptiness of the consummation DeFlores achieves. Beatrice-Joanna permits DeFlores to enjoy her body only by transforming the glove into a relic. Because *his* hand placed inside *her* glove replaces the bodily intimacy denied him, DeFlores himself forces the glove to elasticize and thus enacts a metaphorical occupation of Beatrice-Joanna's body.

DeFlores's desire to "thrust my fingers / Into her sockets here" (1.1.231-2) suggests that he will violently pierce the female body. Yet, "socket" raises a telling contradiction. DeFlores uses the word as a metaphor for Beatrice-Joanna's sexual space, thereby transforming physical absence into fetishistic presence. However, unlike Beatrice-Joanna's body, the "socket" DeFlores preys upon is hollow; therefore, DeFlores occupies nothing but the air that composes his erotic replacement of glove with body. What is more, the socket of the glove calls to mind the socket of the eye, signaling DeFlores's earlier appetite for Beatrice-Joanna's gaze. The visual gaze and the tactile relic come together here in a performance of reciprocal bodily disjunction. Through the glove, Beatrice-Joanna conscripts DeFlores to the animating power of his own body, making both the meeting of eyes and the union of hand and glove dependent on his touch and sight alone.

The glove scene introduces another episode of DeFlores's sexual fantasy, one in which Beatrice-Joanna touches his face and DeFlores then multiplies this touch into an extended sexual meditation. He says, "Her fingers touched me!" (2.2.81). When Beatrice-

Joanna promises an alimantal water that will cure his pox, he asks whether she will apply it “with your own hands” (2.2.84). DeFlores’s proleptic fantasy replaces Beatrice-Joanna’s partial touch with an anticipated sexual consummation. And this fantasy continues the logic of the glove scene in scripting DeFlores’s relegation to a partial, reflexive, and self-consuming eroticism predicated on his mistaking the glove for an actual hand, the relic for a physical body:

O, my blood!
 Methinks I feel her in mine arms already,
 Her wanton fingers combing out this beard,
 And, being pleased, praising this bad face.
 Hunger and pleasure, they’ll commend sometimes
 Slovenly dishes, and feed heartily on ‘em --
 Nay, which is stranger, refuse daintier for ‘em.
 Some women are odd feeders. (2.2.151-7)

Here DeFlores takes the metonymic and synecdochic relationship of body part to bodily whole to its extreme, for the fingers of the glove now become Beatrice-Joanna’s hands combing his beard. Her fingers excite DeFlores’s blood to the point at which he casts himself as the prey to *her* desire. If Beatrice-Joanna “prais[es] this bad face,” she becomes the male wooer and DeFlores the female subject of her blazon. Moreover, locked in a false embrace, DeFlores presumably strokes his own beard and face and wraps his own arms around his body. The scene affirms, then, that Beatrice-Joanna’s touch does not animate the fingerless gloves; contrarily, it confines DeFlores to phantasmatic self-gratification.

Middleton and Rowley extend the imagery of the glove as a substitute hand and a relic of Beatrice-Joanna’s bodily presence in the third act, where DeFlores employs another manual image -- the ringed finger of the dead Piracquo -- to redress Beatrice-Joanna’s earlier scheme. While DeFlores misreads the glove as a hand and mistreats an

article of clothing as a relic of the body, he turns the terms of this very imagery in this pivotal scene when he informs Beatrice-Joanna that he has executed the murder of Piracquo and that she is implicated within it. To prove Alonzo's death, DeFlores returns to Beatrice-Joanna a incriminating piece of physical evidence: the finger of Alonzo bound by a gold ring. This "token" of the deed, as DeFlores calls it, suggests that the ring alone, which would have served as adequate proof of the murder, cannot be understood apart from the flesh to which it sticks. "I could not get the ring without the finger," says DeFlores, adding later, "for it stuck / As if the flesh and it were both one substance" (3.3.28, 37-8).

The severed, ringed finger acts as both image and relic. As an image, it signifies the dead body of Alonzo de Piracquo and confirms the completion of the murder by DeFlores, suggesting that he has upheld his end of the contract. As a relic, it inscribes a direct, fleshly linkage between Beatrice-Joanna's sexual will and the execution of Piracquo's murder -- a linkage that will be duplicated when Beatrice-Joanna forges another fleshly compact with DeFlores, whom she must repay sexually for the murder itself. In this regard, the severed finger metaphorizes Beatrice-Joanna's own penetrated ring that will serve as repayment for the murder. In addition to its graphic specularity by which it visually represents the completed murder, the ringed finger bears a physical trace to the dead body of Alonzo. In other words, when DeFlores says, "I could not get the ring without the finger," he suggests that the ring itself is not enough to confirm the physicality of the deed; instead, he needs both non-fleshly object and fleshly body. By melding object to body part, the ringed finger literalizes the claim to physical presence posited by relics themselves, for this "token" consists in both metal and flesh, body and

artifact, “as if the flesh and it were both one substance.” The ringed finger, though separated from Alonzo’s body, retains by virtue of its association to that body, its physical presence.²⁸ This object-body, then, demonstrates how relics work: the “flesh and it” are “both one substance.

But the ringed finger also scripts a narrative of sexual and political conquest, one that skews Beatrice-Joanna’s earlier manipulation of DeFlores and presents to her, in gruesome fashion, the image of her penetrated body. When DeFlores announces to her, “Y’are the deed’s creature,” he also reminds her of the sexual promise she made to him. In this sense, the relic of Piracquo undoes the false relic of Beatrice-Joanna, the glove, with which DeFlores was duped in Act One. DeFlores now presents to Beatrice-Joanna not only the physical remnant of her undesired lover but the physical reminder of the undesired sexual deed she must now render to DeFlores in exchange for the political deed he has executed. As an icon of a phallus penetrating a female ring, Piracquo’s severed finger becomes the image that damns Beatrice-Joanna.²⁹ One could go so far as to say that DeFlores forces Beatrice-Joanna not to venerate this relic, but to own its signification: her body will become the open ring that DeFlores has labored for the right to penetrate.

²⁸ Rings were commonly regarded as relics, usually held or worn as tokens to commemorate the presence of a deceased loved one, but also acting (sometimes simultaneously) as points of contact with Christ Himself. In *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988), Peter Brown offers a short account of Saint Macrina, who “always wore a ring containing what was supposedly a fragment of the Cross around her neck.” After the death of her betrothed, Macrina considered herself a widow and intended to be faithful to her dead spouse, and the ring signified such secular fidelity. But as Brown notes, “the ring and its relic were also the pledge of the enduring presence of Christ, her true Bridegroom” (272-3).

²⁹ This particular iteration of the ring as both metonymy and synecdoche for the woman’s body, and hence an image of sexual penetration and political exchange, is familiar from the circulation of rings in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, a point discussed by Karen Newman, “Portia’s Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The Merchant of Venice*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1987): 19-33.

Piracquo's finger is a counter-relic to Beatrice-Joanna's glove, for it stands as a body part that joins additional bodies together: where the glove acted as a sartorial substitute through which DeFlores could access Beatrice-Joanna's body, the ringed finger links Beatrice-Joanna to the murder of Piracquo and to the body of DeFlores. As the proof of both Beatrice-Joanna's murderous intentions and the violation of chastity that ensues from her sexual obligation to DeFlores, the ringed finger severs Beatrice-Joanna from the body she wants most: Alsemero's. In this respect, this relic sets up the play's definitive scene of bodily dissimulation, the chastity test, during which Beatrice-Joanna strives for a final time to alter her body's signification and dupe the men (in this case, Alsemero) who seek to read it.

The Flesh Made Trope: The Book, The Body, and the Chastity Test

Beatrice-Joanna's dissimulation of the body reaches its climax in the play's fourth act, which can be read as an extension of her semiotic and somatic duplicity witnessed in the glove scene. Here she skews the correspondence between bodily symptom and bodily truth in order to prove (albeit falsely) her chastity to her husband, Alsemero. Her bodily proof becomes a drama of false signification: she counterfeits the terms of bodily exteriors and interiors such that her body becomes, in her handling, a manipulable sign system. Beatrice-Joanna's sexual body is ultimately a semiotic body. Her flesh matters insofar as it can be re-signified; she understands the body as combination of tropes whose tenors and vehicles can be confused and rearranged at will.

At the beginning of Act Four, Beatrice-Joanna breaks into Alsemero's private closet and there discovers a manuscript believed to be Antonius Mizaldus's *De Arcanis*

Naturae, which contains a formula used to discover “How to know whether a woman be a maid, or not” (4.1.40). This chastity test calls for a woman to drink a spoonful of water from “glass M, which upon her that is a maid makes three several effects: ‘ twill make her incontinently gape, then fall into a sudden sneezing, last into a violent laughing -- else dull, heavy, and lumpish” (4.1.46-50). Armed with the knowledge that she has become the “deed’s creature,” and cognizant of the fact that she has fulfilled her sexual obligation to DeFlores offstage, Beatrice-Joanna tests the experiment on her servant Diaphanta and then memorizes the reactions so as to pass the test when Alsemero administers it in the next scene. When Alsemero instructs her to drink from glass M, Beatrice-Joanna remarks in an aside: “I’m put now to my cunning: th’effects I know, / If I can now but feign ’em handsomely” (4.2.137-8).

Much of Beatrice-Joanna’s appropriation of power in *The Changeling* emerges from her ability to make her body signify falsely through dramatic performance. From her entrance into Alsemero’s chamber and the interpretation of Mizaldus’s book that she enacts therein, we next move to Beatrice-Joanna’s rehearsal of the virginity test that enables her performance of a feigned chastity. Beatrice-Joanna’s impregnable body that resists contamination by Alsemero’s fluid finds a complementary enclosure in the heroine’s performance of the final two components of the virginity test. Through a metatheatrical rehearsal and performance of the symptoms of virginity, Beatrice-Joanna’s body-- her own physician’s closet -- resists the signification imposed on it and instead asserts its own set of meanings that Alsemero cannot interpret.

Beatrice-Joanna’s capacity to make her body signify falsely looms large in feminist readings of the play as a marker of feminine agency set against the patriarchal

conscription of female desire. For example, Naomi Liebler argues that Beatrice-Joanna relies on bodily performance to challenge the proverbial demarcation of the female body as the site of male authority. Beatrice-Joanna is a woman “who knows how to ‘act,’ in both senses of theatrical imitation and of taking action, on her own behalf.”³⁰ Similarly, working from the premise that Beatrice-Joanna not only feigns virginity, but also fakes orgasm, Marjorie Garber concludes, “The representation of female pleasure is itself a changeling. The existence of the possibility of fakeness protects the privacy and control of pleasure.”³¹

The heroine also exaggerates one of the basic properties of early modern drama, cross-dressing, which Gail Kern Paster refers to as “the contrast between fictional outer and insufficient inner.”³² Beatrice-Joanna does not only cross-dress, but she also cross-tests and cross-*texts*. Just as she earlier “changed [her] saint” and “cozened” Piracquo’s faith, she now presents her body as the flesh made trope. In doing so, suggests that as a writer can manipulate significations by using rhetorical figures, she can also deploy her body as a false currency that promises gratification to DeFlores and honor to Alsemero only to dissimulate the results each man expects. She formulates her body (the “fictional outer”) as an indicator of virginity (her “insufficient inner”). While her attempt to perform chastity temporarily resists patriarchal holds placed upon her sexual desire,

³⁰ Naomi Liebler, “A Woman Dipped in Blood: The Violent Femmes of *The Maid’s Tragedy* and *The Changeling*,” in *Women and Violence in English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Linda Woodbridge and Sharon Beehler (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 2003), 375. For additional feminist interpretations of the play’s sexual politics, see Eaton and Burks.

³¹ Marjorie Garber, “The Insincerity of Women,” in *Desire in the Renaissance: Psychoanalysis and Literature*. Eds. Valeria Finucci and Regina Schwartz (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994), 35. Following Freud, who connects gaping, sneezing, laughter, and melancholia with orgasm, Garber concludes that Beatrice-Joanna “produces the symptoms, the simulacra of orgasmic response, that delight her husband and confirm his apparent mastery of her” (27).

³² Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1993), 20.

Beatrice-Joanna's keen dissimulation of her body also makes a point about how the body can be narrativized. In this sense her body signifies less as fleshly material and more as textual matter, with glass "M" signifying not only maid (Alsemero's expected interpretation), but also mimesis (Beatrice-Joanna's performance), for Beatrice-Joanna uncovers Alsemero's script and copies the effects from Diaphanta's authentic reactions: "Th' effects I know - / If I can now but feign 'em handsomely" (4.2.137-8).³³ The bodily duplicity that Beatrice-Joanna enacts is fueled by her recourse to rhetorical "feigning," or the art of *fals semblant*, which enables her to twist the terms of her body's signification so that she may seem chaste when indeed she is not.

By studying the symptoms of the virginity test as demonstrated by Diaphanta, Beatrice-Joanna rehearses the outward signifiers of chastity she must perform in order to flatter Alsemero with a false referent. When Diaphanta laughs, Beatrice-Joanna responds in an aside, "Just in all things, and in order / As if'twere circumscribed; one accident / Gives way to another" (4.1.109-11). Beatrice-Joanna imitates these symptoms in a form of equivocation whereby she poses as chaste, or "circumscribed," by rendering the text of the chastity test legible and faking its symptoms. In effect, her body becomes the false relic that deludes believers into thinking that it performs some kind of spiritual function when in reality it is a forgery that, reformers charge, serves only to turn a profit.³⁴

³³ Garber conceives of orgasm itself as a kind of mimesis, "an act or acting out [that] poses a special problem[.] How can a lover tell the difference between origin and imitation, between the "fake" and the "real"?" ("The Insincerity of Women," 30). I am suggesting here that the dramaturgy of orgasm also relates to the more literal bodily reenactment of the symptoms of orgasm/virginity evinced by Diaphanta's reactions.

