The Object of Affection: Metamorphosis and the Unbound Subject in Early Modern English Literature

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The Object of Affection:
Metamorphosis and the Unbound Subject in Early Modern English Literature
by
Emily Barth

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of Washington University in
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Emily Barth

Washington University in St. Louis
May 2020
For Sophie and Jakob
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
by
Emily Barth
Doctor of Philosophy in English and American Literature
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Professor Joseph Loewenstein, Chair

This project explores examples of metamorphoses in early modern English literature, and argues that metamorphosis becomes a means of affective expression for characters who are otherwise constrained. The Ovidian assault on the firm distinction between subject and object tells us something about affective life in the early modern world – and perhaps especially, if not exclusively, the affective life of early modern women.

My primary texts include Thomas Lodge’s *Scillae’s Metamorphosis* and William Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece*; Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, Book III Cantos 10-12, and Book IV through Canto 10; Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* and John Lyly’s *Woman in the Moon*; Anne Cecil’s *Pandora* sonnets, and selections of Katherine Phillips’ and Mary Sidney’s poems. In considering these texts, I explore how radical changes respond to or incorporate violence as a core facet of the expression of subjectivity, and how such change may provide opportunities for affective communication. Because of the way the subject may be construed in early modern England, much of the literature grapples with the fine line separating subject from object, and the idea that it is not difficult to cross that line oneself through a deterioration of boundaries. This progression is always disruptive, though not necessarily negative. This dissertation is indebted to Julia Kristeva’s model of subjectivity as being consistently mutable and reflective of external reality. Kristeva’s essays hinge on “the turning points” that situate the
individual in relation to community, and the porous boundaries between self and other.

Signification is a necessary ingredient for the formation of a definite subject, but signification is unstable, particularly in poetic language.

What Kristeva describes is traumatic subject formation that can occur repeatedly. It is an ongoing process informed by external events that occurs “between social and asocial, familial and delinquent, feminine and masculine, fondness and murder.”¹ Metamorphosis renders these interstitial spaces visible, and produces a mimetic image that reduces the subject to a singular object, undoing complex organizing fantasies of self and shattering inner cohesion. The Ovidian epyllia develop an idea of metamorphosis in which transformation is made available as an individual response, as it is for Scilla, whose originates in “The wondrous force of her untam’d desire,” an emotional pageant that culminates in her fusion with the shoreline in a demonstration of how she had become “enthrald” (118.6, 126.2). The tool that the epyllia develop has a mobility of its own, and becomes portable to other genres; so one can find the same sort of crying-out in Hermione’s statue, and in Anne Cecil’s lamentations: the drive toward ossification becomes also a drive toward emotional force.

After great pain, a formal feeling comes –
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs –
The stiff Heart questions ‘was it He, that bore,’
And ‘Yesterday, or Centuries before’?

The Feet, mechanical, go round –
    A Wooden way
Of Ground, or Air, or Ought –
    Regardless grown,
A Quartz contentment, like a stone –

This is the Hour of Lead –
    Remembered, if outlived,
As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow –
First – Chill – then Stupor – then the letting go –

(Emily Dickinson)
Introduction

Take me alone death let my babe stil move,
To sue a pardon from Joves court above
I am wth childe makes off a judge to give
The mother pardon so y’l both do live,
But death loves not this play, it cryes I’le have
Both childe and mother, neither wil I save
O death tis hard, yet having don no sin
To take out of ye world a not entred in
Yet peace sweet babe, for I wil even bee
A coffin and a grave, stil unto thee.¹

‘The complaint of a woman dying with child’ appears in multiple manuscripts. The speaker in the poem imagines her body first as something that might be traded for her child’s life, and then – as it becomes clear that this is not an option – as “a coffin and a grave.”² This imagery draws on the well-recognized womb:tomb topos common in sixteenth and seventeenth century poetry. The metaphor asks the reader to imagine the mother’s womb as “a coffin and a grave” but the content of the poem asks us to move one step further, to construe the metaphor as ‘literalized’: we are asked to believe this complaint is that of a woman dying while pregnant, the child remaining ensconced in her body actually making the womb a coffin. Such imagination relies on an understanding, derived from new translations and adaptations of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, that the body’s metamorphic potential might be called upon to perform one final maternal task. The idea that the mother’s body could be called upon to provide a tomb or monument for her child

¹ This transcription is my own. This version of the poem appears in the following manuscripts: Bodleian, MS. Rawl. Poet. 147, f. 73; Bodleian, MS. Tanner 465, f. 44; Bodleian, MS. Ashmole 47, f. 35.
² The Folger Library’s manuscript adds a couplet to the end: “My wombe thy chariot, + my faith thy guide/ Shalbe to heaven wth Christ, where wee shal hide” ‘The complaint of a woman dying with child' Folger, V.a.345, p. 33. See also Yale Library’s b.200, p. 229, which ends “Shall be to heaven, where with Christ abide.”
recurs frequently in early modern women’s poetry, which positions the metaphor such that it contends with the metamorphic and the religious as the speaker strives to find a way to hold on to her child through death. This difficulty is particularly poignant in the context of child loss poems. However, one can trace a similar trajectory of grappling with the use of the metamorphic for expressive purposes through the history of engagement with Ovidian poetry in England.

The Ovid that Arthur Golding inherited when he translated the *Metamorphoses* in 1567 was an Ovid tied to religion. The earliest English translations of Ovid participated in a tradition of moralizing his stories; T.H.’s *Fable of Ovid treating of Narcissus,…with a moral thereunto, very pleasant to read* (1560) and Thomas Peend’s rendition of the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditis from Book IV of the *Metamorphoses* (1565) follow suit. When George Turberville translated the *Heroides* and Arthur Golding published his translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in the same year, they – Golding in particular – produced an Ovid whose stories were detached from the sort of religious or ethical questions one might be prompted to consider by the medieval *Ovid moraliseé* and those earlier translations, like Peend’s, or assimilations, like Chaucer’s *Book of the Duchess*, which omits Alcyone’s metamorphosis altogether while refocusing attention to her emotional state. Early modern integrations of Ovid restore metamorphosis to a position of narrative importance, while maintaining Chaucer’s focus on the emotional agency of the metamorphosed figure.

One can see this reclamation of the classical Ovid, and the mediation of the Chaucerian attention to affect, in the additions that Golding makes to stories like Daphne’s and Niobe’s. As he chases Daphne through the Golding translation, Apollo calls to her: “Thou doest not know, poore simple soule, God wote thou dost not knowe,/ From whome thou fleest. For if thou knew, thou wouldste not flee me so,” bargaining with Daphne that if she stops running, he will stop
chasing her (I.625-26). Daphne seems to know enough: she knows she is being pursued, and she knows she doesn’t want to be pursued. She does the only logical thing one can do in such a situation, in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*: she asks her father Penaeus to help her rid herself of the body that has become so problematic. Her decision to make this request is premeditated. As Apollo chases her, hope spurring him on, the poem records Daphne’s thought progression, that “feare did make the Mayden fleete devising how to shift” (I.660). Indeed, she shifts – perhaps not quite the way she intended, but in a way that becomes a model for early modern writers fascinated by metamorphosis as a potential solution for characters to access in times of need. Daphne says: “O let the earth devour me quicke, on which I seeme too fayre, / Or else this shape which is my harme by chaunging straight appayre” (I.669-70).

What happens in response to Daphne’s prayer is a metamorphosis that expresses her emotional turmoil. Rather than serving as a means of escape, the metamorphosis captures Daphne’s predicament and provides a visual expression of her emotional state:

This piteous prayer scarsly sed: hir sinewes waxed starke,  
And therewithall about hir breast did grow a tender barke.  
Hir haire was turned into leaves, hir armes in boughes did growe,  
Hir feete that were ere while so swift, now rooted were as slowe.  
Hir crowne became the toppe, and thus of that she earst had beene,  
Remayne[n]d nothing in the worlde, but beautie fresh and greene.  

(I.671-76)

Daphne becomes an object that Apollo finally can touch, though as “He proferde kisses to the tree, the tree did from him wriethe” (I.682). The poem records something like acquiescence as “The Lawrell to his just request did seeme to condescende.” Condescension here is less an agreement than a giving in or giving up: her heart still “pants,” the body still twists away, the crown of the tree shakes (I.698-700). Daphne becomes not just material for Apollo, but expressive of her own emotional turmoil. Her shape is too fair, all adornment for a thinking,
feeling girl determined to escape the violence of intimacy threatened by Apollo’s repeated
gestures during his hunt of her. She succeeds, at least, in covering her body, becoming to some
extent unseen.

Daphne is certainly not the only character in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* whose
transformation effects more than a physical movement from subject (person) to object. We
usually think of the fundamentals of character in terms of subjectivity (or self-possession), but
many poets figure the most basic elements of character in terms of objectification: a person who
suddenly lacks agency, who is no longer capable of being an actor, whose movement is
constrained, or who literally turns into a tree or rock. In his preface, Golding portrays the
metamorphosed as obtaining an outwardly true expression of their inner lives. We become
mirrored in our transformations, our exacting shapes carved out as though “wee are a block or
stone” (Pref. 114). Golding’s Epistle and Preface repeatedly engage language that suggests such
deep exposure of the subject that one’s “whole estate, thoughtes, woordes and deedes” are
expressly shown in the poem. The word “object” is hardly adequate to convey this description,
and yet the objects of metamorphosis seem to perform an exposure of the subject, even as her
original form might be hidden away.

In these chapters I explore examples of metamorphoses in early modern English
literature, and argue that metamorphosis becomes a means of affective expression for characters
who are otherwise constrained. My primary texts include Thomas Lodge’s *Scilae’s*
*Metamorphosis* and William Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece*; Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*,
Book III Cantos 10-12, and Book IV through Canto 10; Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* and
John Lyly’s *Woman in the Moon*; Anne Cecil’s *Pandora* sonnets, and selections of Katherine
Phillips’ and Mary Sidney’s poems. In considering these texts, I consider how metamorphosis
can become desirable, and how radical changes respond to or incorporate violence as a core facet of the expression of subjectivity.

Early modern literature interrogates the metamorphic through explorations of how characters are made, or make themselves over, into objects. Because of the way the subject is construed in early modern England, much of the literature grapples with the fine line separating subject from object, and the idea that it is not difficult to cross that line oneself through a deterioration of boundaries. Frequently, the poetic depictions of such transformation portray a change that is not abrupt but rather occurs through a progressive expression. This progression is always disruptive, though not necessarily negative.

I begin by discussing Scillae’s Metamorphosis and The Rape of Lucrece, in order to show the progressive nature of metamorphosis, as well as its expressive force. In considering The Rape of Lucrece, I find that metamorphosis sometimes entails a collapse of boundaries between self and other in order to facilitate identification with others as a way of engaging in the split subjectivity discussed above. I then turn to Amoret’s repeated identification with others in The Faerie Queene, and the revisions of her story, continuing to explore the idea that finding oneself in others can be paradoxically isolating, and querying the force that silence can exact on identity. The Faerie Queene provokes a question about what in a character might remain constant throughout change, and I turn to that question in greater depth, and from other angles, in considering The Winter’s Tale and The Woman in the Moon. Finally, I return to the imaginative metamorphoses mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, reading in women poets’ lamentations a desire to literally become vessels for their dead.
This dissertation is indebted to Julia Kristeva’s model of subjectivity as being consistently mutable and reflective of sociopolitical reality. Kristeva’s essays hinge on “the turning points” that situate the individual in relation to community, the porous boundaries between self and other, and the “wanderings of the subject and its objects.” What Kristeva refers to are the “objects” that, separately and for a time, enable the significance of the subject: social and familial roles, fragile identities, “fears and struggles, abjections and lyricisms.” Signification is necessary for the formation of a definite subject, but signification is unstable, particularly in poetic language, which “through the particularity of its signifying operations, is an unsettling process – when not an outright destruction – of the identity of meaning and speaking subject”; that is, signification is mutable, allowing the subject to be formed repeatedly. Importantly for Kristeva’s argument, as well as for my own, this process often accompanies crises.

What Kristeva describes in these passages is traumatic subject formation as an ongoing process informed by external events that occurs “between [the] social and asocial, familial and delinquent, feminine and masculine, fondness and murder.” Allowing metaphor to proceed as metamorphosis provides a clear depiction of one version of subject formation. Metamorphosis captures the subject, rendering the in-between visible, and produces a mimetic image that

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3 I am also indebted to the work of trauma theorists including Ruth Leys, who provides a vocabulary to describe the transition from subject to object, and Dorian Stuber, who argues that trauma studies “[arise] within…the linguistic turn.” Leys’ and Stuber’s work lends a theoretical framework for examining interactions between character and text in which mimetic transformation collapses not only distinctions between self and other, but between subject and object, and speaker and sentence. Ruth Leys, Traume: a Genealogy. University of Chicago Press, 2000; Dorian Stuber, “Review of Trauma: a Genealogy.” Bryn Mawr Review of Comparative Literature, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Fall 2002), p. 1.
4 Powers of Horror, 135.
5 Ibid.
7 Kristeva Reader, 94.
8 Powers of Horror 135
reduces the subject to a singular object, undoing complex but organizing fantasies of self and shattering inner cohesion. Kristeva describes “sites” that are representative of the subject in process, momentarily simplifying the subject but not comprehensively representing her. She suggests we view these sites not in terms of a break or separation, but rather as reiterations of the break or separation that has already occurred. This reads much like the deeply problematic mimetic representations described by Cathy Caruth as growing out of traumatic experience.

Daphne is still present within the laurel tree, and the laurel tree condenses Daphne into one salient image, but being a laurel tree doesn’t quite help Daphne: she splits, becomes both protected from and subject to Apollo. Similarly, Samuel Daniel’s *Complaint of Rosamund* describes the titular character’s descent into indiscretion and its aftermath, and provides a near-perfect example of this division within the subject. Rosamund describes simultaneously being herself and not herself: “Ah me, poor wench, on this unhappy shelf/ I grounded me, and cast away myself” (14.6-7). She is both the acting agent and a thing cast off. In the next stanza, the part of herself that was saved on the semi-shore of the “shelf,” grounded and objectified, becomes a site of conflict. In the space of a few sentences, Rosamund transitions from being a straightforward complainant to holding the position of the speaker one finds in Ovid, presenting the dual perspectives of participant and experienced observer.

Such transitions are made possible by the way that Golding tries to reimagine a literary tradition already present in Europe and in England, to both render a more faithful translation of the *Metamorphoses* and to reimagine the language and setting as being particularly English. This endeavor highlights metamorphosis and radical change as already being a thing of cultural

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9 Susan Stewart offers a very similar rubric in her work on lyric poetry.
11 It would be an interesting exercise to re-read the stories discussed in this introduction against Kristeva’s description of “expulsion” (see “The Subject in Process,” 153).
concern, as what Raphael Lyne refers to as the “changing world” of English writing, and “the changing place of England within the world.”\textsuperscript{12} Lyne makes particular note of the “change-filled landscapes” present in the poems he examines in his study, particularly in Golding’s, Drayton’s, and Sandys’s translations and adaptations of the \textit{Metamorphoses}, connecting varying ideas about geographical space to each poet’s work. What Lyne’s work suggests but does not say is that in “Englishing” the \textit{Metamorphoses}, Golding and his cohort thrust Ovid’s work and metamorphosis in general into relief as something portable: if the \textit{Metamorphoses} can be Englished, they can be imported to other generic settings as well. Metamorphosis becomes an option to be taken up in times of need.\textsuperscript{13}

It is in this environment that the last decade of the sixteenth century sees a sudden rise in Ovidian epyllia, short epics like Thomas Lodge’s \textit{Scilae’s Metamorphosis} (1589). These stories of metamorphosis rework core classical myths early on, stressing “originality not of subject matter but of treatment,” as Elizabeth Story Donno writes in her introduction to \textit{Elizabethan Minor Epics} (1963).\textsuperscript{14} Donno suggests that it is the very aesthetic of the poems that seems Ovidian, that their attention to detail and their suggestion that those details exceed the merely natural locate us in Ovid’s world. This is only confirmed by the transformations that then occur. The genre itself changes over the course of the decade, eventually leaving behind overt references to Ovid in favor of fully assimilating his metamorphoses, embracing a landscape rife with mutability and an engagement with language in which words make things happen.

\textsuperscript{12} Lyne suggests, in fact, that Ovid is brought into new worlds. Raphael Lyne, \textit{Ovid’s Changing Worlds}, 22.
The genre of the English epyllion, then, essentially builds and then breaks itself down in a relatively short period of time. The Ovidian epyllia develop an idea of metamorphosis in which transformation is made available as an individual response, as it is for Scilla. Her transformation originates in “The wondrous force of her untam’d desire,” an emotional pageant that culminates in her fusion with the shoreline in a demonstration of how she had become “enthral’d” (118.6, 126.2). I am arguing that metamorphoses like Scilla’s originate from within her; there is no plea to any deity to remove her from her body, nor is there a specific moment in which an angry god points down at her and says, “now, you will be a rock.” However, the circumstances that lead to Scilla’s emotional metamorphosis are arranged by Venus and Cupid; it might be possible (though rather difficult, I think) to make an argument that the two of them are responsible for her transformation. If this were the case, she would not be alone: many of the metamorphoses that occur in Ovid’s work are inflicted by vindictive gods, or earned as punishments by wayward humans. Even many of these, though, describe metamorphosis as originating from within the subject’s own emotional turmoil: Niobe (“all tears”) mocks Latona for having fewer children than herself. In retribution, all of her children are killed.

So she sat there,
A childless woman among her sons, her daughters,
Beside her husband, and never moved; no air
Lifted her hair, the color of her features
Was waxen, and her eyes were fixed and staring,
The picture of utter grief, and in the picture
No sign of life at all: the tongue was frozen
To the roof of the mouth; no pulse beat in the veins;
Neck could not bend, nor arms be moved, nor feet
Go back or forward; and the vitals hardened
To rock, but still she weeps…

(VI:303-13)\(^{15}\)

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Niobe turns to stone from the inside out, and her petrification begins with the shock of grief. She is completely expressive in her transformed state. Golding begins Niobe’s story with her “wrathful stomake,” and makes her transformation more gradual. Her sons dead, “Hir heart was so/ With sorrow hardened, that she grew more bolde” (Golding VI:363-64). When her daughters are killed, the continued progression of Niobe’s stoniness matches Ovid’s original, until Golding embellishes, “And into stone hir verie wombe and bowels also bind” (VI:392). Focusing our attention on the parts of Niobe that make her a mother, beginning and ending her story with this focus, draws attention to the particular mutability of the female body.

Golding’s adjustments to Ovid’s stories emphasize a type of metamorphosis – often requested, sometimes desired, not generally offering real salvation – that is significantly active in the literature of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This metamorphosis may involve invocations of divinity but is fundamentally not exogenous. The change that one finds in narrative poetry and drama that adopts the environment of the Metamorphoses is predicated upon the agency of the transforming subject, and on an inherent closeness between subject and object. The suggestion of such closeness between subject and object, the potential for “objectification” such that the subject becomes an object, a non-human expressive force, is most obviously at play in the epyllia that draw directly on Ovid’s Metamorphoses. This is a model initiated by Lodge with Scillaes Metamorphosis in 1589, and adopted by many of the epyllia that follow. The tool that the epyllia develop has a mobility of its own, and becomes portable to other genres; so one can find the same sort of crying-out in Hermione’s statue, and in Anne Cecil’s lamentations: the drive toward ossification becomes also a drive toward emotional force. This type of objectification reappears in the texts examined by this dissertation, and it seems to be a curiously feminine type of transformation, one that seems almost exclusively to concern women.
There is not a particularly clear answer to the question “why women?” that does not in some way trouble the modern feminist. It is not the case that men do not also metamorphose in Ovid, but there are more women who do, and early modern writers are infinitely more concerned with the metamorphosing female figure than the male (Bottom’s time as a donkey aside). One could cite medical reasons for this – the female body, capable of conception, pregnancy, and childbirth is already a site for change; the early modern medical assessment of the “leaky” female body only makes it moreso. I have chosen to focus on women’s transformations and objectifications for all of these reasons, and also because of the history of feminist thought on objectification, which focuses primarily on the female body as a site of imaginative deprivation, pleasure, and pain. Martha Nussbaum’s identification of seven features of objectification (instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership, and denial of subjectivity) offers a limited way of thinking about the topic, but in maintaining the category of violability does not entirely deny expressive power to the objectified.\(^{16}\) Nussbaum, in fact, argues against a blanket notion that objectification is a negative phenomenon. Hers is the most comprehensive treatment of the subject to date, and she writes in part to argue for the possibility of gratifying, pleasurable, respectful experiences in the context of objectification. Nussbaum is drawing on Kantian thinking, and writing primarily about sex. However, when I refer to objectification in an early modern context, I mean something slightly different. Scilla, like Daphne becoming a tree, is “objectified” by becoming an object. Amoret is objectified by losing her individuated subjectivity, and by unceremoniously slipping into silence and invisibility.

Hermione is objectified through her husband’s language, and then she turns into a statue. I am keenly interested in characters who refer to one another as “thing,” in mothers who imagine their bodies as stone shelters for their children. The epyllia seem to solidify and disseminate an imaginative tradition that makes these moments possible, highlighting a sense of easy slippage between person and thing such that it can be taken up as an expressive tool.

By the 1590s, having significantly shifted away from the *Ovide Moralisé*, the stories of change and metamorphosis that primarily influence literature like the epyllia are that of Daphne’s split subjectivity, her story’s assertion that subjectivity is inherently traumatic, and the solidification of this idea in Myrrha’s claim to a liminal presence. Myrrha’s story, in which she is both perpetrator and victim, desirous of her father and condemned by him, enacts that split subjectivity. Myrrha’s expressed desire for metamorphosis includes an understanding that in being changed, she will hover somewhere between the living and the dead, that metamorphosis will in “altring mee, deny to mee both lyfe and death” (X.559). The transformation freezes her in place, binds her to the ground, and symbolically reduces her to her tears. Still in some regard herself, she is neither a person nor entirely a thing; she is both entirely tree and entirely an embodied expression of shame and sorrow, objectified in the way Golding imagines the subject mirrored by transformation, and Kristeva imagines a captured moment. That she, like Daphne,

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17 This assertion departs from Barkan’s contention that it is the story of Minerva and Arachne that informs Renaissance thinking about metamorphosis, that Minerva, who offers “at once a theology and an aesthetic of metamorphosis” (3) in which metamorphosis is highly moralistic and entirely at the discretion of the gods, provides an accounting that “exists in order that Ovid may shed its sharp moral and aesthetic rules,” adhering instead to Arachne’s vision of subtle and ongoing mutability, colors bleeding into one another, “radiant with multiplicity but confounding clear definition, [reflecting] a reality in the universe that is similarly fluid” (3). Arachne piles story upon story, and Barkan notes their multiplicity without contending with their singular origin; his concern is primarily to connect the departure from the *Ovide Moralisé* to a secularization that he refers to as a pursuit of the pagan. More importantly for this project Barkan traces the shifting of Ovid away from morality lessons as being a divorce of change from morality, an aesthetic that allows the divine to “enter” the familiar, that insists on “the magical power of the image,” that is “characterized by a reaction against the masculine-dominated world of stability.”
requests such a transformation amounts to something like a self-objectification: no one does this to her, not without her consent. Myrrha, like Daphne, has already seen herself as another kind of object – a sex object – and imagines for herself a transformation into something that relieves her of the problematic body. Scilla picks up on this model. Her transformation, originating in “the wondrous force of her untam’d desire,” is portrayed as an emotional pageant that culminates in her fusion with the shoreline in a demonstration of how she had become “enthrald” (118.6, 126.2). This idea becomes portable, and metamorphosis itself looks somewhat different as it appears in other genres, often, as in Katherine Phillips’ “To Mrs. Wogan,” in response to loss. In that poem, Phillips imagines that mourning produces internal structural change, creating “a Monument in every Brest” *(To Mrs. Wogan*, 20). Functioning as a similar tool or resource, metamorphosis sometimes appears as a desirable and even sought-after outcome in response to national or personal crises, as it does for Mary Carey and Anne Cecil in response to child loss, and as it does for Hermione in *The Winter’s Tale*.

The first chapter of my project focuses on Ovidian epyllia, and in particular *Scillae’s Metamorphoses*. I argue that Scilla’s transformation is not a punishment but is rather expressive, and originates within her. This privileging of the internal is picked up in Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece*, in which the reader is made privy to the inner monologues of both Lucrece’s rapist and Lucrece herself. As Lucrece processes what has happened to her, she relies on other characters, other victims, with whom she identifies, finding herself elsewhere. This split, Lucrece’s identification of herself in others, allows her to make her tragedy one part of a larger story while paradoxically serving to further isolate her, much as Scilla is abandoned in her coastline.
Characters’ production and destabilization through text continues as a central concern in the second chapter, which examines Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene*, focusing on Amoret’s persistent silence. I argue that by the end of Book IV, the violence of Amoret’s story and its revisions has allowed her, like Lucrece, to find herself in others, though no one seems to recognize Amoret in herself. The changes wreaked on Amoret’s character put deliberate pressure on the idea that there is some central, core identity that remains constant throughout change, and engage directly with the question of what trauma does to that core. I suggest that Amoret undergoes a dispersal based on contradictory revisions of her story through which she remains unceremoniously silent.

The epic form of *The Faerie Queene*, and the concern with change that Amoret displays, share some characteristics with the dramatic works that I take up in the third chapter – Shakespeare’s *Winter’s Tale*, and Lyly’s *The Woman in the Moon* – in which substitution and transformation become rapid and immediate problems. Here, concern with how one maintains legible identity, and with what one needs to maintain a legible identity, more specifically address the question broached in the previous chapter of whether one can “preserve” oneself through change. I engage with this question in part by focusing on Hermione’s experience of motherhood and child loss, and her own eventual wondrous monumentalization.

The final chapter turns much more directly to maternity and child loss, and investigates women’s lamentation, examining personal poetry and diary entries in which the writer seeks to become a monument to a dead loved one through language. If the texts examined in the previous chapters ask a question something like “where do we keep our selves?,” these lamentations ask where we keep our dead, in whom we find an important aspect of self-definition. In these poems, the collapse between self and other leads some of the authors to push toward self-objectification,
toward the transformation of the self into a vessel for a corpse. As in the *Metamorphoses* and, I have argued, the epyllia, the desire again entails rendering oneself as an object, an elimination of boundaries, and an understanding of oneself as being like a vessel, available to be emptied and refilled. Anne Cecil’s sonnets in memory of her dead child perform this self-objectification most directly. Likening herself to Niobe, Cecil’s own longed-for transformation into stone is a return to something that, we come to recognize, she already is or has been. If only she, too, could turn to rock, then she “might againe have been the Sepulcure,/ Of him that I bare in mee, so long ago” (6.13-14). When the maternal speaker asserts that she was once and longs again to be a sepulcher, she both describes herself as a hollow enclosure (playing on the space of the womb, filled and emptied and filled again). The dead’s indeterminacy as subject or object reflects their spiritual intermediate state and allows the dead to inhabit a composite space that Kristeva names abject, which “does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite.”¹⁸ The mourner’s empathetic relationship with the deceased, and that failure to moderate grief with faith that the early modern English patriarchy marks as conspicuously feminine, results in a similarly liminal and composite status for the mourner. Her transformation is not into a mere vessel, but into something neither alive nor dead, retaining the dead and expressing the subject.

The tone that makes Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* so wonderful and peculiar, in which the speaker is sometimes an impartial observer and sometimes deeply emotionally embedded into the story being told, is adopted and assimilated by the literature of Elizabethan and early Jacobean England, not just because it is a wonderful and peculiar tone, but because it speaks to something about the way subjectivity is thought about and presented through the literature of the

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period. The closeness between participant and observer, or subject and object, is an important aspect of the texts I am going to examine. That closeness is something that is played with, worried over, and made desirable; it insists that if the subject is so easily objectifiable, there must be ways of holding onto oneself (or not), and of holding on to one’s selfobjects (or not). When Daphne transforms into a laurel tree, her bark is tender, and Apollo caresses it as he would any body. The unbinding of Daphne’s subjectivity through her transformation does not provide her an escape but in fact leaves her root-bound and still vulnerable. This persistence, or elucidation, of story through the transformed body makes the signified suddenly present. The texts tend to move characters from one way of being to another through slippage – Scilla is swimming and then she is in the midst of a pageant and then she is sand and rock and shore. The transformation that originates within the subject – dreamed of, longed for, imagined to perfection, and slid into – produces a self-objectification that suggests a vision of subjectivity predicated on an understanding of oneself as being both an acting agent and a thing, eliding potential distinction between subject and object.

The chapters outlined above trace the resource of metamorphosis in the early modern period as it changes itself, becoming perhaps less literal but maintaining strong theoretical force, and as the literature in which metamorphosis appears facilitates transformation through sentence structure, grammatical shifts, and linguistic turns. Clark Hulse has described the epyllia as part of a grand literary ecosystem, and establishes the form as a crucial view into “a world in process, a view that always threatens to break down into the chaos of its parts.”19 The epyllia, with their drive to “combine and remake other genres,” also serve as a transitional form for Ovid’s Metamorphoses as they move from translation to background to gestus, to the point where the

19 Hulse, 4.
metamorphoses become something toward which the literature gestures, almost subconsciously. If the translations of the Metamorphoses undergo a progression themselves (as I believe they do), the way that stories of metamorphosis appear in Ovidian epyllia are in turns directly inserted, subverted, and made so deeply endemic to the literature that they become a philosophical landscape in which to think about the physicality of communication, the immediate signification of identities, and one’s status as (or easy ability to become) an object.

