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Muscular Bodies and Formations of Masculinity and Impairment in Shakespearean Drama

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Doctor of Philosophy

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B.A., Butler University, 2007

M.A., Emory University, 2012

Advisor: Sheila T. Cavanagh, Ph.D.

An abstract of a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the

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Abstract

Muscular Bodies and Formations of Masculinity and Impairment in Shakespearean Drama

By

Catherine E. Doubler

Muscular Bodies and Formations of Masculinity and Impairment in Shakespearean Drama posits that early modern masculinity was defined not just according to and against notions of femininity, but also against emerging notions of disability. I argue that early modern writers, and playwrights in particular, constructed masculinity in ways that valorized or stigmatized certain bodily impairments. These writers, and most notably William Shakespeare, made these value judgments about impairments in two ways that I address in this dissertation: how the impairment affected the athletic, martial, vocational, and sexual ability of the person, and if the impairment showed how the male body possessed both physical and subjective layers. Bodily layers and what they came to represent about a person are critical to my argument in that the layered tissues of the body—skin, fat, and muscle—were not only important considerations of early modern anatomists in spite of the Galenic emphasis on fluids and humors, but also that they were often labeled as the sites in which the bodily ability and thus the masculinity of a person could be observed and determined.

This project analyzes literary and anatomical texts that deploy these discourses of impairment and impairment's relationship to the layers of tissue in human bodies. The first two chapters, which consider Vesalian anatomy texts, Shakespearean actor Will Kemp's pamphlet *Nine Daies Wonder*, the anonymous Jacobean tragicomedy *The Two Noble Ladies*, and Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, argue that we can see two types of ideal bodily masculinity in early modern literature. One ideal calls for a form of bodily masculinity that can absorb or incorporate impairments productively into the male body and self; the other ideal anticipates present-day standards of masculinity by defining bodily manliness in contrast to bodily conditions and traits that are deemed socially unacceptable. The last two chapters of this study show how the plays *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* privilege this latter masculine ideal, pointing to the development of a dichotomy between manliness and disability that prevails in the present day.

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Illustrations

Introduction

Considering Gender and Impairment in Early Modern England

Portia: This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;

The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh:'

Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;

But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed

One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods

Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate

Unto the state of Venice.

Gratiano: O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!

The Merchant of Venice, IV.i.301-308[1]

Muscular Bodies and Formations of Masculinity and Impairment in Shakespearean Drama considers how early modern English masculinity was defined according to and against not just notions of femininity, but also nascent understandings of disability. I posit that early modern writers, and playwrights in particular, constructed masculinity in ways that valorized or stigmatized certain bodily impairments. These writers, and most notably William Shakespeare, made these value judgments about impairments in two ways that I address in this dissertation: how the impairment affected the athletic, martial, vocational, and sexual ability of the person, and if the impairment showed how the male body possessed both physical and subjective layers. Bodily layers and what they came to represent about a person are critical to my argument in that the layered tissues of the body—skin, fat, and muscle—were not only important considerations of early modern anatomists in spite of the Galenic emphasis on fluids and humors, but also that

[1] All Shakespeare quotes are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare*.

they were often labeled as the sites in which the bodily ability and thus the masculinity of a person could be observed and determined.

As a disability studies project, this study departs from scholarly considerations of the "monstrous" in the early modern period,[2] nor does it draw its conclusions based on representations of deformed bodies. On this latter point, I directly address the claim of influential disability studies scholar Lennard J. Davis that early modern people were more concerned with deformities and monstrosities than disabilities:

> Disability as the observation of the absence of a sense, a limb, or an ability is much less remarked on than deformity as a major category, a dramatic physical event or bodily configuration like giantism, dwarfism, or hunchback formations. Even so, only a few writers comment on the subject at all—notably Castiglione, Montaigne, and Bacon, writing briefly on 'deformity'' and 'monsters.' And of course we have Shakespeare's *Richard III.* (52)

Davis stresses how important it is not to assume that disability is a trans-historical category; however, his examples of early modern texts that contribute to a history of disability are

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[2] See Burnett and Sugg for a thorough consideration of how early modern English drama used discourses of the monstrous in order to label certain bodies as "other" to the emerging medical notion of the standard body; Sugg in particular understands this distinction between the monstrous and the "normal" made along class, religious, and racial lines (92). Many of the essays in *Monstrous Bodies/Political Monstrosities* take a closer look at how monstrous births and bodies signified the conditions of nation-states. To learn about how early modern English notions of the monstrous were inherited from the medieval period, see *Disability in the Middle Ages*, Williams, and Cohen.

problematic in that they point directly to characters and examples of people who are "clearly" deformed. I am more concerned not with examples, but with how concepts of deformity and impairment seep into early modern language and metaphor. Moreover, I take issue with Davis's claim that disability, as the noted loss of some kind of ability, is not very much discussed in the early modern period. With the growing influence of Vesalian physiology, as well as what must have been the common occurrences of impairments and disfigurations caused by violence or illness, I maintain that early modern people were acutely aware of how impairments could affect a person's sense of self or his or her placement in society. The scope of this project is to determine how certain bodily impairments or conditions were part of the discussion when it came to the social construction of early modern masculinity.

In this sense, my work takes inspiration from that of Will Fisher and Bruce R. Smith, two scholars who have made it clear in their work that early modern masculinity is not merely a matter of sexuality and gender. In *Shakespeare and Masculinity*, Smith puts forth the idea that a person's identity, including his or her gender, is determined as that person comes into contact with other people and identities. These processes of contact and influence, which Smith refers to as coalescences (132), can come about from several points. Masculinity may be shaped by a person's job, age, body type, or social station. A person may affirm his masculinity by pointing to different traits of other people and labeling them as un-masculine. Overall, Smith's concept of identity coalescences allows for a more complex, multifaceted understanding of early modern masculinity.

Will Fisher's book on how clothing and non-genital bodily features could announce gender identity in the Renaissance also stresses the importance of looking at multiple discourses that constitute masculinity in the period. For instance, Fisher's influential chapter on the

significance of the beard in early modern England explicitly adopts an alternative angle—that of individual age—from which to analyze masculinity: "I hope it [the notion of "bearded masculinity"] will help us to see that masculinity was not only constructed in contrast to femininity, but also in contrast to boyhood; as a result, we can say that men and boys were quite literally two distinct genders" (87). This project draws from Fisher's work to uncover more complexities of early modern masculinity. While it is important to mention that the category of "the disabled" or "persons with disabilities" did not exist in the period as present-day people do, writers were shaping the contours of masculinity by marginalizing and disparaging certain bodily differences and impairments.

The field of early modern disability studies, which has grown significantly in the past five years, covers how bodies were valued according to standards of beauty or tasks they could or could not perform. A volume on "Disabled Shakespeares" in Disability Studies Quarterly from 2009 has become a touchstone for me when situating my work in this relatively new field. In contrast to the work I cited earlier that considers early modern and medieval monstrosity, early modern disability studies "rescue early modern disability narratives out of critical conversation that has often overlooked or misidentified non-standard bodies using the compelling but restrictive language of marvelousness, monstrosity, and deformity," according to David Houston Wood and Allison P. Hobgood in their introduction to the volume. The essays in the volume, which analyze disability discourses at work in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Julius Caesar*, and other Shakespearean plays, establishes a field of inquiry that sees disability as an identity central to understanding the early modern self. I am in agreement with Wood, Hobgood, and the other essay contributors' overarching goal to consider disability when talking about early modern subjectivity, but my study differs in two ways. First, I wish to meditate on early modern

disability not only as it relates to subjectivity, but also how it relates to gender. In her essay on *Julius Caesar* in the *Disability Studies Quarterly* volume, Allison P. Hobgood has started working through this connection between gender and disability in her analysis of Caesar's bleeding, epileptic body: "Understanding epilepsy as disability in *Julius Caesar* aims to supplement these stricter, in this case feminist, interpretations of Caesar's body by pointing out the play's ableist privileging of normativity. The able body—strong, self-contained, unmarred—and its disabled counterpart—weak, infirm, grotesque—are encoded within Caesar's gendering throughout the play." Hobgood's work nods toward an understanding of the ways in which unable, grotesque bodies affect gender vocabulary in the early modern period; my study expands upon this work by looking at how the vocabulary of ableism and the privilege that is accorded standard body types is embedded in early modern discourses of masculinity.

My second qualm with the "Disabled Shakespeares" volume relates to how the language of present-day disability studies is applied to the past. At this point, it is important for me to clarify what terms from disability studies I will be using in this study henceforth and why. As one can see in previous paragraphs, I have decided to use the term "impairment" when discussing bodily differences that have been labeled as socially unacceptable for a number of reasons. First, the discussion of cultural versus social constructionist models of disability studies have informed my use of the term "impairment" over "disability" in most cases. As articulated very succinctly by Sharon L. Snyder and David T. Mitchell in *Cultural Locations of Disability*, the social model of disability calls for a distinction between the two terms. For proponents of this model, impairment denotes a physical condition rooted in the biological reality of the body, whereas disability is thought to be outside of these biological concerns—disability is the concern

of cultural and social spheres, in which impairments are given some kind of significance, positive or negative, according to the value a society grants them (7).

As many cultural theorists have pointed out, this model has many problems. The social model of disability operates under the assumption that the difference between biological impairment and cultural disability is clear. However, as Snyder and Mitchell rightly claim, "Environment and bodily variation (particularly those traits experienced as socially stigmatized differences) inevitably impinge upon each other" (6-7). Shaking up the false distinction between biology and culture has been accomplished in other areas of cultural analysis; Judith Butler, for instance, famously questioned the divide between sex and gender in *Gender Trouble* by highlighting how biological sex was just as much a social construction of the medical community as cultural notions of gender.[3] The cultural constructionist model for disability acknowledges how the distinction between physiological conditions and social influences of disability is not as black and white as one would think. Moreover, Snyder and Mitchell explain how the cultural constructionist model for disability allows for positive models and identities with which individuals can identify:

> In cultural model applications, this divided understanding of impairment [as a positive bodily experience and as a cause of discrimination and physical pain] is encompassed by the larger, politicized term *disability*. The dual operation of the

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[3] Butler disrupts the distinction between sex and gender with a series of brilliant questions: "And what is 'sex' anyway? Is it natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal…Are the ostensibly natural facts of sex discursively produced by various scientific discourses in the service of other political and social interests? If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called 'sex' is as culturally constructed as gender" (10).

> term is why many cultural model scholars understand 'disability' to function both as a referent for a process of social exposé and as a productive locus for identification…We believe the cultural model provides a fuller concept than the social model, in which 'disability' signifies only discriminatory encounters. (10)

While I agree with Snyder's and Mitchell's assertion that identifying as disabled has empowering, positive benefits, I also resist this cultural constructionist model because it only works for cultures that make this identity available to its members. Snyder's and Mitchell's explanation of the cultural constructionist model makes sense particularly in twentieth- and twenty-first-century American culture, in which "disability" is a culturally constructed zone of embodiment that is recognized by the government, employers, doctors, and other social institutions. But early modern people could not identify or be identified as disabled, nor did early modern institutions recognize disability as a subjective identity. The cultural constructionist model cannot be applied to the discourses about disability and impairment that were emerging in the early modern period.

Since disability cannot be known as category with which one can identify in the early modern period, let alone identify with it in the beneficial or productive ways that Snyder and Mitchell discuss, I am very hesitant to use the term when referring to certain socially recognized bodily conditions in the early modern period. While I agree with Snyder's and Mitchell's argument that the cultural constructionist model of disability importantly highlights the overlap between biological conditions and social discrimination when it comes to living with certain bodily conditions, the notion of disability as a culturally recognized category with benefits and drawbacks cannot be applied trans-historically. Instead of recklessly using the cultural constructionist model in order to analyze early modern discourses, I have decided to use the

following vocabulary and conceptual paradigms in order to discuss early modern "disability" more responsibly:

1. For the most part, I prefer to use the term "impairment" rather than "disability" when discussing socially recognized bodily conditions. If I use the term "disability" occasionally, I do so in order not to make my vocabulary feel repetitive. I have decided to use the term impairment, even in the title of this project, precisely because it does not carry the connotation of a personal identity recognized by governments and other institutions that "disability" does. "Impairment," however, was a word used in the early modern period to denote bodily variations and ill health.[4]
2. I strongly maintain throughout this dissertation that early modern people recognized some bodily traits or conditions as socially acceptable or unacceptable. I use the term "impairment" to signify bodily conditions that a person or persons label as socially unacceptable.

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[4] When looking at the definition of the verb "impair" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one sees how the term could refer to the deterioration or injuring of the human body as early as the Middle Ages. Interestingly, the verb could be both transitive and intransitive in early modern English; that is, a person's body could not only be impaired by an outside force, but also was seen to have the capacity to impair. The *OED* cites from Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* to illustrate the use of the transitive verb: "Flesh may empaire…but reason can repaire" (qtd. in "impair, v.").

3. Although major differences exist between early modern and present-day constructions of disability, people living in both time periods conflate bodily conditions that create physical struggles with those that create social struggles. Susan Wendell describes this conflation by looking at an example of what could be called a "cosmetic" disability: "An important example [of a social disability] is facial scarring, which is a disability of appearance only, a disability constructed totally by stigma and cultural meanings" (44). In this study, I refer to physical conditions that cause bodily difficulties and/or social difficulties as "impairments."

These three guidelines will direct the way I think about early modern disability in this project. As we will see, notions of what constituted an acceptable or unacceptable bodily characteristic had a direct influence on how early modern people assessed the masculinity of an individual.

A wealth of books and articles has been published on early modern English masculinity. The scholarly trend in these kinds of gender studies has been to define masculinity only according to its prevalent opposite, femininity. Some scholars have boldly claimed that this binarism was the only governing principle when determining manliness; Gary Spear, for instance, reads a passage from *Troilus and Cressida* as indicating how the play and, by implication, early modern discourse in general "figures masculinity as fully realized only in tension with historically and socially specific notions of effeminacy" (409). One prevailing scholarly discourse has taken the interactions between gender, sexuality, and desire into account, looking specifically at how early modern discourses were beginning to frame sexual acts outside of the social and religious bounds of marriage as sodomitical; these acts were then labeled as effeminizing.[5] These discussions of early modern gender and sexuality respond, in one way or

[5] See Bray; Goldberg; Smith, *Homosexual Desire*; Stewart, *Close Readers*; and Traub,

another, to Thomas Laqueur's discussion of the pre-modern one-sex model in *Making Sex*. Laqueur analyzes a number of anatomy texts written before 1700 to show how the pre-modern understanding of sex was a matter of degree and not kind. Looking at Galen's and Aristotle's descriptions of genitalia in particular, Laqueur argues that male and female bodies were not in and of themselves distinct, but that men and women had similar bodies whose genital organs were made different according to the bodily heat of the individual.[6] Since the publication of Laqueur's monograph, scholars have debated the veracity of this one-sex model for understanding pre-Enlightenment concepts of gender. Katharine Park and Robert A. Nye argue that Laqueur does not properly distinguish between the Aristotelean and Galenic sources that he uses to make his argument for the one-sex model, and that he notably ignores how Aristotle put forth a two-sex model of gender along with describing women as deformed versions of men (54).

What concerns me about Laqueur's analysis, as well as the studies in early modern sexuality that came in its wake, is how they emphasize sexual organs, reproductive sexuality, and sexual desire generally to determine gender at the detriment of non-sexual discourses of gender. For instance, Laqueur briefly considers how ideas about work and the division of labor shape conceptions of sex and gender. He looks at Aristotle's discussion of the division of labor between the sexes in order to show how the "cultural" (division of labor) and the "natural"

Desire and Anxiety. Many of these studies, and most notably Goldberg's, consider how discussions of non-normative sexual acts were not only shaped by gender, but also by factors such as class, religion, or geographical and location.

[6] Laqueur cites Galen in particular to argue this point; Galen argued that the female uterus and vagina were inverted versions of the male scrotum and penis, respectively, and that the male's greater body heat caused these organs to be pushed out of the body (28).

(biological gender) did not exist as distinct categories in the pre-modern era; paraphrasing Aristotle, Laqueur declares, "One sex is strong and the other weak so that one may be cautious and the other brave in warding off attacks, one may go out and acquire possessions and the other stay home to preserve them, and so on. In other words, both the division of labor and the specific assignment of roles are natural" (29). Yet, after he considers this Aristotelian discussion of gender, he quickly returns to analyzing descriptions of genitalia, stating emphatically, "the physical appearance of the genital organs was and remains the usually reliable indicator of reproductive capacity and hence of the gender to which an infant is to be assigned" (31). While Laqueur may be right when he says that the appearance of the genitals is most important when determining the gender of an individual, I maintain that this should not mean that discussion of genitals and sexuality in gender studies should be privileged above other discourses that also contribute to understandings of gender.[7] One of the most important goals of this project is to show the complexity of early modern masculinity. To do so, I will discuss how ideas of effeminacy, genitalia, and sexual desire were a handful among many discourses that shaped notions of gender, and that disability and other discourses have comparable influence on determinations of early modern masculinity.

Other considerations of early modern masculinity that do not focus exclusively on sexuality still abide by the assumption that masculinity and its attendant qualities are defined against femininity. Mark Breitenberg's important monograph, *Anxious Masculinity in Early*

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[7] In this respect, I take inspiration from Michael Stolberg's critique of Laqueur in that Stolberg looks at how early modern anatomists such as Felix Platter and Caspar Bauhin saw differences between male and female bodies by looking at non-genital bodily features, especially the skeleton.

Modern England, draws upon Stephen Greenblatt's account of early modern subjectivity by asserting that identity is constructed in relation to an Other. While Breitenberg is concerned with showing the instability of the male/female binary, he does make it clear that his "attention has been given to the ways in which early modern masculinity relies on a variety of constructions of woman as Other" (11). Moreover, studies such as Breitenberg's perpetuate the assumption that any subjective quality that is not coded as masculine must necessarily be written as feminine. For instance, Jean E. Howard briefly discusses two bodily characteristics and their opposites—strength/weakness and hardness/softness—that are of particular interest to my project. When discussing how gender difference was produced in the early modern period, Howard notes, "If women were not invariably depicted as anatomically different from men in an essential way, they could still be seen as different merely by virtue of their lack of masculine perfection (softer, weaker, less hot) and their subordination could be justified on these grounds" ("Crossdressing" 423). Although she is careful to say that softness and weakness are labeled as feminine qualities in order to perpetuate the subordination of women, Howard does not show how softness and weakness can be and are physical qualities divorced from any gender signification, especially femininity. Even some disability theorists, such as Simi Linton, have noted how disability has historically been aligned with femininity (100).

As this project will show, softness, weakness, and the stigma associated with certain impairments are often applied to women in early modern texts, but they are not exclusively applied to women. Furthermore, impairment may be linked to femininity, but that does not mean that femininity and impairment overlap perfectly as stigmatized states or conditions. Femininity can overlap with notions such as disability, but these two concepts do not overlap all of the time. Men, even at the height of masculine achievement, may still possess some physical or moral

softness (like Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra*), and physical characteristics with negative social valences are often attributed to bodies that are, say, old, frail, or impaired, but not depicted as feminine (like Nestor or Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida*). This is to say that early modern people did not just see gender according to a conceptual continuum in which male and female were situated on opposite ends of a spectrum.[8] The early modern framework for conceiving gender was much messier and disorganized in that early modern writers imagined bodily masculinity as possessing solidity and depth in the face of bodily fluctuation, decay, and impairment (of which femininity was a part, but not the only part).

We are used to looking at messy bodies in the early modern period due to the work of several influential monographs and essays in Baktinian body studies. Drawing upon the idea of the grotesque body, characterized by its appetites and unruly fluids, put forth by Bakhtin in *Rabelais and his World*, Michael C. Schoenfeldt, Gail Kern Paster, and Peter Stallybrass argue that instability and fluctuation characterize the early modern, humoral body. Moreover, all of these critics believe that early modern people countered this messiness of the humoral body through self-discipline and ideals of bodily refinement. Stallybrass, for instance, pays attention to how men exercised power over women by extolling behavior in which women kept two bodily openings in particular—the mouth and vagina—closed. Both Paster and Schoenfeldt acknowledge the openness and disarray of the early modern humoral body, but disagree on how early modern people perceived that porousness: Paster claims that the leakiness of the body, especially female bodies, was thought of as shameful (10), while Schoenfeldt argues that

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[8] Howard rightly notes that the one-sex model of gender differentiation explained by Laqueur was not the only conceptual model for assigning gender; religious texts and anti-theatrical tracts assumed sharp differences between male and female ("Crossdressing" 423).

excretion and other functions of the porous body were praised so long as those functions were properly controlled by the individual (15). The Bakhtinian model, while it acknowledges the messiness that some early modern people thought characterized the humoral body, ultimately creates a very tidy narrative about the presupposition of messy appetites and fluids that need some matter of policing. Moreover, this account of the early modern body privileges the humoral fluids out of a preconception that the physical properties of those fluids naturally lends itself to the supposition that the body is physically, socially, and morally difficult to discipline or rein in. The result is that the rampant discussion of bodily tissues during this period is not only analyzed to a lesser extent, but also that tissues are not looked at for their own messiness or their destabilizing and enigmatic qualities. Moreover, these critics have little to say about situations in which individuals or characters in a work of literature are not able to exercise socially accepted methods of self-discipline upon their bodies. These studies presuppose a particular level of corporeal and cognitive ability when it comes to regulating the body.

Overall, this project both works with and tells a different story from previous studies that have focused on the early modern body or gender and sexuality. Instead of putting forth a Bakhtinian discussion of humoral volatility, or a Foucauldian history of sexuality and gender construction, this dissertation considers how early modern people deal with the instability of flesh, the precariousness of human tissue, and the fear that one's body may even resist discipline and regulation. This sense of the body's fluids and tissues being distinct comes across in this introduction's epigraph, taken from *The Merchant of Venice*. Disguised as the lawyer Balthazar, Portia brings about the play's climactic point by creating a distinction between flesh (tissue) and blood (fluid). In this sense, Portia becomes not only a "doctor of the law," but a physiologist; the courtroom drama also stages an anatomy wherein this anatomist shows his/her audience the first

principle of Vesalian dissection: the nature of flesh as distinct from fluid. It is important to remember that this climax is basically grounded in impossibility—flesh cannot be separated from blood, of course—but this unattainable separation of flesh and blood then is revealed as a discursive fiction, or a distinction that, while ultimately false, wields incredible power nonetheless.

What this new emphasis on bodily tissue, rather than just humoral fluids, had on conceptions of early modern masculinity became encapsulated between two often competing visions of ideal manliness that one could read from a person's bodily form and abilities. The first vision of ideal masculinity was what I call "abrasive masculinity," which I describe in detail in the first chapter. Abrasive masculinity allows that a person's body may be affected by certain impairments that have been unusually given social capital. An impairment that can confirm a person's bodily masculinity is a wound suffered in battle, for instance. Here I draw influence from Coppélia Kahn's psychoanalytic concept of the wound as fetish. In her analysis of the construction of Roman masculinity in early modern English drama, Kahn notes, "In an obvious sense, wounds mark a kind of vulnerability easily associated with women: they show the flesh to be penetrable, they show that it can bleed, they make apertures in the body. But through the discursive operations of *virtus*, wounds become significant to the signification of masculine virtue" (17). I agree with Kahn's claim that this form of bodily vulnerability can signify manliness in early modern culture, but I take Kahn's claim in a different direction by emphasizing how wounds affect the abilities of bodies and offer an opportunity for the interior of the body to be exposed to view. I contend that wounds, among other things that affected bodies, showed how the male body possessed layers of tissue in the form of skin, fat, and especially muscle, and that these layers of tissue in the male body signified a man's physical, intellectual,

and spiritual depth of subjectivity in contrast to what was believed to be the physical and mental superficiality of women.

This type of masculinity, which relied on the positive social valences of particular impairments, competes with a type of physical masculinity that more closely mirrors our present-day ideals of solid, impenetrable, and smooth bodily masculinity that is defined against embodied states that possess impairments. This second ideal did not allow room for the effects of impairments, old age, and illness to be registered on the model male body, but did also rely on the importance of the literal and figurative layering required to be masculine. Overall, what we see here is a conflict between two versions of ideal masculinity that make different allowances for impairments upon and within the male body. However, both types of masculinity depend upon the somewhat paradoxical notion that the male body has to reveal—whether through wounds, athleticism, or other displays of able-bodiedness—physical layers that do not and should not be apparent at first glance. A person, if he or she wishes to identify as masculine, has to be able to find a balance between exposing and hiding this corporeal mysteriousness. Throughout this study, I refer to this early modern imperative to build and maintain one's physical and mental layers, as well as the corresponding command to endow the male body with the ability to signify beyond itself or to be a literal and figurative reality, as hypodermic masculinity.

Chapter One, "Conceiving Ability, Athleticism, and Impairment for the Early Modern Man," considers how early modern physiological texts grounded physical ability or impairment within the tissue layers of the body. Looking at the significance of muscle and fat within *2 Henry IV* and the actor Will Kemp's 1600 pamphlet *Nines Daies Wonder*, this chapter shows how a distinction was being made between one masculinity that allowed for impairments and another

that established bodily masculinity by othering certain bodily conditions and impairments. Chapter Two, "The Carpet Knight and the Myth of Effeminacy and Muscular Atrophy in *The Two Noble Ladies* and *Antony and Cleopatra*," reassesses the stock literary character of the carpet knight, or a soldier who abandons the vigor of the battlefield for the pleasures of a mistress's bedroom. Scholars often say that the two characters I look at in this chapter, Sinew from *The Two Noble Ladies* and Antony from *Antony and Cleopatra*, are emasculated and physically weakened by their erotic dalliances. However, I argue that these figures are able to absorb the supposedly impairing effects of sexual indulgence within their bodies. In this sense, this chapter ends my analysis as to how the ideal male body can make use of impairing conditions.

The remaining two chapters look at how this model of masculinity that made productive use of impairments was being usurped by another model of masculinity that defined itself against impairing conditions. "Muscle and the Distinguishability of Bodies in *Troilus and Cressida*" makes note of this trend by analyzing how the male characters in this tragicomedy exalt bodies that have physical and metaphorical layers while dismissing or ostracizing male bodies that possess any manner or combination of impairments. Fatness, old age, the inability to walk, sneezing, wheezing, drooling, and all other kinds of bodily conditions are lampooned and then othered in this play. Moreover, bodies that are too grounded in their physicality—that cannot serve as a signifier for a concept of group of people—are also impaired for their lack of physical and figurative layers. The last chapter, "'I feel myself able once again:' Race, Gender, and Hypodermic Masculinity in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*," analyzes how the titular kinsmen, Palamon and Arcite, adopt a socially accepted standard of bodily eminence and athletic ability in order to, paradoxically, create distinct and even individualized ideals of masculinity for

themselves. I close this chapter with suggestions for future considerations as to how discussions of gender, disability, and race can move forward.

Overall, changes in bodily tissues—especially skin, muscle, fat, and sinew—came to signify changes in a person's masculine status in the early modern period. Weakness, wounding, weight gain, weight loss, and ageing, among other changes, were believed to have both positive and negative effects on a person's social standing as a man in early modern social hierarchies. Strength, flexibility, and athletic prowess had social capital, whereas deformities and impairments could ostracize an individual. Thus as certain bodily conditions had value over others in this manner, I maintain that these values anticipate present-day discourses of disability, and that these nascent discussions of disability in the early modern period went hand in hand with discussions about masculinity.

Chapter One

Conceiving Ability, Athleticism, and Impairment for the Early Modern Man

"Will you tell me, Master Shallow, how to choose a man? Care I for the limb, the thews (sinews), the stature, bulk, and big assemblance of a man?" (*2 Henry IV* III.ii.236-238).