³⁴ Controversies over false or forged relics proliferated as early as the thirteenth century. As Ronald Finucane notes, "After the fall of Constantinople in 1204 the churches of the East were ransacked and crate upon rattling crate of bones was sent to the West," which resulted in some churches claiming to "possess Christ's breath in a bottle, his tears or blood, Mary's milk, or even the tip of Lucifer's tail" (31). The issue of duplicated relics, or even entire corpses, also figured prominently in anti-Catholic polemic, as did the popular belief that the bones of mere animals were substituted for sacred relics and hence used to dupe

While Beatrice-Joanna's performed orgasm has been read by Garber and others solely in terms of the virginity test, I extend her formulation to account for the literal fake orgasm personified by Diaphanta who, as a servant cast into the role of Beatrice-Joanna's double, also adopts the logic of bodily presence and substitution ascribed to relics. If Beatrice-Joanna metaphorically "fakes orgasm" in the virginity test, she then embodies such fakery by literally substituting Diaphanta for herself.³⁵ Insofar as Diaphanta is a substitution for Beatrice-Joanna's body, she functions loosely as a living relic: a body connected physically and politically, by virtue of her social position as servant, to Beatrice-Joanna's body. As a subservient female body that stands in for her master's own, Diaphanta, an outright changeling, disrupts the sexual joining that Alsemero anticipates. Like Beatrice-Joanna's glove, she marks the partiality of bodily consummation and once again presents a male suitor with a substituted version of Beatrice-Joanna's body. Additionally, Diaphanta stands as an emblem of bodily secrecy, for even if Alsemero were to successfully discern her interior, his discovery could only be a mis-mapping of his wife's *doppelganger*. Beatrice-Joanna, then, catalyzes a permutation of fakery: she sends Diaphanta -- a feigned version of herself -- to her

believers into a profiteering scheme. Paraphrasing the German reformer Sebastian Meyer, Eire notes, "The laity may have thought that they were venerating holy relics...but all they were probably doing was kissing the bones of dogs and asses" (96-7). The most controversial, and perhaps popular, relics were the splinters of wood claimed as part of the cross on which Christ was crucified. Reformers often quipped that all the trees in their respective countries could not eclipse the number of fragments of the true cross that churches claimed to possess.

³⁵ Here, Beatrice-Joanna embodies what Laura Gowing refers to as "the power of married women [who] had the authority and knowledge to examine other women's bodies and read the signs they found there." See Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch, and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2003), 71. Diaphanta also articulates the vulnerability of the unmarried servant: "She will not search me, will she, / Like the forewoman of a female jury?" (4.1.102-3). Beatrice-Joanna maintains her bodily privacy both by forcing Diaphanta to take the virginity test and then casting her body as a material vehicle by which she will dupe Alsemero.

marriage bed, where Diaphanta may or may not herself fake orgasm with Alsemero.³⁶ Because the female body's hermetic secrecy resists Alsemero's hermeneutic tools, he cannot recognize the partial sexual jointure that arises. Beatrice-Joanna's body speaks not to the gendered bounds of the patriarchal territory, but to the parameters of bodily knowledge. In contrast to Alsemero's dependance on Mizaldus's formula, Beatrice-Joanna relies on her own body to grant *her* the orgasmic pleasure of "faking it."

The Perverted *Pieta* and the Profanation of Religious Images

No matter how deft her performance of chastity, Beatrice-Joanna escapes neither the grip of patriarchy nor its attendant gazes. As Beatrice-Joanna is ultimately reinserted into the collective gaze of the theatre as an image of defilement and pollution, her compulsion to crush forms of bodily and sensory devotion also becomes an intense ironization of religious images themselves in the concluding scene. The play thus seizes on representations of relics and images only to refashion them, to present alternatives to them, and to further elucidate their contingency with forms of textual representation and dissimulation.

When Alsemero learns that Beatrice-Joanna fulfilled her sexual bargain with DeFlores he casts her into his closet. The male-authorized threshold he previously breached now becomes the site of her death at the hands of DeFlores. Prior to Beatrice-Joanna's death, Alsemero refers to and then revises the language of sainthood and

³⁶ Garber suggests that the multiplication of fakery transgresses its own bounds in light of cross-dressing in early modern theatre, for "the boy actor playing Beatrice-Joanna likewise is 'faking a faked orgasm' from the ambivalent double position of transvestite theatre, a man playing a woman playing a trick on a man" ("The Insincerity of Women," 29-30). She concludes, "Perhaps we are dealing not - or not only - with the 'insincerity of women,' but also with the intrinsic and instrumental insincerity of theatre, with the mimesis of mimesis itself."

devotion that appears earlier in the play in the context of his idealized love for her in order to reinvent her as an emblem of transgression. First claiming, “You are a whore” (5.3.32), Alsemero proceeds to raze the temple of her body with which he associated her at the play’s opening:

I'll all demolish and seek out truth within you,
If there be any left. Let your sweet tongue
Prevent your heart's rifling -- there I'll ransack
And tear out my suspicion...

you fall down

Beneath all grace and goodness, when you set
Your ticklish heel on't. There was a visor
O'er that cunning ace, and that became you;
Now Impudence in triumph rides upon't.
How comes this tender reconciliation else
'Twixt you and your despite, our rancorous loathing,
Deflores? He that your eye was sore at sight of,
He's now become your arms' supporter, your
Lips' saint. (5.3.36-9, 45-54)

Alsemero reinserts Beatrice-Joanna within the domain of image worship, presenting her defiled body to the audience as both the definitive object of DeFlores's veneration and the prop of his sexual desire. Where Beatrice-Joanna was formerly the object of conflicting male gazes -- DeFlores's and Alsemero's -- Alsemero now suggests that DeFlores becomes her object of devotion as well: as her "lips' saint," he appears to embody the answer to her prayers. Even as Beatrice-Joanna attempts to defame DeFlores in her admission of the murder of Piracquo, Alsemero refuses her confession and definitively redefines her body as unnatural and dishonorable, again troping on the religious imagery with which he opened the play:

Oh, the place itself e'er since
Has crying been for vengeance, the temple
Where blood and beauty first unlawfully
Fired their devotion, and quenched the right one--
'Twas in my fears at first; 'twill have it now.

Oh, thou art all deformed! (5.3.73-8)

Beatrice-Joanna's deformation operates also as a *reformation* of the body, for Alsemero now rejects the visual desire -- the image worship -- that he earlier afforded his beloved. This speech operates as an iconoclastic pronouncement on the unreliability of images, making Beatrice-Joanna's body the epitome of both false image and false relic.

The play's final movement underscores this point by ironizing the language and gestures of visual devotion. Following Alsemero's damning speeches, DeFlores carries the wounded body of Beatrice-Joanna in his arms, enacting through this gesture a parodic *pieta*. In place of the dead Christ who lay in the arms of the Virgin Mary, the dead and non-virginal body of Beatrice-Joanna rests in the arms of the deformed servant. Presenting Beatrice-Joanna's dead body to the gaze of the audience, DeFlores reinscribes her within political, religious, and theatrical specula. In doing so, he ironizes these forms of visual devotion by making their paradigmatic icon a polluted woman whose very blood must be poured into the sewer, a place defined by collective waste, so as not to further damage the body politic. Beatrice-Joanna speaks to her role as deformed image when she says to Vermandero:

O come not near me, sir, I shall defile you:
I am that of your blood was taken from you
For your better health; look no more upon't,
But cast it to the ground regardlessly,
Let the common sewer take it from distinction. (5.3.149-53)

Beatrice-Joanna's body and blood will rest not in a reliquary, tabernacle, or chalice, nor will it produce noble offspring. Rather, it will trickle into a "common sewer."³⁷ At the play's end, her body becomes an object of sexual defilement rather than devotion

³⁷ The physiological properties of Beatrice-Joanna's blood in this scene are discussed by Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, 99-101.

(whether visual or tactile, political or spiritual). Her utterance, “O come not near me,” makes her the image that refuses worship and suggests that Beatrice-Joanna achieves the bodily distance for which she labors throughout the play. But this work does not go unpunished, for Beatrice-Joanna emerges as both anti-relic and anti-image: her body is not esteemed religiously but “regardlessly” as it disintegrates into mere indistinction.

Michael O’Connell argues that “Reformation iconoclasm brought to an end a semiotic and symbolic field for apprehending and imagining the sacred,” and concludes that in the seventeenth century, “what was lost was a visual aesthetic that had materialized religious concepts and experience in traditions of painting, sculpture in stone and alabaster, wood carving, stained glass, and theatrical performance.”³⁸ A play like *The Changeling* demonstrates that such a sweeping epistemological contention is not entirely true. Certainly iconoclasm, like other liturgical and theological innovations of the Reformation, challenged the sensory depictions of sacred realities as well as the material devotion aimed toward an otherwise inscrutable godhead. Yet, the intensely visual, if not visceral, depictions of bodily travesty in Jacobean tragedy, especially those represented in the language of sacrament and religious devotion as they are in *The Changeling*, suggests that a “visual aesthetic” remains alive and active even in the wake of a systematized dissolution of images.

The question becomes, then, not whether images and relics disappear, but to what uses they are put in a Reformation aesthetic. The “ironization” of religious images and relics may extend even farther to the plane of sacramental contamination, a form of literary representation that renders the pivotal material objects of Catholic devotion,

³⁸ Michael O’Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2000), 58.

beginning with the Eucharist itself and including also images, reliquized parts of the body, and any other number of religious trinkets like rosaries and statues, suspect if not also subverted. By bringing Beatrice-Joanna forth onto the stage in his arms in what I have described as a perversion of image, relic, and sacrament, DeFlores makes her into an inverted Christ figure -- a guilty body whose slaughter is presented as fit punishment for her crime -- as he also makes himself into a debased version of the Virgin Mary. Moreover, by making Beatrice-Joanna into an embodiment of defilement -- the image of social, sexual, and spiritual pollution -- DeFlores reverses Alsemero's opening speech, which described Beatrice-Joanna in the idealized language of visual devotion. What we have, then, is not the disappearance of what O'Connell terms a "visual aesthetic" or the dissolution of a "semiotic and symbolic field" for expressing the sacred, but a revised visual aesthetic, one that exposes images not as salvific but as subversive, and one that translates the sacral and sacramental into the deviant.

THE POETICS OF PRESENCE

Sacramental Re-Imagination and Theatrical Resurrection in *The Winter's Tale*

Our sacraments are bodies of stories only.
William Tyndale

In this chapter, I again broaden my focus beyond the Eucharist itself in order to explore how early modern drama participates in a reformation of sacramental theology and practice. Shakespeare's romance, *The Winter's Tale* (1611), provides evidence for how drama redefines the aesthetics and theology of the Eucharist, in addition to the Catholic sacraments of confession and matrimony, through theatrical art. If reformers contended that sacraments are figurative signs rather than sacred material events unto themselves, Shakespeare's play divests apparent episodes of incarnation and resurrection of their miraculous identity and instead reveals them as theatrical transformations, restoring them to the realm of fiction alone. The play demonstrates the agency of the word, a point that intersects with the reformist turn to *sola scriptura* -- to a program of spirituality, liturgy, and ultimately, salvation grounded in Scripture rather than in the corporeal devotions centered on Christ's flesh. These theatrical and theological reformations of sacraments suggest a broader cultural re-imagining of the body's physical materiality in light of its linguistic productions in religious, poetic, and dramatic discourses.¹

¹ Though not a focus of my work in this project, it is worth mentioning, too, that the so-called medical discourses like Helkiah Crooke's *Micocosmographia* (1611), Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1604), and Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) that critics of early modern

Jean Calvin identifies the function of sacraments as figurative, characterizing them as “external signs by which the Lord seals on our consciences his promises of good-will toward us.”² Calvin deemphasizes the physical potency of Catholic sacraments and insists instead on the immaterial “sanctification of invisible grace.”³ For Calvin, the material action of a sacrament like baptism or communion receives its spiritual meaning when the recipient activates his faith, a point echoed by Paulina in *The Winter’s Tale* when she says to Leontes, “It is required / You do awake your faith,” before he beholds Hermione posing as a statue.⁴ Throughout *The Winter’s Tale* Shakespeare describes the body in sacramental language, but it is the language of reformed sacramentality -- sacraments as signs and figures rather than material acts sacralized in themselves -- that gains prominence in this play.

Engaging with such Protestant critiques of sacrament, *The Winter’s Tale* imagines a way to dematerialize and de-corporealize sacramental action, and in doing so, invites us to consider the body within the representative domain of figure rather than physical flesh

embodiment have brought to our attention are highly figurative and self-consciously literary. In defining the passions, for example, Wright provides a literary tour-de-force that combines both the rhetorical arts of *synonymia*, *metaphora* and *imitatio*, not to mention the stylistic principle of embellishment known as *copia*:

Some say, they were sparkes of fire apt to kindle virtue; others, that they were souldiers, armed to attend their captayne: They be like water, sayth Basil, that sustayneth oyle above, that it may swimme purely and not be infected with earth: others compare them with horses which draw a coach; so the passions draw the soule to the fruition of her virtuous objects. *Cicero* in 4 *Tusculan* calleth anger, *cotem*, the whetstone of fortitude. And indeed mee thinks the passions of our minde are not unlike the foure humours of our bodies, whereto *Cicero* well compares them in the aforesayde Booke. (sig. B8 v)

The body, then, is written as a literary fabrication not only in the religious and dramatic texts I examine here, but even in the books of the body commonly read for the information they reveal about the body’s anatomical and physiological properties.

² Jean Calvin, *Institutes on the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: MI, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing), 1989), Book IV, sec.7, pp. 491-2.

³ Calvin, 504. As Calvin continues, “God...truly performs whatever he promises and figures by signs” but that “these sacraments, or seals, confer nothing, and avail nothing, if not received in faith” (503-4).

⁴ William Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale* (Ard 3), ed. John Pitcher (London: Methuen Drama, 2010), 5.3.94-5. All references to the play are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically hereafter.

alone. By rewriting the language, protocols, and spiritual privilege of Roman Catholic sacraments -- specifically confession, marriage, and Eucharist -- *The Winter's Tale* questions the spiritual priority of bodily presence and corporeal agency germane to older religious models. By positioning word and flesh in conflict, the play also unmoors the Eucharistic body specifically from a position of cultural privilege.

I engage these sacramental transformations at three specific moments in *The Winter's Tale*. The first, in Act One, occasions Leontes's and Paulina's respective reformations of priestly confession; the second stages Florizel's non-sacramental marriage to Perdita within the pastoral setting of Bohemia in Act Four; and the last presents the climactic statue scene as the play's theatrical challenge to theologies of Eucharistic presence in Act Five. Each of these sacramental revisions offers insight into the play's dual religious and literary reformations of the body, and each shows how characters appropriate the language and gestures of Catholic sacraments in order to rewrite them as figurative rather than physical events. In *The Winter's Tale* bodily presence becomes a theatrical and tropological, rather than a theological, construct.⁵ The play reveals how the power of corporeal transformation lies not in the hands of a priest or a deity but at the disposal of the poet, dramatist, and actor.

⁵ Here and throughout the chapter I qualify a number of religious, and specifically Eucharistic, interpretations of *The Winter's Tale*, including: Andrew Moran, "Synaesthesia and Eating in *The Winter's Tale*," *Journal of Religion and the Arts* 9: 1-2 (2005): 38-61; François Laroque, "Pagan Ritual, Christian Liturgy, and Folk Customs in *The Winter's Tale*," *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 22 (October 1982): 25-32; Phebe Jensen, "Singing Psalms to Horn-pipes: Festivity, Iconoclasm, and Catholicism in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 279-306; Gloria Olchowy, "The Issue of the Corpus Christi Cycles, or 'Religious Romance' in *The Winter's Tale*," in *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare*, eds. Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne (London: Routledge, 2009): 145-62; and Darryll Grantley, "*The Winter's Tale* and Early Religious Drama," *Comparative Drama* 20 (1986): 17-37. For a reading that moves between Catholic and Protestant aesthetics in the play cf. Walter S.H. Lim, "Knowledge and Belief in *The Winter's Tale*," *SEL* 41, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 317-34.

