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Generative Space: Embodiment And Identity At The Margins On The Early Modern Stage

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GENERATIVE SPACE: EMBODIMENT AND IDENTITY AT THE MARGINS ON THE
EARLY MODERN STAGE

A Dissertation
Presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
For the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy
In the Department of English
The University of Mississippi

by

SALLIE J. ANGLIN

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ABSTRACT

In “Generative Space: Embodiment and Identity at the Margins on the Early Modern Stage,” I argue that the early modern stage provides a space in which emerging, marginal and unsanctioned identities can be shaped through the physical interactions between characters and their environments. Spaces that are marginalized on the stage, set apart from the main action of the play, or considered culturally or environmentally offensive, harbor figures that are not socially accepted or allowed to exist legitimately outside of those spaces. This is in some ways liberating to the characters, but at the same time their identities are contingent upon the marginal spaces they inhabit. Such spaces are also shaped by physical and sensual interactions between the characters: sights, sounds, and smells move through these spaces in profoundly material ways that connect onlookers to the objects of their gazes or speakers to their audiences. Identities are shaped by the characters’ bodily interactions with the spaces they inhabit; these interactions result in a self that is interconnected with the environment and the objects in it. The identities the characters are allowed to express exist only temporarily within these generative spaces, but as they are represented on the stage, they ultimately find expression and legitimacy in public. My dissertation shows how space shapes identity and how bodies shape space.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Tim and Akemi.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

“The picture-frame or proscenium stage. . . reinforces the pleasures of perspectival space, in which each object has a measured and appropriate position within the whole—a ‘whole’ produced by a “single and immobile eye,” positioned to see/know the relations between, and meaning of, the objects in view.”¹

“I know where I am, but I do not feel as though I’m at the spot where I find myself. To [the speaker], space seems to be a devouring force. Space pursues them, encircles them, digests them. . . . It ends by replacing them. Then the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look at himself from any point whatever in space. He feels himself becoming space, dark space where things cannot be put. He is similar, not similar to something, but just similar. And he invents spaces of which he is ‘the convulsive possession.’”²

“Generative Space” is a study of embodiment on the early modern stage. More specifically, it is a study of how identities change when bodies inhabit and move through marginal spaces. The project makes four primary assertions: 1) the body is materially connected to its spatial environment 2) space influences identity formation 3) marginal spaces house marginal identities 4) the early modern stage was conducive to marginal representations of identity because it was capable of featuring less popular and fringe spaces. The epigraphs by Elin Diamond and Roger Caillois, respectively, approach the relationship between space, the body and identity from different perspectives. Diamond points out that the space of the stage acts as a mimetic device that demonstrates the role space plays in defining the objects within it. Caillois shows that embodiment can be destructive to an articulable, clearly defined identity or body. At

¹ Diamond 5.

² Caillois 30 original emphasis.

the same time, the body's engagement with space can provide the opportunity for new identities to emerge. Both emphasize that identity relies on space as one of its formative components. Both Caillois and Diamond also emphasize the material nature of space and identity. The relationship between identity formation and space was also a concept in early modern England, and the stage was conducive to exploring that relationship. Thomas Heywood writes,

The World's a Theater, the earth a Stage,
Which God, and nature doth with Actors fill,
Kings have their entrance in due equipage,
And some there parts play well and others ill. (*Apology* A7r)

Heywood comments on the mimetic properties of the stage and he points out the inevitable imperfections of playing a particular role. His comment is akin to an early modern theory of performativity. Judith Butler's study of gender identity emphasizes the imperfect performance of the parts we try to play in the world, the imperfect performances of identities we attempt to stage.³ Both Heywood and Butler show some performances are more easily recognized than others and more easily accepted. The identities that are not recognized are, according to Butler, are imperfect iterations of normative identities. When I began this project, it was not my intention to study gendered identities, but I realized that all identities are gendered and in the early modern period, marginal identities are ambiguously gendered. Of gender performance, Butler writes:

[T]he "coherence" and "continuity" of "the person" are not logical or analytic features of personhood, but, rather, socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility.

Inasmuch as "identity" is assured through the stabilizing concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality, the very notion of "the person" is called into question by the cultural

³ See Butler, *Gender Trouble*.

emergence of those “incoherent” or “discontinuous” gendered beings who appear to be persons but who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined. (23)

These are the marginal identities, the identities that people do not try to iterate, but they happen nonetheless. Out of these imperfect performances, anomalies are generated. Out of these anomalies, new identities are forged.

Butler’s work on identity performance expands on the work of her predecessors to include the materiality of the body as a necessary element of identity formation.⁴ Although Butler makes clear that the boundaries of the body are never merely material, it is through spatial studies and body theory that the element of the environment enters the discourse of identity formation more fully.⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes,

...it is clearly in action that the spatiality of the body is brought into being...By considering the body in movement, we can see better how it inhabits space (and, moreover, time) because movement is not limited to submitting passively to space and time, it actively assumes them, it takes them up in their basic significance which is obscured in the commonplaceness of established situations.

The stage provides a social, spatial and literary foundation on which to study the movement of the body in space. In her study of a “corporal feminism,” Elizabeth Grosz argues:

The body image is not an isolated image of the body but necessarily involves the relations between the body, the surrounding space, other objects and bodies, and the coordinates of axes of vertical and horizontal, In short, it is a *postural* schema of the

⁴ Jacques Derrida placed little to no emphasis on materiality.

⁵ Butler writes that the “boundaries of the body become...the limits of the social *per se*” (167).

body. The body image is the condition of the subject's access to spatiality (including the spatiality of the built environment). (*Volatile Bodies* 85)

The concept of the body as an integral player in and manipulator of its environment figures prominently in my argument. The body does not simply *move through* space; it constitutes and is constituted by space.

This project participates in an ongoing discourse which includes studies by Jean Howard, Russell West, Andrew McRae, Andrew Hiscock, and to some degree, Christopher R. Friedrichs, about the emerging spatial turn in the early modern period. Steven Mullaney's *The Place of the Stage* approaches the cultural aspects of place and in doing so touches on the material space of early modern London. Mullaney explores the early modern popular theater and its influences from a model of cultural production. In doing so, he addresses the material aspects of London and its theaters. Spatial influences are not his emphasis, however. In James Mardock's study of Ben Jonson's representations of the city, *Our Scene is London*, space is utilized as a catalyst for Jonson's authorial voice. Mardock writes, "Jonson's representational engagements with the city of London potently shaped the early-modern urban experience [and] his consciously theatrical authoring of the city aided the emergence of a new authorial subjectivity, a new idea of the author" (1). In some instances, the concept of a material space is set aside and at times "space" is a synonym for such concepts as "culture" and "history." Andrew Hiscock emphasizes space as a social medium, "constantly developing through social and political action" (17). He makes a point to deemphasize space as "a mathematical, quantifiable extension with a given number of dimensions," focusing primarily on the social forces that shape space rather than how space in turn shapes the social.

Many early modern spatial studies explore the importance of space in Elizabethan and Jacobean London, focusing on topics such as trade, literacy, nationalism and play going. John Twyning, in *London Dispossessed*, explores the court and the suburban underworld, the influx of immigrants and criminals in order to show the change of the London metropolis in terms of space and identity. He writes:

If nothing else, a city is a monument to the accumulation of cultural resources; it is a place where society takes stock. As a principle of social organization the poverty-wealth axis is, arguably, the most basic form of dispossession; and one which is all too easily naturalized.... Usually the class which controls the major economic resources get to define the culture which it dominates through legal, social and moral categories. In this respect early modern London became an arena where such cultural conflict was played out with considerable intensity. (3-4)

Twyning's focus is at the core a study of class difference through readings of Thomas Dekker's pamphlets and plays. Jean Howard's *Theater of a City* explores the historical places that were used as the settings for popular theatrical comedies. She effectively turns the city's historical places into social spaces on the stage, as she focuses on comedies with urban themes and settings. Darryll Grantley also limits his study of early modern space to representations of London on the stage. Grantley explains the relationship between dramatic space and "real" space:

Dramatic narratives take place in physical space, and when that stage space reconstitutes urban localities familiar to the audience through experience, the constraints of realism obviously come into force, the spaces represented on stage possessing a reality that would inevitably interfere with any more imaginative project associated with them. On the other

hand, the fact that plays are forced to condense narratives and be selective about detail conduces to the exploitation of popular conceptions (which can be fanciful) attaching to particular places to provide a useful shorthand means of creating narrative meaning. In these cases it is not simply material recognition that is at issue, but understanding of what social and cultural meanings are inscribed in them. (21)

Grantley's explanation of the use of real spaces on the stage takes into account the complex nature of a narrative space that is both representational and material. Ian Munro also focuses on the historical sites of London and representations of the city in early modern theatre. He shows representations of the crowd as expressions of London's confused identity. Munro argues for the instability that London's inhabitants create, and the crowd's "resistance to being read" (10).

Other writers have chosen to emphasize the role space plays in shaping cultural difference and social roles. John Gillies approaches space from an abstract perspective in his study of social and cultural difference in Shakespeare. *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* explores the geographical imagination in Shakespeare as Gillies attempts to explain how the "other" is situated spatially within the worlds of Shakespeare's plays. Andrew Gordon and Bernard Klein, in *Literature, Mapping and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain*, have collected essays that address the ways in which cartography, anatomy, and other types of boundary defining discourses shaped early modern politics.

There are a number of studies on gender and space. Lena Orlin's work on domestic spaces has helped to shape conceptions of privacy, familial space, and identity.⁶ Laura Gowing has also contributed to studies on both domestic space and women's bodies.⁷ Amanda Flather's *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* is a wide-ranging historical study of general types

⁶ See Orlin, *Locating Privacy; Private Matters; and Material London*.

⁷ Gowing, *Common Bodies and Domestic Dangers*.

of spaces. She states, “Space is more than, and different from, a physical location or place. A space is an arena of social action” (2). Stephen Guy-Bray’s *Homoerotic Space* is a study in poetic space rather than material space and he uses the term “space” quite loosely. Employing Certeau’s claim that “an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text,” Guy-Bray’s primary interest is in mapping out a homoerotic literary tradition (Certeau 117). Jennifer Munroe explores representations of gender in the specific space of the garden and argues, “early modern gardens, both actual and imagined, provide a window into how early modern social space...was shaped and reshaped by people as they made and remade the places they inhabited” and, “garden landscapes often represented competing interests in realigning authority, for the marginalized as well as the elite” (1, 3). Munroe’s study is both cultural and literary, as she explores descriptions of real gardens and representations of gardens in literary texts.

My dissertation is inspired in some way by the studies I have mentioned, and it expands on them. Doreen Massey writes, “the spatial organization of society ... is integral to the production of the social and not merely its result” (*Space, Place and Gender* 4). With this in mind, I explore the link between space, power and social-relations, but I also include the material aspects of both space and identity. In Renaissance England, popular conceptions of identity were undeniably material, as physiology, optometry, the rising study of geometry, and natural science in general understood the body as a geohumoral entity—physically integrated into its environment. As the mind and the body were not thought of as severed from each other, identity as a whole was physical. As I have pointed out, there are a number of studies on early modern space. There are far fewer studies that explore the connection between space and the body. Russell West-Pavlov’s book, *Bodies and Their Spaces*, studies how space influences the

development of the early modern “gender system.” The collection of essays, *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England* is similar to this project in that it explores the ways in which early modern writers understood the relationship between the mind, the body, and the environment. “Generative Space” investigates space and identity on the early modern stage as reciprocal agents of influence upon one another. I show how early modern identity is spatially determined and that the distinction between space and identity is often unclear. This project is inspired by Howard’s work, but I choose to examine how marginal spaces shape and provide representations of marginal identities. I am also responding to Hiscock’s studies, but with a distinct focus on how space affects identity. I borrow Grantley’s concept of space as both representational and material, but I focus on bodies as integral parts of the spaces on the stage. This project is an interdisciplinary study that shows first how the body is primary in the formation of identity and that identity and space are not inseparable. Ultimately, early modern identity is represented on the stage as embedded and interconnected to its environment, a characterization that might strike some readers as postmodern or posthuman, and indeed, posthuman ideas concerning space and identity formation bypass the intervening centuries and find their most striking parallels in early modern thought.

This project seeks to illuminate the similarities and create new intersections between the eclectic theories of space and embodiment. For the purpose of clarity and length, however, I have chosen Manuel Castells’ definition of space as my point of departure:

a material product, in relation with other elements—among others, men, who themselves enter into particular social relations, which give to space (and to the other elements of the conversation) a form, a function, a social signification. It is not, therefore, a mere occasion for the deployment of social structure, but a

concrete expression of each historical ensemble in which a society is specified. It is a question, then, of establishing, *in the same way as for any other real object*, the structural and conjunctural laws that govern its existence and transformation, and the specificity of its articulation with the other elements of a historical reality.

(115)

Castells' description recalls Marxist inspired spatial theories as he explores space as a "material product." He recognizes the postmodern position of space as a social construction, and as he emphasizes the historical positioning of space, he also (albeit perhaps unintentionally) points out the interconnected quality of space to other objects (and therefore bodies). Although he expresses the relationship of space to other objects within a "historical reality," he nonetheless recognizes that space and material objects are defined and shaped through their relationships with each other. This dissertation approaches space as a social, material and historical object.

The spaces I pay most attention to are marginal to the stage, to the city, and to the main spaces of the text. I consider them instances of "terrain vague" because of their marginal statuses and variable uses. Terrain vague is a term coined by the Spanish architect Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubió in 1995 to describe contemporary urban spaces that have generated fascination over their existences and histories. The term is borrowed from the French, as Solà-Morales Rubió points out, because *terrain* refers more to urban space than to open land. The French *vague* has both Latin and Germanic roots, alluding to movement and fluctuation.⁸ In English, "vague" was used as early as the fifteenth century as a verb meaning "to wander; to range, roam; to ramble idly or as a vagrant."⁹ Solà-Morales Rubió points out the paradoxical meaning of the term, which implies empty and vacuous, but also unconstrained. Similarly, the

⁸ The German *Woge* is the word for a sea swell. *Vague* in French literally means "wave."

⁹ "vague" v.1. Solà-Morales also points out, "*Vague* descends from *vaccus*, giving us 'vacant' and 'vacuum' in English, which is to say 'empty, unoccupied,' yet also 'free available, unengaged' (119)."

English word “idle,” which is used in the above definition, meant “Empty, vacant, void” or “void of any real ... significance” for early English readers, writers and speakers.¹⁰ In reference to people, “idle” did not refer to lack of movement, but to the lack of clear definition. In fact, idle people were described as somewhat nomadic, moving throughout the city because they had no distinct home or place in which they belonged. Similarly, terrain vague is space that moves: its uses, inhabitants, and even demarcations change. Solà-Morales Rubió saw these spaces as disruptive to social and spatial order:

When architecture and urban design project their desire onto a vacant space, a terrain vague, they seem incapable of doing anything other than introducing violent transformations, changing estrangement into citizenship, and striving at all costs to dissolve the uncontaminated magic of the obsolete into the realism of efficacy. (122-23)

Although Solà-Morales Rubió was thinking particularly of contemporary, post-industrial urban landscapes, I find this term and his expression of it helpful in deciphering early modern spaces that, while not post-industrial, are nonetheless performing similar roles. Early modern terrain vague is both assimilated into the central landscape and also marginalized. It is not completely “other,” but neither is it clearly incorporated. Similar to Solà-Morales Rubió’s *terrain vague*, historical and dramatic occurrences reveal that these early modern spaces were attempted to be used as spaces of social control to produce identities that fit comfortably into the social structure, but the result was often disorder and the formation of identities that generated cultural anxiety.

My first chapter, “Is’t possible, to be impossible: an honest whore?”: Unsanctioned Identities on the Renaissance Stage,” shows Bridewell prison and Bethlem hospital as compromised or corrupted spaces that contribute to the identity of early modern London through the cultural stigmas that mark them. Looking primarily at the *Honest Whore* plays and *A Woman*

¹⁰ See OED “idle” A. adj. 1 and 2. a.

Killed with Kindness, these two institutions provide spaces for legitimizing the “honest whore,” an identity that is neither valued nor allowed to persist outside the institution. Bellafront’s marginalized existence as a prostitute enlivens her and gives her a degree of strength and power. Once she becomes an honest whore, she begins to deteriorate—the new identity she inhabits is more respected than that of an active whore, but it lacks vitality. An active whore may be infamous and culturally troubling, but she has a social and spatial “place” in early modern London, while the honest whore does not. Bellafront gains a modicum of social validation but loses her liberty and her happiness in the process. The hospital, the prison, and even the home generate a liminality that ultimately provides the foundation for new identities to emerge. Spaces like the household and the monastery assume some of the characteristics of brothels, and prisons, and allow the formation of characters whose complex identities resist simple categorization within early modern social hierarchies.

In Chapter Two, “‘Be Clamorous and leap all civil bounds’: Queer Space in *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will*,” I argue that the interactions between the characters and the environments they inhabit create spaces that do not simply invert sexual identity, but prod the characters to evolve in ways that both liberate and oppress them. Characters transform and are transformed by the spaces they inhabit. Using architectural theories about queer space, along with early modern conceptions of private, enclosed, and closeted spaces, I posit that Malvolio’s dark room acts as a material space that inhibits not only his physical freedom, but his personal expression, his will for social mobility, and his sexual agency. Viola, as Cesario, penetrates Olivia’s veil of feigned mourning and rather well guarded chamber. These spaces themselves become ambiguously gendered and afford a vibrant, though temporary staging of queer identities.

Chapter Three, “The Ecology of the Grave,” posits that burial sites act as generative spaces for marginalized characters in *The Widow’s Tears*, *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, *Hamlet* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. In each play, burial sites provide a space for socially ostracized characters to find expression and even momentary happiness. At the same time, the creative power of the burial site is destructive to both the bodies and the identities of the characters traversing it. This destruction leads to various forms of regeneration, but cannot be regarded as an uncompromised example of the cycle of destruction and renewal. Instead, the socially sanctioned and individuated identity is replaced with a collective, environmentally embedded identity. I explore traditional burial spaces, such as graveyards and tombs, but I also examine unsanctioned dumping grounds for the dead—ditches and crossroads, which were burial sites for the criminals and victims of suicide. The burial sites discussed in this chapter emphasize the nebulous borders between life and death.

My final chapter, “Inhabiting the Unseen: Off-stage Space and Identity at the Margins in *Women Beware Women* and *Titus Andronicus*,” employs early modern ideas concerning the material nature of sight and extends them to a consideration of offstage spaces and unseen events. I argue that because the rapes of Bianca and Lavinia occur in an offstage diegetic space, the early modern physiological connection that is established through vision and the corresponding empathic and somatic responses it creates is diminished. This disjunction results in a more radical dehumanization of these characters as the audience’s perception of their physical being and their identity has been obscured and disrupted. Both women’s humanity remains at the margins of the visible, albeit in startlingly different ways. While Bianca is seen as spoiled, greedy and selfish after the offstage interaction with the Duke, Lavinia’s visual wounds allow the audience to empathize with her from a distance. She is objectified, but not in the same

sense that a dead lover might be in early modern poetry. Instead, her body is materially bound to the chasm between Titus and Rome. The ingénue that existed prior to the offstage rape and mutilation no longer exists; she is stripped of her identity as a maid and a wife. The violence upon her body has transformed her into a terrain, a sacrifice, a corpse in the process of dying. She is physically alive, but has no viable social place in the world of the play. In the final scene of *Women Beware Women*, the Duke asks that the ‘ruined’ bodies be removed from our sight and in *Titus Andronicus*, Lavinia dies with her face hidden behind a veil, implying that a ‘ruined’ object should not or cannot be represented in the space of the visible.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes, “We have said that space is existential; we could just as well have said that existence is spatial” (292). The play space of the theatre will never be the actual space it represents; however, the space of the stage, like the characters and the spaces within the plays, is a space that intrudes on ‘real,’ historical space, even as it is never quite actualized within it. The space of the theatrical stage is generative in that it provides a material environment for certain identities to materialize, but both the space and the identities are temporary and permeable. One could just as easily replace “existence” in Merleau-Ponty’s quote with “identity.” Indeed, as identity is spatial, identity is itself always in the process of being shaped, formed and reformed.

CHAPTER 1: “IS’T POSSIBLE, TO BE IMPOSSIBLE: AN HONEST WHORE?”: UNSANCTIONED IDENTITIES ON THE RENAISSANCE STAGE

The beginning of the seventeenth century marked a shift on the English stage as contemporary landmarks, streets, and social venues began to be regularly represented in published plays. The English theatre showed its audience places with which it was already familiar, places that comprised a part of people’s everyday lives and routines, places that helped to shape the audience members’ identities within the social and spatial world of the city. The majority of the public theatres themselves, however, made their homes in the liberties and suburbs of London, outside of the jurisdictional regulations of the city itself.¹¹ Steven Mullaney argues that the city limits constituted a fairly impenetrable border when it came to laws governing social behavior.¹² He describes the city “as well defined in its territory as it was in the less immediately visible yet less manifest domain of its rights and privileges” (6). Access to the city itself was restricted by a wall with seven gates.¹³ The city was regulated by zones, many of which fell within the jurisdiction of controlling institutions other than the city government, such

¹¹ Much of my work in this chapter builds off of Steven Mullaney’s groundbreaking studies on the regulating factors of the City as distinguished from the suburbs. See Mullaney.

¹² “The city before us is one that is still relatively well-contained by the ancient Roman wall that hedges it against the Thames. Although there are signs of growth to the east and west, the outlying suburbs known as the Liberties of the city lie for the most part open and unoccupied, and some free space—even customary sites reserved for trade and recreation—even remains visible within the walls themselves” (Mullaney 6).

¹³ The official boundaries of the city eventually expanded beyond the boundaries of the wall, but the wall still acted as a method of controlling entrances and exits into the old city limits. Christopher R. Friedrichs writes, “In actual fact, walls offered little protection from the seemingly endless stream of unwelcome vagrants who drifted from the countryside into the cities. But the importance of the walls was as much psychological as practical” (23).

as guilds, churches, parishes and wards.¹⁴ There were close to twenty-five wards and more than a hundred parishes in early modern London, each with their own regulations and ordinances in addition to the city government's laws.¹⁵ The regulation of space in and around the city emphasizes the impact the absence of city regulations had on the development of spaces of licensed licentious behavior outside the city.¹⁶ The city may have been distinguishable from its outskirts, but the city itself was made from a motley collection of values, ethics, beliefs, and desires that shaped the spaces within it. Although critics such as Mullaney have claimed that socially marginal identities took root outside of the city limits, this chapter argues that there are spaces within the city, regulated by the city and local governments, that allow for socially marginal activity to take place and for new identities to emerge in representations of city spaces on the stage. I am particularly concerned with how spaces within the city, often maintained by the city, are identified as part of the urban organism (even though they may be separate from the London streets) that helped to create the emerging political and social structures. The spaces of the city that I discuss in this chapter, in turn, are generative as well, providing new identities with the physical dimensions they require to grow and develop. The stage's representations of these spaces emphasize their ambiguous and multi-dimensional functions. The transgressive spaces on the stage reflected the tensions in the city while they also perpetuated such tensions.

¹⁴ For more on jurisdictional control, see Friedrichs 31-35; Bernard, *Emerging City*, 127-9; Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 234-5.

¹⁵ Friedrichs argues, "The city government tried to keep a grip on things with a ceaseless stream of ordinances and directives covering every aspect of urban activity. But the actual collection of taxes, maintenance of infrastructure, enforcement of regulations and apprehension of wrongdoers could take place only on the neighbourhood level" (270-71).

¹⁶ The city theaters were also restricted by the censorship of the Master of the Revels.

My work in this chapter leans heavily, although not entirely, on previous studies of the seventeenth century comic form known as “city comedy.”¹⁷ While this dramatic subgenre did indeed allow for the audience to envision on the stage the space through which they moved every day, it also gave the audience a peek into urban interior spaces that were not familiar to them. Instead of only watching themselves moving through familiar streets, shops and taverns, audiences also saw into the lives of madmen, whores, beggars and outcasts through onstage representations of asylums, prisons, back alleys, and private households. The first part of this chapter investigates plays—specifically *The Honest Whore Part I* and *Part II* and *The Pilgrim*—that represent urban interiors on the London stage, such as Bridewell prison and Bethlem hospital.¹⁸ These urban interiors, about which John Howes wrote in 1587, “ar nere kinsemen in condicions,” provide the setting for identities that normally find little space for articulation within the dominant culture to be represented and temporarily validated (Cited in Carroll 98). Like the early modern stage, these spaces are also marginal, also theatres of a unique sort.¹⁹ In addition, spaces such as hospitals and prisons are reconstituted by the actions that take place within them and serve unintended purposes. They become spaces in which marginal identities and illicit interactions can find expression. In the second half of this chapter I turn my attention towards socially sanctioned spaces that transform into marginal spaces within the microcosm of the play. Specifically, I look at how a once central and familiar space in *A Woman Killed with*

¹⁷ The critical studies that make up the work on city comedy attempt to both theorize as well as describe the plays that make up the sub-genre. Some of the primary critics I build off of are Leinwand, *The City Staged*; Gibbons, *Jacobean City Comedy*; Knights, *Drama and Society* and Leggatt, *Citizen Comedy*.

¹⁸ References to *The Honest Whore, Part I* are cited in Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino’s *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*. Taylor and Lavagnino title the play, *The Patient Man and the Honest Whore*. For the sake of distinguishing the first and the second parts of the play, I will refer to *The Patient Man and the Honest Whore* as *The Honest Whore, Part I*.

¹⁹ Steven Mullaney writes, “The place of the stage was a marginal one, and in the world of early modern culture such marginality was in itself significant” (9).

Kindness turns into a prison and a house of sexual commerce.²⁰ As a whole, the chapter investigates representations of the ‘whore’ and the relationship of the whore to material space in order to show how the use of space generates fraught, ambiguous identities that are socially unsanctioned in the city. These identities, I argue, exist on the threshold between a socially sanctioned ‘life’ and physical decay.

In this chapter, I am not interested in the way space is represented on the stage, per se, although I may refer to stage direction, and I acknowledge the importance of performance when addressing material space. I am more interested in representations of material spaces within the texts themselves. I argue characters’ formation of identity is synonymous with the spatial tensions that surround them. My inquiry into the relationship between space and the characters’ identities is two-fold. In addition to examining the spaces in the texts, I also look at the historical spaces that are represented in the texts. The audiences would have had impressions of both Bridewell and Bethlem (albeit varying and complicated impressions), and the historical, social and spatial situations of both these institutions have profound effects on what they represent in the plays themselves.

Within the walls of London there were regulations attempting to limit the movement, both social and physical, of the city’s inhabitants. Guilds operated as controlling systems over their members even while they gave them certain rights and privileges. There was a constant struggle between the crown and the City for jurisdiction over establishments, such as Bridewell and Bethlem Hospital.²¹ The complex jurisdiction created by numerous centers of authority and

²⁰ This is not to say that households were not metaphorical and often actual prisons for women already. Instead, this chapter focuses on the permeability of the household space, which, while it may prevent wives’ movement, provides them access to outside people for commercial and personal purposes. I draw on numerous early modern critics’ work showing that private households were in fact quite public.

²¹ Patricia Allderidge explains the struggle between the Crown and the City for control over Bridewell hospital, for example (147).

emergent subcultures made it difficult to control public spaces with ease. City life included the seedy underworld found in the suburbs, and it was not easy to separate or sometimes to distinguish unauthorized people and transactions from those that were lawful and socially sanctioned. Melissa Mowry argues that in the mid and late seventeenth century, radical activity was portrayed pornographically in illicit spaces, such as bawdy houses and brothels. She argues that these portrayals represented the emergence of an “alternative publics that contravened the order imposed by dominant culture” (Mowry 214).²² The spaces in which prostitutes and “masterless” men and women dwell are associated with alternative communities and arguably generate those communities.²³ While the suburbs were known for illicit activities, specifically prostitution, transgressions within the city walls were actively and aggressively challenging the social hierarchy.²⁴ In the liberties, such as Southwark, officials did little to regulate prostitution because they benefitted from the trade economically (Mowry 210; Karras 37-39). Within the city walls, however, the poor laws against vagrancy were extended to include prostitution as early as the 1570s (Mowry 209). Prostitutes who were found practicing their occupation within the city were submitted to public shaming as a punishment. A third offense got them banished from the City.²⁵ It is clear that not only was the City attempting to control the urban space under its

²² Specifically, Mowry argues that the pornographic portrayals equate democratic politics to “an ideology devoted to the constant proliferation of alternative publics. . . .” (214).

²³ For more on the communities cultivated in Bridewell and Bedlam, see Ken Jackson, “Bethlem and Bridewell,” and Fumerton, *Unsettled*.

²⁴ This hierarchy was in fact more tenuous than sometimes thought. Keith Wrightson describes the early modern social structure as one that is adapting, the degrees of power changing with the formation of new classes and social places as it is shaped by language, a “language of sorts.” He argues that the language used to describe social place was “Adaptable to context and responsive to change, it expressed the plasticity of social identity, the mutability of social alignments, the clash of interests, and the power relations of a dynamic society” (34). Wrightson’s work suggests that the early modern English social hierarchy was much less rigid than described by Harrison. I posit that the early modern spaces which were intended for regulation and control were also fluid. Further, the changing social relations are not only class-based or even gender-based.

