

Stage(d) Hands in early modern drama and culture

Imogen Lydia Felstead
B.A, M.A

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Department of English Literature and Creative Writing

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Lancaster University

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Abstract

This thesis offers the first full phenomenological study of the staging of hands in early modern drama and culture by analysis of selected canonical and non-canonical plays (1550-1650) in dialogue with significant non-dramatic intertexts. Reading plays by Shakespeare, Webster, Middleton, Rowley, Tomkis, Marlowe, Heywood, Brome, Jonson and Dekker, I argue the hand constructs subjectivity, materially and psychologically, in the natural, built and social landscapes represented on stage and experienced in the early modern world. This argument is supported through broad-ranging interdisciplinary analysis shaped by first-hand experience following an injury to my right hand.

The introduction situates the hand within anthropological, materialist and phenomenological critical approaches to argue its functions as an ‘extroceptive’ tool. I explore Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the body as a natural instrument of expression, which registers and defines the individual’s spatial being-in-the-world. I position the hand as a self-defining agent as understood by: Nancy’s work on thinking the body ‘anew’; Derrida’s analysis of the hand as ‘maker’; the history of technicity and exteriorisation in the works of Stiegler and Leroi-Gourhan alongside medical practices surrounding my own contemporary experience.

Chapter One analyses the active hand, conventionally gendered masculine, as a symbol of human mind and spirit materialised with reference to ‘intentionality’. I argue the staged hand, a cognitive symbol that constitutes the body schema, is the most pivotal body part on the early modern stage, cultivating and developing the subject’s expressive and symbolic relationship with the world. Bulwer’s *Chirologia* and *Chironomia* (1644) informs this chapter to demonstrate

tactual perception to be the centre of early modern corporeality and hapticity to be indispensable to sensory experience.

Chapter Two considers the feminine hand as an object staged by boys and passed between men alongside Merleau-Ponty's notion of intercorporeity, to suggest that the feminine hand is situated within a paradox. Both passive and objectified, it is a powerful source of autonomy, command and agency, as embodied by Elizabeth I. I argue that the potential for agency turns the active helping hand into an instrument of disorder and empowerment which creates a space for independent desires and actions.

Chapter Three considers the body without the hand and the hand without the body using Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the body schema with respect to phantom limb syndrome and anosognosia alongside my own experience at Wessex Rehabilitation Centre. I argue the phantom limb phenomenon is a recurrent transhistorical feature in early modern drama and culture and represents cultural anxieties of fragmentation, loss and disruption.

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Textual conventions and abbreviations

All biblical references are to *The King James Bible* (London, 1611)

OED – The Oxford English Dictionary

Primary sources

All references to Shakespeare's texts are to William Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, Second Edition ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard and Katharine Maus (Oxford: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008)

All references to the main play texts are to Act, Scene and lines in the following editions:

Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday or The Gentle Craft* (1600), ed. by D.J. Palmer (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1975)

Thomas Dekker, *The Honest Whore Part One* (1604), ed. by Nick de Somogyi (London: Nick Hern Books, 1998)

Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton, *The Roaring Girl* (1611), ed. by James Knowles and Eugene Giddens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Edmund Ironside in *Shakespeare's Edmund Ironside: The Lost Play* (1587), ed. by Eric Sams (Hants: Fourth Estate Ltd, 1985)

Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome, *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634), ed. by Gabriel Egan (London: Nick Hern Books, 2002)

Ben Jonson, *Epicoene or The Silent Woman* (1609), ed. by Roger Holdsworth (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1979)

Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* A- and B- texts (1604, 1616), ed. by David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993)

Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Changeling* (1622), ed. by George Walton Williams (London: Arnold, 1967)

Selimus, Emperor of the Turks in *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (1594), ed. by Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000)

Thomas Tomkis, *Albumazar: A comedy presented before the Kings Maiestie at Cambridge, the ninth of March. 1614. By the Gentlemen of Trinitie Colledge.* (London: Printed by Nicholas Okes for Walter Burre, and are to be sold at his Shop, in Pauls Church-yard, 1615)

John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614), ed. by John Russell Brown (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)

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Dedicated to my mother and father

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Introduction

The Instrument of Instruments



Figure 2: William Marshall, 'An Alphabet of the Natural Gestures of the Hand' in John Bulwer's *Chirologia* (1644) [Engraving]. Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.



Figure 1: Mike Felstead, *Imogen's hand* (2020) [Photograph].

Eight years ago I found myself without the use of my dominant hand. The two images above represent how my thesis draws on early modern and contemporary experience to construct, on the one hand, a hermeneutic reading of the hand as symbol (Fig.1) and, on the other hand, a phenomenological reading of the hand through physical, felt experience (Fig.2). I bring these together to create a sense of how hands work emotionally, symbolically and practically in early modern drama. This work analyses selected canonical and non-canonical plays between 1590-1640, written for public and private theatres.

Plays by William Shakespeare, John Webster, Thomas Middleton, William Rowley, Thomas Tomkis, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Heywood, Richard Brome, Ben Jonson and Thomas Dekker have been chosen due to the significant and diverse ways they represent the early modern hand, demonstrating how the early modern stage is a physical laboratory of hapticity that is staged and enacted. I investigate the thematic continuities and contiguities to explore possible overarching patterns and anomalies in the cultural formation of the hand. To imagine how the hands in these texts might have been understood by early modern spectators and readers I discuss the plays in dialogue with significant non-dramatic intertexts from the period, such as John Bulwer's gesture '*Iuro*' depicted above (Fig.1). I also pay attention to cultural artefacts in the form of objects the hand wears and employs, objects that connect person to environment both physically and spiritually. I examine cultural understandings of gestures and objects that inform the meanings of the staged hand and its dramatic props.

The 355,332 matches for 'hand' in 12,844 different texts, provided by Lancaster University's search tool CQPweb in the database Early English Books Online, indicates the hand's reach.¹ Strikingly, in contrast, the query 'head' returned 183,387 matches in 10,685 different texts and the query 'foot' returned

¹ CQPweb is a web-based corpus analysis system which provides an interface to the corpus workbench system. It is designed for large corpora, corpora with word-level annotation, and corpora with rich text-level metadata. CQPweb is maintained by Dr Andrew Hardie. The corpus Early English Books Online (EEBO) version 3 contains 44,442 corpus texts in total. The total number of words and texts in the time period specified 1550-1649 is 477,569, 985 words and 16,914 texts. It should be noted that EEBO is printed texts rather than manuscripts and so although the corpus is very large, CQPweb can only give a limited trace of how early modern people thought about their hands. To access this result, the exact term and configuration used was as follows: restricted query with comma-separated alternatives listed in square brackets: 'han[d,ds,de,des,dis]', text-type restriction '1550-1649'. 'han[d,de]' produced 212,282 matches in 11,239 texts and 'han[ds,des,dis]' produced 143,050 matches in 10,915 texts. Further to this, as CQPWeb does not have a spelling regulariser, I also searched alternative spellings: firstly, 'haun[d,ds]' which produced 4 matches in 3 different texts and secondly, 'hon[d, ds, dis]' which produced 11 matches in 6 different texts.

106,142 matches in 9,171 different texts.² Whilst this thesis is not focused on corpus linguistics, the data points to the extensive significance of the hand in contrast to other body parts in early modern culture. It is particularly striking to see how large a number the search ‘hand’ generates when considering the premodern bodily hierarchy where the head was thought to contain the soul and was linked to God as Father.³ This thesis investigates the factors that influenced the hand’s marked difference in contrast to other body parts.

I refine my processes in Appendix 1 to show the relative frequencies, or collocations, in the Z-score ranking in subcorporas (1550-1609, 1610-1649) to consider the hierarchal assessment of the hand in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period.⁴ The word ‘right’ remains the top collocation for both periods alongside other theological connections such as ‘his’. Interestingly, ‘helping’ also remains high for both subcorporas indicative of the helping and nurturing hands of God and his subjects, a point I consider in Chapter One. Such distinction of the helping hands in the early modern period represent the hand as a reliable and faithful instrument. This, as I show in detail in Chapter Two, is something that can also be subverted in early modern drama and performance by the active feminine hand.

The high data result for ‘hand’ indicates that there is much to be made visible. Indeed, the sense of agency from the hand is indicative of many and varied

² To access this result, the exact term and configuration used was as follows: restricted query with comma-separated alternatives listed in square brackets: ‘he[d,dd,dde,ad,ade,adde,ads,ades,ds,addes,adis]’, text-type restriction ‘1550-1649’ and ‘f[oot,oote,ote,ute,eet,eete,ete,eets]’, text type restriction ‘1550-1649’. ‘he[d,dd,dde,ad,ade,adde]’ produced 144,427 matches in 9,913 texts and ‘he[ads,ades,ds,addes,adis]’ produced 60,443 matches in 7,349 texts. ‘f[oot,oote,ote,ute]’ produced 60,443 matches in 7,349 texts and ‘f[eet,eete,ete,eets]’ produced 45,699 matches in 6,539 texts.

³ The head was also understood to signify the ruler or the monarch and to the patriarchal, male heads of the household who encoded dominant authority over their counterparts.

⁴ The collocation function provides frequency lists of terms by a score of the statistical significance and frequency of appearance. In my examples, to achieve these results, I searched ‘han[d,ds,de,des,dis]’ text-type restriction between 1550-1609 and 1610-1649 with the defined bracket of three words to each side. I have used the algorithm ‘Z-score’ which measures results that reflect a combination of significance (amount of evidence) and effect size (strength of connection), producing a compromise ranking relative to MI (effect size) and LL (significance). See Appendix 1.

things: our relationship to other body parts; the tools the hand develops; cognitive skills that interact with tools and language that tools and society are shaped by. The subject of the hand is an extremely vast one and the corpus results reveal a large range of meanings that are beyond the scope of a single thesis. I have chosen to demonstrate the hand's centrality in early modern drama and culture to show that, at the same time early modern hands were navigating and mapping 'new worlds' across the globe and advancing science and technology, hands were also used to configure new emotions, rationalities and ontologies. I unfold more of the complexities by a specifically phenomenological approach and apply this to the early modern stage to consider how the staged hand affected and shaped the everyday lives of those on the stage and of the spectators.

The second image (Fig.2) that stands as an epigraph and point of origin for the thesis presents my hand as an object to be gazed upon, understood and read. The reader may, for example, choose to pay attention to the rings on my fingers or the scar on my palm. The scar is corporeal evidence of the deep glass laceration to my palm which happened in 2011 when I severed an artery, four nerves and two tendons in my dominant, right hand. I remember the feeling as I pulled myself up off the floor and looked at the open wound in my hand. My fingers were no longer capable of movement and my hand was numb, unrecognisable as if it belonged to someone else. There was the inside of my body, the hidden, secret part I was not meant to see.

I underwent a seven-hour reconstructive surgery for *flexor digitorum superficialis* to the middle finger, *flexor pollicis longus* to the tendons (four strand repair), all five branches of the median nerve zone four and carpal tunnel

decompression.⁵ My surgeon informed me I was extremely fortunate to be discharged with my two ‘whole’ hands. My hand was then put in a surgical splint and I attended long-term rehabilitation to rebuild my proprioceptive and kinaesthetic memory. Although presently I have full motor function in my hand, after undergoing rehabilitation, my nerves have not reconnected. This has left me with a strange, heightened consciousness of my right hand when I am passive or resting. It feels like a hard and heavy object which I now carry with me, but also, paradoxically, one which is constantly pulsing. This experience has, inevitably, shaped my thinking about how hands work as part of human identity and led me to phenomenology as a theoretical model for my research. When I describe my accident I subconsciously place my hand out, palm upwards, to the viewer. Here, as a starting point to my thesis, my hand is a corporeal symbol of my accident and identity, as well as holding agency in presenting my work to you, the reader, and directing your attention to the text that follows in a way that mirrors the early modern manicule.

My thesis will henceforth be punctuated in the margin with the early modern manicule.⁶ The manicule appears in manuscripts and in printed texts throughout the period as an instrument of guidance and a direction of thought. William Sherman suggests that the ‘severed hands’ printed in the margins ‘have an uncanny power to conjure up the bodies of dead writers and readers. Some of these hands are printed and some are handwritten [...] and others capture the sinews, joints, and even nails with a precision that rivals the most artful anatomical study.’⁷

⁵ Imogen Felstead’s Therapy Treatment Record, Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust [11 April 2011].

⁶ Manicule detail in Terence, *Terentius cum tribus cōmentis: uldelicet to. Calphurnii] Gvido. Iv[vealis] Donatus*, ed. by Giovanni Calphurnio, Guy Jouenneaux, Aelius Donatus, Sebastianus Duclus, O.S.M. Giolama da Lucca (1501).

⁷ William Sherman, ‘Toward a History of the Manicule’, *Lives and Letters* (2005)

<http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/papers/FOR_2005_04_001.pdf> [accessed 13 November 2017], (p. 29).

The manicule in this thesis serves to point the modern reader to the ways the early modern hand operated in relation to embodiment, environment and subjectivity, to point out and indicate the hand's polyvalence and powerful agency. To understand the cultural specificity of the early modern hand on stage, it is helpful to first establish some broader transhistorical theoretical and philosophical arguments regarding the significance of the hand in the formation of human lived identity.

Where would we be without the hand? As extensions of our identity and the principal organ of touch, hands provide information about the external world around us and the bodies we own. The hand is our most familiar body part and is used from first waking – pulling the body out of bed or rubbing the eyes awake – until sleeping. With our fingers on a touchscreen device we are able to ‘buy now!’, write, draw, turn pages in electronic books and communicate instantly with family or friends. We can even choose prospective partners by swiping right for yes and left for no. The hand also remains a crucial identifier of criminality.⁸

The hand constitutes the connecting point between person and material world. Josephine's Pryde's work, for the 2016 Turner Prize, perfectly encapsulates the hand as the instrument by which we are able to engage with the physical and material world. The series of photographs show twenty images of women's hands endowed with embodying cognitive purpose, through gesture and engagement with touch-sensitive objects.

Figure 3: Josephine Pryde, *Hands "Für Mich"* (2016) [Photograph]. Turner Prize



2016, Tate Britain.

As the title of the work *Hands “Für Mich”* [Hands “For Me”] suggests, Pryde’s work focuses on the hand’s relationship with the body and how the interaction with objects plays a pivotal role in understanding one’s own self living in the world. The world is, quite literally, at our fingertips. The contemporary philosophies and personal medical records above introduce the transhistorical hand that can help us understand or ‘dig deeper’ to explore the cultural continuities and complexities of the early modern hand. Such depictions of the hand testify to it being central to our embodied existence and functioning as a living tool that can mediate all action, a view which, I will show, was strikingly similar in early modern drama and culture.



Early Modern Hands and Identities

The classical definition that ‘the soul is as the hand, for the hand is an instrument with respect to instruments as the intellect is a form with respect to forms’, as Aristotle stated, set a model for early modern understandings of the hand.⁹ In the second century, distributed as an authoritative source on anatomy throughout the early modern period, Galen’s *De usu partium* elaborated on the Aristotelian view.

He opened his work with a substantial passage on the wonders of the human hand:

Thus man is the most intelligent of the animals and so, also, hands are the instruments most suitable for an intelligent animal. For it is not because he has hands that he is the most intelligent, as Anaxagoras says, but because he is the most intelligent that he has hands, as Aristotle says, judging most correctly. [...] Hands are an instrument, as the lyre is the instrument of the musician, and tongs of the smith. Hence just as the lyre does not teach the musicians or tongs the smith but each of them is a craftsman by virtue of the reason there is in him although he is unable to work at his trade without the aid of his instruments, so every soul has through its very essence certain faculties, but

⁹ Aristotle, *De anima*, 3.8.432a1-3 in *The Works of Aristotle: Volume III*, ed. by W.D. Ross and trans. J.A. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon, 1931), unpaginated.

without the aid of instruments is helpless to accomplish what it is by Nature disposed to accomplish [...]

For though the hand is no one particular instrument, it is the instrument for all instruments because it is formed by Nature to receive them all, and similarly, although reason is no one of the arts in particular, it would be an art for the arts because it is naturally disposed to take them all unto itself. Hence man, the only one of all the animals having an art for arts in his soul, should logically have an instrument for instruments in his body.¹⁰

According to Galen the hand is the vehicle of reason and is the chief instrument for the rational soul, distinguishing man from animal as a marker of human exceptionalism.¹¹ For Galen, to know the hand was to know the body: ‘if we train ourselves thoroughly by discussing this part [of the hand], whose action is perfectly clear, we shall the more easily learn the method to be used in discussing other parts later on.’¹² Galen draws attention to two divergent epistemological approaches, those of Aristotle and Anaxagoras. Aristotle’s writings posit a theological dimension, which Galen supports, suggesting that the hand is given to man because they are the ‘most intelligent.’ By contrast, Anaxagoras’ secular approach centres around technicity, in that hands allow humans to produce tools, generate knowledge and so become intelligent.