The most publicized and perhaps greatest athletic feat of early seventeenth-century England was accomplished by the same man who first played Falstaff. Upon leaving the Lord Chamberlain's Men, Shakespeare's theater company, in 1600, the actor and dancer Will Kemp undertook a feat for which he sought financial and social capital: dancing a morris for 130 miles from London to Norwich. The morris dance is now associated mostly with traditional folk dancing of rural England, but most scholars agree that the name of the dance takes its name from the Spanish *moresca*, or "Moorish" dancing. The dance requires a number of steps taken to music from a pipe and tabor, and this music is accompanied by the sound of bells worn by the dancer as he or she performs the dance. Kemp details his journey in the pamphlet *Kemp's Nine Daies Wonder* (1600), which was written both to prove that he undertook the journey and to publicize the event. However, not even a year or two before Kemp drew crowds along the road from London to Norwich, he most likely played Falstaff, the "fat-witted," "fat rogue" the future Henry V befriends and then publicly renounces in *1 Henry IV* (written and performed in 1596-7; published in 1598) and *2 Henry IV* (written and performed in 1598-99; published in 1600). So much of the dialogue in *Henry IV* depends upon references to the girth of Falstaff's belly that we cannot but speculate about the state of Will Kemp's body while he performed this now infamous role, even though few present-day scholars have said anything about Will Kemp as Falstaff. But if Kemp could play the corpulent knight, how could he then perform such a rigorous athletic feat

only months later? What does this example tell us about how present-day cultural discourses maintain that fatness and fitness are mutually exclusive opposites?

This chapter will address this question concerning the significations of Kemp's body by reassessing how early modern discourses, ranging from anatomy texts to dramatic literature, constructed notions of the ideal male body. My reassessment considers how the two seemingly contradictory presentations of corporeality we see attributed to Kemp—the fat body and the athletic body—are actually two sides of the same coin. Both athleticism and obesity were beginning to be seen as bodily conditions that could lead quickly to deformity; both conditions act as measures by which we can make out burgeoning understandings of disability. Furthermore, athleticism and obesity are tied up in anatomical discussions of muscularity. Physiological discourse on muscle presupposes that the body has certain movements and abilities that it can perform, and implicitly suggests that those who are unable to perform these movements are incompetent and weak—in other words, these discourses begin to mark certain variances from the standard conception of the body as disabling. And as early modern writers attribute these standards of bodily movement to muscularity, these writers do the work of planting the physical source of masculinity underneath the surface layers of the body. In order for an early modern individual to maintain his masculinity, he has to maintain the illusion of bodily and subjective layers that are difficult to penetrate.

As physiological texts on muscularity presuppose a body in motion, we then have to allow ourselves to consider how bodies are in flux, how they change, and how they can develop or erode. Facing this reality of the changing body, we encounter a tenet central to the study of disability—that in order to understand the experience of embodiment, we have to understand and accept the fact that the body is protean, never fixed, always changing, and usually in ways that

have been deemed undesirable. Critics from Lennard J. Davis to Susan Wendell have claimed that the ways in which disability studies take the malleability of the body as its central focus are its greatest strength as a discipline.[9] *Nine Daies Wonder* and the *Henry IV* plays are linked not only by Kemp's embodiment of roles in both texts, but also by portrayals of male bodies in flux. Both texts, then, become models for understanding how early modern literature contributes to a history of disability and bodily malleability. In this chapter, I will read these two texts in dialogue with early modern anatomical and exercise manuals so that I can assert a more nuanced understanding of early modern masculinity. These physiological texts further illustrate how early modern masculinity was affirmed and diminished by impairing bodily changes and fluctuating bodily conditions. Early modern masculinity becomes an ideal not just defined against notions of femininity, but against and along with nascent understandings of disability.

The Big Assemblance of a Man: Falstaff and Impaired Masculinity in *2 Henry IV*

If we consider Kemp in his role as Falstaff, one key element of his performance is his active and dominating role in determining and then playing with standards of masculinity and ability. Linking these two factors of identity that were emerging in the early modern period, Falstaff discursively manipulates youth and age, health and ability—dualities that figure prominently in determinations of masculinity. In terms of gender signification and cross-dressing, much has already been said about the portrayal of Falstaff, especially in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (written and performed in 1597-1598; published in 1602),[10] but *2 Henry IV*

[9] See Davis 26; Wendell 60.

[10] See Goldberg; Hodgdon 155; Lewis 28; Parker 20.

also shows the cunning and wisdom of Falstaff with respect to defining and then destabilizing notions of the man as able-bodied.

Even in Falstaff's first scene in *2 Henry IV*, it is made very clear that Falstaff's primary function in the play is to act as the center of attention for the play's concerns with how masculinity, ability, and health are linked. Facetiously calling his diminutive page a giant, Falstaff inquires about a doctor's testing of his urine, to which the page gives the paradoxical response, "He said, sir, the water itself was a good healthy water, but, for the party that owed it, he might have new diseases than he knew for" (I.ii.2-4.). Hearing about his healthy-diseased body, Falstaff immediately senses the doctor poking fun at him, responding, "Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me. The brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter more than I invent" (I.ii.5-7). With these few lines, Falstaff establishes the social dynamic he will adopt throughout the play. As Falstaff suspects that the doctor is using medical/physiological discourse to "gird at" him, Falstaff decides to use the (male) body as his main talking point when mocking others. Falstaff takes as his comic fodder the fluctuations of health, ability, and masculinity as they play out on the male bodies in *2 Henry IV*.

Falstaff's line above is just the beginning of his use of physiological discourse for his ends. Within the same speech, he starts to defend himself by commenting on the physicality of Prince Hal: "The juvenal the Prince your master, whose chin is not yet fledge. I will sooner have a beard grow in the palm of my hand than he shall get one off his cheek" (I.ii.16-19). Belittling Hal, Falstaff reformulates the prince's possible masculinity as a monstrosity; by stating that he is more likely to develop a "freakish" beard in his palm than Hal is to develop an actual beard, Falstaff reformulates Hal's maturation into a man as a strange and rare physical deformity. And

Falstaff's discussion of Hal will circulate around classifying this notion of deformed masculinity that will eventually prevail within the context of the play.

In *2 Henry IV*, Falstaff makes two large assessments concerning Hal: one relating to his inherited family traits, and another relating to the kind of masculinity popular with younger men. First, Falstaff, like King Henry in the very beginning of *1 Henry IV* and towards the end of *2 Henry IV*, notes the cold-bloodedness of Bolingbroke and its effects on Hal and his brothers: "There's never none of these demure boys come to any proof; for thin drink doth so overcool their blood, and making many fish meals, that they fall into a kind of male green-sickness; and then when they marry, they get wenches. They are generally fools and cowards" (IV.ii.81-85). Green-sickness, a disease discussed by Hippocrates (460 BCE - 370 BCE) in the short treatise *On the disease of virgins*, was a kind of lovesickness thought to afflict girls with melancholy and a lack of appetite, and this passage can easily be read as Falstaff simply effeminizing the likes of Bolingbroke and his sons.[11] But this passage and the rest of Falstaff's speech also revolve around notions of motion and stagnation, action and idleness, valor and cowardice, in such a way that the physical state of Bolingbroke and his sons is pathologized as an illness that leads the body into idleness—as a physical state that impairs these men and that Falstaff disparages to the point of disabling these men as "fools and cowards." Falstaff belittles Bolingbroke's sons as effeminate in this speech, but he demeans their masculinity through other means as well: by addressing the problem of their physical lethargy and spinelessness in battle.

Acting as physician, Falstaff prescribes sherry in order to relieve Bolingbroke and his sons of their ailments—the liquor will make their wits "apprehensive," "quick," and "nimble" to

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[11] In her analysis of the passage, Helen King emphasizes how Falstaff's language works by exploiting the difference between male and female (17).

the point when the tongue can give birth to this wit (IV.ii.89-91). Sherry also warms the blood, which was beforehand "cold and settled," to such an extent that the heart is mustered to do valorous deeds (IV.ii.93-101). Falstaff's language does not just rely on distinguishing the feminine and masculine; it works with the opposites of stasis and action, or quickness and sluggishness, in order to diagnose Bolingbroke's sons not only as effeminate, but also as inactive and impaired by their condition.

Moreover, Falstaff's idea of mental agility being necessary to ideal masculinity comes up again when Falstaff comically disparages the fashions of young men such as Hal. Falstaff's major explication of Hal's manliness occurs in the first scene in *2 Henry IV* of which Doll Tearsheet is a part, and this is not just coincidental. The scene thrives off a major comic irony: Doll, a woman who "knows" many men, is forced to listen to Falstaff as he explains to Doll many, and often contradictory, notions of manliness—notions of manliness that do not necessarily make themselves clear in the bedroom. When Doll inquires about the affection between Poins and Hal considering Poins's slow wit, Falstaff instructs Doll on the fashionable display of courtly masculinity that Poins and Hal share:

> Because their legs are both of a bigness, and a plays at quoits well, and eats conger and eel, and drinks off candles' ends for flap-dragons, and rides the wild mare with the boys, and jumps upon joint-stools, and swears with a good grace, and wears his boot very smooth like unto the sign of the leg, and breeds no bate with telling of discreet stories, and such other gambol faculties a has that show a weak mind and an able body. (II.iv.219-226)

Falstaff's disdain for what I call "gambol masculinity" betrays an anachronistic and disparaging attitude toward the increasing popularity of sport and athletic games among upper-class men in

the Elizabethan era. This ideal of masculinity stems first from the ability of the man to display muscularity and strength—we see this in Falstaff's mention of the big, strong legs that were fashionable[12] and the ability to play a game like quoits, which required a certain amount of physical strength. But what is key to this kind of masculinity that Falstaff has been defining in *2 Henry IV* is the way in which this "able-bodied" masculinity, so called by Falstaff, is actually a deformity of masculinity. The signs of masculinity that Falstaff extols—a beard, a quick wit, and hot blood—have been trumped by a masculinity that writes itself explicitly on the able muscularity of the male body.

I call Falstaff's ideal masculinity "abrasive masculinity," not only because this type of masculinity is performed through battles of wit, but also because it puns upon the word "abrasion," signaling a masculinity that is exhibited through wounds and impairments. We see this when Falstaff picks out soldiers to draft in Act III; selecting men with names such as Feeble and Wart, Falstaff consciously uplifts a version of masculinity not based on muscularity or apparent able-bodiedness: "Will you tell me, Master Shallow, how to choose a man? Care I for the limb, the thews (sinews), the stature, bulk, and big assemblance of a man?" (III.ii.236-238).

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[12] Bruce R. Smith notes how portraiture dating from 1590 to 1610 in England emphasized particular features of the male body, most notably, the head, groin, and thighs (*Shakespeare and Masculinity* 31). Smith details the importance of these first two body parts in marking masculinity, but has comparatively little to say about thighs and legs. Rackin also addresses how early modern clothing was cut to reveal a man's legs. This positive emphasis on the muscularity of legs among aristocratic men provides an interesting counter-discourse to mappings of the individual body upon the body politic, in which the legs usually signify members of the lower classes that support the "heads" of state (Harris, *Foreign Bodies* 42).

Falstaff attempts to show Shallow that manliness and ability do not depend on muscularity, and his didactic technique here shows how these three traits—manliness, muscularity, and able-bodiedness—are linked to such an extent in the minds of men such as Shallow that Falstaff has to instruct others on this alternative masculinity.

Rather, Falstaff's attitude toward the male body is defined by one overarching claim: manliness is not denigrated, but is actually affirmed by impairment and illness. For instance, when Falstaff tells Doll, "to serve bravely is to come halting off" (II.iv.43-44), he valorizes the limp caused by courage in battle, or the venereal disease resulting from sexual promiscuity, as signs of an active and exercised masculinity. These changes in the male body—impairing changes—become markers of that body's inherent manliness. Paradoxically, bodily malleability signifies a nonmalleable, innate masculinity within. Aspects of male bodies that suggest physical solidity and thus masculinity, such as bulk and bigness (recall Falstaff's dismissal of Poins's and Hal's big legs and men of "big assemblance" in the mustering scene), are undermined as signifiers of a person's manliness. Furthermore, Falstaff's dismissal of bigness and bulk also destabilizes his own physical bulkiness as a sign of his masculinity (or femininity) and personhood. Falstaff undermines physical bulk, whether fat or fit, as a false signifier of gender; rather, Falstaff determines manliness according to the impairments by which a man's body changes.

What Falstaff's abrasive masculinity does is help us come to terms with our own late modern biases about fat and fit bodies. Most recently, Elena Levy-Navarro's work on early modern constructions of obesity has fully exposed such biases, especially when those biases pertain to the body of a character as infamous as Falstaff. In her analysis of the Henriad, Levy-Navarro notes how Shakespeare differentiates a fat, magnanimous bodily aesthetic represented

through Falstaff's body from a lean, mean aesthetic promoted by Hal.[13] Hal, in his insults and jokes about Falstaff's body, marks that body to represent an older feudal order, the excesses of society, and an inertia that forecloses the possibility of forward movement in time and imperialistic progress. At the same time, Shakespeare critiques the lean aesthetic promoted by Hal because it quietly advocates the consumption of the bodies of those in the lower classes so that Hal can achieve his imperialistic aims (Levy-Navarro 67-109).

However, in the early modern period, muscle and fat (or flesh) were not mutually exclusive categories. Most surprisingly, fat and flesh were seen as constitutive parts of the muscles of a human body. The anatomist and physiologist Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564) made these observations from dissections he performed as part of his research. Vesalius wrote a seven-volume treatise on human physiology while holding a post as a lecturer of anatomy at the University of Padua. This treatise, *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543), marked a shift away from the Galenic physiologic model that had dominated the field of medicine for centuries. The text of the *Fabrica*, along with the detailed illustrations that accompanied it, had an impact on anatomy and depictions of the body for centuries after its publication. While Shakespeare most likely did not read the *Fabrica*, the influence this book had on the early modern imagination was

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[13] The fat versus thin dichotomy in the Henriad has also been noted by Jonathan Goldberg: "Hal's new regime of trim reckonings...would cut the body down to size; it is mobilized against decaying aristocratic corpulence--the fat body that will come to be the body of the malnourished poor--and the woman's body" (172). In an even earlier essay, Jonathan Hall claimed that the antagonism between Hal and Falstaff mirrored the struggle between the Fat and the Thin that was a part of Lenten festivities (75).

widespread, and it is often cited as having the largest impact on the changing early modern conceptions of the human body ("Vesalius, Andreas").

In his breakdown of the parts of muscle, Vesalius makes it clear that flesh is the part of the muscle that actually "contains and strengthens" the ligaments. Flesh is also the "special organ of movement" within the muscles; moreover, flesh will and must contain fat in order to perform its muscular functions (118). However, Vesalius does imply that there is a difference in the ratio of fat to muscle between men and women. In Book II of the *Fabrica*, which describes the muscles, Vesalius opens his discussion of dissection with his description of what one must do in order to cut through the layers of dermis properly. Vesalius notes that one will not have much difficulty separating the skin from the layers of muscle and fat underneath:

> You will have no trouble doing this in the human, especially if the person is rather plump, since often, *and especially in women*, the thickness of the fat in the thorax and abdomen measures more than the breadth of two fingers; and in public dissections we have seen around the hips and buttocks, in women who were not excessively obese, fat measuring more than a palm in thickness. (146, emphasis mine)

Vesalius claims that women's bodies, whether they are thin or more corpulent, are easier to dissect because they possess more fat. The implication then is that men's bodies have less fat and are harder to dissect as a consequence. Regardless of body type or gender, muscle needs fat in order to move with ease, but there is a difference between men and women regarding the ratio of fat to muscle. Vesalius remarks upon this difference in terms of the ease and difficulty of dissection; women's bodies are easier to penetrate with scalpel and needle than men's bodies. The manner in which Vesalius frames this gender difference constructs the male body as

stratified and more complex than the female body. Both men and women have layers, but the layers of male bodies speak to the complexity and impenetrability of that gender. Vesalius affirms a bodily, hypodermic masculinity that depends upon the maintenance of physical and subjective layers.

To return to the relationship between fat and muscle, Falstaff also does not abide by this duality between fat and muscle, nor does he simply signify a kind of physical and political inertia. Rather, Falstaff's corporeality is built up, teased, and discussed *ad infinitum* in *Henry IV* so that corporeality, physical bulk and mass itself, can be exposed as a false signifier of gender and ability. After being rejected by Hal, Falstaff falls into denial and attempts to explain the situation to Shallow, assuring the Justice that "I will be the man yet that shall make you great" (V.v.75-76). Shallow cheekily responds, "I cannot perceive how, unless you give me your doublet and stuff me out with straw" (V.v.77-78). Patricia A. Cahill reads this passage in a manner that reemphasizes Shallow's leanness, which parallels the leanness of Hal and thus makes Hal vulnerable to critiques of his masculinity: "this acknowledgement contains within it the awareness that the great men who, like Hal, are marked by their leanness and parsimonious regimens, may be something less than 'select' male specimens" (100). Although I believe that the passage certainly reasserts the similarities between and instabilities of Hal and Shallow's thin subjectivity, I also think that Shallow's joke, delivered during the last scene in which we see Falstaff, does the work of exposing Falstaff's fatness as a fiction—a fiction in the form of a straw-stuffed doublet worn by Will Kemp. Kemp's costume loses its ability to signify Falstaff's fatness, and consequently we see fatness and physical bulkiness emptied of its capacity to signal something about a person. Both leanness and fatness are conflated as fictions that insufficiently determine manliness.

Dancing for the Congruity of his Health: Will Kemp's *Nine Daies Wonder*

Despite the ways in which both fat and lean, muscular bodies are conflated and then both emptied of signification in *2 Henry IV*, one could easily surmise how the specter of the fat knight haunted Will Kemp in the months following his performances as Falstaff. Kemp, known for his extemporaneous jokes and physical comedy, acted as the headlining clown for Shakespeare's playacting company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men, for approximately six years.[14] During his tenure as an actor with this company, Kemp's reputation as a dancer grew; he was best known for the post-play jigs common in the Elizabethan theater, and several of his jigs were published. But it was with the Chamberlain's Men that he was likely the original player for some of Shakespeare's best known comic roles: Costard in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Lancelot in *The Merchant of Venice*, and Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Moreover, many reputable scholars—most notably Andrew Gurr and Jean E. Howard—have suggested that Kemp was the first actor to play Falstaff,[15] beginning around 1596 or 1597 with the production of *1 Henry IV*.

Kemp describes his own body in *Nine Daies Wonder*, a pamphlet that was published very shortly after the first performances of *2 Henry IV*, in order to affirm values of temperance and sobriety that were alien to the portrayal of Falstaff. In this sense, Kemp tries to reestablish the binary between bodily excess and temperate leanness that Falstaff disturbed with his abrasive masculinity. Kemp praises his own body's athletic exceptionalism (in contrast to Falstaff's

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[14] Neilsen 466; Thomas 511.

[15] See Gurr 107; Howard, "Introduction" 1301.

exceptionalism as a fat man), and this exceptionalism, made possible by bodily regulation and temperance, manifests itself when Kemp's body is in flux and motion.

In the few scholarly analyses of Kemp's pamphlet, focus drifts toward how Kemp situates himself in comparison to the rural, common folk that he encounters during his journey. Kemp's translation of the plebeian, carnivalesque morris into a written form suggests that he had colonized the dance, transforming it into an urban, proto-capitalistic venture,[16] or Kemp's unwillingness to drink and his rebuffing of any commoners who wish to dance with him mark his willing exclusion from the carnivalesque activity with which the dance is associated.[17] Overall, the scholarly consensus reads the publication of the pamphlet in Bakhtinian terms, marking it as one more instance of rural, folk culture being squelched or transformed to serve the needs of an ascendant urban, capitalistic culture. As useful and important as these readings are, what happens when we focus upon the event narrated—that of an athletic feat? What happens when we look to the overriding preoccupation of Kemp during this narrative (even beyond money-making)—that of maintaining the health and the fitness of his body?

The physical exceptionalism of Kemp comes about as Kemp encounters people in the countryside who attempt to dance with him. Kemp narrates an episode in which a "lusty" town butcher "would in a Morrice keepe mee company to Bury: I being glad of his friendly offer, gaue him thankes, and forward wee did set; but ere euer wee had measur'd halfe a mile of our way, he gaue me ouer in the plain field, protesting, that if he might get a 100 pound, he would not hold out with me; for indeed my pace in dauncing is not ordinary." Kemp uses the butcher, a seemingly energetic man, to highlight his own exceptional physicality and athleticism; he

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[16] See Palmer.

[17] See Thomas.

dismissively notes how the butcher has to stop the dance "ere euer wee had measur'd halfe a mile" in order to place emphasis on the fact that his own dancing ability is not "ordinary."

The anecdote about the butcher contrasts sharply with an episode concerning a dancing "Maydemarian" girl with her fat sides and legs. Kemp makes it crucial to his story to note the girl's fleshiness, yet also commends the girl for "foot[ing] it merrily to Melfoord, being a long myle." The girl's athletic accomplishment is commemorated with a song:

> A Country Lasse, browne as a berry,
> Blith of blee, in heart as merry,
> Cheekes well fed, and sides well larded,
> Euery bone with fat flesh guarded,
> Meeting merry Kemp by chaunce,
> Was Marrian in his Morrice daunce.
> Her stump legs with bels were garnisht,
> Her browne browes with sweating varnish[t];
> Her browne hips, when she was lag
> To win her ground, went swig a swag;
> Which to see all that came after
> Were repleate with mirthfull laughter.
> Yet she thumpt it on her way
> With a sportly hey de gay:
> At a mile her daunce she ended,
> Kindly paide and well commended.

In the tradition of the morris dance, the "Maid Marian" was a man dressed as a woman who accompanied the main male dancer (Swann 20). Here, an actual woman plays the Maid Marian role, but she also cross-dresses—as a Falstaffian figure. Moreover, despite the vivaciousness and energy of the girl's performance, she tellingly has to lose some agency by becoming the focus of the poet's embellishment. The use of participles marks how the girl's body becomes a site of ornamentation; just as her legs are "garnisht" with bells, her body comes to wear fat and sweat as a suit of clothes that parallels the morris bells—her brow is "varnisht" with sweat, her sides and bones are "larded" and "guarded" with flesh. Fat, flesh, and sweat become less tied to the body and are increasingly externalized as the suit that the girl cross-dresses in to perform the morris dance. What is more, her bodily fat and sweat cannot help but evoke the facetious, yet disparaging, descriptions of Kemp's famous character Falstaff. As Falstaff is known for his "fat paunch" and "sweat" that "lards the lean earth," it becomes clear that the poet's descriptions are meant to displace Kemp's identity as Falstaff onto the dancing girl. Kemp's reputation as the performer of Falstaff—and his adoption of the knight's fatness—become disembodied and re-embodied onto the body of an Other, and not only an Other when it comes to corporeality, but also when it comes to gender and her "brown" skin tone.

Despite the song's tendency to "other" the girl and adorn her with the physical attributes of Kemp's Falstaff, the song also makes a turn with the "Yet" beginning the thirteenth line. Until this point, the description of the girl has honed in on her fatness, sweat, hips, and flesh that jiggles when she dances. But at this point, which offers the first pause in the song, the "yet" undoes the work of building up the girl's fleshiness. The songwriter notes how despite her corporeality, she "thumpt it" along with Kemp; this is the first time that the girl is given an active verb in the poem, which gives the readers the impression that girl has overcome potential

physical limitations—her fatness, her stump legs, etc—in order to become an agent who can act, who can thump on her way and dance with Kemp. This shift in tone is predicated on the idea that this body type is a liability when it comes to movement and projecting agency. I see a resemblance between the small, yet powerful, narrative of the body told in this poem and the present-day narrative of a person with a disability who overcomes that disability. Concerning this latter narrative, Simi Linton has noticed this implies that "the person has risen above society's expectation for someone with those characteristics [of disability]. Because it is physically impossible to *overcome* a disability, it seems that what is *overcome* is the social stigma of having a disability" (17, emphasis Linton's). While I do not suggest that the dancing girl has a disability that 21st-century readers would supposedly recognize, a narrative pattern emerges in this song in which a person possessing certain physical characteristics exceeds the expectations of those around her. In the last two lines before the shift at line thirteen, it is noted that "all that came after" the girl "were repleate with mirthfull laughter" upon seeing her. Although one could argue that this "mirthful" laughing from the others does not signify hostility, it suggests that the girl presents a paradox—that of a brown, chubby woman performing a rigorous, athletic dance. The "yet" signifies a turn in which the girl sportily and successfully performs the dance despite her physicality and despite the reaction to her physicality that those around her express.

As the song presents a story of bodily exceptionalism in the dancing, fat Maid Marian, the text's main purpose is to present Kemp's rather different physical exceptionalism. Relating to this aim of the pamphlet, a refrain throughout the *Nine Daies Wonder* is Kemp's resistance to drink and merriment for the sake of maintaining salubriousness and agility: qualities for which Falstaff is not known. After the first day of dancing, Kemp makes sure to note how he has "to giue rest to my well-labour'd limbes." After the third day of dancing, Kemp recalls how "The

good cheere and kinde welcome I had at Chelmsford was much more than I was willing to entertaine; for my onely desire was to refraine drinke and be temperate in my dyet." On the fifth day, a friend advises Kemp to "obserue temperate dyet for my health." Kemp approaches this dance as an athletic feat requiring a rigid bodily regimen of abstinence and rest, all for maintaining "temperance." If we look to explanations of the humors, temperance is most closely associated with the act of regulating the temperature of the body; the body can experience unnatural levels of heat, for instance, if one drinks excess amounts of wine.[18] But the contradiction here pertains to the fact that Kemp needs to maintain a regularized, temperate balance of the humors to succeed at a very unusual, maybe even intemperate athletic feat.

However, salubriousness even seems alien to Kemp; in describing one moment in which he needed to resist drinking, Kemp narrates, "'With Gentlemanlike protestations, as "Truely, sir, I dare not,' 'It stands not with the congruity of my health. Congruitie, said I? how came that strange language in my mouth? I thinke scarcely that it is any Christen worde, and yet it may be a good worde for ought I knowe, though I neuer made it, nor doe verye well understand it; yet I am sure I have bought it at the word-mongers at as deare a rate as I could haue...Farwell, Congruitie, for I meane now to be more concise, and stand upon eeuener bases." Language that signifies the health of the body is alien to Kemp; he takes up the word and promptly abandons it "to be more concise." Moreover, the word is not a Christian word, certainly not a Christian word to describe his health. Congruity seems to expand beyond Kemp's vocabulary, despite the fact that his body often expands beyond "normal" boundaries, and he feels the need to keep his vocabulary as trim and temperate as his appetite. As Kemp is temperate in drink and food, and

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[18] For more on the effects of alcohol on the temperature of the body, as well as a consideration of drunkenness as disability in early modern discourse, see Wood.

does the same for his vocabulary, keeping it "upon eeuener bases," it is as if he is heeding Hal's weight-loss advice at the end of *2 Henry IV* to "make less thy body" and "leave gormandizing" (V.v.50-51). In adopting temperate eating and drinking habits, and in also tempering his vocabulary to make it more even-keeled, Kemp purposefully rejects the ideas that Falstaff put forth in *2 Henry IV*. As I see it, Kemp was trying to remake his public image, placing more emphasis upon the skill that made him famous—his dancing—and less on the verbal dexterity and corpulence for which Falstaff was known. In dismissing able bodies, shapely legs, and physical strength as false signs of masculinity and even as monstrous, Falstaff empties the body of its ability to signify manliness; however, Kemp's self-portrayal in *Nines Daies Wonder* reinstates this physical core to masculinity. Fatness, stumpiness, physical passivity, and so on are imposed onto a body othered by a variety of factors, including gender, class, and skin color. Like Hal, Kemp looks to temper the maintenance of his limbs, his legs specifically, to prove his ability and his masculinity.