²⁵ According to Karras, “A common whore was ‘taken from the prisone to Aldgate, with a striped hood, a while rod in her hand, and there the cause is proclaimed; and from there through Cheap and Newgate, then to Cock’s Lane, to remain there.’ A second offence required the whore to remain on the thew, and a third required the cutting of her

jurisdiction, but also that the spaces were repeatedly infiltrated and disrupted by uncontrolled inhabitants—these inhabitants threatened the structural boundaries of the City as much as they challenged what constituted a bonafide identity.

Numerous social and spatial sanctions and regulations were placed on prostitutes in England and throughout Renaissance Europe. According to Diane Ghirardo, in Renaissance Ferrara prostitutes were legally required to wear a yellow mantle clearly marking their occupation (88).²⁶ There were spatial regulations on prostitutes that prevented them from leaving their homes or brothels at certain times of the day. Although prostitution was legal in some countries, prostitutes were not allowed to organize as guilds and were required to live in particular areas and buildings. In 1546, Henry VIII closed down the stews and bawdy houses of London, citing an end to the “toleration of such dissolute and miserable persons as have been suffered to dwell in common open places called the stews without permission or correction . . . their abominable and detestable sin” (Hughes and Larkin 365). Ironically, the result of the closures was a decrease in control over prostitution. Prostitutes worked out of their homes and plied their trade in taverns, inns, and boarding houses. In England, the outlawing of overt prostitution allowed bawds, whores and panders to gain a surreptitious freedom to move semi-secretly throughout the city. They were no longer relegated to Southwark or Bankside, where stews were normally found. Ivo Kamps and Karen Raber point out that prostitution was “preserved from the long arm of the law” because it offered a service that was in high demand (Kamps and Raber 258). Although illegal, prostitution sat in a social limbo, where it was alternately tolerated and prosecuted.

hair and banishment from the city. The punishments for other sexual offenses (adultery and clerical unchastity) involved similar elements” (15).

²⁶ See Ghirardo for a thorough study of the spatial limitations imposed on prostitutes in Renaissance Ferrara. Although her study does not directly address England, the spatial limitations and the shifting moralizing of authorities similarly affected where and how open English prostitutes could practice their trade.

The unintended physical mobility afforded to low class workers, prostitutes, and certain charity cases in London contributed to the problem of distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate occupations in the open spaces of the city, such as streets and markets. Jean Howard points out the distinct mobility of prostitutes and that they had no “‘fixed’ social identity” (Howard, “Bawdy Houses” 122). This generated anxiety among writers at the time. John Taylor describes the lack of regulation as one cause of the city’s degradation. He writes:

The Stewes in England bore a beastly sway, Till the eight Henry banish’d
them away: And since these common whores were quite put down, A
damned crue of private whores are grown, So that the diuell will be doing
still, Either with publique or with private ill. (Taylor, *The Works* 2: 110)

Robert Crowley emphasizes the popular conception that taverns and prostitution were linked; in doing so, he highlights the elusiveness that illegalization generated for prostitution:

The bawds of the stues be turned all out
But some think they inhabit al England through out.
In taverns and tiplyng houses many might be founde,
If officers would make serch
But as they are bounde. (13-14)

Writers such as Crowley, Robert Greene and John Awdeley attempted to document what they perceived as the seedy underworld of the urban London streets. In his 1592 publication, *A Disputation, Betweene a Hee Conny-Catcher and a Shee Conny-catcher*, Greene writes that “there be a hundred in London more cunning than myself in this kind of cony-catching,” adding that there are so many, one should “look for a Bed-roll or Catalogue, of all the names of the Foystes, Nyps, Lifts, and Priggars, in and about London” (7, 16-17). In *The Fraternity of*

Vagabonds, John Awdeley specifies various roles for underworld women, all of which ultimately involve some form of prostitution, and all of which are able to move uncontrolled through spaces that are defined by lawful and social regulations and boundaries (51-60).

At the same time, prostitution was never a socially acceptable occupation and its existence generated anxiety over the spatial infiltration of strange or foreign women, and this is reflected on the stage. When the brothels in the suburbs are ordered to be shut down in *Measure for Measure*, Pompey's remark that the ones in the city "shall stand for seed" (1.2.99), points to the brothels as the gateway for sin into the city. For Hippolyto in *The Honest Whore*, the bodies of both whores and their customers become passages for corruption, and even death, when he tells Bellafront,

For your body,
It's like a common shore, that still receives
All the town's filth. The sin of many men
Is within you; and thus much, I suppose,
that if all your committers stood in rank,
They'd make a lane, in which your shame might dwell,
And with their spaces reach from hence to hell. (374-382)

The bodies of the prostitutes and the spaces associated with them are both recognized as vessels for impurity and corruption. In Dekker's pamphlet, *Lantern and Candlelight*, he describes what Lucifer sees as he explores London's suburbs. He writes, "He saw the doors of notorious carted bawds like Hell-gates stand night and day wide open, with a pair of harlots in taffeta gowns, like two painted posts, garnishing out those doors, being better to the house than a double sign" (347). Prostitution literally leads to the gates of hell. Interestingly, Bridewell prison, a place for

penitent whores and the final setting for *The Honest Whore Part Two*, was nicknamed ‘limbo’. Like a kind of limbo, Bellafront is described as “like Dunkirk, true to none” (6.405), and “like the Jews, scattered, in no place certain” (7.453).²⁷ William C. Carroll points out, institutions such as Bridewell and Bethlem were, “first and foremost, conceived for the regulation of the body, before the ‘cures’ for madness as poverty can take place” (98). The prison and hospital both act as regulatory spaces for Bellafront’s body.

The Honest Whore, Part I, set in a Milan that is a thinly veiled London, opens with an extreme example of spatial regulation and limitation—a casket, and the funeral of Infelice, the Duke’s daughter, whose death he has faked in order to keep her from marrying Hippolyto. This is the first of many situations that emphasize physical confinement. The next time Infelice appears onstage, she is carted off to Bergamo as her father the Duke tells his servants and the doctor to “Follow her close. / No words that she was buried—on your lives— / Or that her ghost walks now after she’s dead.” The Duke makes clear that Infelice’s physical movement is to be limited to a private space where non-conspirators cannot see her. This solitude and compromised movement turn into a figurative death for Infelice. He calls her hidden body a ghost and even after revealing the plan to keep her alive, he refers to her as dead. The title character, Bellafront, possesses more freedom of self-expression, although her mobility is also limited throughout the play. Bellafront never leaves her room before the final scene in Bethlem, but her room is more of a safe haven than a prison, and she willfully remains within it. Mary Thomas Crane makes the case that enclosed interior domestic spaces did not often provide the opportunity for liberatory self-indulgence that one might think because they were actually quite public spaces (4-22).

Bellafront’s room is also a public space; the difference is she, through Roger her servant,

²⁷ Dunkirk was a region heavily contested by France, England, Spain, and the Netherlands. Dunkirk, a place without a stable national identity, and the Jews, a people without a stable place—both implicating Bellafront’s unstable relationship to her space, her body, and her identity.

controls the entrance and therefore controls the level of publicity or privacy. Roger is not a man who keeps her in; he keeps other men out at Bellafront's will. The audience gets a further glimpse of the freedom Bellafront is afforded within the confines of her social status when she discusses her planned trip to the tavern. Bellafront is a courtesan, with a private practice, unlike street prostitutes or those who work in brothels. As a courtesan, Bellafront can keep a select few clients who pay well and she may also dress like and assume the social demeanor of a wealthier woman (Kamps and Raber 258). The courtesan is by definition a more discreet and private prostitute than the "Bawdy Baskets" that walk the streets. It is this public discretion that arguably gives the courtesan room to do business in Renaissance London. Bellafront's paradoxical lifestyle as a private "public woman,"²⁸ and later as an honest whore situate Bellafront in the margins of a strict but uncontrollably fluid structure of identity formation.²⁹ Bellafront's identity includes, but extends beyond the classifications of class, nation, or gender. Her social place is contingent upon her movement through urban spaces.

Bellafront's physical mobility, like that of most prostitutes, is limited by the need to be secretive and discreet. When Fluello and Matteo ask her to meet them at the tavern on the upcoming Friday, Matteo comments,

Your best come like a madwoman,
without a band, in your waistcoat, and the linings of
kirtle outward, like every common hackney that
steals out at the back gate of her sweet night's lodging. (275-78)

Matteo's comments allude both to the disheveled look of the woman after sex, as well as to the lengths prostitutes had to go to stay in business. Thomas Nashe describes the seedy unseen traffic

²⁸ OED "public" adj. and n. s.2.

²⁹ For descriptions of the structure of sixteenth and seventeenth century English society, see Harrison.

happening about the city as prostitutes attempting to evade arrest, sneaking out of “back-doores, to come in and out by, undiscovered. Slyding windowes also, and trappe-bordes in floars, to hyde whores behind and under, with false counterfet panes in walls, to be opened and shut like a wicket” (Nashe X1v). *The Wandring Whore* describes a “Mrs. G—“ who works “neer the Coffee-house in the postern by More-gate” (*The Wandring Whore Continued* 7). Mrs. G’s workspace lies within a social and literal liminality. In *Measure for Measure*, when Vincentio asks Mariana if she is married, a widow or a maid, she says she is none of them. His response is “Why, you are nothing then....” Lucio’s response, “My lord, she may be a punk...,” points out that the social position of the prostitute is tenuous—Lucio recognizes a prostitute as an identity category for women, while Vincentio reveals the strict parameters for defining a socially sanctioned identity. The interaction between Vincentio and Lucio reveals that the prostitute’s material spatial liminality reflects her marginal social status.

Prostitutes were marginalized and demanded no respect, but like the widow, the wife and the maid, they were identifiable figures in early modern London. While whores were clearly common players in early modern London life, the “honest whore” was not. Bellafront admits that “a strumpet to turn chaste: that sound / Has oft been heard, that woman hardly found” (10.208-09). Matteo is surprised when he finally accepts Bellafront’s transformation; realizing her sincerity when she rejects him, he proclaims, “Is’t possible, to be impossible: an honest whore?” (9.104).³⁰ Throughout the play, *The Honest Whore, Part I* provides allusions to Bellafront, post-conversion, as a character who lingers at the threshold of a fixed identity. When she prepares to leave the city, she says:

The lowest fall can be but into hell.

It does not move him; I must therefore fly

³⁰ Notice that Matteo does not answer his own rhetorical question.

From this undoing city, and with tears

Wash off anger from my father's brow.

He cannot, sure, but joy seeing me new born. (10.202-05)

Bellafront sees her penitence as a rebirth, and the beginning of a new identity. At the core of her rebirth, however, is an identity crisis. It is significant that the next time Bellafront appears onstage is in the final scene, set in Bethlem Monastery, where Candido has also been detained.³¹ She enters, apparently in disguise, yet she implies that her former customers should know her, suggesting they are all mad. Although she admits to the disguise later in the scene, Bellafront's attitude implies an ambiguity over whether she is in disguise or actually mad, or if it matters. Matteo's earlier comment about whores sneaking out of back doors, "your best come like a madwoman," implies a unique and not altogether clear relationship between madness (or appearing mad) and the existence of the unregulated prostitute. Similarly, this scene suggests that the lack of a socially sanctioned identity, particularly Bellafront's, possesses similarities to madness in that in both cases, there is dissociation between one's experiences and emotions and one's identity.

Historically, the madhouse in general and Bethlem hospital, in particular, were paradoxical spaces. Bethlem was a public space, but it had a community of its own, separated from the rest of the city, comprised of a motley crew of madmen, whores, and merchants who had gone mad from losing their worth at sea. Public tours were given through the hospital so that onlookers could view the odd behavior of the inmates, making the separation between the city

³¹ There is a documented connection between the hospital and the Drapers' Company from as early as 1361, when the drapers enrolled in the "confraternity of St. Mary of Bethlehem." The historical relationship might explain the extant amount of clothing references in *The Honest Whore*, as well as Candido's admission to the hospital as a part of the comic resolution (O'Donoghue, *Bethlehem* 47).

and microcosm of the hospital more striking.³² Ken Jackson notes that governors showed the patients to visitors in exchange for charity, but that the visitors often found amusement in the spectacle of the mad men and women (“Bethlem and Bridewell” 396). He points out that literary scholars have viewed the practice as “a show that simultaneously could move one to pity and laughter” (Jackson, “Bethlem and Bridewell” 396). In 1522, Thomas More wrote, “thou shalt in Bedlam see one laughing at the knocking of his head against a post and yet there is little pleasure therein.”³³ One might take this statement to mean that the viewer gets little pleasure from the spectacle, the patient gets little pleasure from his actions, or that there is no pleasure to be found within the walls of the hospital. In *The Honest Whore, Part I*, Father Anselmo states that the patients perform “such antic and such petty lunacies, / That spite of sorrow they will make you smile” (5.2.158-61). The space itself becomes a place for the patients’ paradoxical identities to emerge. Bellafront constitutes one of the “in-between” identities found in Bethlem, an in-between space. She is not chaste nor is she without honor at the end of the play; she is able to be both honest and a whore within the paradoxical walls of Bethlem hospital.

At first glance, it may seem peculiar that Dekker and Middleton chose to end the play in the hospital. The comic resolution of the union of two couples in marriage occurs in a place that is not at all unified with the rest of the city. Jackson points out that the hospital is represented as both a metaphor for the city, as well as a place within the city that controls threats to social order (124). Bethlem represents the opposite of unity. It represents social rejection, spatial isolation, and split subjectivity. At the same time, the hospital was a space that allowed for the intermingling of social classes and genders, a place where the visitors, at least in *The Honest Whore, Part I*, become part of the show. In *The Pilgrim*, social structures and hierarchies get

³² For a detailed discussion of the social history of insanity in early modern England and Bedlam Hospital as a form of entertainment, see Michael MacDonald’s *Mystical Bedlam*.

³³ Cited in Andrews, Briggs, Porter, Tucker, and Waddington 132.

more obviously discombobulated. Alphonso is forced into treatment at the madhouse by his daughter's lady-in-waiting (dressed as a boy). His rights to his daughter as a father are not upheld within the hospital, nor are they reinforced in the church at the end of the play.³⁴ Ken Jackson remarks that Bethlem is "simultaneously a figure for the city and a place in the city which contains and mediates the social anger or 'madness' threatening public order" ("Bridewell and Bethlem" 404). Even more so, the hospital acts as a generative space that ignores social distinctions. It is a microcosm, but not necessarily a reflection of what exists outside of its walls.

Jackson also notes the odd choice for the playwrights to refer to the hospital as Bethlem Monastery, pointing out that the audience would have known the hospital *as* a hospital (*Separate Theaters* 119). "Monastery" would have been a reference to its previous use, and it does not seem fitting given this is the site of Bellafront's presumed social transformation from 'the impossible' to a soon-to-be wife, whereas nuns and prostitutes often lack direct male authority. But recalling the hospital's previous use points out what it is, at least in some cases, substituting. When Henry VIII closed the monasteries and nunneries, few options were left for single women. An occupation as a prostitute was one of those options.³⁵ Henry's decision effectively turned potential nuns to whoredom, and the monastery into a potential space for whores and other marginal figures to be set apart from the city's streets. The hospital did not house prostitutes specifically, yet the Sweeper says, "a whore will hardly come to her wits again" (15.142-43). Historically the hospital was known as a safe haven for criminals as well as lovers who did not

³⁴ The madhouse featured in *The Pilgrim* is not given a name and unlike in *The Honest Whore, Part One*, in which Bethlem acts as both hospital and church, the hospital and the church are separate spaces.

³⁵ Some critics have suggested that the closing of the monasteries did little to increase vagrancy. John Pound argues that there is little evidence to show that the dissolution of the monasteries had an effect on poverty or vagrancy (16). Instead of suggesting that nuns and monks were reduced to beggars because of the dissolution, however, I would argue that the closing of the monasteries created fewer opportunities for those, women in particular, who had fewer options. In other words, not necessarily former nuns, but women who might have had that option now only had the options of marriage, prostitution or disreputable jobs such as fishmongering, which was often equated with prostitution.

have the favor of their fathers to marry. In 1543, complaints against the hospital cited “ungodly solemnization of marriages frequently used in the hospital of Bethlehem” (O’Donoghue, *Bethlehem* 79). O’Donoghue argues, “There is some reason to believe that the privileged precincts, if they did not confer the right of sanctuary, allowed special facilities for marriages in which haste or privacy was available” (O’Donoghue, *Bethlehem* 78). My point here is that the representation of the hospital in the play is in conflict with itself: it may be a space that sequesters the strange, lewd, mad and socially rebellious from the city, yet at the same time it is a haven to protect such figures from legal and social authorities. It is a vague space that the people of the city want access to, but are uncertain of its residents. It is both part of the city and separate from it. It generates the comic resolution at the end of the play while at the same time perpetuating a distinct difference between its inhabitants and those looking in.

Bringing Infelice and Bellafront to Bethlem reveals the similarities of their situations, and Bethlem Monastery plays a particularly important role, as it is the site of the comedic resolution of *The Honest Whore, Part I* and intersects the two plots. Both Infelice and Bellafront are attempting to cast off the social and physical confines that have been placed on them due to their limited identities. Hippolyto says of Bethlem as the site of his reunion with Infelice, “The place well fits— / It is the school where those that lose their wits / Practise again to get them” (13.102-104). Bethlem Monastery is a unique public space. It is regulated and the inmates are controlled to a degree, but they also have freedom within the confines of the hospital. The sons of citizens who go mad are “free of the house” (15.126) and when Bellafront is admitted, she “talks a little idly, / And therefore has the freedom of the house” (15.333-34). In sixteenth and early seventeenth century London, to be “free” meant to be capable of moving or doing what one

wanted, but it also implied citizenship.³⁶ To be a member of the “freedom” was to be a valid member of a guild of the city and thus to be a recognized and lawfully sanctioned citizen. Bellafront, until her arrival at Bethlem, is considered a vagrant, an idle and “wicked” person who because of her incontinent lifestyle, contributed to the disease and disorder of the city.³⁷ Her identity within the confines of the hospital, while in some ways less clear, is more acceptable and paradoxically, she is “free” in that she is accepted as a member of the community. Similarly, in *The Puritan*, as a patient of the madhouse, Alinda has the freedom to move beyond its walls, apparently because she is certain to return. One nameless character in the play tells Alphonso, “Here’s one belongs to the very house, / sir; ‘tis a poor idiot, but she’ll shew you the way as well as a wiser body” (4.1). Not only does Alinda have the freedom to move abroad, she is expected to return on her own volition. There is no concern for the fact that she is outside of the madhouse. The implication is that the madhouse is where she belongs, so she will always return and is therefore trusted with leaving. She maintains her disguise as a “she-fool” by begging from Alphonso. Her performance would have been familiar to audiences; they have seen the common stage character, Tom O’Bedlam, before and Alinda’s disguise puts her in the same position—a licensed beggar of the madhouse.³⁸

The inmates of the hospital are historically both socially elevated and rejected. William Langland describes “lunatics” as mediators of the divine, stating that rich people “are ready to

³⁶ To “take up the freedom of the city” meant to become a citizen, adopting all the opportunities as well as the regulations that attend such an identity. Susan Wells claims, “To ‘take up the freedom of the city’ denoted, ideologically, participation in the City’s independence, in that communal existence legally recognized in the Charter” (42). In the context of *The Honest Whore*, Bellafront’s “freedom” awards her citizenship to the community within Bethlem Hospital.

³⁷ According to the act of the Common Council of 1579 harlots increased the number of bastards and diseases “to the great charge of the city” (*Report of the Commissioners* 397).

³⁸ William C. Carroll argues that though it was “widely believed that Tom O’Bedlam men were generally licensed to beg (and therefore not subject to arrest) . . . there is no evidence . . . to support this assertion” (102). Regardless of the law, the audience and the inhabitants of Stuart and Tudor London, in large part, believed there was such a law. They certainly recognized Tom as a character with a specific role within the play and in the city.

entertain fools and minstrels, and to put up with all they say. Much more should ye welcome and help lunatic lollers, who are God's minstrels and merry-mouthed jesters" (cited in O'Donoghue, *Bethlehem* 66). In John Fletcher's *The Pilgrim*, however, Roderigo says of Alinda disguised as a madwoman, "Sure 'tis a kind of sybil; some mad prophet. . . / Can fools and mad-folks then be tutors / to me? Can they feel my sores, yet I insensible? / Sure this was sent by providence to steer me right" (4.2.) Roderigo sees the madwoman as a courier from the cosmos, a deliverer of information so superior that it is beyond his grasp. In this instance, the mad person, who typically is seen as lacking reason, possesses the ability to reach information that usually only the most reasonable, most superior and closest to the divine have access to.

The evolving use of Bethlem and the madhouse reifies the relationship between madness and socially unsanctioned desire, and it challenges the meaning of the space itself. The madhouse becomes the safe haven in which the illicit lovers meet. In *The Honest Whore, Part I*, Castruccio tells the Duke where Hippolyto and Infelice plan to meet, stating, "the inn at which they light is Bethlem Monastery" (14.96), and later Matteo jokes they be locked "into some little room by / ourselves; that we may be mad for an hour or two" (15.24-25). His comment has a bawdy implication, but it also suggests that privacy creates madness, social isolation creates the lunatic. In addition, when the doctor admits to his part in Infelice's feigned death, he says he "chambered up" the girl in order to "stop discovery" (13.83-84), echoing her father's suggestion that solitude is a form of death. Also, when Bellafront decides to become an honest whore, she says to Matteo, "I pray depart the house. Beshrew the door / For being so easily entreated . . . Let this suffice: I am not as I was" (9.36-37, 41). Private space means, for both Infelice and Bellafront, a passing through, a shift from one seemingly fixed identity to another.

In *The Honest Whore, Part II*, Bellafront is no longer a carefree whore, sparring with her servant, Roger, confidently declaring that she is “in bonds to no man” (*Part I* 6.309). The transformation Bellafront has undergone from whore to wife has not been a kind one. Where once she was beautiful, Lodovico now says, “I scarce know her, for the beauty of her cheek hath (like the moon) suffered strange eclipses since I beheld it” (116-117). Charlotte Spivak suggests that Bellafront’s “moral conversion [has] rendered her unfit to survive in an immoral world” (Spivak 16). I want to suggest that she finds herself at the margins of society, not only because of her shifting morality but because she inhabits a role that is difficult to accept and to believe. When Bellafront asks Matteo, now Bellafront’s husband, how he plans to pay the rent, he responds:

Why, do as all of your occupation do against quarter days:

break up house, remove, shift your lodgings. Pox o’ your quarters! (159)

Matteo still considers Bellafront a practitioner of “the trade.” Additionally, he points out the inherent transience of prostitutes, implying that Bellafront’s social, spatial and moral steadfastness is inappropriate to her status and trade. Of Bellafront’s final circumstances, Spivak writes, “one cannot help being haunted by a disturbing image of her as a carefree whore, singing over her cosmetics and engaged in light-hearted banter with her servant, Roger” (Spivak 16). Bellafront’s transformation seems to be a slow death; she is altered from physically healthy and happy, while spatially and socially free or “vague,” to physically decaying in social and spatial confinement. The confinement here, though, is one she has imposed on herself as is suited to her new role as a wife. That the characters in the play will not let her be both honest and a whore has been violent and destructive to Bellafront.

Bridewell is equally unique for the setting of the comic resolution at the end of *Part II* because it too is an urban space with shifting utility and often conflicting purposes. Bridewell, originally a palace that had fallen into decay, was bought by the City and transformed into a workhouse and sometimes orphanage. The new Bridewell was intended to house the “correction and punishment of idle vagrant people and dissolute, and for setting them to work, that they might in an honest way take pains to get their own livelihood.”³⁹ When orphans were older and able to work they were also sent to Bridewell. At the time the City acquired the dilapidated palace, Mayor Dobbs envisioned it to be a house of correction, unlike the other charity hospitals. He categorized the different types of “poor” in order to be sure they were separated into the hospitals suited best for their needs; the “thriftless poor” were intended for Bridewell.⁴⁰ Among them were those who were perceived as excessive consumers, those who refused to maintain the parameters of a proper place, and “dissolute women.”⁴¹ The concern over vagrants and other

³⁹ Bishop Ridley’s letter to Sir John Gates, cited in Copeland.

⁴⁰ Dobbs categorizes the poor into three “degrees,” each with three types:

Three Degrees of Poor.

1. Poor by impotency.
 2. Poor By casualty.
 3. Thriftless poor.
1. The poor by impotency are also divided thus:--
 - (1.) Fatherless poor man’s child.
 - (2.) The aged, blind, and lame.
 - (3.) The diseased person by leprosy, dropsy, etc.
 2. The poor by casualty, thus: --
 - (1.) The wounded soldiers.
 - (2.) The decayed householder.
 - (3.) The visited with any grievous disease.
 3. The thriftless poor, thus:--
 - (1.) The rioter, that consumeth all.
 - (2.) The vagabond, that with abide in no place.
 - (3.) The idle person, as dissolute women and others.

(Cited in Copeland 35-36)

⁴¹ That Dobbs is particularly concerned with the vagabond’s refusal to “abide” in a given place implies that he holds a concept of a “proper” material place, and that its role in upholding structure, identity and civility in the city are important for him.

misplaced people grew to the point that in 1587, an order of Common Council emphasizes the problem of vagabonds, and advised clearing the city of vagrants.⁴²

Eventually, Bridewell was referred to more as a prison than a hospital. Stow classifies Bridewell as a hospital as well as a “house of correction” in his survey. For him, there is no distinction between the criminal and the patient when it comes to those at Bridewell.

Interestingly, he also remarks that prisoners are released into the custody or by the consent of the citizens (145). The act of Common Council presented on August 4th, 1579 gives the right and responsibility of finding, accusing, and gathering together vagrants to the parish leaders, such as constables, parsons, and churchwardens (*Report of the Commissioners* 394). Specifically, it suggests citizens “inquire and understand of all idle persons, vagabonds, rogues, disordered parents, or masters of houses, disordered children of the poor, disordered alehouses, and such like” (*Report of the Commissioners* 396). Both Stow and the 1579 act reveal attempts to limit the amount of physical freedom afforded to the “idle” by giving control to established members of the community. Notably, the 1579 act of Common Council emphasizes the relationship between idleness and vagrancy, roguishness, excessive lifestyles, and general wickedness, appointing Bridewell as a central component to controlling and cleaning up the urban public interiors. The act makes it clear that Bridewell’s power is to extend organically into the parishes by way of the official and non-official leadership in each parish. The act condoned a form of citizen’s arrest that set the foundation for the potential formation of a web of power and authority over social practices and spatial control that would have been unofficial and yet completely sanctioned. Both the spaces and the people occupying them are described as “disordered,” as well as “excessive” and “incontinent.” City officials make clear that “[n]o lodging, gaming, or victualling, be

⁴² According to Copeland, the order advised that vagrants return to their last place of residency; therefore, they treated as strangers, and visitors of the city rather than legitimate members of the society (53).

suffered in any cellar,”⁴³ fearing that spaces would become ambiguous, difficult to define and thus difficult to control and to associate with specific identities. The act insists that spaces should not have multiple or ambiguous uses:

Where many landlords and farmers of alleys, or of great houses converted into small habitation, do keep victualling houses, ships, or cellars, for uttering of drink, victual, and other chaffer, to the inhabitants of those alleys or small habitations, all such shall be utterly disallowed and forbidden to be used of such landlords or farmers, or by any other, by their means, or within such alleys or houses. (*Report of the Commissioners* 397)

The fluid boundaries of physical delineation were tied to the disruptive interior spaces in the city, and those who did not possess a socially sanctioned identity inhabited those spaces, spilled out into the parish streets and more respectable public spaces, and they threatened the order the city had attempted to establish. The alehouses and bawdy houses revealed the possibility of a city life that was not centered on labor or a strict hierarchy. The City’s attempt to control social demeanor by regulating space and freedom of movement was an explicit attack on the personal agency of the underclass. To be imprisoned in Bridewell meant not only physical restraint, but it also suggested that those prisoners would leave Bridewell as newly made productive members of London. It was clear, however, that authorities had little trust in the possibility of rehabilitation if the ex-prisoners were left to their own devices, and so citizens were encouraged to take them as workers.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Report of the Commissioners* 397.