Anaxagoras’ view, that the hand is the origin of *techné*, parallels that of modern evolutionary biologists and neuroscientists who argue that toolmaking abilities and the freedom of the hand allowed for the development of knowledge and of language. Anaxagoras’ assertions, however, were fundamentally radical and therefore dangerous to sanction for writers such as Galen because it suggested that knowledge is created and sustained through human skill with objects. Praise of

¹⁰ Galen, *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* 1:4, 6, trans. by Margaret Tallmadge May (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), pp. 69-71.

¹¹ This has been elaborated by contemporary critics such as Tom Tyler who acknowledges that other kinds of touching are possible and accessible to animals.

See Tom Tyler, *Ciferae: A Beastiary in Five Fingers* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012)

¹² Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia a description of the body of man. Together vvith the controuersies thereto belonging. Collected and translated out of all the best authors of anatomy, especially out of Gasper Bauhinus and Andreas Laurentius. By Helkiah Crooke* (London, 1615), p. 784.

human manipulation as a source of knowledge is found in early modern writings such as those by Andreas Vesalius, Helkiah Crooke and John Bulwer. Vesalius shared Galen's belief that human beings have hands because they are the most intelligent species. This was recorded by Baldasar Heseler, a German student of medicine, who witnessed the anatomic demonstrations performed by Vesalius in Bologna 1540:

So that man may pursue all arts, nature has given him such an upright posture. Therefore, contrary to all animals, man has the power to learn workmanship, to handle an instrument with the hands, the instrument of all instruments, to enquire with his reason into everything and to govern it.¹³

Vesalius's work *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543) disseminated anatomical illustrations and formulated descriptions of the body by empirical, 'hands-on' medicine. He advised: 'beginners in the art must be urged in every way to take no notice of the whisperings of the physicians [...] but to use their hands as well in treating, as the Greeks did and as the essence of the art demands'¹⁴. His view that the hand evidenced God's work is made further apparent when he details the 'peculiar and rare occurrence' of the design of the tendons in the fingers which is proof of 'the marvellous labour of the supreme Creator [...] of the world.'¹⁵

The frontispiece of *Fabrica* shows anatomy in action with the dissecting hand of Vesalius and the dissected hand of the corpse eerily positioned to imitate the handshake. Here the anatomist's hands expose human agency and divine providence simultaneously as it is by the hand that we are able to evidence God's intelligence and goodness, whilst hands also distinguish human beings as active subjects. In early modern culture, as Katherine Rowe explains, 'the hand becomes

¹³ *Andreas Vesalius' First Public Anatomy at Bologna 1540: An Eyewitness Report by Baldasar Heseler*, ed. by Ruben Eriksson, trans. by R. Eriksson (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells boktr, 1959), pp. 55-56.

¹⁴ Andreas Vesalius, *On the Fabric of the Human Body Book 1: The Bones and Cartilages*, trans. of *De Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem* by William Frank Richardson and John Burd Carman (San Francisco: Norman Publishing, 1998), p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 305-306.

the prominent vehicle for integrating sacred mystery with corporeal mechanism' by the dissection of the hand in particular which 'persists as one of the central moral topos of anatomy demonstrations: celebrated for its difficulty and beauty, it reveals God's intentions as no other part can.'¹⁶ The hand can reveal the contents of the human soul and, literally, the contents of the human body to depict interior life and fate.

Vesalius extends his work on the divine inspiration for medical understanding as part of the wider network of the growth of human knowledge through technicity as, for example, in his advice for preventing innumerable diseases:

And where as ther be mani and mani things, wereof the brittle and feoble nature of mankind hath daili necessite, & indigence, as wel to the staffe maintaining and upholding of his helth & wel fare, as also to the repairing & restoring of the same being enithing decaied or emperisshid, who so can deuise or inuent eni maner of thing whereby man mai perceauer, and the better continue in good helth, or fallen therefor, the sonar and moore effectuousli recouer the same: Such inuentor and deuisar in mi opinion, not onli meritith praise and comendation of al them that wourtheli be comprehendid under the name of man, but also in conscience is straightli bound, to publishe it so largeli, that the utilite thereof mai be extendid & spred ouer al men: For therefore, no doute doith god ensueire diuers men with sundri knowledg, that eache with outhr frindeli communicating his receauid talent, one therebi shold find himself the nearar bound & beholding to the outhr. So that by suche impartial distribution of his manifold graces, god hath throu his diuine pollici, in a certain amite, & leege, meruelousli unitid and knit al this wide wordle together: Vvere it not, that one man, one Cite, one Nation, had neade of an outhers comoditees, wisdome, counceil, help, serueis, soukar, ritches, uerili one wold contemn & neglect an outhr wurs then strange doggs togeather.

Considerid then, that gods bountie doith thus gather and bind us in one, throu his indifferent liberalise, who that enuieth, dispraisith, detractith an outhers giff, malignith, despichith, reprouith, and doith open contumeli euen to god the geuer thereof.¹⁷

¹⁶ Katherine Rowe, *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 28.

¹⁷ Andreas Vesalius, *A compendious declaration of the excellent uertues of a certain lateli inuentid oile, callid for the uuorthines thereof oile imperial VVith the maner hou the same is to be usid, to the benefite of mankind, against the innumerable diseasis*. Vuriten by Thomas Rainold Doc. of Phisick (1551), sig.B.1v-B.2r.

Vesalius attributes activity and life to external matter. The body is not bound by the skin but rather our bodies extend and connect to other bodies to practice techniques and to engage with objects which show what it means to be human. The human hand thus stands not only as a technical marker of humanity but also for the creation of the object that it produces. The hand is both a subject of anatomy to be studied and a tool used to dissect, separate and distinguish. The next added technic was the invention of the revolutionary printing press that introduced subjects to education and information. Printed anatomical textbooks allowed for a greater understanding of both the self and the world.

The technical ability of the hand is also understood by Croke in *Mikrokosmographia* (1615) in his chapter dedicated ‘On the excellency of the hands’:

The hand is the first instrument so it is the framer, yea and imployer of all other instruments. For not being formed for any one particular use it was capeable of all [...] By the helpe of the hand Lawes are written, Temples built for the service of the Maker, Ships, houses, instruments, and all kind of weapons are formed. I list not to stand upon the nice skill of painting, drawing, carving and such like right noble Artes, whereby many of the Ancients have made their names honorable to unto us, yea and eternized them to the worlds end.¹⁸

Crooke’s commentary draws on binary oppositions between secular/sacred, transience/stasis and destruction/creation to describe the hand that commands power over the material world. The hand becomes not only the ‘first instrument’ but ‘imployer’ and ‘capeable’ of all. This portrayal of the hand as the ‘instrument of instruments’ is in keeping with Aristotelian and Galenic tradition, that God ‘hath armed [man] with two wondrous weapons, which he hath denied all other living creatures, Reason and the Hand.’¹⁹ For Crooke the hand, like reason, is a uniquely

¹⁸ Crooke, p. 729.

¹⁹ Ibid.

human tool. It is a symbol of authority by which ‘we promise, we call, we dismiss, we threaten,’ but it is also an instrument of expression whereby ‘we intreate, we abhorre, we feare, yea and by our hands we can ask a question.’²⁰ Crooke’s writing commends the hand for its ability to: bring tools into existence; create modes of transport; make and wield weapons to defend and fight with and produce drawings and writings that are kept alive by the hands’ activity even after the artist or writer has died. Such technological experiences enabled by the hand allow subjects to situate themselves within the world and to identify a community and place of their own.

In 1644, written twenty-nine years after Crooke’s *Mikrokosmographia*, the physician and philosopher John Bulwer published *Chirologia: or the naturall language of the hand. Composed of the speaking motions, and discoursing gestures thereof. Whereunto is added Chironomia: or, the art of manuall rhetoricke. Consisting of the naturall expressions, digested by art in the hand, as the chieftest instrument of eloquence*. The manuals hold a psychophysiological purpose, to outline the signification of manual gestures and meaning that ‘serve for privy cyphers for any secret intimation’ and call upon the hand’s capacity to imply purpose and decisiveness.²¹ In the introduction to *Chironomia* Bulwer comments directly on the contrasting ideas of Galen and Anaxagoras, confirming his approval of the teleological view of Galen:

[T]he properties and motions of the *Hand*, as it were in an extasie of admiration concluded Man to be the wisest of all intellectuall and artificiall elegancies: which opinion of *Anaxagoras*, *Galen* with great elegancie and humanity, by way of inversion corrects, That because Man was the wisest of

²⁰ Ibid., p. 59.

²¹ John Bulwer, *Chirologia: or the naturall language of the hand. Composed of the speaking motions, and discoursing gestures thereof. Whereunto is added Chironomia: or, the art of manuall rhetoricke. Consisting of the naturall expressions, digested by art in the hand, as the chieftest instrument of eloquence* (London: Tho. Harper, 1644), p. 150. All subsequent references for *Chirologia* will be given parenthetically.

all creatures, therefore he had *Hands* given to him'²².

Hence the hand, he continues, is the 'famous *companion of Reason*' and the prime instrument of communication through 'corporeall eloquence' by the hand's 'preheminance in gesture'.²³ Bulwer's handbooks of rhetoric catalogue natural expressions of the hand and recognise that hand gestures are 'the chiefest instrument of eloquence'. The hand, as supreme instrument, holds prominence for its ability to communicate with others.



This thesis draws upon two opposing ideas: Aristotle's teleological argument that human hands which create and construct are the gift and evidence of an intelligent creator (God) and Anaxagoras' evolutionary thesis in which manual *techné* or practice is the creative process which produces human understanding and identity. Since these different ideas often overlap in early modern culture, a study of the staged hand requires a combination of phenomenological, ontogenetic and technical analysis to consider five key research questions. Firstly, how does an awareness of the hand as motor connecting the subject to his/her environment draw attention to early modern modes of perception and subjectivity? Secondly, in a theatrical context, how does the hand operate as a motor of communication and stimulation to create a shared body schema between actors and playgoers? Thirdly, how does the embodied rhetoric of gesture combine with iconic representations of the hand to create active and passive status on and off stage? Fourthly, how does the performed feminine hand function as both a passive object, embellished by gloves and rings, and as an active subject? And finally, what is the body without the hand and the hand without the body?

²² Bulwer, *Chironomia*, pp. 1-2 (original emphasis).

²³ *Ibid.*

The early modern period is especially significant for a phenomenologically-led investigation of the hand. The early modern discourses of science, religion, medicine, philosophy, art and literature intersect as part of what has been labelled a ‘pre-Cartesian’ continuum where mind, body and spirit were intimately intertwined. Whilst the term ‘pre-Cartesian’ is useful shorthand, I agree with Laurie Johnson’s, John Sutton’s and Evelyn Tribble’s consideration of the dualist frameworks of body and soul in Platonic and Christian thought and practice. They suggest that when examining the works purely as pre-Cartesian ‘we risk a teleological reading of the unique historical discourses and feelings about the body’ whilst also oversimplifying ‘if we read Descartes back into early and more alien non-dualist frameworks for inhabiting the body-mind’ nexus.²⁴ The phenomenological model of subjectivity and the paradoxical, dualistic qualities of the hand as object and the hand as knowing agent are, therefore, particularly relevant to early modern ideas of selfhood.

Crooke’s understanding of touch to be the ‘fundamental sense’, crucial for understanding human selfhood, in his work *Mikrokosmographia* (1615), presents an example of phenomenology *avant la lettre*. For phenomenology can bring together historicism and theory and open up discussions around early modern subjectivity and performance. The importance of the living, exploring hand to orient the property of the flesh and body in its expressive engagement and symbolic relationship with the world was conceived and understood by modern philosophers like Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Long before the so-called corporeal turn in critical studies, Merleau-Ponty asserted that ‘I am conscious of the world through the medium of my body’ and his declaration points usefully to the pre-

²⁴ *Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare’s Theatre: The Early Modern Body-Mind*, ed. by Laurie Johnson, John Sutton and Evelyn Tribble (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 2.

Cartesian worldview of psychophysiology, where bodies and minds were intimately intertwined in complex and different ways.²⁵

Merleau-Ponty understands the body to be a locus of subjectivity, as ‘the origin of the rest, expressive movement itself, that which causes them to begin to exist as things, under our hands and eyes’ (169). He states that ‘consciousness is originally not an “I think that” but rather “I can.”’ (139) Merleau-Ponty’s corporeal foundation for identity is crucial in reading early modern drama to establish the hand as the precedent of an investigation into how the early modern body experienced the material and physical world. I also consult works by Jean-Luc Nancy, André Leroi-Gourhan and Bernard Stiegler, to explore how the hand is both an ‘instrument’ of the subject *and* a technical creator of subjectivity.

²⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Donald A. Landes (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 82. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.



Early Modern Bodies and Minds

In the early modern period, as David Hillman asserts, both body and mind were perceived as shared with ‘other bodies and minds, with the objects round them and with a myriad of cosmic and environmental factors’.²⁶ Hillman expands on this point to explain that Renaissance English was resolutely ‘a language of corporeal experience, implicating a profoundly psychosomatic world’ and work by early modern scholars has indicated that writers of the time ‘treated the mental world as fully interactive with the corporeal world.’ This, he contends, drives the focus to the body in order to consider ‘somatic dimensions’ of early modern consciousness and to fully realise ‘how central a role physiological experience played’ throughout the period’s texts.²⁷

My thesis follows this trajectory and participates in the critical field of embodiment and physiology in early modern studies, exemplified in such works as Hillman’s ‘Staging Early Modern Embodiment’ in his edited collection *The Body in Literature* (2015). This has helped me frame the importance of corporeality of the early modern self in relation to emotions and cognitions. The notion that in order to understand the early modern world we must first understand the complexities of the early modern body is reflected in Gail Kern Paster’s research on the influence of humoral theory in *The Body Embarrassed* (1993). Paster’s analysis of the interconnections between the outer/inner body by depictions of women as ‘leaky vessels’ represented on stage has helped shape my approach on the feminine hand situated within a paradox in Chapter Two of my thesis. Jonathan

²⁶ David Hillman, ‘Staging Early Modern Embodiment’, in *The Cambridge Companion to The Body in Literature*, ed. by David Hillman and Ulrika Maude (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 41-58 (p. 43).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Sawday also understands the body paradoxically as subject and object in *The Body Emblazoned* (1996) and, while he does not use any theatrical examples, his description that the ‘culture of dissection’ is also a ‘culture of enquiry’ has proven useful to construct information on the dissecting, probing hand of the anatomist. Katharine A. Craik’s *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (2007) has informed my research on somatic connections between early modern reading practices and bodies whilst Mary Floyd-Wilson’s *Occult Knowledge, Science and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (2013) opened up my ideas around the female body understood as a source of occult secrets. Floyd-Wilson’s understanding that not only was the female body under specific restrictions, but had certain powers and potency, has been vital for my own research into the feminine hand and its workings on the early modern stage.²⁸

The expanding field of ‘body criticism’, as it relates to lived and performed practice, has greatly influenced my research to show that the hand bridges the gap between subject/object and exterior/interior in the early modern world.²⁹ Critical works on touch, an essential dimension for understanding the early modern hand, reveal how hands were associated with sensuality, carnality, divinity and contagion. The edited collection *The Book of Touch* (2005) and *The Deepest Sense* (2012) by Constance Classen have been instrumental in guiding my interpretation

²⁸ Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993); Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1996); Katherine A. Craik, *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Mary Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

²⁹ The hand figures in human cognitive, physical and emotional development and such works have helped me understand the hand’s features and distinctiveness from medical, anatomical and philosophical perspective. See Sir Charles Bell, *The Hand: Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments* (London: Pickering, 1837); John Napier, *Hands*, ed. by Russell H. Tuttle (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980); Frank R. Wilson, *The Hand: How Its Uses Shapes the Brain, Language, and Human Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998); *Psychobiology of the Hand*, ed. by Kevin J. Connolly (London: Mac Keith Press, 1998); Raymond Tallis, *The Hand: A Philosophical Inquiry into Human Being* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003); Darian Leader, *Hands: What We Do with Them – and Why* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2016)

of the rich sense of touch.³⁰ Classen's work covers touch from the medieval time period through to technological modernity and has opened up space for my discussion about the vast complex operations and implications of touch for masculine and feminine identities formed by the hand. Charting the range of touch principally in the early modern period Marjorie Boyle's *Senses of Touch* (1998) and Elizabeth Harvey's edited collection *Sensible Flesh* (2003), both covering religious, literary, rhetorical, legal, theological and medical texts, offer an interdisciplinary framework that informs my reading of the hand's central role to touch and its intricate and often contradictory operations in the early modern period.³¹