As much as Falstaff is known for his "quick" and "nimble" wit, which is delivered "o'er to the voice, the tongue" (IV.ii.89-91), by declaring that he will "be more concise" in the *Nine Daies Wonder*, Kemp means to redirect the focus away from the strength of his tongue and toward the strength of his legs. One can see this shift foreshadowed in the Epilogue to *2 Henry IV*, in which Kemp comes onstage to ask the audience, "If my tongue cannot entreat you to acquit me, will you command me to use my legs?" (15-16). What we see here is a devaluation of the muscularity of the tongue and an increase in esteem to the muscularity of the leg.

All of this leads to the moment when Kemp makes his approach to Norwich, at which point he, "mistrusting it would be a let to my determined expedition and pleasurable humour, which I long before conceiued to delight this Citty with (so far as my best skill and industry of

my long trauelled sinewes could affoord them), I was aduised, and so tooke ease by that aduise, to stay my Morrice a little aboue Saint Giles his gate." What this passage comes down to is a desire to make a theatrical, grand entrance to please his audience, and the body parts that will "delight this Citty" are Kemp's "long trauelled sinewes." Kemp associates skill and industry with this part of his body. It is the part that delivers entertainment and pleasure to the crowd at Norwich. In his parenthetical reflection, Kemp makes his muscularity central to the commercial and popular reception of the dance.

The notion of the athletic, masculine body, asserted through an ability to temper and control the movements of the body, undergoes a number of reassessments and transformations in the roles that William Kemp adopted in the years that saw his performances as Falstaff and as a morris dancer. As much as Hal and other characters obsessively discourse about Falstaff's fatness, Falstaff himself resists this overdetermination of his body in *2 Henry IV* by calling attention to a kind of masculinity that is determined by able-bodiedness and then offering another masculinity to counter it. However, Kemp undoes this work of Falstaff. He displaces Falstaff's physical qualities onto the Maid Marian dancer, and rewrites his own physicality in terms of temperance, able-bodiedness, and muscularity. All of these terms affect Kemp's body as it is *in motion.* Taking early modern physiological manuals as its focus, the next section of this chapter will look at conceptions of muscularity, the body part responsible for voluntary motion, as that part of the body that determined what the body should be capable of doing. This section will look at depictions of the early modern body in the way that physiologists saw it, but that many scholars ignore—as a changing, moving body.

The *Kanon* of Motion: Defining Normal Abilities in Vesalius's *Fabrica*

Beginning with influential articles from Nancy G. Siraisi and Glenn Harcourt, a few early modern scholars have established how Vesalius and other early modern thinkers initiated discourses that would eventually help to establish standards and ideas of "the normal." Many have agreed that physical normalcy emerged as a category with the rise of statistics in the nineteenth century; such mathematical functions as the bell curve or statistician Adolphe Quetelet's "average man" formulated common standards of height, weight, and other physical characteristics, and people whose bodily features did not figure within these statistical ranges of normalcy were deemed exceptional or disabled.[19] These scholars have warned against applying these modern ideas about normalcy and disability to pre-modern cultures. And Lennard J. Davis calls out the anachronism of discussing disability in the early modern period, which I addressed in the Introduction. While normalcy as a statistical concept did not exist in the Renaissance, Vesalius and other anatomists did look at and classify human bodies according to a range of characteristics labeled as common, temperate, and harmonized. And, to argue against Davis, the tension between these acceptable characteristics and unacceptable ones was a widespread preoccupation in the literary and scientific discourse of the Renaissance, a preoccupation that emerges in more subtle ways than, say, the representation of the hunchbacked monarch in *Richard III*.

In her essay, Siraisi notes how Vesalius relies on Galenic notions of the "canon of men," or an idea of a standard human body (68). The word "canon" takes its origin from the treatise *Kanon* by the fifth-century BCE Greek sculptor Polykleitos. Bodies in his Kanon were young, male, mature, and mirrored the features of male athletes (71). Kenneth Clarke has stated that for

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[19] See Warner; Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies* 63; Davis 20.

Polykleitos, "His general aim was clarity, balance, and completeness; his sole medium of communication the naked body of an athlete, standing poised between movement and repose" (36). For Vesalius and for the Renaissance sculptors who drew influence from Polykleitos, the figure of the young, Greek, male athlete becomes the vehicle for passing on ideas of bodily harmony, temperance, and wholeness; the figure poses as a model against disruption, fragmentation, and deformity. Moreover, Vesalius's references to Polykleitos speak to the interrelationship between art and science in the early modern period, which Erwin Panofsky addressed in his essay "Artist, Scientist, Genius." Panofsky destabilized a trans-historical belief in the mutual exclusivity of art and science by noting how the importance of pictorial representation to anatomists made science and art mutually contribute to one another. Glenn Harcourt elaborates on Panofsky's thesis by noting how these artistic representational ideals went hand in hand with constructing both an aesthetic and physiological bodily ideal. However, Siraisi also notes how Vesalius allows for bodily variance without reverting to popular tastes for descriptions of monstrous bodies; consequently, Vesalius expands his readers' understandings of what constitutes a "natural" human body (62).

Harcourt's interest in how early modern discourses of art and science combined to establish a bodily norm intersects with the corporeal ideals central to those discourses. Harcourt translates a well-known passage in which Vesalius discusses the ideal body for dissection: "It is desirable that the body employed for public dissection be as normal [*temperatissimum*] as possible according to its sex and of medium age, so that you may compare other bodies to it, as if to the statue of Policletus" (qtd. on 28). Harcourt's mistranslation of *temperatissimum* as "normal"[20] leads him to the conclusion that Vesalius "intends the production of nothing less than

[20] Siraisi also notes Harcourt's mistranslation; see "Vesalius" 70.

a normative description of human anatomy" (38). While I take issue with Harcourt's anachronistic understanding of Vesalius's definition of the standard body as a "normal" body, I also appreciate how Harcourt highlights a tension between a desire for both the median and the exception in Vesalius's work. In his analysis of the famous muscleman plates preceding the text of Book II, Harcourt notes how the poses of the figures produce a sense of the strength and grace that can exist in human musculature, and how these qualities are revealed when the figure is placed in some sort of action. As a result, Harcourt makes the astute observation that "normative structure [of the body] in its turn produces not only median form but the potential for exemplary action as well" (45). Siraisi, in turn, makes a similar claim about the plates ("Vesalius" 70).

More recently, Valerie Traub has uncovered a "logic of the grid" that pervades early modern anatomy and cartography texts. This suggests a developing sense of physiological and geographical normalcy that is based upon quantitative measurements and anticipates the codification of "the normal" in the nineteenth century with the discovery of modern statistics. Putting aside Siraisi's thesis on Vesalius's appreciation of bodily difference, Traub chooses to emphasize Siraisi's claims that a "generalized" body was crucial to Vesalius as he developed the field of modern physiology. As Traub puts it, "the corporeal schema codified by Vesalius is fantastically devoid of disease, irregularity, morbidity, or the marks made on the flesh though the processes of living, labor, and dying" ("Nature" 53). The "lived-in" body cannot become a standard for the body, and it cannot become the text through which information about the body, especially the male body, is expressed and disseminated. This ideal of a blemish-less male body counters Falstaff's notion that a male body possessing the marks of disease and violence authentically represents masculinity.

Traub, Harcourt, and Siraisi's desire to unearth an early modern anatomical discourse built upon notions of a bodily standard, which hints at later historical notions of physical normalcy and abnormality, is grounded methodologically in the theoretical tenets of queer studies and the history of medicine. However, the emergence of physiological standards or naturalness in early modern anatomy texts can also provide us with a history of how present-day understandings of disability and non-disability emerge. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson begins looking at these pre-modern discourses of disability in her brief analysis of Aristotle's *On the Generation of Animals*, stating that the Greek philosopher's conflation of femaleness with monstrosity is a founding "declaration that the source of all otherness is the concept of a norm, a 'generic type' against which all physical variation appears as different, derivative, inferior, and insufficient. Not only does this definition of the female as a 'mutilated male' inform later depictions of woman as diminished man, but it also arranges somatic diversity into a hierarchy of value that assigns completeness to some bodies and deficiency to others" (*Extraordinary Bodies* 20). We can trace the development of these Aristotelian notions of bodily deficiency in early modern discourse, and other early modern scholars have already enriched Garland-Thomson's ideas in work that addresses definitions of monstrosity and unnaturalness during this period.[21] Moreover, Garland-Thomson very importantly shows how discourses of gender and disability have been linked for centuries. My interest, however, lies not in assessing the physical particulars of "standard" or "deficient" bodies per se, but in unraveling what early modern discourses are implicitly saying about how bodies should be able to interact and operate in social spheres.

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[21] See Burnett and Comber in particular.

While Traub's and Siraisi's work is crucial to my understanding of the project of Vesalian anatomy, I wish to enrich this growing interest in early modern bodily standardization by paying attention to what Vesalius's "canon of men" should be cap*able* of doing in daily life. Siraisi and Traub's analyses rely on an interpretation of the Vesalian body as a static entity; indeed, both scholars implicitly subscribe to an understanding of Western medicine similar to that of feminist disability theorist Susan Wendell, who claims that "the body as *corpse*, not the body as lived experience, is at the heart of Western medicine" (120, emphasis Wendell's). However, Vesalius does speak to the lived experience of the body, particularly in the book on musculature in *De humani corporis fabrica*. As muscles are defined in Galenic physiology as the organs of movement, it is in this book of the *Fabrica* in particular that we see Vesalius reconfigure the dissected corpse into an entity that interacts in the social world and performs a requisite number of daily tasks. In this sense, Vesalius unravels a debate about the requisite tasks a body should be able to accomplish that parallels the debate we see between Hal's gambol masculinity and Falstaff's abrasive masculinity.

However, before I begin to discuss how Vesalius determines how the body should move and interact in the social sphere, it is necessary to clarify briefly the confusing and conflicting terminology that early modern people used to describe muscularity. Like Kemp, Shakespeare did not use the word "muscle" in any of his plays or poems, even though the word was being used frequently in literary works by the middle of the sixteenth century.[22] This is a crucial aspect of my analysis of muscularity in the early modern period; the part of the body where strength resided was referred to with different terms depending on the discourse that one examines.

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[22] The word's etymology stems from the Latin *musculos* and alludes to the notion that muscles look like mice. See "muscle, n."

Present-day anatomy textbooks differ most sharply from early modern perceptions of muscle in that the former organizes muscular tissues and structures into voluntary and involuntary muscles. Current anatomical discourse makes the distinction between skeletal muscles, which are the muscles of voluntary motion, and smooth and cardiac muscles, which are muscles of involuntary motion.[23] Early modern anatomists, however, were only concerned with those muscles that facilitated voluntary movements. As a result, physiologists in the early modern period linked together bodily structures that present-day doctors label as distinct from muscular tissue. Ligament, nerve, tendons, fat, and flesh all combined to make a muscle in early modern anatomy. For Vesalius, Harvey, and other early modern physiologists, ligament is understood under the general term *nervi,* which is often translated as sinew. But this term can refer to nerves and to sinews, and a reader typically has to determine what sense is being used from context. William Harvey, quoting Aristotle in his notes on muscularity, says that "movement is to be related more correctly to sinews [*recitus in nervos referatur matus*]" (68-9), and that sinews often serve the purpose of fastening muscles with joints [*quaecunque operosas motiones faciunt vincula, caetera nervis vinciuntur ut in articulis*]" (70-1). This function of fastening the muscle to the bones or joints is often applied to *nervi*. In associating ligament with sinew, Vesalius draws on the Latin meaning of the term ligament as "a things that binds." Sinew or ligament is a hard, yet flexible, white substance that "has various functions in the human frame to do with binding, containing, and protecting" the muscle. Sinews "surround certain bodies" of the muscle "like a protective garment" (102). Ligament combines with nerve initially, and then splits at the head of the muscle; flesh weaves the split fibers of ligament and nerve

[23] See Marieb 312.

together in a soft substance before the ligament and nerve come together again to form the tendon of a muscle (102). Of course, Shakespeare does not make these differentiations as precisely as an anatomist would. For him, sinew becomes the primary body part that signifies physical strength, athletic and martial prowess. Women do not have sinews in Shakespeare's plays. Sinew remains a body part possessed exclusively by the bellicose and brawny, and the evocation of the word to describe a person signals a desirable masculinity. Yet the term is also evoked in moments when the presence or proper functioning of sinew is in question. It becomes a measure of physical masculinity.

Why did early modern writers use this word, sinew, and not others? "Sinew" is not a Latinate word, but an English one with Germanic origins. For its literal definition, the term does correlate with the definition of a tendon or ligament in Vesalius and the Aristotelian definition of *nervi* put forth in Harvey's notes: "A strong fibrous cord serving to connect a muscle with a bone or other part." Sinew does not refer to the actual muscle, but a piece of tissue that connects the muscle to the body. The term assumes a more symbolic significance by the mid-sixteenth century, around the time that Shakespeare was growing up and was a young writer. The *Oxford English Dictionary* states that in the 1560s and 1570s, more metaphorical phrases began using sinew to refer to strength or force, or the strength or force of something ("sinew, n.").

So the flesh of a muscle, which we see bulging underneath the skin, is not the sign of strength; rather, the sinews, the hidden cords and threads that hold that flesh together, give the body its power and ability to move. The fact that masculine strength becomes physically rooted in a more hidden dimension of the body indicates a societal need to make sure that muscularity, and therefore masculinity, is not readily apparent on the surface of the body. Like the sinews of a

muscle, masculinity must be uncovered and untangled. The power of sinew as a signifier of masculinity lies in the fact that it is not readily apparent on the surface of the body.[24]

With this understanding of the anatomical terminology under our belt, I now wish to refocus my initial discussion of the early modern standard body. Much of Siraisi's, Traub's, and other scholars' discussions of this standard hone in on the famous muscleman plates that precede the text of Vesalius's second book. While the depiction of these figures, posing in idealized pastoral settings, certainly reifies the young, male muscular body as a standard according to which other bodies must be measured, I do think that scholars have looked at these plates in such a way that the movements and fluctuations of the figures are ignored; despite being in mid-action, these figures are approached as corpses, detached from the societies that are often portrayed in the background in the plates. However, Vesalius's text presents a deeper, hidden story. In describing each muscle, Vesalius also has to describe what each muscle is for, and this necessarily entails resurrecting the corpse and resituating it in society.

As Book II of Vesalius's work opens, he concurs with Galen in defining the muscle as "the proper instrument of voluntary movement or movement that depends on our own impulse" (111). But by claiming that muscle is the organ of voluntary motion, Vesalius then has to qualify which voluntary motions are important. Thus, along with describing the physical properties of each muscle in the human body, Vesalius also creates a catalog of human movements in Book II.

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[24] Karen Newman notes how patriarchal culture in the early modern period marked bodies as female through features that lie very much on the surfaces of bodies: cosmetics, clothes, jewelry, etc. In fact, women's bodies are coded as female through characteristics that are not even a part of the physical body, but that are endowed with so much cultural significance that they seem to become a part of the body (6).

This catalog, which I call the "canon of motions," speaks to the assumptions Vesalius makes about what actions the human body should be capable of doing. The canon includes: chewing (181), "blowing, speaking, coughing, sneezing" (283), pushing out a fetus (290-1), pushing needles or scalpels, kneading and rubbing objects with the hands (327), maintaining an erection and ejaculating (104-5; 385), work such as softening leather or baking bread (394), running (397), being able to stand on one leg and stretch the other leg back (414), rising on tip-toe (437), dancing (450), and carrying large burdens (450). While many of these actions may seem so commonplace and obvious that they need no commentary, it is precisely because these acts seem so ordinary that we need to consider how Vesalius uses these illustrative actions to codify the basic movements that a standard human body should be able to perform. The canon privileges a body that has hands able to work with the "instruments of the arts" (327); a body that can see and speak, a body that can reproduce, and a body capable of athletic feats. The canon implicitly ostracizes those who possess bodies incapable of these basic motions. In a similar vein, Falstaff facetiously exposes this kind of ostracizing tone in his speech to Doll. Those men who are not capable of, say, taking part in drinking games or playing fashionable athletic games are relegated to the margins of courtly masculinity.

Furthermore, I would argue that Vesalius's canon of motions not only marks basic actions of a human body, but privileges actions on a class basis—much like Falstaff in his speech. When Vesalius mentions movements such as softening leather or baking bread, he does so from an observational perspective: "We see the lower leg moved in this way by people who use their feet to soften leather on wooden platforms, or when bakers in many countries knead the dough by treading on it" (394). It seems as if movements associated with the artisan classes are useful examples, but the people who make these motions are not part of the "we" that Vesalius

evokes when discussing these movements of the lower leg. When it comes to movements that contribute to economic labor, Vesalius consciously discusses the movements of the hand that enable one to push a needle or scalpel; in other words, he privileges the anatomist with having the body that can best exercise the canon of motions. The learned man who is skilled in the arts, in possession of all of his senses, fertile and athletic becomes the standard body when we look at the story being told to us by the canon of motions.[25]

We see a canon of motions in the treatises of other anatomists as well. In his anatomy text *The History of Man* (1578), John Banister, the English surgeon, discusses motions similar to those of Vesalius, adding the capability of hollowing, crying, and blowing a trumpet (101) and the ability to climb walls, trees, and large rocks (108). Moreover, Banister discusses muscles in a way that does not emphasize what movement the muscle makes possible. In his discussion of the muscles in the face, Banister claims that these muscles exist "for the beauty of the face answerable to the rest of the body" (90). In moments like these in the *The History of Man*, we continue to see how many facets of human physiology that present-day people would define as "biological" are, for Banister and other anatomists, deeply rooted in cultural values concerning work, beauty, and, bodily acceptability. In considering facial beauty and appearance, Wendell notes how a physical feature such as facial scarring is a "disability of appearance only," and that ostracization of people with facial scars shows exactly how "the power of culture alone to construct a disability is revealed when we consider bodily differences—deviations from a society's conception of a 'normal' or acceptable body—that, although they cause little or no functional or physical difficulty for the person who has them, constitute major social disabilities"

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[25] For more on how the ideal body in the early modern period was thought to be the right of the upper classes, see Comber 187.

(44). Banister's comments on the function of facial muscles complicate Wendell's assessment. For Banister, beauty of the face is a *natural* function of the facial muscles. The fact that this beauty is "answerable to the rest of the body" reflects a concern, I think, to establish a proportion of beauty in which the muscles of the face create a beauty that correlates with the beauty of the body. But the idea that the muscles of the face are "answerable" to the body reveals Banister's use of social, communicative metaphors to describe how the muscles of the body interact with each other. This small example shows just how early modern notions of the natural and the social overlap.

We see an additional example of this overlap in Vesalius's discussion of the muscles of the bladder. In describing one muscle that regulates the excretion of urine, Vesalius claims that:

> Nature fashioned it primarily for this purpose, that it should govern the channel of the bladder and insure that the transverse fibers of the bladder should not excrete urine by their own natural movement and without our consent. It was necessary that the actions of excreting waste from the body should be voluntary; for if perchance the expulsion of excrement were entrusted entirely to natural movement, wastes would be continually dripping down, and apart from the fact that we would find this extremely disgusting, it would impinge most detrimentally on many actions that we perform in our daily lives. (387)

Nature plays a complicated and even contradictory role when it comes to the use of this bladder muscle. Nature fashions this muscle so that this muscle moves voluntarily, but not continually; as such, both voluntary and natural movements are enabled by Nature. Moreover, if excretion were a natural movement, Vesalius takes care to note how "we would find this extremely disgusting;" social values governing acceptable and unacceptable bodily motions, proper and disgusting

bodily functions, manifest themselves here. Moreover, Vesalius's claim that the inability to control one's bladder would interrupt daily life suggests how much Vesalius is implicitly channeling ideas about human productivity and activity. The inability to control one's bladder as being a "detriment" puts in place a system that values bodies that possess better control over their functions. And it marginalizes bodies that do not possess these controls: infants and children, the elderly, people with particular illnesses and physical impairments. What both Vesalius and we take to be a basic human function—control of excretion—actually marginalizes large groups of people as disgusting and unable to perform work.

Vesalius's text works with the age-old tension in the study of medicine between anatomy and physiology, or form and function. We find not only an idea of how the standard body should look, but also descriptions of what the human body should be able to do. Each muscle is given a function, and these functions, if taken together, add up to a set of standards for the body's functions and movements. Even more than the depictions of young, male, muscular bodies we see in the illustrative plates, this canon of motions creates a conception of a standard functioning body that excludes more bodies than one would think. As the figures in the muscleman plates move, showing their grace and athletic strength, they also nod toward the cities that punctuate the backgrounds of the landscapes they occupy, showing what a body should be capable of doing in order to be fit for society.

Perverted Gymnastics: Alternative Notions of Athleticism in Girolamo Mercuriale

As much as athleticism, flexibility, and agility seem to be positive features of the standard body, others in the classical and early modern world dismissed the figure of the athlete as a false bodily ideal. A few early modern writers sought to reformulate Western cultural history

by taking the stance that many well-regarded Greek and Roman cultural institutions and values, such as athletics, signaled the decay of the form of the human body, as well as the proliferation of diseases and deformities. For this alternate discourse, one should consider the work of the Italian physician Girolamo Mercuriale (1530-1606). Mercuriale's book *De arte gymnastica libri sex* (1569) was not quite as popular or culturally significant as Vesalius's *Fabrica*, but it was the first history of exercise of its kind, drawing on a vast number of ancient Greek and Roman sources, and its influence is felt in a number of English books, most notably Richard Mulcaster's *Positions Concerning the Training up of Children* (1581). A couple of things need to be contended with concerning Mercuriale's text. First, as Siraisi has noted, Mercuriale writes a history of gymnastics that is meant to complement a history of the human body as slowly degenerating over the course of history ("History" 238). *De arte* begins with the supposition that in ancient times, there was no need for medicine. However:

> When that abominable plague of intemperance, the refined arts of the cook, the exquisitely subtle spices used at feasts and the foreign ways of mixing wine invaded mankind, multifarious kinds of diseases began to proliferate, and necessitated the discovery of medicine: it would certainly have been possible to do without it for ever, had not human—or rather bestial—gluttony, the offspring of all vices, rendered its use most necessary of all. (11)

Mercuriale here creates an alternative fall of mankind in which, once again, forbidden eating becomes the source of all bodily woes. And it is intemperance [*intemperantiae*] that spurs the fall. Failure to find a medium in eating and consumption leads to illness. Mercuriale is of the opinion that the number and kinds of illnesses have proliferated since humankind fell for the sin of gluttony, and he lists some of these horrifying diseases and their debilitating effects (17). In

many ways, Mercuriale is linking diseases that cause impairments to "the offspring of all vices," suggesting that there is a link between gluttony and impairment.

But what we must go away with when it comes to Mercuriale's history is how he locates the ideal, disease-free, strong body in the earliest Greek and Roman past, when there was a greater emphasis on gymnastic exercise. In the dedication to the 1573 edition, Mercuriale calls for the resurrection of gymnastics and exercise, stating a hope that we "may summon it from the grave, and bring it once more to the sight of men and to the light, should the inclination of a prince turn in that direction, and men of learning, well schooled in Antiquity, be found to begin the task and to strain all the sinews of their intellect in this pursuit" (5). To bring back the art of gymnastics requires a muscular/intellectual effort in which the "sinews of the intellect" are pushed to reinstate the glory of the art and the benefits to the body that gymnastics would bring.

Intemperance and muscularity figure in compelling ways into Mercuriale's description of the bodies and lifestyles of athletes. Mercuriale distinguishes three types of gymnastics. Military gymnastics consists of practices soldiers use to gain skill in warfare; medical or legitimate (*legitima sive medica*) gymnastics consists of exercises meant to help a person develop a healthy constitution; and perverted gymnastics (*vitiosa gymnastica*) or athletics were practiced by those wishing to develop strength and win competitions. To begin, one must note how Mercuriale's terminology betrays his desire to cast out athletics from the more acceptable forms of gymnastics. In his use of the term *vitiosa*, which can mean perverted or defective, Mercuriale ascribes a proto-ableist label to athletics, linking it to deformity and corruption. Mercuriale establishes the link between athletics and deformity by creating a history of athletics that mirrors the history of the body that he outlined at the beginning of *De arte gymnastica*. Referencing Pliny, Mercuriale claims: "Gymnastic games were founded by Lycaon, the athletic by Hercules

at Olympia, so that this art has two fathers. Although they were men of distinction and instituted an art that was at first illustrious and worthy of admiration, later it became so corrupted and adulterated by the long passage of time and the wicked ways of men" (177). Taking its patronage from the queer, morally pure pairing of two mythological men, athletics becomes subject to mutilation and bastardization, much in the same way that the human body becomes corrupt and deformed due to the sin of gluttony.

The adulteration of athletics is given even more resonance when Mercuriale describes how athletics introduces characteristics that are undesirable to society. Paraphrasing Plutarch, Mercuriale claims that "nothing introduced effeminacy and slavery into Greece as much as this perverted gymnastics" (179); Mercuriale also quotes Aristotle when affirming that "athletes' limbs are often deformed, since their great gluttony stops their nature from digesting food and distributing it equally throughout the body" (189). Athletics are othered repeatedly in *De arte gymnastica*; furthermore, Mercuriale continues his ableist agenda by linking the deformity of athletes' bodies with the original sin that led to the need for medicine and gymnastics to begin with—gluttony.

Indeed, Mercuriale spends many words describing the eating habits of athletes in order to emphasize the intemperance that is encouraged by perverted gymnastics. Mercuriale cites hyperbolic tales of consumption to get at his point; Milo of Croton, for instance, would eat "twenty minas [over 29 pounds] of food and a similar amount of bread, then drain to the last drop three pitchers of wine," and that he even "ate all by himself a bull he had carried, still breathing, on his shoulders" (189). Nor did athletes moderate their movements, as they would spend all day exercising, "as if they meant to deny entirely Hippocrates's universal rules for health: work, food, drink, sleep, sex, all in moderation" (191). By detailing some of the excesses

of athletes, Mercuriale reiterates standards for eating, exercise, and other bodily activities, emphasizing a mean that people should follow to maintain the health of their bodies. What is more, he makes sure to clarify that the kind of exercise that athletes practice is not for the health of the body, but for strength, and that "it is called perverted, since it aims at strength, not health" (177). Mercuriale presents a different idea about the importance of physical strength; here, the desire for strength is what "perverts" gymnastics.

Moreover, counter to what we would think regarding the male body image in the twenty-first century, Mercuriale construes the desire for physical strength as un-masculine. This attitude is established in Mercuriale's discussion of the sexual abstinence of athletes. Quoting Basil the Great, Mercuriale reiterates that athletes refrained from sex because "the body was enfeebled by the pleasures of Venus and made to weak and lazy for its necessary duties" (193). Thus linking sexual activity with physical weakness, Mercuriale implies that it is sexual activity and desire that establish a person's manliness. In discussing the measures that athletes would take to curb sexual desires, Mercuriale makes the offhand comment that these measures are "irrelevant for boys under fourteen, since they are not stimulated to sex, and after that it is agreed that they are usually called men" (195). Two things occur with this statement: Mercuriale implies that at age fourteen, boys do become stimulated to sexual desire, at which age they become men, and that this assessment is not biologically, but socially grounded—it is "agreed" that boys become men at age fourteen, when they start having erotic feelings.

When considering all these discourses together—*2 Henry IV*, *Nine Daies Wonder*, Vesalian anatomy texts, and Mercuriale's *De arte gymnastica*—we get a complex and often contradictory sense of what the ideal male body was in the early modern period, and how that male body aided in determining standards and norms for physical appearance and capability.