⁴⁴ According to Copeland, Citizens were allowed to “take clever vagrants, skilful of any occupation, into their service” (48). The act of Common Council, 1597, states, “that the governors shall do their endeavors to bestow as many of the youth as shall be put to labour there, in service, either as apprentices, or otherwise with citizens, or any other that will be content to receive them; and specially that owner and masters of ships be entreated to receive such in their service” (Cited in *Report of the Commissioners* 397). The act also entreats preachers to use their sermons as opportunities to suggest citizens use the prisoners as servants:

In Bridewell, a penitent criminal could be just that. His or her identity was bound up in his or her criminal activity, penitent ways, and the possibility for a new life and a new self. Once outside of Bridewell, however, penitent criminals were forced into apprenticeships with less physical mobility or personal freedom. If they refused, they were considered vagrant once again. It was virtually impossible to be identified as a penitent criminal if one was not controlled by another citizen. A penitent criminal must sacrifice his or her agency in order to be recognized with social validity:

If any such vagrants shall be found skilful in any occupation whereby any citizen or other using such occupation will be contented to receive them into service, either in London or in the country, the governors of Bridewell shall do their endeavor so to bestow them; provided always, that if after such bestowing any of them be found vagrant, he shall be used as one escaping or running away out of Bridewell, as is aforesaid. (Cited in *Report of the Commissioners* 395)

Once the prisoner is taken in at Bridewell, they are the “charge of the city” and the city gives control over them to whichever citizens would like to take them, under penalty of law. Since to

That the preachers be moved at the sermons at the Cross, and other convenient times, specially in the term time, and that other good notorious means be used to require both citizens, artificers, and others, and also all farmers and others for husbandry, and gentlemen and others for their kitchens and other services, to take servants and children both out of Bridewell and Christ’s Hospital at their pleasures, with declaration what a charitable deed it shall be not only for the relief of those whom they so shall take in service, but also of multitudes of others that shall from time to time be taken into the hospitals in their places, and so be preserved from perishing. (Cited in *Report of the Commissioners* 398).

Adults as well as children could be taken from the prison and lawfully placed into service. From the perspective of the city government, the act of vagrancy effectively stripped those prisoners of their rights to move freely through the city.

reject the guardianship of the citizen was to be treated as an escape from the prison, the guardian effectively becomes an extension of Bridewell and of the City.⁴⁵

The whores in *Part II* emphasize the paradoxical relationship they have to the social world outside of the prison. Penelope Whorehound says, “if I go amongst Citizens wives, they jeer at me: if I go / among the Loose-bodied Gowns, they cry a pox on me, because / I go civilly attired” (208). Penelope remarks on the dilemma penitent whores face when attempting to reenter the social network. Bellafront also describes the isolated feeling of a courtesan walking down a typical city street. She says, “I, though with face mask’d, could not scape the ‘hem’: For ... dress up in civilest shape a courtesan, let her walk saint-like, noteless and unknown, Yet she’s betray’d by some trick of her own” (181). Noticed or unnoticed, disguised or in the open, the courtesan is isolated, a body moving through the streets of bodies, not one that belongs to the crowd. Using Bridewell as the location of the final scene, however, suggests that while it is a location separate from the city, it is still a part of the city, and celebrated as a foundation for charity and rehabilitation.

Jackson suggests that the use of Bridewell is not meant to be ironic—that it is fitting that Bellafront’s innocence would emerge in the place known to generate moral transformation. The problem is that most of the actual “wrongdoers” are impenitent, especially the whores. Jackson argues that for the characters, particularly Orlando, “Bellafront’s decision to reform and stay with her husband is the correct one” (131). Bellafront’s comment that “Women shall learn of me to love their husbands in greatest misery” (213), fails to echo the comic ending that Orlando creates with his goodwill. Also, Carolo states with certainty that Bridewell could not possibly “cure” the city of prostitution. He says to the Duke:

⁴⁵ John Twynning points out that “masterless” men and women as well as foreigners and Catholics were not given the right to Habeas Corpus, a detail which further points out the importance of having a clearly defined and sanctioned identity within the city in order to be recognized as a citizen (Twynning 25).

Attach all the light heels I'th' city and clap 'em up? Why,
my lord, you dive into a well unsearchable. All the whores
within the wall and without the walls? I would not be he
should meddle with them, for ten such dukedoms. The
army that you speak on is able to fill all the prisons within
this city, and to leave not a drinking room in any tavern besides. (185)

Carolo suggests that Bridewell is ultimately ineffective because of the utterly rampant amount of illicit sexual activity in the city. For him, Bridewell is a civic theater that performs the illusion of penitence and of accepted penitence, and that the only honest whores are those inside the walls of the prison. As Catarina asks, sarcastically, “Is this world a world to keep bawds and whores honest?” (209-10). Her question has some historical validity. According to John Twyning, Bridewell prison/workhouse was itself used as an illicit brothel for the prostitutes housed there (26-27). Although I may question the factuality of this statement, it is clear that Bridewell was both a space used for regulating social control and rehabilitation as well as a space in which social disorder could reside without much resistance.

In his *Madness and Civilization*, Michel Foucault argues that during the Renaissance, “houses of confinement” were built to separate the unreasonable from a world governed by reason.⁴⁶ While I find some truth to Foucault’s explanation, it does not take into account the complex relationship between the inmates and the communal identity they create, nor does it fully consider the effects of the spatially porous boundaries distinguishing not only the sane from the insane, but also the madhouse from the city street.⁴⁷ Any seepage at all fails to wholly confine the prisoner, and both Bridewell and Bedlam were porous spaces, due to questions

⁴⁶ For more on Foucault’s discussion of madness during the Renaissance, see Chapter II, “The Great Confinement.”

⁴⁷ In his “Conclusion” to *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault writes, “Madness has become man’s possibility of abolishing both man and the world—and even those images that challenge the world and deform man” (281).

concerning ownership and rights to the hospitals and the physical walls of the buildings. Foucault points out that “Madness and the madman become major figures, in their ambiguity: menace and mockery, the dizzying unreason of the world, and the feeble ridicule of men” (Foucault 13). Vagrants, whores, madmen and other characters of the London world who possessed little validity or power within the changing social world of the city found themselves in this state of ambiguous existence. Additionally, Bridewell and Bethlem did not help to perpetuate a clearly defined social hierarchy or a system of power: the authority over their administration was itself always changing hands. Within the context of the plays and early modern London, the two institutions act in opposition to themselves, attempting to constrain and reshape socially unsanctioned London characters, while at the same time perpetuating their existence. These spaces are paradoxical precisely because they are within the city limits. While the suburbs were commonly known for illicit affairs and rabble rousing, the existence of ambiguous spaces and uncertain people within the walls of the city made any attempts at distinction more difficult. Spaces such as Bridewell and Bethlem and the characters they housed illuminate the loose boundaries of power and authority that the wall attempted to maintain, and the buildings themselves act as thresholds for unsanctioned characters and loosely articulated identities to move through.

Brothels, prisons and asylums were not the only generative spaces in the early modern city. Apparently, private houses also acted as meeting areas for illicit and illegal behaviors. The varying purpose of the private house not only challenged the concept of a commercial and public space, but it also created ambiguity surrounding the identity of its residents. Transforming the household from a bound and protected space to one with readily available entrances and exits was incredibly easy. The household in fact was not a confined or separate and private space, as

perhaps it was intended.⁴⁸ The inability to control domestic spaces and those who lived in them generated anxiety, which resulted in numerous tracts regarding the roles within the household, the function of the home, and how a household should be governed. In *A Godly Forme of Household Government*, Robert Cleaver writes that if a wife “be not subject to her husband, to let him rule all the household, especially outward affaires: if shee will make against him, and seek to have her own wayes, there will be doing and undoing” (F3v). Cleaver and others attempted to influence women’s ever-increasing presence in public spaces by ideologically barricading the domestic doors.⁴⁹ The fluid nature of the home also emphasizes that women’s identities were quite mutable in Renaissance England. A wife could easily become a “whore.” Gusman in *The Wandring Whore* tells the story of a husband whose business had “faln to decay,” so his wife set up her own trade by “opening her fore doores and lying backwards” (*The Wandring Whore Continued* 7-8). The household space and the space of the wife’s body are both transformed for the purpose of economic security. Ruth Mazo Karras describes the vague distinction between a whore by trade and ‘whore’ as a term used to insult. She writes that often, “the term ‘whore’ was used as an insult rather than as an accusation, the defamatory speaker did not mean specifically to denote that the woman was a common prostitute” (29). However the term may have been used from one context to the next, it is clear that its meaning was fluid, both concrete and ambiguous at the same time.⁵⁰

William Harrison’s *The Description of England* explicitly argues that adultery should be considered a sex crime, arguing, “adultery and fornication should have some sharper law . . . to

⁴⁸ For more on private, private houses and domestic spaces, see Orlin, *Locating Privacy*; Korda; Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*; Wall.

⁴⁹ Cleaver also equates public, non-familial intrusion into the household as a kind of economic sodomy, writing, “A great backe-friend to thrift is good fellowship, and company keeping. . . for it hath losse of time. . . [It] draweth home others to thy house, or draweth thee to others houses, as taverns, alehouses” (F3v).

⁵⁰ For detailed examinations into the relationship between women and the private household, see Orlin, *Locating Privacy* and *Private Matters*; and Flather.

be condemned to the galleys; for that punishment would prove more bitter to them” (Harrison 189-90). Hugh Latimer, in his last sermon to Edward VI, argues the similarities between adultery and prostitution, writing that, “adultery should be punished with death (. . .) There would not be then so much adultery, whoredom, and lechery in England as there is” (210-11). The relationship between adultery and whoredom appears to be that in both situations the woman is “masterless,” uncontrolled by her husband or a male authority figure.⁵¹ In *The Honest Whore Part One*, Candido suggests that disobedient wives should be confined to the madhouse: “Wives (with meek husbands) that to vex them long, / In Bedlam they must dwell, els dwell they wrong” (5.2.521-22). For Candido, uncontrollable wives are insane and the only proper place for them is the madhouse.

In other popular writing, wives who seesawed between a legitimate social life and the underworld were given more specific designations. The “Autem-Mort” is one of the more obvious examples of the woman’s unregulated and socially marginalized role acting as a conduit for spatial mobility. The Autem-Mort is a woman who is a wife as well as a con artist. According to Thomas Harman, the Autem-mort is “as chaste as a cow I have, that goeth to bull every moon, with what bull she care not” (Harman 99). She is the embodiment of the fear one’s wife is only pretending to be chaste, honest, and confined to the home. Another type of female vagabond described by Harman is a “Walking Mort,” a woman who is an impoverished widow. In his anecdote about the Walking Mort, the woman’s loyalty is to the wife of the man soliciting her (Harman 100-05). Both the Autem-Mort and the Walking Mort are paradoxical. One appears to be honest but isn’t, while the other appears to be forced into prostitution by circumstance, but is unwilling to betray a woman in order to sleep with the woman’s husband. A woman did not need

⁵¹ Coppélia Kahn also points out the relationship between disobedience and how wives might have been viewed as whorish because they disobeyed their husbands, specifically because it might imply sexual aggression or infidelity (250).

to be a prostitute in order to find herself in Bridewell, Bethlem or some other hospital or prison, however. Between 1605-09, only 15 prisoners were charged with whoredom, while 262 were charged with “fornication.” There are 27 charges of “keeping company,” 19 of “lewd” acts and 35 accounts of “ill” or “bawdy house keeping” or “house taken in.”⁵² The line between legitimate and illegitimate domestic space was getting crossed and was punishable by imprisonment.

Ben Jonson complicates the relationship further in *Epicene*. He writes:

Alas, sir, do you ever think to find a chaste wife in these times?
Now, when there are so many masques, plays, puritan
preachings, mad folks, and other strange sights to be seen daily,
private and public? (2.2.29-32)

For Jonson, exposure to most anything performative, morally questionable, or philosophically threatening makes a woman unchaste. Chastity is equal to bodily as well as social and architectural confinement. In anti-theatrical Puritan tracts, according to David Leverenz, “whoredom becomes the most frequently used code word for worldly taint of any kind” (24).

Despite earlier critical claims that there were clear and divisible binaries between categories such as male and female, married and unmarried, and chaste and impure, feminist criticism has shown otherwise.⁵³ More importantly, the early modern English stage has shown otherwise. While guides on how to run a household and Puritan morality tracts attempt to reinforce the distinction between public and private, and wife and whore, performed plays are creating and revealing paradoxes—honest whores and masterless wives—but these paradoxical identities are contingent upon their spaces. The whore can be penitent in Bridewell. Once she is outside again, she must either be “mastered” by a member of the community, or branded an

⁵² According to Paul Griffiths, there were specifically, 10 “Bawdy House keeping,” 6 “Bawdy house taken in,” 4 “Ill company taken in,” 4 “Ill house keeping,” and 11 “Ill house taken in” (“Structure of Prostitution” 451).

⁵³ See Kahn and Leverenz.

outlaw. The madman is socially recognized and perhaps accepted as a licensed beggar, Tom O'Bedlam, but he cannot move through the streets without an affiliation to the hospital.⁵⁴ The wife's reputation and her identity *as a wife* is equally determined by the kinds of spaces she chooses to traverse. Thomas Chobham writes that if "someone sells herself in secret, she is not called a whore" (cited in Karras 27). Again, the distinction between actions committed in public versus actions performed in private make up the difference between wife and whore. Not only did exposing the wife to the world make her unchaste, but *revealing* her to the world made it so as well.

In *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, Anne is an honest wife turned adulterer and her domestic space is transformed from a home to a brothel to a Bridewell. Anne is unlike Bellafront in that she is not a prostitute by trade, yet she finds herself in the ambiguous place between a wife and a disowned adulterer who is effectively transformed into a whore by her lover, Wendoll. When Anne reveals that her affair with Wendoll is a "custom" even though she clearly no longer wants to participate, and complains that his love is "too public," her status as a wife is already losing legitimacy. Her role as an unchaste wife in the play is juxtaposed against that of an honest whore, but both she and Bellafront find themselves in in-between spaces that strip them of a socially sanctioned identity. The spaces to which she is relegated reflect this and in turn become ironic representations of traditional domestic and outdoor spaces.

Frankford makes a huge mistake when he allows his friend Wendoll to lodge in his house, and not just because his wife makes him a cuckold. He gives Wendoll access to his home as if he *were* the husband. He tells his wife, "Use him with all thy loving'st courtesy" (4.78). In

⁵⁴ There are contradictory views about whether Bethlem allowed some of its patients to roam outside of the hospital in order to beg for charity. The historical fact is secondary to the urban myth of Tom O'Bedlam. This character was such a recurring figure in contemporary literature and drama that most people would have recognized him and understood that he represents a licensed vagabond—a quintessential paradox.

Lantern and Candlelight, Dekker describes husbands who condone their wives acting as prostitutes: “Then came certaine infamous earthy minded Creatures in shapes of Snailles, who all the day time hyding their heads in their shells, least bodies should with two fingers point at them for living basely upon the prostitution of their wives bodies” (Dekker 297). Although Frankford does not intend for his wife to be intimate with Wendoll and is not condoning prostitution, he is opening his home to external social and sexual threats. Later in the play, after Frankford has discovered the affair and attempts to catch them in the act, he says, “Master Wendoll, in my absence use / The very ripest pleasure of my house” (11.63-64). It is no surprise that in response to such freedom, Wendoll responds, “I am husband now in Master Frankford’s place / And must command the house” (11. 89-90). Frankford had given up his position to Wendoll long before he makes the ironic offer. Allowing friends to enter and entering friends’ homes leads to bodily indulgence and social, perhaps even sexual, perversion. When Frankford first introduces Wendoll into his home, he says to him, “I know you, sir, to be a gentleman / In all things; your possibilities but mean; / Please you to use my table and my purse— / They are yours” (4.61-64). Giving Wendoll access to food and money points out Frankford’s unhealthy close relationship with his friend and also emphasizes the bodily indulgences that the relationship encourages.

Wendoll describes his friendship with Frankford as a physical union marked by bodily processes:

He cannot eat without me,
Nor laugh without me. I am to his body,
As necessary as his digestion,
And equally do make him sick or whole. (6.40-43)

Frankfort opened his doors to Wendoll and the result is a bodily union highlighted by consumption, imbalance and confusion. Wendoll even begins to call Anne Frankfort his servant Jenkins' mistress, in response to which Jenkins asks, "Is your worship married?" (6.58), pointing out how easily Wendoll lapses into the physical and social confusion between himself and Frankfort. The parallels between physical indulgence and spatial interpellation continue throughout the play. Wendoll says to Anne, "My pleasure is / We will not sup abroad so publicly, / But in your private chamber" (12. 90-92), and later "let us sup within," to which she replies, "Oh, what a clog unto the soul is sin!" (12.102-03). Jenkins adds to the constant references to the private dinner, "...and if they do sup together, pray God they do / not lie together" (12. 12-13). According to Robert Cleaver's contemporary marriage manual, "Cramming and pampering of the body. . . . dull[s] the minde and wit, darken[s] reason" (E7r). Food fills the body with "grosse humors, which breed diseases, and diseases bring other charges of physicke, or at least losse of time, and neglect of businesse" (E7r). Anne's affair with Wendoll is almost always associated with food, the dinner table, or digestion.

As Wendoll seduces Anne, he says, "The path of pleasure and the gate to bliss, / Which on your lips I knock at with a kiss" (6.161-62), showing quite simply how the body is itself a space. Yet the body of another man's wife is an architectural spoil of sexual victory. The subplot mirrors the first, but reveals a house in which strangers are denied entry. When Shafton wants to buy the house from Sir Charles, Charles refuses because the house has always been owned by his family:

Where he the first of all our house begun,
I now, the last, will end and keep this house,
This virgin title never yet deflowered

By any unthrift of the Mountfords' line.

In brief, I will not sell it for more gold

Than you could hide or pave the ground withal. (7.21-26)

The house is described as a virgin because only one family has kept the house in its control. The patriarchal family line acts as a stronghold that protects the physical boundaries of the house.

The virginal status of the Mountfords' house and Susan's choice not to prostitute herself to repay the family's debts parallel each other. Similarly, Anne's domestic space mirrors her situation, as it is more porous, having effectively been transformed into a brothel.

When Anne's status as a mother, a wife, and an honest woman are taken from her, she is moved to a house where she, like Sir Charles in his prison, is "lodged far from the sight of day" (7. 71).⁵⁵ Separated from her husband and confined in a house that acts as a prison for her, she is stripped of her identity and starves herself. She is dead before her body dies, however. Frankfurt says after he expels her from the house, "How ill am I bestead / To be a widower ere my wife be dead" (15. 29-30), pointing out the importance of her roles as wife and mother to not only her identity, but to her existence as well. It is only after she is reunited with her husband physically that she retains her old identities and a new life even as she is dying:

My wife, the mother to my pretty babes,

Both those lost names I do restore thee back,

And with this kiss I wed thee once again. (17.115-17).

By controlling the boundaries of her body, Anne, described in architectural terms such as "lath," is able to restore herself. Her power is derived from her proximity to death, from the impending extinction of her identity. She acts here from an absolute margin, echoing the marginal space she

⁵⁵ A "masterless" woman is physically unconstrained. When Lady Macbeth goes mad, she sleep walks, physically free of her reasonable mind. Her masterlessness is what marks her as mad, moving her from a wife to an offstage antic, a character without a stage.

inhabited during her life-- situated between the family house and the wilderness in the country house seven miles from the family home. She can only repossess the titles “mother” and wife” *because* she is dying. Anne can only be an honest whore because such an identity is fleeting; it can only exist within the confines of the vague and marginal space of the home-turned-prison. Otherwise, she has no place to “be” that is not on the outskirts socially and spatially.

In *The Honest Whore, Part II*, Lodovico sarcastically exclaims, “‘She has been’: That’s the epitaph of all whores” (116). Both Bellafront and Anne have to endure a kind of death in order to achieve social acceptance, but the outcome is both imperfect and tragic. Their stories suggest there is little room for ambiguous identities outside of paradoxical spaces such as Bridewell and Bethlem, but conversely, they are constructing the ground for developing identities to emerge and take hold. This movement contrasts urban order and the spaces and identities that order appears to support. The hospital, the prison, and even the home generate an indefiniteness that ultimately provides the foundation for new identities to emerge. They are generative in that they form a place for transient characters to potentially find “refuge in the margins of the city precisely when the city offers them an abusive identity, a crushing homogeneity, a freedom under control” (de Sola-Morales Rubió 112). Spaces, such as brothels, prisons, and madhouses challenge the definitions of presumed spaces, like the household and the monastery and provide spaces for the formation of characters whose complex identities resist ready categorization into early modern social hierarchies.

CHAPTER 2: 'BE CLAMOUROUS AND LEAP ALL CIVIL BOUNDS': QUEER SPACE IN *TWELFTH NIGHT, OR WHAT YOU WILL*

“We have said that space is existential; we could just as well have said that existence is spatial” (Merleau-Ponty 292).

“*Secret*. This will be found a fraudulent dimension: for *there is nothing so secret, that shall not be made manifest*. The speeches of *whispering*, the actes of the *Closet* shall not scape publishing” (Adams 119).

During the Renaissance, the setting of *Twelfth Night*, Illyria, was considered by writers and explorers to be an elusive place with unclear boundaries. Ortelius writes, Illyria’s “confines are not distinguished by every one with sealf e same, but with different boundes, for Pliny encloseth her betweene the rivers Arsia and Titia: but Ptolome doeth stretche the same from Histria, until the border of Macedonia, acordinge to the sea coasts” (N1r). Illyria is amorphous, shifting shapes from explorer to explorer, but its dimensions are never determined and they never remain the same. Similarly, Shakespeare’s Illyrian setting is multi-dimensional; it represents an island in the Mediterranean and contemporary London. It is a hostile environment, a renowned city with “memorials and [...] things of fame” (3.3.23), Elysium, the pastoral land of the dead, and the transformable space of the stage. Illyria is an ideal setting for *Twelfth Night*, as its

unstable geography mirrors the unstable bodies of the characters that inhabit it.⁵⁶ The spaces of *Twelfth Night* are equally malleable, and the character's interactions with such spaces result in unbounded sexualities.⁵⁷ While the characters in *Twelfth Night* try to convince the audience and perhaps themselves that the spaces they control are clearly defined and impenetrable, as they traverse the stage they reveal hidden entrances and exits and create new ones. Similarly, the spaces disrupt boundaries of gendered identity that are already tenuous at best. The interconnection between the characters' bodies and spaces of the stage creates what I term a "queer space."

A "queer space" houses interactions between bodies that cultivate and redefine gendered identities. The "queer space" itself is often unsanctioned and inarticulable. Within the context of this project I am employing David Halperin's definition of queer. According to Halperin, "Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant" (62).⁵⁸ Queer identity is not grounded in the realm of definitive truth or based on categorical sexual identities. The physiological fluidity of the Renaissance gendered body is itself a kind of queering.⁵⁹ For

⁵⁶ Criticism has historically recognized the instability of the characters' identities and sexualities, given both the setting and the cross-dressing. C.L. Barber addresses the issues of gender and sexuality within the context of carnivalesque argument for containment. Barber finds sexual "aberration" a non-issue in the play because of the characters', audience's, or reader's secure sense of normal sexuality. He claims that the gender reversal is liberating "through release to clarification" (6). Juliet Dusinberre's early feminist reading emphasizes the "similarities between the sexes," but claims that the play ultimately reestablishes gender difference. In "Fiction and Friction," Stephen Greenblatt makes a similar argument, except he emphasizes the play's focus on specifically male identity formation (92). Valerie Traub has perhaps contributed the most radical exploration of gender in *Twelfth Night*. She actively engages the homoerotic moments in the play, and points out that the effeminacy we see in the characters does not necessarily mark same-sex desire. She writes, "'Appropriate' male desire is phallic, whether homoerotic or heterosexual; without that phallic force, men in Shakespearean drama are usually rendered either asexual or nominally heterosexual" (136).

⁵⁷ Only a handful of critics have addressed the issue of space, and few of those have addressed the relationship between space and gender. Laura Sarnelli's "Staging the Space of Desire" brings an awareness to space, but places little emphasis on the architectural, geographic, or urban spaces within the play, nor does she explore the stage as a space of erotic desire.

⁵⁸ In order to distinguish between gay, lesbian, and queer, Halperin adds that queer "demarcates not a positivity, but a positionality vis-à-vis the normative—a positionality that is not restricted to lesbians and gay men but is in fact available to anyone who is or feels marginalized because of his or her sexual practices" (62).

⁵⁹ For varying arguments on homosexuality in general and male homosexuality in particular, see Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*; Goldberg, *Sodometries*; Cady, "'Masculine Love'"; Kent and Gert; Saslow;

this project, I am defining space through physical dimensions and boundaries and by the interactions that take place within and help to form those dimensions and boundaries.⁶⁰

Specifically, this chapter deals with the physical spaces of the stage and the stage spaces generated by the text.⁶¹ On a practical level, the spaces in the text are performed by physical bodies on a physical stage. In addition, the discursive spaces of the text are also always interacting with the discursive bodies of the text. The spaces in *Twelfth Night* are particularly erotic and challenge identity formation through negotiations of sexual desires and gender relationships. In “Bodies-Cities,” Elizabeth Grosz describes the relationship between the body and space:

This relation of introjections and projections [between bodies and environments] involves a complex feedback relation in which neither the body nor its environment can be assumed to form an organically unified ecosystem. . . . The body and its environment, rather, produce each other as forms of the hyperreal, as modes of simulation which have overtaken and transformed whatever reality each may have had into the image of the other: the city is made and made over into the simulacrum of the body, and the body, in its turn, is transformed, “citified,” urbanized as a distinctively metropolitan body.

(“Bodies-Cities” 247)

Smith, *Homosexual*. For investigations into specifically female homosexuality, see Brown, *Immodest Acts*; Andreatis; Dekker and van de Pol; and Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism*. For useful collections of essays on alternative sexualities, see Goldberg, *Queering the Renaissance* as well as *Reclaiming Sodom*; and Zimmerman, *Erotic Politics*. More recently, criticism has explored early modern sexuality through the lens of embodiment, and thus shifting away from challenging heteronormativity with homosexuality. For examples, see Hammons; Keller; and Goldberg, *The Seeds of Things*.

⁶⁰ In *Homoerotic Space*, Stephen Guy-Bray uses Michel de Certeau’s definition of a space as a “practiced place,” yet Guy-Bray is specifically choosing only de Certeau’s implementation of this concept in rhetorical space—the written text—and he forgoes engaging in detail material space, such as the space of the city that de Certeau emphasizes (6-7). At times, Guy-Bray appears to use space, genre, canon, and scene interchangeably, and he does not attempt to engage the material influence within these spaces.

⁶¹ This chapter makes no attempt to distinguish space from discourse; it is focusing instead on the interaction between bodies and spaces, both of which are discursive and materially present.

Grosz specifically discusses the body within the environmental context of a city, but one can see how the body has a mutual relationship with any environment.⁶² This particular relational model is what Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr. call the “dispersion” or “distribution” model in which, “bodies, subject, and environment are relational and interdependent” (6). While other attempts to explain the relationship between the body and environment follow more dualistic thought, the distributive model challenges dualistic paradigms, and arguably provides the foundation for a monistic approach.⁶³

Aaron Betsky, in *Queer Space*, explores how architecture actively maintains same-sex desire, and generates spaces in which queer sexualities can find material and, often intimate, realization. He writes, “What I am calling queer space is that which appropriates certain aspects of the material world in which we all live, composes them into unreal or artificial space, and uses this counterconstruction to create the freespace of orgasm that dissolves the material world” (18). Queer space is mutable and often (though not always) constructed from formerly ordered and heterogeneous spaces. Betsky’s understanding of queer space, however, is non-material, and he implies a dichotomy between “artificial” queer space and “real” non-queer space. He also claims that queer space is, “By its very nature ... something that is not built, only implied, and usually invisible. Queer space does not confidently establish a clear, ordered space for itself.... It is altogether more ambivalent, open, leaky, self-critical or ironic, and ephemeral” (18). Betsky’s

⁶² Grosz uses the term “environment,” not space. I recognize that an environment can include much more than space and is not the same thing. An environment also necessarily includes space. For this reason, I may use the term environment when discussing texts that also use that terminology. Also, this dissertation is exploring space in particular, but I am acutely aware of how environmental factors, such as sound, can alter spaces.

⁶³ Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan describe four distinct models of ecological relations. The first is similitude, which implies that the body is a microcosm of the world. The second, is the exchange model, in which “critics have focused on the ebb and flow of exchange between body and environment.” The exchange model maintains a separation between the body and the environment, however. The third, the counteractive model, argues that the environment and the body are at odds with each other, and the final one, the distributive model, is the model I am most interested in here. In some ways, the distributive model can incorporate the other three, yet it maintains that there is no clear distinction between the body and the environment (Floyd-Wilson & Sullivan 4-6).

definition of queer space assumes that if a space is ambivalent, it cannot be explicitly present in all its glorious irony. Stage spaces provide a context in which the two are not mutually exclusive. Although Betsky tends to rely on unnecessary binaries to explore the possibilities of a queer space, his description emphasizes the mobile nature of such spaces. In *Twelfth Night*, the stage acts as one layer of a complex discursive structuring of sexual space that is “relational and contingent” (Sarnelli 623). That is to say, the interactions between the characters and the environments they inhabit create spaces that do not simply invert sexual identity—they allow those identities to shift and evolve in both liberating and oppressive ways. *Twelfth Night* provides a platform for the fluidity of queer space to be realized.