These stories of metamorphosis participate in a redefinition and clarification of the characters on whom they act. This availability of impactful change is something taken up by both trauma theory’s concern with memory and mimesis, and the broader psychoanalytic engagement with language. Because trauma theory originates in psychoanalytic work there is significant overlap in their vocabularies, and trauma theory’s affinity for the rubric of semiotics as it appears in the work of Julia Kristeva provides an avenue for exploring how such responses occur on the individual level through these texts, and how the texts might speak to broader cultural engagement with radical change.

Historically, critical attention to the epyllia and other literature of metamorphosis generally focuses on the transformation as an instrument of mobility. Source criticism tracks intertextuality; William Keach’s *Elizabethan Erotic Narratives* (1977), the first book-length study of Ovidian narrative poems, follows the development of Ovid from the moralizing of the Medieval period to the imitation of the Renaissance by suggesting that Ovid exerted direct influence on early modern poets’ style and thematic content. Clark Hulse’s *Metamorphic Verse* (1980) is a generic study, in which the minor epic or epyllion mirrors through its metamorphic

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content the fluidity of literary culture in a blurring of boundaries that is endemic to the
metamorphic, which he describes as “integral, minimizing differences.” 21 Leonard Barkan’s The
Gods Made Flesh (1986) turns from philology and intertextuality to the metaphorical and
allegorical; metamorphosis “becomes a means of creating self-consciousness because it
establishes a tension between identity and form, and through this tension the individual is
compelled to look in the mirror.” 22 Barkan’s sense (like Hulse’s) that metamorphosis is a
blurring of categories informs his position that the importation of Ovid’s stories provides a way
of thinking outside of Christian contexts – that the Pagan provides a different type of access to
divinity and eroticism. Similarly, Jonathan Bate’s Shakespeare and Ovid (1986) examines
Shakespeare’s use of Ovid in terms of a humanist engagement with the past, one which sees
metamorphosis as “psychological and metaphorical instead of physical and literal.” 23

More recently, scholars like Wendy Olmstead have expanded on these ideas about
fluidity and the collapsing of difference. Olmstead reads metamorphoses as allegories of social
mobility and difference, construing metamorphosis as a vehicle for freedom, a means of
increasing opportunity. 24 In Redefining Elizabethan Literature (2004), Georgia Brown argues
that metamorphosis works through text to make change in the real world through social and
political commentary. Still concerned with source criticism and the metaphorical, a number of
monographs have honed their focuses to examine, for example, the Ovidian body, human-animal
transformation, and the place of emotion and politics in stories of metamorphosis; Lynne

Enterline (2000), Susan Wiseman (2014), and Cora Fox (2009) (respectively) have engaged these topics from a psychoanalytic perspective.  

These critical trajectories reflect the early modern literary world’s multidimensional engagement with Ovid, with what Goran V. Stanivukovic has assessed as the “Ovidian discourse of the body and self” being the closest thing “to the complex, often contradictory ways in which Renaissance subjects were constituted” in “the changing cultural, social, and political conditions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.” There are ample examples of early modern stories of metamorphosis in which the theories of mobility or fluidity hold sway, often brilliantly adduced in the work outlined above, but that other kind of metamorphosis begs two questions about subjectivity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One question concerns change, and is broached in Caroline Walker Bynum’s work on Medieval literature as a question about what, if anything, remains constant through radical change. The other hinges on the desire to be made, if not inanimate, then non-human and non-animal. This latter issue suggests a basic understanding of oneself as at least partly thing, subject as well as object locked in simultaneity rather than fluidity.

It is worth considering Bynum’s perspective; multiple scholars have suggested that the epyllia find their precedent in Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*. Bynum’s work identifies textual  

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moments that differ from the “norm,” an understanding of metamorphosis as finite, and by and large she asserts a “medieval resistance” to “the shape-shifting motif” that would have the subject undergoing an unending transition. “Resistance” might be too active a word. Most medieval writers who interested themselves in the problem of change worked from the *Ovide Moralisé* or, later, one of its translations, situating their work within a Christian framework. Meanwhile, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, and the work that follows Golding’s translation, suggest that in their transformations, his characters entirely lack such a rubric. The destruction of that rubric might be seen to begin with Criseyde.

Early modern metamorphic literature owes something important to Chaucer: as suggested above, it is Chaucer who looks to the *Metamorphoses* in *The Book of the Duchess*, only to turn and focus on affective transmission instead of actual transformation. The criticism that tackles the similarly transformational subtext of *Troilus and Criseyde* has smartly engaged with the idea that the metamorphic is endemic to literature depicting trauma. In *The Mythographic Chaucer*, Jane Chance remarks that Criseyde says, “rightly, in line 793, she soon will be “chaunged,” changed as the moon changes, another kind of lunacy, as well as exchanged for Antenor.” Chance goes on to identify this “change” as a type of metamorphosis, one that begins with Troilus’ failure to save Criseyde. This metamorphosis is “witnessed by her reification (as

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29 Christine de Pizan’s *Mutacion de Fortune*, for example, meditates on metaphor and transformation within a structure that identifies death as providing a final earthly metamorphosis. This is quite an orthodox Christian perspective, one which Suzanne Conklin Akbari argues mediates the *Ovide Moralisé*. While Akbari suggests that de Pizan’s use of metaphor can be understood in terms of Ovidian metamorphosis, “as the process through which outer form comes to reflect inner form,” those terms are adjusted to adhere to a trajectory that looks to finality, to death and to the end of days. Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “Metaphor and Metamorphosis in the *Ovide moralisé* and Christine de Pizan’s *Mutacion de Fortune*.” *Metamorphosis: The Changing Face of Ovid in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, edited by Alison Keith and Stephen Rupp, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2007, 77-90.
incestuous Myrrha [1139]) and madness (as the imbalanced falsifier Athamas [1538], husband of Ino, father of Meleager, and ancestor of Diomede).”\textsuperscript{31} The actual moment of transformation is marked by a swoon that Chance describes as “a kind of death of her love – and a protection against pain, for which she has no resources.”\textsuperscript{32} When Criseyde awakens, her reasoned and organized deliberations (on behalf of them both, as Troilus is much too beside himself to participate) are made of repetition of the facts: this has been decided in parliament; she will go for ten days; it will be awful; the war will end; she will come back. Criseyde’s numb recounting insists that this is a temporary change, while Chaucer’s comparison of her to Myrrha begs quite the opposite. The love affair between Troilus and Criseyde has been a hot one, intense and carnal. When Criseyde leaves Troy, she exchanges her father for Pandarus, and, crucially, Diomede for Troilus. The intensely physical, traumatic loss of Troilus can only be ameliorated by numbing and an exchange of bodies, an acquisition of bitterness that exceeds Myrrha’s:

\begin{verbatim}
The woful tears that they lepton fall
As bittre weren, out of teris kynde,
For peyne, as is ligne aloes or galle –
So bittre teeris weep nought, as I fynde,
The woful Mirra through the bark and rynde -
That in this world ther nys so hard on here
That nolde han rewed on hire peynes smerte. (1135-41)
\end{verbatim}

In a deeper engagement with the theoretical grounding of Chance’s association of the metamorphic with the traumatic, Patricia Clare Ingham’s work explores \textit{Troilus and Criseyde} as a text that “meditates upon trauma by rendering visible the formal properties of its representation” through Chaucer’s “use of trope, ambiguity, and voicing,” utilizing the literary features of the poem to bring some visibility to things that can rarely be depicted forthrightly.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{31} ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Chance, 149.
\textsuperscript{33} Patricia Clare Ingham, “Chaucer's Haunted Aesthetics: Mimesis and Trauma in Troilus and Criseyde.” College English, Vol. 72, No. 3 (January 2010), 227-28.
Ingham relies on Dorian Stuber and Ruth Leys’ work in trauma studies to explain what she sees as a “collapse between victim and witness/perpetrator” in Chaucer’s poem, resisting earlier work that represents trauma in terms of voice and recuperative testimony, suggesting instead a response grounded in what Ingham describes as “psychological mimesis.” 34 Ingham defines psychological mimesis as “a victim’s embodied reenactment of the traumatic event.” 35

Such an understanding of mimesis enables us to recognize metamorphosis not as an escape, but rather as a desirable means of signification, an intensified and physicalized communication of an event like that of the Complaint of a woman dying with child. The end of that anonymous poem does not portray a large and blustery emotion like Scilla’s, but it displays, and physicalizes the speaker’s emotional state nonetheless, peace and stillness presiding over the metamorphosis of womb to tomb: “Yet peace sweet babe, for I wil even bee/ A coffin and a grave, stil unto thee.” It is this rendering visible of affect, the intensified and physicalized communication of an event, that I argue is taken up by the characters in the early modern literature considered in this dissertation, the stillness that also indicates continuation, even into death.

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34 Ingham, 232.
35 Ingham, 229.
Chapter 1

Languages of Disarticulation:
Transformation, Disembodiment, and the Inconsolable Subject

As Clark Hulse has pointed out, to define the epyllion is to do something that is never quite right.¹ The narrative poems that make up the corpus of the epyllia have historically been divided by their antecedent material into groups of mythologically and historically based stories. Hulse describes the former “characteristically following Ovid’s Metamorphoses as a model, [relating] a sexual consummation by young lovers in a witty narrative enforcing the lessons of *carpe diem*.” The latter he defines as a “historical complaint, modeled on the *Mirror for Magistrates*, [which] uses dramatic monologue to tell of a female protagonist who confronts seduction (or rape) and death as a solemn and moral warning against lust.”² This is a distinction that Hulse immediately questions on the grounds of Renaissance poetic theory, asking whether the authors would have recognized such division within the genre. If Hulse also recognized the diffuse importance of Medieval complaint, and the specific importance of Chaucer’s *Criseyde*, it might lead him to question the division he attempts to make still further. One might also – and should – question the distinction based on a lack of clear generic division between the treatment of mythologically and historically based poems. Poems like Thomas Lodge’s *Scillaes*

¹ Clark Hulse’s first chapter in *Metamorphic Verse: the Elizabethan Minor Epic* (Princeton University Press, 1981) calls attention to the difficulties with the terms “epyllion” and “minor epic,” as well as to questions about generic distinction. “Epyllion,” diminutive of “epos,” is meant to indicate a short epic. Often “epyllion” and “minor epic” are used interchangeably in modern literary criticism. However, these terms simply do not exist in the world of early modern poetics; they are modern impositions. Rather than distinguishing between historical and mythological poems, heroic or romance, early modern theorists like George Puttenham categorize poems based on whether they are “true” or “fabulous” (Puttenham 2:42-44). It is doubtful that anyone in early modern England would have recognized the poems that we presently refer to as epyllia as a distinct genre; this is rather a useful contemporary imposition. (See Hulse, 16-34.)

² Hulse 17.
Metamorphosis, Christopher Marlowe’s Hero and Leander, and Shakespeare’s Rape of Lucrece share substantial generic characteristics such that one cannot really call Lucrece a non-mythological complaint any more than one can read Hero and Leander as an unequivocal endorsement of the protagonists’ consummation. The bases of these complications of classification are inherited from Ovid, in whose Metamorphoses the narrator often operates at an emotional remove from the stories he reports, occasionally giving voice to a protagonist, producing a sort of layered affect. This layered affect is established as endemic to the epyllion by Lodge’s Scillae, which in complicating its emotional presentation produces other questions, primarily regarding the function of Scilla’s metamorphosis at the end of the poem. Is her transformation just retribution for her coy chastity, or a tragic end? In this chapter I will contend that neither is the case, that Scilla’s metamorphosis is instead an affective response to Glaucus’ pursuit made possible by an easy slippage between subject and object.

Scillaes Metamorphosis opens as a complaint situated in an Ovidian landscape populated with stories of forlorn lovers. The beginning emphasizes love’s power to enthrall and captivate:

Walking alone (all onely full of griefe)
Within a thicket nere to Isis floud,
Weeping my wants, and wailing scant reliefe,
Wringing mine armes (as one with sorrowe wood);
The piteous streames relenting at my mone
Withdraw their tides, and staid to heare me grone.

From foorth the channell, with a sorrowing crie
The Sea-god Glaucus (with his hallowed heares
Wet in the teares of his sad mothers dye)
With piteous lookes before my face appeares;
For whome the Nimphes a mossie coate did frame,
Embroidered with his Sillas heavenly name. …

…But (loe) a wonder; from the channels glide
A sweet melodious noyse of musick rose,
That made the streame to dance a pleasant tide,  
The weedes and sallowes neere the bancke that groes  
Gan sing, as when the calmest windes accorde  
To greete with balmie breath the fleeting forde.

(1-9)

The extent of the pathetic fallacy, part of what Keach finds satirical in the poem, insists that nature does not merely mirror but actively participates in our emotional lives, even behaving autonomously at times, as when Thetis and the nymphs assemble and “The watrie world to touch their teates doo tremble” (10).³ There is a bit of foreboding tucked into comic lines like this one, and indeed Lodge introduces the poem as a cautionary tale in its long title: “Scillaes metamorphosis, enterlaced with the vnfortunate loue of Glaucus: whereunto is annexed the delectable discourse of the discontented satyre, with sundrie other most absolute poems and sonnets: contayning the detestable tyrannie of disdaine, and comicall triumph of constancie: verie fit for young courtiers to peruse, and coy dames to remember.” While the “triumph of constancie” is at times comical, it is also Scilla’s downfall; as Charles Segal points out, the poem’s Ovidian character presents itself in its “juxtaposition of tones, beginning…as a light, amorous adventure and ending in horror.”⁴ The poem careens between humor and serious commentary, starting a stanza in a light mode and resolving it into something darker. The nymphs, for example, offer a punning exchange in which the prick of a briar becomes a sexual innuendo about the “prickes” that “are scarcely feard of us” and “in Ladies bosomes often sting,” an acute example of this dynamic (15). The couplet that concludes this episode and provides its moral thrust offers a rather general platitude – “That while some smile; some sigh through

³ William Keach, Elizabethan Erotic Narratives (Rutgers University Press, 1977), 43.
⁴ Charles Segal, Landscape in Ovid’s Metamorphoses: a study in the transformations of a literary Symbol (Weisbaden: F. Steiner, 1969), 367.
change of time; / Some smart, some sport amidst their youthlie prime” – which nevertheless manages to capture the dual nature of the nymphs’ jest. The duality is grounded in the essential Ovidianism that every affect is haunted by another quite different one, and leaves the reader with a sense that the whole episode is run through with an undercurrent of both comedy and threat: the briar that pricks Thetis comes from a bush where a nightingale sings, and Chelis reminds her cohort that “prickes doo make birdes sing”; that in fact masculinity forces the birds’ songs from their throats (15). It is not possible to read this without thinking that Philomel, or the “smale foweles” that awaken in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, that “so priketh hem nature in hir corages”, linger in the background.

This discomfort of the juxtaposition of humor and threat sets up a sense in the poem that the emotional remove that sometimes manifests as humor is not pervasive, that genuine woe underlies the complaint. Lodge makes much of Glaucus’ misery, or rather, Glaucus makes much of his own misery. His complaint takes up the bulk of the poem, his critique of Scilla and what he sees as her unreasonable chastity emphasizing the deadly impact of her rejection:

Scilla hath eyes, but too sweete eyes hath Scilla;  
Scilla hath hands, faire hands but coy in touching;  
Scilla in wit surpassesthe grave Sibilla,  
Scilla hath words, but words well storde with grutching;  
Scilla a Saint in looke, no Saint in scorning:  
Looke Saint-like Scilla, least I die with mourning.  

(31)

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5 The pun in this example operates on several levels; first, according there is the poetic convention that the nightingale leans its breast against a thorn in order to sing (Sidney uses this image in ‘The Nightingale’ in England’s Helicon, and Shakespeare has Lucrece use it to devastating effect in *The Rape of Lucrece*, where she addresses the bird and promises to “imitate thee well,” eventually stabbing a knife into her own breast. Second, the pun, as discussed above, is heavy with sexual innuendo. And third, pricks might simply designate notes in a musical score.
The brief inventory of all things Scilla foreshadows the dissolution of eyes and hands that will come with her transformation. All eyes, hands, and words, each piece of Scilla would be “Saint-like” if not for her scorning. Near the end of his complaint Glaucus sighs in resignation:

Tongue might grow wearie to report my wooings,  
And heart might burst to thinke of her denyall:  
May none be blamde but heaven for all these dooings,  
That yeeld no helps inmidst of all my triall.  
Heart, tongue, thought, pen nil serve me to repent me,  
Disdaine her selfe should strive for to lament me.  

(58)

His resignation assures the reader that whatever the poetry sounds like, it cannot assuage his grief. Whatever the words or tone, his anguish is quite real to him. He is so bereft that even Disdaine ought to lament his plight. The invocation of Disdaine initiates a narrative shift away from all of this sadness and misery, a shift that will cure Glaucus and leave Scilla doubly pursued, first out of desire and then out of ridicule. Nothing she does can change her situation of pursuit, or her estimation in Glaucus’ eyes as a thing called Scilla that has various parts available to be named, coveted, and despised as circumstances demand. The familiar problem of the person catalogued into her parts begets something different in the minor epic, pushes past a macabre appreciation by another to a vision of the self in pieces that facilitates a wholesale identification with some other thing.

Scilla’s trajectory through the poem is anticipated by stories about the affliction of love told early on, and by the violence of pursuit and reversal of desire foregrounded in Nais’ song:

Of love (God wot) the lovelie Nimph complained:  
But so of love as forced Love to love her;  
And even in love such furious love remained,  
As searching out his powerfull shaft to prove her.  
He found his quiver emptied of the best,  
And felt the arrowe sticking in his breast.  

(13)
The turn and the *traductio* in this stanza are typical of the poem’s reversals and frame Cupid’s double intervention, the use of one arrow to cure Glaucus of his lovesickness and another to afflict Scilla, whose complaint has left Cupid himself love-struck in a great triangulation.

Glaucus might be cured, but he hasn’t forgotten the humiliation of being rebuffed by a nymph. Scilla’s new terrible predicament is not punishment enough, and when she swims away in disgrace, he and the narrator follow. Scilla’s vocalizations become the defining expression of the rest of the poem; the world resonates in Orphic response to her grief, turning the grief into something that exists both inside and outside of Scilla.⁶ The interaction between Scilla’s mournful plaining and the natural world expands her inner emotional state beyond the bounds of her body, and beyond a simple repetition-exchange with Eccho: “For every sigh, the Rockes returns a sigh;/ For everie teare, their fountains yeelds a drop.” “The Nimph” – here Scilla again – “that fed on sorrowes sop/ Make woods, and waves, and rockes, and hills admire/ The wondrous force of her untam’d desire” (118). Scilla casts her vocalizations out to the rocks and water, understanding that the natural world will become an admirer for her, intending that she should find her voice reflected there. The ‘dialogue’ the narrator reports between Scilla and Eccho begins a muddled process in which inside and outside mix with and reflect one another until they culminate in Scilla’s metamorphosis. Eccho only becomes the character Eccho after Scilla’s lament begins, and the multiple echoes that reverberate off of Sicily’s rocks condense into a single voice. Initially it seems there is more than one Eccho, or a general echo, when “the Ecchoes in the rockes/ Of Sicilie, her piteous plaining mockes” (116). The next stanza presents a

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⁶ Orpheus’ affective connection to the natural world is a favorite story; the idea that the voice could move both animate and inanimate things to sympathy is a powerful one. Shakespeare composed a song for Henry VIII, beginning “Orpheus with his lute made trees,/ And the mountain tops that freeze,/ Bow themselves when he did sing” (3.1.3-5).
more specific exchange, but the speakers, Eccho and Scilla, run together and seem indistinct by the end of the stanza. “Eccho her selfe,” her self or herself; the first line sets up this elision of difference, and prepares the reader for the switching of speakers midway through. Despite this mingling of voices, Eccho intensifies Scilla’s voice. The first time that Eccho “with piteous voice from out her hollow den” returns Scilla’s words, she changes them. “O love!” becomes “no love,” and Scilla becomes the echo: “No love (quoth she), then fie on traitorous men,/ then fie on hope”; “then fie on hope (quoth Eccho).” Having switched positions again, it seems that “the Nimph” who answers every word in the last line of the stanza could be either of the speakers, though elsewhere “the Nimph” is always Scilla (117).

This externalization becomes visual and tactile in the pageant that appears “from Ditis den, by Ate sent” (120). The allegorical figures emerge nearby and apparently from nowhere, physically encroaching on Scilla as the emotions they represent run through her; much as the figures assume their shapes, it seems, from the elemental world, they really come from Scilla. The idea that this procession somehow begins with Scilla is supported by the resemblance of Glaucus’ despair to Scilla’s, as his also finds its way out into the world, in fact altering the landscape:

Whilst thus he spake, fierce Ate charmde his tongue,
His senses faild, his armes were folded straight,
And now he sighes, and then his heart is stung;
Againe he speaks against fancies fond deceit,
And teares his tresses with his fingers faire,
And rents his roabs, halfe mad with deepe dispaire.

The piteous Nimphes that viewd his heavie plight,
And heard the sequell of his bad successe,
Did loose the springs of their remorsefull sight,
And wept so sore to see his scant redresse:
That of their teares there grew a pretie brooke,
Whose Christall cleares the clowdes of pencive looke.

(70-71)
This is Ate’s other activity in the poem: she charms Glaucus’ tongue, before Cupid’s intervention, prompting the deepest of his despair, which he bodies forth in physical acts of demarcation. This charm that Ate sets on Glaucus produces an expression of despair that in many ways resembles the emotional outpouring that Scilla experiences in her doubling and displacement with Eccho. This arrangement, in which Glaucus and Scilla effectively mirror each other (thanks to Ate’s work), ought to render them essentially as equals. But Scilla has been doubly pursued, struck, wronged: first, by Glaucus’ unwanted attention, and second, by his rejection. The compounding of the two interactions leaves her understandably imbalanced.

Scilla’s madness manifests itself in the pageant rather than in tearing or rending as it does in Ovid’s original account, in which prior to her final manifestation as rock Circe ensures that Scilla becomes a monster even to herself, viscous dog heads growing from her waist, a thing that “in vain she offers from herself to run/ And drags about her what she strives to shun” (xiv.51-52). In Lodge’s version, “Furie and Rage, Wan-hope, Dispaire, and Woe” appear as Scilla and Eccho confirm one another’s speech and so seem to ride in on the sound. Keach has suggested that “the horror of the [original] myth haunts the conclusion of Glauces and Scilla, even though Lodge does nothing to keep this horror before his readers,” but perhaps the horror of Scilla’s first (omitted) transformation into a monster is to be found in this pageant, and its account of metamorphosis as exteriorization of emotion (49). The exteriorization of emotion is common to the transformations in Ovid’s Metamorphoses, but the popularity of these metamorphoses in early modern poetry sits in contrast to what we know about early modern emotional expression. Many of the chapters in Early Modern Emotions: an Introduction (New York: Routledge, 2017) attend to theories of “emotional communities,” building on Rosenwein’s
vision of emotions as both forms and products of social relations. The relevant point is that in the present scholarship of early modern emotions, we understand shared norms of emotional expression to be in place, and for there to be “a co-existing variety of emotional ‘constellations’ or ‘sets’ which include and exclude, privilege and downplay, particular emotions and versions of emotional life.”7 This understanding of emotional expression includes an understanding of fluidity and shared experience. Scilla’s pageant, like other Ovidian metamorphoses, contrasts with what one might call normative emotional response: hers does not participate in an emotional community but rather isolates her. Consuming and introspective, but thrust out into the world, the figures all represent emotions that fall under the rubric of unsatisfied desire or grief: ‘monstrous’ emotions. Furie and Rage are possessive, hungry, cannibalistic, and at least partly blind; self-mutilating Dispaire arrives stabbing herself repeatedly; Wan-hope seems to have gone completely mad, “robbed of his witts.” All of them are in some way deprived of their senses.

Woe, the penultimate affect, arrives disheveled in the same way that Glaucus makes himself, her hair “disparsed,” her cheeks wet, bearing the “fatall torches of a Funerall” that light the way for Scilla’s binding and metamorphosis. It is a kind of death, in that the transformation situates her in a liminal space between dead and alive, object and subject (120-23).

The assault on Scilla binds her, and howling into her metamorphosis she expands into the landscape, her hair “chang’d with wonder into hideous sands,” her “snow-white hands” becoming “hard as flint,” an ironic little echo of the “marble heart” that Glaucus accuses her of having (123, 60). The thing Scilla turns into is never exactly specified. Instead, Lodge describes

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the process of transformation, and the character of it. The howling and striving of Scilla’s
captivity become features of the environment that both crafts her new form and absorbs her:

The waters howle with fatall tunes about her,
The aire dooth scoule when as she turns within them,
The winds and waves with puffs and billowes skout her;
Waves storme, aire scoules, both wind and waves begin them
To make the place this mournful Nimph doth weepe in,
A haples haunt whereas no Nimph may keepe in.

(124)

The interaction of the sea and wind with the Scilla-place makes “the place this mournful Nimph
doth weepe in,/ A haples haunt whereas no Nimph may keepe in,” effectively banishing Scilla
from the poem even as her presence remains embedded in and central to its emotional activity –
she becomes a conduct lesson, according to the narrator, and a thing to be avoided; “Lenvoy”
says:

Ladies he left me, trust me I mislay not,
But so he left me as he wild me tell you:
That Nimphs must yeeld, when faithfull lovers straie not.
Least through contempt, almighty love compell you
With Scilla in the rockes to make your biding
A cursed plague, for womens proud back-sliding.

While it is easy to read this metamorphosis as punitive, particularly given the narrator’s
moralizing to that effect, Scilla’s transformation is fundamentally expressive. Her howling is
translated to the howling of the water; the Scilla-place carved out by the waves and the wind is a
place in which she continues to weep, the anger of being unwelcomely pursued and sorrow at
having her love unrequited wrapped up in the air’s “scoules” and the water’s “howle” (124). The
place she becomes is created from her emotions and remains emotionally charged: it is when
they smile that “nimphes, sea-gods, syrens” “forsake the haunt of Scilla,” as if by participating in
a different and oppositional emotional register they abandon her (125). Scilla, forsaken, becomes
entirely abject, a nymph in a place “no Nimphe may keepe in” and as such self-estranged, a void filled with wind, water, sound, feeling.

Kristeva’s abject is neither subject nor object, but rather is “anterior to the distinction between subject and object in normative language.” The abject is also “the locus of needs, of attraction and repulsion, from which an object of forbidden desire arises. And finally, abject can be understood in the sense of the horrible and fascinating abomination which is connoted in all cultures by the feminine… It becomes what culture, the sacred must purge, separate and banish.” Kristeva describes what is different about the emotional work undertaken by Scilla’s metamorphosis, and what is particularly early modern about it. In their introduction to Reading the Early Modern Passions, Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson emphasize an important distinction in the historical understanding of the affective self: early modern emotions are much more social, rather than inward-looking, as privileged in modern culture. At the same time, early modern emotions are understood to be closely tied to the body in a way that we no longer really see them. In her entry for Early Modern Emotions, Patricia Simons remarks that “During the early modern period, the word ‘emotion’ focused on violence and disruptive motion… It was a disorderly, extreme and physical more than psychic quality.” What Kristeva’s description calls to mind, and what Scilla enacts, is the display associated particularly with feminine emotion. Scilla-the-unattainable and the attainable-too-late, separated, isolated, and banished, is reduced to need, a hollowed-out space, and dangerous
emotion. Estranged from herself by the quick turn of desire and Echoe’s displacement of her voice, she is there and not there, the sand and flinty rock and also a disembodied howl; she is the sort of abject that is a “wellspring of sign for a non-object.” The purged thing is terrifying: “The Sea-man wandring by that famous Isle,/ Shuns all with feare dispairing Scillaes bowre,” and Glaucus directs the narrator “To write no more, of that whence shame dooth grow,” as if by writing about the shameful, one propagates it (125, 130). The poem does not ask which aspect of the story is shameful because it doesn’t have to: the shame, no matter what, because of her behavior or because of what has been done to her, attaches to Scilla. Shame is the great separator, dividing one from others, located at the level of the body, rendering the abject.

“The abject,” Kristeva writes, “has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to I.” For Scilla this ‘opposition to I’ manifests in her own sudden plurality: the ‘I’ is in some ways here a ‘we’, as her externalization precedes a solidification, a resistance to such expressive expansion, and an attempt to recall herself. Kristeva continues: “If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning, which, as a matter of fact, makes me ceaselessly and infinitely homologous to it, what is abject, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses.” That is, the abject still attracts, still draws the subject, but fails to provide the sort of oppositional meaning the object might impart; instead it provides a peculiar reflection:

A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A "something" that I do not recognize as a thing… On the edge of nonexistence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me. There, abject and abjection are my safeguards.

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12 Powers of Horror, 1-2
13 Powers of Horror, 2
Scilla’s story is indeed supposed to function as a sort of social safeguard, a warning for women to be chaste but not too chaste. Several times the narrator comments that her metamorphosis should serve as a proscriptive story, that “if everie coy one felt/ The like misshapes, their flintie hearts would melt” (125). The metamorphosis may be a mishap, a disturbance of emotion, but the spelling here suggests the narrator’s focus is on the physical transformation: that it is in becoming misshapen the resistant woman’s heart will also change. However, the safeguard that Scilla’s story enacts is more personal than this narrative allows. Scilla’s transition into a “something” accomplishes her resistance to expansion and expression while still allowing her to project out into the world the rage and despair engendered by Glaucus and Cupid. The ‘abject’ becomes her ‘safeguard’ in that it allows her to reflect what was externalized while containing it all, objectified.