Many questions arise from these discourses. Could both lean and fat bodies be manly? What kinds of physical abilities matter when determining if a person is manly? Is humoral temperance or intemperance a cause of manly behavior? What these questions betray is the common notion that masculinity was determined by the ability of the body. Definitions may vary as to what masculinity or acceptable bodily ability is across these discourses, but they overwhelmingly equate manliness with a vision of corporeality that excludes deformities and aberrations in physical behavior and motion. This vision contributes to the need to hide symbolically the root of masculinity within deeper layers of the body. For a man to maintain these hypodermic layers of masculinity, he must preserve his body against the stigma of certain impairments while being open to vulnerabilities that reveal those layers. Masculinity is defined against, or according to in Falstaff's case, a nascent notion of disability, and each author takes it upon himself to determine which disabilities matter when it comes to determining masculinity.

Chapter Two

The Carpet Knight and the Myth of Effeminacy and Muscular Atrophy in *The Two Noble Ladies* and *Antony and Cleopatra*

What difference there is in honours sight,

Twixt a good Souldier and a carpet-Knight.

His perfume's powder, and his harmonie

Reports of Cannons, for his brauerie,

Barded with steele and Iron, for the voice,

Of amorous Ganimedes, the horrid noise

Of clattering armour, for a Downie bed

The chill cold ground, for pillow to their head,

Tinckt with muske Roses, Target and their shield,

For gorgeous Roomes, the purprise of the field,

For nimble capring, Marching, for the tune

Of mouing consorts, striking vp a drumme,

For dainties, hunger; thus is honour fed,

VVith labour got, and care continued.

Richard Braithwaite (1588-1673) is most well known as the author of two influential conduct books, *The English Gentleman* (1630) and *The English Gentlewoman* (1631), yet he was also a noted satirist in seventeenth-century literature. One collection of satirical poetry, *A Strappado for the Devil* (1615), contains the above section in which the goddess Bellona is asked to help her followers discern between two martial types: the "good soldier" and the "carpet knight." Braithwaite makes it clear that the environments in which the two types thrive differ sharply, showing that the labor of the good soldier nourishes honor better than the cushy lifestyle of the carpet knight. But the form of the poem calls this stark contrast into question. During his comparisons, Braithwaite makes the carpet knight's possessions and environment the standard of

comparison against which he offers the good soldier's equivalent. The carpet knight and his accoutrement are more familiar; the reader, it is assumed, is looking for soldierly equivalents to the carpet knight's perfume, his amorous Ganymedes,[26] and his downy soft bed. Braithwaite, engaging in apophatic reasoning, makes his reader discover the real soldier only through the carpet knight's negatively charged qualities.

In addition, the comparative list lacks any substantial pause, and this lack of a pause, along with the consistent enjambment, leaves the reader struggling to associate the right objects with the right type of soldier. The lack of a uniform grammatical construction of comparison—sometimes the two terms are next to each other, "his perfume's powder," sometimes they occur in a prepositional phrase, "for the voice, / Of amorous Ganimedes, the horrid noise / Of clattering armor"—further contributes to a growing sense of confusion. In a phrase such as "for a Downie bed / The chill cold ground, for pillow to their head / Tinckt with muscke Roses, Target and their shield," it takes readerly persistence to keep the referents clear. To whom does the "their" of the second line refer? In his preface to the reader, Braithwaite commands the reader to "Bee thine owne president in the surueigh of these distempered *Epigrammes*; and therein thou may performe the part of an honest man." It is almost as if Braithwaite has written a vague or "distempered" text in order to challenge his readers to engage and rewrite actively the moral meaning of the text. This process of being confused by the distempered text before finally inferring the text's true meaning comes across in this epigram on the carpet knight. The reader understands that this "their" refers to the carpet knights' pillows, but it takes a minute for the

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[26] Much has been said about early modern appropriation of the name Ganymede to refer to boys who engage in sodomy and male sex, as well as religious, literary, and humanist rewritings of that very definition. See Rambuss 54-57; Goldberg 126-137; Barkan.

reader to make this connection. Moreover, the use of the possessive plural moves the comparison from singular examples—the lone good soldier and carpet knight of the first line—to a proliferation of these figures. As the terms of comparison multiply, so does the number of carpet knights and good soldiers with which the reader has to contend.

In sum, the reader gets the sense that a clear distinction should be made between these two figures, yet the very structures of comparison undermine the reader's ability to discern. As the standard of comparison is the carpet knight in this passage, and as we only get to understand the good soldier through him, we recognize this figure of the carpet knight to act as a mediator between these two radically opposed environments. The carpet knight calls into question the mutual exclusivity of the world of soft luxury and erotic idleness with the world of the grizzled, self-denying, hardened soldier. In this sense, the enjambment in the above passage by Braithwaite speaks to the subjective enjambment that the carpet knight experiences; just as a reader may only bridge the gap between two lines of poetry by carrying the sense of the first line into the next, the carpet knight attempts to carry his meaning, his subjectivity, between two different modes of being.

As we will see particularly in my analysis of *Antony and Cleopatra*, the carpet knight calls into question the assumption made by many postcolonial, queer, and psychoanalytic scholars that erotic pleasure softens the soldier, corrupting his Stoic morals and, most importantly, causing the dissolution of his firm, muscular body. Rather, the two carpet knights I shall study, Shakespeare's Antony and the solider Sinew from the anonymous play *The Two Noble Ladies,* as well as other characters with whom they interact, consistently and even stubbornly express a belief in the permanence of soldierly musculature that does not shrink or atrophy, despite the carpet knight's inclinations to "soft" pleasures. This belief in muscle as a

self-evident and unthreatened physical reality gains strength through muscle's ability to incorporate opposing qualities, such as softness and pleasure, seamlessly into itself. This discursive insistence on musculature as an unchanging corporeal reality reinforces an early modern fantasy that bodily masculinity cannot be changed. In this sense, what the following two plays attempt to do counters the abrasive masculinity for which Falstaff advocated in *2 Henry IV*. Both *The Two Noble Ladies* and *Antony and Cleopatra* are invested in creating a type of masculinity free from the impairing effects of sexual activity, a masculinity hidden underneath the surface of the body that is difficult, if not impossible, to access, and which absorbs the effects of lived existence without itself changing.

The carpet knights Antony and Sinew exhibit softness and hardness, dotage and strength, when they are represented as characters whose bodies consistently incorporate aspects of martial and erotic environments. Scholars such as Ania Loomba, Lisa S. Starks, and Cynthia Marshall explain Antony's loss of self by focusing upon how the Roman general finds himself caught in the play's many binarisms (Egypt versus Rome, masculine versus feminine, East versus West, etc.) or how he suffers from Freudian melancholy. However, in characterizations of Antony's body that occur in the play's real time and in recollections of a past martial Antony, we see a body that has always been defined by the conflation of daintiness and asceticism, and that fights forcefully against muscular atrophy. The anonymous Jacobean play *The Two Noble Ladies* makes it very clear that understanding the carpet knight means looking at that knight's musculature. *The Two Noble Ladies*'s carpet knight is muscle personified, and Sinew (or sinew) necessarily becomes our reference point for understanding the character. Despite the character's lovesickness, the shrinkage of Sinew's muscles is never questioned. Sinew represents the consolidation of the carpet knight character through his muscles, but ironically, this definition of

the carpet knight as a physically enfeebled man emerged out of the first definitions of a carpet knight as a soft man.

Looking at the etymology of the "carpet knight" shows how the definition of this word solidified into a very specific moral, sexual, and social male type. This history of the word begins by correcting an error in the *Oxford English Dictionary* that I discovered upon first looking up the term. "Carpet knight" was introduced into English not by George Whetstone in 1576, as the *OED* claims. Rather, Arthur Golding, famous for his 1567 translation of the first four books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, used the term in his translation of Leonardo Bruni's text *The historie of Leonard Aretine concerning the warres betwene the Imperialles and the Gothes for the possession of Italy* (1563). A marginal note referring to a Roman general Maximus, who fought under the emperor Justinian, calls the general "a cowardly carpet knight" (110). Also in the 1560s, Barnabe Googe (1540-1594) used the term in his translation of the first three books of Marcellus Palingenius's *Zodiacus Vitae.* Palingenius's satiric epic was placed on the Catholic Church's list of banned books in the 1550s; much of the text, including this portion in which Googe's carpet knight appears, rails against luxury and the pleasures of the world as ungodly:

> For lofty landes dose cause a man,
> for to excell in pride:
> Thimmortall gods for to despise,
> and men for to deride.
> Without all rule, a carpet knight
> and vertues mortall foe:
> For who doth vertue ought regarde,
> when riches swelleth so?

When referring to Palingenius's Latin, it seems fair to say that Googe took it from common usage: Palingenius's man who is "insanum, mollemque facit [a man made foolish and soft]" becomes "without all rule, a carpet knight." The context of the phrase's usage in Googe's English lends the name a more general sense than its more recognizable, *OED* definition as "a contemptuous term for a knight whose achievements belong to 'the carpet' (i.e. the lady's boudoir, or carpeted chamber) instead of to the field of battle."[27] Rather, Googe takes this soft, foolish man from the original text, approximates his traits to a social type, the carpet knight, from common usage, and introduces the word in such a way that it looks as if the carpet knight is merely a man inclined to luxury and covetousness, not the very specific soldier of the boudoir that we see in later early modern texts. Googe's carpet knight is not written off as sexually promiscuous or effeminate; instead, he is physically and morally softened by luxury and material wealth.

We begin to see the more well-known sense of the word reflected in Whetstone's *The Rocke of Regard*, a miscellany of prose and poetry. In Whetstone's text, a soldier who is unwittingly about to marry a secretly betrothed noblewoman obsesses over his wedding plans, taking care to consult with the "carpet knights" about staging masques and entertainments (55). The phrase then appears to have caught on in poetic circles. Four years after Whetstone's miscellany appears, the poet Humphrey Gifford published a book of poems and bits of prose in *A Posie of Gilloflowers*. The collection features one poem, "For Souldiers," which is less an ode to

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[27] See "carpet-knight, n." Earlier version first published in *New English Dictionary*, 1888. In the second half of the sixteenth century, carpets were seen as luxuries for women's chambers and thus became associated with effeminacy and inactivity; see "carpet, n. 2b."

martial bravery than a call to idle carpet knights to be strong, courageous, and unshrinking. The speaker refers to "those curious carpet knights" who choose to "spende the time in sport & play" (13), to go abroad to war again, and "not to make your Ladies game, bring blemish to your worthy name" (15). And, in a translation of the *Iliad*, Arthur Hall refers to Paris multiple times as a "luckie carpet knight," escaping Menelaus only through the intervention of Venus (58).

This hard man gone soft, the soldier whose sexual dalliances are feared to culminate in effeminacy and weakness, was staged as a curiosity, or an object of scrutiny, in the early modern period. Although the carpet knights above appear in early modern poetry, the drama of the early modern period focuses more upon the physicality and musculature of the carpet knight. He moves between two opposed words: the toughened asceticism of martial life and the stereotypically softened world of sexual pleasures.[28] What the drama of the period does with the carpet knight is look closely at the effects of his movement between these two worlds; poetry of the period uses the phrase more or less as a quick derogatory epithet without looking closely at the carpet knight's ambiguous gender, sexual, and physical status. The carpet knight becomes open to a more nuanced analysis of his complicated social and physical standing in drama than in poetry.

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[28] Many scholars have noted how ejaculation was associated with a loss of masculinity, and orgasm with a shortened life or death, in the early modern period. Breitenberg states this association very succinctly in *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England*: "The paradox in this [early modern] cultural and anatomical code is that if the generation of semen (heated blood) is the most quintessentially masculine moment, it is also, finally, just a moment. Thus ejaculation represents the supreme moment of masculine disempowerment *and* vulnerability—a literal and figurative 'emptying out' of the masculine principle" (50).

The Constant Sinew That Will Never Shrink: *The Two Noble Ladies*

The anonymous Jacobean play *The Two Noble Ladies* stages the relationship between musculature, masculinity, and eroticism very apparently in its portrayal of Sinew, a soldier turned carpet knight who tries to win the affection of a woman named Caro. This deliberate naming of the character restages this part of the plot as an allegorical vivisection, as a story in which the audience becomes witness to its own anxiety that male musculature changes under the influence of sexual desire.[29] More generally, readers of the play get a sense of the horror of and fascination with muscle in the early modern period. To go along with Shigehisa Kuriyama's claim that "fascination with musculature was a peculiarly Western phenomenon" (8), especially in Galenic physiology, audience members of *The Two Noble Ladies*, as well as the other characters in the play, are forced to look at Sinew with both fascinated disgust and longing. Sinew's musculature demands to be looked upon and scrutinized for its desirability and ugliness, its firmness and unshrinkability. And it is because Sinew plays a questionable gender and social role as a carpet knight that his muscularity becomes an object of scrutiny.

Before speculating about the author of *The Two Noble Ladies* and the portrayal of its love-stricken muscleman, it is worth summarizing the unique textual history of this play. The source of *The Two Noble Ladies*, MS. Egerton 1994 in the British Library, contains manuscripts and fair copies of fifteen early modern dramatic pieces. The younger William Cartwright, an actor and bookseller who collected the play manuscripts during the Civil Wars, assembled the full manuscript in the Restoration years (Boas 108). The fact that many of these pieces circulated

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[29] For more on how early modern masculinity necessarily involves the expression of anxiety over masculinity, see Breitenberg.

in actual early modern playhouses during rehearsals and performances has made this manuscript compendium more well known for the information it provides about sixteenth- and seventeenth-century play staging than for the actual content of the plays contained within.

The eleventh piece in the set is a fair copy and prompt book of the hybrid "trage-comicall Historie" *The Two Noble Ladies,*[30] *Or the Converted Coniurer*, performed between 1619 and 1623 at the Red Bull (Rhoads vii). The text is presumably written in the hand of its anonymous author, a figure whom scholars have quietly marked as an opportunist and dilettante: the deviation of the manuscript from standard prompt-book format has led critics to believe that the author was an ambitious greenhorn who brought his script to a playhouse, not a hired playwright (Rhoads vi). Additionally, Lois Potter implies, in her critical introduction to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, that the play's title was chosen merely in order to capitalize on the success of a revival in 1619-1620 of the Fletcher and Shakespeare collaboration (71).[31] The claims about the author of *The Two Noble Ladies* have been dismissive at best, but the text's sexual and religious sensationalism reveal a playwright who was extremely attuned to the tastes of Jacobean audiences and who was adept at satisfying those tastes.

In the few critical analyses of the play, scholars hone in on the stories of the two female protagonists, Miranda and Justina. Taking place during a fictional martial conflict between Antioch and Egypt, the play's preoccupation with violence in war is accentuated by the shocking sexual violence that the two noblewomen confront and overcome. Justina, a princess of Antioch,

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[30] See Rhoads vi-vii; Boas 99.

[31] Potter also states the two noble ladies of the title are "not it [the play's] main subject," and that it is possible that "the play's title was chosen in response to the revival of [*The Two Noble Kinsmen*]."

escapes the slaughter of her family and narrowly avoids gang rape by a group of soldiers. Throughout most of the play, she steadfastly relies on her Christian faith in order to resist the seductions of Cyprian, a conjurer who uses witchcraft and the assistance of a demonic spirit, Cantharides, to try to break down Justina's defenses. Justina eventually manages to convert Cyprian to Christianity, leading him to become the "Converted Conjurer" of the play's subtitle. Miranda, a princess of Egypt, flees her country in the disguise of a solider when her father attempts to rape and marry her. Miranda eventually marries Lysander, the play's hero, at the conclusion. The two women receive scholarly attention as the motivators of the play's religious and erotic themes. Both women confront sexual violence and attempted rape, and their adherence to virtue, whether or not explicitly Christian in nature, celebrates virgin martyrdom and the dominance of Christian faith over Stoicism and witchcraft.[32] The two charismatic, faithful women become litmus tests for the strength of female sexual morality as it becomes threatened by unchristian, sexual transgressions.

For some scholars, the themes of sexual violence and witchcraft resonate in *The Two Noble Ladies*'s comic subplot, in which a courtesan named Caro (from the Latin *caro*, flesh) is tricked by Cantharides into proclaiming her affections to three suitably named suitors: Barebones, a scholar; Bloud, a courtier; and Sinew, a soldier. Verbal sparring and trickery ensue between the three paramours as each falls in and out of favor with Caro, and the plot comes to a conclusion when Cantharides bites each of the four characters, causing all of them to fall into a laughing fit of insanity and demonic possession. The fact that Caro's desire is so easily altered and redirected by one of the play's conjurers acts as a foil to the play's overarching concern with

[32] See Munroe 186; Cox 205; Bamford 53-9; Williamson 151-2.

Miranda's and Justina's constancy in the face of the conjurers' attempt to manipulate their desires (Bamford 186).

Despite these astute interpretations of the play's portrayal of sexual violence and demonic possession, it is surprising that no analysis of the subplot considers what I call the complex "drama of the body" highlighted by the names of the characters and the nature of their interactions with one another. The subplot is a comic allegory of the body's parts and what happens when a demonic spirit possesses that body. In this sense, the two plots of *The Two Noble Ladies* overlap in their concern with what happens when demonic possession and paganism infect bodies politic and physical bodies. Sinew becomes such a key figure in this drama because strength and the condition of a person's sinews were major indicators of demonic possession. Two out of the three signs of possession listed in King James' *Daemonologie* (1597) are concerned with changes in muscularity. One sign was "the incredible strength of the possessed creature, which will farre exceede the strength of six of the wightest and wodest" men that were not possessed, and muscular rigidity, "an ironie hardnes of his sinnowes so stiffelie bended out, that it were not possible to prick out as it were the skinne of anie other person so far." In the case of Sinew, the play's carpet knight, we see resistance to possession through repeated claims that his sinews have not changed, and that the muscularity that he possesses is "normal" or "common." Yet, Sinew works to reconcile his amorousness with his status as a soldier, and he does this by drawing attention to his muscularity as evidence that he can reconcile both of these personal attributes.

Sinew plays with common, gendered understandings of such theoretical concepts as the power dynamics of the gaze and early modern notions of sexual constancy to create for himself a space in which sexual desire, manliness, and muscular prowess can coexist within a single

subject. He achieves this by being first cast into the role of a carpet knight, a role that necessarily calls into question all three of these aspects of early modern male existence. Lysander, Sinew's commander, chastises the lovesick soldier for abandoning his post in pursuit of Caro:

> *Lys*: Y'are turn'd a carpet knight, are fall'n in loue,
>
> And given to Idlenesse.
>
> *Barebones*: Alas my lord, i' tis not he delights in idlenesse;
>
> He would fain bee doing, but that another has got his worke out of his hand.
>
> (2.2.77-81)

Although Lysander uses the "carpet knight" epithet in an accusatory manner, implying that Sinew has passively been "given" and "fall'n", Adam-like, into this idle state, the work of this small exchange is to redefine the role of the "carpet knight." In this scene, Barebones does not refute Sinew's status as a carpet knight, nor his lovesickness, but rather challenges the common assumption that a carpet knight is idle and therefore made "soft." Sinew, as a carpet knight, does not delight in idleness; he would prefer to be "doing" his "worke," yet another, the courtier Bloud, is doing that work for him. The strain and work of the soldier on the battlefield are redirected and transformed into the erotic work of the bedroom. With Barebones's denial of idleness, this work becomes just as morally legible as martial work. *The Two Noble Ladies* sees carpet soldiery become a legitimate form of soldiery, one that does not result, as it is assumed, in the softening of the soldier's muscles into "effeminate" flesh.

At first, the audience's impression of Sinew is that of a defeated soldier, a person whose muscular strength has failed him. When lamenting his lovesickness to Barebones, Sinew narrates that "The little God of Loue has coudgell'd the great god of warre out of mee; in which conflict I

was wounded to the hart with the loue of *Mrs. Caro*...and vnlesse poore Sinew be infolded in that flesh, I shall remayne in a moste miserable case" (2.2.30-33). The salve to Sinew's woundedness lies in Caro's flesh. As the author intertwines erotic and medical discourses, Sinew implies that being "covered" in Caro would heal him and sexually satisfy him. What this small anatomy lesson also does is direct attention to how the tissues of the body interact. The comic subplot is not based on humoral physiology; instead, the bones and tissues of the body are granted their own dramatic, chaotic power.

The supposed exposure and defeat of this muscleman becomes more questionable when Barebones describes Sinew to Sinew himself: "I doubt not the strength and toughnesse of your loue, being a souldier and your name *Sinew*, I assure my selfe you will not shrinke willingly" (2.2.47-49). When looking at the grammar of this passage, it is clear that Barebones's observations of Sinew—his name and his status—could support both of his claims: Barebones does not doubt Sinew because of his name and status, and he assures himself that Sinew will not "shrinke" because of his name and status.

With both readings as possibilities, Sinew's strength and the power of his musculature are affirmed and redirected. In the first reconstruction of the sentence, "I doubt not the strength and toughnesse of your loue, being a souldier and your name *Sinew,"* Barebones makes it clear that falling in love and being a tough, strong man are not mutually exclusive. Rather, Sinew's *love* must be tough and strong because of Sinew's status as a muscle and as a muscular man. Love does not diminish Sinew's muscularity or his capabilities as a solider; instead, Sinew's musculature toughens his amatory devotion. In the second reconstruction of the sentence, "being a souldier and your name *Sinew*, I assure my selfe you will not shrinke willingly," one must first understand why Barebones comments upon the unlikely event of Sinew's "shrinkage." When

first used in the English language, the verb "to shrink" often referred to shrinking sinews. In the early modern period, a shrinking muscle or sinew signals a breakdown in the strength and vitality of that muscle, and the *OED*'s entries illustrate the use of the word especially when the term describes the muscles of defeated or demoralized soldiers ("shrink, v."). However, Barebones is assured that Sinew will not shrink because he is a soldier and he is sinew, muscle, strength personified. The anxiety that sinew would shrink is assuaged because, according to Barebones's logic, sinew does not shrink. Muscle intrinsically embodies and expresses strength and force. Moreover, if one looks at the sentence as a whole, it is implied that Sinew's love for Caro will not shrink willingly. As we saw in Mercuriale's book, which emphasized the importance of sex to a man's good health, the constancy of erotic devotion and the toughness of muscle become intertwined in *The Two Noble Ladies*. Eroticism and muscular prowess mutually enable one another.

Sinew's last appearance onstage is built around affirming his constancy of amatory devotion and muscularity. In the final scene of the subplot, Sinew attempts to separate Bloud and Caro by disguising himself as a messenger conveying a request from Bloud's superior, Lord Colactus. Drawing from a common conception of sinew as a connective part of the body—that which binds all of the body's flesh, bones, and organs together—Sinew portrays himself as the communicative part of this body in flux, conveying messages from one part to the other. Yet his mission fails when Bloud, unaware of Sinew's disguise, decides to "venture a little of my Lords displeasure" rather than leave Caro behind (5.3.1501). In this part of the "drama of the body," the parts of the body not only misrecognize but also disobey each other. Curiously, Cantharides decides to wreak irrevocable havoc on this body already in turmoil. Bloud's betrayal becomes

Cantharides's "cue," and Cantharides begins systematically biting each of the characters.[33] However, the final demonic possession of the body is cued when Bloud makes the final, unnatural decision to disobey his master and the social order of which he is a part. His actions, at this moment, reflect that he has been possessed; the demon is merely cued to make this possession outwardly manifest. The image of a consuming Cantharides biting into the characters reflects a body consumed by its desires. As Sinew, Bloud, and the others are bitten, all of them begin "halloing" or uttering monosyllables such as "*sa sa sa tarararara*" before they exit the stage, never to return for another scene (4.3.79, 99). Language is lost, and consequentially the characters depart from one another; the audience sees the body and mind finally disintegrate, linguistically and physically, on stage. Yet before this moment occurs, Sinew throws off his disguise and proclaims, "Deare *Caro*, you may see a courtiers loue is quickly tyr'd; now my disguise is of, you know mee for your souldier...Now looke on mee, your constant *Sinew* that will never shrinke" (4.3.94-5).

The multiple cues that the characters receive reinscribe the scene as aware of its very theatricality. This theatricality is heightened when Sinew throws off his disguise to reveal the soldier beneath. The image of a cloak tossed away to reveal the true "sinew" is purposefully

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[33] Biting appears to be a fairly uncommon occurrence in early modern drama. In *The Spanish Tragedy* (1586) by Thomas Kyd, the character Hieronimo bites off his own tongue, and in *Titus Andronicus* (1592), the titular character wonders if he and his sons Marcus and Lucius should cut off their hands and bite their tongues off in solidarity with their mangled daughter and sister Lavinia (III.i.130-131). "Biting your thumb" was also an insulting gesture in the early modern period: in the very first scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, the Capulet Samson insult the Montague Abraham by biting his thumb at him (I.i.36-41).

evocative of the famous écorché images of the period, particularly those in Juan Valverde de Amusco's *Anatomia del corpo humano* (1560), drawn by Gaspar Beccera (fig. 1). A student of Michelangelo, Beccera is said to have copied his teacher's depiction of the self-flaying Saint Bartholomew in *The Last Judgment,*[34] with the dagger in his left hand to signify the saint's martyrdom.[35] Due to Beccera's rendering, the traits of the Saint Bartholomew image became common écorché tropes in physiological manuals. Beccera also possibly drew influence from the Apollo Belvedere, a Roman statue that was a copy of a fourth century BCE sculpture (Long 70).

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[34] See Rifkin 31; Cazort 39.

[35] Much has been said about how the religious and medical come together with these images of dissected, flayed figures. Vesalius details how to remove the skin from a cadaver in the *Fabrica*, indicating that this was common during early modern anatomy lectures. Early modern people would have also been familiar with flayed martyrs such as Saint Bartholomew. See Sawday and Park for more on this "culture of dissection" in the Renaissance.

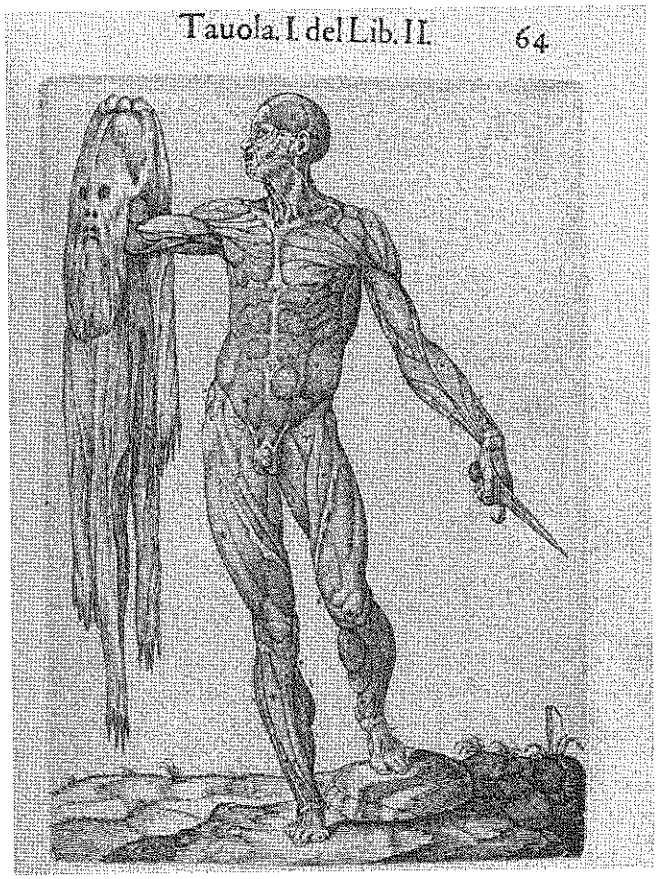

Fig. 1. Écorché, engraved illustration by Gaspar Beccera from Juan Valverde de Amusco, *Anatomia del corpo humano* (Salamanca, 1560; 64).