My claim that drama participates in a program of sacramental re-imagination qualifies Stephen Greenblatt's familiar contention that Shakespeare and other dramatists staged "evacuated rituals, drained of their original meaning" such that previously "literal" church rituals become "literary" and mark "a drastic swerve from the sacred to the secular in the theater."⁶ Greenblatt's term "evacuate" is problematic, because the reformist revaluation of sacraments as figurative signs rather than somatic entities does not negate the sacred but introduces a new conception of it. A play like *The Winter's Tale* does not eradicate sacramental activity from either the devotional or the aesthetic cultures of early modern England.⁷ To the contrary, sacramental actions are alive and well even in the wake of the Reformation, though their definition, function, and liturgical elaboration are rendered differently from that in the Roman church. By focusing more on sacramental *re-imagination*, I question the rigidity of Greenblatt's binaristic "swerve from sacred to secular" and suggest that Shakespeare's play uses the space of the stage to pose alternatives to traditional conceptions of religious sacraments rather than merely replacing them or emptying them out. These theatrical reformations of religious activities, I argue, intersect with a reformed understanding of sacrament as discontinuous with bodily presence or bodily action. They offer insight into how the body may be thought of not as essentially physical and somatic, but as rhetorical and figurative, and in

⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 126-7. In *Shakespearean Iconoclasm* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), James R. Siemon offers a useful historical background against which Greenblatt's concept of evacuation may be placed: "It is a historical commonplace to describe the Reformation as demanding an interiorization of religion while effecting a withdrawal of validity from the outer, or material, means of Christian ritual" (59).

⁷ It is also specious to argue that a single play, a group of plays, or even "Renaissance drama" in general can independently evacuate centuries of sacramental traditions. Plays, we must remember, are fictional works and despite their propensity to participate within social changes like religious reform, cannot themselves initiate a widespread sacramental "evacuation." What staged drama can do is provide a way to reimagine alternatives to social, religious, and political norms; the extent to which this re-imagination is actually manifested is always uneven and incalculable. I am grateful to Barbara Herrnstein Smith for insisting on this point in her response to an earlier version of this chapter.

doing so invite us to consider a new reading of the body in both religious and dramatic discourses.⁸

“Shall a Priest make his Maker?”

Before proceeding to *The Winter's Tale*, I wish to first establish a broader discursive context in which the problems of sacramental presence, specifically Eucharistic transubstantiation, may be put into fraught conflict with humanist poetics. In his farcical poem, *Concerning the Holy Eucharist and the Popish Breden-God* (1625), the Protestant clergyman Thomas Tuke claims, “Never Cake could make a Baker, / And shall a Priest make his Maker?” (167-8).⁹ This sardonic inquiry, applied to Roman Catholic priests and the doctrine of transubstantiation, offers a critique of transubstantiation grounded not in the familiar concerns with the denial of the cup to the laity, the threat of cannibalism, and the differentiation between carnal and spiritual

⁸ As I show in this chapter, these important cultural domains are mutually informative. The epistemological transformations of the body are, I suggest, consonant with both changing religious ideologies and theatrical innovations. Whereas critics have addressed intersections between drama and religion or the body and textuality, for example, they have not adequately recognized the tripartite union of body, stage, and liturgy and its consequences for early modern literature and culture. For example, literary critics, like Lynn Enterline (*Rhetoric and the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000]), who focus on the body and drama do not generally attend to religion, with an exception being Kristen Poole, *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000). Likewise, critics who focus on religious reformation and drama do not account for the body. See, for example, Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996). While Lupton offers an extensive interpretation of *The Winter's Tale* in the contexts of both paganism and Christianity and idolatry and iconography, she does not account for the role of the body in these competing representational domains.

⁹ Thomas Tuke, *Concerning the Holy Eucharist and the Popish Breden-God* (London: 1625), lines 167-8. References to the poem will be cited parenthetically in the text hereafter. Throughout this chapter, I refer to “Eucharistic presence,” a term I use principally to denote the Catholic belief that Christ’s actual body and blood consist in the Eucharistic bread and wine. Working from this religious understanding of presence, I also use “presence” to refer more generally to the body as a tangible and material entity, living or dead, that interacts with other bodies and with its respective environments. As I make clear in the chapter, these presence-oriented epistemologies of the body may be contrasted with the body’s poetic fabrications, which are fictional rather than real and tropological rather than tangible.

eating, but in the language of humanist poetics.¹⁰ The body of Christ, Tuke maintains, cannot be produced by a priest because such an action fundamentally confuses the roles of artistic creator, or “maker,” and the object he makes. Just as a cake cannot produce its baker, so a priest cannot magically incarnate his maker. To do so produces theological, ontological, and aesthetic error.

By separating a priest from his divine maker, Tuke singles out the term *maker* as used by many humanist writers to define the art of poesy. For example, George Puttenham opens *The Arte of English Poesy* with the following definition of the poet: “A poet is as much to say as a maker. And our English name well conforms with the Greek word: for of *poiyn* to make, they call a maker *Poeta*. Such as (by way of resemblance and reverently) we may say of God, who without any travail to his divine imagination made all the world of nought....even so the poet makes and contrives out of his own brain both the verse and matter of his poem.”¹¹ For Puttenham, as for Tuke, the act of poetic making can be related to divine creation “by way of resemblance and respect”; a poet is *like* a God, but nowhere does Puttenham say that a poet *makes* his God. To “make” something poetically is to fashion it out of language using available tropes and figures. In this sense, a poetic creation is fictional and its substance consists wholly in the linguistic materials of its composition.

¹⁰ Tuke addresses these specific critiques at lines 75-109, 269-306, and 418-30, respectively. He also alludes to other quibbles, including the uniqueness of Christ’s historical sacrifice, which he suggests happened once in time and therefore cannot be literally repeated during the Mass (220-34) and the perennial anxiety concerning the remnant or remainder of the consecrated host (also taken up in lines 269-306).

¹¹ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesy*, eds. Frank Whigham and Wayne E. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2007), 93. From this definition we also derive the term *poesis*, which refers to the process of creating fictions through language. Throughout this essay, I use the term “poetic” in this specific humanist context in order to indicate the various artistic processes by which Shakespeare and other writers create the body out of language. I also use “poetic” interchangeably with “tropological,” a term that indicates a more corollary engagement with rhetorical tropes and figures.

By situating the Catholic priest in the context of poetic making, Tuke exposes the Mass and its attendant miracles as violations of theological and poetic protocols. The flippancy of the following description reveals not only the derision with which Tuke views Eucharistic presence but also the desecration and disfiguration of Christ's body that results from the priest's work:

Priests make their maker Christ, yee must not doubt,
They eat, drink, box him up, and beare about.
Substance of things they turne; nor is this all;
For both the Signes must hold him severall.
Hee's whole ith'bread, whole ith'cuppe,
They eat him whole: whole they suppe;
Whole ith'Cake, and whole ith cuppe. (1-7)

The sarcastic dismissiveness of clauses like "they...box him up, and beare about" and "Hee's whole ith'bread, whole ith'cuppe" manipulate long-standing church practices, such as placing consecrated hosts in a box, or pyx, so as to reserve remaining hosts and prevent them from theft or decay, as well as the belief that Christ dwells wholly in any segment of the wafer or any drop of wine in the cup. A few lines later, these pejoratives crystalize in a punchy rejection of priestly dignity: "They make their God and then they eat him up" (17). Eucharist thus results in a cannibalistic ingestion of the creator by his created.¹² Furthermore, what Catholics uphold as faith Tuke later regards as illusion:

"So, for fayth ye fancy teach," he argues, "And for truth mens dreames ye preach, / Making in God's Church a breach" (228-30). Transubstantiation also results in trickery, foolishness, and idolatry: "What a silly thing this is, thou makest, / Which for the Lord Jesus Christ, thou takest? / Which, idol-like, can neyther heare, nor talk, / Nor see, nor feelee, nor smell, nor one jott walk" (231-5). The priest thus makes a false god,

¹² Cf. Tamora's ingestion of Chiron and Demetrius in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, which I discussed at length in Chapter One.

participating in both forgery and idolatry, which Catholic believers (according to Tuke) mistakenly translate as expressions of faith and piety.

Tuke's poem marks a transition from an older Eucharistic theology reliant on philosophies of form and substance (such as those of Aristotle and Aquinas) to a new understanding of the Eucharist as tropological -- as a body made out of words as well as figures like similes and metaphors. As a sign or seal of Christ's body rather than Christ's flesh itself, Tuke's Eucharistic body is not physically substantial but linguistically representative. Its function is to symbolize and memorialize rather than to substantiate and materialize. Tuke's suggestion of the tropology of Christ's body rejects the Catholic understanding of the Mass as a metaphysical event during which the priest, by virtue of his ecclesiastical ordination, can both make God and distribute Him to the people under the form of a flat wafer.

The Eucharistic controversies, as we have seen, produce a semiotic debate concerning the correct interpretation of the words Christ used to institute the Eucharist at the Last Supper. These words, *Hoc est enim corpus meum*, are repeated during every Mass and as Catholic dogma has it, mark the transformation of bread and wine into Christ's body and blood. The confusion surrounding this line concerns the signification of *est*: does *est* mean "is" (the argument for literal presence) or "signifies" (the argument for symbolic representation)?¹³ Tuke appropriates the exact language of these

¹³ I have discussed this debate at greater length in Chapter One, but for our purposes here, we can say generally that Catholics and conservative Lutherans (indeed Luther himself) held that *est* meant "is" and denoted Christ's real bodily presence, while Calvinists and Zwinglians argued that it meant "signifies" and identified Christ's body as a symbolic memorial.

Interestingly, Brian Cummings omits a discussion of these words, as well as an engagement with Eucharistic discourse in general, from his learned book, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2002). Cummings's extensive analysis of the textual underpinnings of religious reform has been deeply influential for my claims in this project and especially in this chapter. Placing the reformation "within the early modern culture of writing" (18),

Eucharistic debates over body and sign. Referring the reader to nearly a dozen biblical citations, he unequivocally announces his position: “View well the places yee see quoted here, / And ye may plainly see what IS means there, / “To put IS for SIGNIFIES is not rare” (451-4).

By taking up the semiotics of Christ’s body, Tuke makes literary form inseparable from religious reform and moves from the theological interpretation of the words of consecration toward the semiotic. Situating his claims not in a prose treatise but in a poem with regular rhyme and meter, Tuke proves that poetic form is substantive here and not accidental. By taking up the very idea of representation within the literary artifact that is his poem, Tuke performs poetically what he argues theologically. Consider the following passage:

There’s no such offering of him [Christ] day by day,
(Yet confesse we that a Representation
Is in the sacrament, of his oblation),
Who did once offer up himself for sin,
But since that Once hath never offer’d bin;
Not properly by in a type, or figure,
Where of we certain are: of yours not sure. (513-19)

Tuke uses couplets to juxtapose two sets of terms, each of which stands metonymically for opposed theological systems. First, by setting “Representation” against “oblation,” Tuke refutes the Catholic position that Christ’s oblation, or sacrifice, is repeatable, suggesting that Christ offered Himself once for the salvation of humankind and that this sacrifice cannot be repeated through the action of the priest. What traditional religion regards as a fleshly oblation that centers on the corporeality of both priest and Christ,

Cummings cautions too strict a reading of Catholicism and Protestantism as graphed between the word and the flesh. He argues that, given the importance of hermeneutics to medieval religion, the reformation witnessed not simply a shift in theology and devotion but a shift in the valuation and protocols of grammar and style.

reformed religion assimilates to the domain of “Representation.” The reformed communion service becomes literary in this regard, abandoning claims to presence and reasserting the representative and figurative functions of Holy Communion. In this service, Christ’s body exists as “type or figure,” thereby making the Eucharistic sacrament and the Eucharistic body tropological and not corporeal. Tuke’s second set of terms, “figure” and “sure,” pressures the presupposed dogma, or truth, of Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist, replacing the surety of belief in Christ’s real presence with the slipperiness of figurative language. By the time of Tuke’s text, we can surmise how the corporeal body of Christ gradually becomes a trope, as a fleshly-minded religious system gives way to a reformed spirituality grounded in tropological terms.

“Thy penitent reformed”

Tuke’s poem re-imagines both the Christ’s Eucharistic body and Eucharistic semiotics in the terms of humanist rhetorical pedagogy. It highlights the figurative nature of Christ’s body by pointing to the ontological and aesthetic laws that transubstantiation violates. By moving the body of Christ from the domain of strict flesh to that of figure and trope, Tuke engages a sacramental revision that also presents itself as a reformation of the body. This twofold reimagination of body and sacrament constitutes a theological and aesthetic concern that also informs Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*, a play that, despite recent critical estimations of its Eucharistic themes, offers insight into a semiotic conception of sacrament. For example, two of the play’s principal characters, Florizel and Paulina, gesture rhetorically toward such a religious question. Upon greeting Camillo during the pastoral scene, Florizel says, “I am so fraught with curious business

that / I leave out ceremony” (4.4.518-20). While Florizel simply apologizes for his bad manners, he also couches his apparent breach of decorum in language that calls to mind iconoclasts’ desire to eradicate, or “leave out,” the sensory trappings of images, relics, statues, and vestments germane to Catholic liturgy, devotion, and “ceremony.” Paulina, moreover, qualifies Leontes’s visual attraction to Hermione’s statue by reminding him, “It is required / You do awake your faith” (5.3.94-5). Leontes requires an inward and immaterial faith, and not just his bodily perception of Hermione’s likeness, to reunite him with his wife. Both Florizel and Paulina suggest prevailing oppositions -- the ceremonial and the spiritual, the material and the immaterial, bodily works and inner faith -- that organize cultural attitudes toward sacramental action. Catholic sacraments, such as baptism and Eucharist, are intensely corporeal rituals; they sanctify the bodily actions of priest and worshipper. Likewise, other liturgical activities, such as Eucharistic processions, pilgrimages, and devotions to relics, all involve sensory engagement and physical activity. From a reformist perspective, however, the reliance on the body for prayer and worship distracts a believer from focusing primarily on the divine grace to which these physical acts point.

The Winter’s Tale grants expression to the latter view in its appropriation of the sacrament of confession beginning in the play’s second scene, where Leontes dismisses Hermione from court on account of her supposed infidelity. He then seeks the counsel of Camillo, whom he identifies as both confidant and fraternal confessor:

I have trusted thee, Camillo,
 With all the nearest things to my heart, as well
 My chamber-counsels, wherein, priest-like, thou
 Hast cleansed my bosom; I from thee departed
 Thy penitent reformed. (1.2.233-7)

Leontes replaces ecclesiastical confession with political, or courtly, confession by recasting himself as penitent to Camillo's priest.¹⁴ Catholic confession relied fundamentally on the intercessory role of the priest in dispensing absolution for one's sins. Eamon Duffy suggests that laypeople normally confessed to a priest annually, and "[used] the confessional as a form of spiritual direction," which included a period of "practical reassessment, reconciliation with neighbors, and settling of spiritual accounts."¹⁵ By contrast, Leontes does not confess to a priest but to a courtly lord. In doing so, he displaces the sacred space of the confessional onto the sociopolitical space of the court.