The study of touch has been central to my own work alongside works on cognition and sensation, performance theory and actor-spectator experience such as David Bevington's *Action is Eloquence* (1984) which has guided my research as to the potential of the staging of hands in the early modern theatre by space, hand-props, costume and expression.³² With respect to Elizabethan hand gestures more specifically Mary Hazard's view in *Elizabethan Silent Language* (2000), that to read the hand as a 'rich medium' takes into account 'the text, the subtext, and the cultural context for what was written, said, or enacted, and for what was left literally unrecorded, unsaid, or invisible', has framed my own reading of Elizabeth I's manual gestures.³³ More recently *Shakespeare and Gesture in Practice* (2016)

³⁰ *The Book of Touch*, ed. by Constance Classen (New York: Berg, 2005) and Constance Classen, *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2012) See also *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*, ed. by David Howes (New York: Berg, 2005); Constance Classen and David Howes, *Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses in Society* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014) and Pablo Maurette, *The Forgotten Sense: Meditations on Touch* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018)

³¹ *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth Harvey (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) and Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, *Senses of Touch: Human Dignity and Deformity from Michelangelo and Calvin* (Leiden: Brill, 1998)

³² David M. Bevington, *Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984)

³³ Mary Hazard, *Elizabethan Silent Language* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), p. 12.

by Darren Tunstall has guided how I consider gestures as tools of communication through the actor's body. Tunstall's understanding that gestures can reflect the mind as embodiments of cognitive acts and so can impact the minds and reactions of early modern spectators forms a theoretical base in my study of the staged hand.³⁴ This notion is explored in Evelyn Tribble's integral development of cognitive theory in *Cognition in the Globe* (2011) and *Early modern actors and Shakespeare's theatre* (2017) which develops the term 'kinesic intelligence' on the early modern stage.³⁵ The concept of 'kinesic intelligence', built upon a foundation of training and practice, helps to explain how early modern players moved their bodies and how spectators may have responded by behavioural mirroring or mimicry. Tribble explains:

Mindful bodily skills such as gesture, dance and swordplay were crucial forms of kinesic intelligence honed by the early modern player within particular cognitive ecologies of skilled practice; they taught not simply the skills themselves but an entire way of being in the world, including wit, timing, grace and skilful coordination with others.³⁶

This point is expanded upon by Tribble as she discusses the affective labour on the early modern stage and the spectator's relationship with actor as 'skilled spectatorship'. I draw upon the terms 'kinesic intelligence' and 'skilled spectatorship' to explore the feeling, thinking and remembering hand on the early modern stage.³⁷ This hand was engaged in a particular kind of affective practice and the importance of physical external objects, those which the hand holds, become tied to cognition and are able to forge relationships with the self and others.

³⁴ Darren Tunstall, *Shakespeare and Gesture in Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)

³⁵ Evelyn Tribble, *Cognition in the Globe: attention and memory in Shakespeare's theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

³⁶ Evelyn Tribble, *Early modern actors and Shakespeare's theatre: thinking with the body* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11, 18.

As well as cognitive perceptions of the body, works that explore the dramatic power of gesture and the body in relation to space and place offer insight into how the body's expressive movements can mark moral complexities in performance. Miranda Fay Thomas' *Shakespeare's Body Language* (2019), for example, has given me a new understanding of the physiological implications of shaming gestures on the early modern stage by gestures such as thumb-biting in *Romeo and Juliet* and hand-washing in *Macbeth*.³⁸ In terms of spatial apprehension Andrew Bozio's work *Thinking Through Place on the Early Modern English Stage* (2020), and his claim that theatrical performance could alter how playgoers experienced and navigated their own embodied approach to environments in early modern England, has influenced my considerations of the hand's active agency.³⁹

Cumulatively, the varied approaches to reading and understanding the body have formed a foundational ground for my work by 'thinking *with* the body'. My thesis takes a new direction by approaching modern philosophy and medicine alongside works of early modern physicians, thinkers and dramatists. Particularly by thinking with *my own* body, my injured right hand, I demonstrate the rich multiplicity of the hand in early modern drama and culture.

³⁸ Miranda Fay Thomas, *Shakespeare's Body Language: Shaming Gestures and Gender Politics on the Renaissance Stage* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019)

³⁹ Andrew Bozio, *Thinking Through Place on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)



Early Modern Hand Studies

The subject of the premodern hand and the inexhaustible interest hands held for early modern artists and writers is ‘grasping’ critical attention. Jonathan Goldberg’s *Writing Matter* (1990) indicates the importance of the writing hand and its material practices, institutions and ideologies in the early modern period by sociological and ethnographic analysis.⁴⁰ My use of phenomenological theory allows for a new perception of the handiwork of writing as the hand is the connecting point between subject and object and intergral to understanding the phenomenological term ‘being-with’. I show how the phenomenological relationship between the hand and the pen can open up understandings of lived experience and enable subjects to establish social relationships and form subjectivities. I show that writing, as a manual skill, is critical to the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge in the early modern period. Katherine Rowe’s chapter entitled ‘God’s handy worke’, in David Hillman and Carla Mazzio’s edited collection *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (1997), alongside her work *Dead Hands* (1999), guides my reading of the disembodied ghostly hand and how severed hands challenge conceptions of bodily agency and experience.⁴¹ Furthermore, the specialist focus on the representation of the premodern hand and hapticity in Claire Richter Sherman’s *Writing on Hands* (2000) has been a vital resource for this thesis. Produced from an exhibition curated by Sherman, the work showcases the plethora of images of hands with

⁴⁰ Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990)

⁴¹ Katherine Rowe, “‘God’s handy worke’: Divine Complicity and the Anatomist’s Touch,” in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 287-309 (p. 288).

inscriptions that survive from the premodern period.⁴² The work catalogues over eighty printed images, from 1466-1700, to examine the hand as central to ‘the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge’.⁴³ Sherman divides the book into six major themes relating to human experience and culture, from anatomy to alchemy and mathematics to music, to show the connections between the hand, the brain, memory and the senses. The various pictorial mediums exhibited, such as illustration, woodcut and painting, have been critical to my research practice. I have read Sherman’s selection of premodern iconography using phenomenology to provide new textual analysis which situates the hand, that functions as a metonym for both mind and body, to be the most pivotal body part on the early modern stage.

To date, in terms of the study of hands on the early modern stage, Farah Karim-Cooper’s work *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage* (2016) is the only book-length study on the subject and will be referred to throughout my own investigation into the early modern hand. Karim-Cooper’s analysis of the hand’s ability to acquire knowledge, skill and memory has been an invaluable starting-point for this thesis. I agree with her suggestion that Shakespeare would have been aware of the materiality of the glove due to his father’s, John Shakespeare’s, trade as glover and whittawer and, by extension, would understand the hand’s primacy and ability to ‘transmit meanings beyond those codified in medieval and Renaissance courtesy manuals and art’.⁴⁴

Karim-Cooper’s work begins with an examination of the Dutch printmaker Hendrick Goltzius’ drawing ‘Right Hand’ (1588), which stands as a self-portrait

⁴² The exhibition opened in 1991 by the Ontario Science Centre and was moved to the Smithsonian Institution’s Experimental Gallery in the Arts and Industries Building in 1992.

⁴³ Claire Richter Sherman, *Writing on Hands: Memory and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Washington DC: University of Washington Press, 2000), p. 7.

⁴⁴ Farah Karim-Cooper, *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 2.

visualising Goltzius' lived experience. The drawing gestures to the accident he had as a child that permanently injured his right hand.⁴⁵ Here the hand's versatility and extensive agency is clear; the hand is a fundamental marker of interaction with the world and an agent of learning. It can enable how the subject is perceived by others and how the subject can perceive their own embodied self. She then discusses the theology of the early modern hand, that was perceived as a 'bodily reminder of God'.⁴⁶ This argument has been previously considered by critics such as Katherine Rowe and Marjorie Boyle.

In order to create new readings of the staged hand I employ phenomenological analysis to deepen understanding of how the hand functions in two complementary ways: as sacred instrument and as constitutive of mind/spirit and body/soul in visual art, illustration, dramatic and non-dramatic texts. Phenomenology offers a sophisticated means to understand the relationship between views of the hand that appear paradoxical.

Karim-Cooper's work then addresses the feminine hand in social rituals and the beauty treatises and recipes used by women of the period, a subject which follows her earlier publication *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (2006).⁴⁷ She explores the erotic qualities of the feminine hand alongside the materiality of the handkerchief and glove in Shakespeare's works such as *Richard III* and *Othello*. Using apposite non-dramatic intertexts, such as *The Book of the Courtier* (1528) by Gonzaga and Thomas Becon's *The Catechism* (1564), Karim-Cooper demonstrates the significance of the early modern hand and staging conventions, such as costume and space, over the last twenty years of performance

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

⁴⁷ Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006)

at the Globe Theatre and Sam Wanamaker Playhouse and examples of Johann de Witt's drawing of the Swan Theatre (1596) and Henry Peacham's scene from *Titus Andronicus* are effectively employed.

Karim-Cooper suggests that gestures 'act as emotional transmitters' and, as such, gestures embedded in narrative bodies function in three ways:

[T]hey tell us something about how bodies interacted and socialized through hands and the sense of touch in early modern England; they are vehicles that advance the plot; most importantly, they represent passionate exchanges and signify broader concerns in the plays in which they occur.⁴⁸

These principles establish the hand's centrality and importance.

I offer a new perspective to this argument by the phenomenological shared body schema and mirror neuron theory. Both phenomenological theory and contemporary science inhabit similar territory and I suggest the hand can stimulate intense emotional responses, in spite of the playgoers' awareness of fictionality which rules in the playhouse. Furthermore, my own research adopts a fundamentally different approach to Karim-Cooper's by undertaking a detailed study of Merleau-Ponty and Nancy's conception of intercorporeity or double touching and the division of boundaries between self/other where the hand is simultaneously agent and object in order to produce a deeper understanding of early modern women's hands as represented on stage.⁴⁹ Early modern women's hands are situated within a paradox, between passivity *and* activity. This analysis of touching/being touched is referred to throughout my thesis with reference to emotional affect and by the hand's role in creating an emotional-physical simultaneity with actors and spectators during performance.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 141.

⁴⁹ Karim-Cooper briefly references phenomenology in one sentence but does not enlighten the reader further, p. 160.

The final chapter of Karim-Cooper's work turns to the performance of dismemberment. This principally focuses on the 2014 performance of *Titus Andronicus*, directed by Lucy Bailey, where spectators reacted viscerally to the bloodshed by vomiting or fainting. Here Karim-Cooper very briefly mentions the potential for reading early modern texts with symptomatic conditions, such as phantom limb syndrome, but does not expand in much detail.⁵⁰ I offer a new perspective to this by using Merleau-Ponty's understanding of phantom limb syndrome and anosognosia to understand the political, social and religious powers contained within detached phantom limbs in early modern drama. Phenomenology helps us see new dimensions into the emotional affect of the detached limb on the early modern stage from that which is purely theatrical. I show that the staged phantom limb has both transgressive and collaborative qualities alongside transformative powers that can be appropriated for personal and political gain. I focus on phantom limb syndrome by phenomenological theory alongside my 'first-hand' experience of the treatment I received at Salisbury District Hospital and employ my injured hand to point to new ways to feel, explore, manipulate and grasp early modern texts.



A Hands-On Understanding of Phenomenology

I view my hand as a separate entity following my accident, an object to reflect on, something exterior and unfamiliar. I still feel keenly the 'strangeness' of my right hand and its numbness has become proof of its disconnection from my body. My study of the hand, then, in particular the injured or absent hand in Chapter Three, is shaped around my own personal experience. I follow Havi Carel's work *Illness: The Cry of the Flesh* (2008) which privileges the phenomenological model for

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.10.

‘discerning, ordering and describing’ human experience.⁵¹ After being diagnosed with lymphangiomyomatosis, Carel describes the feeling of being ‘locked’ inside her body, ‘trapped by her feeble lungs’, and recounts the ‘simple action’ of grasping a ribbon, the very same task I undertook during my rehabilitation process.

Carel states:

My effort to grasp a ribbon, a simple action, becomes the explicit object of learning. It is the process of routine actions becoming explicit and artificial that faces the ill person to suddenly become aware of what Sartre calls the “taken for grantedness” of the body. Illness can play a unique instructive role by forcing the ill person to devise new ways of achieving a goal.⁵²

Just as Carel’s physiological experience of living with a degenerative and potentially fatal illness guided her writing, for me the rehabilitation process compelled me to reflect on my phenomenological relationship of being-in-the-world. I employ Carel’s methodology and draw upon personal experience in dialogue with medical, phenomenological and theoretical discourses as analytical tools. Disability scholars, like Carel, recognise the value of phenomenological theory as an intrinsic part of their work and critics of early modern literature have recently focused attention on historical and literary representations of disability.⁵³

The accident and treatment I underwent during rehabilitation put me in direct touch with the work of Merleau-Ponty and his understanding that we are able to comprehend the sensory, motor and haptic structures of embodied experience by the conscious understanding of *our* body inhabiting space. One of the images that has stayed with me from my time in rehabilitation is a three-dimensional model of the motor-sensory *homunculus* – the little man in the brain –

⁵¹ Havi Carel, *Illness: The Cry of the Flesh* (Durham: Acumen, 2008), p. 6.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 104-106.

⁵³ For an extensive overview of works see Elizabeth Beardon, *Monstrous Kinds: Body, Space, and Narrative in Renaissance Representations of Disability* (USA: University of Michigan Press, 2019)

depicting how the body would look if each part grew proportional according to the brain. Notice the over-representation of the hands:

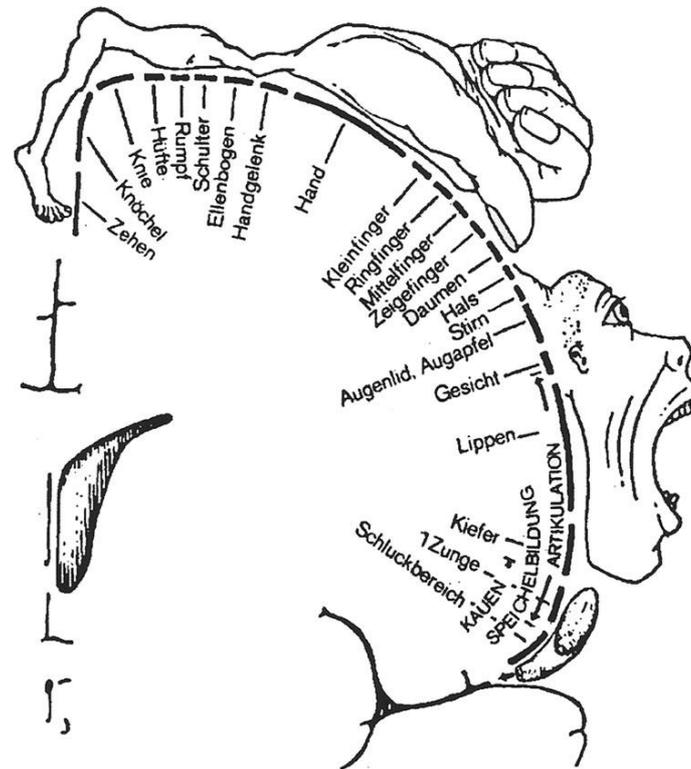


Figure 4: W. Penfield and T. Rasmussen ‘The sensory homunculus’⁵⁴

My autonomy and sense of selfhood has been challenged by the loss of my hand’s agency and disrupted my kinaesthetic awareness of my body’s relationship with space. My ‘body schema’, or ‘intentional arc’ as Merleau-Ponty terms it, that ‘projects around us our past, our future, our human milieu, our physical situation, our ideological situation, and our moral situation’ (137) had to be understood anew.

Furthermore, when thinking about my experience alongside Leroi-Gourhan’s ideas on technicity, I sense a detachment from my ability to create, use tools and interact with objects. I view my hand as something I can no longer trust, a hand I no longer know. Although my hand remains visually intact, my experience corresponds with Merleau-Ponty’s conceptions of phantom limb syndrome and

⁵⁴ W. Penfield and T. Rasmussen, ‘Illustration 26b’, in *The Cerebral Cortex of Man: A Study of Localization of Function* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p. 119.

prostheses, most pertinently felt during the time my hand was placed into a splint for six months. The splint became part of my body schema, changing how I moved and interacted with the world. The nexus between my ‘habitual body’ and ‘lived body’ had to be reconnected. Indeed, the fact I have permanently lost the sense of touch in my right hand remains to be fully comprehended by myself even to this day. The section below outlines the key theorists and theoretical frameworks of phenomenology, post-phenomenology, *techné* and technicity used throughout my thesis to read early modern scripts.