Her desire for Glaucus has already shifted prior to her metamorphosis, when she is shot into an emotional relation in direct opposition to the position she had taken naturally. She is psychologically self-estranged in this shift, and then physically estranged by her transformation into the forbidding sand and rock. The melting that takes place is one that is somehow both condensation and dispersal, an uncanny reflection of the still-vocal Scilla, and a mimetic response. The rejected feminine, the expelled self, finds itself emblematized in metamorphosis and the abjection that originates within the subject.

This type of abjection replaces the object in the subject-object paradigm; the border that the abject demonstrates “becomes” the object. In this way the subject finds herself in opposition to and homogenous with the abject, which is based on loss and emptiness: “There is nothing like the abjection of self to show that all abjection is in fact recognition of the want on which any
being, meaning, language, or desire is founded.”¹⁴ Identification with want is identification with “a language that gives up, a structure within the body, a nonassimilable alien, a monster, a tumor, a cancer.”¹⁵ This identification with want, with a nonassimilable alien, occurs via a transference. For Scilla, the original monster was external and embodied in Glaucus: the pursuer who would not give up, an ocean creature quite physically different from a nereid, desire unbridled. Glaucus and Cupid’s actions in the poem transfer that unbridled desire to Scilla such that the original monster becomes something internal to her, instead. The series of events that makes Scilla desirous of Glaucus both makes her over into Glaucus – she takes over his role, becoming intrusive, violating his desire, touching where touch is not wanted – and also illustrates another idea of what is monstrous via her restructuring of dangerous, seductive sexuality when she becomes a rocky piece of shoreline, a cove for swallowing ships, a sort of vagina dentata waiting for something to crash into her, a thing to be repeatedly avoided and thus repeatedly drawn to.

What happens to Scilla – or rather, what Scilla participates in – is a response to trauma, a response based on an understanding of the self as abject and on reenactment. Kristeva fashions the abject as being much like Freud’s trauma, which the wounded psyche presents as an action or dream that recurs and resists symbolic interpretation. Freud bases this idea first on his contemplation of loss. In his 1917 Mourning and Melancholia, Freud describes loss (metaphorically) as a wound, stating that “the complex of melancholia behaves like an open wound, drawing to itself cathetic energies …. And emptying the ego until it is totally impoverished” (253). Later, working with veterans from World War I, Freud refined his

¹⁴ Powers of Horror, 5.
¹⁵ Powers of Horror, 11.
understanding of the wounded mind, describing the death-drive, a desire to “re-establish a state of things that was disturbed by the emergence of life.”\(^\text{16}\) It is from this latter drive that the repetition-compulsion emerges, the “compulsion to repeat” that “seems more primitive, more elementary, more instinctual than the pleasure principle which it over-rides.” Scilla’s metamorphosis is itself an unending repetition. The cove, having overridden the instinct for self-preservation, suffers from a compulsion to repeat its hurt through its wailing, dangerous coastline. Lodge’s poem is certainly not alone in treating metamorphosis as something that emerges as trauma response; rather, it provides an excellent example of the metamorphic as a somatization of trauma (or psychic wounding) recognizable during the period as well.

Bessel van der Kolk’s writing focuses like Robert Burton’s on the position of the body.\(^\text{17}\) The body becomes an unsafe place, reshaped by traumatic experience. “The past,” he writes, “is alive in the form of gnawing interior discomfort.”\(^\text{18}\) The dissociation that van der Kolk describes as “the essence of trauma” makes way for the return of the traumatic experience in the form of intrusive memory, flashback, dream, and bodied symptom.\(^\text{19}\) Caruth and van der Kolk equate

\(^{16}\) Sigmund Freud, The Ego and the Id (Mineola, NY: Dover Thrift, 2018), 34.

\(^{17}\) Robert Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy may not engage the traumatic in the way that Freud or Bessel van der Kolk do, but Burton posits that the loss of attachment figures, social status, and health will predispose a person to mood disturbances, which he describes in terms of their physiology based on Galen; this is in some ways not terribly distant from the most recent accepted work on trauma and loss. Much of the work on trauma itself is being pioneered by the Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute. Bessel Van der Kolk’s work (The Body Keeps the Score (New York: Penguin Books, 2015)) greatly expanded understandings of somatic trauma responses. Cathy Caruth’s Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) and Kali Tal’s Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) both moved toward a psychoanalytic poststructural approach that casts trauma as a recurring sense of absence that suggests an unspeakable void. Ruth Leys’ work seeks to move beyond this aporia; critics like Herman Rapaport are more likely to examine traumatic silence in terms of its rhetorical utility. Most recently, scholars have begun taking something of a revisionist approach, tending to pair consideration of traumatic experience with a secondary focus such as postcolonial theory or cultural studies. Contemporary Approaches to Literary Trauma Theory (ed. Michelle Balaev, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) offers a good overview of the field.

\(^{18}\) Van der Kolk, 98.

\(^{19}\) Van der Kolk, 66; Cathy Caruth, Trauma: Explorations in Memory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 5; Cathy Caruth calls this the “literality”; the “literality” to which Caruth refers is that of the “nonsymbolic nature of traumatic dreams and flashbacks, which resist cure to the extent that they remain, precisely, literal. It is this literality and its insistent return which thus constitutes trauma and points toward its enigmatic core: the delay or
such symptomology with something that is true to, and often physicalized. Van der Kolk tries to understand where the historical truth of a traumatic event is located in its mimetic reenactments, and why that traumatic event fails to be appropriately integrated into autobiographical or historical memory. Instead of being integrated as most other events are, Murray M. Schwartz writes in his review of Ruth Leys’ ‘genealogy’ of trauma studies, “the sense of a reliable ‘context’ or explanatory holding environment is what traumatic experience damages or destroys, depending on the severity of the experience; and when ‘context’ is damaged, so is the semantic or linking capacity that underlies what Antonio Damasio (1999) calls the ‘autobiographical self’.”

Van der Kolk sees in this lack of context a possible explanation for the distinction between traumatic and ‘regular’ memory: “It is plausible that in situations of terror, the experience does not get processed in symbolic/linguistic forms, but tends to be organized on a sensorimotor or iconic level—as horrific images, visceral sensations, or fight/flight reaction.”

Scilla, polyvocal as she is, does not speak in words; she howls, she flees, and she freezes.

The body participates in the destruction of context, by which I mean that the body participates in an erasure of narrative, a preservation, instead, of select moments and feelings. The distinction that theorists draw between traumatic responses that are mimetic vs. those that are antimimetic is similar to the distinction in Freud between traumatic neurosis and repression trauma: the two categories exist side-by-side, and share some characteristics, but cannot be assimilated with one another. Repression trauma evades representation of memory or incompletion in knowing, or even in seeing, an overwhelming occurrence, that then remains, in its insistent return, absolutely true to the event.” Ruth Leys, Trauma: a Genealogy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 228; Caruth 231.


Van der Kolk, 248.

Freud often refers to this as “castration trauma,” but in this context “repression” seems a more suitable word to use.
experience in a purposeful forgetting. Traumatic neurosis is, in contrast, a state in which the trauma is not entirely repressed – in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud describes motor symptoms that occur as a result of “fixation on the factor of the trauma” which is nonetheless sufficiently made a part of their orientation to the world that the patient takes it as self-evident that their dreams would return them repeatedly to their trauma.\(^{23}\) “I am not aware that the patients suffering from traumatic neuroses are much occupied in waking life with recollection of what happened to them,” he writes; the patient has, rather than concrete waking memories, symptoms that manifest their trauma physically, in *multiple* contexts rather than in one specific situation.\(^{24}\) The emotion essentially occupies and takes over the body, not dissimilarly to the way Richard Burton describes a particular “giving way to every passion and perturbation of the mind: by which means we metamorphose ourselves and degenerate into beasts.” From this degeneration comes melancholia.\(^{25}\)

The destruction of context, the aporia of trauma, the gap between memory and representation, produces what Cathy Caruth calls a “deathlike break.”\(^{26}\) This break is where the traumatic neurosis or mimetic trauma reaction lives, and produces the performative symptomology that Caruth refers to with the term ‘literality’. This break is situated between the physical and non-physical, represented but not expressed, subject and object; in the break we find the thing we are repeatedly drawn to, the trauma and the abject.

Scilla’s metamorphosis is such a destruction of context. She metamorphoses into something that can no longer participate in narrative, but preserves select moments and feelings. As the piece of land that Scilla becomes, that holds Scilla, howls and threatens to swallow sailors

\(^{24}\) Freud, II.3.
\(^{26}\) Caruth, 115, n. 6.
and nymphs alike, it reenacts her outcry and emptiness: empty of love given and love received, she is definitively non-symbolic in her literality and yet is wholly sublimated into the symbolic, the very picture of boundary erosion, the edges between water and land in perpetual motion, the question of whether she is rejecting or wanting unanswered. Scilla’s transformation to this unbounded thing quite resembles the problem Kristeva identifies with the differentiation of the abject: “the ‘unconscious’ contents remain here excluded but in strange fashion: not radically enough to allow for a secure differentiation between subject and object, and yet clearly enough for a defensive position to be established – one that implies a refusal but also a sublimating elaboration.”

This lack of differentiation that Lodge develops for Scilla produces an ambiguity of I/Other in which the reader can imagine the unconscious becoming explicit, as in the performativity of traumatic mimesis. Scilla’s metamorphosis at first attempts to situate her in a metaphorical discourse, but faced with a lack of language, Scilla sublimates, attaching to the representational. Scilla, the boundary-less, the subject-object, overtake any conduct lesson intended for her, becoming instead a representation of the victim as landscape, the victim as someone in which one can find a world, or at least an alternative shoreline. Lodge’s adaptation of Scilla’s metamorphosis becomes a model for epyllia in its tone and structure, and to some extent in characterization. When William Shakespeare turns his attention to the epyllion in Venus and Adonis, Adonis’ body, tragic in death, is absorbed into the landscape, most particularly into the blood-red flower that makes natural what was unnatural (Adonis’ refusal of eros, his consistent

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27 Powers of Horror, 7.
comparison to flowers, his position as a subject-object) in the poem. Venus’ response to the flower is to lay claim to it and incorporate it into herself; she sees in the flower’s sweet smell Adonis’ breath, in the flower’s dripping sap tears, and knowing it will wither now that she has picked it, Venus compares the flower’s death to Adonis’, and being the instrument of that death, hides herself away.

Shakespeare quickly follows Venus and Adonis with The Rape of Lucrece, a poem that draws not on the Metamorphoses but on the Fasti. The story is history, rather than magic, and yet Shakespeare’s presentation of Lucrece’s trauma relies on identification with figures from Ovid’s Metamorphoses. The Rape of Lucrece does not incorporate overt metamorphosis, but Lucrece’s externalization and absorption into a mythopoesis is just as complete, as Lucrece’s rhetoric provides her with several other victims – non-human, divine, mythological – with whom she identifies in fellow-feeling or displaces her own grief. Identifying the victim as a prior victim historicizes and mobilizes a story that might otherwise be location-bound, and Lucrece begins with extravagant mobilization. She imagines the stars as her first companions during her indictment of Night, Opportunity, and Time. The stars, raped alongside Lucrece, would become, she says, “co-partners in my pain” that then withdraw from view (789). Rachel Eisendrath has remarked that this is a “special kind” of company: “Here’s an audience that is imagined retracting from her, that is incapable of providing any kind of help. This image of raped stars going dark and disappearing from view evokes the strangest possible sense of company.”28 It evokes, as well, a loss of self: if Lucrece identifies with these stars, not merely as the audience that Eisendrath imagines but as co-habitants in her distress, then does she see herself fading too?

Something similar happens when Lucrece calls on Philomel “to make thy sad grove in my dishevelled hair” while they sing to one another about the parallel crimes of Tarquin and Tereus (1133). Christy Desmet’s analysis of this invitation uses language that might be applied to Lucrece at almost any moment in the poem:

Interestingly, at this crux in her meditation, Lucrece can imagine fellowship only in terms of a collapse of physical boundaries, realized through the visually confounding conceit of Philomel, presumably after her metamorphosis into a bird, nestling into Lucrece’s hair. The two will also collaborate on a mournful song in which Lucrece, “burden-wise,” will “hum on Tarquin still” while Philomel “on Tereus descants better skill” (ll. 1133-34). Implicit in the musical programme that Lucrece sets for herself and Philomel, by contrast with the visual conceit of the bird in Lucrece’s hair, is the separation of singers and musical lines that produces harmony.²⁹

Separation, and yet the two figures can only harmonize, they can’t fix anything; the two are in the same position. The intimate company that Lucrece imagines, the bird nesting in her hair, does not just collapse the physical distance between the two figures. Lucrece becomes a support for Philomel, vocally and physically, the thing that carries Philomel about. This peculiar merger, which fashions Lucrece as the ‘lesser’ of the two singers while making her a necessary help to Philomel, facilitates Lucrece’s ability to imagine herself in the company of others while maintaining her isolation. That fantasy both alleviates and nurtures her loneliness, and advances the transformation into myth that Lucrece talks herself into over the course of the poem.

That transformation is facilitated by the importance of story and rhetoric to the poem. The Rape of Lucrece begins with story, with Collatine “the publisher/ Of that rich jewel,” Lucrece and her perfectly chaste beauty. Collatine makes Lucrece known and so opens her to threat, and the language of the poem opens its descriptions of her with expanding metaphors:

²⁹ Desmet 35.
For [Collatine] the night before, in Tarquin's tent,
Unlock'd the treasure of his happy state;
What priceless wealth the heavens had him lent
In the possession of his beauteous mate;
Reckoning his fortune at such high-proud rate,
That kings might be espoused to more fame,
But king nor peer to such a peerless dame.

(15-21)

Collatine’s description of Lucrece as treasure gives way, over the next few stanzas, to a depiction of her beauty as sovereignty, not a jewel but the issue of a kingdom:

Beauty itself doth of itself persuade
The eyes of men without an orator;
What needeth then apologies be made,
To set forth that which is so singular?
Or why is Collatine the publisher
Of that rich jewel he should keep unknown
From thievish ears, because it is his own?

Perchance his boast of Lucrece' sovereignty
Suggested this proud issue of a king;
For by our ears our hearts oft tainted be:
Perchance that envy of so rich a thing,
Braving compare, disdainfully did sting
His high-pitch'd thoughts, that meaner men should vaunt
That golden hap which their superiors want.

(29-42)

No longer a jewel but a territory, Lucrece’s face is a “field” for “the silent war of lilies and of roses” (71). Such heraldic and martial imagery returns with territorial language in Tarquin’s soliloquy as he makes his way to Lucrece’s bed like an explorer sent to colonize new land. “Affection is my captain, and he leadeth,” he says; “Desire my pilot is, beauty my prize/
Then who fears sinking where such treasure lies?” (270, 279-80). Tarquin’s emotions grow like crops in the new landscape on which he treads, and for which he shortly vows a full-scale invasion:
As corn o'ergrown by weeds, so heedful fear
Is almost choked by unresisted lust.
Away he steals with open listening ear,
Full of foul hope and full of fond mistrust;
Both which, as servitors to the unjust,
So cross him with their opposite persuasion,
That now he vows a league, and now invasion.

(281-87)

Tarquin’s position, as always, is that he is not entirely in control, but that he has power, as his
desire spurs him forward. The colonizer comes with full crew, sailing ever closer, every lock “by
him enforced” giving way in a miniature triumph (303).

When Tarquin does finally reach Lucrece, his assessment of her sleeping body produces a
duality in which she is both person and object, alive and dead. On the pillow he sees that “her
head entombé is./ Where like a virtuous monument she lies” (389-90). Her hand on the green
coverlet is “like an April daisy on the grass,” her sweat the “dew of night,” her breasts “a pair of
maiden worlds unconqueréd” (389-91, 408). Her body is an entire landscape to be explored, and
all the while the lines of her face are like a “map of death” disturbed only by her breath (402).
The poem describes “life lived in death, and death in life,” emphasizing the simultaneous states
that Tarquin identifies in Lucrece, who exists in this in-between state long before her rape (406).
It is as though in having been exposed at Collatine’s encampment, having allowed Tarquin into
her house, the house giving way to Tarquin as he moves through each of the doors separating
him from Lucrece, the violation that predetermines her death is already accomplished and can be
read in her face – and though the assault gets much worse, it is the assault itself that prompts
Lucrece to claim control of her narrative.
In his analysis of *The Rape of Lucrece*, Jonathan Hart writes: “Narrative may be as much an interpretation of events or a response to another tale as a tale itself.”\(^{30}\) In *The Rape of Lucrece*, the characters’ subjective narration is not only interpretation but an attempt to make reality. Tarquin “links physical force and narrative force”; Lucrece finds value in the pliability of language.\(^{31}\) She consistently reorients the narrative, first in her encounter with Tarquin, as she stammers through a restructuring of what is happening:

> She puts the period often from his place,  
> And midst the sentence so her accent breaks  
> That twice she doth begin ere once she speaks.

(565-67)

Having failed to put a stop to what is happening, Lucrece’s next move is an attempt to conjure Tarquin’s better self into being:

> In Tarquin’s likeness I did entertain thee  
> Hast thou put on his shape to do him shame?  
> To all the host of heaven I complain me.  
> Thou wrong’st his honour, wound’st his princely name.

(596-99)

Her argument supposes Tarquin either to be someone other than who he once he was or to have forgotten himself. “O be rememb’red,” she begs, and pleads for “exiled majesty’s” return (607, 640). Tarquin cuts her off mid-sentence, and so just as her beginning was halting and interrupted, failing to exert any change, so is the end of her attempt to appeal to his humanity. When Tarquin “entombs her outcry” with Lucrece’s “nightly linen” he returns to the language of containment and death employed earlier in the poem, and she resumes her liminal status in “living death and pain perpetual” (679-80, 725).

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\(^{31}\) Hart, 60.
Afterwards, Tarquin leaves, and in the ensuing crush of words, Lucrece joins herself to other narratives. At first this is an act of hiding; in her address to Night she wants that personification to “Make me not object to tell-tale Day,” to Day who can read, “charactered in my brow,/The story of sweet chastity’s decay” (806-08). Her story will, she fears, be legible even to the illiterate, and it will be repeated – as Scilla’s is – as tawdry gossip or as a warning. That particular fear quickly gives way to anger and despair as she concludes that suicide is the only solution to her lost honor. Once Lucrece has convinced herself of this, her desire to hide is surpassed by the need to expose Tarquin Philomel-like. Her initial complaint concludes as Philomel the nightingale ends “The well-tuned warble of her nightly sorrow,” and like Philomel, Lucrece’s sorrow will become something she rehearses, inconsolable, until her end (1080). Lucrece addresses this dynamic directly as the sun rises and the morning birds “Make her moans mad with their sweet melody” (1108).

‘Come Philomel, that sing’st of ravishment, 
Make thy sad grove in my disheveled hair.
As the dank earth weeps at thy languishment,
So I at each strain will strain a tear,
And with deep groans the diapason bear;  
For burden-wise I’ll hum on Tarquin still,
While thou on Tereus descants better skill.

‘And whiles against a thorn thou bear’st thy part,
To keep thy sharp woes waking, wretched I,
To imitate thee well, against my heart
Will fix a sharp knife to affright mine eye,
Who if it wink shall thereon fall and die.
These means, as frets upon an instrument,
Shall tune our heart-strings to true languishment.
(1128-41)

Lucrece does not identify with Philomel – Lucrece already knows their ends to be dissimilar – but identifies her as a kindred spirit, and finds Philomel’s exposure of her rape attractive.
Lucrece would like to be able to imitate *that* well, to embody Philomel’s response in traumatic mimesis rather than to perform a direct incorporation of or transformation into Philomel. She understands the ability to tell the story, to control the narrative, as a final means of exerting power; this, more than her death, because death was inevitable from the moment of her violation.

During the ekphrastic description of the fall of Troy, Lucrece’s connection with Hecuba and the extent of Hecuba’s grief is also based on change and voice. It is most important that Hecuba has an enormous grief, that she, too, embodies a ruined city, and that she has been ruined by her life. Hecuba is described in terms of her deterioration, and the Lucrece-narrator finds that “Of what she was no semblance did remain,” that she is the image of “life imprisoned in a body dead” (1453, 1456). This could serve, of course, as the description of Lucrece herself. Lucrece imagines Hecuba to feel what she feels, what she will later describe as the defilement of her body, a separation within herself. “The abject,” Kristeva writes, “simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject.”32 It is Lucrece who is abject, though she sees this in Hecuba, and her death drive serves “to correlate that "not yet" ego with an "object" in order to establish both of them. Such a process, while dichotomous (inside/outside, ego/not ego) and repetitive, has nevertheless something centripetal about it: it aims to settle the ego as center of a solar system of objects.”33 Everything she sees, thinks, touches, revolves around her abjection. One has to wonder what Lucrece is rending when she “tears the senseless Sinon with her nails,” as she suggested she ought to tear the absent and voiceless Helen and as she has torn herself (1564). The urge to destroy Tarquin (whom she identifies with Sinon) meets the urge to destroy what is senseless and voiceless in this passage.

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The violence in Lucrece’s response to these figures is in some sense a recognition – she is, in fact, in Helen’s position. Recognition is a problematic thing for Lucrece, and she knows it. Christy Desmet observes that the “‘recognition’ – whether personal or political, rational or emotional – that Lucrece receives from her father, husband, and the other Roman men is limited and incomplete.” As evidence for this, Desmet cites their quick agreement with Lucrece that “her body’s stain her mind untainted clears” even as they reduce her to a thing, a piece of property, an object to be paraded through Rome (1710). “In effect,” she writes, “the Romans complete the indignity inflicted on Lucrece by Tarquin during the rape, when he had effectively rendered his victim both silent and invisible.” This seems not quite right: the Romans’ treatment of Lucrece is quite different from Tarquin’s, but suffers from a similar problem in that there is a failure to recognize the complete Lucrece. In his essay, “The Politics of Recognition” – which Desmet quotes as well – Charles Taylor discusses the links between recognition and identity, where identity is partly shaped by recognition and its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.

Our identity is, to some extent, at the mercy of others. Lucrece doesn’t have many options for how she will be recognized in the aftermath of her rape. Her turns to Philomel, Helen, and Hecuba are all attempts to find a true reflection of herself, an undistorted mode of being. But

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35 Ibid.
when she encounters other characters in the poem, Lucrece is always recognized as a singularity:

Collatine speaks of her grief as though it were a mask or garment she could take off:

'What uncouth ill event
Hath thee befall'n, that thou dost trembling stand?
Sweet love, what spite hath thy fair colour spent?
Why art thou thus attired in discontent?
Unmask, dear dear, this moody heaviness,
And tell thy grief, that we may give redress.'

(1598-1603)

Collatine’s wordless sighing in the face of Lucrece’s story confirms, for her, an identity that includes guilt. Once Lucrece is safely dead, there is a great clamoring to claim her as wife, or daughter. She is one thing or another to each of the speakers, and seems to be purely that thing in the moment in which they speak. In fact, she is never only one thing or another, never only raped or innocent, dead or alive. What concerns Lucrece most during her conjuring of the fall of Troy is the incompleteness of the figures: senseless Sinon, Priam’s ineffective tears, and more than anything, Hecuba’s inability to communicate what has happened to her. “Poor instrument’, quoth she, ‘without a sound,/ I’ll tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue”: Lucrece, Philomel-like, can sing now for Hecuba as well (1464-65).

She has elided the distinctions between the three of them, Philomel, Hecuba, and herself, rather than becoming something else in particular. She has also, “Her sacred temple spotted, spoiled, corrupted,” collapsed distinctions between self and other in general (1172). In part this is an effect of Lucrece’s need to separate her soul from her body: she sees the soul as still unblemished, and only the body defiled, and so creates an other of herself that can coexist with the unblemished soul and eventually complete the distinction. She tells an absent Collatine, “Myself thy friend will kill myself thy foe”; the real aim of her suicide is to finally segregate the two parts of herself (1196). Such a splitting of her subjectivity allows Lucrece to find herself
reflected in both Philomel and Hecuba, to speak with and for them in a polyvocality that makes Lucrece’s rape part of a collective violation and facilitates her own disembodiment. This blurring of distinction between tainted self-aspect and other also leads Lucrece to further destabilize differences between subject and object. Finding herself in Hecuba means finding herself in a painted tapestry, and Lucrece frequently adopts objectifying language to describe herself as well as others: men are made of marble, women’s minds of wax. Troubled by what has happened to her, as Hecuba has been, Lucrece similarly sees herself already dead, already fixed into her final state, just waiting to be fully released from her corpse. Mostly, Lucrece’s character, like Philomel’s and like Hecuba’s, aspires to be one of myth and epic; she wants to join these other women. Her last lucid questions set up the moment she becomes such an exemplum as she imagines being released from her dead body and transfigured into an example: “May any terms acquit me from this chance?/ The poisoned fountain clears itself again;/ And why not I from this compellèd stain?” (1706-08) When the men gathered to hear her story begin to agree that surely her untainted mind can “clear” her body’s “stain,” she reveals that this was always a trick question. “‘No, no’, quoth she, ‘no dame hereafter living/ By my excuse shall claim excuse’s giving’”: Lucrece is no longer afraid of being made an example; she does it herself (1710, 1714-15).

Coppélia Kahn’s comment that “Shakespeare makes Lucrece valorize the rapist’s dichotomy between active resistance and passive submission, read her resistance as passivity, and totalize that passivity into ‘yielding’,” and that all of this merely affirms “her inscription into patriarchy,” adeptly points out that there is nothing revolutionary about Lucrece’s death save her
revolt against the Tarquins. On the other hand, it seems that Lucrece has already displaced herself, divorced the ‘real’ Lucrece from her “poison’d closet,” admitting her to a metamorphic tradition just as she is inscribed into the patriarchy by physical violation, her essence determinedly extracted from her body and externalized in the others in whom she finds herself (1658).

Lucrece’s certainty that her body and mind are quite separate but simultaneously extant helps her to imagine the assumption of a symbolic role ahead of the suicide that will dictate the terms of her story, that will prescribe her body as a vessel made for sacrifice. Collatine’s distress over her rape prompts Lucrece to envision their sorrows mixing, her taking on the lot, and to “Let it then suffice/ To drown one woe, one pair of weeping eyes” (1679-80). She is “she that was thy Lucrece,” a conduit for the story, not even in control of her body at the end when “She utters this: ‘He, he, fair lords, ’tis he/ That guides this hand to give this wound to me” (1721-22). Perversely identifying with her rapist, Lucrece recreates her trauma in the profoundly somatic gesture of taking his violation into her body again with the knife’s penetration. The collapse of physical boundaries reaches a height in this moment, with whatever autonomy she had gone, and confirmed so. And Lucrece’s audience joins in, her father and husband arguing over which one of them has greater claim to her and to sorrow. Catherine Belsey has assessed this argument as being reflective of the way that “joy in ownership, pleasure in possession, depends on the possibility of loss or dispossession,” reading against the two feminist readings generally set forth for the poem. In these readings, Lucrece is either “an exemplum of female virtue” or “a model

of resistance to patriarchy.” Belsey beautifully submits with her analysis of the text’s “endorsement of woman as property.” But while Belsey contends that it is Lucrece’s death that makes her neither of these things, and finally unpossessable, it seems more that Lucrece has been arranging this since Tarquin’s violent attempt to have her for himself. As Lucrece provides a reading of her story that breaks down difference, recognizing herself and completing herself in Philomel and Hecuba, she makes it quite difficult to be possessed or lost.

Lucrece and Scilla share a refiguring that finds its roots in Ovid and Livy’s stories, and participate in purposeful resistance to silence. Oppression of women, and sexual violation of women, is so often talked about in terms of a suppression of the voice, but Lucrece and Scilla are both loquacious in their responses to what happens to them. Their violations are inscribed otherwise, and necessitate a reorientation away from the idea of textual silence and bodily suppression. Lucrece’s and Scilla’s disembodiments are prepared for and orchestrated by them as their texts progress. Kathryn Robson’s theoretical treatment of rape posits that there is a version of textual response in which “sexual violence is figured through images of disembodiment that both displace and inscribe rape”; for Scilla and Lucrece there is a displacement of self from body that serves as a means to a permanent inscription.

Elisa Marder’s analysis of Ovid’s Philomela positions that character as an archetype of feminist discourse, which is “expressed in disarticulated speech – by a language that has no ‘tongue’.” Philomel’s weaving communicates perhaps with greater clarity than does Scilla’s

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39 Belsey, 316.
40 Belsey, 317.
wailing. Lucrece actually does speak her story – laden with self-chastisement – but in the end it is her empty body that produces a fast communication. In each case it is the disarticulation of the physical body that allows the subject to become totally emotionally articulate, the transformative process that results in a fixed representation of the trauma they have experienced. That such a fixed representation exists at all owes itself to the logic of revenge advanced by Procne and Philomel. Marder writes: “Procne rejects a logic of symmetry or exchange. She refuses to take a tongue for a tongue or even a penis for a tongue. The weapon that is stronger than the sword is a language fueled by excess instead of loss.”

Scilla’s unending weeping, her dangerous cove, like Lucrece’s recognition of herself as an other and the (phallic) knife’s opening of her chest, inscribes the excessiveness of her experience through a disembodiment, so that the text responds to bodily violation not with a focus on what has happened to the body, but with a certainty that the subject will find a way to speak, no matter what. This certainty is at the core of the metamorphoses that are the central concern of these pages: the subject, in some way constrained or debilitated, metamorphosed or changed, becomes unbound through her constraint. The ability to communicate, as though producing an emotional blast, through one’s objectification makes that transition somewhat desirable. What “objectification” means in this context is fluid, to some extent, ranging from Daphne’s tree to Lucrece’s harmonizing, but the outcome tends to be the same: the value of the destabilization of character lies in the volubility in which it issues, in a rhetoric of exemplarity in Shakespeare’s poem and in a landscape’s keening frenzy in Lodge’s.