Leontes's renaming of Camillo as "priest-like" clinches this sacramental revision. By calling him "priest-like" (235), Leontes inserts Camillo into the role of an ecclesiastical confessor. What is more, this compound construction literally splices the office of priesthood onto a destabilizing simile. "Like" denotes priestly office as nothing more than a figure of speech and an inauthentic approximation, or copy, of clerical activity. Through the epithet, "priest-like," Leontes voices a potent reformist charge by suggesting that he can be absolved in the absence of a priest. In doing so, he all but travesties priestly office by suggesting that he does not need a real priest; instead,

¹⁴ One could argue that Camillo, like Paulina, whom he marries at the end of Act Five, plays a priestly role throughout the play: he advises, confesses, heals, mends, and orchestrates, though it is also important to note that in this scene of confession, his priestly agency fails as he soon betrays Leontes and calls their relationship (both fraternal and political) into question. I am grateful to Jean Feerick for this suggestion.

¹⁵ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1992), 60. Moreover, contrary to prevailing assumptions, confession was not necessarily private; rather, "it was an exercise carried out with queues of waiting fellow-parishioners looming close behind, the mutter of their rosaries or their chatter plainly audible."

someone whom he tropes as “priest-like” will do.¹⁶ Camillo, in effect, becomes a clerical understudy in Leontes’s fictional and figurative confession.

However, the speech also reveals that Leontes draws carefully on the language, form, and action of the sacrament in order to rewrite it. His reformed sacrament follows the process of verbal admission, absolution, and penitential departure: after confessing to Camillo “the nearest things to my heart,” he reports that Camillo “hast cleansed my bosom” and he leaves a “penitent reformed.” By repeating the sacramental gestures and troping on the language of the rite, Leontes emerges not only as a “penitent reformed” but also as a reforming penitent who transposes the sacrament of confession and its attendant rites into the registers of both a courtly conversation and a dramatic improvisation.

Leontes’s exchange with Camillo constitutes the first of many scenes during which Shakespeare rewrites the language of religious ritual as a secular act. By doing so, Shakespeare demonstrates the gradual movement away from the corporeal, material, and monetary practices that signified spiritual sobriety in the Roman church. He also externalizes the confessional ritual, placing it within the Sicilian court and on the English stage. By making confession a communal experience, Shakespeare reflects the inclusion of confessional rite within the reformed communion service itself, which reimagines confession as an interpersonal act of repentance rather than an individual gesture of penitence. Reformed confession, in turn, functions dually to repair the spiritual

¹⁶ The play issues a further critique of priestly office by displacing the sacerdotal function of “priest” onto the pagan identity of the Oracle in Act Three, a symptom of the play’s setting in a pre-Christian world. The Officer makes Cleomenes and Dion swear that they bring from Delphi “This sealed-up oracle, by the hand delivered / Of great Apollo’s priest” and that they have not “dared to break the holy seal, / Nor read the secrets in it” (3.2.125-8). Moreover, Leontes projects the language of holy office onto Polixenes in Act Five, describing him as a “holy father, / A graceful gentleman, against whose person, / So sacred as it is, I have done sin” (5.1.169-71).

relationship of individual to both God and community and to ensure the integrity of the collective worshipping body itself.¹⁷

By turning confession outward, as it were, reformers liberated penitents from institutional corruption and papal mediation. For example, in *The Large Catechism* (1529), Martin Luther writes: “We have always taught that it [confession] should be voluntary and purged of the pope’s tyranny.”¹⁸ Luther revises the yearly obligation to confess before a priest by proposing three alternate forms: “common confession,” or the confession of sin before one’s neighbors such as that made during the Lord’s Prayer; an individual’s private confession before God; and what he calls “secret confession which takes privately before a single brother,” an act by which one Christian acts in the name of Christ to absolve another Christian.¹⁹ Leontes’s relocation of confession in the “priest-like” office of Camillo corresponds to Luther’s third suggestion of private fraternal reconciliation. We see such a phenomenon recur in Act Five, when Cleomenes, a lord and distinctly not a priest, apparently absolves Leontes: “Sir, you have done enough, and have performed / A saint-like sorrow” (5.1.1-2). “Saint-like” echoes “priest-like,” and like its earlier counterpart, challenges the Roman church traditions (in this case, the belief

¹⁷ The reformed church has no protocol for confession as a separate rite in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Instead, general confession is subsumed within the service of the Lord’s Supper and constitutes a comparatively large portion of this liturgy. The communion service begins with a rubric concerning the relationship between communion and confession and detailing the new emphasis on confession between laypeople rather than confession to a priest. It reads: “So many as do intend to be partakers of the Holy Communion shall signify their names to the curate overnight, or else in the morning afore the beginning of Morning Prayer, or immediately after. And if any of those be an open and notorious evil liver, so that the congregation by him is offended, or have done any wrong to his neighbors by word or deed: the curate having knowledge thereof, shall call him, and advertise him, in any wise not to presume the Lord’s Table, until he have openly declared himself to have truly repented and amended his former naughty life, that the congregation may thereby be satisfied, which afore were offended.” *The Book of Common Prayer: The 1559 Edition*, ed. John E. Booty (Charlottesville and London: U Virginia P, 2005), 247.

¹⁸ Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism*, trans. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 101.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 102-3.

in saintly intercession, which connected believers to the bodily and spiritual agencies of deceased holy men and women) by again making them into a simile.²⁰

Julia Reinhard Lupton reads Leontes's "saint-like sorrow" as an illustration of him as "a living emblem of saintly penance."²¹ But his sorrow is only "saint-like" and not saintly, a point emphasized by Paulina, who underscores the futility of Leontes's contrition and removes him from the confessional system entirely. Following Hermione's trial before Leontes and the court, Paulina denies Leontes any modicum of mercy:

But O, thou tyrant,
Do not repent these things, for they are heavier
Than all thy woes can stir. Therefore betake thee
To nothing but despair. A thousand knees,
Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,
Upon a barren mountain, and still winter
In storm perpetual, could not move the gods
To look that way thou wert. (3.2.204-11)

Like Lupton, Carol Thomas Neely suggests that Paulina "engineers the penance that will transform Leontes' tragic actions to a comic conclusion."²² But against the optimistic interpretations of both these critics, I contend that Paulina doesn't "engineer" penance but instead denies Leontes the opportunity to express contrition, at least at this moment in the play. By suggesting that Leontes cannot repent, Paulina not only pressures the play's resolution, but also issues a rejoinder to Leontes's earlier confession and condemnation of Hermione. Recall that in Act One, Leontes reads Hermione's physical actions as

²⁰ In addition, Cleomones instructs Leontes, "At the last / Do as the heavens have done, forget your evil; / With them, forgive yourself" (5.1.4-6). The command, "forgive yourself," locates contrition in the penitent himself as opposed to making contrition a condition of sacramental confession. One cannot forgive oneself in either the Catholic or the reformed understandings of penance, though reformist understandings acknowledge personal contrition before God outside the mediating institution of the church, as discussed above.

²¹ Lupton, 210.

²² Carol Thomas Neely, *Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 199.

irrefutable evidence of her transgressions. For example, he regards Hermione's extending her hand to Polixenes as "Too hot, too hot!" and concludes, "To mingle friendships far is mingling bloods" (1.2.108-9). As he translates friendship into an erotic liaison, Leontes mutes Hermione's tongue by confessing her fault for her before she has the chance to speak it herself. He signifies her blood as already commingled and her disposition as already "too hot." Moreover, he defines her "paddling palms and pinching fingers" and "making practiced smiles" as "entertainment / My bosom likes not" (1.2.115-19). By citing these bodily signs as proof of her guilt, Leontes acts not simply as a confessor, but as an inquisitor. Despite his inquisition and ultimate condemnation of her, the play ends with Hermione's refusal to converse with Leontes, a divisive silence that marks her refusal of verbal confession to her husband.²³ By refusing to speak, Hermione both reverses the "priest-like" interlocution Leontes enjoyed with Camillo and extends the denial of penance issued by Paulina.

As Leontes earlier confessed Hermione a whore, so Paulina confesses Leontes a unforgivable tyrant. Paulina's suggestion that Leontes cannot confess socially -- that he cannot repair his marriage to Hermione within the political milieu of the court -- intersects with her suggestion that he cannot confess sacramentally. Paulina does not merely suggest that Leontes cannot repent; rather, she speaks a litany of recognizable penitential practices such as kneeling, fasting, and removing one's clothes in order to underscore the point. By telling Leontes that such actions will not win him forgiveness, Paulina also exposes the folly of such penitential gestures themselves. In doing so, she

²³ Lynn Enterline argues, "If Hermione is to be restored to Leontes and not fade away again before the force of fantasy and doubt, it is on the condition that she *not* respond to his words only, that she not conform utterly to his language and desire" (224; italics in original). I note with interest Enterline's attention to the patriarchal critique Hermione issues through her silence, but also point out that Enterline marshals this critique in service of the same kind of neat resolution argued for by Neely.

empties the confessional and its accompanying bodily penances of their spiritual efficacy.²⁴ Paulina, like Florizel, leaves out ceremony and, like Calvin, presents confession as a “fictitious sacrament” laced with “falsehood and imposture.”²⁵ Furthermore, her emphasis on mathematical multiplication (“A thousand knees, / Ten thousand years together”) not only finalizes Leontes’s damnation, but also mocks the Catholic idea that more penance makes for better penitence.²⁶

Paulina not only rejects Catholic forms of penance, but also revokes the brute physicality attached to them. In the high middle ages and well into the sixteenth century, the mortification of the flesh was an expression of contrition and was especially tied to the practice of pilgrimage. Pilgrimages were, as Duffy explains, “often undertaken precisely as penance, and the element of hardship in them was of essence.”²⁷ Bodily penances such as approaching a holy shrine on one’s knees, prolonged fasting, and walking barefoot were acceptable penances and were often administered by priests to penitents. By suggesting that Leontes cannot repent through these traditional means, Paulina revises earlier dramatic expositions of punishment and pilgrimage, two of which appear in Shakespeare’s history plays. Recall that at the end of *Richard II*, Henry Plantagenet promises to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to atone for his usurpation of the crown:

²⁴ Paulina may also allude here to popular accounts of penitents like Saint Simeon Stylites the Elder, who spent much of his life fasting, standing for long periods of time until his limbs gave way, and finally (and most famously) sitting atop an erected pillar until he died, in order to atone for his sins.

²⁵ Calvin, *Institutes*, Book IV, chap. xix, p. 635.

²⁶ In *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Penguin, 2003), Diarmaid MacCulloch sees such a profusion of penitential acts as evidence for the medieval “market for devotion,” which comprised buying indulgences, repeating prayers countless times, and offering Masses for the dead. He credits these practices as evidence of a “Mass religious hysteria” indicative of widespread religious anxiety concerning salvation and the state of one’s soul (19).

²⁷ Duffy, 191. The topic of pilgrimage has been widely documented in studies of medieval religion. In *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia UP, 1998), Peter Brown writes of pilgrimage as a “pattern of piety, consisting in meditation in places touched by the presence of Christ interspersed with instruction at the feet of priests” (272).

Lords, I protest that my soul is full of woe
That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow.
Come mourn with me for what I do lament,
And put on a sullen black incontinent.
I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land
To wash this blood off from my guilty hand.²⁸

The bloody hands of the king can be purged only through the physical act of pilgrimage, a form of repentance of which Paulina preempts Leontes from enacting. The second example comes from *2 Henry VI*, which casts Dame Eleanor Cobham's procession as a pilgrimage. Her husband, Gloucester, describes her as his "punished Duchess" who "uneath may she endure the flinty streets / To tread them well with her tender-feeling feet." The Duchess echoes his words when she describes herself as "mailed up in shame, with papers on my back, / And followed with a rabble that rejoice / To see my tears and hear my deep-fet groans. / The ruthless flint doth cut my tender feet."²⁹ Unlike the spectators who gape at Dame Eleanor's treading barefoot over the dirty ground, Paulina remains unpersuaded by such corporeal contrition. By removing Leontes from confessional efficacy, she exposes ecclesiastical confession, pilgrimage, and physical penance as fraudulent.

And she was not alone. In his colloquy, *The Pilgrimage of True Devotion*, Desiderius Erasmus exposes the aforementioned actions as "feigned for lucre." The interlocutor Menedemus exposes the frivolity of material objects, many of which were purchased with money made from pilgrims' donations, as follows: "But to what purpose serveth so many holy water pots, so many candlesticks, so many images of gold...What profiteth that musical crying out in the temples that is so dearly bought and paid for,

²⁸ William Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (New York: Norton: 1997): 5.6.45-50.

²⁹ William Shakespeare, *The First Part of the Contention (2 Henry VI)*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (New York: Norton: 1997), 2.4.8-10; 33-6.

when in the mean season our brothers and sisters, the lively temples of Christ, living by the walls die for hunger and cold?”³⁰

Like Menedemus, Paulina rebukes the profusion of material objects that define traditional religious practices by enacting a rhetorical iconoclasm that doubles as a form of verbal torture. By her words alone she reproves and replaces the material practices of Catholic penitence and inquisition. And Paulina needs no hammer, brush, or broom; the iconoclast *par excellence*, she uses language itself to assert the primacy of the word over the flesh. With breathless defiance, Paulina expresses her numbness to proverbial modes of torture and inquisition, suggesting that she will become no Dame Eleanor:

What studied torments, tyrant, hast for me?
What wheels, racks, fires? What flaying, boiling
In leads or oils? What old or newer torture
Must I receive, whose every word deserves
To taste of thy most worst? (3.2.172-6)

Here Paulina assumes the role of Leontes’s inquisitor. She adopts the position of tortured heretic rhetorically in order to offset any punishment Leontes intends to impose upon her physically. By cataloguing bodily torments, she redeploys the language of physical torture as her own verbal examination of Leontes and his lord. The “studied torments” of wheel, rack, fire, and flaying become but bookish clichés whose force is weakened by the onslaught of Paulina’s piercing language. The cutting phonology of the speech, characterized by a profusion of plosives (“studied torments tyrant”) and fricatives (“fires,” “flaying,” “taste of thy most worst”) enacts a form of linguistic violence. By

³⁰ Desiderius Erasmus, *The Pilgrimage of True Devotion* (1518), in *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources*, ed. Robert S. Miola (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), 445, 451. This catalogue of objects is a conventional literary characteristic of Erasmus’s Papist critique. Writing about a similar Erasmian list of relics, James Simpson so eloquently notes, “Lists of this kind are an essential and recurrent weapon in the evangelical rhetorical arsenal. The verbal junk here could go on forever (exhausting the capacities of the breath itself): it is an infinite, jumbled, unsorted pile of rubbish, the only sane response to which is hammer and broom.” *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2007), 22.

issuing this speech with such a lashing and forceful profusion of language, Paulina diminishes the effect of Leontes's hypothetical physical torments by herself executing a form of verbal torture that cuts the air with the force of her speech.