Theoretical Framework

Edmund Husserl’s understanding in *Logical Investigations* (1900-1), that ‘we must go back to the “things themselves”’, sets the foundation of the phenomenological tradition.⁵⁵ In *Ideas II* Husserl calls the moment at the intertwining of touch and kinaesthesia to be *sensings* (*Empfindnisse*) which bring together the notion of the hand, exposed to touch, providing a sense of self and lived experience (*Erlebnis*). He uses the example of moving his hand over the table when he gains an ‘experience of it and its thingly determinations’ whilst, at the same time, paying attention to his hand and the touch-sensations ‘of smoothness and coldness, etc’:

Lifting a thing, I experience its weight, but at the same time I have weight-sensations localized in my Body. And thus, my Body’s entering into physical relations (by striking, pressing, pushing, etc.) with other material things provides in general not only the experience of physical occurrences, related to the Body and to things, but also the experience of specifically Bodily occurrences of the type we call *sensings*. Such occurrences are missing in “merely” material things.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901), ed. by Dermot Moran, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 168.

⁵⁶ Husserl, *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy: Second book, studies in the phenomenology of constitution*, trans. by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), p. 146.

For Husserl, kinaesthesia, such as moving the hand or lifting an object, relates to the way in which the body understands itself and the world. Martin Heidegger expands on this notion through the terminological understanding of ‘Dasein’ which, he postulates, ‘exists in the manner of *being-in-the-world*’ and this ‘*basic determination of its existence is the presupposition for being able to apprehend anything at all.*’⁵⁷ Punctuating the term with hyphens represents being-in-the-world as fixed to a singular, unified meaning whereby existence and the ability to know is analogous with understanding the self and the world.

In his work *What Is Called Thinking?* Heidegger reflects on ‘Dasein’ absorption and the technical construction of the self in tools, such as hammers, and by manual labour roles, such as cabinet making. For Heidegger it is by means of action and activity [*Handlung*] that we are able to engage and interact with things that are ready-to-hand [*Zuhandenheit*] and he uses the example of the action of hammering to suggest it ‘uncovers the specific “manipulability” [*Handlichkeit*] of the hammer.’⁵⁸ Heidegger positions thinking in relation to the actions of an apprentice cabinet maker. The craftsman learns how to build the cabinet by their response to the material ‘ready-to-hand’, the selection of different wood and the surfaces they interact with thus ‘maintains the whole craft’.⁵⁹ Heidegger suggests that the process of thinking must first begin with learning ‘to answer to whatever essentials address themselves to us.’⁶⁰ Thinking, like the process of cabinet making, is thus addressed as a kind of practice or handicraft [*Handwerk*]. For

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 164 (original emphasis).

⁵⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1927), trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 98.

⁵⁹ Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* (1952), trans. by J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row), p. 379.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Heidegger, '[m]an himself acts (*handelt*) through the hand; for the hand is, together with the word, the essential distinction of man.'⁶¹

Merleau-Ponty begins from, and develops, phenomenological discussions found in Husserl and Heidegger's writings and would have been familiar with the established discussions of embodiment and consciousness found in Descartes, Maine de Biran, Jean-Louis Chrétien, Paul Ricœur and others. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty extends the concept of 'being-in-the-world' through his understanding of the body as our expression in the world which registers and defines the individual's spatial, somatic experience. He understands that 'we grasp space through our bodily situation' and so a corporeal or postural schema gives us a 'global, practical and implicit' notion of the relation between body and things:

A system of possible movements, or 'motor projects,' radiates from us to our environment. Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space. It applies itself to space like a hand to an instrument, and when we wish to move about we do not move the body as we move an object. [...] Now if perception is thus the common act of all our motor and affective functions, no less than the sensory, we must rediscover the structure of the perceived world through a process similar to that of an archaeologist. (5)

Here Merleau-Ponty describes the hand as an epistemological tool that is primarily sensory and that functions as a pointer or indicator for the way the rest of the body behaves. The movement and dexterity of the hand enables active exploration which can extract information from objects in the environment. The role of the archaeologist is to examine ancient sites and objects in order to discover and understand the past. The action of the archaeologists' hands is to uncover, interpret and preserve archaeological remains in order to understand both the world we inhabit today and the world we inhabited in the past. For Merleau-Ponty, the hand is the primary tool whereby the feeling body becomes not an object of the world

⁶¹ Heidegger, *Parmenides* (1942-43), trans. by Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1992), pp. 80-81.

but rather ‘as a means of communicating with it’ (87). The hand produces a body-in-the-world that is ‘no longer seen as a sum of determinate objects, but as a latent horizon of our experience, itself also ceaselessly present, before all determinate thought’ (92). This corporeal foundation for identity constitutes a ‘latent horizon’ of early modern self-consciousness of preserved historical artefacts and manuscripts that demonstrate some of the finest examples of the technicity of the hand.

Indeed, as historical phenomenology studies show, it is crucial to read sensory history to understand and approach life in the past. As Holly Dugan notes, to examine the biological operations of sensation as a simultaneous subjective and social experience offers ‘a wide range of information about life in the past’.⁶² To focus on the past through reading the hand as haptic perceptual agent, then, allows us to touch ‘the present yet sense the past’ and re-illuminates the tactile sense that is alive in early modern dramatic printed texts.⁶³ Further to Dugan’s approach, I follow Bruce Smith’s examination of historical phenomenology in *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (2010) to develop original ways of ‘knowing’ early modern drama ‘through-the-body’.⁶⁴ Examining the early modern hand by this framework allows us to uncover, interpret, preserve and experience the early modern world. To introduce the key terminology, as a tool for reading early modern drama and performance in the chapters that follow, I will now outline terms used by Merleau-Ponty such as motor/body intentionality, habitual/present body, body schema, *chiasm*/intertwining, gap [*écart*], alongside Nancy’s ideas of touch and exteriorization/individuation, *techné* and Derrida and Leroi-Gourhan’s writings on

⁶² Holly Dugan, ‘Shakespeare and the Senses’, in *Literature Compass*, 6, 3 (2009), 726-740 (p. 727).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 735.

⁶⁴ Bruce R. Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), p. 122.

technicity before finally returning to Merleau-Ponty to analyse phantom limb syndrome.



Motor/Body Intentionality

Merleau-Ponty draws on Husserl and Heidegger and employs the term ‘motor intentionality’. This is ‘the life of consciousness—epistemic life, the life of desire, or perceptual life’ underpinned by:

[A]n intentional arc which projects around us our past, our future, our human milieu, our physical situation, our ideological situation, and our moral situation, or rather, that ensures that we are situated within all these relationships. This intentional arc creates the unity of the senses, the unity of the senses with intelligence, and the unity of sensitivity and motricity. (137)

The ‘intentional arc’ suggests a self-awareness through material knowingness which allows the living body a position in the world in relation to time, space, culture and being. The term ‘intentional’ is etymologically derived from the Latin verb ‘*intendere*’ meaning to ‘point to’ or ‘aim at’ and so implies action, volition and engagement in the material world. To investigate staged hands in the early modern period it is necessary to engage with the interface of the material and physical, corporeal world. The index finger is the finger which points or indicates and the hand is an active agent whereby the subject is able to make sense of bodily movements and unify them into ‘meaningful action’ (136). He suggests that:

Insofar as I have a body and insofar as I act in the world through it, space and time are not for a mere summation of juxtaposed points, and no more are they, for that matter, an infinity of relations synthesised by my consciousness in which my body would be implicated. I am not in space and in time, nor do I think space and time; rather, I am of space and of time; my body fits itself to them and embraces them (141).

This is consonant with social conventions and traditions across time which define an early modern sense of the self in the world. In the early modern period, people

experienced the world through their hands in social and material practice, such as: in physical environments built and non-built; households; relationships; rituals; work and art.



Habitual/Present Body

According to Merleau-Ponty the body is comprised of ‘two distinct layers’ (82), the ‘habitual’ and the ‘present’. The habitual is defined as a non-cognitive ‘motor intentionality’ (110). This is neither a form of knowledge nor an automatic reflex but rather ‘it is a question of a knowledge in our hands’ (145). The ‘habitual’ manifests itself in the perceptual or ‘present’ body, ‘that of the body at this moment’ (82). Monika Langer explicates that, with its ‘two layers’, ‘the body is the meeting place [...] of past, present and future because it is carrying forward of the past in the outlining of a future and the living bodily momentum as actual present.’⁶⁵ The habitual structure of the lived body connects the subject to the world through its operative intentionality and enables the subject to adapt to the natural and social environment and to feel at home in social and cultural space.

Operative intentionality makes embodied engagement with the surroundings an active process and implies an understanding of the lived, present body. It is the body that ‘understands the acquisition of habit’ (114). Merleau-Ponty elucidates:

I am not in front of my body, I am in my body, or rather *I am my body* [...] I do not simply contemplate the relations between the segments of my body and the correlation between my visual body and my tactile body; rather, I am myself the one who holds these arms and legs together, the one who simultaneously sees them and touches them. (151, my emphasis)

⁶⁵ Monika Langer, *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception: A Guide and Commentary* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 32.

For Merleau-Ponty we do not ‘simply contemplate’ but rather engage and act in our environment by *being* one’s own body rather than possessing it. He continues with an analysis of the hand:

What unites the “tactile sensations” of the hand and links them to the visual perceptions of the same hand and to perceptions of other segments of the body is a certain style of hand gestures, which implies a certain style of finger movements and moreover contributes to a particular fashion in which my body moves. (151)

Merleau-Ponty’s formulations of cognition as an embodied act, grounded in bodily experience through expression, inform my understanding of embodied subjectivity in early modern texts such as Bulwer’s works *Chirologia* and *Chironomia* (1644). Bulwer’s seventeenth century thesis parallels Merleau-Ponty’s writings as he too examines in detail the gestural expressivity of the human hand. For example, Bulwer describes the movement of wringing one’s hands (*Ploro*) to be taken as a representation of grief, distinctly intertwined with cognition for ‘compression of the Braine proceeds the HARD WRINGING OF THE HANDS, which is a Gesture of expression of moysture’ (28). Here cognition is connected to the human body, grounded by somatic experience and a certain style of hand gesture. The body is not merely a passive object, but an active being by its movement and gesture.

This is crucial when viewing staged gestures in performance, for example, when the Duke in Thomas Dekker’s *The Honest Whore* (1604) asks Infelice to ‘wring not thy hands’ (I.iii.60). Here his request is a stage direction for the actor and invites the audience to focus on the hands in the moment of performance. They become an expression of Infelice’s display of grief which cannot be contained or controlled because, as Bulwer clarifies, the hand’s movements are intimately linked with the compression of the brain. By reading the representation of habitual gestures, like the wringing of the hands, we are able to speculate how the hand as

agent and its gestures can constitute both the subjects enacting them and watching them.



Intercorporeity/Double Sensation

One of the central premises that will be explored in this thesis is the ambiguity between active/passive, subject/object and immanence/transcendence using Merleau-Ponty's conception of the body's 'double function', or intercorporeity, whereby the body is both a subject and an object (141, 329). To illustrate this, Merleau-Ponty uses the example of the action of touching one's right hand with one's left hand. By this, the moving hand functions as an active subject in touching, whilst it is also simultaneously a passive object being touched:

If I touch with my left hand my right hand while it touches an object, the right hand object is not the right hand touching: the first is an intertwining of bones, muscles and flesh bearing down on a point in space, the second traverses space as a rocket in order to discover the exterior object in its place. (141)

Being touched disrupts the subjectivity of the hand by its intentional activity. For Merleau-Ponty there is a gap [*écart*] between ourselves as touching and ourselves as being touched. Bruce Smith expands on this theory: 'When you touch yourself, you trouble the usual distinction between subject [...] and object [...] What comes in between the toucher and the touched [...] defies the rational mind.'⁶⁶ This image of our left hand touching our right hand represents the body's ability to be both a perceiving object (the touched) and a knowing subject (the toucher) of perception in perpetual oscillation. Using Merleau-Ponty's account of 'double sensation', I rethink early modern embodiment beyond the dichotomies of not only mind/body but also of subject/object and activity/passivity. This premise is significant to explore the early modern feminine hand that can both be acted upon and acting as well as perceived and able to perceive.

⁶⁶ Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare*, p. xviii.



Body Schema

Merleau-Ponty formulates the term the ‘body schema’ (100) to explain how the individual is able to orient their body within the environment: ‘I hold my body as an indivisible possession and I know the position of each of my limbs through a *body schema* [*un schéma corporeal*] that envelops them all’ (101-2). He describes the action of standing in front of his desk and leaning on it with both hands:

[O]nly my hands are accentuated and my whole body trails behind them like a comet’s tail. I am not unaware of the location of my shoulders or my waist; rather, this awareness is enveloped in the awareness of my hands and my entire stance is read, so to speak, in how my hands lean upon the desk (116).

The tactual and haptic perception of the desk is tied to the perception of the body. The moment one’s hand touches an object results in an immediate awareness of one’s body schema, the body’s positioning which he describes as ‘like a comet’s tail.’⁶⁷ In the early modern period, Crooke likewise read the human hand by its ability to touch. He wrote in 1615:

This touching vertue or tactive quality can be diffused through the whole body both within and without [...] yet we do more curiouslie and exquisitely feele and discern both the first and second qualities which strike the sense in the Hand than in other parts.⁶⁸

Crooke understands touch as felt throughout the whole body. However, by the hand’s ability to touch, grasp, reach, hold and decipher, it is the hand that becomes the foremost sensory part of the body. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty’s work outlines the effects of the hand’s touch to perceive the contour and spatiality of one’s own body:

There is, on the one hand, my arm as the support of these familiar acts, my body as the power of determinate action whose field and scope I know in advance, and my surroundings as the collection of possible points for this

⁶⁷ Husserl uses the term ‘comet’s tail’ when discussing memory of the lived present that can retain elements of the past. He distinguishes between primary and secondary remembrance. The ‘comet’s tail’ is the retention of the ‘just past’ within the present that is joined to every actual perception. See Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, trans. by John Barnett Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), p. 37.

⁶⁸ Crooke, p. 730.

power to be applied; there is, on the other hand, my arm as a machine of muscles of bone, as a flexing and extending apparatus, as an articulated object, and the world as a pure spectacle with which I do not merge but that I contemplate and point to. (108)

Here he understands the body to be simultaneously subject and object. He describes the awareness of the surroundings by which the body's parts that 'envelop each other' hold immediate agency and control by the 'power of determinate' habitual acts. At the same time the body is an 'articulated object,' an instrument that is made up of muscles, able to flex and extend.

Merleau-Ponty draws on this distinction in *The Visible and the Invisible* (1969) to suggest the hand is an active agent that can inspect and explore the facets of the objects that surround it by motricity and the sense of touch. The hand 'touches itself, sees itself. And consequently, it is capable of touching or seeing something, that is, of being open to the things in which it reads its own modifications.'⁶⁹ The body's touching and seeing of itself, he continues, 'is not an act, it is being at (*être a*)' and to 'touch oneself, to see oneself, accordingly, is not to apprehend oneself as an object, it is to be open to oneself, destined to oneself.'⁷⁰ Touching and touched can never fully coincide or be separated as 'the touching is never exactly the touched.'⁷¹ I examine this further through the staged hands of actor and spectator. The 'double function' is understood by the relationship the actors hold with the spectators and, conversely, the relationship the spectators hold with the actors.



Hands of the Actor and Spectator

⁶⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 249.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 254.

Employing Merleau-Ponty's understanding of a proprioceptive and kinaesthetic knowingness through a body schema, I explore the illusion of a shared body schema between actor and spectator whereby the body performs *vis-à-vis* both object and subject roles. I suggest that it is through the playgoer's understanding of their own body and their lived experience that the hand gestures on stage would affect members of the early modern audience to react viscerally and consciously and empathise with the actor.

Merleau-Ponty's argument that 'attention to life is the awareness we experience of "nascent movement" in our bodies' (90-91) is further expanded with the concept of the artifice of gesture and mimicry in relation to the actor's body that performs on stage. He considers this by examining the spatiality of the body and motricity of 'role play' in relation to the role of the soldier:

When the normal subject executes the military salute on command, he sees nothing there but an experimental situation, he thus reduces the movement to its most significant elements and does not fully place himself in the situation. He role plays with his own body, he amuses himself by playing the soldier, he "irrealizes" himself in the role of the soldier just as the actor slides his real body into "the great phantom" of the character to be performed. The normal subject and the actor do not take the imaginary situations as real, but inversely they detach their real body from its living situation in order to make it breathe, speak, and, if need be, cry in the imaginary. (107)

Applying this theory to a theatrical context, the actor's gestural discourse (the military salute on command) enables them to detach themselves from their 'real' body and situate themselves within a fictional environment. Being both embodied and dis-embodied implies that the actor is a doubled subject. Merleau-Ponty describes the ghostly bodily presence of the fictional character the actor embodies as "the great phantom" (107). The active hand as motor is the engine whereby the actor is able to interact and reach out to their fictional and material environment in the theatre. The play in performance displays the hand as the tool for both

accidental and deliberate touch. The deliberate, active touch when reaching out gives human beings a cognitive relationship with the outside world. This further applies to the hands of the actors that ‘reach out’ to the spectators as the primary tool for creating powerful, emotional responses.