The opening scene, set in Orsino’s court, provides the tenor of the play’s sexual and gendered themes. Orsino begins:

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken and so die.
That strain again! It had a dying fall;
Oh, it came o’er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odor. Enough, no more.
‘Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou,
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea (...) (1.1.1-11)

Orsino shifts from wanting the musicians to play to wanting them to stop twice in a row. He highlights the mercuriality of his love, but more importantly, the lilting nature of Orsino's speech mimics a wave, until it reaches a nautical reference describing love as a container that is not limited by its capacity to take in what it desires. For Orsino, desire—his desire—is fluid and always open. It transforms and overwhelms other characters and objects as it rejects all boundaries but its own. These lines also point to the movement of sound through space, which is significant to understanding the stage as a materially changing environment as well as the interconnected relationship between space and the body.⁶⁴

Early modern writers conceived of voices as physical matter that originated from outside of the speaker. In *The Art of Well Speaking*, Balthazar Gerbier describes the early modern conception of the material voice:

[T]he life of a humane voice, the very Spirituall Soule of that voyce, that is to say, its sence, is partly Spirituall, and partly Intellectuall; its that which enters into the pores by permission of the corporall ayre, where it remaines; and having knockt at the doore, and obtained entrance, the spirit then of humane speech, which is the speeches sence, bereaves its selfe of that Corporeall robe, and is conveyed unto our intellectuall parts, and there manifests its self, as in a true draught, the very being, thoughts, conceptions, desires, inclinations, and other Spirituall passions of him that speaketh. (24)

The voice is reliant on the air for travel and reception. The passage indicates the volatile boundaries between speaker, space and sound recipient, and it also reveals the generative properties of the interaction. Viola's description of her message to Olivia connects the materiality of her voice to the fertile orifice of Olivia's ear: "My matter hath no voice, lady, but

⁶⁴ For critics who claim that sound, voice and air were understood as material objects, see Bloom; and Smith, *The Acoustic World*.

to your own most pregnant and vouchsafed ear” (3.1.80-81). Orsino’s first description of Olivia connects desire, the body and space with the materiality of the air, “she purged the air of pestilence” (1.1.19).⁶⁵ Voice, sound, and music are all devices that are central to revealing and maintaining material connections through space.

The relationship between air and space is echoed through the dependency of the play upon a tempest, occurring before the action of the play that displaced both Viola and Sebastian. The seacoast is the embodiment of the ever-changing demarcations of Illyria, a name recalling delirium and illusion. Viola begins by asking the captain,

What country, friends, is this?

Captain: This is Illyria, lady.

Viola: And what should I do in Illyria?

My brother he is in Elysium.

Perchance he is not drowned. (1.2.1-5)

Viola’s response to the captain implies that her actions correspond to her brother’s, and she also states that Sebastian is both dead and/or alive. Thus, the uncertain boundaries of the seacoast mimic Viola’s uncertain sense of place and identity. The shipwreck marks the action of the play with disharmony and violence from the beginning. The events that take place in *Twelfth Night* can only take place because of the hostile, or at the very least, ambivalent relationship between the characters and their environments. Steve Mentz argues that the shipwreck acts “as a structural imperative that serves to disrupt any tendency in these plays toward pure sentimental harmony” (166). Mentz’s claim reflects early modern understandings of plays that include a

⁶⁵ David Schalkwyk makes a unique argument that love in *Twelfth Night* may be humoral, but “if early modern humoral psychology of affect is relevant to the play, it is so negatively; as a form of misrecognition” (95). He argues that love is not a physiological response, but a behavioral one instead. Nonetheless, he maintains that the emotions felt in the play are embodied and that sound is imperative to that embodiment: “Music is crucial to the play’s representation of love because it does its work *within*, through the passions” (95).

near-death event or scene, such as a shipwreck. In John Fletcher's introduction to *The Faithful Shepherdess* in 1608, he defines a play that "wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some neere it," as a tragicomedy.⁶⁶ Arguably, the shipwreck brings Viola and Sebastian toward death.⁶⁷ Not only does Viola point out the impossibility of knowing for sure if someone is alive or dead after a shipwreck ("Perchance he is not drowned" (1.1.5)), she also points out that the final destination of a destroyed ship can be either Illyria or Elysium. In effect, the play begins with an identity crisis brought on by a geographic disaster. For Viola and Sebastian, the shipwreck effectively kills their former selves, since they no longer possess the patriarchal lineage or social status that defined and supported them.

Viola's sense of loss extends to her own identity as a noble person and a woman, which results in her dressing as a page boy/eunuch. After Viola disguises herself as a eunuch named Cesario, Orsino has Cesario woo Olivia for him because he looks more like a woman: "Diana's lip/ Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe/ Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,/And all is semblative a woman's part" (1.4.31-34). Orsino recognizes and reveals the homosocial element involved in wooing and attraction. The play challenges the traditional gender and sexual binary by emphasizing Cesario's feminine looks, but it is quite clear that Viola is passing as a man. I am not suggesting that Renaissance literature promoted a clear delineation between a feminine woman and a masculine man, but instead that *Twelfth Night* does more than simply show the audience a masculine woman—the play reveals that gender identity is not just fluid but that it is desirably so. Orsino, after all, never questions whether Cesario *is* a man and

⁶⁶ Steve Mentz makes this point in "Shipwreck and Ecology" (166), but he argues that the "neere" death circumstances created by the shipwreck are destructive forces that the plays must forcefully address so that a new order can emerge. He says, "Shipwreck defines the hostile word in these plays...and it requires all the resources of Shakespeare's literary and dramatic artistry to create a new order" (166).

⁶⁷ A number of critics have written about the heavy undercurrent of death and destruction in *Twelfth Night*. Anne Barton argues that the characters of Shakespeare's comedies must undergo a stand-off with death before they can emerge to find the comedic ending. See Barton; Garber; Spencer; and Marciano.

both he and Olivia prefer Cesario's feminine masculinity. As previous criticism has pointed out, the acknowledgement reveals that men and women both share similar sexual and gendered signs, pointing to the unclear distinction between male and female sexuality.⁶⁸ More importantly, however, Orsino believes that Cesario's feminine qualities will allow him access to Olivia's chambers, a previously closed off space. Such an acknowledgement suggests that fluidity in gender identity not only allows characters more physical movement, but that it is a given that gender ambiguity is considered attractive, at least to Orsino and Olivia. It is not simply Viola's clothing that allows her entrance. Viola's cross-dressing also leads to "masculine" behavior—when she (as Cesario) is first denied entrance, she demands it, creating, albeit violently, an opening that Orsino could not. Orsino tells Cesario to do what he cannot or will not, which is to "Be not denied access, stand at her doors,/ And tell them, there thy fixed foot shall grow / Till thou have audience," and to "be clamorous and leap all civil bounds" (1.4.16-18, 21). The language in this scene provides imagery of a penis becoming increasingly erect, relating Viola's visit to Olivia as an act of foreplay. "Civil" can mean "proper to a citizen," but the word also suggests "civic," both having the Latin root "civis." In either sense of the word, to "leap all civil bounds" invokes the importance of space to Viola's actions. More importantly, it points out Viola's disruption of those spatial boundaries, whether they are material or social.

The correlation between the body and architectural spaces has been a critical focus recently, but the relationship was contemporary to Shakespeare.⁶⁹ Numerous authors cited the theological, political and physical relationship. In his *Treatise on Architecture*, Filarete describes the spatial equivalent of built environments to the body:

⁶⁸ See Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, especially Chapter five, "The Homoerotics of Shakespearean Comedy." 117-144.

⁶⁹ See West-Pavlov and Grosz.

The exterior and interior appearance of the building is arranged effectively in such a way that the members and passages are suitably located, just as the exterior and interior parts and members are correct for the body of man. (12)

Similarly, Henry Wotton described the mimetic relationship between architecture and the body:

For what are the most judicious Artisans but the Mimiques of Nature? This led me to contemplate the Fabrique of our owne Bodies, wherein the High Architect of the world had displaid such skill, as did stupifie, all humane reason. There I found the Hart as the Fountain of Life place about the Middle, for the more equall communication of all the vitall spirits. The Eyes seated aloft, that they might describe the great Circle within their view. The Armes projected on each side, for ease of reaching. (7)

Architecture was understood as constructed similarly to the body, and the need to control both material spaces and bodily demarcations were equally important and often coincided. For women, their chastity depended not only on whether or not they participated in illicit behavior, but also if they were sufficiently and effectively separated from the immoralities of the world. In Joannes Vives' *Instruction of a Christian Woman*, the author writes that women should, "let no man in to the house at home, but whom her father by speciall wordes commaundeth to be let in" (I2v-I3r). As Georgiana Ziegler points out, "It is a simple step from woman *in* house/chamber to woman *as* chamber/enclosed space" (112). In *Asylum Veneris, or A Sanctuary for Ladies*, Tuvil describes a woman's breast as "a precious cabinet in which the choicest of all Virtues are preserved" (12). Olivia's refusal to open her doors for the Duke or any other man is a mark of her chastity and forceful entry is a violent stripping of her virtues.

This architectural stand-off challenges Viola's sexual identity even as it suggests that Orsino is in fact not as masculine (or as male) as he first appears. The image of an increasingly

erect penis waiting outside Olivia's "door" may at first compel one to read the lines as heteronormative; however, Viola's already ambiguous sexuality and the lingering trace of the boy actor "underneath" challenge the notion that this moment of spatial penetration must necessarily be representative of male heterosexuality. When Viola as Cesario acts aggressively at Olivia's gate, "He's fortified against any denial," and says "he'll stand at/ [Olivia's] door like a sheriff's post, and be the supporter to/ a bench, but he'll speak with [Olivia]" (1.5.41, 44-46). Cesario is acting as a masculine figure, demanding entrance into Olivia's contained domain. Yet, Cesario's stand is also described in terms of defense, suggesting that his rhetorical space is permeable and needs to be "fortified against denial." He has also apparently told Malvolio that he will stand like a "sheriff's post," which provides the initial phallic image; however, the post was also a sign used, as David Bevington explains, to "mark a residence of authority" (343n. 145). Whether the phallic signifier is attached to Cesario or Olivia becomes ambiguous, suggesting not a reversal of sexual identity, but a nonparadigmatic shifting of sexuality. The "stand-off" taking place in this scene marks the ambiguity of Cesario's and Olivia's sexuality, a material enactment of Betsky's description of a queer space:

Order [breaks] down into the mirroring of the body in a new realm of nature recreated by the artifice of architecture. Just as spaces removed themselves from the everyday realities of the city and the state, so the architecture freed itself from the structure and ground, becoming a free-floating collage of sheltering screens set against the quasi-natural backdrop of immense vaults. (39)

The stage provides a space that is malleable and ever-shifting depending on the characters and their interactions. Cesario and Olivia's spatial transaction may describe boundaries that need to be erased and barriers that need to be broken down, but the space of the stage is literally quite

open. Material spaces described in the play are a combination of the actual stage's boundaries and the character's physical relationship to those spaces and to each other.

In the case of Olivia's home, the dynamics of sexuality and desire are particularly fluid. It is only when Olivia hears what Cesario looks like that she allows him to enter:

Olivia: Of what personage and years is he?

Malvolio: Not yet old enough for a man, nor young
enough for a boy; as a squash is before 'tis a peascod,
standing water between boy and man, He is very
well-favored, and he speaks very shrewishly. One
would think his mother's milk were scarce out
of him. (1.5.152-159)

Once Olivia hears Malvolio's description of Cesario as in between manhood and boyhood and that he possesses a high-pitched voice, she agrees to his entrance. The interior of Olivia's house is similar to Orsino's—they both regulate who enters and exits, generating seemingly same-sex environments. However, Cesario's description suggests that Olivia admits him not because he is simply feminine, but because he is neither typically masculine nor feminine. Olivia, who posits herself as the veiled courtly love object, also challenges the sexual and social norm. She is not the typical ingénue, as she suggests; she is an unmarried matriarch, who incidentally governs over a man in her family—her uncle Toby—who has no household of his own to govern. Toby's subordinate position to his niece reinforces the power dynamics at play in the household.

Olivia's position reasserts the correlation between space, power and gender.

Similarly, Orsino's court is populated by musically adept eunuchs and a very non-traditional lover and ruler—one who does not seem too occupied with ruling or chasing women,

but rather with whining and consuming excessive amounts of love songs. Just as Orsino emphasizes the importance of cleansing his body with song, his continual presence within an interior suggests his powerful relationship to his domestic space, as well as an anxiety over the mercuriality of interior spaces. He makes this clear through his many declarations about bodily “interiors” as inconstant: “[N]o woman’s heart/ So big, to hold so much. They lack retention (2.4.95-96); “[A]ll true lovers are unstead and skittish in all motions...” (2.4.18); “Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm, / More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn, / Than women’s are” (2.4.33-35). However, for Orsino men are “unfirm” in love, while women are inconstant by nature. As Viola says, “Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we, / For such as we are made of, we be” (2.2.31-32). Feste also points out Orsino’s fickleness (2.4.75-78).

Like Olivia, Orsino commands everyone to “give place” so that he may speak with Cesario alone. To “give place,” or to withdraw suggests the ensemble is giving possession to Orsino. Orsino is purging the space of the stage in order for him and Cesario to occupy it together. Orsino creates an intimate space for the two of them. This alters the space of the stage, turning it into a love scene for Viola/Cesario, yet it also marks the porous nature of Orsino’s interiority. Orsino states that a woman’s love is an appetite, “That suffer surfeit, cloyment, and revolt; / But [his] is all as hungry as the seas, / And can digest as much” (2.4.99-101). However, in this very scene he “suffers” cloyment and revolt when he first begs for Feste to sing and then quickly kicks him and the others out. The space and Orsino’s physical desires (his body) are both permeable; the space on the stage both reflects and externalizes Orsino’s body.

The other domestic space is Olivia’s house, but there are two representations of it. First, there is Olivia’s room, which is presented as a fortress that signifies ambiguous sexual desire. Olivia demands privacy from members of Orsino’s household and others who would like to enter

her chambers. By maintaining her veil in the presence of company, she is also demanding privacy publicly. According to Georgiana Ziegler, privacy was a relatively novel concept in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁷⁰ Many people could not afford the space to have room for privacy or private space the way we presently conceive of it. Olivia, however, clearly makes a distinction between the privacy of her household, which includes all of its members, and members of other households. Private space for her is a space of control, in which she allows those she desires to enter.⁷¹ Yet the early modern English household maintained multiple uses and was not necessarily a private space. Francis Bacon explains that portions of the household should be used for banquets and “triumphs” as well as for “dwelling.”⁷² Olivia’s home, and particularly her private chambers, are similarly multi-faceted.⁷³ The only outsider she allows to enter is a feminine boy, and while she literally puts on the face of a mourning daughter and sister, desiring privacy and seclusion, the audience sees that she only feels the need to be in private when she has company.⁷⁴ Her privacy is communal.

The second representation of Olivia’s house is at night when she is asleep. Olivia’s absence changes the contours of her house, transforming it into a rambunctious house of ill repute. Sir Toby’s refusal to conform to domestic proprieties prompts the change:

Maria By my troth, Sir Toby, you must come in earlier

⁷⁰ Ziegler 73.

⁷¹ Mario Praz describes the materialization of interiority, explaining, “for the soul, the house where it lives is nothing but an expansion of its own body . . . The surroundings become a museum of the soul, an archive of its experiences” (23-24). Praz’s description of the soul suggests a monistic impression of the mind and the body. He also conceives of interiority in distinctly spatial and material terms.

⁷² In his “Of building,” Bacon explains that one side of noble house should be set aside for public use, while the other side should be private. The household, at least for a noble person, is equal parts public and equal parts private. Merchant class households were also multi-usage homes, with private shops connecting to and blending into the living space. Poorer families’ homes were inherently public, since there were so few rooms and no private bedchambers.

⁷³ Theatrically, *Twelfth Night* is regarded as a “chamber play” because so many of the scenes are set in smaller indoor spaces (Cannon 163). In performance, demarcating either through set design or lighting, the smaller spaces from the larger allows for the play to “show a world beyond” (Cited in Cannon 163). Additionally, Cannon points out the possibilities for discovery that the willow cabin and the dark house provide (164).

⁷⁴ Olivia only puts on the veil when she knows Cesario is about to enter. She is also very willing to take it off.

o' nights. Your cousin, my lady, takes great exceptions
to your ill hours.

Toby Why, let her except before excepted.

Maria Ay, but you must confine yourself within the
modest limits of order.

Toby Confine? I'll not confine myself no finer than I am. (1.3.4-10)

Toby's improprieties are described spatially; however, this is not only a description—Toby's indiscretions have to do with the actual space of the play and the stage. Olivia's home acts as a prison for Toby, with regulated entrances and exits. He feels restrained by Olivia's control over the house, the entrances and the level of revelry-induced noise. Later Malvolio tells Sir Toby, "If you can separate yourself and your misdemeanors, you are welcome to the house," but if not Olivia would like him to go (2.3.97-99). Malvolio and Olivia both attempt to control Toby's behavior in the house. Olivia's home is not a prison, but bears a similarity to one because Toby's lack of power in the space is used to restrain his actions. Socially and physically, Toby is repressed, forced to act according to rules based on the domestic hierarchy, forced to abide by the law of the household. Betsky explains how the prison acts as another type of queer space that confines its inhabitants. According to him, "the body could resist the cells, grates, and the walls by creating a body with other bodies" (Betsky 47). Toby resists the regulated space of the house through his invasive voice and physical interactions with other characters. His rejection calls attention to the play's overall carnivalesque representations of a "world turned upside down," which itself challenges the sanctity of regulated space. Malvolio accuses Toby of turning Olivia's house into an alehouse (2.3.88-89). For Malvolio, Toby's drinking and "caterwauling" are transforming the house to a more public and porous space. In addition, Toby's and Andrew's

interaction contribute to the ultimate queering of the domestic domain. The two exchange verbal sexual challenges and offers throughout the play, including Toby's willingness to act the woman's part by promising Andrew, "If thou hast her not/ i'th' end, call me cut. . . . Come, come, I'll go burn some sack. 'Tis too/ late to go to bed now. Come, knight; come, knight" (2.3.185-86 & 189-190). The interaction between the two men is highly suggestive. In addition, the two men leaving together after this exchange implicitly marks the "backstage" as a space where sexual transgressions can happen.

The stage provides the audience access to socially sanctioned performances, but also reveals their margins. The stage acts similarly to a Renaissance map in that it shows the audience what it knows, but it also provides room for challenging the boundaries of knowledge, identity and culture. According to Celia Daileader, maps acted as reflections of cultural identity: "their margins provide a space for fantasies of the exotic and the monstrous against which this cultural identity can be formed. . . ." (13). The stage works similarly. It is a spatial representation of a cultural, social and geographic world. It is a three-dimensional cartography that provides the added element of materialized, interactive space.⁷⁵ If the onstage space is a *theatrum mundi*, then the offstage space reveals the unrepresented subterrain of the world, the undiscovered, the other.

Toby and Andrew find themselves at the threshold between the offstage (unseen and unrepresented) and the onstage, not quite backstage, yet neither completely visible on stage—Toby's "cut" and Andrew's coming find themselves in the textual and discursive margins of the stage. Although in Toby and Andrew's case, the margins are spaces that provide them more

⁷⁵ For more on the similarities between maps and Shakespeare's theatre, see Gillies.

freedom of movement. The margins in *Twelfth Night* become fluid spaces that allow for more sexualities to find representation.⁷⁶

Andrew and Toby are not the only ones who recognize the power of entrances and exits. Maria describes her mouth as a threshold and she “will not open [her] lips so wide as a bristle may enter in/ way of” Feste’s excuse for leaving the house so long (1.5.2-3). She flirtingly tells Andrew to “bring [his]/ hand to th’buttery-bar, and let it drink” (1.3.68-9).⁷⁷ The buttery-bar is part of the door that often leads to the cellar, another invisible space, unseen by the audience and just beyond the theatrical and fictional space of the play. Maria has implicit control over the cellar. Gaston Bachelard calls the cellar, “the dark entity of the house, the one that partakes of subterranean forces” (18). The cellar acts as a queer space for a harmonious rejection of accepted representations. Cesario’s erotic stand-off is similarly just off the space of the stage. Spaces that make reference to the “back” or are described with the word “downward” both imply transgressive sexual actions. I do not want to create a false dichotomy between visible/straight and dark/queer. Instead I want to suggest that it is these less clearly defined spaces—spaces that may be made more fluid because of the shadows—that allow (or force) queer identities to take shape on and off the early modern stage. The space in which Maria has control is aptly offstage and decentralized because she is not a legitimate possessor of power. Instead, both she and Viola/Cesario find expression in the margins.

⁷⁶ There is ample evidence to suggest that although “sodomy” was illegal, the court of James I knew of and condoned sexual relationships between men. Lucy Hutchinson makes it clear when she compares the courts of James I and Charles I:

The face of the Court was much changes in the change of the king, for King Charles was temperate, chaste, and serious; so that the fools and bawds, mimics and catamites of the former court grew out of fashion and the nobility and courtiers, who did not quite abandon their debaucheries, yet so reverences the king as to retire into corners to practice them. (cited in Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* 55)

There was a clear difference between lower class same-sex relationships and those in the courts. For information regarding same-sex relationships, see Bray; Goldberg, *Sodomities*; and Orgel. For early modern commentary on the issue, see John Marston, *Scourge of Villanie*, 1598 and Clement Walker’s *Relations and Observations*, 1649.

⁷⁷ A “buttery-bar” is the “ledge on the half-door to the buttery or wine cellar” (Bevington 339 note 69).

The relationship between bodies and space in *Twelfth Night* suggests that both space and identity are contingent upon each other.⁷⁸ Toby says, “I’ll drink/ to [Olivia] as long as there is a passage in my throat and/ drink in Illyria” (1.3.38-9), showing how “passage” and “drink” can be used to describe both body and space to reveal a similarity between the two. Another example of the relationship between space and the body comes in Olivia’s garden when Malvolio finds the forged letter. As Malvolio is daydreaming about his future with Olivia, Toby angrily cries, “Out, scab!” to which Fabian replies, “Nay, patience, or we break the sinews of our plot” (2.5.74). Fabian describes the workings of a scheme, and also the plot of a narrative, with tendons, illuminating the fundamentally physical and discursive relationship between the body and the text. “Plot” can also mean a patch of demarcated land used for cultivation. Toby’s outburst could disturb the plot, changing the space of the stage and the course of the play. The garden becomes a place for not only the cultivation of soil, but also for social and sexual transgression. Malvolio reveals and feeds his desire for social upward mobility in a space that Olivia and Viola find equally productive.

When Viola visits Olivia a second time, she meets her in the garden where immediately Feste makes the connection between social place and geographical space:

Viola Save thee, friend, and thy music. Dost thou live

by the tabor?

Feste No, sir, I live by the church.

Viola Art thou a churchman?

Feste No such matter, sir. I do live by the church, for

I do live at my house, and my house doth stand by the

⁷⁸ Doreen Massey argues, “Space does not exist prior to identities/entities and their relations....[I]dentities/entities, the relations ‘between’ them, and the spatiality which is part of them, are all co-constitutive” (*For Space* 10).

church.

(3.1.1-7)

As the witty clown, Feste exposes the inadequacy of language; in doing so he also shows the close discursive proximity between space and identity. Importantly, Feste's observation implies that subjectivity is not fixed or centralized, but constructed in relation to its environment. This scene also equates the architectural space of Olivia's house with her body and therefore, her sexuality. Sir Toby tells Viola/Cesario, "Will you encounter the house? My niece is/ desirous you should enter, if your trade be to her" (3.1.74-5), combining spatial and economic language to evoke desire. Viola/Cesario's response is that she is "bound" to Olivia, as if on a journey, but also 'confined' within/to Olivia. When Olivia enters the garden she asks everyone except Viola to leave, leaving the two of them alone, and again echoing the actions in Orsino's court. The garden, like Olivia's private closet, acts a space where she can express her erotic desire. The garden serves as a literal marginal domestic space, and also exists as a threshold between the natural world and the cultivated space of the social.⁷⁹ Like the cellar and the private room, the garden is a space of erotic exchange and desire.

The encounters between Viola and Olivia are significant; however, there are other encounters and other near encounters that take place in the play that are often neglected. The focus on gender and sexuality in *Twelfth Night* is usually centered on the transvestitism of Viola and the male actors. There are additional possible points of entry and engagement, including the interactions between Toby and Andrew, and Malvolio's social transgressions. Malvolio's desire to marry Olivia in order to gain authority and status is punished by placing him into a "dark room and bound" (3.4.137-38). Feste's decision to disguise himself as Sir Topas suggests the

⁷⁹ Drawing from Bruce Smith, Laura Sarnelli argues that "gardens and closets, the spaces where Olivia and Viola's meetings take place, reflect the erotic imaginary as one of the liminal spaces of sexual desire" (627). For Smith, these are examples of a space that "separates the *here* of the ordinary experience from the *there* of sexual passion" (109).

importance of disguise and secrecy in the world of the play. Malvolio cannot see Feste, so the disguise is not to fool him, and Maria even remarks to Feste, “Thou mightst have done this without thy beard/ and gown. He sees thee not” (4.2.64-5). The disguise does not fool the audience either, but it does reveal an anxiety about secrecy and interiority. Walter Cannon writes, “[I]llustrations from the period are obsessed with interiors and the problems posed by secret spaces. Indoor activity that could not be seen indicated certain anxieties concerning the existential lives of those about whom those on the outside have suspicions” (165). The question over whether an exterior reflected its interior implied vulnerability within social and economic hierarchies, which were touted as fixed and inherent. However, it also exposed the lack of an objective focal point—there was no one centralized fixed point from which to view and judge (Cannon 166). Malvolio is in a “discovery” space separate from the rest of the stage, but whether someone is hidden or in view is really a matter of perspective. When Feste disguises himself, it implies that he is hidden from Malvolio and could be discovered. However, from the perspective of the audience, Malvolio is hidden. Malvolio’s dark house is neither offstage nor visible, neither fully represented nor completely other. While Feste’s guise reveals anxieties about secrecy and deceit, Malvolio is the character who is actually out of plain sight of the audience and so it is he who is under suspicion.

Malvolio’s cell acts as a closet in many ways, preventing him from expression. Certainly Malvolio talks quite a bit in this scene, but he has no freedom to move or to speak to who he wants. His expression is muted by the darkroom’s walls and Feste’s guise. Furthermore, the problem with perspective in this scene calls into question which space is a closeted space. Alan Stewart argues that the early modern closet, specifically the gentleman’s closet, was a “secret nonpublic transactive space between two men behind a locked door” (83). He explains the

woman's closet, on the other hand, as "a place of utter privacy, of total withdrawal from the household" (81). He adds, however, that retreating to the closet was a "very public gesture of withdrawal, a very public sign of privacy" (81). This description implies that either interiority was desired by women and seen by them as a sign of self-control or it was a place in which they could lose self-control, within the "modest limits of order" of course. According to this comparison, the centered self is embodied in the woman, while the male interior is much more open, multiple and fluid. Lisa Jardine also argues that early modern closets were private spaces of withdrawal. According to Jardine, closets belonging to both men and women were personal spaces of withdrawal in which he or she could enact "total control" (150).⁸⁰ For both Jardine and Stewart, closets are spaces in which people choose to enter in order to separate themselves from the public space of the household. Unlike the modern closet, the early modern "closet" was not forced upon its inhabitants.⁸¹ However, both of these explanations presume that privacy is desirable above communal interaction and activity. More so, they both indicate that privacy is necessary for marking a person with selfhood and agency. Such an idea would ignore the early modern concepts that link selfhood and identity to environmental and material factors. Galenic physiology is only the foundation for a distributive model of identity; it is not the extent of it. Conceptions of sound and sight linked these senses to material properties outside of the body. With this in mind, privacy is that which refuses someone access to the material elements that make him or her complete.

Lena Cowen Orlin argues that closets were not private spaces and that intimate communal spaces were more preferable to private spaces. She remarks:

⁸⁰ Jardine examines two types of closets: Alsemero's (male) closet in *The Changeling* and Gertrude's (female) closet in *Hamlet*, both of which she describes as private spaces getting violated by intruders.

⁸¹ For more on the modern "closet," see Sedgwick.

To the assumption that privacy existed in Shakespeare's age as we define it or that it was desired as we desire it, I take as an admonitory counter-example the knowledge that this was an age in which no single person or married couple had a private bed-chamber. . . . all evidences are that even those who had the power of choice still preferred companionship to privacy. ("Gertrude's Closet" 47 nt 8)

She also points out that closets were often described in wills as "the closet," and were not identified as owned by a specific person, nor were they reserved for specific genders ("Gertrude's Closet" 61). She does agree that the closet was "primarily about control of access" ("Gertrude's Closet" 65). Therefore, closets could be used for possession, security, secrecy, privacy or exclusivity (Orlin, "Gertrude's Closet" 65). They were not necessarily spaces of liberated interiority. Like the modern conception of the closet, the early modern closet was a space for hiding, storing, and controlling (from the inside out or the outside in). Readings of illicit behavior in early modern closet spaces attempt to emphasize how such spaces allow for the performance of generally unsanctioned social and sexual interaction. In *Twelfth Night*, Malvolio's "dark room" is not specifically named a closet, but it possesses the necessary traits. (In fact, "closets" were only one term used to describe private rooms in households, and were not distinguished from studies and other spaces.)⁸² It is a publicly private space, it has controlled access, it is used as a way to contain his social and sexual interactions, and it separates him from the other characters in the play. While the room creates the distinction between Malvolio and the others, it is not a place of freedom or liberation. The space is a boundary created to impede his

⁸² Although the Oxford English Dictionary shows "closet" as a verb meaning "to shut up or detain," later in the 17th century, the term was used figuratively earlier. As early as 1595, "to closet" could mean "to shut up in any private repository." The distinction is that the earlier definition does not detail that a "closet" is used for the actual "closeting."

agency. It does not transform him into a centralized subject. Instead, it challenges whether he can trust his own eyes and ears precisely because he is separated from the rest of the stage.