By cataloguing common forms of punishment and by adopting a distinctly verbal form of torture, Paulina challenges the physical torments used by inquisitors to extract confessions from supposed heretics. Perhaps the most famous example of violent physical interrogation in early modern culture comes from the examinations of the Protestant preacher, Anne Askew. Consider briefly John Foxe's description of her execution in *Actes and Monuments* (1563):

She brought in to Smithfield in a chayre, because she could not go on her feete, by meanes of her great tormentes, when she was brought unto the stake, she was tied by the middle with a chaine, that held up her body...Thus she being troubled so many maner of waies, and having passed through so many tormentes, having now ended the long course of her agonies, being compassed in with flames of fire, as a blessed sacrifice unto God.³¹

Tortured on the body, tied in chains, and ultimately consumed by fire, Askew embodies the victim of religious torment that Paulina refuses to become. Paulina, one could say, is the redeemed version of Askew, for she speaks out against Catholic doctrine but escapes physical torment. In this sense, she becomes Anne Askew *a-skewed*: she twists, redirects, and obfuscates (that is, "skews") the traditional program of bodily punishment adopted by Catholic inquisitors.³² While Paulina's reference to practices of "flaying" and "boiling" evokes images of grotesque physical pain and torment, both of these practices connote the loss of skin. To *flay* is not simply to punish, but to strip the skin off (*OED*, 1-3), itself a popular form of martyrdom in the period. Similarly, to *boil* is literally to melt

³¹ *The Examinations of Anne Askew*, ed. Elaine V. Beilin (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1996), 191-2.

³² *OED*, "skew" (v), 4, 6.

the flesh and convert it into vapor. By using these words in particular, Paulina calls up images of fleshly torture that also point to the disintegration of the flesh. As grossly corporeal as these actions are, these words also constitute acts of disembodiment (if not disembowelment) that gesture toward the dissolution of corporeal presence. By extension, flaying and boiling figure for Paulina as the removal of the material body from the center of religious piety and penance even as they factor so singularly in the description of Askew's torture. Using words instead of wheels, rhetorical questions in place of racks, figures and not fires, she strips both religious inquisition and corporeal punishment of their own skin.

“Move still, still so / And own no other function”

In the pastoral interlude in Act Four, *The Winter's Tale* moves from revising priestly confession and physical penance to rewriting both Catholic and reformed marriage rites. Shakespeare appropriates the ecclesiastical language of marriage and the imagery of bodily union it contains in order to further depict the body as a tropological construct. Florizel in particular fashions the body of Perdita as a series of similes and allusions, while also appropriating the language of sacramental marriage in order to craft a union apart from ecclesiastical and legal sanctions.³³ In his newly-invented rite, the joining of hands and recitation of vows become poetic tropes as opposed to sacramental actions. By remaking marriage in pastoral, as opposed to papal and political, terms, Florizel anticipates the play's definitive construction of a tropological body in the statue

³³ In what follows, I gesture toward the legal prohibitions against inter-class marriage, but my emphasis remains on the religious revisions to marriage enacted by Florizel. While he does not discuss marriage or this scene overtly, Christopher Pye offers a legal reading of the play in “Against Schmitt: Law, Aesthetics, and Absolutism in Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 108, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 197-217.

scene, which reimagines both the body and the bodily miracles of incarnation and resurrection not as singularly theological and corporeal but also as theatrical and rhetorical.

Florizel elevates the status of Perdita's sheep-shearing festival to "a meeting of the petty gods" and casts her as "the queen on't" (4.4.3-4). By also transforming her Whitsun pastoral into a wedding feast, Florizel evokes the emerging Protestant conception of companionate marriage, which, according to Carol Thomas Neely, set "the loving amity of the couple" on par with "the two conventional functions of the institution -- the accomplishment of legitimate procreation and the avoidance of fornication."³⁴ Polixenes's objection to the union of Florizel and Perdita demonstrates the wedge that companionate marriage drives into the patriarchal arrangement of marriages based on the preservation of social rank against the looming threat of social descent. In defiance of Polixenes's injunction that "The father, all whose joy is nothing else / But fair posterity, should hold some counsel / In such a business," Florizel writes himself out of his father's bloodline, exclaiming, "From my succession wipe me, father! I / Am heir to my affection" (4.4.412-14; 485-6).

But here Florizel does more than defy paternal commands. By removing himself from Polixenes in genealogical and sociopolitical terms, he invents a new identity for himself as "heir to my affection." By disinheriting himself from Polixenes, he adheres himself to Perdita. Florizel's "affection," or his bodily attraction to Perdita, can also be linked to his capacity to affect, or pretend and assume, false appearances.³⁵ Florizel's shifting affection works in concert with Perdita's changed disposition, which she

³⁴ Neely, 9.

³⁵ OED, "affect," 5.

articulates later in the scene: “Methinks I play as I have seen them do / In Whitsun pastorals; sure this robe of mine / Does change my disposition” (4.4.131-4).³⁶ This robe acts as a trope for the rhetorical transformation Florizel enacts upon Perdita. In the remainder of the scene, Florizel rights Perdita’s social standing at the same time that he transforms her into his wife. What appears as a marker of Florizel’s physiological emotion (his seething passions that challenge his cool and rational obedience to his father) also operates as a signifier of rhetorical invention (his ability to use various kinds of language to recreate and reform marriage contracts). Florizel’s affective, or corporeal, disposition thus incites his rhetorical dis-positioning, understood as his fictional articulation of social, religious, and literary norms. Florizel proves that he can transform what appears as the prohibited mingling of a lowborn shepherdess with a king’s son into a viable contract. Florizel also suggests that he can not only create in language the ideal depiction of his wife, but that from his description emerges Perdita’s body as a rhetorical figure itself.

Perdita’s changed disposition, engineered by Florizel’s rhetorical performance, provides insight into the fabrication of her body as a collocation of tropes. Florizel’s portrait of Perdita’s idealized body is less a mimetic reflection of a material entity (a living and fleshly body) and more a poetic creation of a body in language (a literary and figurative body). Once she dons her dis-positioning robe, Perdita emerges as the first of

³⁶ Perdita’s “robe” calls to mind Protestant objections to priestly vestments, a movement known as the Vesterian Controversy. For a fuller discussion of this movement in the context of Eucharistic theology and “sartorial duplicity,” see Tracey Sedinger, ““And yet woll I stiehl saye that I am I”: *Jake Juggler*, The Lord’s Supper, and Disguise,” *ELH* 74 (2007): 237-69. Sedinger displaces onto clothing the debate over “visible representation...and intelligible reality” (243) that informed Protestant objections to Christ’s Real Presence. For an extended discussion of clothing as a trope for rhetorical dissimulation, see Madhavi Menon, *Wanton Words: Rhetoric and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), esp. ch. 1.

the drama's two tropological bodies, the other being Hermione's statue. Florizel limns Perdita's lithe and lyrical motions as follows:

What you do
Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
I'd have you do it ever; when you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so, so give alms,
Pray so, and for the ordering your affairs,
To sing them too. When you do dance, I wish you
A wave o'th'sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that, move still, still so,
And own no other function. Each your doing,
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds,
That all your acts are queens. (4.4.135-46)

Whereas the conventional *blazon* engenders a poetic dismemberment of the woman's body in the name of an eroticized encomium, Florizel engineers a poetic membering of Perdita's body. Assembling her body as a new creation, Florizel both sacralizes and socially mobilizes Perdita, making her into a model of both Christian devotion and aristocratic status. But more importantly, Florizel authors Perdita's body tropologically. His paradoxical command, "Move still, still so," conflates flux and stasis, monumentality and mobility. He asks that Perdita "own no other function," such that she will always, or "ever," occupy the dual position he creates for her. Florizel does not merely use paradox to describe Perdita; rather, he makes this rhetorical trope the very substance of her character. Paradox defines Perdita in this speech such that, by its end, she becomes the trope that describes her. Perdita's paradoxical "function" -- to "move still" -- defines her rhetorically as one whose bodily movements -- singing, dancing, praying, buying and selling -- perform the *fals semblant* of rhetorical figuration.³⁷

³⁷ *Fals semblant*, or "false appearance," is identified by Puttenham in *The Arte of English Poesy*, as the trope of tropes. Puttenham defines *allegoria* as the "trope of *fals semblant*," and says of it: "Of this figure, therefore, which for his duplicity we will call the Figure of False Semblant or Dissimulation, we will speak

This scene emphasizes Florizel's creative agency, which counteracts religious and political obstacles to his marriage. In this regard, Florizel's poetic creation of Perdita's body further illuminates his desire to "leave out ceremony" (4.4.520). By rendering Perdita poetically, Florizel does not merely recount or reflect Perdita's actual bodily motions but instead makes them anew out of various linguistic combinations. Barbara L. Estrin reads the interchange in an apposite manner, locating the poetic agency in Perdita's movements. She claims that "Florizel neither invents Perdita's body nor ventriloquizes her voice," suggesting that "she leads and he follows" and that Florizel occupies a "secondary role as recorder."³⁸ But Florizel does not merely record; he invents. Florizel's variations on an adverbial theme -- "When you speak," "When you sing," and "When you do dance" -- never ground Perdita's actions in discernible time. We cannot know for certain the precise temporality -- past, present, future, or somewhere in between -- of each "when." Moreover, the delineation of Perdita's movements comprises a wave-like fluctuation of tenses evidenced by her present actions (do, speak, buy and sell, and dance) and Florizel's future projections of these actions ("I'd have you do it ever," "I'd have you buy and sell so," "that you might ever do"). All we can glean from such a contorted calculus is that Florizel proleptically represents in language what Perdita "would" and "might" do, along with what he "would have" her do, and that he scripts her body according to these fictional and subjunctive projections. We therefore cannot proclaim with such assurance that Perdita is leader to Florizel's following, author to his

first, as of the chief ringleader and captain of all other figures either in the poetical or oratory science" (271). Through the dissimulative capacity of allegory specifically and of figuration more generally, "every speech wrested from his own natural signification to another not altogether so natural is a kind of dissimulation, because the words bear contrary countenance to the intent" (271).

³⁸ Barbara L. Estrin, "'Bettering' the Generic Domain of *The Winter's Tale*," *Exemplaria* 20.3 (Fall 2008): 303.

recorder. The final section of the speech, which draws attention to what Perdita is “doing in the present deeds” reads as the culmination of Florizel’s imagined projections. Florizel produces Perdita’s body *linguistically* (as opposed to recording it historically), writing her out of her lowborn status and “queening” her acts. His speech offers less a realistic reflection and more a fictional imagining, an argument corroborated by Perdita herself when she immediately replies to Florizel by casting his description as grandiose if not excessively inaccurate and rhetorically copious: “O Doricles, / Your praises are too large” (4.4.146-7).³⁹

Florizel’s speech is contextualized by the pastoral setting of Bohemia, which emerges as a topos of disguise and dissimulation that engenders the scenes of recognition at court in Act Five.⁴⁰ In the pastoral scene, Florizel moves from *kinesis* to *poesis*, transposing Perdita’s physical movements into the key of rhetorical amplification and ornamentation. In turn, Perdita emerges as the flesh made word through the linguistic inspiration of Florizel’s garden of eloquence.⁴¹ Having changed Perdita’s disposition and effectively disposed of her physical body in order to elevate it to a higher poetic creation,

³⁹ Both Phebe Jensen and James Siemon argue for the latent insidiousness of Florizel’s artistic creation of Perdita, and in so doing, recognize the potency of his art. Jensen, for example, sees Florizel and Perdita as antithetical contenders in the art-nature debate, noting Perdita’s “specific objection to art and festivity” as an indication that “she does not believe in transformation -- the exact belief she will need by the play’s final scene” (297). Siemon sees in the scene suspicion of a different sort, reading in Florizel’s encomium “a possible tyrannical aspect to the act of shaping that paradoxical stillness, at once monumental and moving, into which he could cast her” and citing Perdita as one who, “insistent as she is upon nature rather than art,” cannot “escape infection by such artful impulses” (293-4).

⁴⁰ It is also relevant to note, both for the current reading and the revision of marriage rites specifically, that Bohemia was an historical site of anti-Papist sentiment. As Diarmaid MacCulloch notes, Bohemians were influenced by the Wycliffite sentiments of Jan Hus and “rejected the idea of a separate priesthood, and the belief...that the Eucharist was a miracle in which bread and wine became the body and blood of Jesus” (38-9).

⁴¹ Note that prior to the “What you do” speech, Perdita invites Florizel to “Come, take your flowers” (4.4.132), and while Florizel never actually handles literal flowers, he strews the scene over with the flowers of rhetoric, a topos familiar to humanist rhetorical manuals of the period, such as Henry Peacham’s *The Garden of Eloquence* (1577). We may also note the resonance of *flora* and the stem *flor-* in the name, “Florizel” as an indication of such rhetorical tropes and figures -- the flowers of language -- as written about by Puttenham in *Poesy*: “This ornament which we speak of is given to it by figures and figurative speeches, which be the flowers, as it were, and colors that a poet setteth upon his language by art” (222).

Florizel extends his artistic project toward a broader social concern: the scripting of his own marriage ritual that escapes (and overwrites) the legal and ecclesiastical prohibitions to his union with Perdita. He does so by rewriting the prosaic marriage rite into the poetry of his newly created Perdita who acts as Galatea to his Pygmalion. In his “What you do” speech, Florizel appropriates the language of eternity and continuity that we find in marriage vows, such as those included in the 1599 *Book of Common Prayer*:

I N. take thee N. to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us depart, according to God’s holy ordinance: And thereto I plight thee my troth.⁴²

Later in the service, the priest blesses the rings, praying that the bride and groom “may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according unto thy laws, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”⁴³ Both vow and prayer proceed according to the repetition of prepositional phrases, such as “for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health” and both insist on the endurance suggested by “ever” and “till.” In like manner, in the “What you do” speech, Florizel enacts a similar repetition of clauses, substituting “ever” and “so” for the *BCP*’s “from,” “for,” and “till.”⁴⁴ But the speeches differ in the sense that the marriage vow in the prayer book is a performative in J.L. Austin’s sense of the term: the utterance creates what it signifies, for the marriage is literally contracted and sanctified through the recitation of the vows.⁴⁵ By contrast,

⁴² *BCP*, 292.

⁴³ *BCP*, 292.