The actor’s hands hold expressive power and agency able to, as Evelyn Tribble succinctly puts it, spread the ‘word [...] into the world’.⁷² Tribble’s work explores the connections between cognitive science and early modern performance studies, with close analysis of Shakespeare’s acting company and historical cognitive activity to recognise ‘the profound importance of social and environmental shaping’ that can alter according to varying elements such as artefacts, stage space and actor-audience relationships.⁷³ I follow Tribble’s view that the training of attention, or ‘skilled viewing’, is ‘a practice sedimented in the body’ and the physical skills that dwell in ‘interstices, in stage directions and implied action’ of and by the hand can reveal ‘elements of early modern theatricality that have been overlooked.’⁷⁴ The growing body of research into cognition and performance suggests that ‘when we observe the action of another, we access our embodied kinaesthetic memory in order to retrieve a simulation of that action, and so our brains respond in a way similar to when we ourselves

⁷² Tribble, *Cognition in the Globe*, p. 105. See also Susan Goldin-Meadow, *Hearing Gesture: How Our Hands Help Us Think* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003), p. 163.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8. See also Mary Thomas Crane, *Shakespeare’s Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001); *Shakespeare and Character: Theory, History, Performance and Theatrical Persons*, ed. by P. Yachnin and J. Slights (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Amy Cook, *Shakespearean Neuroplay: Reinvigorating the Study of Dramatic Texts and Performance through Cognitive Science* (US: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Raphael Lyne, *Shakespeare, Rhetoric and Cognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Raphael Lyne, ‘The Shakespearean Grasp’, in *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 42 (2013), 38-61.

⁷⁴ Evelyn Tribble, *Early Modern Actors and Shakespeare’s Theatre*, p. 18 and ‘Skill’, in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. by Henry S. Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 173-189 (p. 174).

execute the movement observed,' that is known as the phenomenon of mirror neurons.⁷⁵

Neil Forsyth explains that mirror neurons 'make our brains, our embodied minds, act as if we ourselves are experiencing whatever that other person is experiencing.'⁷⁶ Cognitive scholars have suggested that mirror neuron theory, based on research on macaque monkeys which are a species not known for imitative behaviour, is still being defined and understood. However, recent studies have shown that the monkey and human mirror neuron systems are different. The human system 'responds to empty-handed gestures, [...] to movements made in the air, simulating actions made on an object but without having the object present'.⁷⁷ Applying these ideas in a theatrical context, I follow Bruce McConachie's view that our 'ability to empathise with the experiences of others through mirroring is the cognitive hook that impels spectator interest in the activities of actor/characters and engages us in the unfolding narrative of the play.'⁷⁸ The action and perception of the hand allows the audience to perceive action on stage as motor mimicry by a shared body schema. Through the spectators' understanding of their own hands, body and lived experience, the hand gestures on stage would, inherently and unavoidably, trigger reactions of empathy.

Actor and director Rick Kemp's *Embodied Acting* (2012) outlines what mirror neurons can tell us about performance and recalls an fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) study of dancers trained in the styles of ballet and

⁷⁵ *Movement in Renaissance Literature: Exploring Kinesic Intelligence*, ed. by Kathryn Banks and Timothy Chesters (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 4.

⁷⁶ Neil Forsyth, 'The Tell-Tale Hand: Gothic Narratives and the Brain', in *Text Matters*, 6, 6 (2016), 95-113 (p. 109).

⁷⁷ Erica A. Cartmill, Sian Beilock and Susan Goldin-Meadow, 'A word in the hand: action, gesture and mental representation in humans and non-human primates', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* (2012) <<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rstb.2011.0162>> [accessed 20 March 2018].

⁷⁸ Bruce McConachie, *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 18.

capoeira which ‘showed that they displayed more neuronal activity when watching dance in their own style than the other,’ whilst both groups of dancers exhibited ‘more neuronal activity than a control group of non-dancers.’⁷⁹ This data suggests that mirror neurons are more likely to fire in response to observed action that is already recognised, familiar or known in the observer. Such cognitive readings have enabled me to understand how bodily movements can shape meaning and, predominantly, how the hand has an ability to demonstrate intention and emotion and how this can illuminate early modern dramaturgy.

This thesis explores the features of mirror neuron theory, alongside Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of the actor as ‘the great phantom’. I employ the phenomenological term body schema to explore the hand’s role in creating and provoking somatic reactions on the early modern stage and how early modern staged hands could ‘hold a mirror’ to established issues and problems of the time, whether social, material or political. This would have significant implications for the spectator’s individual response framed by their own social status, for example, gender, class and ethnicity. Mirror neuron theory relates also to boy actors, as I examine closely in Chapter Two. Their hands would have been trained instruments of emotion, technicality and transference to imitate feminine behaviour from playing the role of servant to playing the role of Queen.

⁷⁹ Rick Kemp, *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience Tells Us about Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 142.



Techné

In addition to the phenomenological understanding of the hand, as a marker of being and vital for forging relationships to things and objects, the works of Nancy, Derrida, Leroi-Gourhan and Stiegler are essential to understand the significance of the early modern staged hand via *techné*/technicity, exteriorisation, individuation and community. Since the hand is the primary active instrument of touch it seems particularly strange that the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy's book *Corpus* (1992) ignores the central role of the hand. The hand haunts the text almost like a phantom limb as the instrument via which Nancy's principal extension or reaching out to 'become' is achieved. The overarching premise of Nancy's thinking about the body is founded upon the Christian conception of incarnation where spirit is made flesh in the body of Christ. Nancy outlines a deconstructive model of touch whereby we are simultaneously in touch and separated from ourselves and others. His work, nevertheless, helps to explain touch in relation to embodiment and materiality and focuses on concepts of exteriority, opening and spacing articulated by terms such as *exposure*, *exteriorisation*, *being-with*, *being singular plural*, *techné* and *sharing (partage)*.



Exteriorisation and Co-existence

Nancy understands *techné* by *partes extra partes* (parts outside parts): '[w]e are exposed together', he writes, 'body to body, edge to edge, touch and space, near in no longer having a common assumption, but having only the between-us of our tracings *partes extra partes*'⁸⁰. This is further explored by the reciprocity of touch that denotes existence: 'Being in touch with ourselves is what makes us "us", and there is no other secret to discover buried behind this very touching, behind the

⁸⁰ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, trans. by Richard A. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008) p. 91.

“with” of coexistence.’⁸¹ It is the moment when sense and matter are exposed to each other, by touch or contact, that being occurs. The self has access to its interiority by its exteriority, the resistance to touch:

[W]e only gain access to ourselves from outside. I am an outside for myself. This isn’t simply through the fact [...] that the eye doesn’t see itself, that the face is something *turned* to the exterior and that we never see it, that we never appropriate not only the face but also the whole body. This is what skin is. It’s through my skin that I touch myself. And I touch myself from outside, I don’t touch myself from inside.⁸²

Touch, then, is a fundamental aspect of ‘co-existence’ as sensing is ‘always a perception, that is, a feeling-oneself feel’ and it is through the touching-touched paradox that subjectivity is constituted as intersubjectivity.⁸³

Comparatively Nancy does write upon the hand in his later work *Noli me Tangere: On the Raising of the Body* (2003). He analyses the many artistic representations titled *Noli me tangere* (‘touch me not’) that reflect the words spoken by Jesus to Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb, Saint John’s Gospel Chapter 20 Verse 17.⁸⁴ He suggests that the hands within the paintings are not only often at the centre of the composition, but ‘they are actually like the composition itself, like the hands of the painter, who organizes and manipulates the flourish [*le délié*] of their fingers and palms.’⁸⁵ Everything, he notes, seems ‘arranged to start with the hands and to come back to them: in effect, these hands are the gestures and the signs of the intrigue of an arrival (that of Mary) and a departure (that of Jesus).’⁸⁶ The hands are ‘ready to be joined’ but also distant, ‘like the shadow and

⁸¹ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 13.

⁸² Nancy, ‘On the Soul’, in *Corpus*, pp. 122-136 (p. 128).

⁸³ Nancy, *Corpus*, p. 8.

⁸⁴ Saint John. 20-17.

⁸⁵ Jean-Luc Nancy, ‘The Hands’, in *Noli Me Tangere: On the Raising of the Body*, trans. by Sarah Clift, Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), pp. 31-38 (pp. 31-32).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

the light.’⁸⁷ Nancy’s conclusive remarks return once again to his idea of contact and separation as a form of primary social understanding.



Hands Making Selves

In contrast to Nancy, for philosophers such as Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Louis Chrétien, and Maine de Biran, the hand ‘naturally comes to mind’ because of its immediacy, proximity and presence. Jacques Derrida engages with Nancy’s underscoring of the ‘trope of touch’ in *On Touching* (2000) and draws upon the concept of *techné*. Arthur Bradley terms this to be ‘originary technicity’ which exists ‘at the heart of the phenomenology of touch’ and so ‘the immediacy, continuity and indivisibility of the touch is always mediated through alterity’, through tools and prostheses which supplement life.⁸⁸ Derrida’s engagement with Nancy is especially pertinent to my thesis because it seems to fill the anthropological gap in *Corpus* by reflections on the hand specifically as a ‘foremost instrument of analysis’ that opens ‘a feeding ground for intellect.’⁸⁹ Derrida asserts that ‘what nature puts within reach of the human hand and what it allows human beings to make *by hand*, with the hand, thanks to the hand [...] is the proper object of a pragmatic anthropology.’⁹⁰ As Bradley observes, for Derrida, the history of the hand remains ‘impossible to dissociate’ from the history of technics.⁹¹

Amidst the very contradictory trajectories within *On Touching* Derrida refers to the Kantian tradition and the belief that the ‘fundamental, founding, and

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 33.

⁸⁸ Arthur Bradley, *Originary Technicity: The Theory of Technology from Marx to Derrida* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 110.

⁸⁹ Jacques Derrida, *On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy*, trans. by Christine Irizarry (New York: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 61, 151.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 41.

⁹¹ Bradley, p. 110.

originary signification of touch [...] is the hand, the human hand—the fingers and the fingertips’. These nerve endings, he continues:

[I]nform us, human beings, about the form of a solid body. [...] This way, no doubt: if it is nature that has provided the hand, so to speak, it has given it to human beings only; and by thus making man beings, it has then allowed them freely to make themselves, particularly through objective knowledge, the guiding thread of this analysis. And what Kant analyzes is not the structure of the papillae and the nervous system, or the link with thought, and so forth; rather, it is what human beings *make with their hands*. It comes down to their phenomenal experience of the hand, as it were.⁹²

Derrida extends this to suggest that it is only by the action of the hand coming into contact with other surfaces that we are able to conceive and perceive the body. He explains this by the ‘three beats of the human hand’:

The expression “on my hand” comes up three times to scan a theatrical action, that is going into action, and more literally into surgery, this manual operation that carries the hand forward and puts it in contact with a foreign body.

Resistance, then *effort*—as if everything went by way of the hand, the human hand, the three beats of the human hand. Starting with *moi*, with the genesis of *moi*—as willing motor subject.

A. *First beat*: “If one places on my hand an object whose surface is rough...”

It is the moment of pure, purely passive sensation, the “part of feeling.” The motor faculty is still “paralyzed,” the ego is not distant from its modifications.

B. *Second beat*: “If the object is left *on my hand*, supposing it to have a certain weight...” (Here the concept of weighing, [...] also carries over to the hand.) I feel a “force opposed to mine” but it is not yet the *ego* acting to raise or to hold back my arm, even if I already know that there is something outside of me [that] challenges all the “sophisms of idealism.”

C. *Third beat*: “If—the object still remaining *on my hand*—I wish to close the hand, and if, while my fingers are folding back upon themselves, and their movement is suddenly stopped by an obstacle on which they press and [that] thwarts [...] them, a new judgement is necessary; *this is not I*. There is a very distinct impression of solidity, of resistance, which is composed of a thwarted movement, of an *effort* [that] I make, in which I am *active*.⁹³

Here Derrida discusses the technicity of the human hand which creates consciousness and makes human beings distinct from other animals. Consciousness does not start from the inside but rather from the outside. It is the hand and its technical relationship with the world via hapticity that constructs subjectivity.

⁹² Derrida, *On Touching*, pp. 41-42 (original emphasis).

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 151 (original emphasis).

Fundamentally these ideas, in Derrida's *On Touching* and *Grammatology*, are supported by the history of technicity as the evolution of consciousness and being by French palaeoanthropologist and archeologist, André Leroi-Gourhan, and his work *Gesture and Speech* published in 1964.



Technicity

According to Leroi-Gourhan, humanity begins by prehuman man obtaining an upright stance which liberated the hands for tool-use and enabled the development of the cerebral cortex, technology and language. He argues that 'the whole of our evolution has been oriented towards placing outside ourselves what in the rest of the animal world is achieved inside by species adaption.'⁹⁴ Leroi-Gourhan's paleontological theory of human history as a process of exteriorisation focuses particularly on hands in *Gesture and Speech* where he considers the 'uniquely human phenomenon of exteriorisation of the organs involved in the carrying out of technics' from the flint tool to digital technologies.⁹⁵ For Leroi-Gourhan, 'the making of anything is a dialogue between the maker and the material employed.'⁹⁶

The French philosopher Bernard Stiegler draws upon this reading in *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus* (1998) to understand humanity as constructed by an 'originary lack'. He understands human consciousness as developed through a process of 'exteriorisation' that requires engagement with prosthetics functioning across time by being deposited in technical systems or artefacts (such as tools, paintings and archives).⁹⁷

⁹⁴ André Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, trans. by Anna Bostock Berger (London: MIT Press, 1993), p. 42.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

⁹⁷ Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. by Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 188.

Stiegler argues that prosthetics as ‘organized organic matter’ are a central facet to technical memory. Technical memory creates exteriorization that ‘enables the transmission of the individual experience of people from generation to generation, something inconceivable in animality.’⁹⁸ Stiegler employs the term ‘epiphylogenetic memories’ to account for the relationship of humanity to its technical memory. Stiegler asserts that ‘at its very origin and up until now, philosophy has repressed technics as an object of thought. Technics is the unthought’.⁹⁹ For Stiegler, the concept of technology is thus tied to the concepts of knowledge, language, humanity and time. The actions of the past permeate the present just as actions of the present will permeate the future and it is only through technics that we can perceive the passing of time.



Phantom Limb Syndrome

As the hand is so crucial to the formation of human identity a theory to explain how humans are disabled and learn to adapt in cases where one or both hands are no longer able to function is needed as a starting point to explore representations of manual dismemberment in early modern drama and culture. Phantom limb syndrome, the sensation of a body part that lingers in the mind and the body of the subject following amputation, is a useful model to adapt for analysis in this thesis. It is found in both phenomenological theory and in early modern writing, as is explained in this section. I shall begin with my own experience of this phenomenon after my accident.

Even though my dominant hand was for a time completely paralysed, I could still feel its ghostly presence when my body was prompted to act (trying to

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 37, 159.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. ix.

move my hand to open doors or answer the telephone, for example). My injuries meant I could no longer rely on the habitual. I began to understand my own body's agency and, in many ways, felt the dynamism and mutability of the phantom limb.¹⁰⁰ Even to this day my dominant hand no longer feels as though it is my own.

The persistent sensation of limbs felt post-amputation was first introduced by the sixteenth century surgeon Ambrose Paré who described and depicted the artificial hand called 'le petit Lorrain'.¹⁰¹ Paré's ideas have been theorised by Merleau-Ponty who explains the ambiguity and ambivalence which characterises such phenomena as phantom limb syndrome and anosognosia. He defines the latter as a 'forgetfulness, a negative judgement or a failure to perceive (80). Merleau-Ponty explains the sensation of the missing limb in terms of the habitual:

I know that the objects have several faces because I can move around them, and in this sense I am conscious of the world by means of my body. At the same moment that my usual world gives rise to habitual intentions in me, I can no longer actually unite with it if I have lost a limb. Manipulable objects, precisely insofar as they appear as manipulable, appeal to a hand I no longer have (84).

Here Merleau-Ponty describes the physiological impact of the phantom limb that gives form to absence and dwells in the subject's body through the haunting of its missing parts. The phantom limb is 'not a representation [...] but rather the ambivalent presence' (88). I can relate to this feeling as I have a heightened awareness of my body's limitations and newfound capabilities after my accident.

The distinction between the biological and the lived or somatically felt body explains the phantom limb to be a quasi-presence that remains 'open to all the actions of which the arm alone is capable and to say within the practical field that one had prior to the mutilation' (84). There is a paradox here whereby the

¹⁰⁰ The term 'phantom limb' was first introduced by the physician Silas Weir Mitchell after the American Civil War.