43 Marder, 161.
Chapter 2

True Love Alone:
Abstraction, Disarticulation, and Subjectivity in *The Faerie Queene*

The victimology that Shakespeare engages in with *The Rape of Lucrece* entails a sort of superimposition of story on story, such that Lucrece’s rape becomes a new account of Philomela’s and of Hecuba’s tragedies, and Lucrece becomes both herself and something more than herself. This is a different change from the one Scilla experiences, but like Scilla’s metamorphosis, is fundamentally an urge toward becoming a greater, more elaborate expression of the affective self. The epyllia do not contain this urge; it is imported to other genres, and in Spenser’s epic, in the much worried-over episodes depicting Amoret, one finds both characters echoing and replaying her character, and revisions of her story that duplicate, alter, and amplify Amoret’s core narrative, changing it slightly, much like Echo responds to Scilla. There are at least two versions of Amoret’s relationship with Scudamour, two versions of her birth, two accounts of her leaving two different gardens and entering Faerie Land. The answer to ‘which one?’ is ‘both, and’. Like Scylla’s expressive metamorphosis and Lucrece’s fervent identification of herself with Hecuba and Philomel, Amoret’s dispersal is a return to the central trope of the *Metamorphoses*, of transfiguration as abject revolt against erotic violence.

In his analysis of Book IV of *The Faerie Queene*, Jonathan Goldberg remarks on the “problem of other voices” that haunts the text: “Absorption into other voices, subservience to other texts: this is the problem encountered in Spenserian narration. The narrator, simply in order to tell a tale, represents himself as being in the service of a text that comes before him, imposed upon by demands that are “outside” his text, usurped, so that his voice belongs to a ventriloquist, his text to the text of another.” Goldberg describes Book IV’s relation to Chaucer’s *Squire’s*
Tale, its narrative work thrust toward filling in the space left by that story’s missing ending, posits a situation in which the constraints on Spenser’s text are simply and only the existent parts of The Squire’s Tale, and then abruptly withdraws that assessment, writing, “This is not, however, at all how the situation is defined [by Spenser]. Instead, the problematization of narration is insistently affirmed; the problem of other voices remains an essential and inescapable condition of narration.”1 Goldberg attends to many other voices, but most of all to the voice of other poets: Endlesse Work is a study of intertextuality. But there are other voices to which he is less attentive. The present chapter addresses a different polyvocality and the silence it envelops: its polyvocality are the many legends of the beloved Amoret, which swirl around her own relentless unspeaking. While Amoret’s ubiquitous silence can be read negatively, as a denial of agency and, eventually, a forced exit from the poem, her story’s layered, revisionist complexity provides an opportunity for a more positive reading in which she gains representational force through her plurality. Accepting each installation of her story as adding to, rather than replacing, what we know about Amoret results in a prismatic and violent depiction of “true love alone.”

The mute display of Amoret, captive in the triumphal pageant of Love at the House of Busyrane is itself a moment of abstraction that broadcasts her final expressive identity as one grounded in violence: Amoret enters the poem in story and pageantry, carrying her heart in a silver bowl, already emblematic. Despite the relative success of her rescue from the House of Busyrane, and the seeming completeness of the story on offer in canto xii of Book III (1590), the reader has already been prepared by this initial imagery for Amoret’s role as a symbolic entity,

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expressive (if enigmatically so) despite her silence. Also despite Amoret’s general ongoing silence in the poem, her abduction and its aftermath feature language as a central concern, and her presence in the poem is grounded in linguistic remembrance, the narrativization of Amoret proceeding from Scudamour’s identification of Busyrane’s literary activities, even as he engages in some of his own, his “foltering tongue” recounting twice what has befallen Amoret (3.11.12). “If Goodness find no Grace? Nor Righteousness no Meed?/ If Good find Grace, and Righteousness Reward” then how can it be that Busyrane is allowed that “bounteous Creature” “so cruelly to pen?”

Her physical torture both occurs in synchrony with Scudamour’s “Pangs” and is in some way (he says) because of him; she is “pend,” written,

In doleful Darkness from the view of Day,  
Whilst deadly Torments do her chaste Breast rend,  
And the sharp Steel doth rive her Heart in tway,  
All for she Scudamour will not denay.  
(3.11.11)

Scudamour’s account of the reasons for Amoret’s captivity maintains ambiguity between refusing to deny Scudamour and refusing to yield love more than once, as though the two overlap or are in some way the same. The account leaves the reader in the curious position of having to understand her captivity as being because of a refusal to forswear Scudamour, as well as a refusal to say no to Scudamour.

Scudamour tells Britomart this story, and then immediately tells her the story again. Scudamour’s second rehearsal of the events, protesting the uselessness of the first complaint, expands upon the extent of Amoret’s captivity and torture, the protagonist of that violence the image of the Petrarchan lover gone mad, even as he admits the possibility that he sows “vain Sorrow in a fruitless Ear,” this complaint no more likely to result in action than the last, a closed
circuit – but we might also read his admission as “vain” sorrow for himself, a sorrow unable to meet the ear that needs it, Amoret unhearing:

What boots it ‘plain, that cannot be redress’d,
And sow vain Sorrow in a fruitless Ear,
Sith Power of Hand, nor Skill of learned Breast,
Ne worldly Price cannot redeem my Dear
Out of her Thraldom and continual Fear?
For, he (the Tyrant) which her hath in Ward
By strong Enchauntments, and black Magick lear,
Hath in a Dungeon deep her close embar’d,
And many dreadful Fiends hath pointed to her Guard.

There he tormenteth her most terribly,
And Day and Night afflicts with mortal Pain,
Because to yield him Love she doth deny,
Once to me yold, not to be yold again:
But yet by Torture he would her constrain:
Love to conceive in her disdainful Breast;
Till so she do, she must in Dool remain,
Ne may by living means be thence releas'd:
What boots it then to 'plain, that cannot be redress'd?

(3.11.16-17)

The revision Scudamour offers mitigates the problematic ambiguity by broadening Amoret’s refusal and recentering Scudamour’s claim on her: it is not so much that she won’t give him up, but that her yielding to him produces a permanent and irreplaceable bond. Amoret is Scudamour’s beloved always and forever because he won her and she is bound to him; she is a captive for the same reasons. Importantly, Scudamour ends his second complaint by reasserting the idea that what has happened cannot be “redress’d.” In some ways, he is quite wrong – Scudamour can’t enter the castle and rescue Amoret, but Britomart does – and in others, he is absolutely correct. The first glimpse Britomart has of Amoret, in which Amoret appears staged in the pageant, has Britomart locate her through the framing offered by the hanging tapestries,
which the reader receives as ekphrastic descriptions of Ovid’s stories “all of Love, and all of Lusty-hed” (3.11.29). Britomart’s recursive attention to the images of the arrases in Busyrane’s entry hall, which “Ne seeing could her wonder satisfy/ But ever more and more upon it gaz’d./ The whiles the passing Brightness her frail Senses daz’d” is echoed by the way the words “Be bold” catch and hold her eyes, and by the whirlwind that strikes the house as Cupid’s masque enters, commanding attention (3.11.49-50). Britomart, the entranced reader, has been prepared to see Amoret’s body as part of this pageant, as a moving mythographic image. Britomart’s captivation at the sight of the tapestries easily transfers to Amoret, abstracted, captivated by love. The images woven in the hall invite the onlooker to reflect on the wounds love causes; so does Amoret, and because she is abstracted, Britomart might recognize her own captivation and “consuming pain” in the wounded woman. Amoret at this point in the poem appears as a portrait of herself: the object of desire for men, a means to self-understanding for Britomart.

Amoret appears to be functioning as a symbolic depiction of herself in the pageant, but this is far from unusual for her. What makes this episode special is how stark the image is. It provides a moment of Amoret through which we might puzzle out one version of what it means to be true love alone. Hers is a relative stasis, like the one that Julia Kristeva describes as part of the evolution of the subject in *Polylogue* (1977). In her chapter titled “the Subject in Process,” Kristeva describes the evolution of the subject in symbiosis with language. This symbiosis challenges the idea of the monolithic nature of either, and provides an explanation for that notion as well: the subject reaches stasis only temporarily. “The unitary subject discovered by psychoanalysis,” Kristeva writes, “is only one moment, a time of arrest, a stasis, exceeded and
threatened by this movement.”{2} In a corrective to Lacan, she conceives of signification as always en procés, always rejecting any unifying position, dissolving the unifying position, in fact, through the linguistic sign and its system (word, syntax) as subjectivity is established through volatile language. The linguistic sign is complex and so is not, Kristeva postulates, stable enough to create a stable subject.{3} So the subject, constituted by language, can only remain unstable. Because of this the stories we tell about one another, and about ourselves, do not establish a single insoluble presence but rather engage in the principle of negativity, dissolving structure and veering toward infinite possible signifiers, and yet the subject is “not thereby lost but multiplied”: some central identity persists in the face of infinite possibility.{4} This is how Amoret can come to be rescued and also never rescued, how she loves Scudamour but is also his captive. In the House of Busyrane, she is herself but is also an extension of the often violent erotic poetry pictured on the walls. She is, not altogether unusually but perhaps particularly, made a moving picture through language in that house.

The role of language and substitution in the House of Busyrane is emphasized by his particular magic – Spenser explicitly makes Busyrane a poet. His spells are variations of writings he finds in older books, or of the stories in his tapestries, “Figuring straunge characters of his art,/ With liuing blood he those characters wrate,/ Dreadfully dropping from” Amoret’s heart (3.12.31). Busyrane’s imitations are meant to capture Amoret’s affection and embed her in a violent tradition of love poetry, the blazon mutilating her body, the cardiectomy detaching her from the heart that figures what Amoret in fact is, or has been raised to be, an example of true love, the Ovidian and Petrarchan imagery of the front hall mirroring the delay of her lovers’

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{3} Ibid.

{4} The Subject in Process, 140.
union. To remove the spells, he rehearses “those same bloody lynes,” and the rehearsal reverses what we know to have taken place. Busyrane’s rewriting of the same bloody lines magically restores Amoret’s body but does not fundamentally undo her experience. In effect, Busyrane merely renders the experience invisible. If the unitary subject “is annihilated, liquified, exceeded by…the process of significance,” surely Amoret’s experience still exists by virtue of it having existed, even as she surpasses it and becomes more than the moment her heart is pierced in the House of Busyrane, just as rewriting the lines of Busyrane’s poem does not erase them.5

At the heart of this episode is the trouble it poses for love in general, and for Amoret in particular. As Busyrane writes Amoret’s torture in her own blood, the poem poses a rhetorical question: “who can love the Worker of her smart?” (3.12.31) Even the good version of love – Britomart’s version of love – is disruptive, leaving her restless, causing sleeplessness and stomach pains. When Britomart rescues Amoret from an obviously bad version of love, the re-reading of Busyrane’s poetry restores Amoret’s physical integrity but does little to undo what has been done otherwise. In the 1590 ending to Book III, Britomart brings Amoret back to Scudamour, and even this happy ending seems fraught.

Scudamour and Amoret’s very physical reunion as what appears to be a single entity at 3.12.45 is a binding of her body, a (willing) submission. Amoret “clipt” tightly between Scudamour’s arms, the embrace is characterized in a way that mirrors her recent captivity, where her imprisoned body became a prison itself. Bound up again in Scudamour, Amoret’s body transforms from a prison to a pleasant hideaway, a thing that now takes delight in constraint. As Spenser highlights the manipulation of her body, emptying and refilling it when Scudamour embraces “her body bright./ Her body, late the prison of sad pain,/ Now the sweet lodge of love

5 The Subject in Process, 134.
and deare delight,” Amoret’s body becomes a vessel that contains experiences that seem to be both substitutive and cumulative, a place that alerts us to the fact that pleasure and torment are not opposites, not precise replacements for one another, a sign for multiple signifieds (3.12.45). Scudamour’s embrace may replace her captivity in the House of Busyrane, but does not erase it, and the poetic symmetry with which apparently positive love replaces profane lust makes the two more proximal than is comfortable, two parts of a whole.

Perhaps because these two things are so proximal, Amoret’s reaction to her embrace with Scudamour in the 1590 ending of Book III, introduced not with the positive “and” but with the cautionary “but,” qualifies the happy outcome and stages Britomart’s keen reservation: “But she faire lady overcommen quite/ Of huge affection, did in pleasure melt,/ And in sweet Ravishment pourd out her sprite.” (3.12.45) The structure echoes the language with which the poem describes Amoret falling as Busyrane’s charm is undone, when one might have expected her to leap up in relief, but “she felt her selfe to be unbownd,/ And perfect hole, prostrate she fell unto the grownd” (3.12.38). In each case, the poem conveys a sense of something ending with her physical ‘undoing’, the moment of stasis becoming semi-permanent. In the moment that Amoret melts into Scudamour, the two become “senseles stocks,” hermaphroditic and incognizant – and stabilizing one another, verging toward something permanent. Britomart envies them, but only by half – the formation of the hermaphrodite is “costly.” Britomart’s half-reservation seems intended to provoke a skepticism in the reader. After all, the only people who turn into trees, or “senseles stocks,” in Ovid’s Metamorphoses are escaping from something: Daphne running from Apollo, Myrrha from her shame. To be senseless in The Faerie Queene is generally not a good thing. To be without sense is to be forgetful, alienated from oneself, abject,
a stone, a corpse. Britomart registers ambivalence, and the details that should give the reader pause over this ending, the freedom and constraint that intermingle in Amoret and Scudamour’s embrace, seem particularly suited to a metamorphosis that displays as much as it contains.

Jonathan Goldberg has suggested that the “rewriting of Book III revises its meaning; if something is lost, something is also added. The text contains whatever meaning it once had, and what it now has. Amoret still names the “same” character… It is the “same” Busyrane, on the “selfe same day” that carried off “the Ladie selfe.” “Selfe” and “same”; yet everything is different.” When in 1596 Spenser removes the hermaphroditic embrace, in place of that very private, very physical union, he articulates and rearticulates Scudamour’s relationship with Amoret, grounding the bond not in the hugely affectionate reunion but in the “piteous” story of how Scudamour came to win her, an account of enamorment that supplants reunion, consummation, and recognition. This is, of course, a matter of replacing the end of Book III with something 10 cantos later; there is a huge amount of space between the two accounts, with a great deal of action that one could take to be part of the replacement. But it is also true that the first canto of Book IV records a synopsis of the event told in greater detail later, in Canto 10. The fact that the story of how Scudamour came to be with Amoret in the first place is repeated, and greatly expanded in its repetition, should alert readers to its importance. This first rendition also contains internal repetition, something that in Spenserian rhetoric always calls us to attention:

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6 The word senseless is used leading up to this moment, in varying spellings, at 1.2.16, 1.6.47, 1.7.15, 1.8.34, 1.9.23, 2.8.53, 3.1.63, 3.9.16, 3.12.45 (1590). All of these are attached to a negative characterization. There are a few examples of ravishment having a spiritual or otherwise positive effect; at 1.9.14 a vision of the Faerie Queene ravishes the dreaming Arthur, and at 1.12.39 heavenly music ravishes “with rare impression” to drive away melancholy. In these cases the ravishment is described as interrupting and either redirecting or substituting perception.

7 Endlesse Worke 79.
“For from the time that Scudamour her bought/ In perilous fight, she neuer ioyed day,/ A perilous fight when he with force her brought” (4.1.2). Scudamour’s “perilous fight” is in repetition identified as a moment of both gain and dangerous loss: while Scudamour gains a bride, Amoret loses her joy. Scudamour’s gain, too, is complicated by an ominous lack of clarity that suggests Scudamour has brought Amoret out of the garden through a violence that might seep out with them. The story’s repetition is both a recantation and an elaboration, obscuring Amoret’s position as “th’ensample of true love alone.” In the new rendition, Scudamour’s “perilous fight” emphasizes her as an object to be won and then possessed, no longer true love alone: the union, in each account, requires an uncomfortable level of fusion, one which often disproportionately asks the feminine figure to incorporate her partner. In between the two accounts of this story, Amoret moves silently between attachments in which she is an object of desire for male pursuers, and an object of recognition, even of substitution, for female counterparts. The dynamic of recognition and substitution that persistently occurs with other characters – with Aemylia and the old woman in Lust’s cave, for example – seems to question whether affection can be freely given, and maybe to explore whether affection is something that can actually be possessed.

This interplay between sameness and difference works itself with and through the revision, preserving the core substance of what Amoret is as an example of love (alone) while it forces her into a series of violent interactions. Amoret repeats these other characters’ plights and reinforces her own, the fractal character always solid at its center. Each identification augments

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8 Amoret’s attachments read like Franco Moretti’s “clues.” Moretti describes echoes or trails in a text as traces, symptoms that provide opportunities for change. “Clues, whether defined as such or as ‘symptoms’ or ‘traces’, are not facts, but verbal procedures – more exactly, rhetorical figures. …that particular element in the story in which the link between signifier and signified is altered. It is a signifier that always has several signifieds and thus produces numerous suspicions” Moretti looks at detective stories in his examples, but the principle of the statement rests on the allure of identification. Franco Moretti, Signs Taken for Wonders (London: Verso, 2005), 145-46.
our understanding of the signifier, Amoret-as-love whether she is properly attached or misused
out in the world. Moreover, her identification with others, like Lucrece’s, reaffirms her isolation
– her alone-ness – and with each new attachment she becomes an increasingly allegorical figure,
finding only herself, or versions of herself, reflected back to her, rather than the conclusivity of
companionship. Amoret is captured by Lust, and in his cave, she meets Aemylia and an older
woman (“the hag”). Throughout Amoret’s time with Aemylia, their bodies are interchangeable:
on one of the few occasions that Amoret speaks directly, she recognizes her own story in
Aemylia’s, and tells her so: “Thy ruefull plight I pity as mine owne” (4.7.19). Aemylia is just
different enough from Amoret; determined to preserve her chastity, Amoret flees Lust’s cave –
Aemylia has simply waited there to be rescued. Outside the cave, captivity thrown off again,
Amoret quickly slips into Belphoebe’s place as Timias’ “new lovely mate,” a development that
heralds Arthur’s confusion and wondering at signs as he contends with the experience of
stumbling into a scene other than the one he had anticipated (4.7.35). The indeterminacy of
(perceived) erotic engagement troubles Amoret’s story.

Complicating matters further, Scudamour’s and the narrator’s accounts of his and
Amoret’s coupling produce sometimes incompatible “memories” for the reader to assimilate.
The whole story of their meeting, marriage, and separation changes repeatedly, shifting the
nature of Amoret and Scudamour’s relationship with the incorporation of new information that
forces the reader to contend with the fact that neither of these two characters is exactly what we
thought they were.9 This is, of course, the great conceit of Book IV: it expands on what the poem

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9 Aside from the deletion of the reunion at the end of Book III between 1590 and 1596, we have the following: the
account of the Garden of Adonis in Book III Canto vi, in which Amoret chooses Scudamour from among a group of
clamoring suitors; Scudamour’s impatient desire to rescue Amoret from Busyrane in Book III Canto xi;
Scudamour’s despair and departure in the 1596 Book III Canto xii; Book IV Canto i’s assertion that Scudamour
“brought” Amoret “In perilous fight” “From twenty Knights, that did him all assay” (4.1.2); the anticlimactic
reunion in Book IV Canto ix, where Scudamour doesn’t seem to realize Amoret is there, and in fact engages in a
taught repeatedly in the earlier installment, that things are not what they appear. These revisions engage a question regarding the persistent legibility of identity. The question of whether one can remain ‘readable’ through separation and change becomes increasingly problematic as Amoret appears to dissolve among a multiplicity of narratives. This is a classic problem for allegory; Angus Fletcher describes allegorical stories existing “to put secondary meanings into orbit around them; the primary meaning is then valued for its satellites.” The central identity of the thing is defined by the things that it defines, its core almost but not quite lost in the business of its satellite meanings.

In a similar dynamic, Amoret is multiplied: revised and rewritten, reduced, dispersed, and silenced by other characters who retell and rework her story. Scudamour’s inability to fully articulate what has happened to Amoret when Britomart finds him is symptomatic of a larger problem, one linked to violence:

There an huge heape of singulfes did oppresse
His strugling soule, and swelling throbs empeach
His foltring toung with pangs of drerinesse,
Choking the remnant of his plaintife speach,
As if his dayes were come to their last reach.

(3.11.12)

As Scudamour chokes on his words, he becomes emblematic of an inability to articulate constancy, both to Amoret and in himself, and that inability, the garbling or loss of speech, seems a precursor to death. The variant accounts of Amoret’s wooing (if one can in the end call it that) and captivity rely on a set of shifting perspectives and altered details that are split

debate with Britomart over who is most hurt by Amoret’s loss; and Scudamour’s report of his conquest of Amoret in the Temple of Venus in Book IV Canto xii. These citations reflect an evolving story in which it is progressively revealed that Amoret did not in fact consent to belong to Scudamour, and each version of his “winning” her becomes bolder and more violent.

between the two parts of the *Faerie Queene*. This divergence in her story results in what Judith H. Anderson refers to as an intertext, in which “the unlimited agency of the signifier operates virtually without regard for context,” producing not opposing idioms but elements that “coexist interestingly, elusively, and indefinitely.” The intertext as a topography is “conceptually and functionally unstable.” This is Kristeva’s negativity, Derrida’s trace of absence. The modern reader’s task of reconciling the pieces of Amoret and Scudamour’s story, including the two endings of Book III, with one another entails facing the discomfort with the functional instability of Spenser’s revision, and that discomfort provides an opportunity to examine what is important about that instability. The instability of the intertext that Spenser creates through his revision is one that exceeds the text at hand, and speaks to larger cultural concerns about what is conceptually and functionally unstable in the subject, how she is impacted and altered by her experience, the role of violence in all of this, and the consequences of being unable to adequately articulate what core subjectivity might remain constant despite change.

Britomart saves Amoret from Busyrane’s poetry of the erotic in Book III, extracting her from the received amatory culture depicted in his brilliant arrases that cast love primarily as a power differential. But when Scudamour leaves in the revised ending (3.12.45) and so misses his reunion with Amoret, she and Britomart set out into the world and find reflections of Amoret as they go. The story of Lust – captor, rapist, and cannibal of women, who had held Aemylia, the hag, and then Amoret captive in his cave – as Arthur receives it when he makes his appearance at

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11 One ought to acknowledge the possibility that the simple explanation of Amoret’s instability sits with the poet’s inattentiveness between volumes. One might respond to this assertion that these episodes are rather lengthy and significant, and as such inattention seems an unlikely explanation for the problem.

12 Judith H. Anderson, *Reading the Allegorical Intertext* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 1-2; This description is not dissimilar from Jonathan Goldberg’s assessment of the world that Spenser creates in the Faerie Queene, following his destabilizing revision, as one with infinite potential for near-substitution, for overlapping signs, and for text that informs and reacts to text. (Jonathan Goldberg, “Introduction,” in *This distracted globe: worldmaking in early modern literature*. Edited by Marcie Frank. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 2.)
4.8 produces a narrative that Jonathan Goldberg has described as being one in which “identification, substitution, difference, and sameness all seem uncannily in play.”13 Aemylia, like Amoret and not like Amoret, was also captive in Lust’s cave; in that space, their bodies were interchangeable, interchangeable even with the hag, driving home both the fact that Amoret’s story is not unique, and that it isn’t ending.

At 4.7.2 the address to the “Great God of love” suggests a redoubling of her ‘perils’ that expands her story beyond herself:

So whylome didst thou to faire Florimell;
And so and so to noble Britomart:
So doest thou now to her, of whom I tell,
The lovely Amoret, whose gentle hart
Thou martyrest with sorow and with smart,
In salvage forrests, and in deserts wide,
With Beares and Tygers taking heavie part,
Withouten comfort, and withouten guide,
That pittie is to heare the perils, which she tride.

What happens to Amoret happens here, and there, and everywhere, under cover and out in the open, more than once (her heart is martyred with sorrow and with smart), and not just to Amoret. The martyrdom that the narrative describes belonging to Amoret belongs also to “faire Florimell,” “And so and so to noble Britomart”: so, and so, “so doest thou now to her, of whom I tell/ The lovely Amoret,” driving home the equivalency of the perils they each face. Britomart’s “so and so” lends her particular peril, though equivalent, a vagueness that reflects her difficulty understanding what has happened to her. In some ways, Britomart’s difficulty indicates exactly the problem with dividing love into “good” and “bad” exempla: such division obfuscates the significant inclusions of what one might consider “bad moments” even in the midst of the most

appropriate love stories. The struggle to engage in chaste love also entails engagement in the emotional registers initially identified in places like Busyrane’s castle, or Lust’s cave.\footnote{These are all places home to Zizek’s dangerous “ultimate idolatry” in which one experiences “not the idolizing of the mask, of the image, itself, but the belief that there is some hidden positive content beyond the mask” (126). Zizek suggests that the positive is perhaps simply not present; Spenser suggests that the positive and negative are present in equal measure. As M.L. Stapleton notes, the description of Lechery given in the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins in the House of Pride becomes an archetype for future descriptions of other negative incarnations of love (336). One finds this imagery also being reissued in relation to characters hardly associated with the duplicity of Lechery, or the overt carnality of Lust. Recalling Lechery’s “fleshy hooks” (1.4.25), Britomart describes the love she feels as “a hidden hooke with baite I swallowed... infixed... Within my bleeding bowels” (3.2.38-39). Britomart’s frankness about the physicality of her love reflects her anxiety about it. Lechery’s trick depends on his ability to mimic what is good. He strives, that is, to inspire Zizek’s idolator to believe there is something good behind his mask. Britomart apparently has some understanding of this dynamic, though she is unable to totally control it, burdened by her susceptibility to imagery and other input from external sources. Stapleton also notes a similarity between Lechery’s and Britomart’s wandering eyes. Britomart's gaze, in fact, seems to be the frailty of her flesh of most interest to the poem, and it is not only through her gaze that the occasion for her quest is established, but that Spenser indicates the ease with which she misplaces the caster of the bait she swallows. The misplacement, the misallocation of the source of Britomart’s ‘smart’, allows her to create a productive division within herself that facilitates her quest and permits her own adaptation to the idea that Artegall is her intended.}

Because of the torture she undergoes at the hand of Busyrane, Amoret exhibits this engagement most outwardly and least positively of any character, even replaying the scene in which Lechery enters with his heart held disembodied before him – hers having been cut out of her chest and borne in a silver bowl, as a specimen used to make the vulnerability of the heart and, by extension, the person absolutely clear. The injunction Britomart encounters to “Be bold,” “Be bold, be bold,” “Be not too bold” (3.11.50, 54) – of which she can make no sense and which has proved a hermeneutical puzzle for critics – really seems less a riddle intended for Britomart to solve than a warning preparing her for the cruelty in the house, and indicating how quickly one might go too far; the sadistic performance she witnesses serves the dual purpose of reflecting to Britomart her own fear, and emphasizing the sense of being self-alienated that Amoret demonstrates so acutely. She is, that is, an amplification of what happens to others in the poem, a character in the process of becoming allegory, picking up focal exemplarity with each encounter.
Amoret’s encounter with Aemylia and the hag emphasizes this further. Captured by ugly Lust after wandering away from Britomart, alone again, Amoret finds herself in the company of another character with whom identification and substitution are overtly at work.

> With that she heard some one close by her side
> Sighing and sobbing sore, as if the paine
> Her tender hart in peeces would divide:
> Which she long listning, softly askt againe
> What mister wight it was that so did plaine?
> To whom thus aunswer'd was: Ah wretched wight
> That seekes to know anothers griefe in vaine,
> Unweeting of thine owne like haplesse plight:
> Selfe to forget to mind another, is oversight. (4.7.10)

Aemylia echoes Amoret, the division of the heart figuring their synchronicity. The poem’s instruction to mind oneself, to keep oneself in mind even in the face of a “like haplesse plight” is an injunction to see others as a way of minding oneself, to recognize the sameness between oneself and an other in order to maintain one’s difference. But there is no difference between Aemylia, Amoret, and the old woman held captive with them so far as Lust is concerned.

Amoret’s time with Aemylia and the hag is an uncanny repetition of her time with Busyrane, the experience reproducing her story. Her flight from Lust’s cave, complicating the critic’s ability to trace a straight line through the text, is a similarly uncanny repetition of Florimell’s run through the poem. Spenser also indelibly, and crucially, links Amoret to Florimell in 4.1.1 when he confuses the distinctions between their stories. The declared equivalency of their stories occurs at the level of the sentence in the opening stanza of Book IV’s first canto:

> None more piteous ever was ytold,
> Then that of Amorets heart-binding chaine,
> And this of Florimells unworthie pain
> The dear compassion of whose bitter fit
> My softened heart so sorely doth constraine,
That I with tears full oft doe pittie it,
And ofentimes doe wish it never had been writ.

“That” and “this” seem transposed in the stanza, and as the farther-away story of Amoret – *that*
Amoret – becomes once again the topic of the poem, Spenser requires the reader to make a
double adjustment as the syntactical convergence introduces Amoret, substitutes Florimel, and
returns to the first narrative thread. Amoret has a tendency to slip into and out of the poem,
forgotten or invisible or supplanted by another more pressing story. When she wins and
immediately loses the cestus – Florimel’s cestus, that thing that ought to prove her wholeness
and virtuous chastity during the tournament in Book IV, and that also would more closely align
the two characters – one can’t help but read the loss as a metaphorical depiction of the ephemeral
character of Amoret’s subjectivity, framed by her repeated sexual compromise, and a revisitation
of her captivities and violations. These episodes rework and normalize the idea that
accumulations of experiences obscure but do not negate an essential core, just as the retellings of
Amoret’s origination, wooing, and reunion with Scudamour complicate but do not render
obsolete the version of that pair the reader first encounters.