⁴⁴ Florizel also echoes the wedding vow when he says much earlier in the scene, “For I cannot be / Mine own, nor anything to any, if / I be not thine” (4.4.43-5).

⁴⁵ In *How to Do Things With Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1962), J.L. Austin defines the performative as an utterance in which “it seems clear that to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances), is not to *describe* my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it” (6). In this discussion, Austin isolates the “I do” portion of the marriage vow as a primary example of the performative utterance because it produces and legitimizes the very action it names.

Florizel's vow in the pastoral scene is a poetic rendering -- a depiction that acts like a vow or profession but does not constitute, and thus confer legal or ecclesiastical authority upon, the contract.

Throughout these scenes, Florizel draws on the language of sacramental union in order to convert ecclesiastical benediction into rhetorical figure-making. For him, figures of speech and not contracts or sacraments solidify marital union. In addition to rewriting religious marriage vows, he also draws on the bodily exchange of hands, a gesture central to the ecclesiastical rites.⁴⁶ Early in the scene, Florizel, in the absence of any clerical or legal officer, becomes priest-like when he instructs Perdita: "But come, our dance, I pray; / Your hand, my Perdita -- so turtles pair, / That never mean to part," to which Perdita replies, "I'll swear for 'em" (4.4.153-5). Later in the scene, their union threatened by Polixenes's objection, Florizel reiterates the image by extending the string of similes:

I take thy hand, this hand
As soft as dove's down and as white as it,
Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fanned snow that's bolted
By th' northern blasts twice o'er. (4.4.367-70)

Florizel transforms Perdita's hands into similes; indeed, one could say he *handles* Perdita's hands in the humanist sense of "handling" as taking up a theme for literary

⁴⁶ Both Catholic and reformed marriage ceremonies foreground the holding of hands as a physical manifestation of the sacramental act. Consider, for example, the instructions offered to the couple in the *Book of Common Prayer*:

And the minister, receiving the woman at her father or friend's hands, shall cause the man to take the woman by the right hand, and so either to give their troth to each other (292-3).

The liturgical function of hands pervades Florizel's secular appropriations of the marriage rite, but we can see how Florizel also revises sacramental marriage here, and thus continues Paulina's earlier program of sacramental re-imagination.

imitation.⁴⁷ First compared to turtledoves, Perdita's hands then become signifiers of purity and feminine softness.⁴⁸ Where the literal joining of hands in the sacramental marriage rites confirm the couple's union in the name of God, in Florizel's pastoral marriage scene, the hand organizes a condensed *blazon*. The hand thus operates metonymically, standing as it does for Perdita's entire body, which Florizel then anatomizes rhetorically. Lastly, Perdita's hand moves out of a religious venue and into a theatrical staging of a completely secular marriage, one presided over by a shepherd. The shepherd represents another "priestlike" figure enjoined by Florizel to "contract us 'fore these witnesses," to which the shepherd replies, "Come, your hand; / And daughter, yours" (4.4.394-6).⁴⁹

This dilated scene of manual contraction and rhetorical handling demonstrates how Florizel uses art and language to construct an otherwise prohibited marital union, thus obviating the restrictions of both law and church. What is more, Florizel shows how literary creation can overwrite the political prohibition of marriage across classes and the ritual demands of both Catholic and reformed marriage rites. Despite Florizel's poetic project, the marriage never occurs onstage. Even though Leontes, at the end of 5.1,

⁴⁷ Early modern humanists frequently use the term "handle" or related phrases like "take in hand" to justify the endeavor of writing a treatise and to describe the processes by which texts, in their words and phrases as well as in their content and themes, are artificially made, transformed, and disseminated. Cf. Puttenham, who opens Book III of his *Arte* by describing the way in which "vulgar speech," or colloquial language that is unadorned and lacking ornament, can, "being artificially handled," acquire "more beauty and commendation" (222).

⁴⁸ In this respect, Florizel may also be said to rewrite Leontes's estimation of Hermione's false hand-holding with Polixenes: "But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers, / As now they are, and making practised smiles / As in a looking-glass; and then to sign, as 'twere / The mort o'th'deer -- O, that is entertainment / My bosom likes not, nor my brows" (1.2.115-19). Note, too, that Leontes also remembers his wooing of Hermione in language similar to Florizel's: "Why, that was when / Three crabbed months had soured themselves to death / Ere I could make thee open thy white hand / And clap thyself my love. Then didst thou utter, / 'I am yours forever'" (1.1.101-4).

⁴⁹ In his gloss on the passage, Pitcher notes that the joining of hands is also linked to a common practice of "handfasting," which enacts a "private vow or promise to marry" that is sanctioned by law but not solemnized by the church. However, as Pitcher notes, the compact could be annulled by Polixenes on account of the social disparity between Florizel and Perdita (284).

recognizes that Florizel's "petition / Is yet unanswered" and intends to seek out Polixenes, the union never materializes. In its place, we have Florizel's transformation of a corporeal marriage into a rhetorical ideal, one that is deferred into the uncertain time and space of the offstage. Thus both the marriage and Perdita's body, like Bohemia itself, become imaginary counter-sites to legal, ecclesiastical, and political institutions.

"No longer shall you gaze on it"

By making Perdita's hands into poetic figures rather than the physical embodiments of legal contract and solemnized union, Florizel sets into motion the play's final scene, which, like the pastoral interlude, works through the relationship between mimetic representation and poetic creation. Hermione's transformation from marble into flesh makes resurrection and incarnation contingent on artificial machinery and rhetorical dissimulation. In this sense, the play concludes by offering a theatrical and poetic reappraisal of the Eucharist and of sacramental action more generally.

The Catholic Eucharist, as Tracey Sedinger argues, is inherently opposed to theatrical illusion. "As a repetition (as opposed to a reenactment) of Christ's original sacrifice," she argues, "the Eucharistic rite assumed an anti-representational and anti-theatrical realism."⁵⁰ *The Winter's Tale* redresses Eucharistic anti-theatricalism by divesting the body of Christ of its physical and sacramental power and making theologies of presence into episodes of theatrical art. In this play, Shakespeare does not offer what Andrew Moran sees as the "theatrical/religious ritual that makes [Hermione] miraculously present," nor does the final scene implicate the spectators within what

⁵⁰ Sedinger, 241.

Michael O'Connell calls "the process by which a statue responds to prayer and desire, comes alive, and confers blessing on a world that had seemed lost to tragedy."⁵¹ Rather, the real miracle in the play is the poetic making of Hermione's body. Whereas Gloria Olchowy claims that through the statue Shakespeare "throws into special relief the powerful theatrical effect of the maternal body coming to life,"⁵² I agree with Lynn Enterline that in the final scene "Shakespeare tries to replace the animating power of the maternal body with the language and visual spectacle of the theater"⁵³ and extend the claim to the context of Eucharistic semiotics.

In the chapel scene that introduces Act Five, the instruments of Catholic ceremony appear to be firmly in place. The Eucharistic context developed for the scene by Andrew Moran and Phebe Jensen is elaborated in the play by the Steward who, having described Giulio Romano's lifelike sculpture of Hermione ("He so near to Hermione hath done Hermione that they / say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer" [5.2.99-100]) says to Rogero, "There with all greediness of affection are they gone, / and there they intend to sup" (100-101). But this feast never happens. Similarly, Leontes echoes this gustatory language when he beholds Hermione and says, "O, she's warm! / If this be magic, let it be an art / Lawful as eating" (5.3.109-11), a line that indicates the Eucharistic undertones of Hermione's animation.

By comparing the apparent animation of the statue to an "art / Lawful as eating," Leontes evokes the complicated language of Eucharistic controversy, this time engaging debates over the lawfulness of ingesting one's God. Moreover, he places Giulio Romano's art under the purview of a Eucharistic semiotics. For Catholics, Eucharist is a

⁵¹ Jensen, 304; O'Connell, 142.

⁵² qtd. in Lamb and Wayne, 156.

⁵³ Enterline, 206.

lawful art; it is an ecclesiastically-sanctioned form of *poesis* by which ordinary bread is transubstantiated into Christ's divine body through the proclamation of a linguistic formula, *Hoc est enim corpus meum*. But as Thomas Tuke has shown, a reformist position maintains that the Catholic Eucharist enacts only a flawed poetics, one that insists on a theatrical, rather than transubstantiated, supper. It is an *unlawful* art and an unlawful eating. Reformers spilled considerable ink charging that to eat Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist entailed both cannibalism and sacrilege. As Edward Muir writes, "Ingesting the host put the Christian in contact with with the ineffable through a mysterious food that brought both salvation and health" while at the same time "contemplating the host as food...could encourage unappetizing sensations since by eating the Eucharist the Christian cannibalized God."⁵⁴ Eating, then, is not necessarily a lawful art.⁵⁵

Despite its Eucharistic valences, Paulina's chapel, where the statue of Hermione is kept for sixteen years and ultimately displayed, emerges as a theatrical locus: it is as a land of make believe and a world of similitude, its Eucharistic expressions rendered figurative. In Paulina's "sanctuary," Eucharist is exposed as an excess, a sham, an artistic trick in need of reformation. The best example of this divestiture of bodily presence is the play's own stage direction, which introduces Hermione's statue to the play as figurative device. When Paulina draws the curtain to expose the statue, she "*reveals*

⁵⁴ Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2005), 168.

⁵⁵ The act of eating factors significantly in early medieval debates over resurrection, especially with regard to what happens after death to the corpse insofar as it may rot in the earth and be eaten by various creatures. Summarizing the positions of medieval scholastics like Peter Lombard, Caroline Walker Bynum writes, "If food *does* add to human substance, how can we avoid becoming what we eat? How, in cases of cannibalism or attacks by wild animals, can we remain ourselves when digested by others? What will happen to superfluity when we rise?" *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia UP, 1995), 124-5. Leontes's suggestion that eating is proverbially lawful is not necessarily accurate, given the vexed position eating had in centuries of theological and philosophical debates over the resurrection.

Hermione standing like a statue” (5.3.20 s.d.).⁵⁶ Hermione is *like* a statue; she is not literally stone. In this sense, Hermione is a fictional monument, but even more so, a monumental fiction. Her transformation, also regarded as a resurrection, is not authentic. This important detail, then, refutes a suggestion like Moran’s that “the transformation of Hermione from stone to flesh is unmistakably akin to the transformation of bread to flesh in the Eucharist.”⁵⁷ Paulina’s language proves that the play refuses to reify the statue as a magical, sacramental, or even metaphysical body; rather, the play exposes it as the artifice that it is. By undercutting the Catholic notion of Eucharistic presence, Paulina shows how the animation of a statue, like the transubstantiation of a host, is a theatrical and not a theological principle. She restores the dialectic of the word and the flesh to what she construes as a properly fictional realm.

Paulina’s revelation of Hermione depends on the twinned illusions of resurrection and incarnation. As we, like Leontes, behold this “transformation,” we are reminded that Hermione is a speaking statue in the sense that her petrified state is a rhetorical position assembled out of the language Paulina uses to orchestrate her actions. Even though there is speech in Hermione’s dumbness and language in her very gestures, the animation of her statue is less an incarnational or resurrectional wonder than a contrived theatrical production. The statue, then, becomes a topos through which the play exposes the artificiality of the both the sacred doctrines of resurrection and incarnation and the

⁵⁶ This quoted stage direction is Pitcher’s editorial interpolation. The 1623 Folio text includes the following: “*Enter Leontes, Polixenes, Florizell, Perdita, Camillo, Paulina: Hermione (like a Statue:) Lords, &c.*” The Folio direction, by suggesting that Hermione the character actually comes on stage in the semblance of a statue, intensifies the point about similitude over substance. Charlton Hinman, ed. *The First Folio of Shakespeare: The Norton Facsimile* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), 319.

⁵⁷ Moran, 54.

secular understandings of the body as pure flesh. The statue becomes a way to read the body as artifice, as a poetic creation through tropes and images.

As such, the statue also evinces the poetic process of character creation by producing a new Hermione, a character double, a changing role. Character, as Jonathan Goldberg has recently noted, means not psychological being, but written mark or inscription. “The being of characters is their textuality,” he claims, going on to say that “characters have a material opacity; they are not veils to be penetrated but surfaces to be read and reread.”⁵⁸ Here Hermione is a dramatic surface that becomes repositioned from character-as-body to character-as-statue. The statue shifts Hermione from one set of theatrical and textual positions -- the condemned adulterer of Sicilia -- to another -- the redeemed wife from whom Leontes must ask pardon. Definitively “like a statue,” then, Hermione is a literary encasement, an invented persona in a dramatic work generated through Paulina’s figuration and facilitation of her changing dramatic positions. By making Hermione descend from her pedestal, Paulina transports her, making her into a theatrical metaphor -- a literal figure of transport -- that can move from flesh to stone to flesh.

Such metaphorical transport characterizes the dramatic performance of Hermione’s reanimation as it is engineered by Paulina from start to finish. Evoking her apostolic namesake, Paulina may approximate some kind of priestly power here, but this power is decidedly theatrical rather than theological. Her intention in this scene is not to affirm models of bodily devotion but to expose them as dubious fictions that are not to be

⁵⁸ Jonathan Goldberg, “Shakespearean Characters,” in *Shakespeare’s Hand* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 20, 32. Cf. Karen Newman’s qualification of Harold Bloom’s notion of Shakespearean humanism in “Character,” in *Essaying Shakespeare* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009): 111-22.

construed as real. Paulina first articulates the statue's duplicitous lifelikeness when she says, "My lord's almost so far transported that / He'll think anon it lives" (5.3.68-9). Her cautionary remark elicits popular condemnation of religious images as lifelike and capable of either spurring bodily affect or becoming bodily themselves. Such an observation has been taken up by both Michael O'Connell and Julia Reinhard Lupton in aligning the statue with idolatry and iconoclasm, respectively.⁵⁹ Paulina reconciles these poles of image controversy, for she negotiates image making and image breaking in staging Hermione's theatrical resurrection. In her orchestrated performance, Paulina relies on the statue's work as image (and perhaps, even, as idol) in order to expose the statue as Hermione's likeness.⁶⁰ But the statue, intended to act as an uncanny manifestation of Hermione's likeness, also reminds us that the characters themselves are nothing but specters of the body -- those inscriptions and textual surfaces of which Goldberg speaks. As figures in a play, characters like Hermione and Paulina are not real subjectivities; likewise, their bodily animations are equally fictional.

As the scene proceeds, Paulina casts Hermione's body not as a dangerous object that can become flesh but as an object lesson in the artificial process of its making. She cautions Leontes:

⁵⁹ O'Connell reads the statue scene as bordering on idolatry: "In its quasi-religious enactment, the scene realizes the worst fears also of the antitheatricalists, for it presses an audience into idolatry as it assents with Leontes to whatever reality the apparent statue may mysteriously possess" (141). Lupton reads *The Winter's Tale* according to an "iconography of idolatry" (183), but also reads it iconoclastically, suggesting that the statue scene stages "the visual conditions of Catholic image worship, but only as canceled" (216).