We cannot help but notice the difference between the hardness and firmness of the figure's muscles as compared to the soft, limp skin over which he prevails. Phallic mastery becomes central to understanding the power dynamics of the image. Flaccidity and impotence have been cut away by the use of the ithyphallic dagger in the figure's left hand. What is more, the removal of the figure's skin reveals not only the muscle underneath, but letters. These letters, denoting specific muscles, suggest a poetry of muscle hidden in the human form. The proto-experimental nature of this poetry pops out at us if we look at the odd arrangement of letters spread across the figure's body. As readers of this image and the text that explains it, we must be

able to follow the rules of this language: the sequence of parts, the narrative these letters tell about muscle, and the enjambment of these letters as they cause our eye to hop from sequence to sequence. Upon a first look at these letters, our eyes run smoothly over letters in individual sections of this body, yet our gaze cannot help but halt abruptly when we attempt to comprehend the "muscle poem" as a whole. We also must interrupt our reading of the image by referring to Amusco's explanations of the letters. The act of reading this poem is smooth and staggered; it suggests that smoothness and a soft gaze, despite the apparent hardness of muscle, is actually integral to understanding muscle fully. The carpet knight illuminates this coexistence of softness and hardness, a staggered and also smooth gaze, when it comes to an understanding of muscular bodies. That is, the hardness of muscle seems self-evident, but the very way we read those muscles shows how muscle demands the use of softness or a soft gaze in order to be legible.

Despite the contrast in textures in the image and the revealing of letters as well as muscle, most critics look at the image in more metaphysical terms. Michael Sappol suggests that the image dramatizes a separation of body and soul: "The skin's distorted face has the appearance of a ghost or a cloud, suggesting that spirit has been separated from, or peeled off of, the fleshy inner man" (19). The cleanliness of the separation of the man's skin (or soul) from his muscled body, as well as the evidence that he has performed this separation himself with the dagger, has led scholars such as Valerie Traub and to conclude that Beccera's image stages either a desire for an easy division of the soul from the body during death or the moral cleanliness of a Christian death. Moreover, Traub remarks on how this image neatly obscures the reality of the

disintegrating dissected body by presenting an intact musculature, free of messy bodily fluids and disintegrating tissues.[36]

Traub's interpretation as to how the anatomical bodies of these drawings are "staged" implies a narrative element in the presentation of the image; by its very theatricality, the figure requires a background story. It comes as no surprise that Mimi Cazort mentions the Amusco drawing in a section of her book that notes the "theatricality" of the body's gestures in anatomical drawing. Cazort states that this theatricality of the body emerges because sixteenth-century anatomists were trying to tell a narrative of emotion. What this entails is insisting upon the point I made in Chapter One: that the dissected corpse be conceptualized as if it were alive. Cazort affirms how important it was for anatomists "to represent the cadaver, écorché, or skeleton as alive, *capable* of moving or maintaining a posture, and responding to *his* predicament with emotions ranging from self-pity to glee" (27, emphasis mine). Cazort implicitly makes the case here that early modern anatomists wanted to illustrate the dissected cadaver as alive because that type of representational strategy would make anatomy students and the public as a whole understand the human body as an instrument that deploys various kinetic and emotional abilities. What makes Cazort's analysis even more compelling is how she conflates the theatricality of the male body with that body's physical abilities.[37]

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[36] Valerie Traub says of the staging of bodies in early modern anatomical drawing: "Whether surrounded by a minimalist rendition of an antique landscape or reduced to a broken piece of classical statuary, the corporeal schema codified by Vesalius is fantastically devoid of disease, irregularity, morbidity, or the marks made on the flesh through the processes of living, labor, and dying" ("Nature" 53).

[37] Bruce R. Smith has even speculated "The very qualities of body that produce good

Traub, Siraisi, and Cazort's readings of the theatricality of dissected bodies are made possible by Judith Butler's concept of the performativity of bodies, but I propose that the author of *The Two Noble Ladies* saw this theatrical potential in portrayals of dissected bodies as well, and he took very literal cues from early modern representations of the interiority of the body. Beccera's écorché is theatrical precisely because the muscleman poses like an actor throwing off a disguise. The skin becomes the costume, becomes that which hides the subject's true nature, which inheres in the muscle. Muscle stands in for the true self hidden and revealed, a self underneath that is not threatened by fluctuations occurring on the body's surface. The confidence and solidity of the écorché figure express the belief in the permanence and un-impairability of musculature. As Sinew states to Caro, "my disguise is of, you know mee for your souldier," he claims the muscular identity, built around his name and social standing, that Barebones had suggested for him earlier in the subplot. There is also the sexual nature of both Beccera's écorché and Sinew's disrobing to contend with. As much as the écorché image looks like an actor throwing away a disguise, the image also evokes a man disrobing for sex. The display of the ithyphallic dagger supports such a reading as well. The revelation of a simultaneously muscular and erotic subject in the Beccera image, when considered in light of the play, echoes the reading I presented previously in which the eroticism and the musculature of Sinew are shown to be mutually enabling characteristics. As Sinew presents himself as the soldier who will not shrink, his disrobed, erotic presence becomes coupled with a claim to unshrinking musculature. Both the écorché and the undisguised Sinew show how the simultaneous presence of sexuality and musculature, and bodily hardness affirmed by a smooth, soft gaze over that body, are not the mutually exclusive categories that Lysander claims them to be when he calls Sinew a carpet

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exemplars of masculinity are those that produce good actors" (*Shakespeare and Masculinity* 37).

knight. Rather, the carpet knight negotiates these categories through the very manner in which he presents his musculature.

Sinew's willing presentation of his sinews to spectators accomplishes two tasks: it creates an acceptable way for the audience to gaze upon a male body and it reinforces Sinew's claim to sexual constancy. With regard to the first task, the play's audience is consistently aware of Sinew as an object to be looked upon. While she is with Bloud in the first scenes of the subplot, Caro dismisses Sinew due to the frightful appearance of his musculature:

> Your churlish souldier when
> Hee woes mee, me thincks his very lookes scarre me
> All over, and fright me out of loues delight. And see
> Where such a fellow comes. Lets not looke at him. (3.2.20-22)

Caro is careful to contrast Bloud's station as a courtier to Sinew's churlishness. But it is not so much Sinew's social station as his looks that garner most of Caro's attention. Sinew's "lookes" are ambiguous in this passage at first; it is unclear whether Caro is talking about how Sinew looks at her, or if it is his physical appearance that "scarres" her. But when Caro instructs her favorite to avert his eyes as Sinew walks onstage, it becomes more consistent to interpret Sinew's "lookes" as his appearance. Sinew's positioning as an object of the gaze would seem to emasculate him, especially in light of Laura Mulvey's gendering of the gaze as a masculine, voyeuristic privilege over the female object of that gaze, or Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's claim that "Regardless of which sex the partners in the exchange identify with, looking masculinizes, then, and being looked at feminizes" (*Staring* 41). Mulvey's analysis of the gaze has been taken up by early modern scholars to account for, say, the fragmentation of the female body as it is

looked at and blazoned by a Petrarchan lover.[38] Yet this is not a simple inversion of the male starer/female staree dynamic. Sinew's form scares and scars Caro. The presence of a sinewy, muscular body becomes a physical threat to Caro's whole body, a threat that completely eradicates any delight. Like a male gazer in, say, a Petrarchan sonnet sequence, Caro is holistically affected by Sinew's presence, but unlike the Petrarchan male gazer, she receives no pleasure from looking. Moreover, this type of body is threatening not only to Caro, but to her male paramour as well.

Yet we can understand the dynamics of this gaze as one that is not merely erotic, or in this case anti-erotic. Caro's command not to look at the soldier speaks to the destabilizing and unpleasant effects that Sinew's appearance has upon her. Sinew's appearance makes Caro self-conscious about how she sees and how she chooses not to see. Garland-Thomson argues that staring occurs when we encounter an object or person that destabilizes our world: "Staring is an ocular response to what we don't expect to see…The eyes hang on, working to recognize what seems illegible, order what seems unruly, know what seems strange" (3). I must contextualize Garland-Thomson's definition of staring by saying that her understanding of staring depends upon how we look upon the bodies of people with disabilities in the present. Thus, I do not wish to imply that Sinew is disabled in the sense that we in the present-day understand disability. However, Caro's self-conscious ocular reaction to Sinew reveals that there is something disruptive about Sinew's appearance. Caro is so disturbed by Sinew's body that she enjoins herself and her lover not to look at the soldier, thereby ostracizing him from the social sphere. Although we do not know what kind of costume the actor who played Sinew would have worn or

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[38] Nancy J. Vickers famously made the connection between bodily fragmentation and the gaze in the Petrarchan poetic tradition.

what the actor looked like, we nevertheless can understand that this character's physical appearance and Caro's reaction to that appearance are creating dualisms such as the same and the different, the frightening and the pleasing, or the common and uncommon. We can see how this exchange of looks acts to create boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable bodies.

However, when Cantharides manipulates Caro to consider the soldier, she looks upon him desirably, claiming now that he "has a manly forme" (3.2.40). We get two perspectives on the muscular body here: sinew is fearful to look upon and has unpleasant effects on other bodies, and sinew strikes the gazer as desirable, and desirable because it has been coded as masculine. Oddly, the body that Caro fears is not labeled as a "manly" body, although it is not considered feminine either. Gender is not a consideration when Sinew's body is deemed scary and undesirable to look upon. But when Caro desires Sinew, that body is then labeled as manly. This change in perspective speaks to how emerging notions of disability were useful when establishing desirable forms of masculinity. Sinew's body is either manly and seductive or disturbing; he is not explicitly feminized when Caro fears to look at him, showing that one could be deemed unmasculine if one merely possessed a body that was labeled as unacceptable or disruptive.

The manner in which Sinew asks to be gazed upon later in the play correlates with more conventionally gendered constructions of the gaze in that Sinew makes his sexual constancy and his physical appearance legible by attempting to exercise control over how people look at him. Sexual constancy, erotic desirability, and a focused gaze are tangled together in early modern literature. For example, in Philip Sidney's Petrarchan sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella* (1591), Stella's constancy in Sidney's sonnet sequence is predicated upon establishing Stella as the central focus of Astrophil's gaze and attention. As Christopher Warley notes, Stella becomes

the "transcendental signifier whose constancy enforces the speaker's inward 'nobility' and honor" (87). For both Stella and Sinew, sexual constancy is made legible through sight. Yet Sinew's presentation of sexual constancy does not correlate so much with early modern, gendered notions of constancy. When it comes to sexual constancy in the early modern period, Naomi J. Miller has put it rather succinctly by stating that "patriarchal Renaissance conceptions of constancy [were] rare in women and optional for men" (44). The sexual standard emphasizing women's virginity and marital fidelity is found in countless early modern literary texts and conduct manuals, yet constancy also has a more general, physiological dimension, and it is this understanding of constancy that makes the most sense when looking to Sinew's claim.

The trope of male sexual constancy in early modern lyric has received some consideration; in his analysis of the representation of sexual disappointment and disenchantment in Thomas Carew's lyrics, Anthony Low notes that for the male speaker, "constancy of service becomes less a reliable ideal than a rhetorical weapon" (150). I would like to pick up Low's understanding of male constancy as a manifestation of masculine (in this case, rhetorical) force by reading Sinew's claim to constancy less as a sexual assertion than a reassertion of his unshrinking muscular force. In fact, early modern physiologists often tied the achievement of Stoic constancy with the near-impossible task of balancing of the body's four humors. In his reading of the physiologist Juan Huarte de San Juan, Michael C. Schoenfeldt remarks that "constancy assumes immense moral and therapeutic power when physiological instability is presumed to be the norm" (80); that is, a claim to constancy entails an additional claim to physical, moral, and sexual strength.[39] When he calls upon his constancy in the same turn of

[39] Moreover, constancy was also correlated with coming into the age of proper manhood in the early modern period. See Shephard 56.

phrase in which he addresses his inability to shrink, Sinew interlocks amorous devotion with physiological strength. Calling upon his soldiership, his erotic devotion, and his unshrinking muscles, Sinew negotiates these three apparently conflicting qualities by claiming a space in which erotic expression does not qualify muscular expression. Combining these two modes of articulation is the central aim of the carpet knight.

Shakespeare's Antony is very much like Sinew in that the permanence of the Roman general's musculature is consistently affirmed in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The claims that Antony has "gone soft" in Egypt are complicated when the topic of conversation becomes Antony's body. When focus is placed on Antony's actual physicality, we constantly see an unshrinking body, that is, a body whose fluctuations do not necessarily mark an individual whose sense of self is falling apart. In this sense, Antony shows how a male body that is subject to change and even impairments need not be threatened with emasculation. Moreover, we look to the many remarks made by characters in the play about Antony's past self to get a sense of the ideal Antony—Stoic, martial, unmoved by pleasure. Yet these statements are inevitably complicated when we get a hint that Antony has always also been dainty, sexual, a body in flux. The Antony enjambed—the Antony straddling between the martial and erotic—existed even before the moment of the play's action. We see this balancing act not only in depictions of Antony's body and muscularity, but also in the many ways the play speaks about pleasure and battle within the same breath.

Antony's Strange Flesh: *Antony and Cleopatra*

Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* looks at the carpet knight's presence through his absence. Much in the way that Shakespeare scholar Cynthia Marshall discusses Antony's

melancholy, even though Shakespeare never calls Antony melancholic, I am invested in using the subjective enjambment experienced by the carpet knight to understand Antony's supposed subjective instability, even though Antony himself is never discussed according to this exact term. Shakespeare does not use "carpet knight" to refer to Antony in his "dotage" to Cleopatra, but the fears brought about by a soldier in decline, one supposedly made soft through luxury and concupiscence, are ever present. Because of these doubts about Antony, his body's heat and musculature become objects of scrutiny—whether they expand with martial courage, grow to be "treble-sinewed," or become the breeze that "cool[s] a gypsy's lust." This portion of the chapter will look at just how martial activity and eroticism interact in *Antony and Cleopatra*, along with analysis of how Antony's well-noted "dotage" becomes a physical, muscular issue in the play. What is more, the fluctuations of Antony's embodied self do not become signs of Antony's dissolution or loss of self. Antony's changing body is perceived as beneficial to his masculinity.

The problem of Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra* has been expressed, in critical literature, as a problem of conflicting or dissolving identity. The oft-cited dichotomies of the play—East versus West, masculine versus feminine, Rome versus Egypt, dark skin versus light skin, labor versus leisure—are so crucial to how the play has been interpreted mostly due to Antony's disastrous vacillation between these extremes and his inability to stick to any one side of a binary. Ania Loomba marks Antony as the barometer of relations between these binaries when she states, "Antony's passion makes him oscillate between his Roman martial self and a newly acquired 'Egyptian' identity, which appears incompatible with military power" (126). Cynthia Marshall notes that the desire to fix Antony's character is a major preoccupation of *Antony and Cleopatra*'s critical history, and that the attempts to, say, establish Antony as an emasculated character "cloud the fact of Antony's complaint: he feels himself to be coming apart" (392).

Marshall discusses Antony's subjective breakdown through a psychoanalytic understanding of melancholy as identification with a lost object and the dissolution of one's body image. Referencing Lacan's thoughts on the fragmentation of bodily image, Marshall briefly notes Antony's corporeal decline and loss of a true physical shape as indicative of Antony's subjective dissolution: "Antony, failing in his attempt to be a 'man of steel,' has lost the 'armour of an alienating identity.' Loss of the 'rigid structure' of a solidified exterior image, a recognizable role or part, leaves vulnerable the primary self-concept" (394). But my contention is that a body fluctuating in form, without a solid exterior image, does not necessarily denote a loss of self in *Antony and Cleopatra.* Antony and other characters note the loss of Antony's physical integrity in positive and even laudable terms. The expansion of the body, and in particular an expansion of the strength and musculature of that body, signifies a return to the stability of the 'man of steel' that Antony is known to be.

In addition, much like the alternative "work" that Sinew desires in his carpet soldiery, *Antony and Cleopatra* dramatizes and complicates the common conflation of state or martial "business" with eroticism. Antony, in particular, tries to separate his business from matters in Egypt. At Fulvia's death, Antony insists to Enobarbus that "The business she [Fulvia] has broached in the state / Cannot endure my absence" (I.ii.173-4). Fulvia's interventions into politics demand Antony's participation; despite the idea that Antony may see this issue as distinct from his life in Egypt, he finds himself in an erotic entanglement with Fulvia's "business," even after her death. Enobarbus construes Antony's wish in this way; he responds with more business for Antony: "And the business you have broached here cannot be / Without you; especially that of Cleopatra's, which / Wholly depends on your abode" (I.ii.175-7). Enobarbus bawdily opposes Fulvia's business with Cleopatra's, stating that Cleopatra cannot do

her business without Antony abiding in her. Moreover, the implication is that Cleopatra's business has come about because Antony has broached business in Egypt. Business transmits itself sexually, passing from man to woman. This eroticization of business arises again in Act IV as Antony approaches a soldier, telling him that "To business that we love we rise betime / And go to't with delight" (IV.iv.20-1). Antony bawdily instructs his soldiers to "go to't," implying that martial business must be approached erotically, "with delight."

What is more, war in *Antony and Cleopatra* does not dramatize martial action at all. As we see when Antony instructs his soldiers to "go to't with delight," the audience can only imagine war as an unstaged sexual event in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and, moreover, an event that opens the sexual exploits of the play's couple to public view. Battle cannot help but become the forum for Antony and Cleopatra's sex life as soon as secondary characters begin discussing Cleopatra's personal involvement in the war. Echoing the episode in Act I when Cleopatra expresses jealousy toward Antony's horse—"O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!"—Enobarbus states that Cleopatra's involvement in the war

> Needs must puzzle Antony;
> Take from his heart, take from his brain, from's time,
> What should not then be spared. He is already
> Traduced for levity; and 'tis said in Rome
> That Photinus an eunuch and your maids
> Manage this war. (III.vii.10-14)

While we have seen how common it is to conflate erotic and martial elements in early modern discourses,[40] Enobarbus calls for their separation here. The fact that the object of Antony's eroticism is now involved in martial matters can only "puzzle" Antony; Cleopatra's presence in matters of war does not result in a productive blending of Antony's martial and erotic powers, but instead drains Antony of the mental, emotional, and temporal resources he needs. Enobarbus believes that this draining occurs because martial activity must be separate from the activities of the bedroom. Moreover, the presence of the erotic object in this military affair necessarily divorces Antony from involvement in the war at all. Because the erotic and martial are getting mixed up, and because Antony lacks focus, he is excised from participating in the battles; Cleopatra's eunuch and maids fill in instead. Ania Loomba has stated that this displacement of Antony from his martial affairs "unmans" him and his soldiers—all just one instance of gender reversal in the play (120). What Loomba does not consider is the fact that Enobarbus's words address more than gender confusion here. Caught in between the opposing states of war and love, what is consistently in question in *Antony and Cleopatra* is the former character's mental

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[40] *Antony and Cleopatra*, like many early modern plays, looks to the horse as an object where the martial and erotic overlap. Note how Cleopatra act jealous of Antony's horse because the animal, unlike Cleopatra, now gets to bear his weight, or Enobarbus's quip that "If we should serve with horse and mares together, / The horse were merely lost; the mares would bear / A soldier and his horse" (III.vii.7-9). Playing with this convention of a woman bearing a man in sex as a horse bears a man in battle, Enobarbus argues for the separation of women and sexuality from battle while, conflictingly, keeping the horse in the mix; the horse isn't "merely (or marely) lost," but is borne by the mare.

abilities—the need to focus, to have a fully present mind, not to take things lightly—and Antony's mental capacities are always respresented in terms of physical ability and strength.

Take, for instance, the opening lines of the play. Janet Adelman looks at this passage in order to show how gossip and secondhand report structure the play from the very first word (26, 31). As Philo utters "nay" to Demetrius, we are placed in the center of a conversation about Antony. What Adelman does not focus on is the actual content of the passage—Antony's dotage is up for debate, and consequently his physicality:

> Nay, but this dotage of our general's
> O'erflows the measure. Those his goodly eyes
> That o'er the files and musters of the war
> Have glowed like plated Mars, now bend, now turn
> The office and devotion of their view
> Upon a tawny front. His captain's heart,
> Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
> The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper
> And is become the bellows and the fan
> To cool a gypsy's lust. (I.i.1-9)

Dotage denotes foolishness, and, especially in the context of this passage, the state of being foolishly infatuated. What is more, the word is used often to describe old age; a man who dotes is a man suffering from mental feebleness, from wasting away with age, a man who returns to juvenile erotic follies ("dotage, n.").[41] But what needs to be noted here is how this mental

[41] Despite the lack of monographs on physical disability in the early modern period, significant work has been done on addressing how the concept of intellectual and psychological

feebleness is translated to physical debilitation in Philo's assessment. In a mock blazon, Philo assesses Antony's dotage by noting bodily changes in Antony. The change in Antony's eyes suggests a loss of bodily heat—an odd assessment considering that we commonly associate sexual lust with heat. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the temperature of Antony's body is reoriented around martial activity. His love for Cleopatra is not discussed in terms of hot passion: his heart instead cools her lust. Acts of war create authentic bodily heat; Antony's eyes glow with warmth when looking upon a battlefield.

Another complication in the above passage revolves around the status of Antony's heart. Against expectation, the heart that expands in the midst of battle, the heart that causes Antony's very armor to burst, is in a completely opposing state to the cooling heart that "reneges all temper." War is rewritten not only as a "hot" act, but also as a temperate act that becomes legible only through the intemperate and forceful expansion of the body. Bodily expansion and physical strength are closely linked in *Antony and Cleopatra*, especially in relation to Antony's dotage; in an aside, he remarks, "These strong Egyptian fetters I must break / Or lose myself in dotage" (I.ii.117-8). He calls upon an expansion of muscle and strength to shake himself out of what he fears to be the complacency brought on not only by sex, but also by mental weakness. Being in a state of dotage is likened to physical restraint and feebleness; breaking past dotage necessarily entails a reinvigoration and expansion of mind and muscle. However, this expansion of muscle can coexist with the pursuit of pleasure.

We see this complicated expansion come up when Antony reassembles his army to fight Caesar after the defeat at Actium. In a series of passages that refer to the play's first lines, Antony asks, "Where hast thou been, my heart?" (III.xiii.172). Antony calls back to the martial,

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disabilities emerged during the early modern period. See Goodey in particular.

bursting heart that Philo so admires. Yet Antony asks another question following this one: "Dost thou hear, lady?" Since both questions address objects of Antony's thoughts and passions, it becomes unclear what kind of heart Antony addresses: his martial heart, or the heart that "remains in use" with Cleopatra (I.iii.43-44), the heart that lies with Cleopatra. Indeed, the location and status of Antony's heart become a topic for debate in the play: his heart is with Cleopatra when he returns to Rome, but is then joined with Caesar's during Antony's betrothal to Octavia (II.ii.149-156);[42] and, as we see in Enobarbus's advice to Cleopatra above, there is the sense that Antony must devote his heart to thoughts of war in order to succeed in battle. However, after Antony inquires after his previously missing heart after the Battle of Actium, he reclaims his heart only to triplicate it:

> I will be treble-sinewed, hearted, breathed,
> And fight maliciously; for when mine hours
> Were nice and lucky, men did ransom lives
> Of me for jests; but now I'll set my teeth
> And send to darkness all that stop me. Come,
> Let's have one other gaudy night: call to me
> All my sad captains; fill our bowls once more;
> Let's mock the midnight bell. (III.xiii.178-184)

The former, warlike Antony, whose heart and body expanded to break his armor, is invoked to stage a future Antony. We see a call to bodily expansion and fluctuation that entails a restored

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[42] Indeed, Mecaenas claims that it could only be Octavia to "settle / The heart of Antony" (II.ii.247-48). For more on the homosocial union of hearts between Antony and Caesar, see Smith, *Homosexual Desire* 59.

sense of self. The growth of strength, muscle, and hearts hearkens us back to moments before the action of the play began, moments in which the expanding, multiplying body of Antony contradictorily signified a stable, martial self. Yet what Antony does here is combine this resurrected martial self with the feasting and supposed profligacy that has defined his so-called Egyptian self. By calling on Cleopatra and his soldiers to "have one other gaudy night," Antony recalls the "nice and lucky" hours in which he was supposedly made soft by Egyptian luxury, yet this gaudy night has hanging over it the image of Antony's martial potentiality, a figure who "now" sets his teeth and lets his expanding strength overwhelm his enemies. The rapid switches between future, imperfect, and present tenses in this passage denote a moment in which differing temporal versions of Antony overlap to form a recognizable coherent self; as Cleopatra responds after this statement, "my lord / Is Antony again" (III.xiii.186-7). Cleopatra's affirmation suggests that it is possible for Antony to negotiate a stable sense of self between martial violence and revelry. This passage, and Cleopatra's response, enacts a fantasy in which men and their bodies paradoxically maintain permanence and stability because of the fluctuations and changes of that body and self.

This fantasy has many parallels with the abrasive masculinity put forth by Falstaff in *2 Henry IV*, which we saw in Chapter One. There is a discourse put forth in these plays that attempts to establish an unshakeable form of masculinity, a permanent and inflexible vision of the male body that, in a rather absurd fashion, is made so by absorbing the fluctuations and impairments that typify embodied existence.

We can even see this negotiation of solid and fluid male embodiment occur in a rather startling description of the past Antony. Caesar, like Philo, recalls a martial version of Antony

that thrived on soldierly asceticism, not voluptuousness. Addressing the absent general upon news of Pompey's growing strength, Caesar reminisces:

> Antony,
> Leave thy lascivious wassails. When thou once
> Wast beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st
> Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel
> Did famine follow, whom thou fought'st against
> (Though daintily brought up) with patience more
> Than savages could suffer
> .....
> On the Alps
> It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,
> Which some did die to look on. And all this
> (It wounds thine honour that I speak it now)
> Was borne so like a soldier that thy cheek
> So much as lanked not. (I.iv.55-71)

Scholars often cite this passage as a description and affirmation of the Stoic, hardy Roman soldier that Caesar, and even *Antony and Cleopatra* as a whole, extols as authentic masculinity. Mary Floyd-Wilson interprets the passage from a geographical perspective, stating that Antony becomes comparable to the northern savages in his robustness; Peter A. Parolin remarks that the passage describes a "heroically self-denying" Antony whose "past military greatness derived

from his having denied himself the kind of sumptuous fare he now enjoys with Cleopatra."[43] Like the expanding martial body we have seen in descriptions of Antony, Antony also expands beyond his starvation here as his form "lanked not;" as Parolin states, "Caesar imagines…that Antony was nourished by starvation." As we saw with Sinew's example in *The Two Noble Ladies*, Antony's soldiership guarantees that his form will not wither or shrink away; his social status as a soldier fighting against famine forces his body to retain its strength and force.

Yet Caesar's nostalgic recollection of Antony slips in its consistency as a description of martial asceticism. Most critical editions of the play interpret the "strange flesh" of line 67 to indicate human flesh, and that Antony resorted to cannibalism to fend off hunger pangs while in the Alps. However, the phrase "strange flesh" has an erotic dimension, a dimension rooted in the Geneva Bible translation of Jude 1:7, in which Jude explains before Christ, "As Sodom and Gomorrhe, and the cities about them, which in like maner as they did, committed fornication, and followed strange flesh, are set foorth for an ensample, and suffer the vengeance of eternall fire." Other Renaissance texts, such as William Gouge's *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), use the phrase to denote various sexual sins and improprieties, ranging from adultery to sodomy. Moreover, Caesar's claim that "It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh, / Which some did die to look on," could easily and eerily speak to Antony's present situation. Cleopatra can easily fill in to be the foreign, or strange flesh that Antony dines upon, much like Enobarbus's "Egyptian dish" (II.vi.126). This conflation of Antony's past and his current self grows more complicated when Caesar mentions how Antony was "daintily brought up." It becomes very clear that the

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[43] See Floyd-Wilson 81; Parolin 215. Cluck also uses the passage to show how Antony's past self contrasts with his current hedonism; see 147. For more on how Octavius Caesar constructs hegemonic Roman masculinity in *Antony and Cleopatra*, see Starks 69.

reveling Antony we know from the play is not new. Even the past, martial Antony of Caesar's reminiscing cannot be recalled without a nod to a daintiness that has always marked this Roman general.