Amoret is certainly not alone in that a general pattern of substitution and representation
operates throughout Book IV, but hers is special in its attachment to the pattern; for her, this is
less a pattern than a mode of being. The particular ease with which Amoret participates in
substitutions seems rooted in the upbringing she has received in the Garden of Adonis, where she
grows amid “infinite shapes of creatures” and “uncouth forms,” “every sort…in a sondry bed/
Sett by it selfe” (3.6.35). Amoret is very much of this place, where “daily they grow, and daily
forth are sent/ Into the world to replenish it more,/ Yet is the stocke not lessened, nor spent”; its
core substance is “eterne” (3.6.36-37). There appear to be infinite opportunities for
representation of Amoret, and we would do well to ask what the “stocke not lessened, nor spent” really is.

When Judith Anderson asks “Whatever happened to Amoret?,” she identifies quite sharply the fact that Amoret’s story has no conclusion. “In canto viii Amoret is merely sandwiched between the stories of Belphoebe and Aemylia. Although she is related to both stories…the significance of these relationships in canto viii is more puzzling: are they associative, convenient, and superficial,” she asks, “or are other kinds of meaning active?” Anderson is concerned with a lack of completeness, and her own answer to the question – whatever happened to Amoret? – leaves Amoret aside. The self-consciousness of Book IV, “the use of past fragments, which attract attention to their own pastness,” for example, seems intimately related to the question of what happens to Amoret, whose inclusion in story after story speaks to her figuration of the invasion of psychological and erotic concerns in the poem.15 Amoret’s “sandwiching” produces a sort of multiplication in which her sameness and difference from these other characters positions her as an echo or signifier of what happens to them.

Amoret’s life has no end: she does not die. Nor does Amoret’s story end: she does not wed. Rather she goes from loss to loss, from wounding to wounding. In this she recalls Tasso’s Clorinda, accidentally killed by her beloved Tancred, who then finds himself in a magical forest. He strikes at one of the trees and out comes blood, and then Clorinda’s voice, crying that he has wounded her again. Caruth writes about this moment in terms of its traumatic mimesis: “the story…far from telling of an escape from reality – the escape from a death, or from its referential

force – rather attests to its endless impact on a life.”\textsuperscript{16} The voice, released through the wound, does not just bear witness to the past but creates a new traumatic present. So Amoret’s repetitions also present a character not so much in evolution as in dispersal and reaffirmation, the psychoanalytic equivalent of typological confirmation. Amoret’s trajectory through the poem results in an excess of identification, one which explicates the subject’s process and pushes her farther and farther toward pure significance. As Melissa E. Sanchez points out, critics often interpret Books III and IV, the Books of Chastity and Friendship, as allegorical meditations on sexual roles or on female rule.\textsuperscript{17} But Amoret’s veiling in others, her identification with others, seems less about sexual roles than about love at all.

Book IV’s revisions work, often, to dissolve difference and resolution, to push forward the idea just barely contained by Amoret that love is inherently violent. The Masque of Cupid, presented as a nightmarish corruption of reality in Book III, is brought beyond the confines of Busyrane’s castle and to the wedding party in Book IV. No longer a subversive horror show, the Masque in Book IV is brought out into the ‘real’ world as a wedding entertainment, and clarifies the union between Scudamour and Amoret as being of the same potentially damaging amatory culture portrayed in Castle Joyous and in the House of Busyrane. That the bride is kidnapped from her wedding, the reader comes to realize, is also a replaying of Scudamour’s conquest of her. In this version, Scudamour forcibly removes Amoret from the Temple of Venus, rather than “winning” her in the Garden of Adonis. Scudamour effectively revises the perception of Amoret’s consent, and becomes her first captor when he says that “She often prayed, and often me besought/ Sometime with tender tears to let her goe/ Sometime with witching smyles: but yet,

\textsuperscript{16} Caruth, 7.
\textsuperscript{17} Melissa E. Sanchez, “Fantasies of Friendship in ‘The Faerie Queene’, Book IV,” \textit{English Literary Renaissance}, vol. 37, no. 2 (Spring 2007), 251.
for nought/ That ever she to me could say or doe/ Could she her wished freedom froe me wooe” (4.9.57). Amoret’s entreaties have no impact on her abduction from the Garden of Venus; she’s pulled “like warie Hynd within the weedie soyle” out into the world where by this point in the poem the reader already knows she will experience other violations (4.10.5). Scudamour’s account, in part because it does not deny Amoret’s sense of the violence of her removal from the Garden of Adonis, emphasizes the discontinuity between the 1590 and 1596 events of the poem as well as between the two characters. More importantly, it registers Amoret’s lack of voice even as the story reports on her entreaties: Scudamour’s ventriloquization of her voice is usual for Amoret. Spenser has her moving silently through the Faerie Queene; Spenser tells his reader how she feels, when she is afraid, and when she hurts. Her story is told through narration, and by other characters. The interruption of what Kristeva calls the speaking abject, whose feminine subjectivity becomes obscured by “translation error” since she does not speak herself, occurs bluntly in Amoret’s case. 18 This interruption has far-reaching ramifications that keep Amoret from conclusion – if one cannot articulate wants or needs, one cannot articulate conclusivity – and at the same time seem to be expected.

The reader is prepared to expect an emotional, physical connection between the two lovers at their eventual reunion. That this doesn’t happen in Book IV seems like a curious oversight, or a strange gesture toward unending repetition. Book III leads us to believe their hearts match one another even into morbidity, Scudamour’s heart broken as though it “were pelles made” as Amoret’s heart is displaced and dying in the House of Busyrane (3.11.8, 3.12.31). Although Spenser takes away their conclusive embrace in Book IV, he provides an

emotional recognition of greater depth as Scudamour seems to reflect Amoret in much the same way she has reflected others. Scudamour, echoing the statement that Amoret has “never joyed day” since being claimed by him, says that since he was struck with love, he “never joyed howre, but still with care was moved” (4.1.2; 4.9.1, 4-5, 9). Scudamour sets up for the mixed affective state in which he finds himself at the beginning of his description of the Temple of Venus. Love is a dram of honey, weighed down with a pound of gall. The story Scudamore tells about his “purchase” of Amoret, about his defeat of twenty knights and about overcoming Doubt and Delay, about moving through all peril and negativity, is also a story about the beauty and danger of being in the world at all.

No tree, that is of count, in greenewood growes,
From lowest Juniper to Ceder tall,
No flowre in field, that daintie odour throwes,
And deckes his branch with blossomes over all,
But there was planted, or grew naturall:
Nor sense of man so coy and curious nice,
But there mote find to please it selfe withall;
Nor hart could wish for any queint device,
But there it present was, and did fraile sense entice.

(4.10.22)

Scudamore is confronted with a world overflowing with substance, Amoret ensconced at its center. This is the version of the story in which she does not want to leave with him. He compares himself not to a chivalric hero, but to Orpheus leading Eurydice out of hell, and like Orpheus, he will inevitably, eventually, leave his intended behind. The “perfect hole” that Amoret became at the conclusion of Book III – read by a number of scholars as a reference to the site and integrity of her chastity\(^\text{19}\) – follows directly after her restoration to bodily wholeness, “as she were never hurt,” but the assertion that she is “perfect hole” entails a loosening of

\(^{19}\) Jonathan Goldberg, for example, suggests that “Even closed, this wound remains open.” Elizabeth J. Bellamy writes, “the concept of married chastity itself is a kind of ‘perfect hole’.”
consciousness or decoupling of soul from her body: “Tho when she felt her selfe to be unbound/
And perfect hole, prostrate she fell unto the ground” (3.12.38). Healed, but unconscious, the
perfect hole might be, rather than an indication of penetration, chastity, or health, a space of
absence that predicts her effective disappearance during the lovers’ final reunion at the end of
Book IV. Scudamour loses his perfect conclusion even as he repeats the story of bringing
Amoret out of the garden, of his winning her; he leaves himself in an Orphic incompletion, one in
which Amoret still exists and he is unable to grasp her.

The peculiarly anticlimactic meeting is, perhaps, not really anyone’s fault. Amoret’s
captivities, abductions, and woundings replay one another such that the change that she
experiences – from child to bride, lover to wife, chaste beloved to sexual prisoner – moves her
body from person to person, and the outcome of her discontinuity presents a stark anxiety
regarding personal change; she is in some manner hidden, or unrecognizable. The “reunion” in
Canto 9 occurs, appropriately, in the midst of other characters, in the midst of fighting and
contradiction; Arthur has arrived with Amoret, but no one seems to realize she is there. Arthur
does not present her, Scudamour does not claim Amoret where she stands, and she does not
speak. The narrative is centrifugal, distracted: Arthur’s arrival, as always a sort of ex machina
intervention, puts an end to the disagreement between the knights left over from the tournament
where Britomart “won” Florimell when he instructs the fighters that their goal is not to win
ladies, but to help them “that of their loves chosse they might freedom clame.” Despite the
success of this statement in curtailing the fighting, when Britomart and Scudamour speak to one
another for the first time since separating at the House of Busyrane, Amoret is still an expression
of something else for him, neither object (as Florimell almost entirely is) nor subject. Britomart
laments that “yet,…a greater wrong remains: / For I thereby my former love have lost; / Whom
seeking ever since with endless pains/ Hath me much sorrow and much travel cost” (4.8.17). To
the idea that Britomart has lost her “former love,” the love she had or bore before, the person
with whom she has most closely identified, Scudamour responds that he ought to be most
sorrowful, “whose right she is, where ever she be straide,” and indeed, though Scudamour
certainly prioritizes his ‘right’ above hers, he, too, is trapped, devouring his days “in wretched
anguish and incessant woe” (4.9.39.6). He equates his love for Amoret with his life, explaining
that “living thus, a wretch I and loving so,/ I neither can my love, ne yet my life forgo” (4.9.39.8-9).
Amoret, the perpetually disrupted speaking subject, the less-than-unified entity, seems
perfectly absent at the culmination of her long search for Scudamour, her “perfect hole” a
somatic expression of discontinuity.

When Scudamour recalls and reports on his triumphant conquest of Amoret rather than
acknowledging her, he revises and expands the narrative in which their coupling is inevitable,
where they are irreversibly tied, the words consuming him even as he swallows them, “inly
groning deepe and sighing oft,” his own role growing as hers decreases (4.10.48). Scudamour’s
retelling of his abduction of Amoret in Book IV completes, perhaps, the sentences he choked
back down when he met Britomart in Book III; whether it completes the Squire’s Tale is another
matter altogether. It certainly does not conclude their love story. His telling of this new version
of their coupling, made possible by the fact that Amoret’s captivity with Busyrane has finally
been redressed, at least superficially, is the only recognition Scudamour gives of that resolution.
The story maintains her captivity: Scudamour not only removes mention of him as Amoret’s
choice, but in fact claims the opposite. The revision here makes his conquest of her fit more
neatly into the framework of what has, by this point, already happened to her in Books III and
IV, and redefines Amoret as each of her other stories does.
Scudamour’s stories embed Amoret in the narratives hung on Busyrane’s walls as much as her captivity did; Amoret hears to all of this, perhaps she listens to it. She listens in unceremonious, predictable silence to this account of her abduction. Silence in Kristeva’s rubric of abjection is a border of discourse, the edge of speech, an in-between place.20 “The narrative web is a thin film constantly threatened with bursting,” and when one moves past that thin film, approaching the “incandescent states of a boundary-subjectivity” that she calls abjection, one finds “the violence of poetry, and silence.”21 The boundary between subject (girl) and object (allegory) having been shaken, between inside and outside then uncertain, the narrative is challenged: so we receive multiple versions of Amoret that are all simultaneously true. The horror of the burst narrative results from and reflects the horror of the traumatic journey; linearity shattered, it keeps going, and one finds the “incandescent state of boundary-subjectivity” can only express itself in silence because it is, in fact, a distillation of the subject.

What is left of Amoret? Whatever Scudamour says – he is about to present the story of his “winning” her again – she seems at the end of her story to belong most properly to the modern reader. Thomas P. Roche declared in 1961 that the “final episode of the third book of The Faerie Queene [had] never received adequate interpretation.”22 This declaration spurred many articles and book chapters worrying over “Scudamour’s Practice of Maistrye Upon Amoret” (A. Kent Hieatt, 1962), what to do about the 1590 Hermaphrodite (Donald Cheney, 1972), the relationship between chastity and ideal sexuality (Lesley W. Brill, 1971), and Britomart’s role in all of this (Iris Tillman Hill, 1971; Robert E. Wood, 1978).23

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20 Powers of Horror, 30.
21 Powers of Horror, 141.
expressed some concern about a “Poetics of Misogyny” in 1983. In the same year, Helen Gardner remarked that in issuing Books IV-VI “Spenser took up the tale of the lovers and gave the reader new information which might well, if he had known it, have affected his reading of the final cantos of Book III.” This statement seems to be the operating assumption of many later pieces of feminist and psychoanalytic critique, from Dorothy Stephens’ “Into Other Arms: Amoret’s Evasion” (1991) to Elizabeth J. Bellamy’s “Waiting for Hymen: Literary History as “Symptom” in Spenser and Milton” (1997) and M.L. Stapleton’s “Loue my lewd Pilot”: The Ars Amatoria in the Faerie Queene” (1998).

What all of these critics share is a concern over what exactly the revision does to the characters in Spenser’s epic. Many share a particular worry about what has happened to Amoret. Spenser has written her into and out of so many hands that she is, as Jonathan Goldberg notes in his comparison of Amoret with Britomart, in no way a singularity. But there is, for the reader, still a core of Amoret. She “still names the “same” character.” But “Identity – having a self – is a matter of identification with an other and being identified by others” – and Amoret isn’t, after all, identified by others. Lauren Silberman argues that “just as Ovid's Eurydice is reduced to silence in the economy of male desire, so Amoret is reduced to a figment of Scudamour’s

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27 Endlesse Worke, 79.
autobiography as she disappears from Spenser's story.”28 This might be true for Scudamour, who likens himself to Orpheus; it isn’t necessarily true for the reader.

Amoret’s disappearance from the text is loud despite her silence; she is present despite her unacknowledged presence. Her swoons and small deaths seem to culminate in the apparent invisibility that sits so oddly: there and unacknowledged, Amoret makes not a sound while Scudamour describes her as Eurydice, recovered “from the Stygian Princes boure” (4.10.58). She is a Eurydice who requires repeated recoveries, rescues, releases, and it is quite clear that she doesn’t always want to be rescued – to give up, for example, her seat in the lap of Womanhood as a powerfully symbolic position. Only her transmutability into allegory would confer that symbolic position on her; she comes very close to this transmutation, but instead she passes out of narrative, out of meaning, and almost out of mind. In doing so, she invites us to mind ourselves, to consider introspection. Amoret’s persistence in finding herself in others similarly requires an acknowledgement of subjectivity, however violently acquired. What’s more, if she is not in the end lost physically, her suggestion that we engage in introspection relieves Scudamour of the control he might have had, had he ever managed to settle on a story. That she expresses an independence from him through silence and a certain passive allowance of his storytelling, and that he does not acknowledge her presence, suggests that Scudamour will never quite have Amoret. Her silence is an expressive act that produces another iteration of true love alone even as she is coupled with her intended. Much as Scylla’s metamorphosis produces an intense crying-out of her character, emotion gathered and loosed, Amoret’s silence maintains her integrity, the silence its own sort of crying-out.

Chapter 3
What Cannot be Spoken Of:
Subject, Object, and the Things that Adhere in The Winter’s Tale

In Ovid’s story of Pygmalion, the changed creature begins its life as a statue, and is brought to life by Venus’ intervention. Venus takes pity on lonely Pygmalion and makes his statue move and breathe; it becomes a more perfect woman than any of the women he has shunned. The Pygmalion story is followed directly by the story of Myrrha, his granddaughter, who experiences (and consummates) inappropriate desire for her father; he is more perfect in her estimation than any of the men she has met. When she is found out and flees, she asks to be turned into something that will deny to her both life and death – so she becomes the myrrh tree, and her tears become the sap dripping from the tree. The two stories, Myrrha’s and Pygmalion’s, are not just proximate but are deeply referent of each other: the incestuous affairs (the statue being Pygmalion’s own creation, Myrrha being Cinyras’ daughter), the transgressive erotic consummation, the animation and petrification equally marked by desire. In her introduction to The Automaton in English Renaissance Literature, Wendy Beth Hyman suggests that the stories are, in fact, doppelgangers for one another.¹

The stories, taken together, portray a movement between states – animate and inanimate – that happens seemingly at will, if not without reason. Kenneth Gross describes the opening of Charlie Chaplin’s City of Lights, the discovery of a tramp sleeping on a statue and his clumsy, protracted flight in the face of shock and ridicule. The living body and the monument become a means of suggesting the “latent or threshold status of the idea of animation.” Gross writes: “The scene in Chaplin suggests how the fantasy can ask us to reconceive the living body in its private

¹ Hyman, 1
and its public nature, to think again about the conflicting motives that shape its gestures, its free or compelled theatricality. It suggests as well the strange complicities of the living body and the dead monument that can feed the fantasy of animation.”

John Lyly’s *The Woman in the Moon* and William Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* – two otherwise unrelated dramas, in repertory quite far apart – both place the living body and dead monument in close proximity. Both plays ask the audience to consider the fantasy of animation as a necessary reality. Both plays rely on transformation as a means of exploring affective communication, and both query what might be required to maintain identity through and beyond such transformation, what might “adhere” to a person that should make her legible.

Legibility and communication, while related, are not the same thing. How one remains legible when communication is interrupted, as happens when Pandora is rendered mute and must communicate only through physical movement, and how one communicates when legibility is interrupted, as happens with Hermione when Leontes no longer recognizes the same reality she does, remain dominant questions in these two plays as they work through Ovidian transformations into and out of statuary, exploring what can be (or is) external to subjecthood. For something to adhere to a person, and so contribute to that person’s identity, it should be describable, identifiable itself. When strong emotion erupts, as it does in the stories of Pygmalion and Myrrha, and as it does in these plays, the sudden changes that occur can obscure vision and limit description. What is seen, or not, and what can be described, or not, become immediate problems for *The Winter’s Tale*.

Describing the reunion of Leontes and Polixenes to Rogero, who has missed the meeting of the play’s two kings, the Steward says: “Then you have lost a sight which was to be seen,

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2 Kenneth Gross, 6-7
cannot be spoken of” (5.2.41). *The Winter’s Tale* is full of things seen and subjected to surmise, spoken of improperly; things that are ‘seen’ off stage that have to be reported. The idea that one should have seen, and didn’t, suggested by the Steward near the end of the play, seems to reflect the events of the play which “so like an old tale that the verity of it is in strong suspicion” (5.2.28). Like an old tale, even in its structure, the play often relies on transformation to preserve emotion. This particular power of transformation is central to what drives the creation of Hermione’s statue, and dictates the action of the play in a way that moves Hermione between subject and object, heard and unheard. Meanwhile, the ways in which events are reported upon and subjected to surmise demonstrate that our identity comes at least in part from others, dependent on their proclivities and permissions. Hermione’s transformation in *The Winter’s Tale*, like Amoret’s dispersal through the text of *The Faerie Queene*, highlights and encapsulates the joint powers of language and silence, the potency of the thing that goes unspoken.

Hermione’s apparent rhetorical proficiency, which we see but do not hear, ignites Leontes’ jealousy almost immediately. Hermione’s momentary comparison between lover and friend brings the two into uncomfortable proximity, imbues Leontes with the feeling of being “too hot!”:

> Why, lo you now, I have spoke to th’ purpose twice.  
The one for ever earned a royal husband;  
Th’other for some while a friend.  
(1.2.106-8)

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3 This is also true of Perdita, and Camillo. It may also be true of Leontes, whose life is in some ways curtailed by Hermione’s death and Paulina’s insistence that he spend his days in mourning.  
4 Lynn Enterline has argued that speech is problematic from the beginning of the play, in “You speak a language that I understand not”: the Rhetoric of Animation in *The Winter’s Tale.* In *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare.* Cambridge University Press, 2000.
The implied proximity of husband and friend sends Leontes looking for other implications: Leontes fixates both on what he sees and on what he doesn’t. If Hermione places her hand in Polixenes’, Leontes finds the affection has been “practiced” (1.2.116). If she links arms familiarly with Polixenes, then she has gotten a child by him. If Bohemia stays to satisfy her entreaties, he satisfies her physical needs as well (1.2.230). Whispered conversations, which neither Leontes nor the audience ever become privy to, compound Leontes’ sense that something he cannot quite identify is happening right in front of him. The play’s attention lingers on the gap between seeing and knowing, and the potentialities of that gap, contending with the idea that something there but unidentified can press at one so deeply and disturbingly that it necessitates some sort of action, from the outset. Leontes’ suspicion inaugurates a heightened attention to detail that manages to both overlook reality and produce a problematic observation about the proximity between subject and object in Leontes’ imagination: if Hermione has committed adultery, then she becomes something other than his queen. Having decided Hermione’s guilt is a foregone conclusion based on the observations he has made of her behavior, the betrayed and stricken Leontes dehumanizes his wife. “Thou thing!” he cries, banishing her to the dungeon (2.1.22).

Becoming a thing has serious consequences for character, not just for Hermione but for her children, as the play depicts generation as a type of imprinting, the production of a recognizable person in part a replication – if the replicated parent becomes dehumanized, what does that mean for the child? Paulina’s presentation of the newborn Perdita to Leontes is supposed to instill recognition. “It is yours,” she says,

And, might we lay the old proverb to your charge,
So like you, 'tis the worse. Behold, my lords,
Although the print be little, the whole matter
And copy of the father, eye, nose, lip,
The trick of's frown, his forehead, nay, the valley,
The pretty dimples of his chin and cheek,
His smiles,
The very mould and frame of hand, nail, finger:
And thou, good goddess Nature, which hast made it
So like to him that got it, if thou hast
The ordering of the mind too, 'mongst all colours
No yellow in't, lest she suspect, as he does,
Her children not her husband's!
(2.3.94-106)

The child so resembles Leontes that Paulina assumes he can’t deny paternity. But Hermione has already become something other than his wife, and as a consequence Leontes refuses to see his imprint in the baby, and in banishing the infant, makes her another thing that cannot be seen. Leontes expresses the pain and uncertainty of identification in his outburst, but also confirms the gravity of identification. This is a gravity he has already visited on Mamillius: in Leontes’ first encounter with his son, he searches the child for nonverbal clues to assure himself of the boy’s paternity. “What, hast smutch’d thy nose? They say it is a copy of mine” – they say, not it is. Leontes, unable to see as others do, resorts to asking Mamillius: “art thou my boy?” and “art thou my calf?” (1.2.151, 161). By the next scene, Leontes has come to believe that the problem with Mamillius is that he is more his mother’s son than his father’s.

Give me the boy: I am glad you did not nurse him:
Though he does bear some signs of me, yet you
Have too much blood in him.
(2.1.69-70)

Perhaps Mamillius does, in some sense, have too much of Hermione in him. Hermione’s closeness with Mamillius, staged via their separation, foregrounds the importance and the difficulty of identification to the play. For Mamillius, the child who sweetly embraced his mother to whisper a story “of sprites and goblins” in her ear, the results of identification are tragic.
Mamillius’ and Hermione’s shared intimacy seems to reinforce Leontes’ identification of there being “too much blood” from Hermione in him. Mamillius “conceives” in himself “the dishonour of his mother”:

He straight declined, drooped, took it deeply,  
Fastened and fixed the shame on’t in himself,  
Threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep,  
And downright languished.  

(2.3.13-17)

Mamillius, Enterline observes, “perishes rather than accept the loss required of him. Forced to choose between a mother’s grief and a father’s rage, the emotion that Mamillius imitates all too well” – as though he cannot help it, because he is a part of her – “is his mother’s.”⁵ There is something almost magical about Mamillius’ death. He conceives of Hermione’s dishonor as if growing an affective likeness to his mother. This is reported to us, that like Hermione, he is inconsolable. Perhaps because Mamillius’ affective turn is reported like this to Hermione, it works in the reverse, as well: when Mamillius dies, Hermione has to die, too. Mothers are not mothers without children, goes the logic that Hermione cites in her own refusal to defend herself at trial.

The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,  
I do give lost, for I do feel it gone  
But know not how it went. My second joy,  
And first fruits of my body, from his presence  
I am barred, like one infectious. My third comfort,  
Starred most unluckily, is from my breast,  
The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth,  
Haled out to murder; myself on every post  
Proclaimed a strumpet; with immodest hatred  
The childbed privilege denied, which ‘longs  
To women of all fashion; lastly, hurried

Here, to this place, i’th’ open air, before
I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege,
Tell me what blessings I have here alive,
That I should fear to die. Therefore proceed.
But yet hear this – mistake me not – no life,
I prize it not a straw…

(3.2.91-108)

The things Hermione cares about – Leontes’ favor, her relationship with her son, her relationship with the newborn Perdita – have all been lost or taken from her. The dishonor and inconvenience of her defamation, denial of postpartum privileges, and the degrading public trial, leave her stripped of privilege and position. Hermione, ontologically destabilized by her separation from her children, declares her life and honor to be two separate things. She enumerates three intimate losses – of Leontes’ favor, her relationship with her son, her relationship with the newborn Perdita – and then trails these with a triad of social insults -- defamation, denial of postpartum privileges, and the degrading public trial. Thus deprived, she insists that she is simply no longer herself; she proposes to barter her life to redeem her good name. “My life stands in the level of your dreams,/ Which I’ll lay down,” she tells Leontes, not recognizing what she is accused of or what has happened as matching reality (3.2.78-79). Hermione’s argument is perhaps an attempt to separate her life, and the accusation of adultery, from the honor she seeks to redeem. Her argument additionally concedes her death to be inevitable, or perhaps suggests that she is on some level already dead. Husband, children, honor and dignity stripped from her, Hermione has “no life,” nothing to prize, no more fear of death.

If Hermione is simply not herself without the scanty artifacts that indicate her identity, then without those artifacts – crown, husband, children – she becomes something else. It is indeed a kind of death, even if a temporary one, and her swoon comes not just at the announcement of Mamilius’ complete deterioration but also following Leontes’ dismissal of the
Oracle, his erasure of that language, the last thing that might have ended her trial and restored her position. Hermione’s last lines of any impact are those quoted at length above, in which she claims to prize her life “not a straw.” The Oracle’s confirmation of her honor might have caused her to revise this sentiment had it been accepted, or had Mamilius not died, but at this final assault on what little esteem Hermione has for her own life, Hermione’s renunciation of her life becomes reality, like a spell brought to fruition. In the world of the play, at the level of the line, language is incantatory and functions as a poesia that confirms idea into being. Hermione swears her life meaningless; she loses it. Leontes calls Hermione a thing; she becomes a thing.

When Mamillius dies and she faints to the ground Paulina is right to suggest that we “see what death is doing,” not Death but Mamilius’ death working a final shock upon the queen (3.2.146). Hermione is already something between human and non-human, neither alive nor dead, the magic of Leontes’ declaration at the beginning of the previous act (“thing!”) at work on her; she lacks, at this point, the ability to maintain subjectivity in the face of her husband’s derision. Paulina’s admonition to see what death is doing alerts us to the activity of the swoon: a descent through feeling into thinginess, Paulina suggests that Hermione is a site for the consequences of Mamillius’ death to play out. Hermione cannot alert us to this change of state herself, nor does Paulina grant us a detailed description of the swoon – she only tells us to look, and see. There really cannot be a detailed description of Hermione’s passage into unconsciousness, her slipping away from the first person; she has already made this transition, and sinks into the third person in concert with her son through this missing language.

What kills Mamillius is removal from his mother. What kills Hermione is the (understood) deaths of her children. Hermione “dies” off-stage, unseen, only to “reappear” in the next act as a dream creature, a vision for Antigonus, neither here nor gone as he lays the infant
that Hermione names Perdita – a doll, Justin Kolb reminds us – on the ground.\textsuperscript{6} Hermione’s ghost-like character is conjured and reported on, even less substantial than that doll, and in retrospect one can read the end of her life in Sicilia as being predicated on a removal of what constitutes her identity. Perdita begins her life in Bohemia as a prop, and “a scanty array of artifacts.”\textsuperscript{7} Hermione’s early death similarly seems to result from the removal of those precious identifiers that make her character, the indicators of who she is, and a dissolution of shared understanding: once she and Leontes no longer recognize the same sequence of events, let alone the same meaning in that sequence, she becomes fundamentally other, belonging to the mourning that Paulina ensures will dominate Leontes and Sicilia until the Oracle’s prophecy is fulfilled.

Paulina keeps the memory of Hermione’s sudden collapse fresh for Leontes, who mourns constantly for the duration of the play. The mourning, however, does not do what it ought. In \textit{The Work of Mourning}, Derrida describes a process of loss through which part of the self is lost as well. “The world [is] suspended by some unique tear … reflecting disappearance itself: the world, the whole world, the world itself, for death takes from us not only some particular life within the world, some moment that belongs to us, but, each time, without limit, someone through whom the world, and first of all our own world, will have opened up.”\textsuperscript{8} Derrida deepens the consequences of this opening up: “A stretch of [our] living self … a world that is for us the whole world, the only world … sinks into an abyss.”\textsuperscript{9} Elsewhere, he is far more blunt about this point, claiming that “one cannot hold a discourse on the “work of mourning” without taking part

\textsuperscript{6} Kolb describes the deconstruction of Hermione and Perdita, and their subsequent reconfiguring, in terms of authorship and Leontes’ maniacal desire for sole authorial control. Perhaps Leontes is maniacal, but Hermione and her children amply demonstrate the fundamental ontological fragility of the subject. Justin Kolb, “To me comes a creature” in \textit{The Automaton in English Renaissance Literature} (London: Ashgate, 2011), 48.