¹⁰¹ Vittoria Putti, *Historic Artificial Limbs* (New York: Paul B. Hoeber, 1930), p. 10.

biological body has no physical limb, yet the lived body feels the limb as present and frighteningly autonomous. The phantom limb is painful, itches and ‘haunts the present body’ (88) with a mind of its own. Merleau-Ponty describes patients suffering with the phantom limb in relation to anosognosia as experiencing this sensation and speaking of their arm as a ‘long and cold “serpent”’ (150). The phantom limb, that is simultaneously passive and active, comes to symbolise an inner power that cannot be constrained. Joseph Babinski, a French neurologist, builds on this idea by describing anosognosia as the inability to perceive that one side of one’s own body is paralysed and the attribution of the paralysed side to another person.¹⁰²

Neurologist Oliver Sacks describes phantom limb pain as the embodied neurological response to loss that ‘may at first feel like a normal limb, a part of the normal body image’ but, if cut off from normal sensation or action, it takes on a life of its own and ‘may assume a pathological character’.¹⁰³ The phantom limb subsumes the body, ‘becoming intrusive, “paralyzed,” deformed, or excruciatingly painful’ and can extend to, as Sacks describes, phantom fingers that may ‘dig into a phantom palm with an unspeakable, unstoppable intensity.’¹⁰⁴ I explore in Chapter Three the power of the phantom limb as grotesquely realised in early modern drama by the appearance of dismembered hands on stage. Artificial materialisations of the dismembered hand have also been used as part of patient care in modern medical research and I believe these studies offer useful insights

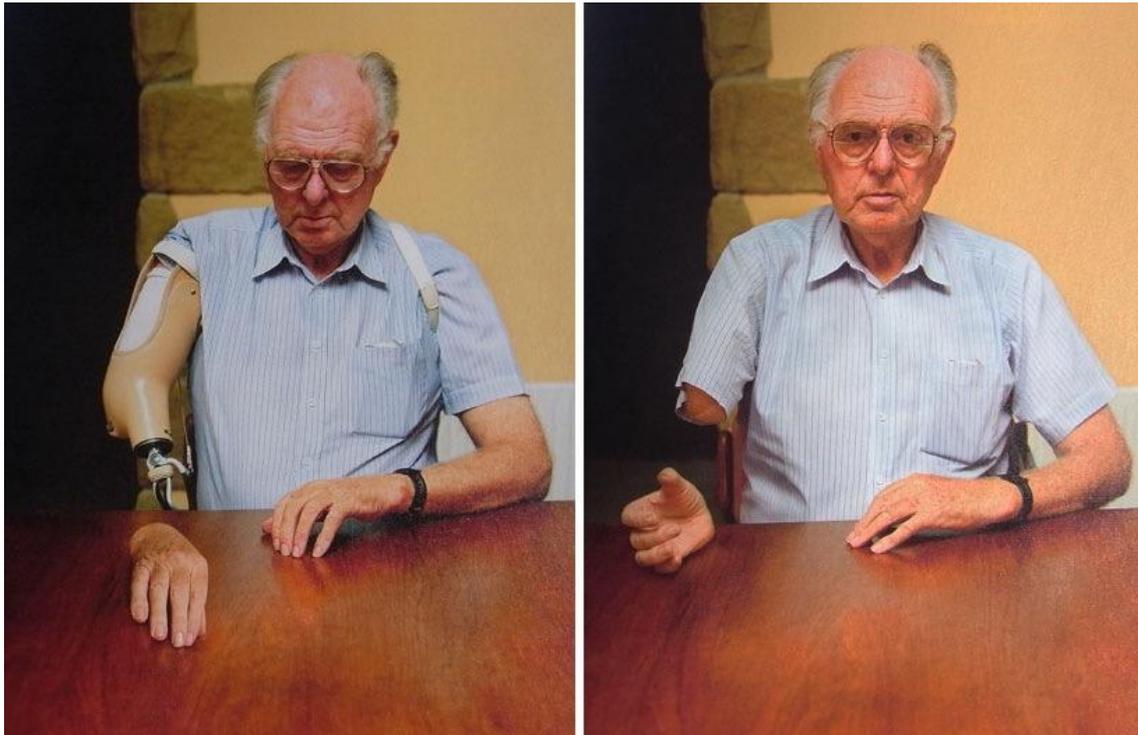
¹⁰² Joseph François Babinski, ‘Contribution to the study of the mental disorders in hemiplegia of organic cerebral origin (anosognosia)’, trans. by K.G. Langer and D.N. Levine from the original 1914 contribution ‘à l’Étude des Troubles Mentaux dans l’Hémiplégie Organique Cérébrale (Anosognosie)’, in *Cortex*, 61 (2014), 5-8. See also Patrik Vuilleumier, ‘Anosognosia: The Neurology of Beliefs and Uncertainties’, in *Cortex*, 40 (2004), 9-17.

¹⁰³ Oliver Sacks, ‘Foreword’, in Sandra Blakeslee and V.S. Ramachandran, *Phantoms in the brain: human nature and the architecture of the mind* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005) pp. vii-ix (p. vii).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

into how the hand without the body and the body without the hand might have worked in early modern drama.

In collaboration with neurologist John Kew and neuropsychologist Professor Peter Halligan, artist Alexa Wright visualises the autonomous phantom



limb that remains part of the body schema through a series of photographs and texts:

Figure 5: Alexa Wright, 'RD', *After Image* (1997) [digitally manipulated colour C Type prints (56 x 75 cm) unframed (mounted on aluminium); small text panels] London, The Wellcome Trust.

'RD' describes the sensations of phantom limb pain twenty-one months after his arm was amputated following a car accident:

The phantom is continuous; it takes the form of my hand. It is sometimes painful and sometimes just sensation. I feel I can control the movements of the hand until I suddenly realise it isn't there. The hand is slightly clenched fist, and that doesn't really change; it can only go about three quarters unclenched. The pain is mostly in the third finger; that sometimes hurts and is painful as though I had broken it. The hand is the same size as my real hand, but much

heavier. It itches a lot of the time and I want to scratch it. I can kid myself that I can make the phantom limb move. It's really just a sort of opening and closing: the hand moves from the wrist downwards, but rotation of the wrist isn't available. I have only got finger and hand joint movements. When I haven't moved it for a while it becomes stiff. I can't imagine being without the phantom because it is there all the time and it is very much like eating or breathing: I can put up with it quite adequately and would probably miss it if it went away. I might wish it wasn't so irritating, but I think I would rather keep it as it is than risk losing it.¹⁰⁵

'RD' describes the phantom limb to be a physical and sentient entity that has become fixed to his habitual existence much like eating or breathing and because of this 'RD' speaks of the phantom limb with a certain level of fondness.

There is a functionality within the phantom limb, then, a dependability on its permanence, which relates to the early modern sovereign's dependence on the invisible but productive and active hands of its counsel. The hands of the counsel are simultaneously connected to the body schema of their master, under rule and command, while also existing as disembodied and autonomous agents with wandering fingers and independent desires, that the master cannot control. I argue that in the dramatic texts phantom limbs serve a purpose, a purpose which can be intentionally subverted and appropriated. My thesis argues that such depictions of the phantom limb, at once separate yet inextricably connected to the subject's body schema, offer insightful means to analyse how severed hands and phantom limbs are deployed in material and political terms in early modern drama.

Certainly, while the subject of the early modern hand has received critical attention, the subject remains underexplored and phenomenology provides an illuminating model for analysing this. The hand's agency is critical to phenomenological thought, particularly as presented by Merleau-Ponty who describes embodied experience as a hand that touches and is touched.

¹⁰⁵ Alexa Wright, 'RD', *After Image* (1997) <<http://www.alexawright.com/after-image>> [accessed 24 July 2016].

Phenomenology reveals that the body is not merely passive but rather actively engaged as being-in-the-world. These philosophical complexities of the body-subject revealed by phenomenology gives us the tools to think about the early modern relationship between the body as subject and the body as object. Moreover, having seen how central the hand is to notions of early modern agency and subjectivity, phenomenology leads to a deeper understanding the phantom limb phenomenon. Indeed, as we will see in what follows, the literal fracture between the biological and lived body has great creative, and often disturbing, potential.



Outline of Chapters

The broad range of theoretical frameworks in the introductory chapter serve to open up deeper understandings of the way hands are represented in my selection of early modern texts. I have grouped plays together in three main areas to understand the cultural specificity, continuities, contrasts and complexities of the hand in early modern drama and culture. The opening chapter explores the figure of the active, usually masculine-gendered hand. I examine the hand's relationships with self and others in relation to the body schema and motor intentionality to suggest that the primary sense of touch, although maligned and feminised in the early modern sensorium, relates to men as much as it does to women. I draw upon the haptic and ontological instrumentality of God's hand that is at once creative, nurturing and powerful. I extrapolate this further by phenomenological discussion of the active hand, a sign of God, as a divine tool of creativity, nurture and power. The active hand in the early modern period was constitutive of mind and spirit. I use John Bulwer's *Chirologia* and *Chironomia* (1644), following his thesis that gesture 'is the only speech and generall language of Human Nature' (6), to analyse texts such as *The Winter's Tale* (1609-1611), *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614) and *Albumazar* (1614) and consider the performative and social language of the early modern hand. I further explore the spiritual hand as a moral and ethical guide by the hand of God and the significance of right and left hands in *Doctor Faustus* (1604), *The Winter's Tale* and *Albumazar*. Using mirror neuron theory and research on cognitive empathy, I show how the shared body schema between actor-spectator in performance is crucial to understand the emotional power and significance of the staged hand.

I argue the hand's technical relationship with the material world of objects is a vital part of the evolution of consciousness and being and investigate the early modern hand as a cognitive map. I focus on the hand as a mnemonic device in which to interact with the exterior world in *The Honest Whore* (1604) and *Epicoene* (1609) and draw on Pacioli's mathematical finger-reckoning system (c.1494) in *The Changeling* (1622). I follow Leroi-Gourhan and Stiegler's understanding of technicity by discussing the handiwork of the shoemaker in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1600), to suggest the hand is a technical creator of subjectivity. I then examine the technicity of the creative and manual skills of the hand that writes and the written word to show affirmation of self and the hand to be a marker of identity. I discuss how the written word is simultaneously a stable fixture of the truth but also a vehicle of power and disruption in *Doctor Faustus* and *Twelfth Night* (1601-1602).

Chapter Two turns to the feminine hand as an object staged by boys and passed between men. Applying Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'double sensation' and Nancy's ideas of *exposure*, I study the early modern feminine hand situated as both active and passive; this paradox was embodied by representations of Elizabeth I. I suggest that the feminine hand becomes representative of the belief that, although sexual temptation arises from all five senses, particularly potent is the sense of touch. I draw upon important non-dramatic intertexts such as the poetic blazon, the hand in marriage and the feminine hand supplemented by material objects such as the glove. Using archival work and photographs taken at Bath Fashion Museum of the Worshipful Company of Glovers' collection of early modern gloves, I suggest such coverings work as extensions of the hand and can provide a greater understanding of early modern perceptions and passions and their enduring affect.

I examine the hands of the boy actor, which would be cosmetically coloured and supplemented by the staging of gloves and rings, to suggest that such hands on the early modern stage embody the paradoxical quality of the feminine hand and are representative of a dual-consciousness whereby the spectators view the staged hands through both fantasy and reality. Such depictions of the feminine hand in *The Winter's Tale*, *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614) and *The Changeling*, alongside non-dramatic intertexts, I argue, betray the attendant awareness that women's hands were not merely passive objects of display but unnerving autonomous agents. As in Chapter One, I turn to the activity of the feminine hand through creative production and consumption in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, *All's Well That Ends Well* (1603), *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Roaring Girl* (1611), *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634), *Twelfth Night* and *The Honest Whore*. The object becomes an extension of the body schema and is employed to express self-definition, resistance and personal autonomy. The potential for agency turns the active helping or working hand into an instrument of disorder and empowerment and, in such cases, women's hands create a space for independent desires and actions.

Chapter Three draws directly on my own experience of injuring my dominant hand. I use this as a starting point to consider the body without the hand and the hand without the body, once internal to the schema of bodily wholeness, and focus on examples from *Titus Andronicus* (1594), *Selimus* (1594), *The Late Lancashire Witches*, *Edmund Ironside* (1587), *The Changeling* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. Merleau-Ponty's suggestion that the phantom limb creates a heightened awareness of selfhood frames my argument. Using Price and Twombly's medical, folkloric and historical research, evidencing that the phantom limb phenomenon

goes back as far as the tenth century, I investigate the dismembered hand in personal and political terms by the autonomous, dangerous and transgressive qualities of the phantom limb. I return to the active hand of Chapter One to explore images of dismembered hands as emblematic of devolved power, from the gage used in a military challenge to the disembodied hand grasping a sword as a heraldic icon. The objects, as extensions of the body schema, create unnerving hyper-masculine and autonomous phantom limbs that can never be restrained. I further look into the political and affective power of dismembered hands to show how, for female characters, there is a dichotomous signification of the hand in that it exists as an agent to assist whilst also retaining the ability to become the locus of evil. Indeed, as Bulwer declares, '[t]he Hand is so ready and cunning to expound our intentions' (19) and it is only the hand that can translate thought into deed and action.

Chapter One

The Active Hand

In 95 CE the Roman rhetorician Quintilian published *Institutio Oratoria* which detailed the hand's wondrous versatility as a tool for action:

As for the hands, without which all action would be crippled and enfeebled, it is scarcely possible to describe the variety of their motions, since they are almost as expressive as words. For other portions of the body merely help the speaker, whereas the hands may almost be said to speak. Do we not use them to demand, promise, summon, dismiss, threaten, supplicate, express aversion or fear, question or deny? Do we not use them to indicate joy, sorrow, hesitation, confession, penitence, measure, quantity, number and time? Have they not the power to excite and prohibit, to express approval, wonder or shame? Do they not take the place of adverbs and pronouns when we point at places and things? In fact, though the peoples and nations of the earth speak a multitude of tongues, they share in common the universal language of the hands.¹⁰⁶

Quintilian asserts that human communication, meaning and understanding would be considerably weakened without the hand's versatile motions; motions so myriad one can hardly begin to describe them. Quintilian catalogues the gestures of the hand as used by orators that express activity and have a communicative power showing that the hand can reveal the interiority of the speaker and affect the spectators even more than the spoken word. Quintilian's praise sets a pattern for early modern understandings of the hand's agency. This chapter examines the active hand, conventionally gendered masculine, beginning with a detailed consideration of rhetoric and gesture and how they translate to the early modern stage. I use this starting point to lead into two sections rooted in the opposing ideas of Aristotle and Anaxagoras, as described in the Introduction to this thesis, to analyse dramatic examples from *The Honest Whore*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Albumazar*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Changeling*, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, *Doctor*

¹⁰⁶ Quintilian, 'Book XI.III', *The Institutio oratoria*, trans. by H.E. Butler (London: Heinemann, 1920), p. 291. Quintilian follows this statement with an exhaustive description of the range of gestures available to the orator.

Faustus and *Twelfth Night*. The first section investigates the way the hand promotes relationships with other humans and strengthens human connections with God. I read examples of the masculine hand of agency and authority and how it would be viewed and understood by early modern spectators by examining gesture in *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Edmond Ironside* and *Albumazar*. Informed by Bulwer's *Chirologia*, and reading through a phenomenological lens, I expand on the concept of a shared body schema between actor and spectator through the staged hand as a cognitive and active symbol.

The second section discusses the staged hand as an instrument which creates and sustains life by its active power of employing objects on the stage. I engage with Leroi-Gourhan and Stiegler's work on exteriorisation and technicity, where tools are the locus of engagement with the world, as a means to read the hands in action in *Doctor Faustus*, *Twelfth Night*, *Epicoene*, *The Changeling*, *The Honest Whore* and *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. A concluding section on writing, *techné* and agency analyses the significance of writing hands in *Doctor Faustus* and *Twelfth Night*.