Malvolio's dark house is very much like a prison. Betsky explores the idea of prisons as queer spaces with "gridded structure, strong walls, and regulated openings that were meant to be part of any 'correct' architecture became correctional, enforcing their own rhythms on the body. Prisons were the ob-scene, the hidden or backstage reality of the social scene" (48-49). Malvolio's cell acts to keep Malvolio from attempting to move socially upward, yet it also limits him sexually. More specifically, it is intended to punish him for possessing socially inappropriate sexual desires. His daydream of marriage to Olivia is framed around having just had sex with her; when he reads the forged letter, he recognizes all of her "c's, her u's, and her t's" and her "great P's" (2.5.86-7). He spells out "cut," which was slang for female genitalia, and he verbally enacts Olivia's urination, eroticizing the act as he couples it with "cut." Malvolio's social transgressions are explicitly bound to his sexuality. Olivia isolates herself and thus controls who she interacts with *materially*, while Malvolio is forced into isolation, preventing him from physical interaction and connection with Olivia or anyone else for that matter. Similarly, Viola's "willow cabin" prevents her from being in the presence of her lover, acting as a material barrier, and as an enclosed indoor space, a kind of prison as well:

Make me a willow cabin at your gate
And call upon my soul within the house,
Write loyal cantons of contemnèd love
And sing them loud in the dead of night,
Hallow your name to the reverberate hills,
And make the babbling gossip of the air

Cry out “Olivia!” (1.5.263-269)

This passage describes the material space of the cabin as a barrier not only for physical interaction, as it also prevents Viola from openly expressing her desire. Her voice resounds off the empty space of the outdoors. The result is an echo of her love that comes not from her mouth, but from the environment, from the hills, the night, and the air. She describes using the open space of the outdoors as a go-between for her love, much like how she uses her disguise in order to find entrance into the households of Orsino and Olivia.⁸³

One of the problems of staging Malvolio’s dark house is that the structure of early modern theatres would either prevent Malvolio from being clearly heard, as his voice would be constricted by the walls or floor of the stage, or from being seen.⁸⁴ The stage direction, “Malvolio Within,” does more than point out his spatial differentiation from those on the stage; it points out the substantial distinction between onstage and off. Offstage in this instance is “within,” while onstage is “without.” The stage becomes the “out” side, the place that is shared space. The audience shares the outside with the players and the performance, but inside is only partially within the theatrical space of the play. The “in” side is the semi-private, the somewhat imaginary, the not completely real.⁸⁵ Some suggest that Malvolio was placed in the trap door space, which would have meant that the audience could have heard him, but not seen him. If he were standing in the back of the stage near the tiring house, he would have been difficult to hear

⁸³ Walter Cannon writes that the dark house and the willow cabin “give entrée into their respective interior worlds. Both characters may be said to be masked, playing roles that confine their subjectivities, and the metaphors they use to call up their respective predicaments betray their interior lives. Viola’s description of the willow cabin is an enclosed space, a kind of prison really from which she will offer up her songs of unrequited love hoping for rescue in the form of love returned” (164).

⁸⁴ For a concise description of *Twelfth Night* staging problems and possibilities, see Cannon.

⁸⁵ There are multiple uses of the stage directions “within” and “without” in English renaissance plays. The uses vary widely, but what is clear is that they not only refer to staging, but also to theatrical spaces within the play. For example, the direction in *I Henry VI* (3.2.40) is “Enter Talbot and Burgonie without: within, Pucell, Charles, Bastard, and Reignier on the Walls.” Here, “within” and “without” refer to the space of the stage as well as the fictional space of the City of Rouen, its walls and surroundings. For an informative discussion on stage direction, see Ichikawa.

(Cannon 162). In his *Opas Majus*, Roger Bacon describes how light, sight and vision perpetuate the model of distributive embodiment.⁸⁶ According to Bacon, there are two kinds of light, both of which possess material value. Both types of light participate in the generation of all things in the world. If someone or something is cut off from light, the power of generation is also taken from him or her. Nonetheless, either staging of Malvolio's imprisonment invokes Olivia's veil. Both moments evoke a desire to see what is beyond the obstruction. When Viola says to Olivia, "Good madam, let me see your face," Olivia's response is "[W]e will draw the curtain and show you the picture" (1.5.125, 128-9), implying that "underneath" is in fact also a surface—that the thing not yet generated through *lumen* and *lux* is present but invisible. This scene draws attention to the disconnection between interiority and exteriority, ultimately intimating that interiors and exteriors are easily separable. The inescapable disconnection between the visible and the voice or the interior and the exterior of a space or a body creates a marginal space that is both limiting and generative. Olivia's veil hides what is effectively another veil, and provides her with more rhetorical space to erotically engage Viola.

The erotic and loving relationship between Antonio and Sebastian exists in a space that is discursively and materially outside of the social norm. Antonio lives "somewhere in Illyria" (Bevington 345), and as an enemy to Orsino, he would endanger his life if he were to enter the town and come close to Orsino's court. The connection between space and the body, and the ambiguity of their dimensions finds expression in Sebastian's lines as he describes how he thinks Viola died: "She/ is drowned already, sir, with salt water, though I seem/ to drown her remembrance again with more" (2.1.28-30), alluding to the similar properties of seawater and tears. Antonio's relationship to the sea seems significant because of water's mutability and its

⁸⁶ For more on Roger Bacon and his theory of light and vision, see Chapter 4 and Lindberg 113.

asymmetrical reshaping of the land surrounding it. As a sea captain, Antonio is identified with nomadism and homelessness. Also, Betsky argues that ships

created a certain freedom from the norms of the everyday, opening up a space of freedom.... Ships were floating pieces of society, always slightly unhinged from the norm. The queer space of the boat was a floating one, as if order had become a fragment. It was one in which the body was exposed to the elements. It was a condensed version of the world. (46)

The sea, the boat and the position of Antonio to the rest of Illyria generates a space that is disconnected from social paradigms, neither public nor private, and clearly less demarcated than the secure interior spaces that Olivia and Orsino attempt, unsuccessfully, to maintain.

The outside (and offstage) spaces of the play in fact appear much closer to private spaces than any of the permeable interiors so far discussed. Antonio's space in the play is not domestic; therefore, his private space cannot be a private domestic space. Instead, Antonio is able to express himself the most freely and is the happiest in an *open* private space. Unlike the comfortable modern interiors we are used to, Mary Thomas Crane points out, "early modern houses were colder, darker, smokier and smellier than ours, so that outdoor space would often be more comfortable and appealing than the indoors" (6). Indoor areas were quite porous, allowing all kinds of unwelcome sounds, smells and sights that, unlike the outdoors, might have felt stagnant and confining. Crane writes that on the other hand,

An outdoor space that represented 'temporary' and 'disparate' shaping pressures on the subject, and that encouraged 'improvisation,' might well have offered more freedom to the nascent subject than did the interior of a patriarchal household. (7)

Antonio admits Sebastian's desire to explore the town is reasonable and expected, but once Antonio is taken from his private open space outside of the city, he finds himself either threatened by the public or physically confined to the suburban inn, the Elephant. Antonio's anxiety over separating from Sebastian is clear as he tries to convince Sebastian to go to the inn and wait until the next day to explore, knowing that he will not be venturing out on that day or next due to his criminal past. Viola also makes clear the spatial axis of power as she says, "I am all the daughters of my father's house, And all my brothers too" (2.4.123-25). While her disguise provides her spatial freedom, her identity is founded on the confining and centralizing properties of her "father's house."⁸⁷ In other words, her experimentation with identity is grounded in a stable yet constricting foundation—her familial ties. Antonio's self-expression and physical body is forcefully tied to a solitary and enclosed space, which is also both stable and constricting.

Antonio is an outcast and a criminal. However, his love for Sebastian is arguably the most sincere and selfless in the play. That Antonio is arguably presented as the most sincere lover in *Twelfth Night* undermines the unity and order at which the play seems to arrive in the end. Comedies traditionally end in marriage, and *Twelfth Night* is no exception; however, *Twelfth Night* also emphasizes the problematic terms under which the marriages happen and it also emphasizes the characters who are left out of the comedic ending. Sebastian tells Olivia she is married to "both a maid and man" (5.1.263), Olivia comments on Viola's discovery, "A sister! You are she" (5.1.326), alluding to the fact that Cesario is no longer a "he." Additionally, although Orsino takes Viola to be his wife, he says to his new sister in law, Olivia, "[S]weet sister, / We will not part from hence" (5.1.384-385), pointing out that he plans to stay with

⁸⁷ Sharon Holland writes:

No other line brings us to our queer knees better than Viola's pronouncement: "I am all the daughters of my father's house, And all the brothers too." When Viola utters these lines, the audience...becomes a constituency. ...In this play, boys will be men, and men will be boys, and women do no amount to much in the long run—for it is the father's house that counts here. (388)

Olivia, and still desires her, when his attention should ideally be on his future wife. Finally, the play ends with Antonio, Feste, Malvolio, and Andrew all without partners. Of these characters, Antonio's situation is the most painful because of his love for Sebastian. When Antonio arrives in Illyria his relationship with Sebastian in public changes because Antonio cannot *be* in public without putting his life in danger. When Sebastian discovers this, he says to the sea captain, "Do not then walk too open" (3.3.37). In order to be with Sebastian, Antonio finds himself walking into a closet of his own choosing. The queering spaces in the play are often just as confining as they are liberating.

Although the city streets appear to be more oppressive for Antonio than the seaside or the boat, the sanctity of the city is constantly challenged throughout the play. From the pseudo-sword fights to Toby's drinking and carousing to Antonio's ultimate reacceptance into Illyria, the play destroys any illusion of fixed, immutable spaces. Olivia and Orsino's houses are also penetrable. Bachelard explains the problem of domestic domains as he explores the idea of the nest, stating, "A nest—and this we *understand* right away—is a precarious thing, and yet it sets us to *daydreaming of security*" (102). This "daydream" is reinforced in the last scene of the play when Orsino asks Viola/Cesario to change into her "woman's weeds." Viola informs him, "The captain that did bring me first on shore/ Hath my maid's garments. He upon some action / Is now in durance, at Malvolio's suit..." (5.1.274-277). The transformation that needs to occur in order for the heterosexual union and order to be achieved does not happen. Those who control the ending of the play are no longer the two noble lovers, but those who live in spaces beyond the stage and beyond the cityscape of the play. Viola/Cesario's complete transformation into Viola happens outside of the world of the play and the space of the stage, if it happens at all. Orsino says, "Cesario, come— / For so you shall be, while you are a man; / But when in other habits

you are seen, Orsino's mistress and his fancy's queen" (5.1.385-388). Orsino exits the stage, not with his wife-to-be, but with his pageboy, Cesario. Viola/Cesario's sexual identity remains in a liminal space that allows for transgressive possibilities.

Illyria itself possessed unclear demarcations and travel literature had generated a concept of the country that was often conflicting and confusing geographically. Historically, Illyria was described as a go-between when traveling through the Mediterranean. Final destinations were Venice and other Italian cities as well as parts of North Africa.⁸⁸ Images of the region are inconsistent. While some travelers, such as Richard Haklyut, describe Illyrian harbors, others describe Illyria as "harborless."⁸⁹ Goran Stanivukovic posits that the eastern Adriatic Sea was not a usual destination because, "The wind, the storms, and the Turks, which caused much anxiety to the travelers, were probably the reason that the knowledge of the eastern Adriatic was always partial, based more on imagination than experience" (401). Illyria was considered by western travelers to be a fraught, frenetic place; it was unclear how lawful or friendly the region was. The geographical boundaries of Illyria were also in question by explorers. Robert Stafforde writes, "No certaine limits can be given of this Countrie: For al Geographers that write, doe disagree about it" (D1v). According to Ortelius, Pliny's Illyria was bordered by two rivers, while Ptoleme's Illyria borders the sea. Ortelius himself describes Illyria in such a way that it may be understood as a land-locked region.⁹⁰ Some descriptions even suggest that "Illyria" was "a relatively flexible term used to designate a large area of land stretching from the eastern coast of the Adriatic sea to modern Croatia in the west" (Stanivukovic 402). Contextually, the Illyria of *Twelfth Night* conflicts with early modern notions of the Adriatic. While Illyria follows the

⁸⁸ Stanivukovic points out that the Adriatic was not written about as often as the other areas, suggesting that it was not considered a place either interesting enough or safe enough to stop by and spend enough time to gather information (401).

⁸⁹ See George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey begun An.Dom: 1610* (1621), B1v.

⁹⁰ See Abraham Ortelius, *His epitome of the Theater of the Worlde* (1603).

guidelines of a romance setting,⁹¹ Thomas Nashe describes the inhabitants of Illyria as “riotous neighbors,” and other writers use Illyria as the place of origin for criminals and an island for lost and orphaned children.⁹² Each of these representations find their way into *Twelfth Night*. Toby and Andrew reflect the riotous Illyrians as they drink and rabble-rouse throughout the night and Viola and Sebastian find themselves “lost” from their past identities and their family name after the shipwreck. Finally, Illyria on the stage is many places at once. As Stanivukovic points out, “It is Renaissance London, a fictive country (a sort of *noplace*), and a region on the margin of the Mediterranean” (402). Illyria is historically and dramatically unhinged.

The queer spaces in *Twelfth Night* are sexually charged spaces that sometimes empower and sometimes disempower their inhabitants. The re-orientation of sexual identities throughout the play affects the space in which the actions take place. Such spaces, at first seemingly bound up and impenetrable, begin shifting shapes and revealing entrances and exits that challenge the “wholeness” or distinction that a clearly delineated space represents. The spaces in *Twelfth Night*, from Orsino’s court, to Malvolio’s dark house, to Illyria itself, become ever changing with the bodies that occupy them. Alternately, character’s bodies and discourses are constantly shifting the civic and domestic spaces within the play. This constant morphing generates, or reveals rather, an inconstancy and incontinence in sexual identity. The characters’ subjectivities become intertwined with the spaces represented in the play, challenging the notion of spatial control that a city seems to represent. The civic and domestic spaces in *Twelfth Night* become ambiguously gendered—not androgynous, but always changing, creating a temporary stage for queer identities.

⁹¹ Bruce Smith and Stanley Wells both describe *Twelfth Night* as a romance. See Smith, “*Twelfth Night*” 115-117; and Wells.

⁹² See Nashe, *An Almond for a Parrot* and Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, Book 4. in which Cadmus and Hermione search for their lost son, Illirio, “upon the coast of Illirie.”

CHAPTER 3: THE ECOLOGY OF THE GRAVE

This chapter argues that the liminal space of the burial site acts as a transformative space for marginalized characters. When characters such as widows, unvirtuous maids, lycanthropes, atheists and specters enter and interact within burial sites, their identities are transformed and sometimes lost. Specifically, I will examine the burial site in *The Widow's Tears*, the churchyard scenes in *The Atheist's Tragedy* and to a lesser degree *Hamlet*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, and finally, a scene from Robert Yarington's *Two Lamentable Tragedies*. What each of these plays holds in common is that their burial sites reveal an interactive and generative relationship between the marginalized characters of each play and the material environment. At the same time, the creative power of the grave spaces is destructive to both the bodies and the identities of the characters traversing them. It is a given that burial sites represent death and dying, but in these plays and others, graves, churchyards and tombs are also spaces characters use to participate in illicit relationships. Some go to these quite public spaces for privacy and physical freedom. Some find transformation; others find rest. Some are humanized, sexualized and given narrative and historical dimension through their interactions with the space of the tomb, grave, or even the unsanctioned burial site of a ditch, while others are dehumanized. Resolutions and romantic unions take place in some burial sites, as do acts of violence and revenge. All the burial sites provide a space for marginalized figures to enact their identities *as* marginalized figures, as imperfect representations of their socially sanctioned identities. In the process of death, they find life, but that life is often temporary and the identity that accompanies it is elusive and fragmented.

In early modern England each burial site, whether churchyard or ditch, carried with it meaning. For those thrown in ditches, it meant slow decay and public shame. For those buried in graves, it may have meant they were publicly respected, or simply that they could afford it. In all instances, the dead hold meaning for the living and the spaces in which the dead reside also possess enormous significance. Burial sites were not used simply to bury the dead. Houndsditch was known for its “brokers,” merchants who traded in second-hand goods.⁹³ Ditches in general were spaces characterized by the water’s various uses and the reuse of the objects found in the ditches. The churchyard was a regulated public space and often the center of a community or parish. Unsanctioned interactions nevertheless took place in churchyards to the point that laws had to be passed in attempts to control them.⁹⁴ Tombs were utilized for illicit affairs, and graveyards were the sites for secret meetings and criminal activity. Burial sites in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century plays are spaces for safe, secret meetings and illicit affairs, and provide the backdrop for characters cultivating identities that are interconnected with the space of the graveyard.

Churchyards and tombs clearly represent the dead and dying, but they also point to an ambiguity in early modern England regarding the distinction between being alive and being dead as well as the connection between the body and the environment. Death was considered a gradual process that took place at some point during the process of decay and putrefaction, which could

⁹³ Luke Hutton mentions brokers in, *The Discovery of a London monster, called the blacke dogg of New-gate*, 1638. Additionally, in *Every Man in His Humor*, Brainworn buys a used coat from a merchant in Houndsditch whom he describes as, “One of the devil’s near kinsmen, a broker” (3.2.27-28).

⁹⁴ The City of London declared, “no person or persons whatsoever shall stand or be permitted to stand or abide, at any time, with any goods or commodities (excepting bread) to sell or put to sale in that part of the said street of Cheape or Cheape-side lying betweene Bread-street end and Pauls Church-yard (the same having never been appointed a marketplace for any commodities whatsoever).” *Whereas against divers lawes, orders and provisions, great number of men and women and their children and servant doe daily on the weeke daies, all the day long, sit in the high-street of Cheape*, City of London, 1657.

take up to a year (Zimmerman, *Early Modern Corpse* 130). The body was only considered completely dead when nothing was left but a skeleton. According to Susan Zimmerman, therefore, the decaying body was “possessed of a gradually fading life or personhood” (130).⁹⁵ Such a notion of gradual death is complicated even more by the creative properties associated with death and dying. Philippe Ariès points out the unclear distinction between life and death, explaining that belief in “some sort of sensibility in the cadaver” justified using the corpses for practical purposes, such as concocting medicinal remedies from the bodily remains. The “living” properties of the corpse, such as hair, skin, and perspiration, were thought to possess healing properties.⁹⁶ Not only that, the act of decay itself was thought to simultaneously generate the vermin that feed on the decomposing flesh.⁹⁷ In the process of dying, life happened. On the other hand, death and decay was understood as an environmental pollutant. Decaying bodies and putrid waterways released stenches and generated what was commonly known as “bad air,” which many believed was harmful and possibly fatal.⁹⁸ Foul smelling and contaminated water was described as “in the highest degree pernicious to the human frame” (Cited in Hamlin 77-8). Stagnant bodies of water were thought to “vomit forth ill ayres” making the inhabitants of the area “very sickly.”⁹⁹ Rotting earth and sites of decay were considered pollutants and people would look for homes surrounded by good air (usually outside of the city) or they would look for temporary relief from their poor olfactory surroundings.

⁹⁵ For more on the ‘liminal’ corpse, see Park.

⁹⁶ Philippe Ariès, in *The Hour of Our Death*, writes:

Cadavers provide raw materials for some very effective remedies of a nonmagical character. For example, the perspiration of the corpses is food for hemorrhoids and tumors, and the hand of a cadaver applied to a diseased area can heal, as in the case of a woman suffering from dropsy who rubbed her abdomen with the still-warm hand of a corpse. (357)

He adds, “Pliny reported that wounded man could be cured if he ate the flesh of an animal killed with the weapon that had injured him...The sword that killed a man possessed therapeutic qualities” (358).

⁹⁷ For examples, see the *Malleus Maleficarum*, 106-14; and Bouguet, 77-90.

⁹⁸ For a detailed account of the growing interest between environment and personal health, see Dobson.

⁹⁹ Tobias Venner, *Via Recta ad Vitam Longam*, London, 1628. Cited in Dobson 15.

While dead bodies were seen as sources of both medicinal remedies and environmental pollutants, early modern doctors argued that the characteristics of burial sites were important in determining the rate of the body's decay. The embalmed or otherwise preserved body was known as the *mummi*a.¹⁰⁰ If bodies were buried deeper, they were preserved longer, whereas a corpse in a shallow grave or ditch might decompose more quickly. Galen suggests that corpses exposed to moonlight decayed more quickly (Cited in Ariès 359-60). Quick decomposition was sought after, but at the same time embalming practices became popular among aristocracy and nobility in the fifteenth century, because the preservation of the body meant preservation of the person.¹⁰¹ For the most part, the unclear distinction between life and death left some people desirous to speed up the process. Ariès cites reports of a particular cemetery known as the “flesh eater” because its soil offered quick decomposition of the corpses buried there. People who could not be buried in the “flesh eater” cemetery often asked for a handful of soil from the churchyard to be placed in their own graves to speed up the process. The liminality of the *mummi*a state was fearful to most.

There are figures in early modern theatre that echo the liminality of the *mummi*a state. The widow is clearly not dead, and yet she is forced to live close to death, in limbo between social acceptance and marginalization. Her identity and name are still attached to a dead husband and she suffers the social pressures of having to appear as if she too is waiting for death. Lucinda Becker points out, “The ideal of the pious widow , perpetually grieving for her late husband and continually preparing for death, was revered during the seventeenth century” (33). The widow is

¹⁰⁰ *Mummi*a is a term that Ariès uses to refer to the embalmed body, and specifically the corpse after the “elements of corruption have been removed” (355). He writes, “Life ends when the virtue of the balms disappears, when corrupting nature recovers her dominion. *Life is therefore an exception to nature*” (355).

¹⁰¹ Ariès 361. Ariès writes that once the king was embalmed, “The king did not die. As soon as he had breathed his last, he was exhibited as if he were still alive in a room where a banquet was prepared, with all the attributes of the power he had wielded during his lifetime.”

struck with the impossible position of having to perform the role of chaste mourner living in a state of physical life and social death, yet at the same time widows were pressured to remarry. The physical and personal need for intimacy compelled many widows to find new husbands. While the growing Puritan influence maintained that marriage was a superior state of existence for women, and rationalists asserted the power of human desires, other contemporary voices suggested otherwise. The author of *The Lawes Resolution of Women's Rights* praises those women who choose not to remarry, and instead choose "to live out the *residue* of their days in a devout remembrance of the husbands departed" (Edgar 376 emphasis mine). Edgar, who praised women who did not remarry, also explains the pressures widows were under from men:

But to what purpose is it for women to make vows, when men have so many millions of ways to make them break them? And when sweet words, fair promises, tempting, flattering, swearing, lying will not serve to beguile the poor soul: then with rough handling, violence, and plain strength of arms, they are or have been heretofore, rather made prisoner's of lust's thieves, than wives and companions to honest lovers.

(Edgar 376-77)

Widows were forced to occupy the paradoxical position of experienced and therefore desirous women, as well as chaste women resolved to live as if they were already dead. According to the law, widows were ironically given more power than the more socially accepted wives and maids. A widow was entitled to a third of her husband's property if he had children and, if her husband had no heir, she had rights to claim all of his property. In the eyes of the law, the widow's rights were more than a woman's and less than a man's. While the law might appear to make attempts at fairness, in actuality, the property rights afforded to the widow allowed for those assets to be put back on the market. The law effectively used widows as stand-ins for their dead husbands in

order to perpetuate a property-based hierarchy.¹⁰² Once a widow is remarried, her property is forfeited to her new husband. While the popular conceptions of widows were that they were sexually knowledgeable and desirous, the laws simultaneously attempted to degender them and make them more desirable to suitors. The rights afforded to widows not only placed them in a loosely defined position sexually and socially, but also in terms of their identities as members of their families. Widows were free to own property without any ties to their families; they could sell and even will land without the constraints of their family ties. It was also legal to sue widows. Such laws effectively extract the wife from any former family guardianships or constraints. Legally, she no longer belonged to her former family.¹⁰³

Chapman captures the dualistic and conflicting conceptions and expectations of widows, mainly through the rakish Tharsalio, whose views critics have tended to argue parrot the antifeminist leanings of Chapman.¹⁰⁴ Tharsalio, however, understands the complexities surrounding widowhood, and the strong possibility of remarriage:

Truth is, I love my sister well and
must acknowledge her more than ordinary virtues. But
she hath so possess'd my brother's heart with vows and dis-
vowing, seal'd with oaths of second nuptials, as in that
confidence he hath invested her in all his state, the

¹⁰² I do not mean to imply that the social hierarchy was only property-based, but that since the patriarch of the family is dead, and certainly if there are no heirs, then that family name has already been dissolved.

¹⁰³ For more detailed information on the laws regarding widows in the late medieval and early modern periods, see F.L. Attenborough, ed and trans., *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963); A.J. Robertson, *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry II* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1925); Doris Mary Stenton, *The English Woman in History* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1957); D. Kelly Weisberg, ed., *Women and the Law: A Social Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman, 1982); Nancy E. Wright, Margaret W. Ferguson and A.R. Buck, Eds., *Women, Property, and the letters of the law in early modern England* (Toronto: Toronto UP, 2004); and Laura Lunger Knoppers, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2009). Theodore John Rivers discusses the importance of kinship to early modern society and how widows were affected by the dissolution of kinship ties in "The Legal Status of Widows in Late Anglo-Saxon England." *Medievalia Humanistica* 24 (1997): 1-16.

¹⁰⁴ See Schoenbaum, 326-29; Herring, 157-60; and Smeak.

ancient inheritance of our family, and left my nephew and the rest
to hang upon her pure devotion; so as he dead, and she
matching (as I am resolv'd she will) with some young prodi-
gal, what must ensue but her post-issure beggar'd, and our
house, already sinking, buried quick in ruin? (2.3.72-81)

Tharsalio's concern is not with proving Cynthia to be a liar or to be disloyal—doing so is only a means by which to protect his family's property. He clearly and strongly believes that Cynthia will break her vow and remarry, but the reason is much more complicated than suggesting that women are one-dimensional and fickle. He attests to her virtue. He says later, “if she should chance to break, / Her tears are true, though women's truths are weak” (4.1.140-41). His task of making Cynthia break her vows is not an easy one, either. She nearly starves herself before she finally gives in. In addition to her physical suffering, Cynthia is lambasted with rhetorical arguments similar to those described by Lawes against her perpetual widowhood from Tharsalio and Lysander (who is disguised as the soldier).

Tharsalio is a bachelor who seeks to marry the rich widow countess, Eudora, while his brother tests his own wife's loyalty by faking his death. Death and widowhood become intricately intertwined in the play and the play's representation of widowhood echoes Renaissance England's uncertainty about widows' roles within a patriarchal culture that uses marriage to maintain social and economic stability. Eudora's gentlewoman Sthenia recalls what Eudora thinks of widow's marriages,

as being but a kind of lawful adultery,
like usury, permitted by the law, not approv'd; that to wed a
second was no better than to cuckold the first; that women

should entertain wedlock as one body, as one life, beyond
which there were *no desire, no thought*, no repentance from
it, no restitution to it. (2.4.26-31 emphasis mine)

Since Sthenia describes marriage as a process by which the wife physically becomes part of her husband's body, the widow is only half alive, a walking dead that is supposed to forego desire or even thought once her husband dies. Cynthia reiterates the idea of marriage as a binding of two selves. She says that for those women who choose to remarry, "I wish them happy winds that run that course; / From me 'tis far. One temple seal'd our troth; / One tomb, one hour shall end, and shroud us both" (3.2.73-75).¹⁰⁵ Her husband's tomb, if he were to die first, would also become her tomb.

The Widow's Tears touches on the complex state of widows and the often contradictory relationship they have with the social structure. Like the ongoing process of dying, the uneasiness surrounding the widow is due to the uncertainty of where she "fits." Chapman reveals the cultural anxiety attached to widows, but uses the marginal space of the burial site to reveal the generative possibilities surrounding liminality. Early in the play, Chapman imposes upon the audience the concept that violence is somehow generative and that destruction and perpetuation are linked. When Tharsalio tells his brother Lysander of his plans to woo Eudora, he describes how once he is married he will arrange a marriage between his nephew and his stepdaughter. He describes a process that is invariably social and explicitly physical:

In this eye I see
That fire that shall in me inflame the mother,
And that in this shall set on fire the daughter.
It goes, sir, in a blood: believe me, brother,

¹⁰⁵ For a detailed exploration into the lives of early modern marriage and widowhood, see Cavallo and Warner.