⁶⁰ Lupton usefully parses the distinction between idol and image, arguing that icons, or iconography, "cover the keying of images to a system of meanings" while idolatry results in the transformation of the "material representative into a principle of mimetic representation by exploiting an ambiguity constitutive of the *eidon* itself" (183-4). Idolatry occurs, she says, when one "might mistake an image for thing it represents" (189-90). In this respect, the critical readings of *The Winter's Tale* that see the statue's animation as a real resurrection of the flesh are idolatrous; the play is not. Phebe Jensen argues the opposite point, that the statue is somehow a corrective to Protestant agendas, locating in the final scene "the iconoclasm of Reform...corrected by the power of the aesthetics of Catholic worship" (305).

Indeed, my lord,
If I had thought the sight of my poor image
Would thus have wrought you -- for the stone is mine --
I'd not have showed it. (5.3.56-9)

Paulina reveals (one could even say, re-makes) a Hermione that is both “poor image” and possessed “stone.” In doing so, she recognizes the power of images, whether in paint or marble, to operate on the senses. In other words, no literal animation of stone into flesh needs to occur in order for Paulina’s retributive drama to work. The image is enough precisely because it works on the body. As Paulina says almost immediately following, “No longer shall you gaze on’t, lest your fancy / Think it moves” (5.3.60-61). Here she speaks like an iconoclast: skeptical of the image’s propensity to activate imagination and to thereby distract the viewer from contemplating the divine mysteries it is intended to signify, she describes the very artistic process by which Hermione is transformed. But the statue is not idolatrous precisely because Paulina removes from it any suggestion of metaphysical power and she insists on the discrepancy between statue as image and statue as body. In turn, the statue’s animation is not a miraculous wonder but a contrived theatrical gesture. By exposing Hermione’s statue as fictional process rather than a material product or devotional object, Paulina reminds us that Hermione, like herself, is an invented persona in a literary work generated through the stitching together of various words, phrases, and rhetorical tropes.

The “resurrection” of “the body” in Shakespeare’s play is nothing more than a reiteration of the poetic features of that body. The play’s program of sacramental reformation, which I have traced in Paulina’s revision of sacramental confession and Florizel’s rescripting of sacralized marriage, reaches its apotheosis in the resurrection of inner faith awakened by Paulina’s art. For Walter S.H. Lim, this faith is “in reality, faith

in the miracles of the stage or stage illusion.”⁶¹ When Paulina instructs Leontes, “awake your faith” (5.3.95), suggests that only his belief in art, like a person’s belief in sacramental grace, can activate Hermione’s descent. Paulina says nothing in the final scene about the resurrection of either the artistic copy (the statue, Hermione’s likeness) or the model (Hermione herself). Instead, Paulina applies the verb, “awake,” specifically to Leontes’s *faith*, and it is this arousal of an immaterial and interiorized faith, as opposed to the fleshly rituals and sensory embellishments of Catholic worship, architecture, and theology, that casts Paulina’s actions in the final scene as a poetic reformation of Eucharistic presence. The resurrection that concludes the play is hardly a resurrection of the physical body or of the literally dead; rather, it is an awakening of faith in the tangible intangibility of theatre itself, a venue that give us embodied characters who are simultaneously virtual, fictional personae.

What is so puzzling about the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale* is that what appears superficially as the transformation of stone into flesh acts theatrically to disavow this miraculous change. In this sense, the play witnesses what Howard Felperin calls “the foregrounding of linguistic difficulty” against the “backgrounding of divine reference.”⁶² Hermione’s twinned incarnation (her becoming flesh) and resurrection (her surmounting death) evoke the myth of substantial change -- a myth propagated in both the Catholic theology of the Eucharist and the poetic mythologies of Pygmalion -- so easily recognizable to seventeenth century audiences. Where we want to see a miraculous transformation Paulina argues that no transformation is required. Her words alone will

⁶¹ Lim, 319.

⁶² Howard Felperin, “The Deconstruction of Presence in *The Winter’s Tale*,” in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, eds. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York and London: Methuen, 1985), 16.

present Hermione's body to the audience, and all Hermione has to do in return is to move her feet:

Either forbear,
Quit presently the chapel, or resolve you
For more amazement. If you can behold it,
I'll make the statue move indeed, descend
And take you by the hand. But then you'll think --
Which I protest against -- I am assisted
By wicked powers. (5.3.85-91)

Like Florizel, who produces the body of Perdita in language, Paulina animates the body of Hermione through speech: "I'll make the statue move indeed." Claiming not to make her maker, but to remake her companion, Paulina makes clear that Hermione's animation is theatrical and not transubstantiative. In fact, the "wicked powers" that she guards against, which Pitcher glosses strictly as strictly secular magic, also recall the sacred magic of the Roman church and the Protestant deflation of *Hoc est corpus* into *hocus pocus*.⁶³ These religious powers to transform bread into wine and stone into flesh are the very powers that Paulina rejects for another transformative power: that of *poesis*.

Paulina's instructions to Leontes exfoliate the statue's artistry, but the missives she gives to Hermione provide more crucial evidence for the play's displacement of liturgical incarnation and theological resurrection onto theatrical art. The final scene of *The Winter's Tale*, while it evokes the possibility of an image becoming lively, also reminds us that the resurrection occurs within the province of fiction. In this regard, Paulina fictionalizes, rather than sacralizes, the process of gazing upon images. Hermione's body emerges as a condition of Paulina's language, and that her animation is one generated by the poetic power of the word:

⁶³ Cf. Pitcher, 343 n. 91.

Music, awake her; strike! [*Music*]
 [*to Hermione*] 'Tis time; descend; be stone no more; approach.
 Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come,
 I'll fill your grave up. Stir -- nay, come away;
 Bequeath to death your numbness, for from him
 Dear life redeems you. You perceive she stirs.
 [*Hermione steps down.*]
 Start not. Her actions shall be holy as
 You hear my spell is lawful. [*to Leontes*] Do not shun her
 Until you see her die again, for then
 You kill her double. Nay, present your hand.
 When she was young, you wooed her; now in age,
 Is she become the suitor? (5.3.98-109)

Granted, Paulina's speech provides ample evidence for the dependence of the transformation on sensory phenomena: the music, the marvelous gazing, the presentation of Leontes's hand. But all of these actions function as stage directions through which Paulina masters the dramatic sequence rhetorically. The first cue for Hermione's resurrection is the imperative, "Music, strike!" In Paulina's "music" we hear the word *muse*, which makes her invocation a request for poetic inspiration. Paulina identifies both the arts of poetry and the accessories of theatrical production, rather than miraculous transformation, as catalysts for the play's denouement. What is more, when Paulina says, "Strike all that look upon with marvel," we may also hear an echo of "marble," suggesting that the apparent transformation of stone into flesh -- of marble into matter -- is really an act of poetic "marvel." Shakespeare makes theatrical marvel out of apparent marble when Paulina signals to Hermione, "'Tis time; descend; be stone no more." Paulina does not pronounce words of consecration nor does she rely on "wicked powers": rather, she issues nothing more than a terse imperative, a unit of language.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ I disagree with Moran's contention that "the transformation of an inanimate object into flesh and blood has a liturgical significance" and that "Paulina's performance is a sacrifice that follows the outlines of a Mass" (39). There is no literal transformation and certainly no evidence of a sacrifice. Given my discussion of "wicked powers" above, if Paulina does anything with the Mass, she rejects it.

Paulina's refashioning of the Eucharist in this final scene suggests a corollary aesthetic debate between mimesis and poesis -- between nature and art -- that undergirds the animation of Hermione. One may consider mimesis a presence-oriented artistic program, one that sees the art object as representing (or making present again) in a lifelike manner what is naturally and physically identifiable. By contrast, poesis does not reflect what is corporeally or naturally "there" but, by virtue of language and fictional tropes, adds something to what is already present. The play suggests that for art to become nature is unlawful; for art to come alive is, at least for reformers, unholy; and for art to simply conform to the historical conditions of life outside the theatre is unexciting. In this respect, one may suggest that Shakespeare's play would be more marvelous, more astonishing, more captivating if, indeed, Hermione really did die and was subsequently resurrected. But this reading works according to the premise that art must become life and that stones must become flesh. It pushes the agenda of Leontes's mimetic expectations as opposed to the poetic machinations engineered by Paulina and Hermione. These two female characters expose the intricacies of linguistic discrepancy, or what Paul de Man terms the "vertiginous possibilities of referential aberration."⁶⁵ Hermione's statue inscribes an unreliable language, a language she uses poetically to make what nature cannot hold or does not have.⁶⁶

Paulina's arts are poetic, and they bring out the vertigo and aberrances of language itself. In the act of remaking Hermione, Paulina does not only mirror a natural

⁶⁵ Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1979), 10.

⁶⁶ As Enterline cogently puts it, in this play, "words are somehow not equal to the world" (213). Lim also reminds us that "representation is defined by a gap that always exists between literary portrayal and the object portrayed" (328). On the complicated representational functions of the statue, see also Lowell Gallagher, "'This Seal'd-up Oracle': Ambivalent Nostalgia in *The Winter's Tale*, *Exemplaria* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 465-98.

body, but she adds to it, amplifies it, and reshapes it. In Paulina's hands, stone and marble are the malleable media of artistic creation. These stony materials signify not the petrification and animation of the flesh but the labor -- the rhetorical handling -- of poetic invention: the physical joining, handling, and manipulation of words.⁶⁷ Granted, amidst this *poesis* is certainly some reliance on mimetic resemblance. Recall that the Steward says of Giulio Romano that "had he himself / eternity and could put breath into his work, [he] would / beguile Nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape" (5.2.95-7). I wish to suggest, however, that the statue also allows for a completely new creation of Hermione's body, one engineered not only through the mandates of mimetic similitude -- the correspondence of art to nature -- but also thorough Paulina's poetic agency. This agency is corroborated by Leontes when he says to Paulina, "What you can make her do / I am content to look on; what to speak / I am content to hear, for 'tis as easy / To make her speak as to move" (5.3.91-3). The repetition of the word *make*, which structures the humanist understanding of *poesis* as a process of artistic invention through the manipulation, or handling, of literary materials, signals Leontes's acknowledgement of and submission to Paulina's production of a new Hermione. Leontes also differentiates the Hermione he sees at the play's end from the Hermione he banished at the play's beginning when he first beholds her standing like a statue and remarks that Hermione "was not so much wrinkled, nothing / so aged as this seems" (5.3.28-9). Paulina redirects the comment to the province of artistic making: "So much the more our carver's excellence, / Which lets go by some sixteen years and makes her / As she lived now" (5.3.30-32).

⁶⁷ On joinery and linguistic *materia* as related to literary production, see Patricia Parker, "'Rude Mechanicals': *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Shakespearean Joinery," in *Shakespeare From the Margins: Language, Culture, Context* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 83-115.

The phrase, “as she lived now” is an important indicator of Hermione as a perpetual approximation -- a vehicle to Paulina’s tenor. Here, Hermione is “as she lived now”; at other points, she is a life “as lively mocked as ever / Still sleep mocked death” (5.3.18-19) and of course, an “art / Lawful as eating.” Stone and statue, Hermione is also a rhetorical figure, specifically a simile, that is compared to other entities. Thus her body is resurrected not through supernatural power but through the agency of words. When Leontes says, “Still methinks / There is an air comes from her. What fine chisel / Could ever yet cut breath?” (5.3.77-9), he attributes to the statue the breath of poetic creation -- the *muse*-ic of which Paulina speaks earlier -- and in doing so, underscores its function as a poetic object. The end of the play proves that Leontes never fully interprets Hermione; he never fully speaks her language, which may account for the fact that Hermione does not verbally address him at the play’s end. In fact, as Hermione moves toward Leontes to embrace him, her grasp figuratively petrifies him, exposing the folly of his own misinterpretation: “O, she’s warm!” he says. “If this be magic, let it be an art / As lawful as eating” (5.3.109-11).

Earlier Leontes says, “The fixture of her eye has motion in’t, / As we are mocked with art” (5.3.66-7). Hermione’s “warm” life suggests the motile and creative powers of artistic newness, and they mock with art Leontes’s reliance on a mimetic relation between lawful art and nature as he sees it. The statue is not a real presence but a derisive fiction, for it has the power to mock both death and life. The statue does not imitate life, for the *OED* records that the definition of “mock” as “imitate” does not emerge until the twentieth century. More contemporary to the play are the connotations of deceit, bewilderment, scorn, and mimicry. If the statue’s art mocks life, it does so

contemptuously, and its contempt is a consequence of its creative (rather than imitative) force. Hermione's statue is art that adds to, and in this case, upsets and deceives, nature. Contrary to the creative fluidity and malleability of Hermione's poesis, Leontes's mimesis depends upon petrified presence and seeks to make nature and art unproblematically concurrent. But they are not so.

"Whom do you seek?"

The Winter's Tale is a romance, and as such, relies on the motifs of errancy, misrecognition, and final realization that define the genre.⁶⁸ In terms of religious history, this romance presents Eucharistic presence as erroneous and also enacts an errancy of presence, understood as a wandering away from Catholic theologies of real presence. Moreover, the play proves that the quest to locate -- let alone resurrect -- bodily presence becomes stymied in the face of the dilations and deferrals produced by art. In a broader literary-historical sense, the play revises the *Quem quaeritis* plays, which constitute both the earliest dramas about the body as well as some of the oldest surviving dramas in English. This proverbial Latin question, "Whom do you seek?" was usually spoken by either an angel or Christ himself to Mary Magdalene and the apostles when they beheld the empty tomb on the morning of Christ's resurrection. For example, *The Raising of the Host From the Sepulchre*, a twenty-line play included in the St. Gall *Breviary*, contains a stage direction that says: "*The body of the Lord having therefore been raised from the tomb, let the cantor begin the responsory,*" which proclaims, "An angel of the Lord spoke

⁶⁸ The trope of errancy, as both geographical and rhetorical digression, has been established by both Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1976) and Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979).

to the women saying: Whom do you seek, do you seek Jesus? He has risen already.”⁶⁹

The text of the play complements the action witnessed: the body of Christ, present in the Host, has indeed been raised from (or at least lifted out of) the sepulchre, and this dramatic action visualizes the otherwise inscrutable mystery of resurrection.⁷⁰

These medieval resurrection dramas proceed according to a simple logic of seeking and finding, which becomes moralized as the quest for Christ’s living body among the dead. For example, in the twelfth century sepulchre drama, *Ad Faciendam Similitudinem Dominici Sepulchri*, contained in the Fleury playbook, the angel says to Mary Magdalene, “Why...do you seek the living among the dead?” to which she replies, “I am deprived of the presence of my beloved master.”⁷¹ Religious resurrection drama enacts a search for bodily presence; it first marks and then satisfies the spiritual need for a physical manifestation of the divine. In this regard, the genre works as romance in miniature, casting Mary and the disciples as the conventional questers who wander, or err, in pursuit of a goal that evades their grasp. These plays emphasize the resolution of this search, imposing upon the circularity of errancy a fixed point of discovery and revelation which, in this case, is the body of Christ. They also make presence

⁶⁹ *The Raising of the Host from the Sepulchre* (from St. Gall), in *Medieval Drama*, ed. David Bevington (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 17.