Antony's past self—the self supposedly defined by hardened, Stoic manliness—and his current self—marked by effeminacy, luxury, and pleasure—consistently overlap in *Antony and Cleopatra*. These identities cannot help but complement one another, affect one another; indeed, both identities always make themselves present because they need each other to make Antony legible. As Antony deals with the threat of existential and bodily self-dissolution, the fear that he will "lose himself," it becomes clear that shifting bodily boundaries mark his supposedly stable martial self as well. Also, we have seen Antony's expanding self, his trebled sinews and redoubled strength, be rewritten as a stable body, much like the unshrinking, yet amorous, body of Sinew in *The Two Noble Ladies*. By rerouting our gaze upon the muscularity of the carpet knight, we see that the presence of muscle is asserted in both plays so that the carpet knight can claim a stable self that straddles two irreconcilable environments.

For the most part, Chapters One and Two have considered the relationship between early modern masculinity and nascent understandings of disability by looking at how some literary discourses incorporated impairments, mental weakness, and sexual profligacy into notions of ideal masculinity. The following two chapters are case studies of plays that attempt to set up more distinct boundaries between impaired, flawed male bodies and muscular, able male bodies. In this sense, the work that these plays do to shape early modern masculinity against disability can be compared to what we saw Will Kemp do in *Nines Daies Wonder*. In that pamphlet, Kemp works to make a distinction between his body's athletic exceptionalism and the bodies of those who witness and attempt to participate in the dance, and he does so by othering those bodies in

terms of gender, skin color, and body type. *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* draw even firmer distinctions between ideal male bodies and those male bodies that are ill, old, or impaired. It is in these two plays that we see a vision of able-bodied, muscular masculinity that anticipates our own present-day ideas about what the ideal man should look like and should be capable of doing with his body.

Chapter Three

Muscle and the Distinguishability of Bodies in *Troilus and Cressida*

The beginning of Act V of *Troilus and Cressida* (composed 1601-2; published in Quarto format 1609) is now all too familiar to critics of the play for its suggestions about gender and sexuality. The first sixty or so lines of this act consist of insults hurled between Achilles and Patroclus and Thersites; the latter, in particular, attacks Patroclus's sexuality. Thersites famously calls Patroclus a "male varlet" and "masculine whore;" scholars consistently scrutinize both of these designations for what they may suggest not only about the nature of the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus, but also about the nature of homoerotic desire and how that desire affects the strength of the Greek army within the play.[44] However, little attention has been paid to how Patroclus and Achilles respond to these provocations. After the "masculine whore" slur, Patroclus defensively reacts to Thersites's jibes by calling him a "whoreson indistinguishable cur" (V.i.28-29). The question of Thersites's birth, parentage, and origins comes to the fore with the use of "whoreson," but the word "indistinguishable" here is unique to Shakespeare, and carries multiple levels of meaning. The word obviously has classist connotations: Thersites is undistinguished in rank and social status. Yet, when in reference to

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[44] Gregory W. Bredbeck has stated that Thersites unmistakably deploys early modern discourses of sodomy at this moment in the play. See Bredbeck 34-9. Bouncing off Bredbeck's point, Daniel Juan Gil suggests that Thersites's use of these insults indicates a belief that the sexual nature of Achilles's and Patroclus's relationship is undermining the Greek army and state. See 356-7. Even more recently, Alan Sinfield's contribution to the collected essay collection *Shakesqueer* cites this part of the play as a passage in which any reader can surmise Achilles's and Patroclus's status as a homosexual couple. See "The Leather Men" 379.

Thersites's physicality, the adjective suggests rich complexities regarding early modern notions of the shapes of human bodies and how people looked at those bodies.

Troilus and Cressida dramatizes the doomed love affair between the titular characters, both of whom become caught up in the damaging politics and violence of the Trojan War. Shakespeare certainly drew on Geoffrey Chaucer's courtly romance *Troilus and Criseyde* (1380s) and George Chapman's translation of the *Iliad* (1598), as well as William Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, which was the first English printed book (1474), as well as Ovid and Virgil (Cohen 1823). Recent readings of Thersites from a disability studies framework suggest that Shakespeare erases Thersites's physical deformity, which is remarked upon in the *Iliad*.[45] In his dissertation on bodily stigma in early modern English literature, Jeffrey Wilson argues that the sheer lack of concrete references to Thersites's disfigurement in *Troilus and Cressida* begs the question as to whether or not Shakespeare's Thersites is deformed at all. Wilson continues by claiming that Shakespeare's erasure of Thersites's disfigurement breaks down the common early modern association of physical defects with moral and spiritual defects. The immorality of Thersites's slanderous language throughout the play cannot be associated with a deformity that may or may not exist. However, when he does mention references to Thersites's body, Wilson does not look at the significance of Thersites's "indistinguishability" and what that

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[45] Chapman translates Homer's physical description of Thersites thusly:

> He the filthiest fellow was of all that had deserts
> In Troy's brave siege: he was squint-eyd and lame of either foote,
> So crooke-backt that he had no breast, sharpe-headed, where did shoote
> (Here and there sperst) thin mossie haire. (II.186-189)

indistinguishability means with regard to the play's construction of bodies and the conceptual tools with which bodies are perceived, assessed, and judged.

By bringing up Thersites's indistinguish-ability, Patroclus explicitly rewrites Thersites's body as a product of the perceptions of others. A man or woman who looks upon Thersites is not able to distinguish the Greek's body; Thersites's disability is then marked as an active force that disables the perceptual tools of others. Moreover, the body of Thersites lacks definition; its parts cannot be noted or classified; and it lacks recognizable shape and form. Thersites's lack of physical definition recalls descriptions of Richard III's unformed body in *III Henry VI*; at birth, Richard was "an indigested and deformed lump" or "like to a chaos, or an unlicked bear whelp / That carries no impression like the dam" (V.vi.51; III.ii.161-2). Richard's lack of recognizable form and his protean physicality echo in Patroclus's description of Thersites. What is an even more alarming suggestion of this adjective "indistinguishable" is that Thersites does not possess a selfhood with origins, boundaries, or borders. It is a physical self that, like a foreign invader upon city walls, actively disables its other with its inscrutability. Patroclus's use of the adjective "whoreson" adds to this reading; Thersites's lineage and personhood are marked as mysterious and questionable. Just as Thersites calls attention to Patroclus's sexuality as a destabilizing force, Patroclus responds similarly by calling attention to the socially destabilizing effects of Thersites's body.

Patroclus's concern with Thersites's physicality is but one mark of the play's use of these dynamics to mark and assign value to male bodies. This first scene of the last act of *Troilus and Cressida* confirms how the characters in this play are so preoccupied with establishing social order according to the bodily condition of the men involved. A number of scholars have noted the theme of blurred distinctions in the play, but there is little scholarship on how Thersites's

body as indicative of this trend, let alone how this concept of physical distinguishability resonates throughout the play. Rosalie Colie's essay on *Troilus and Cressida* from *Shakespeare's Living Art* focuses on how the play empties language and, consequently, individuals of distinction or meaning. As evidenced, for instance, by the oaths Cressida, Troilus, and Pandarus make in the third act in which each character prophetically vows to be known according to a stock type, and not by his or her individuality, Colie notes how the people of *Troilus and Cressida* lose individual meaning and value: "As the characters are reduced to mere token-names, the tautologies rob them of context and reduce intelligible, *distinguishable* qualities to nonsensical sameness" (336, emphasis mine). Colie does not call attention to the obvious question of Thersites's physical indistinguishability as a complement to her claims about the play's breakdown in linguistic distinctions. More recently, Valerie Traub has claimed that *Troilus and Cressida*'s preoccupation with the language of war and disease reveals the play's anxiousness surrounding the loss of distinction between bodies and selves.[46] Traub's investment in looking at how bodies lose their distinctiveness through violence and disease is more aligned with my interests than the investments of critics who merely see the loss of distinction in *Troilus and Cressida* as a metaphor for anxieties about Tudor politics and social hierarchies. Going off René Girard's astute observations on the nature of mimetic rivalry in the play, Eric S. Mallin notes that the play's representation of late Tudor politics of emulation produces an anxiety that

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[46] See *Desire and Anxiety* 85: "Although the rhetoric of war is conventionally dependent on distinctions...the actuality of battle abolishes all difference in indiscriminate carnage. Thus it is entirely in keeping with the plays portrayal of disease and desire that Achilles ambush and massacre Hector, for with that action all moral claims based on the distinction between self and other vanish."

courtier politics and patriarchy reproduce indistinguishable selves.[47] Gary Anthony Schmidt speaks in a similar vein to Mallin when assessing how imitation leads to the loss of distinction in the play, but with a greater emphasis on how Thersites's and Achilles's satirical discourse disrupts the distinctions that constitute class boundaries. Overall, these critical assessments of the play show how Tudor political discourses or the play's satirical bent result in de-individualization. While I certainly do not want to dismiss the more explicitly political ramifications of the play's concern with male bodies, I am interested in the play because of its discursive significance in assigning value to male bodies according to their abilities, impairments, and quirks.

This question of bodily distinguishability, and not so much the question of Thersites's disability, makes *Troilus and Cressida* a central early modern disability text. Although Patroclus's insult toward Thersites reveals this vocabulary of indistinguishability, it is primarily in the play's representations of the warriors where we see this vocabulary in action. When a character is judged for moral failings, for boorishness, even for his mortality, those failings and weaknesses are articulated by describing that character's body as fat or limp, by crippling its movements, or by making it drool or spit. The bodies of Achilles, Hector, Nestor, and others change according to the desirability or acceptability of both the physical characteristics and behaviors that are projected onto those bodies. For instance, the play repeatedly attributes Achilles's nonsocial behavior to his pride, a moral failing that Ulysses speaks of as a fattening agent that enlards Achilles. Therefore, fat becomes the sign of a nonsocial body that can "disrupt the ritualized behavior upon which social relations turn" ("Extraordinary Bodies" 37). By

[47] See Girard; Mallin 152.

projecting fatness onto Achilles, Ulysses makes Achilles's body distinguishable by giving him a physical trait that signifies the Greek warrior's unsociability and undesirability.

What we see from this small example is that the language with which bodies are discussed and taxonomized in *Troilus and Cressida* has nearly nothing to do with the actual physical traits of the warriors. Unlike what we saw concerning the theatrical depiction of Falstaff, which very likely involved a costume for Will Kemp, it may certainly be the case that Achilles or the actor portraying Achilles is not overweight. Acts of speech and representation bring these bodily qualities into being; corporeal (in)distinguishability is figurative, a result of speech acts that are projected onto an individual. If we understand that Shakespeare's play undermines "the persistent assumption that disability is a self-evident condition of physical inadequacy and private misfortune" ("Extraordinary Bodies" 22) precisely by making debatable the "actual" physical differences of the soldiers' bodies, we then see how *Troilus and Cressida* very clearly shows the discursive construction of early modern disability and ability.

In *Troilus and Cressida*, physical weakness or disability becomes threatening only when it becomes the subject matter of the characters' figurative conceptions of the world. The question of national strength and ability becomes a question of metonym as the Greek soldiers clash over identifying the true "sinew" of the army. In Ulysses's description of Patroclus's playacting, the soldiers are "disabled" through a recounting of a theatrical representation. What becomes very clear is that bodies and bodily characteristics become distinguishable when they perform a figurative, often metonymical, function. The "true" body of the person does not matter so much as what bodily characteristics can be exploited or pinned onto that person in order to bring to light, say, a moral failing of that character, or the status of the Greek or Trojan army.

In this sense, the male body has to be granted layers of signification. A man cannot just have a body; he must have a physical body that can signify or a discursive body that changes with the significations granted it. Masculinity, then, depends upon the ability of a man to create bodily layers. Early modern male bodies must be able to change, to hide their characteristics under a veneer of corporeal solidity and then disrupt that solidity by revealing a "true nature." Muscular solidity becomes central to early modern masculinity because, as I stated in the first chapter, muscle lies underneath a layer of skin. And as we saw in Sinew's disrobing scene in *The Two Noble Ladies*, muscle's placement makes it an apt sign of manliness because it is something that is hidden and potentially revealed.

In this chapter, I posit that the characters of *Troilus and Cressida* register and comment upon male bodies according to processes in which flesh dissolves or solidifies. I continue to engage with the disability studies framework that I employed in the first chapter, in which corporeal malleability and impairment have a direct effect on shaping a person's masculinity. In *Troilus and Cressida*, male bodies are subject to real or spoken physical changes; bodies are marked as dissolving or degenerating to the processes of ageing, wounding, and weight gain, or they are praised for their solidity and strength, usually placed in musculature.
Altogether, what emerges is a vocabulary of corporeal malleability in which certain physical characteristics are marked as impairing not just to a person's body, but also to a person's masculinity. Thersites's indistinguishability and Ajax's negatively valued hypermuscularity—both of which cannot be "figured" into a sign—lead to the physical and social impairment of both characters. Agamemnon's status as the authentic "sinew" of the Greek army grants him the privileged position of being physically solid and muscular; Achilles, who is praised for his strength and muscular prowess, oscillates when his asocial pride becomes represented as a

physical disability; Hector is prized for his muscularity and position as the sinew of the Trojan army, but Greek soldiers exploit that very muscularity for vulnerabilities and weaknesses. I will refer to these processes of marking male bodies in *Troilus and Cressida* as "dynamics of physical distinguishability," excavating a particular early modern vocabulary of disability that until now has been hidden underneath the surface of the play's preoccupation with bodies. I find the term "distinguishability" very apt because it can signify both physical and social value. And, as we will see, if a person possesses unvalued physical and thus social traits, those traits are not necessarily feminized. Rather, those traits are registered as impairments, and thus we continue to see how early modern masculinity is defined not just against femininity, but also against notions of disability.

When the vocabulary of corporeal distinguishability is evoked in *Troilus and Cressida*, it reveals how bodies were described, judged, and taxonomized. And as we saw in my analysis of the *Fabrica* of Vesalius in Chapter One, it was becoming increasingly common in the sixteenth century to categorize bodies according to a standard physical type. Garland-Thomson defines this generic body as the "normate" in her influential monograph, *Extraordinary Bodies*. According to Garland-Thomson, the normate "names the veiled subject position of cultural self, the figure outlined by the array of deviant others whose marked bodies shore up the normate's boundaries" (8). The way in which bodies are judged in *Troilus and Cressida* speaks to this cultural act of marking bodies as deviant despite the variation in their supposed deviance. Bodies in *Troilus and Cressida* may be old, limping, drooling, and corpulent, but despite this range in bodily characteristics, each designation works merely to create unacceptable body types against which an acceptable body type emerges. While I use Garland-Thomson's neologism in this chapter very cautiously for purposes of avoiding anachronism—ideas about norms, normates,

and the normal were not conceptual paradigms in the early modern period—I do believe that the cultural work the normate does is applicable to the early modern discourse about bodies that we see in *Troilus and Cressida*. The play's characters consistently do the work of marking bodies with physical deviance, and such markings form a hazy outline of the typical body type in the play. Participation in the dynamics of physical distinguishability in *Troilus and Cressida* is used to sort and categorize acceptable and unacceptable body types. Many of the factors that play into a character's distinguishability or acceptability are recognizable to us—fatness and corpulence, strength, and musculature. This chapter examines how these dynamics work, and it will show how various impairments become pitted against the typical male body, a body that emerges as strong, vigorous, able, and muscular.

Agamemnon Versus Achilles: Locating the Sinew of the Greek Army

As characters mark the social distinction of bodies by deploying positively or negatively valued physical traits, they inevitably mark the distinction of the nation of which those bodies are a part. The status of an army or state is determined through metonym; that is, one of the most significant features of *Troilus and Cressida* is using the spectrum of distinguishability to find the individual body that will stand as the metonymical "sinew" of the state. The body and health politics of *Troilus and Cressida* foreshadow our own late modern concerns with the correlation between the status of individual bodies and that of a nation state. Scholars that are leading the way in fields such as fat studies have noticed that current health concerns, such as the obesity epidemic, are often framed as a problem or threat to the survival of the United States. Sander L. Gilman argues in *Fat: A Cultural History of Obesity* that definitions of acceptable and unacceptable bodies began to inform national identity in the nineteenth century and continue to

do so by using obesity as a gauge of national salubriousness (8). Yet early modern scholars have begun to note the connection between bodily and national health by looking at the period's literature through the lens of fat studies, going beyond the many studies considering, say, the relation between the (in)vulnerable body of the nation and the discourses that create and sustain the inviolable body of Elizabeth I. Elena Levy-Navarro and Mark Thornton Burnett have argued that it was the early modern period that saw the beginning of a pathologizing discourse surrounding fat bodies, and that this discourse represented fatness as a threat to early modern English society.[48] In *Troilus and Cressida*, we begin to see this pathologizing discourse concerning fatness emerge, and we see this discourse written upon the sinewy bodies of the play's heroes as a metaphor for martial and national debility.

As a metonym for the Greek army, Achilles's body strengthens or grows fat and socially disconnected according to the opinions put forth by others in the Greek army. Ulysses notes how opinion has made Achilles "the sinew and forehand of our host" (I.iii.143). Later, Ulysses objects to Agamemnon's suggestion that Ajax go to Achilles's tent to appease the warrior, who has taken himself out of the battle. High opinion has made Achilles proud, and Ajax's involvement will only fatten that pride:

> Shall the proud lord
> That bastes his arrogance with his own seam
> And never suffers matter of the world
> Enter his thoughts, save such as do revolve
> And ruminate himself—shall he be worshipped
> Of that we hold an idol more than he?…

[48] See Levy-Navarro 2, Burnett 165.

> By going to Achilles—
>
> That were to enlard his fat-already pride
>
> And add more coals to Cancer when he burns
>
> With entertaining great Hyperion. (II.iii.173-186)

Critics concerned with the representation of Achilles's pride cite this passage often, yet the obvious metaphors of food consumption and corpulence have so far been overlooked. René Girard interprets this passage as an effect of the mimetic desire that permeates the play's social world. In other words, Achilles's pride stems from how he mimics the worship of Achilles amongst the Greek soldiers (Girard 204). Daniel Juan Gil notes the digestion metaphors in these passages, but focuses mostly on the manner in which pride is characterized as self-consuming in the case of Achilles. Quoting the passage in which Ulysses describes Achilles basting his pride in "his own seam," Gil merely states, "By consuming itself, pride 'steals' food from the collective by withholding the body of Achilles [from battle]" (352). Yet it is clear that the passage above is greatly concerned with patterns of eating and how these feeding patterns metaphorically fatten the metonymical "sinew and forearm" of the Greek army. Ulysses speaks of the worldly matters that Achilles consumes—the great warrior feeds on nothing but those matters that concern himself, and this proves, in Ulysses's opinion, to be a rather fattening diet.

Yet this metaphorical fattening is not without its complications. The past few decades of early modern literary criticism have instructed us not to project the Cartesian mind-body split into the worlds represented in Shakespeare's plays, and in the first two lines of the above passage we see exactly how this split has not yet come into being. The mental/emotional quality of Achilles's pride comes into direct play with a physical quality just made visible—Achilles's fat. As Achilles "bastes his arrogance with his own seam," arrogance roasts and becomes seasoned in

a person's fat. The cooking and eating metaphors do not end here. Ulysses states that Achilles is not willing to consume thoughts that do not "ruminate himself." During the early modern period, "ruminate" signified meditation, contemplation, and, in the case here, self-contemplation, but it also could signify a way of eating or of chewing over something.[49] The thoughts that Achilles consumes concern not only himself, but they are also pre-consumed thoughts about him. Achilles's diet of worldly matters consists of pre-masticated, self-concerned topics. Tasting and receiving information become similar, if not identical, acts; arrogance and a person's fat mutually "enlard" one another.

A reader gets the impression that consuming talk or gossip of one's own musculature can produce a type of fatness. The dynamics of early modern listening, especially men's listening activities or auditory consumption, have received critical attention as of late. Keith M. Botelho's *Renaissance Earwitnesses* takes as its focus early modern "male rumors and the effects they have on the willing and unwilling ears that hear them" (3). Botelho introduces and examines the concept of earwitnessing in his monograph, which is an act of active male listening and the discernment of rumor. Part of the aim of his book is to reveal how "male characters who fail to practice earwitnessing threaten their own masculine authority" (5). By applying Botelho's thesis to the above passages in *Troilus and Cressida*, we see how Achilles's listening practices, his muscularity, his fatness, and his masculinity interact. When Ulysses claims that Achilles only pays attention to rumors concerning himself, and "never suffers matter of the world / Enter his thoughts," Ulysses is evaluating Achilles's auditory consumption habits. Achilles does not devour the proper kind of raw "matter" in his listening practices, but pre-masticated matter that

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[49] See the various early modern definitions of "ruminate, v." in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

fuels his arrogance. For Ulysses, Achilles's imprudent earwitnessing is best expressed as a habit of consumption in which the effects of that habit become manifest in bodily signs that reveal the soldier's declining physical masculinity. Achilles's exclusive consumption of popular opinion that exalts him as the sinew of the Greek army stalls him from masculine action in the battlefield, fattens him, and ultimately de-masculinizes him.

This coexistence of musculature and fatness exposes a social evaluation of fatness that is not as prevalent in present-day discourses. Achilles's selfhood is defined by musculature *and* fatness. Despite Achilles's status as the "sinew," the soldier crowned the muscle of the Greek army by its own soldiers, these very opinions become the hero's exclusive diet, a diet that enlards and fattens. Shakespeare makes legible types of fatness that are not as readily visible as, say, Falstaff's. Although I posited in the first chapter that Falstaff attempts to empty his fatness of any kind of signification in *2 Henry IV*, Elena Levy-Navarro offers the argument that the portrayal of Falstaff and his gut betrays a moralizing attitude toward fat that begins developing in the early modern period. This attitude represents fatness as a sign of his excess and luxury.[50] Achilles's fatness is an alternative kind of fatness because its cause stems from auditory, not gustatory, consumption; it fuels and is fueled by the pride of the warrior; it signifies not just that pride, but also represents the character's failure at listening properly and his consequent unsocial self-removal from the Greek army. Levy-Navarro warns of the anachronism and scholarly irresponsibility of "finding" obese people in the early modern world and in early-modern literature. Concerning such bodily categories as fatness, we need to seek out different ways in which this category was constructed and experienced. What the representation of Achilles in *Troilus and Cressida* shows us is that fatness is not just a physical characteristic apparent in a

[50] See Levy-Navarro 7-8, 67-110.

large, rotund gut. Fatness becomes figurative as well, or a signifier of a person's ethical and corporeal flaws. The moral and social failings of even the most muscular of heroes are transformed into a physical reality when a quality such as fatness is projected onto that hero.

Moreover, we see in the above passage no explicit notion that Achilles's figurative fatness is merely a sign of effeminacy. The connection between physical fatness and femininity has been noted by a number of early modern scholars, most notably Patricia A. Parker. In making connections between physical corpulence and dilatory poetics, Parker considers "how pervasive and multivalent this entire complex of 'dilation' in the Renaissance actually was and how frequently associated with figures of the feminine" (*Literary Fat Ladies* 9-10). This is not the case with Achilles; his dilation is registered not as effeminizing, but debilitating and impairing. Fatness becomes a quality of a deviant body that reflects Achilles's moral impropriety. Characters throw Achilles and his supposedly firm body into the play's dynamics of physical malleability, impairing and thus emasculating him physically because of his perceived moral impairment.

This attempt to write fatness onto the body of Achilles speaks to the consistent issue of metonymical confusion within the play. *Troilus and Cressida* is certainly preoccupied with the "speciality of rule" (I.iii.78), or the proper respect toward social superiors, but along with this hierarchical issue comes the question as to who metaphorically possesses the fit, strong body of the Greek army. Ulysses describing Achilles's fatness is intended to undermine any notion that Achilles is the powerful sinew of the Greek army. In addition, Ulysses tries to clarify this metonymical confusion in the third scene of the first act. When Ulysses begins his speech on degree in the this scene, he extols:

Agamemnon,

> Thou great commander, nerve and bone of Greece,
>
> Heart of our numbers, soul and only spirit
>
> In whom the tempers and the minds of all
>
> *Should* be shut up. (I.iii.54-58, emphasis mine)

Ulysses performs a metonymical vivisection of Agamemnon. As the "nerve and bone of Greece," he serves as the bodily structure that grants Greece its strength. He also is the animating force, the "heart" and "spirit" that moves the army. Ulysses, like a lecturing physiologist holding an anatomical demonstration, exposes to view the internal members of Greece and the Greek army in order to show that Agamemnon lies within, and within multiple organs, of that political body. However, the "should" in the last line of the passage qualifies this vivisection. The individual bodies that should be contained within the metonymical body of Agamemnon are not all present. The implication is that some of those constitutive parts are missing, or are preventing the closure of the body that would guarantee its wholeness: the body "should be shut up," but it is not.[51] Overall, Agamemnon *should* be the metaphorical body of the Greeks, but later Ulysses begins another speech by revealing that "opinion crowns" Achilles to claim this metonymical title. This confusion, and Achilles's disdain for proper authority, leads to the emulation of disrespect and undermining of degree discussed by a number of the play's critics.[52] This split between Agamemnon and Achilles as the actual "sinew" of the Greek army leads Ulysses to

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[51] Gail Kern Paster speaks at length in her influential monograph, *The Body Embarrassed*, about the indeterminate social meaning of porous, open bodies, as well as how early modern people began to feel the need to police the openness of the humoral body. See 13-14 in particular.

[52] See Girard and Mallin.

continue the metaphors of strength and musculature in particular, stating, "'Tis this fever [of emulation] that keeps Troy on foot, / Not her own sinews. To end a tale of length, / Troy in our weakness lives, not in her strength" (I.iii.135-7). Often cited as the quotation best articulating the conflict of the play,[53] this passage narrows the metonymical focus down from nerve (or sinew), bone, spirit, and heart, down only to sinew. What Ulysses implies is a crisis of muscle in the Greek and Trojan army. The war comes to a standstill because sinew is inactive, immobilized. Greece cannot show its muscle, and thus Troy does not need to exercise its muscle, because the Greeks cannot root the metonym of Greece's strength—its sinew—in the right body. Locating the sinew of the army becomes the dilemma of the play.[54] The fact that this prized, metaphorical physical attribute—a muscle, a sinew, or a seat of physical force—finds no home in an actual person speaks to both the ambiguity and centrality of sinew in the play.

Parody and Disability: Patroclus's Bedroom Playacting

Ulysses attempts to explain Greek weakness by narrating the parodic playacting that occurs in Patroclus's and Achilles's bedroom. This description is famous for representing Patroclus as an actor who parodies the Greek generals, sending Achilles into paroxysms of laughter. It may seem that Ulysses's description of the bedroom scene has little to do with

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[53] See Gil 354, for instance.

[54] At the same token, locating the metonymical sinew of Troy's army is tantamount to Greek martial success. When the Myrmidons kill Hector, Achilles aggressively pronounces: "So, Ilion, fall thou next! now, Troy, sink down! / Here lies thy heart, thy sinews, and thy bone" (V.ix.11-12). The culturally valued body, endowed with that culture's sinewy strength and force, can never be too firmly planted lest it become too easy a target.

notions of strength and weakness, let alone muscular ability. Moreover, recent readings focus on how the scene's asocial homoeroticism subverts national stability through Achilles's and Patroclus's pleasure in the playacting, not because Patroclus chooses to parody and belittle the Greek generals.[55] However, these readings ignore the actual content of Patroclus's scenes and what makes the scenes so pleasurable to Achilles in the first place. The content of Patroclus's parodies, Achilles's pleasure in those parodies, and Ulysses's alarm over the parodies all center on issues of bodily strength and ability, all of which has debilitating effects on men and the state they represent.