These destinies go ever in a blood. (1.1.158-62)

Lysander responds, “These diseases do, brother; take heed of them” (1.1.163). Tharsalio is pointing out that social bonds are created out of physical desire and passion, and that “destiny” is not fate so much as a collective action between multiple persons. Social identities are produced at the material level of the body. Lysander’s response indicates that the body also harbors decay. Although his comment is meant as a warning to Tharsalio to carefully consider his choice to pursue a woman who is higher ranked socially, it reveals the very element of Tharsalio’s pursuit that ultimately leads to his success—a no-holds-barred physical invasion upon her house and chamber. He later tells Eudora that if she has him killed, his ghost will “stay still, and haunt those beauties / And glories that have render’d it immortal” (1.2.137-38). It is her beauty that would make him immortal and live after death, and consequently this image suggests that his death would give him power that he lacks presently in the play. He uses the image of his ghost as a way to suggest an unrelenting forceful entry into her chambers, and the ultimate victory over her. Her private space would come under his control whether she likes it or not. He describes her refusal to talk with him akin to “the elements / Fighting before they generate” (1.2.141-42), and makes clear that in spite of her demands and refusals, he will come again and enter. For Tharsalio, the widow is a force that can potentially either impede social and familial reproduction (hence his concerns for Cynthia) or perpetuate social structures, physical life and familial power through property and marriage.

Tharsalio’s adage, “All things by strife engender” (1.2.190-91), does not exclusively pertain to widows. He consistently perpetuates the idea as he discusses Lysander’s relationship with Cynthia. Notably, he uses disease as both a metaphorical and actual conflict within one’s self. He asks Lysander, “[D]id your wife never spice your broth with / a dram of sublimate? Hath

she not yielded up the fort of / her honor to a staring soldado, and (taking courage from / her guilt) play'd open bankrout all out of shame, and then run / the country with him?" (1.2.248-52). The image of a wife poisoning her husband links marriage to both adultery and death, and to the wife's declining status from virtuous to shameful. Notably, her virtue is also described architecturally as a fort overrun by a specifically foreign soldier.¹⁰⁶ Later, Lysander, disguised as a soldier, tells Cynthia, "What I for physic give, you take for poison. / I tell you, honor'd mistress, these ingredients / Are wholesome, though perhaps they seem untoothsome" (4.2.60-62), and soon after, Cynthia tells Lysander, "Your bottle has poison'd this wench, sir," to which he replies, "A *wholesome* poison it is, lady" (my emphasis 4.3.48-49). The theme of destruction as a necessary catalyst for the process of creation runs throughout the play, but the process is not cyclical. There is no destruction that generates a new structure that is similar to and/or replaces the old one. The violence resulting from invasion or poisoning leads to a new interconnectedness that negates the previous structure.

Andrew Marvell wrote, "the grave's a fine and private place, / But none, I think, do there embrace."¹⁰⁷ Marvell's assumption that the grave provides privacy may be true in some instances; however, because the grave is private, it provides a space for secret liaisons. It is in fact, a very fine place for lovers to meet. Chapman's play is not the only example of lovers taking advantage of the privacy of the tomb. Romeo and Juliet's illicit meeting is one of the more famous examples of love in the tombs. The sexual image of the widow and the gravesite, however, intersect in unexpected ways. Quarlous in *Bartholomew Fair* suggests that when you visit a widow, "Thou must visit 'em as thou would'st a tomb, with a torch, or three handfuls of

¹⁰⁶ Although the play is set in Cyprus, the choice to use *soldado* instead of soldier emphasizes the alien aspect of the intruder's status upon Cynthia's imagined "fort." If Chapman were associating Cyprus with the Italian language, the correct term would have been *soldato*, although he may very well have intended to use *soldado*.

¹⁰⁷ Andrew Marvell. "To His Coy Mistress," *The Complete Poems*, eds. Elizabeth Story Donno (London: Penguin, 2005).

link, flaming hot” (1.3.66-67). Elizabeth Hodgson has noted that the graveyard setting emphasizes the sexuality of the widow:

The eroticized widow, that epitome of the sexual attractiveness of grief and a standby in early modern drama, is rendered still more dramatic when she is encountered in the graveyard itself. Here both setting and role make her a walking social embodiment of the very idea of secret desire. Her veiled disguise, her carefully managed enactment of sorrow, her curiously masked and anomalously social role, and especially her public sexual secrecy all make her a figure whose private interiority is urgently in question. (60)

Both the tomb and the widow occupy unclear roles—neither is undeniably private or contained. At the same time, both the grave and the widow are *supposed* to be private—the widow is *supposed* to live a quiet life behind her veil and her chamber walls, while the tomb is *supposed* to be the private resting place for the dead.

The Widow's Tears incorporates the privacy of the tomb and the sexuality of the widow in the early modern imagination in order to do more than question the integrity of Cynthia's interiority. Chapman reveals through the lens of sexuality, the fine distinction between life and death and possessing a clear identity or being reduced to the social margins. True to Sthenia's description, Cynthia chooses to, “follow her husband's body into / the tomb, and there for his company to bury herself quick” (4.1.7-8). Cynthia's gradual death begins with her starvation after the apparent death of Lysander:

that the news of his death hath taken; a funeral solemnity perform'd; his suppos'd corse bestow'd in the monument of our family; thou and I horrible mourners; but above all, that his intolerable virtuous widow, for his love, and (for her love) Ero, her handmaid, are

descended with his corse into the vault; there wipe their eyes time out of mind, drink nothing but their own tears, and by this time are almost dead with famine. (4.1.14-21)

Cynthia is simultaneously controlling her body and her physical constancy with her willful starvation, while at the same time showing an uncontrollable expression of mourning with overflowing tears. In *The Instruction of a Christen Woman*, Juan Luis Vives explains the importance of crying as a signifier of the widows internal feelings, as well as of the quality of her husband, as he claims that it “is the greatest token that can be of an harde harte and an unchast minde, a woman nat to wepe for the dethe of her husbände” (170). For his love, she closes herself in and starves herself with the exception of her own tears, the product of her grief over him. The only nourishment she receives is ultimately a gift from him, but it is a gift of death, and those tears represent both her chastity and reestablish him as the provider of her life, her sustenance, and her death.¹⁰⁸ The play echoes Vives’ instructions for the widow to accept her deceased husband as her “keeper and spy, nat only of her dedes, but also of her conscience. Let her handell so her house and householde, and so bryng up her children, that her husband maybe glad” (25). The widow’s dead husband, according to Vives, spies on her like a ghost, haunting her, enforcing his moral values and education on her just as if he were alive. Such a performance effectively resurrects the husband through the body and actions of the widow. The widow embodies the death of the wife and living remnants of the husband. Cynthia’s choice to lock herself in her husband’s tomb and starve herself is socially appropriate and even desirable, since a virtuous woman “desyreth secretness” (Vives, Juan Luis 174).

¹⁰⁸ Hodgson explores the paradox of the widow’s tears within the context of public and private performance and identity. She writes,

[the] widow must perform miracles, then, to construct a reputation while simultaneously remaining private. She must be seen to be tearful, but she must also do her weeping in privacy, without display.... Her public privacy is what matters most. Her physical display of grief must be known but not seen, a coterie performance which is disseminated by others who tell of it and through which both her own reputation and her husband’s are safeguarded. (64)

Her becoming a living monument to her husband while gradually dying is another way in which Cynthia loses her identity:

For this does she look to be deified, to have hymns made of her, nay to her; the tomb where she is, to be no more reputed the ancient monument of our family, the Lysandri, but the new-erected altar of Cynthia, to which all the Paphian widows shall after their husbands' funerals offer their wet muckinders for monuments of the danger they have pass'd, as seamen do their wet garments at Neptune's temple after a shipwrack" (4.1.114-121).

Her supposed virtue elevates her to such a rarified height that she is beyond human. Her deification transforms her into an object and one of scorn for Tharsalio. Notably, it is her private mourning that is deified. When Lycus actually sees Cynthia mourning, the emotion is so great that he is, "forced to turn woman and bear a part with her. Humanity broke loose from [his] heart, and stream'd through [his] eyes" (4.1.42-45). Her display of grief is so powerful to Lycus that he cries with her. For him, his empathy is what engenders his own humanity. On the other hand, Lysander's deification of Cynthia disallows the possibility of empathy by elevating her to divine status. Tharsalio, while he sees how she is deified by her brother, actually dehumanizes Cynthia by concluding that her emotions are all performance: "Write all; forget not to describe her passion at thy discovery of his slaughter. Did she perform it well for her husband's wager?" (4.1.30-32). Cynthia's starvation, however, is within the privacy of the tomb. Anyone outside of the tomb only hears about her suffering, until Lysander enters the tomb. Upon Lysander's entrance, Ero perpetuates the image of Cynthia as a living dead:

Lysander: I am a soldier of the watch and must enter.

Ero: Amongst the dead?

Lysander: Do the dead speak? Ope, or I'll force it open.

Ero: What violence is this? What seek you here.

Ero describes Cynthia's physical state as on the brink of death: "Her powers of life are spent, and what remains / Of her famish'd spirit serves not to breathe but sigh. / She hath exil'd her eyes from sleep or sight" (4.2.28-30). Her breath is all exhalation, her sense of sight is lost, but she cannot rest either. Her state is that of a sleepwalker, an animated body, without agency, and automaton.¹⁰⁹

Lysander's address to her begins, "Dear Ghost," as he offers advice that she not rush to death and instead "nourish life" (4.2.64, 77). The presence of Lysander alters the space of the tomb. Once Lysander tells Ero, "Thou shalt eat. Th'art now within / The place where I command" (4.2.110-112), he forcefully takes ownership of a space that until now, was a woman's private chamber and the private place of her dead husband. Like Eudora's household, the tomb's male "presence" of the dead husband and his symbolic ownership are not enough to control either the space itself or the body of the widow. Ero, who is starving herself for her love for Cynthia, is easily persuaded to act as Lysander's proxy to coax Cynthia to eat. Even while she tells him that "A woman's tongue best fits a woman's ear" (4.2.169), she also admits to have "lost [her] tongue in this same limbo" (4.2.146), referring to either the tomb or Lysander's control over her tongue, or both. Ero's newfound loyalty to Lysander, however, is ultimately due to her loyalty to her own desire for life. He is right—she does not want to die, and her life depends on a masculine figure. At the same time, acting as an extension of Lysander's desires, she finds herself in a homosocial interaction with erotic implications. She says to him of Cynthia, "It shall go hard, sir, / But I will make her turn flesh and blood, / And learn to live as other

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Elyot defines *Automata* as "thynges without lyfe, whyche seme to moue by them selves: as it may appere in olde horologes, and ymages, whiche by vices do moue."

mortals do” (4.3.173-75). Cynthia’s resuscitation is bound up in her physical desires. To desire is to live. Ero’s love for Cynthia would have her live and the fictional soldier’s desire for Cynthia would also have her survive, but Lysander maintains an unreasonable image of Cynthia:

O Cynthia, heir of her bright purity
Whose name thou dost inherit, thou disdain’st
(Sever’d from all concretion) to feed
Upon the base food of gross elements.
Thou all art soul, all immortality. (4.3.179-183)

Lysander would prefer that Cynthia die rather than live and remarry. He prefers to see her as a goddess, and is consequently unable to empathize with her. For her to live, she would have to reveal the fallibility of her own humanity, which would in turn destroy her image as the virtuous widow. Like Eudora, her name and her reputation would be at stake, but Cynthia’s giving in to her desires and doing it publicly give her life and humanity. Even Lysander, whose attempts to move Cynthia from her grief often appear dissociated from his original intent, says, “I would have you live, and she would have you live freely, without which life is but death. To live freely is to feast our appetites freely, without which humans are stones” (4.3.59-61). Cynthia and Ero echo this sentiment when they step out of the tomb and into the graveyard. Eros says, “let’s air out our dampish spirits, almost stifl’d in this gross, muddy element,” to which Cynthia replies, “How sweet a breath the calmness of the night / Inspires the air withal!” (4.3.1-4). The stifling “bad air” of the tomb is juxtaposed with the sweet, inspiring air of the open graveyard. The tomb thus far in the play has acted as Lysander’s tomb as well as Cynthia’s private chamber—a space for her to die. Conversely, the graveyard is a space of freedom, desire and life.

When Lysander, disguised as a soldier, kisses Cynthia, she makes it clear that she is concerned about her public image, but while the play seems to reveal her as a performer of false emotions, it emphasizes the pressure she is under to maintain the image of the virtuous mournful widow. At this point, Cynthia, Ero and Lysander all enter the tomb and shut the door. The tomb from this moment on is no longer a private space for the cultivation of death and sorrow, but an ideal space for the illicit love of Lysander as the soldier and Cynthia. The audience is denied entry or a view into the private chamber of the tomb, but those watching the play are acutely aware of what they do not see taking place. The tomb is explicitly private, a public secret. Cynthia's allowing the soldier to enter and succumbing to her own desires gives her control over the space of the tomb, and in the tomb, she turns away from death and finds a new life with a new lover, new desires, and a newfound will.

There is no question, however, that the extremes to which Cynthia will go to in order to save her new love are in conflict with the character she seems to be and the character that Tharsalio still believes her to be even at the end of the play. Her suggestion to take her husband's dead body to replace the stolen criminal's body seems to suggest little regard for his life. She makes it clear why she assents to sacrificing Lysander's dead body: "What hurt is't, being dead, it save the living" (5.1.176). Cynthia's experience with death has made her realize the value of living. That Cynthia is living only to mourn her dead husband is to value his life *and* his death over her life. Tharsalio reiterates the duality that characterizes the widow's desire when he says, "She's past our comfort; she lies drawing on" (5.1.26), emphasizing the sexual pleasure Cynthia experiences in the tomb while at the same time reminding the audience of her moral incontinence. Cynthia, however, calls Lysander the soldier the "saver of [her] life" (5.1.200).

The very characteristic that Lysander wants to deny Cynthia, human desire, is that which saves her life.

Tharsalio's presumption that Cynthia will ultimately give into desire is rooted not simply in a misogynistic idea of female incontinence or of the human desire for intimacy. The processes of mourning and dying were gendered. In order to die well, the dying required the distinctly male trait of fortitude to withstand the devil, to fulfill the expectations of the grieving, and to die with stoicism and piety (Becker 53). Women, on the other hand, were put in the difficult situation of having to maintain their femininity while at the same time dying with masculine grace. Pedro De Soto, in *The Maner to Dye Well*, writes a section addressed to "my daughter," the only section not addressed to a male reader, titled "Spiritual counsayles at the howre of death." As Lucinda Becker points out, the implication de Soto makes is that women in particular will have trouble dying well. This particular section, however, not only describes the hour of one's death. It counsels women on *how to live in order to die well*:

Nothing profiteth the soule more then to leade a full and innocent lyfe, and to do good to every man in thine owne life tyme, whatsoever thou wouldst that others should do for thee, be thou careful and diligent to do same thy selfe. After death thou dost goe to everlasting paine, what doeth the fulfylling of thy Testament, the houre of thy funeral, or ... after thy death. Do these things thy selfe in thine owne life dayes that thou mayst be delivered not only from sinne but also increased in my grace, thou mayst escape damnation. (de Soto 18-19)

In order for women to "escape damnation," they should maintain their innocence and live careful and diligent lifestyles. This advice is for all women, regardless of whether they are close to dying. Women, according to this advice, are always in the process of dying. De Soto tells

women, “when death approacheth thee thou do ridde thy self from alcares and worldlie labours, that with fervent desire thou mayst affect to come to me without spotte” (de Soto 19). When a woman is preparing for death, she should become as Cynthia has, withdrawn from the world, purified by her separation from worldly values. Cynthia is supposed to willfully imprison herself and cloister herself from temptation in order to find the fortitude necessary for a heroic death. At the same time, she cannot put herself at too extreme of an emotional or physical remove for fear of becoming too masculine—so her turn to death should not be stoic, but moved by “fervent desire” and “zeale” (de Soto 19). She is supposed to maintain a degree of passion even in her unwavering move towards death.

The passions associated with women reflected what was considered her inherent incontinence.¹¹⁰ The dying woman and the widow were expected to be both uncontrolled and faithful. Cynthia’s precarious position has moved her from deity to devil, as Lysander says, “Is’t possible there should be such / a latitude in the sphere of this sex, to entertain such an / extension of mischief and not turn devil? What is a woman? / What are the worst when the best are so past naming?” (5.1.218-221). Tharsalio also emphasizes the effect Cynthia’s new reputation has on her: “Sister, you hear me well, / Paint not your tomb without; we know too well / What rotten carcasses are lodg’d within” (5.1.297-99). Cynthia’s inhibitions with her soldier simultaneously infuse her with new life, literally providing the opportunity to enact her own will, while at the same time having a destructive effect on her social identity. The privacy of the tomb, as a space

¹¹⁰ The way in which one died was also gendered. In Thomas Middleton’s *The meeting of gallants at an ordinarie: or The walkes in Powles*, the character, War, takes a masculine voice, while Famine and Pestilence are women. War calls Pestilence a “plaguy woman” and a “Poore Dame,” while he refers to Famine as a “Hag” and a “Witch.”

uncontrolled by a patriarchal figure, is a place she can appropriate as her own, while at the same time it is a space that is defined by and shapes death.¹¹¹

Expressions of desire that are threatening to characters' identities, and anxiety over the loss of an individuated self are both found in *Hamlet* as well. The scene opens with the question of Ophelia's agency in her death. In doing so, the scene shows how death is not simply the end, but that the process itself is an expression of one's agency. The First Clown says:

It must be *se offendendo*, it cannot be else.

For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly,

It argues an act, and an act hath three branches—it is

To act, to do, and to perform. Argal, she drowned her-
self wittingly. (5.1.9-13)

The speaker emphasizes that action equates to will; he makes no distinction between mad or reasonable states of the mind as constitutive of will or wit. The body's movement for him also equates to wit; therefore, her actions remark upon her desire. To die is an act of agential control. In dying, Ophelia makes a choice, but the choice is to dissociate herself from her previous identity. For when Hamlet asks the gravedigger who is to be buried there, he responds, "no man," then no woman, and finally, "One that was a woman, sir, but rest her soul, she's dead" (5.1.131,135-36). Ophelia is not simply a dead woman. She is nothing *because* she is dead. Under the gravedigger's logic, she willfully chooses to be nothing. The grave is, for Ophelia, a washing away of the humiliation, grief and emotional pain that she experienced as a result of her

¹¹¹ Tharsalio refers to Ero as "a truebred chambermaid" (5.1.289), implying the tomb is Cynthia's tomb. Cynthia has found the freedom to express desire in the tomb, but at the same time she has suffered for what the characters consider moral missteps and questionable sincerity. Conversely, the fishmonger Tharsalio refers to earlier in the play has the freedom to move through open public space, and yet she also suffers for it. Tharsalio tells Lysander, "I can send you speedier advertisement of [Cynthia's] constancy by the next ripier that rides that way with mackerel" (2.1.32-34). The "oysterwives" have the freedom to move through the city, but they are associated with prostitution *because* of their physical freedom. See also 1.2. 293-95.

previous identity as a virtuous maid. Even the space of her grave does not completely belong to her. The gravedigger calls Ophelia's grave his own, teasing with Hamlet, "You lie out on't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours. For my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine (5.1.123-24). The gravedigger's verbal play with Hamlet makes clear that, in the space of the graveyard, ownership over space is not clearly demarcated. Furthermore, one's identity is connected in fluid ways to its environment. The grave is the diggers because he digs it, stands in it, and tends it, in spite of the fact that he is alive. Hamlet's perspective is from outside of the grave, outside of the space that challenges identity, ownership and even social hierarchical structures.

The graveyard scene is particularly ripe with Hamlet's expressions of fear toward not simply death, but the loss that accompanies it. Early in the scene, the audience is reminded that the social structure they know and the hierarchy they exist within and participate in is unimportant in the graveyard, when the First Clown says, "There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave makers" (5.1.29-30). As the clowns throw the skulls out of the grave, Hamlet ponders the lives of each one, creating an imaginary body and life for each. He grows increasingly upset by the gravediggers' nonchalance and lack of consideration for the lives that once accompanied the bones. He reveals unease over the social positions of the dead no longer maintaining clear distinctions. Once he realizes that great men, such as Alexander, die and decay like all the rest, it follows for him that there is no real distinction between men and the natural world once we die:

Alexander dies, Alexander was buried, Alexander
returneth to dust, the dust is earth, of earth we
make loam, and why of that loam whereto he was
converted might they not stop a beer barrel?

Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.
Oh, that the earth which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall t'expel the winter's flaw! (5.1.209-16)

Hamlet's response to the gravediggers' treatment of the dead reveals his awareness of how the dead continue to exist in alternate forms, but for him this is unfortunate. In spite of his feelings towards this insight, he even goes as far to call Alexander "earth." He seems to accept that even before death Alexander's destiny was always to become clay.

Laertes sees continual life growing out of death, but his vision is more positive than Hamlet's. When Ophelia's body is placed into the grave, he says, "from her fair and unpolluted flesh / May violets spring!" (5.1.239-40). For Laertes, death allows for generation to occur, while for Hamlet, death is the destruction of a clearly defined self. Hamlet's anxiety shifts when he sees Laertes jump into Ophelia's grave (which is an explicit gesture reminding the audience of the tenuous distinction between life and death). Laertes' grief cancels out his fear of death and instead he embraces it figuratively and literally. Laertes was succumbing to the notion that there is a continuation of life after death and a continuation of life from one body to another. Once Hamlet sees Laertes' love for his sister and the grief he feels, he responds with the need to show that his grief is more intense than her brother's. Hamlet's anxiety over death and the loss of the individuated self is not overcome by his desire for Ophelia. Instead, his sense of self is extended through her death and his desire to take ownership of her through his grief.¹¹² In fact, it is not Ophelia's death that brings Hamlet to admit his love for her, but rather Laertes' performative expression of love that spurs Hamlet's effusiveness. He becomes jealous and competitive,

¹¹² According to Bevington, the stage directions of the First Quarto, "*Hamlet leaps in after Laertes,*" suggest that Hamlet may have jumped into the grave with Laertes and Ophelia's body. If this is the case, my point that Hamlet is attempting to appropriate Laertes' position is even more pronounced (5.1.259 s.d.).

stating, “I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers / Could not with all their quantity of love / make up my sum” (5.1.272-74). While Laertes’ love for his sister compels him to become connected to her in a very physical way, Hamlet’s love for Ophelia is an attempt to distinguish himself from everyone else. For Hamlet, his love for her makes *him* special, while for Laertes, his love for his sister only stands to emphasize her beauty and virtue. Even though Hamlet finally admits to his love and claims that he wants to be buried alive with her too, his insistence on infringing upon Laertes’ expressions of love serves to aggrandize himself. He attempts to force a connection with Ophelia in order to break one between her and Laertes, and ultimately, to reinforce his own identity.

The ownership Hamlet seeks to assert over Ophelia after her death is not unlike Ferdinand’s solipsistic relationship with his sister in *The Duchess of Malfi*. When he discovers his sister, the Duchess, has been married to her steward, Antonio, Ferdinand appears not only to be jealous of her relationship with her husband, but he seems to take issue with her general comfort with her relationships, including her relationship with death. He wants to see her be afraid of death, to be uncomfortable with her surroundings, and is frustrated by his inability to make this happen. For Ferdinand, her relationship with her husband is illegitimate, and therefore her children are bastards. He refers to her children as “cubs” and says to her:

Call them your children;
For, though our national law distinguish bastards
From true legitimate issue, compassionate nature
Makes them all equal. (4.1.35-38)

Ferdinand values the hierarchical characteristics of law and shuns the egalitarian forces of nature. More than this, he values social identities and relationships more than humane empathy and love.

While the duchess finds a community through relationships and love, Ferdinand seeks to break the bonds she possesses. He is also angry over her perceived polluting of *his* blood:

Damn her! That body of hers,
While that my blood ran pure in't, was more worth
Than that which thou wouldst comfort, called a soul.

Her romantic relationship with Antonio and the birth of her children are the products of her very literal interconnectedness with Antonio, but for Ferdinand such openness leads to inevitable impurities. He is worried about his own purity, however. He understands her body as an extension of his own and when she opens herself to others he becomes vulnerable to impurities. Her actions threaten his identity and his sense of an individuated self.

Ferdinand attempts to use his sister's comfort in thin and ill-defined boundaries as a way to torture her. He locks her up and crowds madmen outside of her room. When Cariola tells her that the noise she hears is the "wild consort of madmen" that Ferdinand "hath placed about [the duchess'] lodging" (4.2.2-3, 4), the Duchess responds:

Indeed, I thank him. Nothing but noise and folly
Can keep me in my right wits, whereas reason
And silence make me stark mad. (4.2.5-7)

The duchess finds solace in the elements of the environment which find their way to her, either through touch, sight or sound. Her interaction with the external world is what keeps her from going insane. On the other hand, Ferdinand feels his own boundaries are threatened by his sister's openness. Ferdinand's anxiety culminates in a transformation or a madness characterized by him searching for the very thing that he abhors and fears, which is his sister and the impurities she represents.

His transformation into a lycanthrope is the physical manifestation of his fear of impurity and death, while at the same time it represents his overwhelming desire for that which he detests—his sister and the vulnerability that she possesses (and ultimately creates in him). When he calls his sister’s children “cubs,” he dehumanizes them by giving them a bestial name, but as his plot to kill her is more realized, he begins to take the form of the wolf and dissociate himself from himself. He tells Bosola, “The wolf shall find her grave and scrape it up, / Not to devour the corpse, but to discover / The horrid murder” (4.2.310-12). He sees himself as a predator and yet he needs to reassure Bosola that the “wolf” is there to uncover justice, not to devour the duchess’ body. That he feels compelled to deny the wolf’s nature is more difficult to believe after he says only a few lines later, “I’ll go hunt the badger by owl-light. / ‘Tis a deed of darkness” (4.2.337-38). From implying that his sister’s children are lycanthropes of a sort, Ferdinand slowly transforms into one himself.

Both his desire and his fear find expression in the graveyard. The doctor describes Ferdinand’s madness:

In those that are possessed with’t there o’erflows
Such melancholy humor they imagine
Themselves to be transformèd into wolves,
Steal forth to churchyards in the dead of night
And dig dead bodies up—as two nights since
One met the Duke ‘bout midnight in a lane
Behind Saint Mark’s Church, with the leg of a man
Upon his shoulder; and he howled fearfully;
Said he was a wolf, only the difference

Was, a wolf's skin was hairy on the outside
His on the inside; bade them take their swords,
Rip up his flesh, and try. (5.2.8-19)

Ferdinand believes that his transformation is internal, that his corporeal body has been infected by the disease from the inside out. Ferdinand is not the only example of lycanthropes finding solace and expression in churchyards. In *Admirable and Memorable Histories*, the author describes lycanthropy as “a kinde of melancholie, but very black and vehement: for such as are toucht there-with, goe out of their houses in Februarie, counterfet Wolves in a manner in all things, and all night doe nothing but runne into Church-yardes, and about graves” (Goulart 41). The movement from a central social space to the graveyard is described specifically as a symptom of the illness. The author describes another incident in which men who, “imagine themselves to be Wolves, and in their force runne up and downe the fields, falling upon troopes of great and small Cattell, tear in peeces what they incounter, and goe roring up and downe Church-yardes and Sepulchers” (Goulart 43.) There is a clear connection between graveyards and space inhabited by animals and lacking the presence of humans. Many of the afflicted are seen “running up and downe the Woods, Caves and Deserts,” through fields and other spaces that are situated at the margins of human communities (Goulart 41-42). The churchyard remains the central roaming ground for the lycanthrope.¹¹³ In the churchyard, the lycanthrope can be both man and beast, because it serves an important function in the human community while existing on the margins. The churchyard provides him with a space to be close to his dead sister, but only as something monstrous and dissociated from humanity emotionally and physically.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Robert Burton describes a man in Holland afflicted with Lycanthropia as “a poor husbandman that still hunted about graves, & kept in churchyards, of a pale, black, ugly, & fearful look” (cited in Otten 46).

¹¹⁴ Early modern monstrosities were often described as the combination of two types of living things or of the infection of one body by a foreign body. See Paré.

Goulart explains that some lycanthropes experienced out-of-body perceptions of themselves and the environment, “confessing that the bodyes do not leave their humaine forme, neyther yet receive that of a Wolfe: but onelie that the soules are thrust out of their prisons, and flye into Wolves bodyes” (44). The illness, for Ferdinand, represents a vile interconnectedness that he needs and wants, and yet it is the very thing that he imagines destroys him. His blood is connected with his sister’s children, his social identity is immersed with Antonio’s lowborn identity, his body is made bestial by his violent nature, and his “soule” finds freedom through identifying with a beast. After Ferdinand’s illness is discovered, he once again reveals the paradox with which he is grappling. He desires to be alone and when Malateste asks him why he loves “this solitariness,” Ferdinand replies, “Eagles commonly fly alone; they are crows, daws, and starling that flock together” (5.2.29, 30-31), showing how he feels connected through animals because of their loneliness. Immediately after this, however, he sees his shadow and imagines it following him, so he attacks it. He does not feel as if he is ever alone now. Ferdinand’s subjectivity is split—he sees his shadow as both a part of him and a distinct, threatening other. Ultimately, Ferdinand’s split identity finds tragic expression in the graveyard.