\textsuperscript{7} Kolb 59


\textsuperscript{9} \textit{The Work of Mourning}, 115.
in it, without announcing or partaking in [se faire part de] death, and first of all one’s own death.”

The task of The Winter’s Tale is not to mourn until loss is managed, but to mourn until what is lost is returned. Hermione’s swoon, the work of death, participates in this odd work of mourning in that it fails to produce closure, and instead engages her own demise as a necessary component of what has happened: she seems to die instead of speaking her grief.

Of course, Hermione does not die, or doesn’t exactly die. This has been one of the major critical engagements with the play; a myriad of interpretations rely on metatheatrical conflation of the audience with Leontes, allowing the audience to “forget” the possibility that Hermione is alive, to enable a critical embrace of the moment of wonder in the last act when her “statue” comes to life. It is not, however, the case that in the world of The Winter’s Tale we are limited to only two possible explanations for the statue, that either Hermione has died and is brought back to life through the sculpture or that Hermione has not died and the sculpture is a great trick. There is a third possibility hinted at in Hermione’s own promise that Perdita will hear the truth of what has taken place:

For thou shalt hear that I,
Knowing by Paulina that the Oracle
Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserved
Myself to see the issue.

(5.3.158-161)

Hermione hints at a longer tenure being hidden away, a possibility that might be shored up by the Second Gentleman’s comment that since Hermione’s death he has noticed Paulina “privately twice or thrice a day… [visit] that removed house.” Like Derrida’s mourner who must partake in

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11 Michael O’Connell, Marion O’Connor, T.G. Bishop, Anthony Dawson and Paul Yachnin all perform this sort of conflation, embracing the reaction to the unknown to contend with the idea that the queen has in fact been alive all this time.
his own death, Hermione may also partake in her death such that her statement to Perdita – that she has “preserved” herself – is the truth in a very fundamental way. Hidden away, she doesn’t participate in the passage of time as the other characters do, the business of living laid aside. Hermione additionally suggests that Perdita, too, has been “preserved” (“Tell me, mine own. Where hast thou been preserved? Where lived?” (5.3.155-56)). To have been preserved seems to mean something other than having lived; those are two separate questions.

In trying to explain Hermione’s “preservation,” Leonard Barkan keeps returning to the improbability of the whole situation, and to the statue. He writes:

Either Hermione died and was resurrected in marble, or else she spent sixteen years in a garden-shed on the grounds of her husband's palace, a solitude broken only by daily visits from her protectress-or jailer?-Paulina, all the while that this same worthy lady was encouraging Leontes into deeper paroxysms of grief over having in effect killed his wife. I restate these familiar perplexities of the play's narrative as a reminder that the sixteen-year absence of Hermione is distinct from the motif of the statue coming to life. Shakespeare can hardly be said to invoke the latter in order to rationalize the former; rather he piles one extreme improbability on top of another. Why could Hermione not have emerged from a conveniently placed convent, like the abbess in The Comedy of Errors; or why could not Paulina have restored Hermione directly, as Prospero restores Alonso and Ferdinand to each other in The Tempest; or why could not Hermione have restored herself, as Rosalind does in As You Like It? Why, in short, run such risks with dramatic verisimilitude? The answer must lie in the fact that the impact and meaning of the play depend upon the significance of a statue that comes to life.12

If one grants such significance to the statue, as it seems right to do, then one has to consider that Hermione and Paulina see significance in turning Hermione into a statue and bringing her back to life. Hermione has died a small death, simultaneously dying with her son and preserving herself for her daughter’s return. Hermione’s long interlude in “that removed house,” absent

from the action of Sicily and Bohemia, functions not just as an opportunity for Paulina to inflict psychological punishment on Leontes but also retrospectively as a long memorialization of the entire dark episode that reaches its apex with Mamillius’ death and Perdita’s banishment. Hermione becomes, quite literally, a monument, to eventually be demonumentalized, to be warmed and reanimated, curious about the passage of time.

The fact of the matter is that this is not difficult to accomplish. Among other things, the play operates on the premise that we begin life as objects, perhaps as prints of our parents, and that our subjectivity is a gift from others. John Lyly’s *Woman in the Moon*, originally performed substantially earlier than *The Winter’s Tale*, a “just so story” that presents itself as explaining why women are the way they are, opens with a presentation of Nature’s Workshop in which the protagonist’s body is one form among many, a vessel waiting to be filled. The *Woman in the Moon*, probably performed between 1590-1595, requires, in performance, a curtained area on stage where various human forms (the small mannequins of the 15th century, perhaps, or ghostly sheets) wait to be infused with life. Pandora’s emergence from the closet is magical, the miraculous animation of a previously lifeless object. Pandora begins the play as an ‘image’, the boy actor inanimate in the closet before he is a character, the character then giving affective direction to the actor. The original printed text includes many very specific stage directions. Lyly was quite particular about what he wanted happening, and the stage directions seem meant to physically depict the advent of feeling on stage, the development of thing into human, as ‘it’ is

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13 This isn’t just Lyly’s idea; later, in 1620, Thomas Tymme publishes “A dialogue philosophicall. Wherein Natures secret closet is opened, and the cause of all motion in nature shewed out of matter and form, tending to mount mans minde from nature to supernaturall and celestial promotion,” a dialogue between “Philadelph” and “Theophrast” that proposes to set “Dame Nature upon the stage of the world.” Philadelph and Theophrast are concerned about where “forme and matter” come from, how Nature fashions forme, and how that forme comes to be filled, depicting something not unlike the workshop in Lyly’s play.

granted life, movement, and at long last speech, all the while ‘strutting about fearfully’, and
‘playing the vixen’ with ‘everything about’.

Pandora is a creature, a created thing, a creation that belongs to Nature but in being called
such – *creatura* – belongs to a huge category of things that, as Justin Kolb puts it, “[straddle] the
line between the creations of God and man, foregrounding the centrality of poesis.”\(^\text{15}\) Pandora
straddles the line between object, a thing drawn from a closet, and subject, suffused with life and
emotion, insofar as in moving from object to performative subject she doesn’t quite leave her
objectness behind. The bulk of the action of Lyly’s play consists of gods jealous at the theft of
their attributes for this female creature; as revenge, they engage in an ongoing repossession of
Pandora, altering her mood and desires swiftly, vindictively, playfully. Pandora is made a
thinking and feeling being and then influenced, in a cruel mimicry of what might be thought of
as normal in the early modern world, or of the way a character is put on by an actor, through
astrological machinations, until her primary characteristic indeed becomes the very mutability
drawn out of her, and exploited. She fares no better at the hands of the men for whom she was
made; as soon as she agrees to marry one of them, the others become intent on enticing her to
infidelity, and when she wavers, they then eviscerate her.\(^\text{16}\) As the planets take turns inflicting
their dominant characteristics on Pandora, her interactions with the other human characters
become increasingly complicated and fraught, in large part because in the chaos of the quick
changes inflicted on her, the men deem her difficult to control. They repeatedly try to reassert

\(^{15}\) Kolb 48

\(^{16}\) In many regards Pandora can be interpreted as a misogynistic ‘explanation’ of what makes women “mutable…/
Fanatical…foolish…/ And stark mad when they cannot have their will” (5.1.329-32). The play can also be read, as
Leah Scragg has read it, as presenting “an essentially innocent victim or puppet, manipulated by forces beyond her
control.”\(^\text{16}\) For someone to be so manipulable requires there to be space in them for the workings of others, what
Kristeva calls lack, an opening for change. The subject has to be *seen as* manipulable, by herself as well as by
others. Pandora’s ascension to the moon is not mandated but rather is predicated on her own identification with the
‘star’, and the fusion of her body with that of the moon enacts the objectification already at work in her
characterization within the play.
control over Pandora, but Lyly is creating a subjectivity based on impulsivity and mutability on stage, and it turns out that this thing is not entirely within the purview of her male cohort – it lies instead at the whim of the astrological forces. When it comes time for Luna to take her turn with Pandora, Pandora instantly goes mad, lunatic. Pandora’s lack of agency is the major feature of the play: she gives only a few speeches without the influence of the planets, and it seems to be through language that power is enacted. The thrust of this situation is a suggestion that affective identity markers – subjective feelings, emotional behavior – are tethered to the body, and can be untethered. The communication of feeling alters Pandora’s character quite rapidly, and bewilderingly to the human figures around her. Pandora becomes quite difficult to read, though language is privileged in her creation.

Pandora is not named until Discord loosens her tongue (1.1.83; the stage directions read “Image speaks/ Pandora kneeling”). In that moment, the image goes from being an ‘it’ to being a ‘she’, and becomes Pandora. Discord’s gift impresses upon us the importance of speech, Pandora’s “best defense.” Later, when making Pandora turns to afflicting her, Saturn speaks, and what he says comes to be:

I shall instil such melancholy mood
As, by corrupting of her purest blood,
Shall first with sullen sorrows cloud her brain,
And then surround her heart with froward care;
She shall be sick with passions of the heart,
Self-willed and tongue-tied, but full fraught with tears.
(1.1.144–9)

Tongue-tied, Pandora moves about the stage in emotional turmoil, striking out and folding in on herself (she ‘hits him on the lips’, ‘strikes his hand’, ‘thrusts her hands in her pocket’, ‘winks and frowns’) (1.1.176-206). She does this in silence, but is “self-willed,” except, of course, that she isn’t; Saturn is in control. The silence that descends on Pandora entails not just a refusal to speak
but an inability to speak. She relies on physical activity as her sole means of communication, and while the play makes it known that this is a difficulty, something confusing, Pandora is also able to maintain clarity in her communication. Similarly, and in the same episode, in the stage direction ‘She plays the vixen’ we are meant to see not just a teasing or shrewish woman, but a display of the difficulty of agency: what makes Pandora shrewish is both Saturn and Pandora’s resistance to Saturn. These displays acknowledge a certain multiplicity of state, and hint at a layering of states of being that begins with the boy actor making himself an inanimate object to be dressed and directed, subverting his own agency, while at the same time allowing Pandora to exist both independently of the boy and because of the boy. Pandora’s character similarly responds to the gods’ interventions with behavior that is both caused by them and self-directed.

The complication of Pandora’s own agency is demonstrated repeatedly as the planetary forces wreak havoc on her expression. When Jupiter next takes his turn to rule Pandora’s thoughts, he makes it his business to “fill her with Ambition and Disdaine”: instantaneously, Pandora declares herself obsessed by rule (2.1.3). “By night my dreams are all of Empery,” she says, though it is far from clear that she has slept (2.1.9). Jupiter, being Jupiter, begins to desire Pandora, but the spell he has cast on Pandora renders her beyond even his reach; she wants not Jupiter’s love, but his promise to make her Empress of everything (something Jupiter certainly wouldn’t mind himself). The thing that is supposed to place her entirely under Jupiter’s control makes her nearly unattainable: when Juno comes, inevitably, to chastise both Jupiter and Pandora, Pandora returns the sceptre Jupiter has offered her – beyond which she lacks only a throne and Ariadne’s diadem – declaring that “in her selfe Pandora stands secure :/ Am I not Nature’s darling and hir pride?” (2.1.68-69) Pandora’s sense of her own power, inflated by Jupiter’s intervention, is only enhanced by Mars’ ascension, the warlike god entreated by Juno to
exacerbate Pandora’s defensiveness and resistance to the shepherds for whom Nature made her. Likewise, when the milder Sol and Venus ascend the stage to take their turns with the girl, they draw on aspects of her personality that are apparently already present, intensifying rather than creating feeling in the character. Pandora is allowed to remain a liminal entity, her extraction from Nature’s Closet kept fresh by continuous affective development. Despite all intervention to the contrary, the essence of female subjectivity that Lyly conjures with this, the first woman, is one of independence. Although Pandora’s affective output is mediated through others’ language, her experience depicted at first as something that is added to her essential being, rather than originating from it, Pandora’s emotional extravagance creates a projection of recognizable inner life on stage. The imposition of besotted love, or anger, or madness, becomes also an explosion of feminine agency, one which finds its central metaphor in Pandora’s own ascension to the moon, where all of these things that have been drawn out as aspects of her character, emotions and positions that, wherever they originate, finally pertain to her, find stability in a new ‘home’.

*The Woman in the Moon* tugs on the central thread of Ovid’s Pygmalion story, in which the ivory maiden is to a great extent already Pygmalion’s lover: he dresses her, caresses her, loves her *before* he asks Venus to make him a woman “similar to” his ivory creation; Venus, in fact, makes him a woman out of his ivory creation. We are, the story insists, made of stuff and never far from it; so it becomes easy to find a woman in a statue, and a statue in a woman.

Much as the epyllia take stories from the *Metamorphoses* and expand upon them, *The Woman in the Moon*’s engagement with the Pygmalion myth supposes that the things that make up a person’s identity are drawn out into visibility from the body over time. The body, in this case, is a blank vessel, not empty but unknown. *The Winter’s Tale*, too, pulls at the thread in which subject and object are so closely intertwined in its repeated assertion that identity is
constructed of things that adhere to a person, the “scanty artifacts” that make one identifiable. In a sense, the relationship between object (the body) and subject (the things that make up identity) works in a rather similar way to the relationship between nature and art as it is portrayed in the second half of the play, the natural body (nature) animated by its identity (art) until one cannot really pull the two apart.

David Young amply demonstrates the ways that art and nature become indistinguishable, how “reality and imagination seem to be intertwining and merging within a benevolent framework of artifice.”¹⁷ This is made possible, he argues, by Time’s chorus, which “offers the reader or spectator a unique perspective, one which partakes of the artist’s attitude toward his materials (a peculiar mixture of engagement and detachment) and a strong sense of relativity – the relativity of genres, laws, fashions, and categories. It spreads a world before us in which anything is possible, but everything is subject to change…”¹⁸ Change is normal, and consequential: the queen’s change of status kills her child; Leontes’ change of tone becomes a peculiarly foreign manner of communicating with his queen that prompts Hermione to declare “You speak a language I understand not”; Perdita’s abandonment leads to an apparently happy and wholesome upbringing; and the revelation of Perdita’s origin produces a romantically satisfying and politically fortuitous union.

While change is normal and consequential, the play also carefully insists that there are important, perhaps more consequential things, that remain constant. When Perdita is abandoned in Bohemia, the precious artifacts that identify her are boxed up beside the prop meant to represent the baby, separated from her by a thin wooden wall. These things can be hidden for

¹⁸ Young, 144-45.
some time, but not properly removed. To have the artifacts that define one’s identity set aside for some period creates something of a break in time, during which another existence takes place.

Trauma theory maintains that the perception of time breaks in the aftermath of great stress, the poetic utterance not actually utterable, the thing unseen and unspoken, identity formation stopped. Freud is particularly attentive to the indirectness of psychic trauma, to the “bewildering” fact that psychological trauma does not occur in direct relation to bodily injury and that in fact the presence of bodily injury argues against lasting, neurotic, traumatic impact. It is instead the subject’s sense of what Cathy Caruth refers to as a “missed experience” that predicts the expression of trauma: that one has survived something, that there has been a breach of safety, a shock “that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind’s experience of time.” While the deaths of Mamillius, Hermione, Antigonus, and the ship’s crew effect such a break in time, the survival of Perdita and her fairy gold attest to something that evades trauma. Caruth points out the tendency of modern trauma theory to focus on the idea that the post-traumatic involves a destructive repetition of the trauma, and redirects this attention to Freud’s observation that it is not just the dream-experience of the trauma that reinvigorates it with affective power, but the experience of waking up from that dream. She writes: “What is enigmatically suggested, that is, is that trauma consists not only in having confronted death but in having survived, precisely, without knowing it.” Even here, the incomprehensibility of survival effects the break in time, much as the push to externalization and visibility transforms. But Perdita and her fairy gold, rescued by the shepherd, seem to completely circumvent traumatic time: without knowing it, they promise a type of survival that offers

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19 Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 12.
20 Caruth, 61.
21 Caruth, 63-64.
continuity. Though the continuity is something the audience is, again, not privy to, the Shepherd offers a way through, and Perdita remains the lost child that will fulfill the prophecy of the Oracle.

Theatre claims the same power to elude time, to eschew and to rearrange it. The premise of the theatrical performance requires the audience to participate in a break in time, during which another existence takes place. When Shakespeare has Time itself appear as a chorus between the two halves of the play, rather than allowing a narrator to produce the transition of sixteen years for the audience, one finds a language of elision in place of passage in this story.

Impute it not a crime
To me or my swift passage, that I slide
O’er sixteen years and leave the growth untried
Of that wide gap, since it is in my power
To o’erthrow law and in one self-born hour
To plant and o’erwhelm custom.

(4.1.4-9)

This is a language of overwhelming evasion; “Let me pass/ The same I am,” Time says, and turns its attention specifically to Perdita who – having grown from a prop-baby during this swift gap – has presumably most changed. She is “now grown in grace/ Equal with wondering,” and the wonder of her growth is that “what of her ensues” seems also to be “what to her adheres,” that what is coming will rely on the audience understanding that Perdita may be dressed as a shepherd’s daughter but she is still the Perdita of Sicilia, and this – this sense of continuation – is “the argument of Time” (4.1.25-29). This violation of temporality is delightful, even beautiful, and represents a peaceful interlude. If Time here engages in a bit of recursive reconstruction in focusing on what “adheres” to Perdita, or slips sixteen years through with a few lines, it happens “As you had slept between,” and were awakened to “the glistening of this present” (4.1.13-14). Time’s magic mirrors the temporal gap that sometimes occurs with trauma, and redeems that
traumatic mischronology. The redemption has Time bear witness “To the freshest things now reigning”; Time introduces a period of growth in the green world of Bohemia (4.1.13). As Time turns to the things that “adhere” to Perdita, he asks that the audience allow his “argument” to stand, “if ever you have spent time worse ere now;/ If never, yet that Time himself doth say/ He wishes earnestly you never may,” at the end of his speech readmitting the possibility of “worse” time so that we are never without it. The things that “adhere” transcend the pleasant and the traumatic, and join the two halves of the play.

Perhaps it is “what to her adheres” – her father’s paranoia about social transgression, her mother’s honor – that causes Perdita’s harsh resistance to “gillyvors,” the flowers she calls bastards, her nervousness about the idea of grafting and about movement between social stations. Importantly, whatever has to her adhered has done so in the absence of narration, in fact has not needed narration, and so Perdita has no explanation for her mistrust of makeup and particolored flowers, or for her discomfort with Prince Florizel’s insistent attraction to her. She has, it turns out, no idea that the shepherd has adopted her. Perdita has things that she doesn’t even know she has: she has a name given by her mother, a name that means ‘loss’, and, eventually, her box of scanty artifacts. The shepherd produces the box and letter that were left next to the baby-prop to spare his adopted daughter punishment and, he hopes, to make her happy, so that her marriage to Florizel can be sanctioned. But the presentation of the box and letter doesn’t actually occur until the couple have already reached Sicilia (because the play has all but given up on explaining), where Perdita is quickly reunited with Leontes. As is the case with Pygmalion’s creation and with Myrrha, there is a twist of inappropriate desire as Leontes seems to find Hermione in his daughter – though this time, there is no such thing as “too much.” In the family drama that belongs particularly to her family of origin, Perdita is the lost thing that has been found, as
though her entire life to this point were some sort of other, inconsequential experience. The actual changing over of Perdita’s life is not something we are privy to. It happens between scenes, in a closed court; the audience gleans second-hand from the First Gentleman, who makes “a broken delivery of the business” in his report, that Perdita’s intermission as a shepherdess is ended, seemingly in silence, the unspeakability of the traumatic reappropriated to the wonder of the scene, where once again joy and sorrow are joined together:

the changes I perceived in the king and Camillo were very notes of admiration: they seemed almost, with staring on one another, to tear the cases of their eyes; there was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture; they looked as they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed: a notable passion of wonder appeared in them; but the wisest beholder, that knew no more but seeing, could not say if the importance were joy or sorrow; but in the extremity of the one, it must needs be. (5.2.10-19)

In fact, there is both a world ransomed, and an understanding of the world destroyed, in the reclamation of Perdita: the myth of her death is undone and Leontes’ child is returned. The Steward’s account, the one that tells those gathered that they have “lost a sight, which was to be seen,/ cannot be spoken of,” describes both the evidence given for Perdita’s identity and the meeting of Leontes and Polixenes. As regards the first, he tells them about Hermione’s mantle, “her jewel about the neck of it,” the letters that Antigonus left attesting to Perdita’s heritage, and the things that adhere to her:

the majesty of the creature in resemblance of the mother, the affection of nobleness which nature shows above her breeding, and many other evidences proclaim her with all certainty to be the king's daughter. (5.2.35-39)
The kings’ reunion, he says, took place “in such a manner that it seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them, for their joy waded in tears” (5.2.43-44). The world is changed in near silence:

There was casting up of eyes,
holding up of hands, with countenances of such
distraction that they were to be known by garment,
not by favour.

(5.2.45-48)

Perdita’s earlier worry over the propriety of costuming herself as a queen for the spring festival, revealed to in actuality be quite appropriate to her true identity, reappears here: the kings so distraught that they are recognizable only by their clothing, reaching for each other with teard-blurred eyes, in fact rely upon costuming – their own, and Hermione’s mantle – to produce proof of identity. The gentlemen of Act 5 Scene 2 speak of “such a deal of wonder” breaking out of these quiet, private encounters that “who was most marble there changed/ colour,” the coloration of the stoic producing a close foreshadowing of the play’s last miracle.

Perdita has always been a figure of loss, and she, experiencing the loss of her mother anew, asks to be taken to see Hermione’s statue. The Winter’s Tale comes in its conclusion to a heightened emotional state in which the audience is necessarily complicit. Paulina’s orchestration of the event includes her direction of Leontes. “I like your silence, it the more shows off/ Your wonder,” she says, “but yet speak; first you, my liege.” Paulina’s demand that Leontes speak produces a reverse elegy: praise of Hermione as though she was alive, not only of her physical beauty but of her character, rather than a memorialization. This speech ascends to the magical as Perdita kneels and asks the statue’s blessing, and Leontes continues to stare, transfixed. Perhaps Leontes’ speech is magical as Paulina’s is: he confirms in his praise of Hermione the things that would to her adhere, the majesty and tenderness of her character, and confirming this version of Hermione makes way for Paulina to urge Hermione back to life.
When Hermione awakens, brought to life by Paulina’s word, she speaks only to Perdita:

You gods, look down  
And from your sacred vials pour your graces  
Upon my daughter's head! Tell me, mine own.  
Where hast thou been preserved? where lived? how found  
Thy father's court? for thou shalt hear that I,  
Knowing by Paulina that the oracle  
Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserved  
Myself to see the issue.

(5.3.122-28)

Her language is precise. She has “preserved” herself, ontological instability giving way to a stasis bred of the peculiar sense of time allowed by trauma, the word of the Oracle giving her space where she had no language left to provide space for herself. Hermione suggests in this little speech that she has just been waiting: waiting for her daughter, ‘keeping’ herself only for the advent of Perdita’s return, her identity as ‘mother’ something to which she attaches her will to live. “Knowing by Paulina” that there was hope Perdita “wast in being,” Hermione “preserved” herself.

There is no such relational identity for Pandora to cling to – her time as “wife” is brief and troubled – but Lyly’s play is similarly troubled by the reflection of one character’s emotional state in another, by mutability ordered by an affective time. Without the relational identity to “preserve” her, Pandora turns to the very mutability that has driven her mad, taking up residence with Luna, dedicating herself to cyclical change. In both cases – Pandora’s and Hermione’s – these are safe identities (Luna, mother), free from erotic desire, once Gunophilus is safely transformed into a tree. The animated women come to rather different ends, and those ends offer commentary on the animation of the statue: our greatest hope, that the things we have lost will be returned to us, that our dead will awaken, comes to fruition in The Winter’s Tale. In The Woman in the Moon, the animation of Pandora comes at an expense: her attributes are stolen
from the planets, something already living was forced to give up a piece of its life to secure
Pandora’s existence. Her ascent to Luna, then, not only saves her but provides an appropriate
restoration of what makes up Pandora to the sky.

The cost of this solution is the objectification of the human. “Cost,” here, only indicating
the give and take at work in the transformation. Pandora’s ascent to Luna, her becoming part of
Luna, is her own choice. This planetary alliance doesn’t quite make Pandora a statue, but it does
preserve her – and one imagines this works just as well as Hermione’s statue worked for her
preservation, the stony thing a place to keep what is most precious.
The mother’s body tends to be a site of special concern. Hermione’s transformation from statue to breathing, moving, speaking person recalls the Pygmalion myth; one should also pause to consider her transformation into the statue. Paulina tells a good story about a famous Italian artist laboring over the creation of the statue, but the impulse to have Hermione play a statue at all should give us pause. Hermione dies of maternal grief, sharing the death of her children, and she is later resurrected, passing from death to life by means of an oddly vivid transitional status, as a polychrome statue. Hermione’s ability to share the death of her children is one much desired in other instances of maternal grief. In many poems written by grieving women, the mother longs to share the death of her children, and all but does so. Ann Cecil imagines dying of grief, like Niobe, when she writes in memorial of her dead son:

Amphion’s wife was turned to a rocke.
How well I had beene, had I had such adventure,
For then I might againe have been the Sepulcure,
Of him that I bare in mee, so long ago.¹

Cecil greatly desires a sepulchral transformation, but the passage from life into monumentality is unavailable to her. She confirms this in dialogue with death, when she asks death to “end my sorrow” but reports that instead

dead makes mee aunswere Madame, cease these mones:
My force is but on bodies of blood and bones:
And that of yours, is no more now, but a shadow.

¹ See Appendix for a full reproduction of Anne Cecil’s sonnet sequence.
Grief has made her ghostly, and lent her an intermediate status between living and dead. She is not quite tomb-like enough to become the stony monument sheaspirestobe in seeking to create a space for her child.

That imagined space for accommodating the dead in women’s writing on loss often seems stony. The sonnets attributed to Anne Cecil in John Southern’s Pandora are called “Epytaphs,” and it is fitting to think of these poems as engraved or inscribed: the idea imparts a sense of physicality to sonnets which themselves often turn to the physical in commemorating the loss of Cecil’s child. The poems make everything material; the child is marble and time has a hungry mouth; the speaker implicitly disclaims her body but asks to be remade into something more permanent. The capacity of the grave to hold is figured as being like that of the mother’s body, or the mother’s body is figured as being like a grave, and Cecil’s project is to some extent about reducing the differences between those two things. The basis of this project is a type of mourning that differs substantially from what is proper and ‘normal’, from what might be deemed particularly feminine, and from the problems with this type of mourning identified in the polemics and religious doctrine of the period. The identification of extended mourning as feminine and inappropriate is exactly what Gertrude and Claudius describe in Hamlet: Gertrude, somewhat more gently than her new husband, first tries to remind Hamlet that the loss of his father is “common”:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Do not forever with thy vailed lids} \\
\text{Seek for thy noble father in the dust.} \\
\text{Thou knowst ‘tis common: all that lives must die,} \\
\text{Passing through nature to eternity.} \ (1.2.72-75)
\end{align*}
\]

Claudius, meanwhile, frustrated with his nephew, urges Hamlet to “throw off” his “unmanly grief” (1.2.98). The critique of Hamlet is exactly that levelled at women’s mourning: that it is overly emotive, that it continues too long, that it fails to recognize death as being part of a proper
order of events, and as belonging to the progress of the Christian soul. Anne Cecil is, however, well-situated within a tradition of women’s lamentation that makes of problematic mourning practices a solution.

Cecil’s version of the solution is to make a monumental vessel of herself, and the epitaphs’ attachment to the body goes some distance to enacting that transformation by writing it. The child has already been made into something else; in the first sonnet, the speaker reports that Venus’ tears make “almost, alive, the Marble, of my child” (1.8). The child is still her child but has also become an object, almost alive in appearance, stony in composition. The mother, meanwhile, describes an evocative attachment to the child, a situation in which what is good in her resides with the child in much the same way that she longs to physically encapsulate him. That goodness “Is gone : for t’twas in him and no other where:/ And well though mine eies run downe like fountains here/ The stone wil not speak yet, that doth it inclose” (2.6-8). The “stone” refers primarily to the mother’s body, as part of her identification with Niobe – mute, though, and enclosing the precious thing tentatively. The stone also recalls the marble child described in the previous sonnet, drawing the two bodies into close companionship and intensifying the kinship of mother and child in much the same way that death intensifies that kinship in The Winter’s Tale.

When Anne Cecil’s maternal speaker asserts that she was and longs again to be a sepulcher, she both describes herself as a hollow enclosure (playing on the space of the womb, filled and emptied and filled again), and draws a material connection to her dead child. The child, all body in death, practically becomes his memorial stone, and outside of the mother’s
control. The dead’s indeterminacy as subject or object reflects their intermediate spiritual state and allows the dead to inhabit the composite space where metamorphosed characters often live, Kristeva’s abject, which “does not respect borders, positions, rules.” The mourner’s empathetic relationship with the deceased, and the feminine failure to moderate that empathy with faith, results in a similarly liminal and composite status for the mourner. The disconsolate mother is abject specifically in her disregard for “borders, positions, rules,” for her self-appointment as a go-between, conduit, and container for the dead child that she seeks to retain. She shares the metaphorical stone space with her child, argues with Venus for possession of him in the first sonnet, and in the third sonnet becomes “a second Promēt,” passing her life, warmth, wetness, and happiness back to the baby. This passage does not guarantee his resurrection, however; rather, the speaker specifies that it is a means of joining the child. This erosion of a firm boundary between living and dead, person and thing produces an obscure middle space – located neither by singular subject nor by object – that the mourner not only occupies but desires to occupy in lamentations. The not entirely compatible impulses to become like the dead and to preserve the dead rise naturally during the melancholy of mourning, but also in response to what grief is supposed to be.