Gesture and Acting



The silent but eloquent language of hands as a mark of masculine agency was explicitly recognised in the early modern period in the rhetorical training that was adopted from classical sources. Michel de Montaigne's 1613 essay, entitled 'An Apology of Raymond Sebond', mirrors Quintilian's work:

What doe we with our hands? Doe we not sue and entreate, promise and performe, call men unto us, and discharge them, bid them farwell, and be gone, threaten, pray, beseech, deny, refuse, demaund, admire, number, confesse, repent, feare, witnes, accuse, condemne, absolve, injurie, despise, defie, despight, flatter, applaude, blesse, humble, mocke, reconcile, recommend, exalt, shew gladnes, rejoyce, complaine, waile, sorrowe, discomfort, dispaire, cry-out, forbid, declare silence and astonishment? And

what not? With so great variation, and amplifying, as if they would contend with the tongue.¹⁰⁷

His list details the active hand which has its own physiological and affective language. For Montaigne, the hands are separate to the tongue embodying their own distinct command and agency. The hand is positioned as a connecting point between the inner thoughts, emotions and the outer movements of the body. Bulwer reiterates this idea in his 1644 treatise, where he defines manual gestures as the ‘the only speech which is naturall to man’ and one that ‘men in all regions of the habitable world do at first sight most easily understand’ (3). Bulwer identified ‘two Ampitheatres’ of the body ‘proceeding either from the effect of sufferance or the voluntary motions of the Mind [...] which wee call the speaking motions, or Discoursing Gestures, and natural language of the Body, to wit the Hand and Head’ (4). The engravings by William Marshall in *Chirologia* (Fig.6) demonstrate Bulwer’s focus on language based on gesture rather than words:

¹⁰⁷ Michel de Montaigne, *Essayes Written in French by Michael Lord of Montaigne, Knight of the Order of S. Michael, gentleman of the French Kings chamber: done into English, according to the last French edition, by John Florio reader of the Italian tongue unto the Soueraigne Maiestie of hir royall piuiie chamber* (London: Melch. Bradwood for Edward Blount and William Barret, 1613), p. 251. Montaigne’s forty-six examples for the hand stands in stark contrast to his twenty-nine examples for the emotions and actions one can display from the head.



Figure 6: William Marshall, *An Alphabet of the Natural Gestures of the Hand* (1644) [Engraving]. Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

The immediate expressive power of these gestures is employed by Shakespeare in *Hamlet* (1599-1601), as Hamlet advises the players to ‘suit the action to the word, the word to the action’ (III.ii.40). Hamlet believes that when these gestures are used correctly in the theatre being not ‘too tame’ (III.ii.39) or too overdone, ‘do not

saw the air too much with your hand, thus' (III.ii.37), they are an effective representation of reality. The theatre can hold a 'mirror up to nature' (III.ii.45) and to virtue and to vice. The hand represents the border between inner/outer and microcosm/macrocosm as Bulwer calls the hand the 'ingenuity of the outer man, and the better genius of the microcosm'.¹⁰⁸

Bulwer's understanding of the link between hand and cognition closely resembles the theory of mirror neurons relating to staged performances. Here, according to cognitive performance theorists, an actor's gestures affect the spectators' reactions and emotions and so hold a phenomenological correspondence to Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, published 301 years after Bulwer. According to these theories, the hand is understood as intrinsic to the body, both material and immaterial, in establishing the individual's sense of him/herself in-the-world. The body, Merleau-Ponty explains, 'is that strange object which uses its own parts as a general system of symbols for the world, and through which we can consequently be "at home" in that world' (275). Perception is mediated by our bodily gestures which arise naturally by the corporeal and inter-corporeal presence of being-in-the-world.

The hand does more than just 'speak' for both Merleau-Ponty and Bulwer as they contend thought comes into existence by the hand's movements. This is perfectly explicated by Bulwer's study of the gesture *Sollicite cogito* ('I set thoughts in motion') where the accompanying image shows a man with his hand to his head. Bulwer seeks to answer why one will place the hand on the head 'to scratch where it doth not itch'. He postulates:

¹⁰⁸ John Bulwer, *Pathomyotomia, or, A dissection of the significative muscles of the affections of the minde being an essay to a new method of observing the most important movings of the muscles of the head, as they are the neerest and immediate organs of the voluntarie or impetuous motions of the mind : with the proposall of a new nomenclature of the muscles / by J.B., surnamed the Chirosopher*. (London: W.W. for Humphrey Moseley, 1649), sig.B2.

Maybe, to rouse up our distracted intellect; or else the Hand, which is the engineer of invention and wit's true palladium, having a natural procacity to be acquainted with their fancy, officiously offers itself to facilitate the dispatch of any affairs that perplex a faculty so nearly unto it, [since] the hand in the collateral line of nature being cousin germane to the fancy. (72)

The moving hand expresses the mind and can gather information and has a 'natural competency to express the motives and affections of the Mind' (17), developing the idea that 'the hand many times seemes to have conceived the thought' (24). To rouse up, or push outward, thought and emotion into gesture translates readily to the stage, where the spoken script interacts with a wide range of non-verbal languages. The hand can communicate more truly because of its immediacy and the division between the tongue and the heart is bridged by the ally of the hand: 'The Tongue and Heart th'intention oft divide, | The Hand and Meaning ever are ally'de' (9). Of course, Bulwer's handbooks appeared at a time when theatres were officially closed (1642-1660). This closure of the theatres opened up a new space, as Rachel Willie terms it, the space for a 'paper stage' as a tool to voice political discontent.¹⁰⁹ The 'paper stage' is representative of the fact that not only can the active hand display meaning, it can also *make* meaning through implements, such as the pen and paper as is explored in the third section of this chapter.

Nevertheless, Bulwer's treatises reveal that a specific language of Elizabethan hand gestures would be recognised, at least by some spectators, in communicating the interiority of character in an Elizabethan play. As John Wesley suggests, *Chirologia* and *Chironomia* provide us with 'clues about how Shakespeare's actors moved their bodies on stage.'¹¹⁰ The gestures that Bulwer

¹⁰⁹Rachel Willie, *Staging the Revolution: drama, reinvention and history 1647-72* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015)

¹¹⁰John Wesley, 'Original Gesture: Hand Eloquence on the Early Modern Stage', in *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35 (2017), 65-96 (p. 65).

describes are by the hand's 'moving and significant extension' that is 'so absolutely pertinent to speech' that we expect:

[T]he due motion of the Hand to explaine, direct, enforce, apply, apparel, and to beautifie the words men utter, which would prove naked, unless the cloathing Hands does neatly move to adorn and hide their nakedness, with their comely and ministerial parts of speech.¹¹¹

Bulwer describes hand gestures as external coverings of the body. The 'cloathing Hands' are objects of expression and status that extend the passions and senses *beyond* the body. When looking at this in regard to the hands of the actor on stage, the motor function of the hand operates as a material and external agent. The hand is a product of inquiry and power structures that can maintain or subvert social norms. The hand, then, can shape the spectators' engagement with the performance as easily as any costume the actor might wear.

The hand's movements are central to action and understanding on the early modern stage as exemplified in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* when the three gentlemen discuss the off-stage meeting between Leontes, Polixenes, Perdita and Florizel. The three gentlemen become overwhelmed by the fact the spoken word cannot compare to witnessing actual, physical movement. The First Gentleman speaks to Autolycus of the perceived 'changes' seen in the king and Polixenes and notes that 'there was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture' (V.ii.12-13). He reads the gestural discourse and recalls that they 'looked as they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed' (V.ii.13-14). The actor points to the 'importance' of the language of the hand and to its meaning, whether the exchange was of 'of joy or sorrow', that could not be distinguished (V.ii.17).

The Third Gentleman recalls 'There was casting up of eyes, holding up of hands, with countenance of such distraction that they were to be known by

¹¹¹ Bulwer, *Chironomia*, p. 16.

garment, not by favour' (V.ii.43-44). It is only the movement of the clothes and the hands that can be distinguished as Leontes asks Bohemia for forgiveness, embraces Florizel and 'then again worries he his daughter with clipping her' (V.ii.47-49). In this example, the notion that language is an adequate supplement to gesture is ultimately flawed as words are unable to render it and give it justice. Instead, the mere descriptions of the action act as a barrier between the actor and spectator. Finally, the First Gentleman urges the spectators to recognise the importance of gesture in the next scene 'Who would be thence, that has the benefit of access? Every wink of an eye some new grace will be born. Our absence makes us unthrifty to our knowledge' (V.ii.98-100). The play determines that gesture is an essential supplement to language and, as such, one must see it to believe it.

How might actors have performed gestures and spectators read them on the early modern stage? Bertram Joseph, in his work *Elizabethan Acting* (1951), argued that indeed the orator's art 'was anything but formal and stereotyped' but was a 'lively and truthful art designed to portray real emotion truthfully, and was based on a deep conviction that "action" should spring always from real inner feeling, not from any conventional system of external cliches'.¹¹² It should be noted here, however, that both Joseph's analysis of Elizabethan rhetorical gesture and Bulwer's treatise have been approached with skepticism. Scholars such as Marvin Rosenberg believed such works contended that 'actors were "skilled automators" who "moved like clockwork" and the gestures were thus 'procedures for Elizabethan players'¹¹³. Whilst hand gestures and movement were indeed taught, I agree with Wesley's contention that this does not evidence or categorise early modern actors to be merely 'automators'. Cognitive science studies

¹¹² Bertram Leon Joseph, *Elizabethan Acting* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 84.

¹¹³ Marvin Rosenberg, *The Adventures of a Shakespeare Scholar: To Discover Shakespeare's Art* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997), p. 300.

emphasise gesture as not simply a mechanical instrument and, as Tribble suggests, '[f]ar from a "formal stereotyped code," the art of "action" was learned as part of a *techne* of body and mind that gave visual and kinetic shape to the passions within.'¹¹⁴ Tribble argues that 'memories of movements or physical signatures can be remarkably enduring' and current research on human cognition focuses upon gesture to show the body's relationship with objects and its actions can result in a 'greater retention of material' and environment.¹¹⁵ The concept of prescriptive gesture in relation to phenomenology is explored in this thesis to demonstrate that gestures can be both naturalistic and non-naturalistic and that this is not a contradiction.

The hand is an agent of communication and action and, as Wesley asserts, shared and easily recognisable conventions of action meant that the audience could 'follow the emotional and intentional tenor of character's exchanges even if the language was opaque, the theatre noisy, or the spectator hard of hearing.'¹¹⁶ The conventions of actions would enrich rather than suppress 'the interpretative exchange between actor and audience.'¹¹⁷ Building on the notion of actor-spectator interpretation, Cristina Grasseni has introduced the concept of 'skilled vision', suggesting that vision should be considered as an embodied and trained sense.¹¹⁸ In applying Grasseni's view that 'specific sensibilities and capacities [...] are engendered through the active socialization of apprentices into structured and

¹¹⁴ Tribble, *Cognition in the Globe*, p. 90. Tribble highlights the important work of linguists such as David McNeill, Adam Kendon, and Susan Goldin-Meadow and the 'thought-language-hand' link.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 93, 95.

¹¹⁶ Wesley, p. 74.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Cristina Grasseni, 'Skilled Vision: An Apprenticeship in Breeding Aesthetics', in *Social Anthropology*, 12 (2004), 41-55 (p. 48).

shared contexts of practice’, Tribble examines early modern theatricality through the lens of skill that ‘links mind, body, and affect in intelligent action.’¹¹⁹

In order to understand ‘skilled viewing’, and the production of meaning and knowledge of the masculine hand of action on the early modern stage, it is first important to understand discourses of skill and manual activity traced in classical antiquity and Christian thought and practice. In what follows I introduce the hand of God and its influence on the values, practices and interactions of the active hand of man, as an extension of such gestural authority, in early modern culture and performance.



The Divine Digit: Hand-made Humans

As Katherine Rowe has argued, the mechanics of the masculine hand, as an instrument of agency over people and objects, is the primary vehicle for ‘incorporating and illuminating God’s agency and design’¹²⁰. Indeed, the surgeon John Banister asserted that ‘the exquisite structure of the hand’ and its action was divinely created:

Thus if we wel perpend the construction, and composition of the partes, and bones of the hand, our senses shall soone conceiue the maner of the action, with no lesse admiration, in beholdyng the handy work of the incomprehensible Creator: who not one mite, or portion of a part hath sited any where, that serueth for no end, or vilitie to the body: for how fit to apprehend are the handes, and how prompt to moue are the fingers, who is it that knoweth not?¹²¹

The active, masculine hand originates with a divine model in which God’s hand creates and then passes on to man three fundamental features of the active hand: the creative hand; the nurturing hand and the authoritarian hand. Throughout the

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Tribble, ‘Skill’, p. 173.

¹²⁰ Rowe, *Dead Hands*, p. 28.

¹²¹ John Banister, *The Historie of Man* (London, 1578), p. 31r.

early modern period, the hand signified God's universal action and omnipresence. As William Scupbach explains in his work, focusing on Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632), the early modern hand was viewed as a symbol of God's wisdom. To know the hand was to hold a spiritual and material connection with God.¹²² In Michelangelo's fresco painting *The Creation of Adam* (c.1508-1512) in The Sistine Chapel, Adam is depicted by the ontological and haptic instrumentality of God's speaking hand by the extended dietetic gesture of the pointed *digitus secundus* as the central focal point. The 'final touch' to God's creation is enacted through his hand to remove what Stiegler calls man's 'originary lack'.¹²³ That is, the freedom of the hand gives Adam the capacity to use implements to achieve wholeness and perfection.

Adam's first movement as he rose to his feet would, presumably, have been the action of placing his hands to the ground in order to pull his body upward. As Merleau-Ponty suggests, to 'move one's body is to aim at things through it; it is to allow oneself to respond to their call' (177). To touch and to move kinaesthetically in our surroundings, then, allows us to apprehend the world. This is most strikingly exemplified in Michelangelo's painting as Adam's hand literally grounds his being. The world and the lived body form an 'intentional arc' binding Adam's body to the world. God charges Adam with operative intentionality, in that God's hand allows Adam's hand to access an embodied engagement with his surroundings and body-in-the-world. The intentional arc creates a self-awareness through active, material knowingness which allows Adam to stabilise his 'feet on the clay from which he was formed and to stand erect in dignity and responsibility

¹²² William Scupbach, *The Paradox of Rembrandt's "Anatomy of Dr. Tulp"* (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1982), p. 49.

¹²³ Stiegler, p. 188.

as thinker and maker.’¹²⁴ God’s touch creates Adam in his own image as a being who can use his hands to create, direct and shape the world around him.

Such ideas were shared by the classical philosopher and physician, Galen, who exalted the hands for their ability to make and direct: ‘[o]nly man has a hand actually perfected and the reasoning power to use it as well, a power which there is nothing more godlike in mortal animals.’¹²⁵ For Galen, the human hand is connected to divine nature by its ‘perfected and [...] reasoning power’ enabling human beings to ‘use it’ by, for example, shipbuilding, labouring and writing. Galen’s own nurturing hands, as the ‘father of medicine’, shaped and established doctrines to expand and disseminate knowledge. Humans were made to stand upright and pay homage to God, to be their own creator in the material world by using their hands in technical activity, creating ‘infinite sorts of excellent Artes’, as Crooke later termed it.

The power of God’s hand being passed to individuals on earth is further exemplified in the opening chapter of Crooke’s *Mikrokosmographia* (1615) which praises the excellence of the body and credits human stature to the hands that were given to man by God:

[M]an onely had an vpright frame of bodie, because hee alone amongst all Creatures had the Hand giuen him by God, an Organ or Instrument before all organs, and indeed in stead of all. Now, if the figure of man had been made with his face downward, that Diuine Creature should haue gone groueling vpon his handes, as well as vpon his feete, and those worthy and noble actions of his Hand, had been forfeited, or at least disparaged. For, who can write, ride, liue in a ciuill and sociable life, erect Altars vnto God, builde ships for warre or trafficke, throwe all manner of Darts, and practise other infinite sorts of excellent Artes; eyther groueling with his face downward, or sprawling on his backe with his face vpward? Wherefore, onely man had the frame of his body erected vpward towards heauen.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Boyle, p. 85.

¹²⁵ Galen, *De usu partium* 3.2, cited by Ibid., p. 74.

¹²⁶ Crooke, p. 4.

Here Crooke demonstrates the instrumentality of the hand as a contingent, pervasive and active instrument given to man by God. The freeing of the human hand gives man the ability to perform acts that distinguish him above all other creatures. According to Crooke the hand was the first instrument or organ given to man by God. In fact, he contends, the hand was given ‘in stead of all’, its actions able to imitate and work as surrogate on behalf of all other organs.

A second important feature of the hand given to man by God is the ability to nurture, direct, guide and care. God’s touch was perceived as able to heal wounds and cure sickness and, in the early modern period, the monarch was viewed as an earthly extension of God’s hands and the ultimate source of restoration. The royal touch was evidence of the healing hands of God in that their hands were used to heal ailments and would touch and make ‘the sign of the cross over them’¹²⁷. Indeed, worldly power and spiritual authority go hand in hand as the anonymous painting of Richard II, entitled *Portrait Richard II of England* (c.1390), displays. The young king holds the sphere in one hand and the orb in the other, both kingly instruments of clerical and worldly powers associated with the body politic. Throughout early modern culture and drama, the hands of the monarch emulated the ‘hand of God’ and the political hand of the ‘father of his people’, representing an omnipresent figure that functioned between worldly power and spiritual authority.¹²⁸

In a sermon of 1606, Robert Rollock, a ‘faithful servant of God’, discusses this omnipresence by describing the immutable support and structure provided by the hand of God gripping us all:

¹²⁷ Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. by J.E. Anderson (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 3, 12-13.