While there is no positive outcome from Ferdinand’s transformation in the graveyard, the churchyard of *The Atheist’s Tragedy* carries associations with a life renewed, but such renewal is, like in *The Widow’s Tears*, only possible after the characters lose their previous personhoods and their former social identities. After Charlemont is presumed dead, his property is forfeited to his uncle and his betrothed is forced to marry the sickly Rousard, D’Amville’s oldest son. At Charlemont’s funeral, D’Amville says in an aside to the still absent Charlemont, “come now, when t’wou’d, / I’ve buried under these two marble stones / Thy living hopes and thy father’s bones” (3.1.52-54). D’Amville is not worried about Charlemont now that he has not only killed

his father, but also fabricated the story of Charlemont's death. Charlemont may be alive, but he has been stripped of the things that provide him with a lifestyle and a social identity. When Castabella sees him in the churchyard, she immediately thinks he is a ghost. D'Amville also mistakes Charlemont for a ghost in the graveyard. Further, Charlemont says that his miseries are born in the grave. D'Amville has deprived him of the life he expected to live:

I was a baron; that thy father has
Deprived me of. Instead of that, I am
Created king. I've lost a signory
That was confined within a piece of earth,
A wart upon the body of the world.
But now I am an emp'ror of a world,
This little world of man. (3.3.39-45)

It is only when Charlemont has lost everything that he claims himself king of his microcosmic personhood. His death provides him with a sense of self that is both tied to the world and yet distinctly separate from it. Charlemont's return in the graveyard is a veritable resurrection. Huston Diehl points out the echoes of the Christian resurrection in this scene: "the woman weeping at a tomb which the audience knows to be empty, the "dead" man appearing to her, the woman's desire to touch the man to believe he is alive" (51).¹¹⁵ D'Amville chooses the phrase *Non Ultra* ("nothing beyond") at the funeral, which expresses the sentiment that there are none better than the dead, but he also means there is nothing beyond the living. The phrase is doubly challenged in the play, both in the sense that D'Amville's non-religious beliefs are nullified and also that there is more beyond death than the Christian resurrection and afterlife. Early in the

¹¹⁵ There are other references to resurrection as well. At the funeral for instance, D'Amville says, "O might that fire revive the ashes of / This Phoenix!" (3.1.38-39). This image is a non-Christian image of resurrection and an insincere wish on D'Amville's part.

play Charlemont was concerned more about how he was like his family and how the people would think of him. He was concerned for his reputation. He says to his father:

Shall I serve
For nothing but a vain parenthesis
I' th' honoured story of your family,
Or hang but like an empty scrutcheon
Between the trophies of my predecessors
And the rich arms of my posterity?
There's not a Frenchman of good blood and youth
But either out of spirit or example
Is turned a soldier. Only Charlemont
Must be reputed that same heartless thing
That cowards will be bold to play upon. (1.2.18-28)

Now that he has no future to speak of, his life and his “world” are centered on his relationship with the churchyard, which is the world he lives in and effectively stays in during the last part of the play as if he *is* dead. Charlemont muses upon the lives of the dead and imbibes life and energy into the space of the graveyard:

How fit a place for contemplation
Is this dead of night, among the dwellings
Of the dead. This grave—perhaps th' inhabitant
Was in his lifetime the possessor of
His own desires. Yet in the midst of all
His greatness and his wealth, he was less rich

And less contented than in this poor piece
Of earth, lower and lesser than a cottage,
For here he neither wants nor cares. Now that
His body savours of corruption,
He enjoys a sweeter rest than e'er he did
Amongst the sweetest pleasures of this life,
For here there's nothing troubles him. And there,
In that grave lies another. He, perhaps,
Was in his life as full of misery
As this of happiness; and here's an end
Of both. Now both their states are equal. (4.3.3-18)

Charlemont's contemplations create personal histories for the dead men lying in the graves. His contemplations grant the dead men personhood. He fantasizes of finding happiness in decay, and death provides equality to two men who he imagines were unequal in life. Death treats everyone the same, so in death one finds the individuated self breaking down, while at the same time it provides Charlemont with the personal freedom to acknowledge his passions as his personal subjects (3.3.45-46). He has lost the social advantages he had before he was thought to be dead, but he has also been freed of the social pressure to live up to reputations and to fulfill obligations. Charlemont's new perspective does not include wanting to die, nor does he want what he had previously. Actually, his desire for life is the thing that his reason for hiding hinges upon. When he kills Borachio, he says,

What shall I do? Accuse myself, submit
Me to the aw, and that will quickly end

This violent increase of misery?
But 'tis murder to be accessory
To mine own death. I will not. I will take
This opportunity to 'scape. (4.3.31-36)

Charlemont wants to live and he reasons that following the law will not only lead to his physical death, but because he would be an accessory to his own murder, he would be committing suicide to follow the law and that would lead to his eternal death. Ironically, he finds sanctuary in the charnel house; a space that houses death protects him from the law.

Castabella acts much like a widow at the beginning of the third act of the play, and her tears are used as a representation of her grief. She says, "be not displeas'd if on / The altar of his tomb I sacrifice / My tears. They are the jewels of my love / Dissolved into grief" (3.1.59-62). Like Cynthia, her tears show the degree of her love for the man to whom she was legally betrothed.¹¹⁶ Unlike Cynthia, however, Castabella's marriage to Rousard has not infused her with new life. She is unique because she is still a maid (a virgin) and in her eyes a widow (since the death of Charlemont), as well as a wife. The graveyard provides her with a space to reunite with Charlemont, first metaphorically through her grief and her tears and finally physically when he appears to her. The graveyard is also the place where Charlemont goes for privacy. As D'Amville tells Borachio, he goes, "With meditation on his father's death, / Into the solitary walk behind the church" (4.2.13-14). Charlemont remarks that the churchyard is a "fit place for contemplation" because it is "among the dwellings / Of the dead" (4.3.3, 4-5). In fact, no character is ever alone in the churchyard for very long. Charlemont's ponderings over the dead are overheard by Borachio who is hiding in the shadows throughout the scene. Earlier, Borachio tells D'Amville that the churchyard is "the fittest place" to kill Charlemont (4.2.15). Immediately

¹¹⁶ Castabella and Charlemont's promise to wed was witnessed by Languabeau Snuffe, so it was legally binding.

after Borachio attempts to kill Charlemont and dies instead, Languabeau and Soquette enter the churchyard. In his attempts to seduce Soquette, Languabeau says to her, “This is the back side of the house / which the superstitious call Saint Winifred’s church, and is verily a convenient unfrequented place, / Where under the curtains of the night—“ (4.3.52-55). There is the assumption of a privacy that is never quite realized. Equally so, the space is used for secret lovers’ meetings and for murder. The two actions overlap multiple times in the play. For example, Languabeau mistakes Borachio’s corpse for Soquette and kisses it. Perhaps more interestingly, Castabella and Charlemont fall into a sleeping embrace upon two graves, each using “a death’s head” as a pillow. The simultaneous imagery of death and love, murder and sexuality, senselessness and contemplation complicate the meaning of the churchyard. The churchyard is a constant reminder of death and yet it provides a safe haven for those who have already lost a sense of will, identity, or desire within the social context of the play. The dead come here to live again.

The Atheist’s Tragedy emphasizes the tenuous distinction between life and death. The characters that sneak into the churchyard for privacy are always at some risk of violence or death, from physical death to social death. When Charlemont prepares to hide in the charnel house, he grabs the knob to the door, which is apparently a “death’s head.” The death’s head “slips and staggers him” to which he responds, “Death’s head, deceiv’st my hold? / Such is the trust to all mortality” (4.3.78-79). By this point, Charlemont’s comment alludes to many ways in which he was fooled into believing he was somehow protected from death, either physically, or by his title as a Baron, now stripped from him, or by his family name. The fine line separating life and death is exemplified again in this scene when D’Amville tries to rape Castabella. His reasons for luring Castabella into the graveyard and for accosting her are in order to protect the

perpetuation of his bloodline. He says, “O pity that the profitable end / Of such a prosp’rous murder should be lost! / Nature forbid. I hope I have a body / That will not suffer me to lose my labour / For want of issue, yet. But then’t must be / A bastard” (4.2.3944). His murder of Montferrers should ideally result in a title not only for himself, but also for his future male heirs. When he attempts to seduce Castabella, his argument is similar:

...besides the full performance of
Thy empty husband’s duty, thou shalt have
The joy of children to continue the
Succession of thy blood; for the appetite
That steals her pleasure, draws the forces of
The body to an united strength and puts
‘Em altogether into action,
Never fails of procreation. (4.3.102-109)

In his attempts to reason with Castabella, he argues that her sexual desire will in fact help with the act of procreation. To her, the thought of committing incest with her father-in-law compels her to proclaim that she would rather have her memory “utterly extinguished” than to commit such an act. For D’Amville, he sees the act as generative in three ways. It perpetuates her bloodline and his and creates a child.¹¹⁷

Castabella is more afraid of D’Amville infecting her and effectively killing her than she is of being dead. For her, he is the source of death; she says to him when he tries to kiss her, “The poison of / Your breath, evaporated from so foul a soul, / Infects the air more than the

¹¹⁷ D’Amville’s notion that Castabella’s desire will help with the conception is not a metaphor. Sixteenth and seventeenth century physiology argued that in order for conception to take place, women had to achieve climax during sexual intercourse. The more desire a woman had, the more heat she produced. The more heat she produced, the more likely she was to get pregnant and to have a boy

damps that rise / From bodies but half rotten in their graves” (4.3.150-53). D’Amville mocks Castabella by telling her she should ask the corpses for help. In spite of D’Amville’s understanding that life continues after death, his conception of it is limited to bloodlines and familial status. D’Amville says that social constraints such as incest are limitations humans place on themselves and that “Nature allows a gen’ral liberty / Of generation to all creatures else” (4.3.128-29). He does not consider the innumerable situations in which such a comment may be applied. When Castabella says, “O would this grave might open, and my body / Were bound to the dead carcass of a man / Forever, ere it entertain the lust of this detested villain” (4.3.170-174), Charlemont, who D’Amville thinks is dead, emerges, disguised as Montferrers’ ghost, saving her from D’Amville. A corpse helps her after all. Throughout the play, the living are mistaken for the dead and the dead mistaken for the living. Languabeau mistakes Borachio’s corpse for Soquette, and kisses it. Immediately following, the “distracted” D’Amville returns and talks to the death’s head as if it were sensible. The space of the churchyard pushes the boundaries between life and death and at times, blurs them. D’Amville’s choice to harass Castabella in the churchyard is yet another reminder of the allusive nature of the space and the role it is intended to play.

Charlemont and Castabella’s choice to sleep in the churchyard reveals Castabella’s chastity, but it also emphasizes the close relationship between desire, interconnectivity and death that is repeatedly implied throughout the play. When D’Amville sees the two, he is surprised:

Asleep? So soundly? And so sweetly
Upon death’s heads? And in a place so full
Of fear and horror? Sure there is some other
Happiness within the freedom of the

Conscience than my knowledge e'er attained to. (4.3.282-286)

D'Amville's awareness of the situation forces him to realize the limitations of his philosophy of ambition and self-promotion. He thinks that the two have found some degree of peace through their practices of caring and devotion. The image of the two lovers sleeping in the churchyard unifies death with desire and humane actions with consequences. In *Eroticism*, George Bataille explores the close relationship between life and death arguing that, "Life is always a product of the decomposition of life" (55). According to him, the subject fears death and decay because it marks the loss of the individuated self; death and decay create a "void."¹¹⁸ At the same time, the void is the source of desire:

I can tell myself that repugnance and horror are the mainsprings of my desire, that such desire is only aroused as long as its object causes a chasm no less deep than death to yawn within me, and that this desire originates in its opposite, horror. (59)

For Bataille, the subject resists the unindividuated self, while also desiring it because it leads to creation, reproduction and life. The space of the graveyard on the early modern stage provides a sanctuary within which the characters can embrace the death of their former selves in favor of a relational and continuous production of identity. For D'Amville, the two lovers achieve this through their physical embrace and their respective consciences. D'Amville's self is unempathetic and disconnected, while the two lovers are able to use the marginal space of the graveyard to explore their interconnectivity.

¹¹⁸ George Bataille writes:

though the relationship defies clear definition, there do exist unmistakable links between excreta, decay and sexuality. It may look as though physical circumstances imposed from without are chiefly operative in marking out this area of sensibility. But it also has its subjective aspect. The feeling of nausea varies with the individual and its material source is now one thing and now another. After the living man the dead body is nothing at all; similarly nothing tangible or objective brings on our feeling of nausea; what we experience is a kind of void, a sinking sensation. (58)

While other burial sites lend expression to new forms of identity, the ditch is an unsanctioned burial site that denies all legitimacy to those buried there. The churchyard, graveyard and tomb all provide the marginal figure with a transformational identity, while the ditch affords no identity to those left for dead. A ballad from Thomas Percy's *Reliques* illustrates the combined image of the ditch as burial site, dumping ground, and symbol of urban moral decay:

Thus weary of my life, at length
I yielded up my vital strength
Within a ditch of loathsome scent,
Where carrion dogs did much frequent:
The which now since my dying daye,
Is Shoreditch call'd, as writers saye;
Which is a witsnesse of my sinne.
For being concubine to a King. (154-55)¹¹⁹

The passage reveals how the ditch is a depository for excess and death, but unlike the tomb or the private grave, it is an explicitly public space, and the contents of the ditch itself extend beyond its intended boundaries through scent and sight. The ditch allows the body to be more porous. It simultaneously subsumes agency and reifies the embeddedness of the body. The result is an interaction between body and environment that defies boundaries. Marginalized women are particularly connected to death in ditches in early modern stories and legends, but for any person left for dead in a ditch meant their identities were forced to the margins, the literal wastelands of early modern England.

¹¹⁹ According to Percy, the title of the ballad is "The woeful lamentation of Jane Shore, a goldsmith's wife in London, sometime King Edward IV his concubine" (154).

In his 1607 survey of Moorefields, Richard Johnson takes his readers on a figurative tour, in which he describes the macabre history of two ditches in the area. The first, Annis de Clare, was named after a rich London widow who married a “riotous courtier” who drank her into poverty before leaving her penniless and humiliated. The widow committed suicide in the ditch and so it was named after her. Similarly, Shoreditch was thought to have been named after a woman who either died or was buried in the ditch.¹²⁰ Two of London’s most well-known ditches are marked not only by death and crime, but by the deaths of women. Johnson calls Annis de Clare “noisome waters” and describes the London ditches as “heightened with lestals and dung...the ditches being filled up, and the bridges overwhelmed” (B3r). While Johnson gives the names of men who contributed money and property to London, and points out how landmarks are named after those generous men, the few women who did put their mark on the London landscape did so not by their monetary gifts, nor their land, but by their deaths. A spoiled and shrewish wife in Mateo Alemán’s, *The Rogue*, describes her desire to have been strangled by her mother and thrown in a ditch rather than be married to a man who will not “give her leave to range abroad.”¹²¹ Ditches were otherwise not commonly known for the women who died there. They were used as burial sites for all sorts of dead animals and dumping sites for waste. Ditches accumulated the city’s detritus, the excesses of urban life, and were common non-Christian burial sites. An old woman in *The Rogue* finds an “old rotten sheep, that had dyed in some ditch,” and uses it to make a meal of tripe and chitterlings (39). Houndsditch was known as the dumping site for dead and diseased dogs and other animals. Ralph Treswell’s survey of

¹²⁰ Henry Benjamin Wheatley and Peter Cunningham argue that the ditch was “so called after Jane Shore, the mistress of Edward IV., is a vulgar error” (243). Regardless of its veracity, the urban myth of a woman dying in the ditch tells us just as much about how marginal women, such as widows and mistresses, were regarded—just as other forms of refuse.

¹²¹ This quote is cited from book three, chapter three.

London's houses shows Fleetditch lined with public toilets that empty directly into the waterway.¹²²

At the end of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge*, Agenor determines where each corpse should rest, based on social and moral standing. He says:

Goe, and let the Trumpets sound
Some mournful thing, whilst we convey the body
Of this unhappy Prince unto the court,
And of that virtuous Virgin to a Grave:
But drag her [Bacha the strumpet] to a ditch where let her lie,
Accurst, whilst one man has a memory. (5.1)

The Prince's body is taken to the court, an internal space, where his body might be preserved longer. The virgin is afforded a Christian burial. The whore is given the ditch, where she will lie "accurst," (re)membered, forced to remain in the world and in the society that delegitimized her. In *A Rod for Run-awayes*, Thomas Dekker describes numerous people dying in the streets, their decaying flesh finding its way into the ditches.¹²³ The ditches for him and others were thought to be communal and vast spaces of contagion and disease, even as they fed the city. In *The Weeping Lady: Or London like Niniuie in sack-cloth*, the author describes people thrown into ditches after they die: "Ere halfe their Journeyes done they Inne with Death, / I'th' common way they tread on; as they goe / Fall to the ground and dye: gret number so / In Rodes, in Ditches, in the open Field."¹²⁴ The dead are nameless, their bodies without distinction. In Robert Yarrington's *Two Lamentable Tragedies*, a conversation between three men reveals the relationship between a ditch burial and the loss of an individuated identity:

¹²² See Schofield.

¹²³ Thomas Dekker, *A Rod for Run-awayes*, London, 1625.

¹²⁴ T.B., *The Weeping Lady: Or London like Niniuie in sack-cloth*, London, 1625.

Gen. Praie gentlemen which call you *Beeches* shoppe?

3.Neig. This is the place. What wold you with the man?

Gen. Nothing with him, I hear the man is dead,
and if he be not, I have lost my paines.

Lo. Hees dead indeede, but yet we cannot finde,
What is become of halfe his hopeless bodie,
His head and legs are found but for the rest,
No man can tell what is become of it.

Gen. Then I do think I an resolve your doubt,
And bring you certaine tidings of the rest,
And if you know his doublet and his shirt:
As for the bodie it is so abused,
That no man can take notice whose it was,
Set downe this burthen of anothers shame,
What do you know the doublet and the shirt.

Lo. This is the doublet, these the severed limbs,
Which late were joined to that mangled trunk:
Lay them together see if they can make,
Among them all a sound and solid man. (G2r)

The three men attempt to discover the identity of a mangled and dismembered body. They also unsuccessfully try to remake the person, or to find a completed body with the various parts found in the ditch. The body is not only incomplete, it is also strewn throughout the ditch and quickly becomes incorporated to the point that attempts at reconstruction are futile. The body is so well

hidden that only the “neighbor’s” spaniel knows it is in the ditch. Notably, the body is found headless, remarkably unidentifiable. For a culture that values familial lineage and namesakes, identity even after death is important. This burial site is not only a disposal site for London’s criminals. It is a place in which one loses one’s identity.

The burial sites discussed in this chapter cultivate ambiguity and emphasize the nebulous borders between life and death. In most cases, these spaces provide characters with the chance to deviate from their social roles and from their established notions of themselves. The widow has the opportunity to temporarily discover a sense of self that is distinguishable from her husband. Her discovery is wrought from her own desire, and in the process she becomes more human. Lysander’s lack of empathy moves him to become a “transform’d monster / Who to assure himself of what he knew, / Hath lost the shape of man!” (5.1.479-81). Charlemont is able to free himself from his preconceived notions of familial identity and honor and cultivates an identity that is connected to the environment and the objects in it through materiality and empathy. Castabella’s secret love is able to find expression in the churchyard and the two lover’s close proximity to death liberates them from the confines of their socially sanctioned roles. Confronting the thin and often unclear boundary between life and death sometimes results in undesirable forms of liberation. Both Hamlet and Ferdinand discover their own awareness of the amorphous and tenuous nature of identity. The interaction of the body and material space engenders debilitating anxieties and frustrations. In the cases of ditch burials, the unsanctioned nature of the ditch does not allow the characters to retain or explore desire and agency. The discourse surrounding such burials openly recognizes that these corpses are denied resurrection, and forced to remain in the environment in which they were buried. The burial sites explored in this chapter are ultimately spaces that allow for or force transformation. They destructively alter

or diminish the previous identities of the characters that enter them. The result of such destruction is often generative; however, it cannot be regarded as an uncompromised example of the tautological cycle of destruction and renewal. Instead, the socially sanctioned and individuated identity is replaced with a collective identity, an environmentally attached identity, and an empathic identity. Burial sites represent and house the dead; at the same time, they serve the purpose of redefining characters' identities and generating new life.

CHAPTER 4: INHABITING THE UNSEEN: OFF-STAGE SPACE AND IDENTITY AT THE MARGINS IN *WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN* AND *TITUS ANDRONICUS*

“. . . think with the eyes and see with the brain. Deep revelations into the nature of living things continue to travel on beams of light.”¹²⁵

This chapter explores the relationship between space and what is seen, unseen, or obscene in Thomas Middleton’s *Women Beware Women* and William Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* in order to show how actions which take place in offstage spaces alter the relationship between characters and audience. Rape in the early modern period is not directly staged (Catty 108). It is sometimes represented by a dumb show, or an elaborate metaphor enacted onstage, or even the large pit into which Bassianus’ stabbed body is thrown. Then, rape reappears via the body of the victim, who is described by other characters who can clearly recognize her as ravished, or she appears obviously mutilated and violated as in the case of Lavinia. Early modern tragedy chooses to perform rape in such a way that the audience cannot vouch for the victim. There are perpetrators, and there are victims, but there is never an objective witness. I suggest that this decreases the audience’s ability to identify with the victim, and the victim finds herself physically forced into an identity which has no actual social context, merely an imaginary one. The result is that she suffers a crisis of identity. The objects viewed onstage are always necessarily viewed within the context of a particular space. Spaces are defined socially and culturally. Space frames and shapes the objects within it. Because the rapes of Bianca and Lavinia occur offstage, and those unseen scenes are represented onstage, the pair is

¹²⁵ A statement make by cell biologist Daniel Mazia in 1996.

stripped of their identities which were formally situated within the context of socially and politically infused spaces.

At the beginning of *Women Beware Women*, the Duke sees Bianca within a social and spatial context when he gazes upon her standing in her mother-in-law's window. In this instance, his gaze becomes the audience's gaze, as they shift from watching the procession of the Duke (which would take up most of the stage), to one girl framed by a window. By the end of the play, he no longer sees Bianca apart from the others, even when she lies dead in front of him. He says, "Remove these ruined bodies from our eyes" (5.1.121). She is just one of a number of "ruined bodies." I argue that because Bianca's rape occurs offstage and is not seen within a dramatic context, her identity is altered to the point that she becomes a villain. She loses any identity that is situated within the context of family or court society. By the end of the play, not being seen is not being.

The first scene of *Women Beware Women* reveals Bianca's relationship to the social and familial inner circles of the play. Her 'assigned part' is always up for debate. Her role as an outsider is illustrated through both her spatial positioning on the stage and the unreciprocated gazes cast upon her. The scene emphasizes both the importance of space and sight to the play's narrative, performance, and cultural context. The stage directions point out, "Bianca stands apart," spatially distinguishing her from the Florentine household as a foreigner. Her physical distance also alludes to the social differences between herself and Leantio that will soon become apparent to the audience. The first line of the play also calls the audience's attention to the act of seeing, a focus that is maintained throughout. Mother says to Leantio, "Thy sight was never yet more precious to me" (1.1.1.) This phrase can mean either the mother's active perspective of seeing her son—Leantio's presence—or Leantio's active vision. Although the literal meaning of

the phrase “thy sight” may be “the sight of thee,” the possessive “thy” suggests a reciprocal act of seeing. Leantio’s mother makes clear that being either the onlooker or the object looked upon (or both) is “precious” to her. To see and be seen, from the very first line, plays an important role in the social and familial worlds of *Women Beware Women*. When Mother asks Leantio, “What’s this gentlewoman?” (1.1.12), she denies Bianca the active position of viewer, making Bianca the object of Mother’s maternal gaze. She refuses to allow a reciprocal act of viewing to occur between herself and Bianca. Leantio continues his mother’s objectification of Bianca:

O, you have named the most unvalued’s purchase
That youth of man had ever knowledge of.
As often as I look upon that treasure
And know it to be mine (1.1.12-15)

Not only does Leantio refer to his new wife as a ‘purchase’ and a ‘treasure,’ he also emphasizes that he is the viewer. Her own active viewing never comes into consideration. Later, in reference to his elopement, he says:

I had died if I had not sinned.
And here’s my masterpiece; do you now behold her.
Look on her well, she’s mine. Look on her better.
Now say if’t be not the best piece of theft
That ever was committed. (1.1.40-43)

Bianca is something to be looked at, but Leantio denies her, or at least does not acknowledge her potential role as an active viewer. Her spatial separation from Mother and Leantio also suggests that while Leantio and his mother are able to participate in an economy of spatial and visual interaction, her separation is a reminder that she has no place. ‘Economy’ derives from the Greek

oikos, which means ‘home,’ and *nomos*, which means “law”—the law of the family. Jacques Derrida explains that *nomos* “does not only signify the law in general, but also the law of distribution [partage], the law of partition (moira), the given or assigned part, participation” (*Given Time I* 6). To be a member of a family is to have a part, to play a role. Bianca is denied a role as an active family member.

Soon thereafter, Leantio reveals another relationship between sight and space when he says, “View but her efface, you may see all her dowry, / Save that which lies locked up in hidden virtues, / Like jewels kept in cabinets” (1.1.54-56), and “But ‘tis great policy / To keep choice treasures in obscurest places. / Should we show thieves our wealth, ‘twould make ‘em bolder” (1.1.165-67). Keeping Bianca locked up and hidden from view is Leantio’s way of preventing anyone from knowing about her. To be seen is equated with freedom and availability and even suggests impurity. Regarding married women, Edmund Tilney explains that it is more virtuous for her to “keepe well hir house.”¹²⁶ Tilney’s comment and Leantio’s actions imply that a wife will remain pure if she remains at home. For Bianca, Leantio imagines thieves stealing her from him if she goes out and is publicly acknowledged. Ultimately for him, the best chance for her to maintain her identity as a good and virtuous wife is to inhabit no other identities and no other spaces.

Isabella’s situation is quite different from Bianca’s, and yet her reciprocal relationship through sight is also compromised. Fabritio tells her, “On with your mask, for ‘tis your part to see now, / And not be seen” (1.2.74-75). Although he tells her she holds the gaze, he

¹²⁶ Edmund Tilney, *A Brief and Pleasant Discourse of Duties in Marriage, called the Flower of Friendship* (London, 1568). Puritan writers made arguments for women to be kept inside in order to keep them chaste and free from impurities. For more on this, see David Leverenz, *The Language of Puritan Feeling: An Exploration in Literature, Psychology, and Social History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1980). For primary texts that make similar arguments, see Joannes Vives, *The Instruction of a Christen Woman* (London, 1541); Robert Cleaver, *A Godly Forme of Household Government*.

immediately demands, “See what you mean to like; nay, and I charge you, / Like what you see” (1.2.76-77). The father’s control over his daughter’s will, a commonly expressed power dynamic in Renaissance literature, is reproduced through sight. Further, the dialogue regarding Isabella and the scenes that include her act as reminders that she is primarily an object to behold. Sordido tells Ward, “Let me alone to see what / she is; if I but look upon her—‘way, I know all the faults to / a hair that you may refuse her for” (2.2.95-97). He goes on to list all the possible imperfections she might possess. Isabella, however, is wearing a mask and that mask is the object of Sordido’s and the Ward’s gazes. The desire to possess sight is fed by a desire to place people and objects within a sightscape. The act of seeing generates a site in which both the viewer and the object viewed can establish an identity through reciprocal exchange. Indeed, Isabella and the Ward both desire sight, but at the same time, they also both desire to *be seen* as clearly defined entities within the visual field, which is both material and social in this context. Both the onlooker and the object of sight are participating in a back-and-forth interaction that defines and situates them on the space of the stage. When that reciprocation is broken or prevented, at least one participant is violently detached from his or her identity. Identity formation not only depends on seeing, but also on being seen.