The extravagant anguish of these poems contrasts with the restrained grief of elegy. Even poems expressing the magnitude of paternal loss – Ben Jonson’s “On my First Son,” for example – take care to offer some form of consolation, what Peter M. Sacks refers to as the “enforced accommodation between the mourning self on the one hand and the very words of grief and

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fictions of consolation on the other.” 4 In proper elegy, that is, grief is processed and gives way to consolation. Such “enforced accommodation” ends the solitary exclusivity of intensive mourning and urges the mourner to resume a social role. Though it might provide some comfort, lamentation, very much a women’s form, seems to shun the consolation of proper elegy. In the case of these poems, consolation is absent to such an extent that the speaker in fact rejects the idea of compensatory comfort in favor of a metamorphosis intended to facilitate an unending mourning. Lamentation effectively fails to do what Freud terms the “work of mourning,” work that we often imagine the elegy doing. This work ought to result in adaptation sufficient to return one to normal life. Instead, the adaptation that occurs through lamentation pushes the mourner “beyond” the speakable. In declaring silence, outwardly dismissing articulation while still speaking, the mourner is able to maintain a relationship with the dead, to render time static, and to point to an inner situation where she intends to reside with her dead. This is not a real silence but rather constructs the separate chronotope within which she intends to exist, the living crypt she plans to inhabit. 5 If elegy as a genre is meant to contain grief, lamentation contains the dead. 6

5 Bakhtin gives “the name chronotope [literally, ‘space time’] to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (84). M.M. Bakhtin, “Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel” in The Dialogic Imagination (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84-258.
6 The impact of this particular engagement with grief is not limited to female characters and writers; one can point to male characters and writers who proceed similarly through expressions of loss. Hamlet loses sense of normal time quickly in the wake of his father’s death, and his mother’s wedding; his father “but two months dead – nay, not so much, not two -,” quickly is declared dead “within a month!,” or only “A little month,” a matter of weeks (1.2.136-51). The Ghost’s visitation serves only to enhance the extent to which time is already out of joint for Hamlet, and this understanding is compounded by Ophelia’s revelation during the play within the play that the King has been dead at least two months. But it remains the case that the emotive, verbose outpouring of a lament is characterized in the period as a feminine activity – and in fact, Hamlet’s uncle scolds him for persevering “In obstinate condoloment… a course/ Of impious stubbornness; ’tis unmanly grief,” he says, as if to put an end to Hamlet’s sadness (1.2.91-2).
Often, the writer, lamenting, remarks on her own emotional extravagance, as Hester Pulter does in “Upon the Death of my Dear and Lovely Daughter, J.P.” Pulter reports that it has been two years since her daughter’s death,

Since she laid down her milky limbs on earth,
Which, dying, gave her virgin soul new birth.
Yet still my heart is overwhelmed with grief,
And tears (alas) gives sorrow no relief.
(11-14)

Pulter finds herself searching for some expression that might grant relief, and identifies the sorrow she feels at the loss of her child with “sad Philomel,” adopting the Petrarchan convention of the mourning nightingale in a way that emphasizes her sense that Jane was taken from her (15). For two springs Philomel has sung her “mortifying sonnets” (16),

Since all devouring death on her took seizure,
And Tellus’ womb involved so rich a treasure.
Yet still my heart is overwhelmed with grief,
And time nor tears will give my woes relief.
(19-22)

The imagery Pulter uses, of the earth, womblike, devouring her daughter, is imagery that other writers use to describe what they wish their own bodies might do: reabsorbing the beloved child. Pulter creates a refrain out of her ongoing anguish, even when acknowledging the “endless glory” that Jane’s soul has likely been brought to (34). “Yet my afflicted, sad, forsaken soul/ For her in tears and ashes still doth roll,” she writes, beating that refrain until she resolves that her heart has gone to heaven with Jane, and that “Her soul being seated in her place of birth,/ I turned a Niobe as she turned earth” (35-36; 49-50). No other response, Pulter finds, despite all pressure to the contrary, is sufficient.

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7 This text is from “Version A” of the poem, as edited by Elizabeth Kolkovich for The Pulter Project. Leah Knight and Wendy Wall, gen. eds., The Pulter Project: Poet in the Making (2018), http://pulterproject.northwestern.edu.
Juliana Schiesari’s work on “the Symbolics of Loss” responds to the tension between the vocal, outwardly emotional, feminine mourner and the social critique of her affective response. It is the valuation of gendered sadness and loss in Renaissance literature that concerns Schiesari: where men regard themselves and are regarded as having a productive melancholia that enhances their creative output and credentials, women are merely depressed.\(^8\) The inevitability of this relative devaluation comes about, as Schiesari sees it, through plain phallocentrism, where the feminine is at once the desired and the devalued object.\(^9\) But in these lamentations, the very thingliness of the mourner is what the mother’s lamentation renders apparent and then lays claim to in her drive to self-objectification; the desire to be reduced to the very essence of her loss entrenches in what Schiesari terms “hyper-exclusivity,” withdrawing from the world to exist in uninterrupted grief in much the same way that Lacan describes the melancholic as “a self split against itself, fleeing the social into a perpetual dialogue with its own Imaginary… Such a morbid turning-in on itself, however,” he writes, “frustrates the implicit desire for a fusion of selfhood because a distinction is thereby established between the self and its objectification of itself.”\(^10\) Such a definition, embraced by many indebted to Lacan (including Schiesari), assumes a desire for fusion of selfhood or unification of the subject that simply is not present in early modern considerations of loss and grief. It seems, rather, that the maternal mourners present a desire for hyperexclusivity and self-objectification that rivals any cultural pressure to the contrary.\(^11\)

\(^{9}\) Schiesari, 9.
\(^{10}\) Schiesari, 8.
\(^{11}\) The scaffolding for this desired outcome is the alternative time, what Derrida calls a “hauntology,” the prolonged duration of the most intensive grieving period.
Early modern religious leaders and thinkers think of grief as a transitory type of melancholy brought about by a particular event. Robert Burton proposes that melancholia underpins everything with its promise of mortality, and suggests that prolonged mourning is melancholia inappropriately breaking into the physical world, the constant unconscious presence of mortality made painfully obvious by loss. When Burton writes that melancholy is “the character of mortality,” he also places strictures on it: melancholia is ideally to remain bound by “moderation” and by “just reason.” Freud similarly takes up the distinction between normative and immoderate grief in “Mourning and Melancholia,” the 1917 essay in which he suggests a lengthy period of adjustment (often two to three years) during which a person ought to register their loss of, or rejection by, a person or object before letting go of the sorrow. For Freud, the extreme depression of melancholy indicates, as in Burton’s description, an inability to let go, an internalization of the love object. In this, again, early modern women’s lamentation reaches outside of what ought to be acceptable, inviting the character of mortality implicit in cradlesongs and baptisms to become manifest in them through an embrace of an inability to let go and an internalization of the love object.

Cecil’s wish to be her child’s sepulcher makes such

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12 Burton’s own definition of the affect is expansive: “Melancholy, the subject of our present discourse, is either in disposition or in habit. In disposition, is that transitory Melancholy which goes and comes upon every small occasion of sorrow, need, sickness, trouble, fear, grief, passion, or perturbation of the mind, any manner of care, discontent, or thought, which causes anguish, dulness, heaviness and vexation of spirit, any ways opposite to pleasure, mirth, joy, delight, causing forwardness in us, or a dislike…. from these melancholy dispositions no man living is free, no Stoic, none so wise, none so happy, none so patient, so generous, so godly, so divine, that can vindicate himself; so well-composed, but more or less, some time or other, he feels the smart of it. Melancholy in this sense is the character of Mortality... This Melancholy of which we are to treat, is a habit, a serious ailment, a settled humour, as Aurelianus and others call it, not errant, but fixed: and as it was long increasing, so, now being (pleasant or painful) grown to a habit, it will hardly be removed.” Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicholas K. Kiessling, and Rhonda L. Blair, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989-1994), 1.1.5.

13 Barbara Hanawalt reminds us that “Mary is depicted comforting the infant Jesus while contemplating his death on the cross. Other children were comforted with songs of impending doom: Child, if betide thou shalt thrive and thee [prosper];/ Think thou was a-fostred upon they modres kness;/ Even have synde in thyn herte of tho thynges three – / Wan thou comest, whan thou art, and what shal come of thee.” (*Growing up in Medieval London: the Experience of Childhood in History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 61-2).
internalization natural, provides a space for it, and supplants salvation. Other writers acknowledge and then reject either appropriate mourning practices or the consolation of the soul’s progress toward heaven; Katherine Philips’ lamentation for her stepdaughter, Frances, acknowledges the girl’s salvation and refuses to be repaired by that knowledge. The poem itself provides Philips with a means of displaying and transgressing the “bounds of Grief” (5). She writes explicitly about emotional restraint in the early lines of the poem, gesturing towards an acceptance of restraint when she writes “I’ll try if I can weep in numbers now,” as though by describing Frances’ sweetness, charms, and beauty she is performing a sort of calculus of grief (6). She finds, though, that “There is no pity in the stupid grave” and, finally, the verse becomes a reflection of her own objectification (14). The poem accomplishes this first by considering the physical damage wrought by excessive sadness as Philips turns away from the consolation of salvation:

But if to thy blest soul my grief appears,  
Forgive and pity these injurious tears:  
Inpute them to Affection’s sad excess,  
Which will not yield to Nature’s tenderness.  

The mother’s refusal to be consoled, or to admit any error in that refusal, is one that does not merely run contrary to the mainstay of early modern approaches to loss that grief must be moderate. The “injurious tears” that Philips cries upon remembering Frances do not just remind her of the girl; they turn Philips into a permanent repository of the girl’s memory:

But I’ll resign, to follow thee as fast  
As my unhappy minutes will make me haste.  
Till when the fresh remembrances of thee  
Shall be my Emblems of Mortality.  
For such loss as this (bright Soul!) is not

Ever to be repaired, or forgot.

(83-88)

In rehearsing her own version of “the lord giveth and the lord taketh away,” Philips reproduces appropriate emotional boundaries only to insist that there is no restraint possible for maternal grief. This latter assertion, as a secondary manipulation of normalized cultural ideas about the excessive feminine, declines both consolation and restraint, harnesses excess and codifies it, making of the excess itself a memorial. Frances was Katherine Philips’ stepdaughter, and Philips became her mother when Frances was just a baby. There is no attempt to create a new pregnancy in the wake of Frances’ death, but Philips comes as close as possible: “I thought thee too much mine,” she writes, and resolves to follow Frances quickly, the memento mori of the girl’s memories urging her on (82).

Much scholarship regarding early modern women has relied on the recovery of historical documents — often records of legal proceedings against garrulous women — to reaffirm the ideal of the silent woman in early modern England and active cultivation of that ideal. Yet these lamentations present women who are seldom without words. The legal proceedings and comportment books seem to be prescriptive rather than descriptive, as Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford’s recent historical study also indicates. Mendelson and Crawford make particular note of the extent to which women’s discourse is highly contextualized, in part to protect the discourse from negative construction by observers, and in part because women themselves link their speech and their written composition to places belonging to women: “Female discourse was often linked to places where women worked or gathered, such as childbirth and church, dairy and bakehouse, town conduit and market. Moreover, the utility and sheer spontaneity of women’s rhetorical styles encouraged them to maintain these traditions within the privacy of a self-contained feminine world. The more vigorously women’s oral culture
flourished, the less need anyone felt to write it down or to display its treasures to an outside audience.” Mendelson and Crawford’s observation that “as far as the records can take us” women adapted their speech in mixed company to conform to collective understandings of appropriate modesty is hardly revelatory, but the sort of contextualization Mendelson and Crawford point to is one that crosses socioeconomic lines; while we tend to segregate women by social class when examining “women’s work,” it is also the case that both aristocratic and working-class women directed much of their labor to the work of marriage, birth, and death.

The writing we have from female authors reflects the existence of a cross-class “women’s world,” or a culture within a culture, that embraces women’s roles at lifecycle events, and that has increasingly been deemed worth elucidating by contemporary scholarship. The ongoing, extensive discourse during the early modern period that sought to define, categorize, and “know” woman through medical, scientific, legal, and political frameworks begins work that the poems simply continue. Such extensive definition and categorization of a thing emphasizes its otherness, and maintains the distinction between normative and non-normative. In this sense, the feminine is already an object, a thing to be examined, and an entity to be understood as like-but-

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15 “In early modern Wales, where many women composed poetry and shared it with friends, the feminine bardic tradition was so robust that even those female poets who were able to write did not transcribe their poetry, but used literate skills for utilitarian purposes” (213). *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
16 Barbara Harris, writing about the lives of aristocratic women, notes that “Cumulatively, the responsibilities...aristocratic women assumed and carried out as wives, mothers, and widows constituted female careers that had as much political and economic as domestic importance and were as crucial to the survival and prosperity of their families and class as the careers of their male kin.” (Barbara J. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550 : Marriage and Family, Property and Careers*. (Oxford University Press, 2002), 5). But working class women were wives, mothers, and widows as well; in *Women’s Work*, Michelle M. Dowd focuses on representations of the increasingly diverse labor taken on by women, and the impulse in literature to depict that diversification of labor as an element of increased social mobility while also offering “a reassuring fantasy of social order to those who might be concerned about women’s ambiguous position within a volatile service economy” by maintaining a focus on the female subject as daughter, sister, wife, and mother (Michelle M. Dowd, *Women’s Work in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2). Working class women were more obviously engaged with the world outside their homes, out of necessity, but the practical import of their work does not eclipse women’s roles within their households, even in the popular imagination.
17 Mendelson and Crawford, 15.
not-like. At the crux of the distinction made between men and women is the feminine difficulty with moderation: the female body easily violates its own boundaries, and so does her emotional engagement. Anne Lake Prescott sums this up as “the common, if hardly universal, understanding of the female body as secret and transgressive, containing a mysterious womb that can nevertheless be cut open and revealed as empty. The womb, in such a view, is a place of faithless imaginings, a source of interruptions or detours in patrilineal descent.” It is in some regard because of her femininity that the maternal mourner is able (and desires) to make her grief into a form that is both secreted away and made available to the listener or reader. To that end, the feminine voice is used in the text to reaffirm diachronic processes of rupture and continuity, expansion and contraction, and individual and communal affective discourses that are embraced as part of women’s alterity.

To be always an other, to have a separate existence within the predominant social structure, is to fulfill a role that often operates at thresholds. It makes some sense, then, that birth and death, the ushering in and seeing out, in some sense ‘belonged’ to women, who conducted


\[19\] The birthing room – muffled, warm, and dim – recreates the womb’s environment for the duration of labor and lying-in. Standard medical recommendation specifies that this is because cold air is “an enemy of the spermatical parts” (presumably still at work in the child), and there is also a religious justification to be found in Psalm 121, which promises that “the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.” But closing off the room is also done for reasons that are neither medical nor religious. The isolation prevents the mother’s distraction, as well as the entry of evil spirits. This environment also facilitates the continuation of a specific intimacy between the mother and the neonate, to both of whom the real potential of death is so close that we have many diary entries recording women’s preparations for birth being preparations for death, as well: the winding cloth is to be kept close at hand. And the intimacy of the childbed is one that extends beyond the mother and baby to a community of women, all of whom, David Cressy writes, share the experience of such proximity to death. The birthing room, site of the ritual and drama of physical deliverance, bars entry to light, air, and men, but admits women, first midwives and attendants, and later – if all goes well enough – the gossips who come to keep company with the mother.

Various charms were used to keep the devil away, regardless of the Reformation’s official disavowal of such practices. Midwives often provided warm restorative drinks and herbal concoctions, though several medical texts advise against imbibing hot beverages for fear of disrupting humoral balance. Most of these practices could find a basis in medical or religious traditions if challenged, but belong primarily to an alternative female culture whose folkways transcend socioeconomic differences, and whose practices are veiled by its relationship to the wider social world. To identify early modern women and their work as separate and other is to acknowledge something fundamental to the cultural understanding of what women were.
the physical and emotional labor of those events behind closed doors, in semi-public manner, straddling the public and private worlds, straddling, even, the boundaries of their own bodies and voices.\textsuperscript{20} The primary ritual of childbed, the severing of the physical tie between mother and neonate, finds its echo in the severing of emotional connection wrought by death. To some extent death necessarily is less private and intimate; presumably the deceased leaves behind more than one mourner, and certainly the ‘tie’ being severed lacks the visceral stress of the midwife’s knife breaking through the navel string. It is simply an extension of this association for a mourning mother to imagine reabsorbing her child, as though working backwards through the pain of delivery to the relative safety of pregnancy, reasserting their connection through the emotional workings of her own body.

Mary Carey’s \textit{Upon the sight of my abortive birth} records both birth and death in memorializing an early pregnancy loss. The poem begins as what might be considered an example of a more appropriately religious response – she assumes responsibility for her miscarriage and declares her affection for God as the instrument of her punishment – and still Carey identifies so extensively with the “dead formless babe” that she describes her heart, “dead…in every thinge” as resembling the “dead frute” (13, 20-1). Carey links herself to the miscarried fetus, which at the beginning of the poem is added to God’s chorus, giving him “one more;/ To Praise him in the heavens,” through the heart (8). By the end of the lament, her heart has not so much miscarried as it has been miscarried, and so followed the embryo to heaven:

\begin{quote}

to Praise him in the heavens,
\end{quote}

\footnote{Regarding women’s roles during death, Mendelson and Crawford report: “Deathbed scenes were dominated by women. It was women who watched with the dying and laid out the bodies after death” (195). Their sources for this are drawn largely from personal diaries and epistles, as well as from wills that sometimes include instructions for how a body ought to be treated and arranged after death. Women were also involved in their own funeral arrangements (though aristocratic funerals fell under the control of the College of Heralds). Most often this involvement appears as a set of instructions that attempts to avoid embalming; women commonly requested a speedy burial to prevent exposure of their bodies to the gaze of a stranger. The will might also indicate the text to be used for the funeral sermon (Mendelson and Crawford, 198-9).}
“since my hart thou’st lifted up to the;/ amend it Lord; & keepe it still with thee:” (46). Mary Carey has at least two other such lamentations for two other deceased children, and in all of these poems, the stated acceptance of the losses of six of her nine children also belies a bold claim in her writing: she assumes a reciprocal relationship with God, in which her children will be and already have been equally exchanged for the sacrifice of Christ. In 1650, commemorating the death of her son Robert, Carey addresses the divine directly, asking that in his capacity as a parent God “Change with me; doe as I have done / Give me thy all; Even thy deare sonne” (“Wretten by me att the same tym; on the death of my 4th & only Child, Robert Payler” 7-8).

Her production of children becomes an activity through which she not only expresses devotion, but engages with God in a private negotiation for redemption. Carey achieves an identification of pregnancy with sacrifice by stating her own submission, even her joy, at God’s receipt of another soul. But having declared her acceptance of her miscarriage, Carey then confronts God in Upon the sight of my abortive birth with a vehemence that goes unanswered and so effectively lingers. Why, she wants to know, has God needed to punish her? Midway through the poem she imagines God’s explanation to her, though Carey also locates the source of the response within herself (“Methinks I hear God’s voice, this is thy sinne,/ And Conscience justifies the same within” (38)). There is an equation made between her spiritual disease and reproductive difficulty:

Thou often dost present me with dead frute;
why should not my returns, thy presents sute:
Dead dutys; prayers; praises thou dost bring,
affections dead; dead hart in every thinge:
In hearing; reading; Conference; Meditation;
in acting graces & in Conversation:
(20-22)

The ‘conversation’ she records in this section reproduces the general emotional thrust of the poem, responding in the beginning with an appropriately humble answer (she accepts this as true
and begs forgiveness), but within the same line containing her outright acceptance, she portrays herself as an empty thing to be filled, “Nothing Lord; but what thou makest mee” (29). Like the “Embrioe, voyd of life, and feature,” she declares herself yet unformed and unquickened, a “nothingnesse” through and despite her experience (1, 60). It is in fact God’s job to “quicken” her, and the last twelve lines, a full third of the poem, beg God to purge the speaker and re-fill her with life. Carey’s identification with the emptiness and void of the embryo emphasizes her own malleable state, and Carey’s need for God to quicken her emphasizes the extent to which she is no longer quite living, as though the beating repetition of “dead” at the center of the poem has overtaken her, the heartbeat dictating the rhythm of her address, alongside the infant. She asks God to “Lett not my hart, (as doth my wombe) miscarrie; but precious meanes received, lett it tarie; Till it be form’d;” like a child in the womb (37-8). Carey imagines her heart being molded in “Gospel shape,” becoming a “pleasant frute,” the amendment bringing her to both life and faith, and recreating the pregnancy. The implication that the present unformedness of her heart has removed her in some way from realized life also suggests a continued meditation on the moribund failure of faith that has both produced Carey’s miscarriage, and occasioned the composition of her poem. While the poem in part works through and records the reciprocal relationship she fashions with God, it articulates the spiritual illness that distinguishes despair and melancholia.

The censure that grieving women receive is based on the idea that the good soul should be immediately assumed to heaven. In the absence of purgatory, there is no need for intercessory prayer or, indeed, for prolonged mourning. The injunction against performing emotional grief appears in numerous commentaries, church documents, and miscellaneous pieces of literature. In his gospel commentaries, Calvin warns that too much passion in grieving is dangerous because it
causes one to “rush on unrestrainedly and immoderately,” and because “the vanity of our mind makes us sorrow or grieve over trifles, or for no reason at all, because we are too much devoted to the world” (12). In The Sicke Manne’s Salve, Thomas Becon also suggests, “Christians ought to rejoice when any of the faithful be called from this vale of misery unto the glorious Kingdom of God” (124). Public weeping in general was in some way Catholic, and Patricia Phillippy has argued that “male reformers stress[ed] the ineffectualness of Catholic lamentation-by casting it as both excessive and feminine.”

Orthodoxy cautions women to restrain their tendency to intemperate excess, and does so through the voice of the church, the voice of properly self-chastising mother, and even the voice of the child as though to draw support from as many rhetorical influences as possible. Alice Thornton describes her daughter Betty’s “good death” in 1656, recording that the child “cryed in her language” a desire to join her heavenly father. Thornton also records being chastised by her

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21 Patricia Phillippy, Women, Death, and Literature in Post-Reformation England. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9; The striking presentation of these ideas in Spenser’s A View of the Present State of Ireland echoes many of these ideas and expands on them. Eudoxus’ argument that the objectionable keening Irenius describes is the heritage of the Britons, too, is revealed as an issue of control when Irenius insists that such immoderate practices belong only to those among the English who are not yet properly reformed. It is also specifically feminine; though the lamentations heard at Irish burials are not specifically ascribed to women in Spenser’s dialogue between Eudoxus and Irenius, they are characterized as being both effeminate and barbaric.21 Calling it heathenish and unmeasured, Irenius compares Irish lamentation to the foreignness of the Spanish, the Moores, the Scythians, and finally identifies it as an ancient custom practiced by people who also drink or wear the blood of their dead. Feminine mourners become monstrous, animalistic, and mad.21 Their consuming grief is both generative in its outpouring of sound, and degenerative in its dissolution of the mourner’s separation from the dead. Maintaining what was often described as an excessive mourning, a mourning less tolerated in a post-Reformation England that associates wailing with popishness, an England that no longer provides the idea of Purgatory as an accessible outlet for such a connection, results in what Katherine Goodland has referred to as a “cultural angst” over the assimilation of a different modality of mourning into the social fabric of early modern England. The issue with the immoderate wailing central to the critique in Spenser’s View is twofold. In part, the argument against expressive grief derives from an assertion that the practice has heathenish (that is, non-Protestant) origins. More specifically, though, keening is a broad failure of faith: “For it is the manner of all Paganes and infidelles to be intemperate in their waylinges of their dead, for that they had no faythe nor hope of salvacon.” The elegist often ventures this observation of himself before stoically beginning the process of letting go of his sorrow. (Edmund Spenser, A View of the Present State of Ireland in The Complete Works, a variorum edition, vol. 9 (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1949), 92-105).
daughter as she despairs over the loss of her son.²² The voice of the child is a particularly potent means of restraint, and Thornton says that “I did much condemne myselfe, being instructed by the mouth of one of my owne children.”²³

More common is the husband’s tutorial. Philippe de Mornay’s Tears for the Death of his Sonne (translated multiple times in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries) is a small book written to his wife, Charlotte d’Arbaleste. De Mornay appropriates the embodied metaphors of maternal mourning, obviously and purposefully, in order to facilitate his descriptions of the extremity of the loss he feels; he uses the same metaphor of entombment that one finds in lamentation when he asks, “shall I speake my woes, or shall I entombe them in silence?” (A6). De Mornay aligns his tears with Charlottes’s, but his participation in passionate grief contrasts vocal grief with entombment such that one option opposes rather than constructs the other, and once he works through that mutual “aboundant sorrow” it becomes clear that his description of his own immoderate mourning is a tool for instruction, “both the passions of a loving parent, and the restraint of them, that beffitteth a religious Christian” (A3v). De Mornay’s treatise turns corrective, chastising the speaker for blasphemous immoderation: “I feele a rebellious battell within me! keepe downe my tongue, let it loose to no language, but those sounds of the Psalmist/…that my redoubling dolour burst not out into outragious murmure” (A8-A8V). He corrects his own perceived effeminacy as well, his speech that had been “like a foolish Woman” turning to the “better language of the wise” (B8). In this turning the treatise becomes instructive, trumpeting God’s plan and pressing his wife to join him in transitioning away from the deepest expression of their grief, the “aboundant sorrow” he compares to a “deep wound”

²² Patricia Phillippy has chronicled letters and diary entries addressing excesses of maternal mourning, and the attempts to curtail that grief in favor of piety in Women, Death, and Literature in Post-Reformation England, pp. 143-155; Phillippy’s are primarily mid- to late-17th century sources.
²³ Quoted Phillippy 152.
A4. Patricia Phillippy comments that “De Mornay’s imagery of the wound of child-loss” – referring both to De Mornay’s statement in his first line that the grief of child-loss is a wounding thing, as well as to the “outrageous murmure” that temporarily feminizes De Mornay – “conflates grief and its articulation, opposing the potentially toxic language of excessive mourning to the restorative embalming of submissive tears.”

That the tears ought to be submissive is of particular importance, and de Mornay’s conflation of grief and its expression suggests that his wife’s enduring depression is in some sense a willful rebellion, a refusal to bind her wound. The “wound” he describes justifies his weeping as a token of loose, gushing lamentation, but can still be managed, the “outrageous murmur” bridled, the wound allowed to bleed only just long enough: “stoppe it too soone, it spoiles us: stay it too long, it kills us” (A4). It is clear, though, that he understands Charlotte’s wound as being something more deeply embedded in her; de Mornay might be able to enact and close up his grief, but hers requires some intervention to bind it up. Presumably de Mornay’s little book itself ought to perform this intervention, but it doesn’t seem to have done so: Phillipy reports that Charlotte spoke of nothing but death among her ladies, and indeed took to her bed and died soon after, apparently unable to find the moderate expression of grief that would preserve her.

Charlotte d’Arbaleste’s own commentary on her son’s death resists such a corrective binding. She describes her despair as being “a sorrow which can only end in death, with no other consolation but what the feare and the grace of God can give us while we chew the bitter cud of our grief.” This is where she ends the family chronicle she had dedicated herself to writing; d’Arbaleste invokes the ruminant nature of embodied feminine grief and the silence that results

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24 Phillippy, 163.
not from a self-imposed moderation, but from a definitive end. d’Arbaleste’s resistance to the
directive to exert self-control is one that responds to the examples of mourning that early modern
women had to contend with; critical presentations of feminine mourning most often invoke
Rachel and Niobe as cautionary figures of excess.\textsuperscript{26} God’s instruction to Rachel to “weep not”
gives warrant to the injunction against immoderate weeping, and Niobe demonstrates the terrible
effect of ignoring that injunction, her body transformed and trapped in marble. Ignoring (or
perhaps more appropriately, being unable to) submit to these demands to curtail excessive
emotion tends to be seen as a challenge to Christian virtue. To allow oneself this ongoing
outpouring of emotion is to forget that even in the Fall, God saw fit to comfort Eve, or that
through Christ’s death one finds redemption. And yet, Rachel is also heralded as a biblical
exemplar of maternal care, and the diaries and poetry of early modern women reveal an
understanding of their roles as mourners and as mothers that resists the idea that they should in
any way moderate their roles by moderating their grief.

The drive to discipline mourning has continued: Freud polices our mourning as do
Nicholas Abram and Maria Torok, who make a strong distinction between introjection
(normative mourning) and incorporation (pathological mourning). They develop the incoherence
that Freud terms an “internal foreign territory” into their theory of the “illness of mourning,”
characterized by the mourner’s “housing” of the departed love-object with varying degrees of
awareness. Regardless of whether the internal crypt seals up the trauma of loss or, by containing
it, makes possible a recovery or even a conscious readjustment, the subject is fractured, added to,
and objectified by the loss. Torok writes: “given that it is not possible to liquidate the dead and
decree definitively: ‘they are no more,’ the bereaved become the dead for themselves and take

\textsuperscript{26} See Thomas Playfere, Edward Bury’s \textit{Death improv'd, and Immoderate Sorrow for deceased friends and relations reprov'd, etc. [With a portrait.]} (For Tho. Parkhurst, 1693), British Library.
their time to work through, gradually and step by step, the effects of the separation.” 27 In contrast with Freud’s concept of dynamic repression, Abraham and Torok suggest a “preservative repression” as a response to trauma that does not hide the traumatic event only to have it reemerge in moments of emotion, but encrypts the memory in a way that disrupts signification and introduces a “fantasy of incorporation” as a necessary stage in the grieving process. 28 The fantasy of incorporation is a fantasy of willful possession, an introduction of “all or part of a love object or a thing into one’s own body,” embodying the love object to both acquire and obliterate it. The magical thinking this entails implements “literally something that has only figurative meaning. So in order not to have to ‘swallow’ a loss, we fantasize swallowing (or having swallowed) that which has been lost, as if it were some kind of thing.” 29 Torok ascribes a hallucinatory character to this stage, a “gap in the psyche” to be filled by introjection, rendering conscious what was done unconsciously in incorporating the dead by naming what has happened, filling the void with language. 30 Metaphorically, Torok describes the “shadow of the object” – the thing that has been swallowed – straying “endlessly about the crypt until it is finally reincarnated in the person of the subject.” 31 The mourner’s return to social engagement, if in fact she is able to return, is meant to enable the encrypted ghost to be deciphered through the mourner’s narrative, the story she tells in which the dead is conserved and kept ‘alive’ as that dear object.