For instance, while Ulysses criticizes Patroclus's acting abilities, he also undermines his own dis-abling of Patroclus when he states that Patroclus's "conceit / Lies in his hamstring" (I.iii.153-4). Ulysses turns Patroclus's hamstring into an Achilles's heel; the comment comes across as an insult, implying that Patroclus's aping of the Greek generals lacks imaginative force. As Andrew Gurr speculates (117), Shakespeare could be poking fun at the acting style of Edward Alleyn, the Elizabethan actor known for his physical, swaggering onstage demeanor in roles such as Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays (1587-1588). On this parodic level, Patroclus's outdated Marlovian theatrics are too apparently physical, but the way in which Ulysses resituates Patroclus's imaginative capacities into his musculature puts those capacities into an alternative place of physical power. Patroclus possesses a muscular imagination, an imagination that threatens Ulysses and the other Greek generals in its ability to write physical impairments onto the bodies of the Greek generals. In short, Patroclus is funny because he makes fun of people's bodies.

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[55] See "Before Intimacy" 97.

Ulysses immediately notes Patroclus's mockery of other soldiers' bodies in his diatribe against the homoerotic couple, stating that Patroclus imitates the Greek generals "with ridiculous and awkward action" (I.iii.149). In acting the parts of the Greek soldiers, Patroclus "doth think it rich / To hear the wooden dialogue and sound / 'Twixt his stretched footing and the scaffoldage / Such to-be-pitied and o'er-wrested seeming / He acts thy greatness in" (I.iii.154-58). The foundation of Patroclus's theater is laid with exaggerated physical movements and dull or inferior speech. Unusual physicality becomes the occasion for laughter. The terms with which Ulysses describes this theater are signifiers of the discourse within the play that marks active, strong bodies against supposedly inactive and impaired ones.

Ulysses places a moral judgment on Patroclus's imitations: the exaggerated movements and speech are pitiable, to be despised, and are outcast. They are "o'er wrested," a significant term when it comes to a disability reading of the passage. For something to be "wrested" in the period means that it is "deflected or turned from the true meaning or natural application; strained, perverted." But deflected from what? Ulysses deploys a comparative vocabulary here, a vocabulary that acts to distinguish between the "truth" and "natural state" of Agamemnon's greatness and the wresting of that greatness in Patroclus's imitations. In using the word "wrested" to describe Patroclus's portrayals of the generals, he implies that the natures of these generals, especially their physical natures, have been twisted, perverted, bent awkwardly. The imitations are deviations from a respected "norm," putting the "real" greatness of Agamemnon and the wrested depiction of that greatness into play within the dynamics of physical distinguishability.

Ulysses responds to the play's interest in distinguishable bodies by speaking to the social or class distinction of bodies. Agamemnon's distinguishable greatness is set off from the

undistinguished caricature that Patroclus offers. This continuum alludes to an axis of categorization and oppression of which disability theorist Simi Linton speaks. Evoking the work done by race and gender studies, Linton notes that disability and non-disability fall along axes of categorization and oppression that are similar to understandings of race, gender, and sexuality.[56] While I maintain that a conceptual framework for bodies in the form of an axis would oversimplify what is going on in *Troilus and Cressida*, I do think that Ulysses assesses the social value of bodies according to criteria he and the other characters have set for acceptable and unacceptable body types. Ulysses forms his own conceptual axis of greatness and wrested greatness, faithful and despicable depictions of the male body, by assigning social and hierarchical value to bodies according to their distinguishable/indistinguishable state.

After imitating the Greek generals, Patroclus moves on to Nestor waking to a battle alarm. As Ulysses claims, Patroclus mimics the Greek elder so that "the faint defects of age / Must be the scene of mirth; to cough and spit, / And with a palsy fumbling on his gorget, / Shake in and out the rivet" (I.iii.172-5). Nestor's "faint defects" are exaggerated in a show in which the signs of physical illness and impairment—coughing, spitting, shaking—become the butts of a joke. It is significant that Ulysses comes to the conclusion that this slapstick does the work of undermining the abilities of the Greek soldiers:

> In this fashion
>
> All our *abilities, gifts, natures, shapes*,
>
> Severals and generals of grace exact,

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[56] See Linton 31-2: "The naming and recognition of the axis [on which power is distributed along disability lines] will be a significant step" in understanding how disability/nondisability is constructed.

Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,

Excitements to the field or speech for truce,

Success or loss, what is or is not, serves

As stuff for these two to make paradoxes. (I.iii.178-184, emphasis mine.)

This passage not only highlights how Greece's abilities become belittled in Patroclus's dis-abling parodies, but also shows how early modern discourse was staging impairment as something laughable, fearful, and threatening to others. The comic exaggeration of physical differences and impairments transforms those impairments into disabilities. Moreover, Ulysses implies that language, even private jokes between lovers, can have the ability to dis-able and weaken actual bodies. Ulysses forms a discourse of impairment as a paradox or absurdity that undermines reality—as Ulysses puts it, the parody reduces everything, "success or loss, what is or is not." What is more, the distinguishing qualities of the generals are reduced to paradox and play. Social distinguishability becomes undermined by various kinds of undesirable physical distinguishability. The soldiers' defining social characteristics—their achievements, excitements, speeches, etc—lose shape as they become marked with physical traits that are socially unacceptable.

Distinguishing a Body's Mortal Flaws: The Meeting Between Hector and Achilles

The problem of distinguishing bodies in *Troilus and Cressida* takes on a curious twist when the distinguishability of a body is assessed in order to destroy that body. When Achilles and Hector meet in Act IV, the scene is dominated by reciprocal looking. Both characters confuse the scene with competing claims to adequate and inadequate gazing. Achilles and Hector attempt to socialize themselves and each other in the act of proper staring. Both contest, almost

ad nauseam, that they have looked at one another adequately and fully. When the two characters meet, Achilles preemptively claims, "Hector, I have fed mine eyes on thee." After Hector asks Achilles, "Stand fair, I pray thee, let me look on thee," Hector quickly claims to have seen his fill of Achilles—he has "done already"—to which Achilles responds that Hector has been "too brief" in his staring (IV.v.230-237). I highlight the beginning of this conversation to expose how tedious it is and to show that neither reaches a point of satisfaction in his own abilities at looking, nor how he is being looked upon. Hector has to ask Achilles to "stand fair" twice in order to size him up. Hector implies that Achilles reads his body incorrectly, asserting, "There's more in me than thou understand'st" (IV.v.239), despite Achilles's claim beforehand that he had "with exact view perused thee, Hector" (IV.v.231). Both look at the other too superficially, too briefly, and too oppressively. Just as Thersites's unrecognizable, indistinguishable form destabilizes the ability for others to look, or as Achilles's selective hearing mars his reputation, here we see another instance in which a character's perceptual tools are threatened or marked as inadequate. Implied in the exchange between Hector and Achilles is the notion that one has to cultivate proper ways of looking in order to establish the distinguishability of a body.

What else can we make of the relationship that is emerging here? Daniel Juan Gil posits that the connection that comes about during this conversation is premised on complimentary feelings of desire and the compulsion toward violence. According to Gil, Hector and Achilles are "like two bodybuilders admiring one another's dangerously enlarged musculature" (358), but this admiration is consistent with a desire to destroy the very object of admiration. When the two warriors begin threatening each other with bodily harm, Gil notes Hector's warning to Achilles that he will "not kill thee there, nor there, nor there, / But, by the forge that stithied Mars his helm, / I'll kill thee everywhere, yea, o'er and o'er" (IV.vii.138-40), claiming that such a

statement unveils a possibility that this destructive, nonsocial, and erotically charged relationship will last forever in its pleasurable violence (358). Gil's assessment that the conversation establishes an asocial, erotic relationship is compelling, but I am more interested in revealing how this initial act of mutual staring leads to the manner in which each soldier talks about bodies at the end of the conversation.

As we saw in Chapter Two, Garland-Thomson's *Staring: How We Look* unpacks how, at present, the act of staring at the body of another "is the social flash point where these competing demands for *distinction* and homogeneity collide."[57] While Achilles and Hector do not necessarily stare at each other within the context of a society that values anonymity and individual distinction in the way that, say, a present-day democracy does, the conclusions that these two warriors draw as a result of their staring are articulated in terms of how the one wishes to make the body of the other distinct or not. For Achilles, it is crucial to find the part of Hector's body that distinguishes itself as the point at which he will enact Hector's bodily destruction; the Greek soldier cries,

> Tell me, you heavens, in which part of his body
> Shall I destroy him—whether there, or there, or there—

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[57] See *Staring* 75, my emphasis. As I noted in the previous chapter, Garland-Thomson's construction of staring is historically and geographically situated in present-day democracies; the social mores of the United States, for instance, value individual distinction while also making it imperative to cultivate visual anonymity. By staring at someone, we call attention to the staree's bodily or behavioral particularities, which simultaneously calls attention to the tenuousness of our anonymity. Staring makes a person's body distinct in a social milieu that operates on masses of people being an indistinct as possible.

That I may give the local wound a name,

And *make distinct* the very breach whereout

Hector's great spirit flew? (IV.vii.126-130, my emphasis)

In this passage, which shows how bodily and social distinguishability are interchangeable, Achilles presupposes that there is a part of Hector's body that is clearly, distinguishably, the part that will distinguish him with the glory of killing the Trojan prince. On the one hand, Achilles's own social and martial distinguishability depends on violating the proper distinguishable and distinct part of his adversary. On the other, we have seen that Hector's conclusion as to how he will kill Achilles depends not on finding the distinguishable part at all—he will not kill Achilles "there, nor there, nor there." Hector responds by disrupting Achilles's bodily and martial distinguishability. He vows to slaughter the Greek hero "everywhere, yea, o'er and o'er," creating the possibility of Achilles's indistinguishability.

Ajax's Undistinguished Hypermuscularity

As we have seen the dynamics of physical distinguishability play out with the portrayals of Achilles, Agamemnon, Hector, and others, it has become much clearer that all physical distinguishability, whether given a positive or negative valence, is figurative. In one way or another, the physical characteristics to which the play's heroes refer do not necessarily exist on "actual" bodies. Rather, these physical characteristics become signs for something else, usually a personal moral failing or a person's status within a society. Oddly enough, when a character's actual body becomes an object of focus, that character then loses physical distinguishability. We note this with two people in *Troilus and Cressida*: the Greek Thersites, with whom this chapter began, and the hypermuscular Ajax. While Achilles and Agamemnon may vie for the title of

being Greece's metonymical sinew, Ajax's muscularity is grounded quite literally: Ulysses makes the claim that "Bull-bearing Milo" should give up his athletic reputation to "sinewy Ajax" (II.iii.233-4). Achilles's and Agamemnon's muscularity is metonymical; Ajax's is adjectival. Ajax's muscularity does not have the figurative capabilities that the bodies of the other characters possess. His physicality cannot signify something else, such as the status of a nation-state. In this sense, Ajax's embodied existence is rooted *too much* in the body and not enough in the figurative or metaphorical. Although Ajax is "sinewy" and possesses an awe-inspiring muscularity, his imposing physicality is not hypodermic in the sense that his body cannot allude to or evoke multiple layers of meaning. Ajax is merely sinewy, and because of this, his literal corporeality makes his body become indistinguishable.

Moreover, Ajax's muscular preeminence is counterbalanced with the many jokes addressing his slow wit. Ajax is typified as a boorish athlete, all brawn and no brains, repeatedly in the play: Thersites calls Ajax a "beef-witted lord" (II.i.12), for instance. At the same time that Ulysses praises Ajax's athleticism, he facetiously qualifies his statement, making sure to note that Ajax's abilities are "beyond all erudition" (II.iii.229), and that he "will not praise [Ajax's] wisdom, / Which like a bourn, a pale, a shore confines / Thy spacious and dilated parts" (II.iii.234-236). This last insult is rather contradictory; Ajax's parts, which Ulysses has rooted in Ajax's sinewy athleticism and martial prowess, come across as expansive yet bounded. Muscularity appears to grow exponentially and distend, but is ultimately shut up by the limits of mental strength.

The characters that reinforce Ajax's stock character status as a boorish muscleman allude to a number of classical sources that speak to the mental slowness of athletes. Girolamo Mercuriale, of course, discusses the effects of too much athletic training in *De arte gymnastica.*

As we saw in the first chapter, Mercuriale is adamant about revealing the harm that athletic training can inflict upon the human body. Practitioners of athletics during the Greek and Roman eras "were over-concerned with beefing up their bodies and gaining greater strength, and produced minds and senses that were dull, torpid, and slow. Hence athletes were deservedly called dozy, slow, cowardly, lazy by Plato" (177-179). While gymnastic exercise is important to intellectual development, especially in Plato's *Republic*, Mercuriale notes how excessive exercise could make a person's wits dull. Mercuriale interprets this aspect of Greek and Roman life in order to caution against certain cultural practices of the past. Beefing up, yet "beef witted," athletes trained at "increasing the body's size, strength, and speed" (181), or, to put it in other words, bulking up. Mercuriale makes it clear that this type of hypermuscularity is not desirable. To reiterate a quote I addressed in Chapter One, Mercuriale notes how "athletes' limbs are often deformed" (189), and that the practice of athletics was a perverted form of gymnastics, an art "so corrupted and adulterated [*ita corrupta ac adulterada est*] by the long passage of time and the wicked ways of men that Galen declared that the best word for it was *kakotechnia* ["an evil art"]" (177). This sense of deformity, corruption, and adulteration is reflected in many of the descriptions of Ajax in *Troilus and Cressida*, marking his body as an extreme in which too much muscularity becomes undesirable.

Gary Schmidt has also noted the suggestions of deformity and corruption in descriptions of Ajax. In the following passage from the beginning of the play, Shakespeare introduces Cressida as she gossips about the Trojan princes with her servant, Alexander. Schmidt points out that the servant Alexander represents the Greek warrior as "an intemperate hybrid of clashing qualities…a literal representation of the more general phenomenon linking hybridity to excess, monstrosity, and illegitimacy" (254):

> This man, lady, hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions: he is as valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant—a man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly farced with discretion. There is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attaint but he carries some stain of it. He is melancholy without cause and merry against the hair; he hath the joints of everything, but every-thing so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight. (I.ii.18-27)

Alexander's assessment here certainly suggests Ajax's monstrosity, but the construction of Ajax's hybridity and excess is more complicated than what we get from Schmidt's cursory reading. Before Alexander deconstructs Ajax's characteristics, he tells Cressida that Ajax "is a very man *per se,* / And stands alone" (I.ii.15-16), to which Cressida jokingly replies, "So do all men / Unless they are drunk, sick, or have no legs" (I.ii.16-17). Alexander's first assessment of Ajax as a singular, distinguished man who "stands alone" meets with Cressida's joke pointing out the obviousness of such a statement. With this snide joke, Cressida does the work of pitting the desirable and singular muscular body against those bodies that are "drunk, sick, or have no legs." Cressida implies, paradoxically, that Ajax's singularity is not worth mentioning because "all men" are unique in the way that Ajax is unique. This kind of normative preeminence is cast into contrast with those men who are debilitated in some manner, whether through drunkenness, illness, or physical deformity. Here, Cressida constructs a binary between a muscular uniqueness that does not need to be discussed and forms of physical difference that could or should be talked

about if the person in question deviates from the muscular standard. Here, we see the form of a standard, muscular body type in *Troilus and Cressida*, a "figure outlined by the array of deviant others" who are defined by sickness, inebriation, or a lack of limbs.

However, Alexander qualifies his first comment about Ajax with the long, blazon-like description above. The servant counters Cressida's joke by asserting that Ajax's body disturbs standards of conventional bodies, but maybe not in the ways to which Cressida alludes. Alexander accuses Ajax of a moral deviation—theft—that disturbs boundaries between the animal and human. Ajax actively steals the unique, or "particular," characteristics of beasts, which makes those very characteristics no longer unique. The churlishness of the bear, the valiance of the lion is no longer distinct to that creature, but is now a common characteristic of that creature and Ajax. At the same time that Ajax actively steals the qualities of the beasts, he is also passive: nature crowds humors into Ajax, and she crowds them in such a way that those humors begin to act upon themselves. Although it is seemingly impossible, folly becomes "farced" and valor is passively crushed. That which makes humors and qualities unique is rendered indistinct in Ajax. The distinguishable qualities of beasts or the singularity of nature's humors disintegrate and become indistinct and indistinguishable in Ajax.

One question about Ajax that arises is how he does, or does not, become a part of the debate as to the identity of the "sinew" of the Greek army. The metonym never arises when Shakespeare describes Ajax. Especially in light of the fight between Ajax and Hector, Ajax is clearly not the true representative of the Greek army's strength, but is merely a stand-in made to incite Achilles's jealousy. We have seen this when Ajax is characterized as "sinewy," but not the figurative sinew of a social body. Furthermore, the impossibility of Ajax's metonymical potential comes up at the end of Alexander's blazon when he states that Ajax "hath the joints of

everything, but everything so out of joint," that Ajax could only be a "gouty Briareus" or a "purblind Argus." In other words, Ajax is a Briareus that cannot be Briareus, an Argus incapable of being Argus. One body part, eyes or hands, metonymically defines Argus and Briareus, and if those hands or eyes do not function as hands or eyes, the identity of both mythical creatures completely disintegrates. Alexander asserts that Ajax is an empty metonym, a false signifier, and by this implication we understand the impossibility of Ajax becoming the real "sinew" of the Greek army.

Moreover, Ajax's malfunctioning joints in the above passage allude to several ways in which Ajax disrupts the play's notions of physical distinguishability. Marjorie Garber notes this link between jointedness and metonym, claiming, "metonymy is the linkage, the chain of associations, the joint. To be out of joint, to have the capacity to dislocate and be dislocated, is to recognize the fragility of the joint, the point of vulnerability (call it an Achilles's heel) that is the corollary of the gift of movement" (42). By being "out of joint," Ajax loses metonymical capacities, and as he loses metonymical capacity, he loses physical distinction. Alexander and Cressida's conversation about Ajax leads to the creation of a third term to describe the Greek warrior. Alexander's description of Ajax makes it clear that Ajax cannot be deciphered according to distinguished singularity—being a "man *per se*"—nor according to forms of physical disability such as sickness or limblessness. Ajax becomes indistinguishable because he disrupts the metonymical machinery of the play. The way in which Ajax robs beasts or mythical heroes of their defining metonyms—whether that is the valiance of the lion or Briareus's hands—makes those creatures undistinguished, and thus Ajax becomes filled with empty metonyms.

Patricia A. Parker has also written eloquently about joints and joinery in Shakespeare. She briefly notes the preoccupation with joints in *Troilus and Cressida*, including the comment

on Ajax's joints, claiming that the dislocation of physical body parts suggests the play's preoccupation with a "disjointed body politic" (*Shakespeare from the Margins* 110). Parker suggests that Shakespeare uses the concept of joinery to comment upon the larger theme of order—order in physical body, grammar, marriage, politics, and hierarchy. When disjointedness affects any of these orders, Parker often states that deformity results (*Shakespeare from the Margins* 96). I would argue that Ajax's disjointedness does not signify the disorder of, say, the Greek army; as we have seen, Ajax and his body do not have this kind of metonymical or figurative potential. To have all joints, but all those joints out of joint, means that one possesses a body, a mass of material that has no definite parts. Without parts, it becomes impossible to endow the body with metonymical capacities. One is merely matter, an unformed lump, indistinguishable.

Ajax asserts his theft of "particular additions" during his battle with Hector. Confirming Alexander's description, Ajax tells the Trojan prince that he "came to kill thee, cousin, and bear hence / A great addition earned in thy death" (IV.vii.24-25). Here Ajax verifies how he acquires or even steals personal traits. Moreover, the fight between Hector and Ajax reveals a crisis in marking the body of Ajax and distinguishing the nature of Ajax's compounded parts. The halved body of Ajax is the primary concern of Schmidt, who focuses on Hector's reaction to the hybridized hero (255). However, before the duel even begins, we understand it as only a half-battle, one in which both combatants become disabled and feminized due to Ajax's half-Greek, half-Trojan blood. Aeneas remarks to Achilles:

> This Ajax is half made of Hector's blood,
> In love whereof half Hector stays at home.
> Half heart, half hand, half Hector comes to seek

This blended knight, half Trojan and half Greek. (IV.vi.85-88)

In other words, the conflicted halves of Hector are cleft and made distinct. Only one half of a hero seeks one half of another, and because both warriors are disabled, one by familial love and the other by his blood, the fight is *a priori* a half battle.

The nature of this half-battle is reflected in the language that Hector uses to call off the duel. Hector does not speak a language of assertion, but rather a reduced and weakened language dominated by the subjunctive mood. Here, Hector imagines what he *would* do if he could distinguish Ajax's Trojan and Greek parts:

> Were thy commixtion Greek and Trojan so
> That thou couldst say 'This hand is Grecian all,
> And this is Trojan; the sinews of this leg
> All Greek, and this all Troy; my mother's blood
> Runs on the dexter cheek, and this sinister
> Bounds in my father's,' by Jove multipotent
> Thou shouldst not bear from me a Greekish member
> Wherein my sword had not impressure made
> Of our rank feud. (IV.vii.8-16)

Hector wishes that Ajax's parts were distinguishably Trojan or Greek so that he could permanently mark those parts according to their nationality. In complete contrast to his pre-fight boasting with Achilles, Hector aims for making the indistinguishable body of Ajax distinguishable with the cuts of his sword. Ajax's hypermuscularity and the way in which his body is constructed as an empty signifier in the play make those around him try to give him distinguishable parts, parts that can be metonymically attributed to nation, family, social group.

This analysis of Ajax's characterization bookends the examination of Thersites that I offered at the beginning of this chapter. Ajax and Thersites are individuals whose physicality dissolves and becomes indistinguishable. Their bodies are unable to be figurative or to signify something about the social body or even their own status within that social body. It is with these two characters, who are too grounded in their bodies, that we see the divide between acceptable and unacceptable male bodies emerge. A "real man" cannot rely solely upon his body in order to assert his selfhood or masculinity. Rather, a man has to present his embodied existence as both a formidable physical presence and as a metaphor that is capable of signifying something about the social bodies of which he is a part. In other words, men have to possess layers of meaning, layers that can be read both on top of and within the body.

Conclusion: Muscles in Stalemate

What is more, the play, paradoxically, dramatizes inactivity and stalemate. It explores a crisis of strength—the Greeks and the Trojans experience deadlock because Troy no longer "stands in her strength," and Greece remains weak. The loss or inactivity of muscle in the play, whether on an individual or national level, speaks to a larger concern with the decline of masculinity. Hector, before his final fight, advises Troilus to

> Let grow thy sinews till their knots be strong,
> And tempt not yet the brushes of the war.
> Unarm thee, go—and doubt thou not, brave boy,
> I'll stand today for thee and me and Troy.
>
> (V.iii.33-36)

Hector implicitly calls upon his younger brother, the generation succeeding him, not to be a "brave boy." Hector calls for his brother to forsake fame in battle and commit to idleness, to an inactivity that will supposedly let the younger brother's sinews grow into strong knots. For those familiar with the story of the Trojan War, this call ultimately backfires, of course, and we are left to question how and where muscular masculinity is to be cultivated, if at all.

Chapter Four and Conclusion:

Disguises, Skin, and Armor: Surfaces of Masculinity and the Intersection of Gender, Race, and Impairment in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*

Much of *Muscular Bodies and Formations of Masculinity and Impairment in Shakespearean Drama* has looked at how male bodies and their depiction in language and art reveal strengths, abilities, and impairments that shape masculinity. I have attempted to show that the status of a character's muscularity determined much of what that character was able to do, and that these abilities spoke to that character's manliness. In showing how early modern masculinity was not just defined against femininity, but also against nascent understandings of disability, my primary goal has been to give a more complex account of how early modern people defined gender. I realize that this added complexity only destabilizes our notions of early modern gender and disability even more, but this has been one overarching purpose of this project. I have tried to incorporate much of the spirit of disability studies into my account by emphasizing the impermanence and instability of embodied existence in all of my chapters. It thus may seem curious to focus this last chapter and conclusion to this book on *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a play that does not seem at first glance to have anything to say about shifting bodily states or disability. If anything, the play's mythic-heroic ambiance and the hyperbolic praise given to the titular characters lend the drama a larger-than-life feel, and we see nothing but unmatched physical strength and superhuman courage. However, I maintain that Shakespeare and Fletcher's play shows its deep concern with bodily change, feebleness, old age, and impairment through these very hyperbolic praises, and ultimately the play offers a unique opportunity to look at how my account of early modern masculinity and disability also intersect with considerations of race and skin color.

Critics of the play have tended to pass over the many lines describing the characters' bodies in favor of untangling the knotted mess of Palamon and Arcite's relationship and analyzing the play's depiction of same-sex friendship versus marriage. Important essays by Alan Stewart, Alan Sinfield, and Laurie Shannon consider how Arcite and Palamon's relationship compares or contrasts to idealized notions of male friendship in other early modern texts, especially Montaigne's essay "On Friendship." Their final thoughts focus on how the play's depiction of this relationship is, in one way or another, a variant or distortion from the ideal posited in Montaigne's essay. Sinfield claims that Arcite and Palamon's vow to be one another's spouse while in prison speaks to the homoerotic dimensions of their relationship, which is ultimately squelched when the men reassert their heterosexuality through their love of Emilia ("Cultural Materialism" 71). Shannon argues that their friendship, especially as depicted in Arcite's over-the-top "We are an endless mine to one another" speech in Act II, reads more like a parody of male friendship texts. This parody is affirmed when we see how precarious their friendship is once they both fall in love at first sight with Emilia (105). I do not find the moment when the two kinsmen see Emilia to be the turning point in their friendship, however. Even when we first see the two men in the second scene, it is very clear that they do not talk with each other, but that each speaks in monologue to an imagined audience and in order to perform the expertise of rhetoric and eloquence that is demanded of them as "noblemen:"

> *Palamon*: Peace might purge
> For her repletion and retain anew
> Her charitable heart, now hard and harsher
> Then strife or war could be.
>
> *Arcite*: Are you not out?

Meet you no ruin but the soldier in

The cranks and turns of Thebes? You did begin

As if you met decays of many kinds.

Perceive you none that doe arouse your pity

But th'unconsidered soldier?

Palamon: Yes, I pity

Decays where'er I find them, but such most

That, sweating in an honourable toil,

Are paid with ice to cool 'em.

Arcite: 'Tis not this

I did begin to speak of. (I.ii.23-35)

From the outset, the audience receives no demonstrable evidence that this friendship is as close-knit as Arcite makes it out to be in the second act. As the two kinsmen speak of the moral depravity that has taken over in Thebes, Palamon gets carried away when speaking about the need for war to energize Thebes's men, and his kinsman's responses—"Are you not out?" and "'Tis not this / I did begin to speak of"—clearly mark how these two men are not able to talk to one another. It is never as if Palamon and Arcite *did* participate in an ideal friendship—Shakespeare and Fletcher make it very clear that no ideal friendship exists here to begin with.

Alan Stewart also notes the illusion of friendship between Palamon and Arcite, but he comes to his conclusions by considering the kinship between the titular characters. Stewart shows his agreement with Shannon by noting how the superabundance of friendships and hyperbolic discourses about the strength of friendships should warn the audience that these friendships will dissolve by the play's conclusion ("Near Akin" 60). Stewart then rightly reminds

his readers that the relationship between Arcite and Palamon is that of kinship (note the play's title), not friendship, before refocusing his article on the play's portrayals of masculinity and maternity. Stewart catalogs the numerous comparisons of the two kinsmen to wives, Ganymede, and so on, concluding that "Palamon and Arcite are led through a serious [sic] of analogies that cast them as women, or as passive male bodies eaten by men or made love to by men, or as men in love with their own reflection. These images multiply through the play, and no amount of recognition for Arcite's potential prowess as a wrestler is going to shake them off" ("Near Akin" 68). Stewart directs his analysis to overly sexualized figures as the evidence by which he can question the masculinity of Arcite and Palamon, dismissing the play's obsession with athleticism and able-bodiedness. Stewart's analysis confirms one of the main points of this dissertation: analyses of masculinity in early modern literature have privileged discourses of sexuality, and we need now to consider how other discourses, especially disability and ability, are beginning to contribute to the early modern construction of manliness.