⁷⁰ The *Quem quaeritis* drama includes a literal drama of the sepulchre, which, according to Eamon Duffy, “left a deep mark not only in the minds of medieval English men and women but in the very structure of many parish churches” (29). In this liturgical drama, an actual tomb was built at a side altar, and a consecrated host was carried in procession and then actually buried within it, where it remained throughout the triduum, or three days, leading up to Easter Sunday. As part of the Easter Sunday liturgy, the host was discovered and revealed to the congregants, who were able to behold the consecrated body of Christ newly risen from the tomb. Other versions of the play, such as the *Visitatio Sepulchri* contained in the tenth-century *Regularis Concordia*, have a cross and not a host that is first buried and then taken away so that someone can “lift the veil [of the tomb] and show them the place bare of the cross, with nothing other than the shroud in which the cross had been wrapped” (qtd. in Bevington, 28). The cross functions like the host (but not as the host, since according to Catholic doctrine, the host is the actual body of Christ) in signifying the raising of Christ from the dead.

⁷¹ *The Service for Representing the Scene at the Lord’s Sepulchre* (*Ad Faciendam Similitudinem Dominici Sepulchri*), qtd. in Bevington, 41.

discoverable rather than deferred. Like the *Play of the Sacrament* discussed in Chapter One, their dramatic and theological aims converge in order to present moral lessons that reify the physical body of Christ.

But *The Winter's Tale* pursues an alternate trajectory toward an alternate resurrection. The play answers the question, "Whom do you seek" by putting pressure on the very identity of the "whom" that is sought. Shakespeare reconstitutes the tropes of resurrection and incarnation understood as corporeal revelations and creations and instead insists on the poetic production of the body. Paulina's dilated procession with Leontes to the statue of Hermione, followed by her dramatic revelation of the enlivened statue, approximates the discovery of Christ in the tomb and subsequent antiphonal proclamation of the resurrection, but the presence behind the curtain -- the flesh behind the stone -- is radically called into question. Complementary to the play's religious revision of the body, then, emerges its literary reformation of liturgical resurrection drama. Hermione's statue frustrates those who seek either an actual resurrection or the reanimation of an actual body. Instead, Shakespeare's play renders bodies through the agency of the word, a claim that counters centuries of flesh-oriented epistemologies grounded in Catholic religious practices.

Stone does not turn into flesh in *The Winter's Tale*. Rather, Hermione's theatrical resurrection tropes the aesthetic fashioning of the body evinced throughout the play. From the myth of discoverable presence upheld by early resurrection plays, *The Winter's Tale* moves us toward a tropological imagination of both sacrament and the body more generally. Figurative to its core and poetic in its constitution, the body, as demonstrated particularly through Florizel's linguistic creation of Perdita's body and Paulina's

theatrical scripting of Hermione's, is storied. The body emerges through narratives, both the metanarrative that constitutes Shakespeare's play and its constituent tales offered by various characters. In its religious figurations, the body emerges as textual marker of a Catholic past that frustrates the cultural primacy of bodily miracles and corporeal devotion. Bodies, as *The Winter's Tale* imagines them, are "bodies of stories only," a phrase used by William Tyndale to describe the function of sacraments in reformed theology. "Our sacraments are bodies of stories only," he writes, "and that there is none other virtue in them than to testify, and exhibit to the senses and understanding, the covenants and promises made in Christ's blood...where the sacraments or ceremonies are not understood, there they may be clean unprofitable."⁷² *The Winter's Tale* writes the body as a Tyndalean sacrament, as a marker or indicator of -- and indeed a rhetorical pointer toward -- its respective "covenants" and "promises." Just as reformers contend that no real body of Christ exists in the Eucharist, no real body of Hermione is ever present on the Shakespearean stage; likewise, no real body of Perdita is ever found and reclaimed. The "resurrected" body of Hermione is, in its literal literary function as figure, a convention of romance intended to suture the familial and political divisions that comprise the previous four acts. The generic and tropological functions of these bodies are sacramental in Tyndale's sense, for they "testify and exhibit to the senses and understanding" the various reunions that bring the play to a relatively happy end. While the play may never offer us a literal stony body, it presents a panoply of storied bodies -- bodies that may not correspond to or mime nature, but bodies that can mock the very reliability of likeness itself.

⁷² William Tyndale, *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of Holy Scripture*, ed. Henry Walter, Parker Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1848), 357-8.

The Winter's Tale thus emerges as a poignant literary reworking of the tension between word and flesh on the early modern stage. The entire play pivots on the absent body of Hermione, which for sixteen years lies encased in the tomb that is the offstage, only to reveal in the final act that Hermione was never dead. As I have shown, Hermione is less resurrected than she is repositioned, Paulina's stony image of her acting as a further troping of her function as dramatic character and fictional creation. Hermione's stony likeness demonstrates how *The Winter's Tale* offers the idea of an figurative body - a body produced by the poetic work of tropes, figures, and dramatic actions-- as a radiant spectacle, but one whose radiance derives from its subtle departure from natural molds. In *The Winter's Tale*, if still sleep can mock death, cold stones can also mock warm flesh. And for this to happen, no *hoc est corpus* is necessary; all one needs is the playful *hocus pocus* -- the unlawful magic -- of language itself.

THE DISAPPEARING BANQUET

So what does early modern drama ultimately “do” with the Eucharist? Is there a terminus or definitive point at which the Eucharist becomes solely figurative and loses its claims to corporeal presence? Or does a Eucharistic semiotics persist well into the seventeenth century as dramas continue to place the word and the flesh in tension and the language of a Catholic past continues to cross the temporal planes of the history of the Reformation?

Over the course of this project, I have demonstrated how early modern dramatists -- especially Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Middleton, though we could also make similar cases for Kyd, Ford, Webster, and Marston -- adapt, appropriate, and reimagine an iconography of Christ’s body in terms of parody and piety, eroticism and adoration, physical presence and literary representation. Recall that Anthony Dawson has argued that the very design of early modern theatre is Eucharistic, in that it “maintain[s] a sense of the interplay between real presence and represented presence,” and that “theatrical participation is best understood in terms of habits of thought derived from the controversy about the presence of Christ’s body in the sacrament.”¹ Even if we do not agree that theatrical presence and participation are at some level Eucharistic, and that theatre, like transubstantiation, “depend[s] on an ambiguous relation between sign and

¹ Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare’s England: A Collaborative Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 14, 98-9.

referent, exterior and interior,”² perhaps we can at least begin to acknowledge the body of Christ as a pivotal player in the construction of the early modern body between the poles of sign and substance, real and represented presence on the early modern stage.

At the initial stages of this project, I relied more firmly on a strict epistemological shift that divided pre-Reformation Catholicism and post-Reformation Protestantism into religious systems predicated respectively on the flesh and the word. But such a historical trajectory both misrepresents the interplay of the word and flesh evident in the theology and devotional practices of each religious system and misleadingly packages Catholicism and Protestantism in terms of a word/flesh binary. I have not contended at any point that Protestantism wholly abolishes the body; rather, I have labored to show how the reformist imperatives of *sola scriptura*, the priesthood of all believers, and a liturgy grounded in vernacular prayer and the dissemination of and preaching on Scripture inflect the body differently, as a rhetorical phenomenon in addition to a purely fleshly entity.

In my introductory chapter, I enumerated a number of scenes in early modern drama, ranging from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* to the anonymous *Arden of Faversham*, where we encounter some exposition or appropriation of Eucharistic imagery. To conclude the project, I wish to gesture in the opposite direction by looking at Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, a play that stages the Eucharist through its disappearance, thus challenging a theological model of real presence with a theatrical enactment of a vanishing banquet. In this play, I argue, we move from the Mass to the masque as Ariel and his attendants twice bring down a banquet scene but twice deny the feast to the

² Dawson, 27.

participants and thus delay the experience of full communion as both a theatrical and a sacramental act.³

The Tempest uses the banquet as a dramatic topos through which to stage the possibility that the Eucharistic meal disappears. In staging the vanishing banquet, however, the play also mobilizes Eucharistic language and imagery, thus testifying to the aesthetic hold that Christ's body and its ritual performances exert even in the act of disappearance. Thus *The Tempest* performs the complexity of Eucharistic semiotics by staging both critiques and affirmations of the ritual means by which Christ's body is presented in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

By first making an elaborate culinary ritual appear onstage and then snatching it from view, Ariel performs a drama of Eucharistic controversy, using a spectacle to register what reformers saw as the dangerous spectacle of the Mass itself. The stage direction reads as follows:

*Solemn and strange music, and PROSPERO on the top (invisible).
Enter several strange shapes, bringing in a banquet, and dance about it
with gentle actions of salutations, and inviting the King etc. to eat,
they depart.*⁴

Given at a historical moment in which debates over liturgical action and gesture loomed large, it may not be so hard to imagine Ariel's banquet as a Mass in miniature. The music is not only "strange" but also "solemn,"; the spirits' "several strange shapes" may

³ Recent investigations into the social functions of early modern banqueting do not engage with any possible relations with Eucharistic eating. In a capacious study of banquet scenes in early modern drama, Chris Meads reports ninety-nine instances of banqueting and feasting, whether mentioned in a stage direction or literally staged. He sees the banquet as "a social model of degree and order," "a venue for erotic encounters," and the reflection of a "metaphorical appetite for revenge and...extravagant foods." Cf. Meads, *Banquets Set Forth: Banqueting in English Renaissance Drama* (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2001), 2-3.

⁴ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Ard 3). Ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Cengage, 1999), 3.3.17 s.d. All references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically hereafter.

recall the elaborate vestiture of the Roman clergy, which often appeared as ornate costuming; and their “gentle actions of salutations” may also recall the various crossings and bodily gestures, such as those made over the bread and wine, that held supernatural power. What is more, this is a conjured banquet: food is made to appear magically, just as Christ’s body was said to inhere in the host and cup after the words of consecration. And Ariel’s banquet table acts as the altar on which this entire conjured meal appears.

Shakespeare’s text suggests that Ariel’s Mass-masque is both a foolish spectacle and a penitential performance. In this regard, it crosses the planes of the Catholic liturgy and the reformist denouncement of it as *hocus pocus*. Characterized by Sebastian as “a living drollery,” the banquet no sooner vanishes than Ariel identifies Sebastian, Antonio, and Alonso as “you...three men of sin” (3.3.53). These men are not admitted to the banquet prepared by the godlike spirits because they are stained with, if not also surprised by, sin. Furthermore, not only are they denied participation within the staged meal, but the banquet itself vanishes. In this scene, we have all the trappings of the Eucharistic ceremony in place but because of the sinful actions of the usurping Duke, Antonio, whose crime against Prospero recapitulates the Biblical fratricide of Cain, it is a Eucharist denied. We are told that, amidst “thunder and lightning,” Ariel descends like a harpy and “claps his wings upon the table and, with a quaint device, the banquet vanishes.” It is notable that the banquet disappears through the work of a “quaint device” -- a trick of the eye, a theatrical apparatus, a linguistic gesture. This is a literary and dramatic movement, not a theologically-verifiable miracle.

The entire sequence works over the iconography of Christ’s body that is said to appear substantially and really in the host such that, on the clap of a wing, the entire

spectacle can dissolve into illusion. Not only does the Eucharistic spectacle dissolve, but the figure of its performance -- the priest -- is also removed. As the orchestrator of the entire banquet scene, Prospero removes himself from the action proper and watches “*on the top (invisible)*.” His removal from the dramatic action proper shows how theatre itself can conjure spectacles in the absence of a catalyzing figure.⁵ Like *The Winter’s Tale*, *The Tempest* suggests that theatre can not only make a feast appear before one’s eyes but it can also snatch it away at any moment. Ariel’s banquet, like the ensuing masque of Ceres that follows it, reminds us of the aesthetic importance of Eucharistic iconographies but it also shows us how the power of the word and the devices of theatrical fiction can challenge the claim that Christ’s physical body was produced through the prayers of the Mass and thus resided in the Eucharistic bread. In *The Tempest*, we are given a vanishing spectacle, not a veritable sacrament; we encounter “present fancies” rather than instantiations of literal corporeal presence. The materiality of the Eucharist is, at least on the English stage, displaced onto the work of literary metaphor. The miraculous presence of Christ’s body in the host now becomes a figurative device, the theatrical invention that Ferdinand calls “a most majestic vision” (4.1.118).

The “majestic vision” of theatrical creation that we have seen across early modern plays, including Beatrice-Joanna’s performance of the chastity test, Paulina’s orchestration of Hermione’s transformation, and here in Prospero’s conjuration of the disappearing banquet subtends Prospero’s Epilogue to *The Tempest*. In addition to recapitulating the language of mastery and servitude with which he play begins, Prospero

⁵ I am grateful to Douglas Lanier for this productive suggestion.

casts the power of the theatre as the power of the active word. He does so, curiously, by resorting to a religious lexicon:

And my ending is despair
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardoned be,
Let your indulgence set me free. (Ep. 15-20)

Even as Prospero initiates a form of theatrical redemption grounded in the agency of words, he also attributes to language itself a physical force. He asks to be “relieved by prayer” -- a form of language that he says will “pierce” and “assault” even “mercy itself.” So even as *The Tempest* moves us toward the agency of the word seen in the theatrical reconfiguration (and removal) of the Eucharist through the the disappearing banquet in Act Three, the play ends by striking the chord of a Eucharistic semiotics. The movement from flesh to word is more complicated when, as Prospero suggests, words are not de-corporealized but that they act in a bodily capacity. While Prospero’s “prayers” are not liturgical words like *Hoc est corpus meum* that effect substantial transformations, they do instate material change and affective response in the environments in which they are uttered.

However embodied, words remain the primary agent of creation, redemption, and restitution in *The Tempest*. No Eucharistic miracle of corporeal transformation is necessary, for Prospero’s linguistic magic, along with the audience’s promise to tell his story beyond the walls of the theatre, suffices. In Prospero’s speech, the language of religious prayer ultimately figures for him the topoi of theatrical invention and reception. This point is most evident in the play’s last line, in which the audience’s applause is rendered an “indulgence,” a term that recalls the Catholic practices of selling pardons and

Masses for the dead, which reformers fiercely repudiated. But the “indulgence” of which Prospero speaks is not religious; rather, he draws on this loaded religious term to instantiate a new form of theatrical, as opposed to spiritual, indulgence. The means for Prospero’s liberation -- his salvation, if you will -- is not the offering of a liturgical sacrifice but the approval of theatrical artifice that is an audience’s applause.

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