Derrida describes the ‘crypt’ in his introduction to Abraham and Torok’s The Wolf Man’s Magic Word as “a kind of ‘false unconscious’, an ‘artificial’ unconscious lodged like a

27 Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis (University of Chicago, 1994), 111.
28 The Shell and the Kernel, 18, 126.
29 ibid.
30 The Shell and the Kernel, 127.
31 The Shell and the Kernel, 141.
prosthesis, a graft in the heart of an organ, within the divided self. A very specific and peculiar place, highly circumscribed, to which access can nevertheless only be gained by following the routes of a different topography.”

Derrida dismantles something quite important to Abraham and Torok’s cryptonomy in his introduction. While Abraham and Torok maintain a rigid distinction between normative and pathological mourning, Derrida couples the two, complicating the mourning process and deconstructing the rigidity of Abraham and Torok’s ideas about inside and outside, foreignness and mimesis, self and other. The mourner’s body in this scenario, as in so many of the early modern women’s lamentations, is simultaneously inaccessibly private and an open interior to which admittance might be granted, a cabinet where the willful assimilation of the dead enacts a mimesis of the grief process that preserves the dead in all its foreignness rather than differentiating between the person mourning and the person being mourned. Such refusal to differentiate results in a dual alterity, a self (pre)occupied by another, the ghost and the mourner both made foreign. Abraham and Torok describe the dead as silent, and ascribe that silence to taboo, but the incorporated dead surface, deciphered, in the mourner’s language. As the “shadow of the object” wanders the crypt, it remains concealed until given voice through poesis.

By the time these theorists ‘discover’ the mourner’s ability to encrypt the dead, the body they describe is ungendered. But early modern women have already discovered these processes in themselves, as gendered processes reflecting a pathologized mourning that imagines the body as a place to keep the dead.

Katherine Philips’ poetry consistently rehearses imagery of the body as container, or sometimes as holding a vessel within the body as though to hold space within space. In an

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33 The Shell and the Kernel, 141.
epitaph commemorating the death of her first child, Hector Philips (23 April-2 May 1655), Philips emphasizes the private, secular nature of her grief and casts herself as nothing but sound. Like the rise of the lullaby chorus as a prelude to silence, Philips tells her dead child in the midst of erudite verse that “piercing groans must be thy elegy,” though “no eye is witness of my moan” (12-13). The poem ends on a note of absolute closure, a “last verse” that will entomb Philips’ poetic voice with the baby (20).34

Katherine Philips is endlessly fascinated by absence and death, and in poems including but not limited to her child elegies, some written on behalf of others, she works out a critique of pathologized mourning. In To Mrs. Wogan, written on the death of Mrs. Wogan’s husband, Philips insists that Mrs. Wogan’s pain is shared by the greater public, that her loss is a loss to all, and that she ought to curtail her grief. Philips’ persuasion to self-control seems to be due to her sense that the mourner, rather than (or alongside) the dead, adopts a liminal subjectivity. This is at least in part based on the bond Mrs. Wogan shared with her husband; like the maternal bond that buries Philips’ voice in her elegy for Hector, Philips suggests that Mrs. Wogan’s bond with her husband provides an enduring internalized presence for him that has the potential either to return him to communal life, or to draw her into the grave:

Your Love should follow him, now he is gone,
And quitting passion put perfection on.
Such love as this will its own good deny,
If its deare object have felicity;
And since we cannot his great losse reprieve,
Let's not loose you in whom he still does live:
For while you are by grief secluded thus,
It doth appeare your funerall to us.
(37-44)

34 A false promise; this was not her last poem.
Mrs. Wogan’s withdrawal seems to have entombed her. Elizabeth Hodgson has remarked that Philips’ poems “confuse the meanings of the distinctions upon which they appear to depend.”\(^{35}\) Hodgson suggests that this is an interrogation of the limits of privacy, but Philips’ deliberately confused depictions of loss, retirement, and social responsibility also reflect the intertwined relationship of the mourner with the dead. The mourner becomes joined with the dead at least as intimately as in life, and the deceased leaves “a Monument in every Brest,” making memorials of those left behind (20). Even when engaged in chastisement of her friend’s lengthy grief, Philips’ memorial poetry maintains the bond between the mourner and the dead that provides them a shared liminal status; Philips’ rebuke also affirms the process of grafting the dead to the living that she documents in her own lamentations.

Philips’ reflection to her friend Mrs. Wogan that the exclusivity of her grief makes ‘it’ seem her funeral to the collective of observers really is an observation about the extent to which Mrs. Wogan’s encryption of her husband’s soul, or her love for her husband, prevents the soul’s natural emergence into clarity, “Till by degrees it does shine forth at length,/ And gathers Beauty, Purity, and Strength:”; a gathering-in and shining-forth that requires Mrs. Wogan to hold on to her husband, to carry him in a monument embedded in her breast and in some way share him with his former community, freeing his beloved soul by following him:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Now as the Soul you lov'd is here set free} \\
\text{From its material gross capacity;} \\
\text{Your Love should follow him now he is gone,} \\
\text{And quitting Passion, put Perfection on.} \\
\text{Such Love as this will its own good deny,} \\
\text{If its dear Object have Felicity.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(35-40)

The confusion of meanings that Hodgson identifies in Philips’ poetry is tied up with the coincidental values of hiddenness and social visibility in her work. In a letter appended to the 1667 edition of her poems, Philips presents publicity as a kind of violation, publication leaving her body “rifled and exposed,” as though sharing her expressions of grief equates to having left a door open, an invitation to enter her innermost spaces. Katherine Philips asks, in all of her poems, where we live and what we keep there with us; she examines how the vessel that contains the essential self functions, and interrogates how permeable and how escapable it might be. Like Mrs. Wogan’s husband’s departure from the “sordid tenement” of his body, in the epitaph On her Son H.P., Philips characterizes her first child’s death as a release from the confining space of the body: “Too promising, too great a mind/ In so small room to be confin’d:/ Therfore, fit in Heav’n to dwell,/ He quickly broke the Prison shell” (11-14).

The lamentations for Mrs. Wogan and for H.P both assert that the mourner should allow the object – indeed, in Mrs. Wogan’s poem Philips refers to the soul of the deceased as a “dear Object” – to continue its residence in the crypt of her body. To become such a monument, then, is not only a natural reaction but in some sense spiritually desirable, despite the turn away from the social that it requires, the break with what Philips would surely identify as proper mourning behavior. In fact, her frequent emphasis on retreat and retirement from the world (“Who neither will, nor can refreshment give” after the loss of a child) contrasts with the advice she gives her friend, but the discontinuity functions like Derrida’s “different topography”; it participates in Philips’ creation of a liminal space and time where loss becomes addition as the dead child is made part of the living speaker.

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36 Hodgson, 107.
None of these lamentations move beyond incorporation to the phase of introjection that Abraham and Torok imagine. In their work, the trajectory of mourning leads to peaceful satisfaction. The early modern analog for that stage would be a consolation that Early Modern women’s lament seems consistently to refuse. Cecil and Philips resist the pathologizing of grief by succumbing to it. In these poems, as the bereaved mother articulates to purposeful excess, the different topography of her lamentation – as always, reached by following the dead rather than turning away – almost inevitably becomes a topography of the body. The madness of her grief is a catalyst, allowing the speaker to transgress boundaries and assert her authority as mother, as mourner, and as ‘keeper’ of birth and death, both preserving and obliterating her loss. The desire to be filled upon the death of a child as articulated by Mary Carey and Anne Cecil produces a morbid mirror image of the ‘filling’ of pregnancy, and maintains maternal authority but also maintains the fantasy of an invited foreign presence in the body. Mary Carey’s request that God “purge me therefore;/ father, more frute to bring” precedes a series of five requests that she be “quickened,” both brought back from the deathlike state she presently occupies and carried through pregnancy to the point of perceptible fetal movement (94-95). Anne Cecil’s persistent imagery of encasing her child includes a stark moment in the second sonnet in which she describes feeding on her own heart, the heart tangled up with her child as Mary Carey’s is. Repurposing the concept of the immoderate, extravagant consumption, the mother who imagines she can reabsorb her child draws a parallel between reproduction and consumption that undoes the birth, secrets the child away, and restores the potential for material reformation.

In the spirit of such incorporation, the body that Anne Cecil wills into being over the course of her sonnets is composite and, like the deceased and like her mourning figure, neither

37 This is also arguably true of the anonymous author of the short poem that introduces this dissertation, “Take me alone (Death),” which ends with imagery of the mother’s womb serving as coffin and grave for the baby.
natural subject nor artificial object. The encrypting she wants to enact in the sonnets is literally an entombment of the love object, and having failed to enclose her child in her body-tomb, she reports that “In dolefull wayes I spend the wealth of my time/ Feeding on my heart, that ever comes agen” (2.1-2). This consumption that equates the speaker’s self with food is unsatisfying – she is never full, never sated, and never done. The blunt statement of her activity almost necessarily prompts a question about control: does she make a conscious choice to engage in this activity which is both singular and repetitive, and so is always completely destructive, and also never complete? She might be exercising some agency in this self-consumption; she continues feeding on her heart “Since the ordinaunce, of the Destin's hath ben, / To end of the Saissons, of [her] yeeres the prime” with her son’s death, in an attempt to join him, the event of which seems always to be delayed in spite of her deepest wishes or best attempts (2.3-4). She is left alone and invisible, having identified herself with the “prime” of spring, since “Destins, Gods, and Worlds” – the visibilia of Primavera – are “all in [her] loss” (2.14). Finding herself unable to complete the tasks either of finishing off her own heart or of following her dead child, and so a simulacrum of what she wants to be, the poet asks, “what should I consume any more in woe,” what she ought to swallow next (2.13). The mourning body becomes all-consuming, and all-producing, outside of any temporal constraints. Cecil’s self-objectification, in the sense of an understanding of herself as an object to be used, is something she desires, something not entirely stable, and something that runs counter to the social pressure one might expect.

When Anne Cecil describes “feeding on my heart, that ever comes agen” it is not exactly her embodied or encrypted infant that she finds herself perpetually swallowing, but the organ that maintains the connection to the infant, the baby entangled in her own emotional resurgence. Cecil’s poesis fills the physical hollow as her heart rises, leaving a void ready to receive its own
absent material, in much the same way Cecil’s poetry describes the entombment of her child in the womb where he has already been carried. There is something mystical about this process of figuration, and the sense of boundless interiority suggested by Anne Cecil’s heart, by Katherine Philips’ cabinet, and by Mary Carey’s embryonic nothingness. Their interior spaces are repositories for something that is impossible to entirely assimilate.

Such incorporative consumption surfaces as an idea repeatedly in Anne Cecil’s sonnet sequence. Like Mary Carey, Charlotte d’Arbaleste, and Katherine Philips, Anne Cecil acknowledges and then veers off of paths that would lead to religious consolation, instead meditating on the problem of articulation and the transformation of the mourner. The sonnets focus not on the naturally corrupted body of the deceased, but on the mourner’s own body, which offers an enclosed and silent space that Cecil compares to the inarticulate stone of a tomb where she “might againe have been the Sepulcure./ Of him that I bare in mee, so long ago” (6.13-14). Curiously, Cecil’s own longed-for transformation into stone is a return to something she already is or has been.

Similarly, the invocation of Niobe in the second quatraine of Anne Cecil’s second sonnet takes back the weeping that Venus claims as her own in the first sonnet, making the mother iconic and anticipating the enclosure and consummation of the rest of the poem. Though the mourner’s “eies run down like fountaines here,” “The stone wil not speak yet, that doth it inclose” (7-8); like Niobe, turned to stone but still weeping, her very state of being refers back to both the marble of the child and his monument, and the “it” enclosed in her stone body seems both indefinite and to attach to her son. Cecil writes, “With my Sonne, my Gold, my Nightingale, and Rose,/ Is gone: for t’twas in him and no other where,” and the spring, her son, the best and sweetest and fairest of things, this thing that was inside of him is analogized in her feeding and
enclosing only insofar as there is a thingliness about “it” that allows for those activities.\textsuperscript{38} Such an incorporation of the dead fundamentally changes the speaker and performs an addition to her understanding of what makes up her own personhood: intending to protect and keep the dead, she becomes \textit{like} the dead, stone and not stone.

Some of the structural confusion of the poems, like the frequent use of pronouns without obvious referents, allows the often contradictory content of the poems room to breathe, as Hester Pulter might say. Anne Cecil’s work turns quickly between life and death, loss and incorporation. Descriptions that are characteristic of the child, as above, become also characteristic of the mother through the use of nonspecific pronouns. The speaker’s will to live and to give life exists in uncomfortable conjunction with her desire to leave her life in the third sonnet, where she retracts an earlier understanding that even Venus’ tears cannot revive the dead and claims she will be another Prometheus, but also that she will die and reunite with her child in heaven:

\begin{verbatim}
The hevens, death, and life have conjured my yll:
For death hath take away the breath of my sonne:
The hevens receive, and consent, that he hath donne:
And my life dooth keepe mee heere against my will.
But if our life be caus'de with moisture and heate,
I care neither for the death, the life, nor skyes:
For I'll sigh him warmth, and weat him with my eies:
(And thus I shall be thought a second \textit{Promët})
And as for life, let it do me all despite:
For if it leave me, I shall goe to my childe:
And it in the hevens, there is all my delyght.
And if I live, my vertue is immortall.
"So that the hevens, death and life, when they doo all
"Their force: by sorrowfull vertue th'are beguild.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{38} This is glossed in \textit{Pandora}: “Gold, the best of all mettelles, Nightingale, the sweetest of all byrdes, And Rose the fairest of all flowres. These are \textit{visibilia} of Primavera.”
The third sonnet sets the heavens, death, and life up as a tyrannical triumvirate. The reduction of difference between these things also seems to reduce their potency: Cecil reverses the notion that virtue can be found in restraint; her “vertue is immortall,” and her “sorrowful vertue” beguiles the heavens (3.12-14).

The confusion that operates throughout these sonnets derives partly from the tension between what the speaker wants and what she finds available to her. The quatrain in which Cecil wishes to be “Amphion’s wife” records a desire for monumental stability and a failure to attain it:

Amphion's wife was turned to a rocke.
How well I had bee, had I had such adventure,
For then I might againe have been the Sepulcure,
Of him that I bare in mee, so long ago.

The first line of this quatrain is a blunt instrument, hitting the ear hard, and Niobe’s metamorphosis is invoked as a desirable outcome. The “rocke” Cecil envisions for herself would allow her to retain and contain the dead and define her as a mourner, who is at once herself and more than herself. The mother whose body was a womb and is now imagined to be a tomb maintains much the same function she already has had. Such “incorporation” is, true to its earliest definitions, not just a means of preservation but a melding of persons, a complete introjection, the formation of an artificial person that is fundamentally more than it was before. The addition of loss provides its own sort of comfort, if not consolation, or at least, this is the fantasy. Cecil’s exploration confirms that it is precisely the self-objectification brought about by grief that allows the mourner to remain in the world, but this is an uncompromising engagement, in which she refuses to lose her grief, or the license of lamentation. In Cecil’s poetry, there is no moment of ‘enough’, only an insatiable grief.
The addition made by loss, the thing that leaves the mourner always and never alone, produces poems that actively work to collapse distinctions between past and present, self and other, subject and object; the poetic expression of grief refuses to stay still. The instability of that expression as it shifts between literal and figurative, individual and communal, unwinds the social strictures binding the mourner’s speech. Despite these shifts, as she attempts to locate her grief, what the bereaved poet asks is not how she might find herself reflected in a communal expression; instead, the question is how what she holds has come to define her. Despite the unorthodox character of her grief, Anne Cecil – like other writers of lamentation – gestures repeatedly toward an eventual reanimation figured as forthcoming speech, but indicative of the transformative nature of the relationship; the speech that, she says, the stone will make is intimately related to its enclosure of the dead child, as though the child’s additional voice will provide the amplification necessary for speech. Most importantly, Cecil imagines in her tomb-body a version of herself that is not new. Instead, it reflects an image of herself that she is uncannily familiar with, and her grief is at least in part over an understanding that she has in fact not literally become her child’s sepulcher. Such a transformation (as she sees it) would radically remake childbearing, re-create her status as a vessel of pregnancy, the dead child much like the antepartum child in his strange and familiar position, here but not here in a layering of chronotopes. Unable to actually achieve a stony end, Cecil rather wants to want that stable expression of grief. Instead, she continues swallowing her unsatisfying heart, retaining the child by clinging fervently to the material expression of her devastation. In maintaining that expression, allowing it to “ever come again,” she makes grief her subject, and herself its object.
Conclusion

The poem tucked into the frontmatter of this dissertation, Emily Dickinson’s poem 372 in Ralph W. Franklin’s edition of her poetry, describes an affective transition that is accompanied by a broad atemporality. The speaker’s question in the first stanza – “Yesterday, or Centuries before?” – has a declarative echo in the last, which does not answer the question, instead providing a timestamp based on feeling. “This is the Hour of Lead – / Remembered, if outlived”: the time of heaviness, of stoniness, remembered only if survived.

After great pain, a formal feeling comes –
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs –
The stiff Heart questions ‘was it He, that bore,’
And ‘Yesterday, or Centuries before’?

The Feet, mechanical, go round –
A Wooden way
Of Ground, or Air, or Ought –
Regardless grown,
A Quartz contentment, like a stone –

This is the Hour of Lead –
Remembered, if outlived,
As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow –
First – Chill – then Stupor – then the letting go –

Virginia Jackson writes about the “division of the self from itself” in *Dickinson’s Misery*, calling it “the signature characteristic of the subjectivity Dickinson bequeaths to literary history… Any reader of Dickinson can generate a long list of chasms, fissures, maelstroms, cleavings, self-burials, and horrors that irrevocably divide one part of the “I” from another.”¹ Dickinson’s subjectivity in this poem is one she turns to often, as in “I’ve dropped my brain – my soul is numb – ….” (1088) and “From Blank to Blank –“ (484), the rigidity of feeling and the

mechanized movement of the body repeated in each of these poems as she continues to grapple with “the Hour of Lead,” a metamorphic event that transforms the speaker into stony matter, or maybe into more complex quartz. The nerves that “sit ceremonious, like Tombs” seem to wait in funereal preparation for the “stiff Heart” to exhaust its questions, for the “Feet, mechanical” to finish walking their “Wooden way” (“or Ought”) and join them.

What Dickinson further develops in these poems is the subjectivity that appears in early modern women’s writing, peering inward at the stunned nerves, interested in the individual mourner even when assuming she partakes in a communal emotional response: the speaker watches the monument that sits heavy in the chest, the womb that becomes a sepulcher, the body freezing into rock. She becomes, as Jackson describes, “the artifactual object of her own regard.” This is, perhaps, an excellent description of the metamorphoses undergone and imagined by women in early modern English literature. To become an artifact of one’s own grief, something to hold onto, is to never lose the version of oneself that existed at the moment of rupture. It is also, simultaneously, a means of containment: the trauma is encapsulated, divided from the rest of the self, “preserved,” Hermione would say.

*Metamorphosis and the Unbound Subject in Early Modern English Literature* offers an account of physical transformation, or at least the imagining of it, as being integral to emotional expression and even to emotional management in a society that Michael MacDonald claims “placed even greater emphasis on the curative powers of the imagination than we do today.” Imagination is both causative and curative for emotional ailments, and the representation of psychological pain in early modern English literature relies on a collective imagination to

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2 Jackson 224
theorize itself, to create a shared vocabulary and system of intertextual references, and to resist the pathologizing of grief and anxiety that develops in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We still think of poetry and drama as “emotional” forms of writing. The very nature of the address on offer in these forms is designed to create objects that promote and manage shared human feeling, that produce a sort of sensuous knowledge.

Susan Stewart writes, beautifully, about poesis as figuration reliant on the senses, as somatic form-giving. That figuration or form-giving is essential to subjectivity: “The poet discovers his or her identity as a consequence of form making – the role of the maker is not predetermined by either social convention or instrumental reason.” The discovery of identity through poesis is after all an objectification: the subject makes something, in which she finds herself. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe describes the poetic existence, of which “one can speak, in a rigorous sense,” because “existence is that which makes holes in life and shreds it, now and then, putting us outside ourselves.” Stewart finds in this externalization and objectification the critical elements of identity formation. “The task of aesthetic production and reception in general is to make visible, tangible, and audible the figures of persons.” Later, she complicates this making-visible, declaring that “what propels us outward will also transform us.” For the reader, the experience of these texts is fundamentally, by design and by Ovidian heritage, one of wonder. The metamorphosis that effects emotional expression invites participation in the affective work of the text or performance, triangulating speaker, reader, and text so that the reader experiences the affective work and recognizes the “artifactual object” of the other. The reader leaves

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4 Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*, 12
6 Stewart 2
7 Stewart 3
unharmed but not untouched, the text offering up the same emotional space that it describes as a place of recognition.

The expression of emotion through poesis produces an entrancing relationship between the lyric(al) subject and the objectified self. The objectified self becomes an artifact for the lyric speaker, and then the reader, to turn over in reminiscence of the moment of objectification “as Freezing persons, recollect the Snow – / First – Chill – then Stupor – then the letting go –,” the recollection of the letting go an aporia that in fact produces the artifact, the way an oyster produces a pearl. The poetic artifact that transforms the subject encapsulates her emotional force, renders it visible, and maybe provides an opportunity for working through it: Scilla’s rage, Lucrece’s despair, Amoret’s defiance, Hermione’s hope, all of the grief – the emotional force that Hester Pultter and Emily Dickinson would both say breathes through the poetry. The abstraction entailed by the transformation turns out to be part of what allows emotional weight to develop; Scilla is not so terrible before she becomes a rocky cove, nor is Hermione quite so abject before playing a statue. The attachment to their new forms cultivates a lasting engagement with feeling that enhances the emotional expression in a way we modern readers might recognize.

The consolidation of emotion around an image, theme, pattern, in the space between reader and text, opens an opportunity of processing and cognition: we reread, we turn the image over, in almost exactly the same way that the transformed speaker looks to her artifactual self for confirmation of the affective experience the writer is trying to convey, holding onto it to confirm that this thing happened. Even in this small remove, the bit of “letting go” necessitated by separating speaker from artifactual self, the potency of emotion increases and becomes more available to the reader. The power of this abstraction and increase is at least in part an effect of
the management of time: the speakers all lead us to believe this attachment is permanent, despite – or perhaps because of – the “letting go.” The framing of emotional management as an aesthetic project, as an act of poesis itself, is something we might see as not so historically distant, that we might turn to as a system that provides opportunities for emotional engagement that are not time-bound, that allows us to hold onto emotion as an artifact to be felt and studied, that permits us to choose our own moment for letting go.
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Appendix

Foure Epytaphes, made by the Countes of Oxenford, after the death of her young Sonne, the Lord Bulbecke, &c.¹

I

Had with the moorning the Gods left their willes undone²
They had not so soone herited such a soule:
Or if the mouth, tyme did not glotton up all.
Nor I, nor the world, were depriv'd of my Sonne,

Whose brest Venus, with a face dolefull and milde,
Doth washe with golden teares, inveying [sic] the skies
And when the water of the Goddesses eyes,
Makes almost, alive, the Marble, of my Childe:

One byds her leave styll, her doller so extreme,
Telling her it is not, her young sonne Papheme,
To which she makes aunswer with a voice inflamed
(Feeling therewith her venime, to be more bitter)

As I was of Cupid, even so of it mother
"And a womans last chylde, is the most beloved" b.

Note a: In the fiction of the poem, the baby died in the morning. The Gods, nasty creatures that they are, toyed with him all night and then killed him in the morning. The poet also assumes the compassion associated with mourning. The Gods, warm-hearted creatures that they are, might have been overtaken with mourning and let the child live.

Note b: Venus had many children: Cupid or Papheme was her son by Hermes or Zeus. Bulbecke has become her most recent child.

An other [2].

In dolefull wayes I spend the wealth of my time:
Feeding on my heart, that ever comes agen.
Since the ordinaunce, of the Destin's c, hath ben,
To end of the Saissons, of my yeeres the prime d

With my Sonne, my Gold, my Nightingale, and Rose,
Is gone e: for t'was in him and no other where:
And well though mine eies run downe like fountaines here f

¹ Annotations by Ellen Moody, "Six Elegiac Poems, Possibly by Anne Cecil de Vere, Countess of Oxford" (with texts), English Literary Renaissance, 19 (1989), 152-70.
The stone will not speak yet, that doth it inclose.

And Destins, and Gods, you might rather have tanne,
My twenty yeeres: then the two daies of my sonne.
And of this world what shall I hope, since I know,
That in his respect, it can yeeld but mosse:

Or what should I consume any more in woe,
When Destins, Gods, and worlds, are all in my losse.

Note c: The three Destinies (Clotho, Lachesis, and Atrophos) dominate the sequence. As a triad, they were sometimes identified with the three Charites, and these with the Muses and three Graces (see 4 below for the poet's series of triads).

Note d: The poet identifies with "prime" or Spring in the cycle of the Seasons.

An other [3].
The heavens, death, and life? have conjured my yll:
For death hath take away the breath of my sonne:
The heavens receive, and consent, that he hath donne; And my life dooth keepe mee heere against my will.

But if our life be caus'd with moisture and heate,
I care neither for the death, the life, nor skyes:
For I'll sigh him warmth, and weat him with my eies:
(And thus I shall be thought a second Promêr)

And as for life, let it do me all despite:
For if it leave me, I shall goe to my childe:
And it in the heavens, there is all my deyght.
And if I live, my vertue is immortall.

"So that the heavens, death and life, when they doo all
"Their force: by sorrowfull vertue th'are beguild.

Note g: The punctuation is a question mark in both the BL and HL copies. Steevens, The European Magazine, June 1788, p. 390, prints a comma.

Note h: Death enters the sequence as an actor; "he" also refers to the child who "hath donne."
Note I: She uses two of the primary qualities and the myth of man's creation by Prometheus. Prometheus was sometimes associated with losses of "happiness and peace of mind" due to his own gifts and his gifts to others.

An other [4].

Idall, for Adon, ne'v'r shed so many teares:
Nor Thet', for Pelid: nor Phoebus, for Hyacinthus
Nor for Atis, the mother of Prophetesses
At the brute of it, the Aphroditan Queene,
Caused more silver to distyll fro her eyes:
Then when the droppes of her cheeke raysed Daisyes:
And to die with him, mortall, she would have beeene.
The Charits, for it breake their Perug, of golde:

The Muses, and the Nymphes of Cave: I beholde:
All the gods under Olympus are constraint,
On Laches, Clotthon, and Atropos to plaine.

And yet beauties", for it doth make no complaint:
For it liv'de with him, and died with him againe.

Note j: Three allusions to Ovid, X, 529-739 (Venus with Adonis); XI, 220-66 (Thetis and Peleus); X, 163-220 (Proteus and Hyacinthus). Cf. Ovid's lines on Hyacinthus: "Sweet flower, said Phoebus, blasted in the prime . . . I would, sweet Boy, that I for thee might die/Or die with thee."

Note k: The boy's mother grieves for him more than Cybele grieved for Attis. The "mother of prophetesses" refers to Cybele and her priests in Attica and Crete. The tale is violent and has variants. In one Attis, a Phrygian priest, was castrated and bled to death under a pine consecrated to Frigone who hung herself.

Note l: Cf. this playful moment with Ovid, X, 714-39. It is a transition from the quatrain's violence to the sestet's restraint.

Note m: See note c above. The poet has three triads. The Muses may be the mountain goddesses of Hesiod. The Charits are the three Graces pictured with their tresses pulled tightly around their heads in a golden skull-cap. The nymphs of the cave may refer to the element of earth as opposed to the nymphs of water, air, and fire. Beauty is Venus from whom we get the triadic qualities of the Graces. The passage may be "unfolded" as a vision which includes hints of the child's burial in the earth (nymphs), the music of the spheres he will hear (the muses), and the grief felt by the Graces who in Renaissance Neoplatonic thought were matched against the Three Fates and lost.

Others of the fowre last lynes, of other [sic] that she made also [5].
11 My Sonne is gone? and with it, death end my sorrow,
12 But death makes mee aunswere? Madame, cease these mones:
13 My force is but on bodies of blood and bones:
14 And that of yours, is no more now, but a shadow.

Notes n and o: Both the BL and HL copies of Pandora print question marks at both these points; again, Steevens, The European Magazine, p. 391, at both points prints commas.
An other [6].

11 Amphion's wife was turned to a rocke.  
12 How well I had beene, had I had such adventure,  
13 For then I might againe have beene the Sepulcure,  
14 Of him that I bare in mee, so long ago.

Note p: By labelling Niobe Amphion's wife, the poet recalls the incomparable musician-poet and alludes to Oxford. Amphion's race was extinct in the death of Niobe's children; it was Oxford's heir who died.