This is to say that we ought to look at Arcite's prowess as a wrestler, as well as Palamon's martial and athletic ability, because physical agility determines the gender and class positioning of the play's titular characters. Palamon and Arcite are both obsessed with expressing their able-bodiedness as well as their fears of bodily decay and feebleness. Sport and war are the bedrocks upon which male nobility depends. After Arcite wins the wrestling contest in Act II, Theseus asks him, "What proves you [to be a gentleman]?" Arcite responds:

> A little of all noble qualities.
> I could have kept a hawk and well have hollered
> To a deep cry of dogs; I dare not praise
> My feat in horsemanship, yet they that knew me

Would say it was my best piece; last and greatest,

I would be thought a soldier. (II.v.10-14)

Arcite's list of accomplishments can certainly confirm the opinion of many critics who believe that the *vita activa* remains the core of early modern nobility and masculinity. I deepen this critical perspective by looking at how the idea of male nobility in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* depends upon displays of physiological strength and ability.

As central as bodily strength and athleticism is to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, the play is centrally about the vulnerability of the body. Characters in the play adopt a variety of positions on how bodily vulnerability—whether it is in the form of feebleness, old age, or woundedness—contributes to or diminishes a person's manliness. The susceptibility of the body, its weakness and the fear of those weaknesses, is the key dilemma of the play, a focal point of the play's discourse. I contend that *The Two Noble Kinsmen* purposefully misleads readers into thinking that the play is primarily concerned with the relationships between characters, whether those relationships find expression in kinship or friendship. Instead, the play dramatizes how the drive for individual social and bodily eminence becomes more important than interpersonal bonds. Friendship and kinship are window-dressing to the play's true issues; the two protagonists take on friendship with each other much as they put on each other's armor. Friendship is a costume, a distraction from the physicality underneath.

The Two Noble Kinsmen shows how characters maintain their masculinity by discursively constructing and then testing the layers of their bodies. Palamon and Arcite express anxieties about certain bodily debilitations while exalting others. The play is preoccupied with skin, muscle, and disguise, along with a prolonged obsession with how the two main characters touch

each other and affect one's another's touch.[58] One need only look at the duel in the fifth act, in which one has to "force his cousin / By fair and knightly strength, to touch the pillar" Theseus sets up a pyramid in the woods outside Athens (III.vi.293-4), to realize that touch, especially the strength behind touch, is central to the play. More importantly, this interplay of male muscle and skin through acts of touch speaks to a central point of this dissertation: that in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and other early modern plays, masculinity is represented as having both physical and metaphorical layers. As Theseus and Pirithous assess muscularity of men as it lies underneath the skin, as Palamon and Arcite layer each other's bodies with armor, or as Arcite puts on a layer of disguise to show off his inner layers of sinews and muscles, we see how masculinity is shaped and defined according to the maintenance and presentation of physiological layers.

"To make a cripple flourish with his crutch:" Palamon's Feebleness

While it is important to remember that the portrayals of Palamon and Arcite can be inconsistent, mostly due to the collaborative authorship of the play, I do believe that Arcite and Palamon enact different forms of masculinity, and that each person asserts his masculinity by resisting or adopting particular forms of disability. It is critical to note that despite their indistinguishability at times, Palamon and Arcite do differ from one another, especially in Shakespeare's and Fletcher's physical descriptions of them: Arcite is fair and muscular, Palamon is dark-skinned and comparatively "feeble." This emphasis on the kinsmen's respective physical characteristics reflects the play's deeper concerns with how these two men embody different forms of able-bodied masculinity.

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[58] For more on how the sense of touch affected early modern notions of subjectivity, see *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture.*

At first glance, Palamon does not seem to possess a degree of able-bodiedness requisite for the maintenance of his masculinity. After both men have seen Emilia for the first time outside the prison where they are held, Palamon dares his kinsman to "Put but thy head out of this window more / And, as I have a soul, I'll nail thy life to't" (II.ii.216-17). Arcite responds, "Thou dar'st not, fool; thou canst not; thou art feeble" (II.ii.218). Throughout the play, Palamon shapes his masculinity against threats of feebleness. After Palamon loses the duel to Arcite in the play's last act, he declares a victory against the debility of old age, which he will never feel:

> We prevent
> The loathsome misery of age, beguile
> The gout and rheum that in lag hours attend
> For grey approachers; we come towards the gods
> Young and unwappered, not halting under crimes
> Many and stale. (V.vi.6-11)

With his execution approaching, Palamon does not express the passivity of someone about to die. With the consistent use of active verbs in this passage, he makes it clear that his death signifies an active warding off of the forces of old age and feebleness.[59] Palamon and his knights have energy and verve; they move towards their afterlife instead of being paralyzed ("halting") under the sins of old age. Palamon dismisses old age, and the feebleness that comes with it, both before and after his duel with Arcite. While he prays to Venus, Palamon praises the goddess for her ability to "make a cripple flourish with his crutch, and cure him / Before Apollo" (V.ii.13-15). He also appeals to the goddess by mentioning how he has silenced braggart seducers with the

[59] As I noted in the Introduction, see Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity* and Fisher for discussions on how one's age affected masculinity in the early modern period.

following anecdote about an elderly man cured of his debilities by love:

> I knew a man
> Of eighty winters…who
> A lass of fourteen brided—'twas thy power
> To put life into dust. The aged cramp
> Had screwed his square foot round,
> The gout had knit his fingers into knots,
> Torturing convulsions from his globy eyes
> Had almost drawn their spheres, that what was life
> In him seemed torture. This anatomy
> Had by his young fair fere a boy, and I
> Believed it was his, for she swore it was,
> And who would not believe her? (V.ii.39-50)

Unlike Palamon before his planned execution, the effects of old age work on this man, as if he were wood or wool that needed to be "screwed" or "knitted," respectably. These verbs denote acts of joining materials together, which Patricia A. Parker discussed in her analysis of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that I referred to in Chapter Three. Parker claims that that earlier Shakespearean play, which is often read as a companion play to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*,[60] "combines proper joining in matrimony and joining in discourse, both subject to laws or rules, with counterinstances of suspect, aberrant, or improper joining" (*Shakespeare from the Margins*

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[60] Both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* center on activities that interrupt or complicate the marriage of Theseus to the Amazon Hippolyta. Both plays also feature roughshod performances from members of the lower classes.

90). *The Two Noble Kinsmen* has similar preoccupations, especially in Palamon's speech before Venus's altar. The verbs of joining that describe the old man's deformity (as well as his joints) have parallels in the improper joining of concepts that characterize Palamon's description of the man: life inhabits dust, the square (foot) becomes round. This conceptual joining is also apparent in the few lines about the cripple made nimble and quick due to love's influence. What is more, Palamon uses the example of a disparate joining—the old man and the fourteen year-old girl—to make his point in front of men who boast of their love conquests.

But, how do these paradoxes describing a disparate marital union help Palamon to make his point in front of the Don Juans he detests? What is Palamon's logic in using this example? The explanation that follows Palamon's small anecdote do not seem, upon first reading, to give any hints:

> Brief—I am
>
> To those that prate and have done, no companion;
>
> To those that boast and have not, a defier;
>
> To those that would and cannot, a rejoicer.
>
> Yea, him I do not love that tells close offices
>
> The foulest way, nor names concealments in
>
> The boldest language. (V.ii.50-56)

The grammatical construction of the first four lines may reveal just as much as the actual thematic content of the passage. Due to the enjambment, readers initially do not receive a follow-up to Palamon's statement "I am:" Palamon divides the statements affirming an interpersonal quality about himself with dative prepositional phrases. He grammatically disjoins himself when describing how he relates to certain men. With this enjambment, the play dramatizes how men

separate themselves from one another and draw not upon interpersonal relationships, but upon an image of self-sufficiency and subjective integrity in order to maintain manliness. Furthermore, this grammatical-subjective disjoining corresponds to his disparaging praise for the unable—"those that would and cannot"—and his disapproval of those who cannot keep details of their sexual lives private. What I would like to suggest is that Palamon celebrates the power of love to create disjunctions, both in the world and within himself. Men who boast of their conquests fashion their masculinity on a purely superficial level; there are no layers of public and private life, all actions become sharable. Palamon advocates for men to have public and private subjective layers, and these interpersonal layers correspond to bodily layers as well.

"Another Shape Shall Make Me": Arcite's Poor Disguise

This is not to say that Arcite doesn't accomplish his own physical and metaphorical layering as well. After being banished from Athens, Arcite begins to think of ways to get closer to Emilia, deciding to figure out how to sneak back into the Amazon's presence: "I am resolved another shape shall make me" (II.iii.22). The line suggests both a disguise and a re-fashioning. The implication is that Arcite's own shape does not "make him" at the moment. He needs to be reformed, to add the layer of disguise, in order to be made; Arcite's selfhood depends upon crafting other layers of subjectivity. An opportunity presents itself when the countrymen enter the scene in order to rehearse the morris dance, and they tell Arcite about the wrestling and running games Theseus is hosting that day. Arcite decides to don a "poor disguise" and compete in the games (II.iii.82), and his choice of what part of his body he conceals reveals much about the writing of early modern male subjectivity.

After he unsurprisingly wins the running and wrestling contests, Arcite is praised by Theseus: "You have done worthily. I have not seen / Since Hercules a man of tougher sinews" (II.v.1-2). To readers, this begs the question as to what part(s) of his body Arcite has disguised, if Theseus notes the strength of Arcite's muscles first. As the scene progresses, we come to understand that Arcite has not hidden his face, for Emilia states that "his face" reveals how "his mother was a wondrous handsome woman" (II.v.20-21). It is Pirithous who shows us that the very sinews that Theseus has praised are the parts of his body that Arcite has chosen to cover up: "how his virtue, like a hidden sun, / Breaks through his baser garments" (II.v.23-24). Arcite disguises himself by disguising his muscular body, but this aspect of his body is so noticeable that the disguise does a poor job of concealing Arcite's identity. In the register of this scene, muscularity betrays the identity of a man, his rank, status, and power. Furthermore, by adding the layer of disguise, Arcite paradoxically brightens his masculine luster. Concealing his muscularity makes those very muscles even more noticeable and praiseworthy. Thus Arcite is able to enter Emilia's service because he succeeds at creating layers of masculine subjectivity through the layers he creates on his body.

Armor and Hypodermic Masculinity in Act III

The drama surrounding surfaces and layers of male bodies comes to a climactic point when Palamon and Arcite duel in the forest outside Athens. The last scene of Act III is arguably the most complex section of the play when it comes to dealing with matters of the health and ability of the early modern male body. Having escaped from the prison with the aid of the Jailer's Daughter, Palamon hides in the forest outside Athens and recuperates with the help of Arcite, who brings him food and wine. Arcite nurses Palamon back to health only in order to

duel with Palamon once he is up to the task. Despite the fact that the audience hears about Palamon and Arcite's fighting abilities consistently in the play—whether in the battle between Athens and Thebes, the wrestling games of which Arcite is a participant, and even the last duel in Act V—this is the only time that we see the two actors show off their swordsmanship and fighting skill. Why do we see Arcite and Palamon show off their physical abilities only in this scene and not the others?

Early modern scholars ignore this question when they offer their readings of this scene. J.R. Mulryne contends that III.vi reflects James I's son Prince Henry's love of armor (99). Peter C. Herman suggests that the scene "allows Palamon and Arcite once more to renew their old intimacy" (11), but that Arcite's fussiness about making sure Palamon's armor isn't too tight begins to look like tactics to delay the fight (12). However, Palamon is equally fussy over Arcite's armor, and when Arcite asks if there is anything else to say right before the duel commences, Palamon responds with the scene's lengthiest address (III.vi.94-101). Still other scholars believe that the heightened formality with which the two treat each other is a parodic representation of honor and male friendship.[61] I contend that this scene of mutual arming and the duel stages a contrast between the two men: up until this point, Palamon has been enfeebled by his incarceration, while we have received multiple confirmations of Arcite's tough sinews in Act II's wrestling match. At the same time that these contrasting depictions come together in the scene, we become witness to an almost tender scene in which the two men arm each other only to attempt to kill one another lines later. And, as this scene centers on an addition to the body, it comes across as a moment in which Palamon and Arcite take on a prosthetic that solidifies and

[61] See Levin 34.

confirms their masculinity.[62] Thus this scene has many complex things to say about the layering of the male body and the attempt to constrain the male body into an idealized and proto-normative form.

A short monologue from Palamon establishes how this supposedly "feeble" soldier is now poised between two extremes of bodily in ability, fatness and weakness:

> About this hour my cousin gave his faith
> To visit me again, and with him bring
> Two swords and two good armours; if he fail,
> He's neither man nor soldier. When he left me,
> I did not think a week could have restored
> My lost strength to me, I was grown so low
> And crest-fall'n with my wants. I thank thee, Arcite,
> Thou art yet a fair foe, and *I feel myself,*
> *With this refreshing, able once again*
> To out-dure danger. To delay it longer
> Would make the world think, when it comes to hearing,
> That I lay fatting, like a swine, to fight,

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[62] In his book *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, Will Fisher posits that manhood and boyhood were conceived as two different genders in the early modern period, and that the adoption of certain prosthetics denoted a shift from one to the other: "The distinction between boys and men was ultimately materialized through a range of attributes or parts. One of these was facial hair, but there were certainly others as well such as the voice, swords, armor, and daggers" (88).

And not a soldier. (III.vi.1-13, emphasis mine)

Palamon shows his reinvigorated physical dexterity through verbal ability: he puns "week" with "weak" in order to establish a contrast between the word "strength" in the following line, and he shows his abilities with paradoxes as well: in his weakness, he "grows" low. This withering growth is contrasted with the possibility that he may fatten up if left in the forest for too long. To evoke Patricia A. Parker's association of dilation with temporal delaying, the delaying of the duel will cause dilation in Palamon's waistline (*Literary Fat Ladies*). However, this dilation does not result in effeminacy, but animalization; Palamon compares a fat version of himself to a swine, which lies in contrast to his role as a soldier. Palamon's emasculation is not tied to growing effeminacy, but to a kind of bestial alteration in physical form that will impair his abilities to duel with Arcite.

In between describing a weakened version of himself (in the past tense) and a fattened version of himself (in the past subjunctive), Palamon uses present-tense verbs to describe his refreshed state. Palamon claims both ability and self-knowledge in the italicized passage in the middle of the quote above. We can very clearly see how Palamon feels himself to be able again, but when we consider how these lines of blank verse break up the passage, Palamon first states, "I feel myself." This denotes both a physical, sensory awareness of being able to feel himself and his body, and also the fact that he feels *like himself.* Palamon links his subjectivity to his able-bodiedness, his ability to overcome weakness, and his soldiership. His manliness is confirmed by his martial and physical abilities.

Palamon's ability to fight is discussed again when Arcite arrives to arm him. In a show of noble courtesy, Arcite asks his kinsman, "Will't please you arm, sir? / Or, if you feel yourself not fitting yet, / And furnished with your old strength, I'll stay, cousin" (III.vi.35-37). Arcite echoes

Palamon, asking him if he "feels himself" to be fit to fight; again, self-awareness is linked with being able to feel one's body, and to feel one's bodily capabilities accurately. Feeling like one's self means feeling able-bodied.

After Palamon affirms his fitness to fight—he claims to be "well and lusty"—the two men spend a substantial amount of time talking as they affectionately arm each other. So many lines are given to this rather tender scene in order to give the audience a sense of the gravity and significance of this male ritual.[63] Carolyn Springer has written extensively on the interrelationship between armor and masculinity in the early modern period. She notes a particular paradox of donning armor—that it affirms both bodily power and vulnerability simultaneously (5). Moreover, she suggests that for the early modern man, a set of armor was "a mirror of his masculinity. In this respect, body armor might be viewed as a metonymic expansion of the codpiece—an object that aestheticizes masculine power and actively produces an idealized somatic form. It erases the infinite morphological variations of individual bodies by substituting a normative ideal" (11).[64] I do not agree that armor has the same signifying capabilities as the codpiece—both may denote the wearer's masculinity, but they display this masculinity using different signs. However, Springer is on to something when she claims that armor can reshape male bodies to fit an idealized physical form. Palamon and Arcite's arming scene shows two men

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[63] It is important to note how there are some instances of women arming in the early modern period; one should look to representations of Amazons (but not the Amazons in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*) as well as the apocryphal accounts of Elizabeth I donning armor. For more on the depiction of Amazons in the early modern period, see Schwarz.

[64] For more on the codpiece's role in signifying and even shaping early modern masculinity, see Fisher and Vicary.

bonding over the act of conforming to a standardized measure of the male body represented in the armor.

Arcite arms Palamon first, and as he does so, he shows quite a lot of concern that the armor is not causing Palamon discomfort or pain:

> *Arcite*: Do I pinch you?
>
> *Palamon*: No.
>
> *Arcite*: Is't not too heavy?
>
> *Palamon*: I have worn a lighter—
>
> But I shall make it serve.
>
> *Arcite*: I'll buckle't close.
>
> *Palamon*: By any means. (III.vi.55-58)

The two kinsmen do not resort to their habit of speaking in monologue as they dialogue. Their lines are brief; they ask each other questions and show concern for one another. There's a preoccupation with making sure that this new layer that Palamon is adopting onto his body does not cause him pain, but that it is still tightly tied to his body. Palamon's body is accordingly pinched, constrained, and closed into a physical condition ideal for fighting. The ideal male form is able to adopt layers that close that body off, shield it, strengthen it, and ultimately cover up any markers of physical difference. Any distinguishing characteristics of these two bodies are erased in favor of a standard, ideal form.

When Palamon arms Arcite, the conversation runs similarly to the one above. Palamon asks his kinsman if his armor is too tight because he "would have nothing hurt thee but my sword— / A bruise would be dishonour" (III.vi.87-88). Palamon's concern for the fit of Arcite's armor reveals a parallel concern with the ability of the male body to adopt this additional layer. If

Arcite's body shows even a bruise from the armor not fitting properly, it signifies Arcite's dishonor, his inability to conform to this bodily standard. Moreover, this bruise is contrasted with the potential wounds that Arcite will receive as he fights Palamon. Certain scars are more honorable than others, as we saw in Falstaff's praise of bodily marks from battle and venereal disease. Wounds from swordplay signify that one has exercised his courageous masculinity in combat, while bruises from wearing armor emasculate the wearer because they signify that man's inability to adopt a heroic bodily standard. This meditative focus on the arming of these two men is but one aspect of this scene that makes it different from other duels and games in the play.

The audience sees the arming scene and the fight that follows it because the scene makes visible an important act: erasing the differences between two male bodies by layering those bodies with an exoskeleton of armor. Arcite may be known for his strong sinews, and Palamon for his dark skin and feebleness from incarceration, but both bodies are rendered into a standard form. In many ways this scene encapsulates a well-noted paradox about *The Two Noble Kinsmen*: the fact that these two men are both distinct and almost indistinguishable from each other. My analysis of how Fletcher and Shakespeare characterize the titular kinsmen has oscillated between these two opposites on purpose; as much as Palamon's subjectivity is based on paradox and disjunction, and Arcite's on pleasures and surfaces, both characters take on a standard of heroic male embodiment, symbolized by the armor they don in Act III.

Yet as these two men adopt these male exoskeletons that show how they are capable of adopting a socially determined standard of the muscular male body, this act of social-physical conformity contradictorily occurs outside the bounds of Athenian society. The fight between the kinsmen in Act III, we must remember, is a forbidden fight. Theseus sanctions the other

expressions of male valor, whether they take place during the games or in a formalized duel. Arcite even mentions how he has stolen the armor that the two men put on for their duel in the forest, itself a place that lies on the outskirts of the social center of Athens. The forbidden duel, and not the other fights and displays of athleticism and martial valor, is staged because it also dramatizes a key concern for Palamon and Arcite: to distinguish themselves from the common rabble. In the very first words we hear from Arcite, he is beseeching his kinsmen to "leave the city, / Thebes, and the temptings in't, before we further / Sully our gloss of youth" (I.ii.3-5). Arcite and Palamon fear that the corruption within the city will taint them both morally and physically. Arcite's last line here can signify both a loss of innocence and the appearance of physical youth. The immorality of cities is ethically and bodily impairing.[65] Thus, Act III, scene vi of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is the integral scene in the play for both setting up a concern with hypodermic masculinity and for dramatizing Palamon and Arcite's own struggles with breaking away from the corruption of men who participate in society. This scene climactically reveals the central tension of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*: male characters struggle to create and maintain a type of bodily eminence in order to distinguish themselves and pull away from subjectivity based on interpersonal relationships, but this eminence is defined by a socially-determined bodily standard of ability and athleticism.

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[65] This corruption is also what Palamon believes that he is avoiding when he is sentenced to be beheaded following the duel in Act V. As we can remember, Palamon expresses gratitude for being able to die with an incorrupt soul and unimpaired body.

Conclusion: Comparing the Two Portraits

Before Palamon and Arcite duel for Emilia's hand in marriage, Emilia compares portraits of the two men. Arcite evokes conventional, almost cliched blazons from the Amazon, while Palamon evokes paradoxes. Arcite has a "sweet face" and "quick sweetness" in his eye; his brow is "far sweeter" than even Juno's, and "smoother than Pelops' shoulder" (IV.ii.7-21). Emilia's description of Arcite does not probe much deeper than superficialities. Emilia's repeated use of the word "sweet" to describe Arcite, along with her fixation on the smooth surfaces of his body, speak to the idea that Arcite's appeal is only skin-deep. Emilia then sneers at Palamon's dark complexion and seeming melancholy. Despite her rather effeminizing description of Arcite, Emilia initially portrays Palamon as a pathetic, physically weak mama's boy, but then her reasoning turns:

> Palamon
>
> Is but his [Arcite's] foil, to him a mere dull shadow;
>
> He's swart and meagre, of an eye as heavy
>
> As if he had lost his mother; a still temper,
>
> No stirring in him, no alacrity,
>
> Of all this sprightly sharpness not a smile.
>
> Yet these that we count errors may become him:
>
> Narcissus was a sad boy, but a heavenly…
>
> What a bold gravity, and yet inviting,
>
> Has this brown manly face? O, love, this only
>
> From this hour is complexion. Lie there, Arcite,
>
> Thou art a changeling to him, a mere gypsy,

And this the noble body. (IV.ii.25-45)

Although the comparison seems to disparage Palamon at the outset, ambivalence sets in from the first words. Palamon may act as the foil to offset Arcite's luster, but Emilia also recalls Arcite's wrestling with her use of the word "foil," which denotes a throw or defeat in the sport.[66] With this sense in mind, we get the idea that Palamon could also be Arcite's fall, and Arcite and Palamon's rivalry becomes situated even more like an athletic, not an amorous, contest.

As we continue to analyze the passage, we see how Emilia conflates physical and humoral qualities that resonate to any reader clued into issues of masculinity, disability, and now race. At first, Emilia chides Palamon's lack of ability and his dark skin tone. He's a "shadow" and "swart," and his lethargy is dismissively noted: at first Emilia describes him as "still," but then she makes sure to give this stillness a negative edge as she claims that Palamon has "*no* stirring" and "*no* alacrity." To Emilia, Palamon's dark skin color and lack of physical ability and flexibility act as evidence of his inferior status. I am not making any claim about Palamon's "race" when I discuss his dark skin, and ultimately I do not think that determining his "race" matters. However, the fact that Palamon's dark skin is set into contrast with Arcite's fairness does show how the dark/light binarism is at work in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. And, Emilia's immediate disparagement of Palamon's swarthiness reveals how this binarism was being used to construct dark skin color as a marker of difference and otherness.[67] Yet, as Emilia looks at

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[66] See "foil, n2."

[67] Kim F. Hall's influential *Things of Darkness* discusses how the dark/light binarism was increasingly linked with skin color in the early modern period. Hall's monograph shows how culturally constructed notions of racial difference emerge in early modern England; scholars that have followed Hall's example, such as Ania Loomba and Sujata Iyengar, are also careful not to

Palamon's portrait differently, his lethargy transforms into evidence of an active, or "bold" gravity, all to confirm Palamon's "brown manly face." Suddenly, Palamon's "swart and meagre" body contributes to Emilia's claim that this kinsman is indeed manly.

As Emilia changes her mind, she considers Palamon and Arcite's able-bodiedness and skin color in increasingly hyperbolic terms. Her use of the word "changeling," which was a deformed child left by fairies in exchange for a "healthy" un-deformed child, as well as the gypsy epithet, transfer Palamon's dark complexion and flimsy body to Arcite, while Palamon comes to possess "*the* noble body" (emphasis mine). In this monologue, evaluations of athleticism, skin color, and manliness fluidly combine and flow from person to person as Emilia assesses the kinsmen. And, these three qualities become markers of a man's worthiness and value. Here, emerging notions of race, able-bodiedness, and masculinity determine how Emilia judges Palamon and Arcite.

Moreover, Emilia begins this comparison of the two portraits in the hopes that she will choose between the two kinsmen: "Yet I may bind those wounds up that must open / And bleed to death for my sake else—I'll choose, / And end their strife" (IV.ii.1-3). A preoccupation with wounding and scars comes to the fore here and elsewhere. As much as Palamon praises ways to circumvent the disabling effects of old age—the two ways being love and death—he does valorize the wounded, naked soldier, many of which find no payment in corrupt Thebes:

> Scars and bare weeds
> The gain o'th' martialist who did propound
> To his bold ends honour and golden ingots,

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assume that racial difference is a trans-historical concept that has remained consistent or unbroken.

Which though he won, he had not. (I.ii.15-18)

As much as Palamon expresses sadness that the Theban soldier does not receive the honor and money that he deserves for his valor, he calls attention to the vulnerability and woundedness of the soldier as a "gain." True masculine, martial behavior shows itself not in finery and the beauty of bodily surfaces, but in wounds and the display of bodily vulnerability. Masculinity is hidden underneath the skin, beneath scars. As we have seen now multiple times in Shakespeare's work, early modern masculinity is confirmed in evidence of bodily layers. This hypodermic masculinity, once again, appears.

However, I think that it would be foolhardy to say that masculinity is a quality *only* read beneath the surfaces of bodies, because this kind of statement would undermine the importance of skin, and especially skin color, in determining early modern masculinity and subjectivity. Such a reading would imply that hypodermic masculinity relies on a colorblind perspective, and I firmly maintain that this is not the case. What I find compelling about Emilia's debate with herself is how Emilia discusses a person's skin color, able-bodiedness, and gender not only to determine the kinsman with the most noble body, but also the most noble, good nature. One need only recall how Emilia begins to believe that Palamon's face "from this hour is complexion" to note this, for the word complexion is used to describe both one's physical aspect and humoral/emotional/moral disposition.[68] What is more, Emilia's assessments of these three personal facets flow from body to body; Palamon's and Arcite's bodies are made and remade in Emilia's image, which ultimately disembodies and destabilizes these supposedly biological and natural physical attributes. Disability theory has taught us much about this kind of bodily and

[68] For more on the relation of skin complexion to the complexion of an individual's personality in the early modern period, see Loomba 53.

discursive instability. And ultimately, in any consideration of gender and disability, we must turn our attention to race as well when we analyze how bodily "facts" are given social and moral valences in order to create categories of difference. Future studies of identity politics in the early modern period must address how race, gender, and disability flux and flow around and into each other, and if the reality of bodily and discursive instability—of bodies that are not made to register on conceptual continuums or grids, but are merely being formed, dissolved, or being weak and ill—touted by disability studies is a model to follow.

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