Middleton takes advantage of the characters’ alienation on the stage and their inability to participate as either a viewer or a viewed object. According to John Jowett, “Space emblemizes human relationships. Middleton resists centered groupings so as to explore the stage as a site for separation, either as isolation or as a disharmonious composition of separate elements” (516). Bianca’s interactions with the Duke exemplify the way in which Middleton utilizes space to reveal conflict and the uncertainty of characters’ identities. In the scene in which the Duke’s procession crosses the stage, Bianca is standing in the ‘window’ in the upper portion of the stage,

while the Duke crosses below. This scene is visually and spatially interactive. The spectacle is the Duke's procession, which many of the Venetians are apparently watching. Mother clearly considers it a privilege to see the Duke, telling Bianca, "You shall behold / All our chief states of Florence. You came fortunately / Against this solemn day" (1.3.96-98). The audience watches Bianca watching the street and the forthcoming procession. The gaze shifts, however. When the procession has passed, Bianca asks Mother, "Did not the Duke look up? Methought he saw us" (1.3.105). The dynamics of sight shift and the Duke is no longer an object that Bianca sees; he is an active participant in the reciprocal act of looking. In turn, the audience's perspective shifts, by force of this one line, to see, through the perspective of the Duke, Bianca standing at the window. The fact that Bianca is seen standing in a window by her soon-to-be lover is also reflective of Bianca's relationship to the Venetian society she is attempting to infiltrate. The audience is told in 4.1.43-45 that Leantio "took" her from a window when they eloped. In some areas in Renaissance Italy, prostitutes were only allowed to advertise themselves from windows and doorways.¹²⁷ According to Diane Ghirardo,

The portal or threshold has historically acted in Italy as a sacred barrier between private and public space. . . . One of the distinguishing features of prostitutes and other women of ill repute in Renaissance Italy was that they apparently breached this zone with impunity, leaning out of windows and loitering at open doorways. . . . Indeed, illustrations of prostitutes frequently depict them as lingering in doorways or leaning out of windows soliciting business. . . (102-03)

¹²⁷ For a detailed discussion of the spatial limitations of the prostitution trade, see Diane Yvonne Ghirardo, "Marginal Spaces of Prostitution in Renaissance Ferrara" in Dennis Looney and Deanna Shemek, ed., *Phaeton's Children: The Este Court and Its Culture in Early Modern Ferrara* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), pp. 87-127.

Although so far Bianca acts appropriately as a chaste new wife, her standing at the window allows the Duke to see her as something quite different. She is literally framing herself as a whore.

In Henry Smith's *A Preparative to Marriage*, he describes how women are 'seen' in relation to windows and similar spaces:

[W]e call the wife *housewife*, that is, house wife, not a street wife like Tamar, nor a field wife like Dinah, but a house wife, to show that a good wife keeps her house. And therefore Paul biddeth Titus to exhort women that they be chaste and keeping at home; presently after *chaste* he saith *keeping at home*, as though *home* were chastity's keeper. And therefore Solomon, depainting the whore, setteth her at the door, now sitting upon her stalls, now walking in the streets, now looking out of the windows, like curled Jezebel, as if she held forth the glass of temptation for vanity to gaze upon.

(Cited in Keeble 148-49)

I do not want to suggest that the Duke's rape of Bianca later in the play is Bianca's fault because she stood in a window. Instead, I am suggesting that sight and spatial delineation have effects on identity that are uncontrollable and unintentional. Leantio's constant fear of overexposing her to the world outside of his mother's house emphasizes how a person's relationship to space dramatically affects identity.

Thematically, sight has a large effect on characters' sympathy for each other and for their ability to connect emotionally and sexually. When Livia tells Isabella about her mother's supposed secret, she says:

When I return to reputation,
And think upon the solemn vow I made

To your dead mother, my most loving sister—
As long as I have her memory 'twixt mine eyelids,
Look for no pity now. (2.1.97-100)

Livia uses the language of vision to explain her memory and sense of loyalty and love towards Isabella's mother. Later, when Guardiano explains to Livia that the Duke wants a meeting with Bianca, he says, "'Tis beyond your apprehension / How strangely that one look had caught his heart" (2.2.20-21). The Duke's momentary glance toward Bianca is all that is necessary to cultivate his desire for her. As Portia's song in *Merchant of Venice* says, "It is engendered in the eyes, / With gazing fed" (3.2.67-68).

According to Renaissance anatomical theory, a strong physical relationship exists between the viewer and the object viewed. The eye was a focal point for physicians and practitioners of physiognomy who claimed the unique qualities of the eye were responsible for emotional responsivity and physical fluidity between the self and the environment. Theories about sight in the sixteenth century derived from the classical theories of Aristotle, Galen, and others. There were two types of competing theories, intromission and extramission. Aristotle's understanding of the way the eye functioned was considered a form of intromission theory. He argued that sight occurred by the eye receiving light. Avicenna's claim, "the eye is like a mirror, and the visible object is like the thing reflected in the mirror," is yet another description of intromission (cited in Lindberg 49). Galen, who influenced much of the sixteenth century's theories on vision, argued for extramission, the theory that the eye generates the image and projects it outward.¹²⁸ Another influential writer, Nicholas Steno, described the eyes' mechanisms as a combination of intromission and extramission:

¹²⁸ For a detailed description of Galen's theories on vision, see *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*. Vol. II trans. Margaret Tallmadge May (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 462-503.

The optic nerve, which descends from the brain to the eyes, passes through the center of the eye as far as the crystalline humor, through it comes the visible spirit, and as it emerges through the uveal tonic and the cornea it is mingled with clean air and transports its rays to the body, and thus sight is brought about. (Cited in Corner 66)

Steno describes an interactive relationship between the parts of the eye and air and light, explaining how the “visible spirit” comes from the eye. The next step in the process of generating vision is that the spirit mixes with clean air and light rays which are then returned to the body. According to Steno, vision originates from the eye, but is dependent on external properties in order to generate an image.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, theories of sight began to incorporate geometric and anatomical knowledge, cultivating an understanding of the eye and vision that revolved around perspective, the materiality of light, and light’s physical effects on the eye. In *Perspectiva*, Roger Bacon describes the spatiality of light and its contribution to creation:

Every efficient cause acts through its own power, which it exercises on the adjacent matter, as the light (lux) of the sun exercises its power on the air (which power is light [lumen] diffused through the whole world from the solar light [lux]). And this power is called ‘likeness,’ ‘image,’ and ‘species,’ and is designated by many other names, and it is produced both by substance and by accident, spiritual and corporeal . . . this species produces every action in the world, for it acts on sense, on the intellect, and on all matter of the world for the generation of things. (Cited in Lindberg 113)

For Bacon, light is a material object that helps perpetuate the creation of other material objects. It moves through space and is dependent on the air to disperse it through space. Sight and space,

therefore, are directly related; vision is understood in spatial terms, and its acuity is partially determined by space. Ultimately, vision is described by Bacon as the movement between light and space, and without that movement there is no likeness, image or “species”. Galen, one of the major influences of Renaissance anatomy, describes how sight “reaches out through the intervening air to the colored body” (Cited in Lindberg 11). Galen further explains the space between the eye and the object works to generate sight, and “becomes for us the kind of instrument that the nerve in the body is at all times” (Cited in Lindberg 10). Space and sight are intrinsically connected, as sight is dependent on the air in order for the “species” to pass from the object to the observer.

In *Women Beware Women*, romantic love is only one of the emotional ties that are cultivated through sight. The relationship between space, sight, emotion, and the body is particularly emphasized in Act 2.2. In this scene, Guardiano leads Bianca to the stage space “above” while Mother and Livia play chess on the stage below. The chess game between the two women performs a role similar to a dumbshow, acting out what is happening offstage between the Duke and Bianca. Livia’s “black king” stands in for the Duke; she admits she can “place her man well” (2.2.296). She taunts Mother and brags about her strategy: “Here’s a duke / Will strike a sure stroke for the game anon— / Your pawn cannot come back to relieve itself” (2.2.299-301). Mother is unaware that the game reflects the events offstage. The audience, however, has access to the upper and lower stages and is keenly aware of the relationship between the actions taking place in both spaces. The audience does not see the actual rape, since it happens offstage. Rather, they see a game which trivializes the event and adds an element of dark comedy due to Mother’s complete naiveté. The audience is not privy to what happens offstage and does not see this instance of Bianca’s suffering. They do not witness the transformation of her character and

therefore their ability to empathize with her is decreased. While she is offstage, she is effectively a non-entity. When she returns, she is transformed, but the cause of her transformation is not addressed in the play. No other characters demonstrate sympathy for Bianca, nor does she ever talk about her experiences, which makes it easier for the audience to accept her as a villain.

The moment in which Bianca emerges onstage with the Duke behind her is the beginning of what appears to be a drastic shift in Bianca's character. The value she places on comfort and materiality, her tepid emotional interactions with Leantio, and her willful lack of obedience occur, for the most part, after the chess match. Until recently, many critics have resisted calling the offstage action a rape and have chosen instead to read the scene as an indicator of the "real" Bianca—not a fragmented character, but the character she appears to be after her reappearance onstage. A.H. Bullen writes, "After no severe struggle she capitulates," a reading of the scene that lends itself to understanding Bianca as deceitful, shallow and disloyal (lxxiv). In 1840, Alexander Dyce describes the characters of the play as, "repulsive from their extreme depravity," leaving little room for questions about moral ambiguity or fractured identities.¹²⁹ Marjorie S. Lancaster refers to the scene as a "seduction," and Celia Daileader points out the editorial bias in implying and explicitly defining the scene as seductive.¹³⁰ Daileader also makes a strong argument for reading the scene as a rape scene.¹³¹ The scene is certainly a violent one, as the innuendos Livia makes during the chess match imply. Further, the Duke says to Bianca, "strive not," and threatens, "I can command: / Think upon that" (2.2.326, 361-62). When the Duke reminds Bianca, "You know me, you have seen me; here's a heart / Can witness I have seen thee," she responds tellingly, "The more's my danger" (2.2.324-25). The Duke seeing Bianca is

¹²⁹ Cited in Steen.

¹³⁰ Marjorie S. Lancaster, "Middleton's Use of the Upper Stage in *Women Beware Women*" *Tulane Studies in English*, 22 (1977): 69-85. For a scathing critique of editorial choices, see Daileader.

¹³¹ See the chapter, "Offstage Sex and Female Desire," in *Eroticism on the Renaissance Stage*.

her undoing. One look from him tears away at her frail identity as a chaste newlywed. As she says, his gaze is violent and dangerous. Because the ensuing interaction between these two is not staged, however, the text allows for multiple interpretive possibilities. Jennifer Heller describes the problem the audience might have in understanding Bianca:

The text asks us to see Bianca as innocent, for the opening scene carefully establishes her character as a chaste, devoted wife. As a result, we see the Duke's approach as a sinister act that carries with it the threat of violence and a sense of violation. But because the rape is not staged, the text leaves open the possibility that Bianca has an active role in this scene. Herein lies the interpretive paradox: a woman the play asks us to see as innocent may very well play a part in her own trade to the Duke. The staging dramatizes the difficulty the play has with representing Bianca's sexuality as both violated and willingly exchanged. By placing a key scene in the wings, Middleton avoids representing what is ultimately unknowable and unrepresentable—the true nature of Bianca's desires. (428)

Heller focuses specifically on Bianca's desire and sexuality, but her statement makes an important point—that the play presents us with a character whose identity is unclear, and Bianca's inability to find definition literally places her at the margins of the stage. One could argue that the trouble with Bianca comes from the fact that the scene is performed offstage, but what occurs onstage before and afterwards creates the portrait of a character whose place—from windows, to balconies, to secret and hidden spaces—is vulnerable and unstable and always marginal.¹³²

When Leantio returns home from his week-long work trip, he describes marriage in spatial terms, but specifically in relation to the chastity (or lack thereof) of the wife:

¹³² Heller also makes the point, "The fact that the action occurs offstage serves as a metaphor for the fundamentally unknowable space that motivates the revenge tragedy, the desires that are located in the heart" (431).

Honest wedlock

Is like a banqueting-house built in a garden
On which the spring's chaste flowers take delight
To cast their modest odours; when base lust
With all her powders, paintings, and best pride
Is but a fair house built by a ditch side.
When I behold a glorious dangerous strumpet
Sparkling in beauty, and destruction too,
Both at a twinkling I do liken straight
Her beautified body to a goodly temple
That's built on vaults where carcasses lie rotting... (3.1.89-99)

He imagines an honest marriage within the confines of an enclosed space within a cultivated space. Its boundaries are doubly defined and carefully constructed. It is a “banqueting house” in a garden, with its own walls that define the space within the space. A marriage that is corrupt is described as a ‘fair house’ built on the unstable banks of a ditch, and a “goodly temple” that is built on a catacomb with similarly unstable foundations. Both the garden and the ditch are man-made, cultivated spaces, but the ditch is used for waste disposal and the vaults for unsanctioned burials. The lustful relationship, like the ‘dangerous strumpet,’ is porous and pervious. Leantio describes a common Renaissance understanding that equates women to penetrable spaces and suggests that open space is ultimately destructive. Keeping Bianca within regulated confines ensures her chastity. The confines that Leantio imagines for Bianca are extreme. He is willing to lock her in a room that serves as a prison, banishing her from the world of social engagement that he fears so intensely. When he discovers that the Duke has seen her, he devises a plan:

You know, mother,
At the end of the dark parlour there's a place
So artificially contrived for conveyance
No search could ever find it. When my father
Kept in for manslaughter, it was his sanctuary.
There will I lock my life's treasure up,
Bianca. (3.1.242-248)

Middleton chooses to make this space a place that housed a criminal—Leantio's father who committed manslaughter—and separates it from the living quarters in the house. It is marked as a distinctly marginal and foreign space, a 'sanctuary' for the outcasts of society. Leantio is not only trying to protect his chaste wife; he wants her to remain invisible and estranged. .

Bianca has different plans for herself. Since her offstage interaction with the Duke, she no longer finds the house suitable for her:

Methinks this house stands nothing to my mind;
I'd have some pleasant lodging i'th'high street, sir,
Or if 'twere near the court, sir, that were much better.
'Tis a sweet recreation for a gentlewoman
To stand in a bay window and see gallants. (3.1.127-31)

Bianca wants to *see*, and she positions herself "in a bay window," framing herself for being seen. The reciprocal act of sight is what Bianca claims to desire, but in doing so she effectively frames herself, like the picture in Livia's gallery, as a static image. Bianca's identity shifts and transforms throughout the play, from chaste wife to mistress to widow to murderous sister-in-law, yet she is given a 'frame' for each of these except for the brief moment when she is a

widow. Her widowhood is spent crossing the stage in a funeral procession, the only visual sign of her uncertain future, which is threatened for a brief moment by the Cardinal. Even in this scene, she is seen “richly attired” within the context of the procession and at the side of the Duke. The viewers of the procession and the audience are able to understand who she is, even if her situation is, until she is married, tenuous (4.3.1). The play seems to indicate a comfortable security with a static identity, even if that identity was formerly undesirable. The text also suggests that such identities for Bianca are confining; they are mere snapshots, simplifications, of a character that is always changing. John Berger writes:

When is a painting finished? Not when it finally corresponds to something already existing like the second shoe of a pair—but when the foreseen ideal moment of it being looked at is filled as the painter feels or calculates it should be filled. The long or short process of painting a picture is the process of constructing the future moments when it will be looked at. (206)

As Berger suggests, the action of creating the image, or in this case the scene, controls the viewer’s relationship to the content. Bianca does not correspond to something that already exists. Instead, critics and other characters try to frame her to fit a space that cannot contain her complexities. The unseen event offstage positions the audience at a distance from Bianca, unable to see her, to empathize with her, and to understand her choices.

The macabre final scene of *Women Beware Women* repositions Bianca on the upper stage and the text provides a very different image from the innocent, loyal girl we first saw at the beginning of the play. She is murderous, deceitful and desperate. While the Duke blindly looks to the other viewers of the masque for answers as to why the plot deviates from the action, he fails to see the murders happening in front of him. Instead of recognizing the faults and

fragmentations of the performance, he willfully chooses not to see them. When he realizes the performers are dead, he says:

Destruction play her triumph, and great mischiefs

Masque in expected pleasures! 'Tis prodigious;

They're things most fearfully ominous; I like 'em not.

Remove these ruined bodies from our eyes. (5.1.209-212 my emphasis)

The Duke wants the reminders of the play's broken familial structures and fractured social world to be removed from his sight. The bodies he is referring to are corpses, but he makes it clear that anything fragmented and non-ideal is better left unseen. If something is removed from sight, the eye does not draw it into itself—the beholder's physical body cannot be infiltrated by the image, and therefore, the 'ruined' object cannot be represented in the space of the visible.

II.

According to John Gillies, Renaissance cosmography was theatrical. He explains, "Renaissance theatre and 'cosmography' are conceptually interrelated" (35). Gillies illustrates convincingly how the function of the 'frame' of the *mappaemundi* was used to "define identity in relation to otherness" (Gillies 37). The stage functions in a similar way, creating a frame for identity construction within the spatial confines of the performance space. The offstage space is outside the frame or "off the page," so to speak. Actions that occur offstage have a different relationship with the audience from those that occur onstage. Daileader points out that "the [stage's] very boundedness and visibility made it the most effective medium for exploring questions of specularity and boundary confusion" (Daileader 11). Daileader's claim addresses space and sight, but does not take into account the material component involved in seeing and the effects

such materiality has on the relationship between the viewer and the object viewed. Galen and others since Aristotle understood the physiological structure of the eye to be designed similarly to a planet residing in the universe. The lens was understood as spherical and centered in the ocular globe, echoing the Ptolemaic solar system. Both the stage and the structure of the eye reinforced concepts of the marginality of the unseen and the containment of objects within the line of sight. In *Titus Andronicus*, unlike Bianca, Lavinia's offstage rape does not place her in the role of a villain. Rather, the visible marks of violence upon her body provide the audience with insight into her suffering. She can no longer play the part of maid or wife and retains no social or economic power as a widow because her mutilation makes her undesirable. Lavinia becomes an extension of her family's grief, their feelings of dislocation and their identity crisis. She is a dead girl walking—a visible reminder of a life that no longer exists.

Titus Andronicus is known for its violence and particularly for much of it occurring onstage, but a key violent act occurs offstage—Lavinia's raping and maiming. Prior to her rape, Lavinia is not particularly interesting as a character. She is a typical ingénue. Bassianus, her betrothed, describes her as "Rome's rich ornament" (1.1.52). She is objectified by him and by her father, who calls her "the cordial of mine age to glad my heart" (1.1.166). With her willingness to elope with Bassianus and refuse her father's orders to marry Saturninus, Lavinia is a romantic protagonist. Her choice to elope reminds the audience that she possesses her own will and her rudeness towards Tamora reveals a sharp-tongued wit. After the rape, the dismemberment literally and figuratively takes her voice and her ability to act of her own volition.

Lavinia rarely uses either her voice or her volition early in the play. The violence against her acts as a reminder of what she is already viewed as—a body to be raped, as even Saturninus

claims that Bassianus has raped her of Lavinia when he runs away with her. Ironically, while the rape and mutilation serve to remind the audience of how she is viewed, they also dehumanize a body that, in all its objectification, is still human. Lavinia transforms from a woman who stands “upon her chastity” (2.3.124), to an Ovidian half-human figure, described in terms of the same natural environment in which she was raped and mutilated:

Speak, gentle niece, what stern ungentle hands
Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare
Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments
Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in,
...
Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,
Like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind,
Doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips,
Coming and going with thy honey breath. (2.4.16-19, 22-25)

For Marcus, Lavinia has become a landscape, complete with trees, flowing water, flora and even wind. The violence her body has undergone has transformed her into terrain. Her rape is personal as well as political, since it is an act of revenge against Titus and his sons. Her body literally becomes the invaded enemy territory that the Goths wish to claim.

Before Lavinia’s rape and mutilation, the audience sees her as physically “whole” despite other characters’ descriptions of her as an object. Notably, her identity as “Rome’s rich ornament” is associated with her as she is in Rome, and particularly in enclosed man-made spaces, such as the tomb and the senate. Both of these spaces are spaces in which male characters assume control. The audience has a clear understanding of the boundaries of both diegetic

spaces. When Lavinia moves beyond the senate and into the forest, she develops her own speech. Her voice, however, echoes the laws and cultural codes of Rome:

Under your patience, gentle mistress,
'Tis thought you had a goodly gift in horning;
And to be doubted that your Moor and you
Are singled forth to try experiments:
Jove shield your husband from his hounds to-day!
'Tis pity they should take him for a stag.
...
Ay, for these slips have made him noted long:
Good king, to be so mightily abused!

Her and Bassianus' voices work together to act as Rome's voice of judgment against Tamora. At the same time, Tamora's ability to control the natural environment is juxtaposed against her lack of control in Rome, and her language reveals a character that sees a liberating space infringed upon by the cultural confines of the city:

Saucy controller of our private steps!
Had I the power that some say Dian had,
Thy temples should be planted presently
With horns, as was Actaeon's; and the hounds
Should drive upon thy new-transformed limbs,
Unmannerly intruder as thou art!

Tamora actually does have the power she describes, as she forces Bassianus' posthumous cuckoldry and convinces her sons to "transform" Lavinia. Tamora harnesses the power of the

marginal space of the forest, whereas Lavinia becomes victim to it. Tamora is nonetheless unable to find complete liberty in the forest as a space on the stage. Lavinia's and Bassianus' interloping are mirrored by the audiences' interloping. Her "private steps" are visible to the audience. Rome is still present in the space of the stage as it represents the forest. It is in the space of the offstage forest in which Lavinia is actually transformed. The diegetic space of the margins is where she loses both her voice and her connection to Rome.

According to Celia Daileader, "the body, like the stage, is a *space* in its own right; therefore, bodies onstage operate as mimetic spaces, with a potential for diegetic interiority," with female bodies particularly acting as space, "its boundaries and contents are continually searched, prodded, and fetishized by the very discourse which delineated this space to begin with" (52). Lavinia's pain is not only hers, and her body is not merely spatialized internally. Pascale Aebischer points out, "[R]eading *Titus Andronicus* means reading Titus' grief in response to the textual gap left by his daughter's violation, in the theatre, the mutilated rape victim is insistently kept before the audience's eyes for six scenes" (26). The audience is forced to see Lavinia pushed "into the status of uncontestable embodiment," an embodiment that is ill defined and malleable (Tanner 7). The audience visually experiences her body as a contested space. The violence enacted upon Lavinia pushes any articulable former self she had to the actual margins of the space of the stage, so the audience sees a fractured self. The audience no longer sees Lavinia as Rome's ornament, but the scar of the Andronici's banishment from Roman space and identity.

That Lavinia's rape occurs offstage is no surprise. Rape has historically been under or unrepresented on the stage. In *Titus Andronicus*, it is a marked omission from the particularly violent onstage action, and the absence of Lavinia's rape and mutilation may reflect common

dramatic practice, but because the audience is reminded of the act they did not see, the omission is all the more significant. Lavinia is an ever-present reminder of a “non-event;” her mutilation has no witness, and while it is not disavowed completely due to her bodily wounds, the event is disassociated and detached from the reality of the stage. While the audience is forced into an ethics of encounter with the actions that occur within view, the rape is a significant elision that does not require the same emotional and intellectual responsiveness from the audience. Instead, the brutality committed against Lavinia is the suffering of an object and the pain of the “other.”

While Bianca is still valued as an active participant in the action of *Women Beware Women*, Lavinia’s role is relegated to an object of reflection, upon which other characters see their own pain and demise. When Lucius first sees her, he cries, “Ay me, this object kills me!” (3.1.64). Titus attempts to look at Lavinia’s facial expression and movements in order to communicate with her, but more particularly, he suggests that he, Marcus, and Lucius do something in order to be more like her. His attempts to understand her tears or facial expressions are attempts to read her, but his desire to be like her suggests more that he desires a reflection of himself when he looks at her. First, he says, “I’ll chop off my hands too, / For they have fought for Rome, and all in vain” (3.1.72-73), showing how he sees his own pain in her wounds. Later, he says, “Let us that have our tongues / Plot some devise of further misery, / To make us wondered at in time to come” (3.1.133-35). Titus sees himself as an outcast, a freak of Rome, an object to wonder at, and he fantasizes about being recognized as such, like his daughter. The mangled body is the manifestation of a marginalized or fragmented identity. Although placing certain acts of violence offstage could be considered a way to barbarize such actions—that the actions of the uncivilized are relegated to the unseen, Lynda Nead argues that Lavinia’s rape is *ob-scene*, actually “off, or to one side of the stage,” and her raped body is forcing the audience to

see what cannot be represented (25). Critics often focus on the leaky body of the raped Lavinia, but what is actually unseen is not her body—her body is in full display throughout the play. The violent act of rape is what is left off the stage. Demetrius and Chiron’s cutting out her tongue, chopping off of her hands, and raping her are missing from the stage. Unlike Bianca, whose offstage actions produce no “evidence,” so it does not appear that she has changed, Lavinia is both still Lavinia and no longer Lavinia. For the characters, her body cannot represent the maid, the wife, the body of Rome, or the woman. Lavinia is a kind of *memento mori*, but in this case she is a visual reminder and harbinger of her own death, a death that is still in progress.

In the case of Lavinia, her offstage rape acts to fracture the identity of the male Andronici just as much as it is used to reveal a body that is imperfect and yet forcefully represented. Further, the act of rape reveals a lack of control in the men who do it, and certainly acknowledges a leakiness that is usually attributed to women. Effectively, the act of rape reveals the tenuous boundaries that define masculine identity. While *Titus* is not afraid to show the vulnerable state that Titus Andronicus’ identity is in, it still requires that such vulnerability be represented by the body of the raped Lavinia. Lavinia has gained the ability to be the prime mover of her father’s pain. He interprets her face into emotions that he too feels. He recenters her pain within himself.

I am the sea. Hark how her sighs doth blow!

She is the weeping welkin, I the earth.

Then must my sea be mov’d with her sighs,

Then must my earth with her continual tears

Become a deluge overflowed and drowned,

For why my bowels cannot hide her woes,

But like a drunkard must I vomit them. (3.1.225-31)

Titus describes the interconnectivity between her torment and his in expansive spatial terms. Moreover, he states that their pain is uncontainable. Such excess, though possibly obscene, is too vast to stay hidden. Titus and Lavinia's fractured identities must find expression somehow.

Lavinia is not simply a representation of Titus' feelings of marginality, however. After all, the violence that Titus commits and the violence enacted upon him occur onstage, within the confines of the visible stage space. Lavinia's offstage rape and mutilation fundamentally alter not only how the audience sees Lavinia, but also how the audience sees the violence in front of them. Shakespeare constantly puts the audience face-to-face with Lavinia, not allowing them to forget the violence they did not see; this constant reminder becomes a form of mocking. The violence on the stage, the actual violence, becomes less real in comparison. George Chapman called plain sight "barbarous," stating that unique perspectives, such as shadows, illusions and images, "which though ignorants will esteem spic'd, and too curious, yet such as have the judicial perspective, will see it hath motion, spirit, and life" ("Ovid's Banquet" 49). Even physiologically, the seeing of a thing was filtered through the physical properties of the eye in order for one's vision to be protected and remain keen.¹³³ Lavinia's body after the rape is broken, bloody and incomplete. She is not refashioned in the image of what she was before; instead, Titus becomes her voice, and a stick becomes her hands. Unlike Renaissance poetry's attempts to re-member the dead love objects of the writer, Lavinia cannot ever be remembered as a perfect "ornament" because Shakespeare displays her transformed body to the audience.¹³⁴ The audience

¹³³ In *On the Usefulness of its Parts*, Galen writes,

Now what was the better thing to do in order that the crystalline humor might have accurate perception of its proper objects and at the same time be kept safe and quite unharmed by anything from outside? Should it be left perfectly bare without any covering? If it were, it would not persist for a single moment but would perish instantly and be completely destroyed, being unable because of its inherent softness to withstand anything from outside that might come in contact with it. (469)

¹³⁴ John Donne's poetry is especially notable for this.

suffers from an ocular anxiety with Bianca—not seeing her rape makes the audience and the reader more inclined to question it and less able to understand themselves in relation to it. The marks of Lavinia’s attack are insisted upon throughout the play, however. Peggy Phelan argues, “[B]y seeing the blind spot within the visible real we might see a way to redesign the representational real” (3). Seeing the marks of Chiron’s and Demetrius’ offstage and unseen violence within the represented space of the stage resituates Lavinia. Her pain is empathized with and her torment is seen, but empathy is gained at the cost of her identity and her life.

It is no wonder that Titus kills Lavinia. Saturninus tells Titus that a raped daughter “should not survive her shame, / And by her presence still renew his sorrows” (5.3.41-42). Lavinia’s presence was, for Titus, a reminder of the Andronici’s fall. Like the ‘ruined bodies’ in the final scene of *Women Beware Women*, Lavinia’s physical presence is a visual reminder of the play’s anxiety over inarticulable identities and poorly demarcated boundaries between bodies. Lavinia’s body is embedded in its spatial environment and through the act of seeing and reflecting, her interconnectivity includes Titus. That is to say, Titus incorporates Lavinia. However, Lavinia’s offstage rape prevents the audience’s insight into her actual feelings and pain—what they get instead are Titus’ feelings and Titus’ pain. It is also not surprising that Lavinia is sacrificed while her face is hidden by a veil. In this way, her death is also unseen, and even what she is feeling in her death cannot be experienced by the audience.

The offstage space in *Women Beware Women* and *Titus Andronicus* is literally beyond the margins of representation. The rapes that occur there have no context. That the audience does not see the events take place inhibits a visual and an empathic connection to Bianca and Lavinia. Bianca’s identity as a virtuous wife is lost and she is relegated to the role of the villain and social

outsider. Lavinia loses her identity as a wife and a virtuous daughter, but instead of becoming a villain, her visible scars transform her into an extension of her family's pain, her husband's death, and her father's loss of social status. Both leave the stage with a clear, articulable identity and both return as something other than what they were and somewhere other than the social worlds in which they were formally situated. Bianca's and Lavinia's humanity remains at the margins of the visible

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