¹²⁸ King James I said in a speech to parliament of 21 March 1610 that, ‘The king is truly *parens patriae*, the *politique* father of his people’ in *The political works of James I by James I, King of England 1566-1625*, ed. by C.H. McIlwain (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), p. 271, 307.

A chylde that is learning to goe, albeit he grippe, he cannot holde him selfe vp, but it is the grip of the Nourse, that holdes vppe the chylde: It is so, betweene God and vs. We are all infantes, Jesus hes [has] vs in his hand [...] but, when he lettes vs goe, then, we fall: So, this is our comfort, that vve are gripped by God, and his grip vpholdes vs, for vvhen he gripes to the heart of any man, his hand neuer lowsers [loses] againe, and thou shalt neuer goe out of his grippe: yea, euen in that time, when thou thinkest, thou art gone, and the Lord hes [has] casten thee offyn in the meane-time he hes [has] thee in his grip and in that meane-time vvhen thou appearest to be left, call to remembrance, that, he hes [has] gripped thee, and then, assure thee, yet he grips thee.¹²⁹

The guiding hand of God sets the individual on a path of certainty as His hand will guide even when they stray from the path, just as the nurse holds a child upright. The grip of God connects to ‘the heart of any man’ and so the hand of man is always held and directed. The work of creation by touch and handling leads to God as the primordial gardener who creates the world through engaged hands that are immersed in the soil, an active role that is passed on to Adam. The concept that God nurtures the world so engages man to love and cherish it. Rollock’s description of the grip of God suggests that God is continually active by manual apprehension. Strikingly, Rollock uses the material metaphor of the hand to describe an immaterial spiritual experience in order to validate and encourage faith. The action of Rollock extending his own hands out to guide and nurture the reader by the written word suggests Rollock’s writing hand mirrors the hand of God, the creator, itself.

The third feature of the hand of God passed on to man is the power to direct and command. Indeed, in Scripture, as Boyle explains, God’s hand was synonymous with force: ‘literally, God was “armed,”’ which signified his dominion and power.¹³⁰ Boyle employs the example of Calvin’s commentaries on Psalms 78 Verse 42 where the hand of God is ‘well enough known’ to be taken as

¹²⁹ Robert Rollock, *Lectures vpon the first and second Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians: preached by that faithfull seruant of God M. Robert Rollock, some-tyme minister of the Euangell of Iesus Christ, and rector of the Colledge in Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh: Robert Charteris printer to the Kings most excellent Majesty), p. 212.

¹³⁰ Boyle, p. 212.

metonymy for his power and omnipresence.¹³¹ This authoritative commanding hand of God is exemplified by George Wither's 'Illustration III' within his work *A Collection of Emblemes* (1635). This depicts the disembodied, divine hand with a sword emerging from the clouds set against a backdrop of the holy law in stone. The extended hand with sword protects the land and the laws written by God:

Figure 7: George Wither, 'Illustration III' Book.1 (1635) [Engraving].



Wither's emblem serves to remind its viewers of 'some Dutie, which they might else forget, or minde them to beware of some Danger, which they might otherwise be unheedfull to prevent.'¹³² The hand of God is poised to exercise providential control, to restrain the wicked and preserve the followers of the Christian Church. The accompanying poem reads '[t]he Law is given to direct; | The Sword, to

¹³¹ Psalms. 78-42. John Calvin, *The Psalmes of David and others. With M. John Calvins Commentaries* trans. by Arthur Golding (London, 1571)

¹³² George Wither, *A collection of emblemes, ancient and moderne quickened vwith metricall illustrations, both morall and divine: and disposed into lotteries, that instruction, and good counsel, may bee furthered by an honest and pleasant recreation.* (London: Printed by A.M. for John Grismond, 1635), sig.A2.

punish and protect.’¹³³ The hand signifies the direction of the law, that is set in stone, and becomes a symbol of punishment and protection for God’s subjects. Human subjects could be agents of the divine hand and, as such, instruments of inordinate power. Of course, it should be acknowledged that not all human hands were able to exercise such agency and power. In legal terms, for example, the word *manus* [hand] was representative of a husband’s possession over his wife.¹³⁴ The very erasure of Eve in Michelangelo’s *The Creation of Adam* demonstrates that the active hand is gendered masculine, a point I return to in Chapter Two.

The idealised hand of God’s subjects would be an instrument that justly connects the sense of touch to its cognitive and spiritual counterparts. Such divinely inspired gestures would enact a moral response to others, a response that is worked out through the hands. This is addressed within Bulwer’s handbooks where he describes the divine hand joined with those of God’s followers, whose gestures are thus ‘given a sacred allowance to the natural signification of ours’ (14). Among the sixty-four hand gestures Bulwer details, he writes of the ability for human beings to communicate with God ‘by the appeal of our Hands in admiration, attestation and prayer’ (14). The divine hand provides a material impetus for the immaterial spirit, emphasized by its physical contact and would, as Karim-Cooper explains, ‘induce highly emotional responses’ in both spiritual and doctrinal devotion.¹³⁵

Such depictions of the hand testify to its being central to embodied existence as a material tool that can mediate all action. It is an instrument to forge affective relationships between the self and others. The hand’s central role in creating and shaping relationships extends also to the early modern stage.

¹³³ Ibid., sig. B2.

¹³⁴ The marriage of a daughter was called ‘hand’ (*manus*) in the original Roman practice.

¹³⁵ Karim-Cooper, *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage*, p. 252.



On the One Hand

The actor's mimicry of the divine hand of authority is both invoked and emptied out as meaningless gesture in the extension and presentation of the hand on the early modern stage when accompanied by the vow 'by this hand'. For example, in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598-1599), Benedick swears his true love for Beatrice 'by this hand' (IV.i.319). However, here actions speak louder than words as Beatrice responds that in order to prove it, his hand should be put to some use (IV.i.320-321), criticising male chivalry as 'manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue' (IV.i.314-315). Comparatively in *The Tempest* (1610), Stefano uses the verbal vow as an instrument of direct power and action and threatens Trinculo 'by this hand' (III.ii.46). This treatment reflects colonial tyranny and denotes Prospero's prevailing command over Caliban and the island. Whilst in *Twelfth Night*, Malvolio swears 'by this hand' (IV.ii.101) to prove he is sane as he is imprisoned and tortured in his cell. His protests are refuted as Feste replies 'Nay, I'll ne'er believe a madman till I see his brains' (IV.ii.107). When Feste brings light, paper and ink to Malvolio, as requested, he attempts to open his brains through his hand by the written word which proves equally ineffective as the verbal vow. Shakespeare shows us, as I will explore more fully in the final section of this chapter, that the written word is a marker of instability and deception. The hand when presented as a vow is an attempt to signify truth, power and identity though, in the fallen earthly world, its veracity is shown to be open to question.

Whilst the verbal vow can be called into question, as it relies on speech rather than bodily execution, the gesture of shaking hands displays the staged hand open and extended in an action that was central to trust in the early modern period,

the touch marking friendship and co-operation. Dating from the medieval period, the gesture originates in a feudal act indicating homage and a willingness to serve another by placing his hands between those of his lord. For Bulwer the gesture of the handshake is a signifier of trust:

TO EXTEND AND OFFER OUT THE RIGHT HAND UNTO ANY [...] express[es] [...] pity [...] comfort and reliefe used also as a token of assurance, peace, security and promised safety and salvation. (66)
 TO SHAKE THE GIVEN HAND [...] expression usuall in friendship, peacefull love, benevolence, salutation, entertainment and bidding welcome; reconciliation, congratulation, giving thanks, valediction and wel-wishing. (109)

To shake the given hand communicates mutual acceptance and trust and the fact the hand is open suggests the subject's right hand is not wielding a weapon such as the sword. As Herman Roodenburg suggests, the gesture of the handshake in the early modern period held different connotations from the ritual act of greeting and parting that we know today. The gesture instead centred around 'friendship, brotherhood, peace, reconciliation, accord or mutual agreement.'¹³⁶ The gesture of the handshake is employed in *The Duchess of Malfi* when Ferdinand opens his hand to Bosola and so puts his trust into Bosola's hands (III.i.89). This moment is particularly significant for the spectators who witness Bosola, a servant from the galleys, form a partnership with Ferdinand, a Duke. Indeed, in this moment, as Frank Whigham argues, Bosola is made 'a henchman, an agent, an instrument, and so embodies the complex new problems that arise from the status of employee.'¹³⁷ Just as Bulwer writes of the open hand touching another causing both sides to be 'almost equal' (53), in asking for Bosola's hand Ferdinand expands their relationship to one of dependability as he relies on Bosola's hands to move as

¹³⁶ Herman Roodenburg, 'The Hand of Friendship: Shaking Hands and Other Gestures in the Dutch Republic', in *A Cultural History of Gesture*, ed. by Herman Roodenburg and Jan Bremmer (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 152-189 (p. 174).

¹³⁷ Frank Whigham, *Seizures of the Will in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 125.

extensions of his own. Bosola becomes interconnected with Ferdinand, an extension of his body schema, and, as I explicate further in Chapter Three, this touch transforms Bosola's hands into Ferdinand's prosthetic limbs. Bosola later dismembers himself from Ferdinand, a separation that proves vital when later in the play Bosola's physiological approach to others is forced to change as he searches for redemption. Like the written word the handshake is also a tool for subversion, as it signifies both a contact and a separation.

Conversely, the handshake in *The Winter's Tale* is one of counsel and advice when Polixenes asks for the help of Camillo to escape from Leontes' obsessive behaviour. Polixenes requests Camillo to 'Give me thy hand; | Be pilot to me, and thy places shall | Still neighbour mine' (I.ii.447-449). For Camillo, who is tied to his lord Leontes and ordered to kill Polixenes, the handshake becomes a betrayal of his fealty and is representative of a new loyalty. The hand becomes a symbol of direction as the two individuals now co-exist together. The phenomenological description of 'co-existence' is explained by Merleau-Ponty using the example of the handshake. When one hand extends to touch another's there occurs a mutual incorporation, or crossing-over, where the hand of the other becomes an extension of one's own. He explains that '[e]verything happens as if the other person's intention inhabited my body, and mine his' (191). The action of the handshake between Polixenes and Camillo, then, is what Merleau-Ponty terms 'the organs of one single intercorporeity' which binds the men together.¹³⁸ The hand that acts as pilot to Polixenes also acts as a pointed finger, a manicule, for the spectators to recognise the characters they are able to 'trust'.

¹³⁸ Merleau-Ponty, 'The Philosopher and His Shadow', in *Signs*, trans. by Richard C. McCleary (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 159-182 (p. 168).

Such mutual liberality is present in the homosocial exchange between Edward, Warwick and Richard in *Henry VI Part III* (1591) when they are in battle and searching for hope:

Edward: I throw my hands, mine eyes, my heart to thee. [...]
 Richard: Give me thy hand; and gentle Warwick,
 Let me embrace thee in my weary arms. (II.iii.37, 45-46)

This passage delineates the male-centred exchange as King Edward declares ‘O Warwick, I do bend my knee with thine; | And in this vow to chain my soul to thee’ (II.iii.34-35). In the act of joining hands their bodies, minds and spirits become inextricably linked. They no longer stand as individuals but as soldiers prepared to fight as one and with one purpose. In each asking for the other’s hands their relationship develops into one of faith and dependability. Through the handshake gesture the men display their mutual trust and ‘co-existence’ on the battlefield.

Gestures such as the handshake would be familiar to early modern spectators. This recognition enabled playwrights to use such gestures as indicators of many social differences. One example of this is the courtly gesture of the kissing of the hands. Bulwer outlines the gesture ‘TO KISSE THE HAND,’ as an ‘obsequious expression who would adore & give respect by the courtly solemnity of a salutation or valediction. The graceful carnage of the Hand in this officious obedience to the will, while it moves to the chiefest orifice of the minde’ (87). There is, he asserts, ‘no expression of the Hand more frequent in the formalities of civil conversation, and he is a novice in the Court of Nature, who doth not understand a *basiér de la main*’ (88). The theatrical performance of the ‘*basiér de la main*’ can be used to ridicule such courtly gestures and demonstrate the artifice of gesture in performance as, obviously, the actors’ hands may not be high-born.

The spectators would have an understanding of gesture which meant that in viewing plays they were highly skilled in interpretation of themes and attitudes.

In *Albumazar* Tomkis employs this artifice of gesture as Trincalo, a low-class farmer, believes he is transformed into the shape of the gentleman Antonio. During the metamorphosis Albumazar instructs Trincalo to never look upon his reflection as it ‘spoiles the wondrous worke | Of transformation’ (III.v.22-23). Trincalo’s identity, therefore, is unable to be confirmed by sight but rather by the language of the hands as in Act 3 Scene 4 Albumazar welcomes him as the ‘New-borne’ Antonio by kissing his hands (III.v.30). Trincalo believes he must now be ‘grown a gentleman, and a fine one’ by the kissing of his hands ‘so courtly’ (III.x.1-2). Trincalo becomes so sure of his new identity that he also feels a transformation to his interior self and asserts that his ‘veins are fild with newnesse’ so that if a surgeon were to open up his arm they would be able to view the ‘gentle blood’ (III.x.14). Trincalo experiences this rebirth through his hands, which, like the clothes he wears, are integral to his body schema. Of course, the spectators are aware that Trincalo has not truly metamorphised and the physical reality of his hands, probably hard, dirty and calloused, testify to this as evidence of his identity as a labourer.

For Trincalo to misunderstand the action of Albumazar, in taking his hand to kiss as a courtly gesture of respect and salutation, explicitly advertises Trincalo as a fool to the spectators. He no longer knows himself because he has lost touch with his own hands. This sense of disconnection would develop a cognitive relationship with spectators and, probably, elicit reactions of laughter from those who have ‘clean’ hands, or empathy from those whose hands match Trincalo’s. The scene suggests the ridiculous affectation of courtly habits whilst also offering a

satiric observation similar to that of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1599) when Corin discusses the good manners at court that are 'as ridiculous in the country as the behaviour of the country is most mockable at the court. You told me you salute not at the court but you kiss your hands. That courtesy would be uncleanly if courtiers were shepherds' (III.ii.43-66).



On the Other Hand

Such examples evidence the importance of manual gesture and the fragility of the outstretched, active hand as a mark of authority and guidance on the early modern stage. Furthermore, the left and the right hands were invested with their own theological signification.¹³⁹ In contrast to Bulwer's assertion that the right hand speaks of assurance and direction, the early modern concept of the left hand is strikingly different. Robert Hertz examines the paradox between right and left that influenced the theories of philosophers such as Aristotle and Galen. He explains that the right side 'is often thought to be the source of everything that is good, favourable and legitimate, while the left is the profane side.'¹⁴⁰ Hertz further postulates on the power of the left hand that is presumed occult, illegitimate and able to inspire terror and revulsion:

What resemblance more perfect than that between our two hands! And yet what a striking inequality there is! To the right go honors, flattering designations, prerogatives: it acts, orders, and takes. The left hand, on the contrary, is despised and reduced to the role of a humble auxiliary: by itself it can do nothing: it helps, it supports, it holds. [...] Its movements are suspect: we should like it to remain quiet and discreet, hidden if possible in the folds of the garment, so that its corruptive influence will not spread. The hand of sorcery is always the cursed hand. A left hand that is too gifted and too agile is the sign of a nature contrary to right order, of a perverse and devilish

¹³⁹ The early modern spectators would have also been aware of the significance of left/right on the stage as stage-right was the location of good and stage-left the location of evil.

¹⁴⁰ Robert Hertz, "The pre-eminence of the right hand", in *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification*, ed. by Rodney Needham, trans. by Rodney and Claudia Needham (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 3-31 (p. 21, 31).

disposition: every left handed person is a possible sorcerer, properly to be distrusted.¹⁴¹

While the hands are initially described by Hertz as collective and embodied subjects united in perfection, there remains a striking point of divergence as the role of the left hand is merely a ‘humble auxiliary’ and is able to do ‘nothing’. The left hand is able only to help, support and hold and yet it has an unnerving agency that, according to Hertz, should be covered and confined.

In the seventeenth century Bulwer similarly suggests that the left hand signifies criminality, weakness and is ‘the captivity of unlawfull desire and rapacity’ (135). Indeed, Bulwer’s statement that ‘faith consists wholly in the Right Hand, the Left hath no obligatory force or virtue in it’ (101) is present even to this day with the belief that the right is naturally superior to, stronger and nobler than the left.¹⁴² In Michelangelo’s *The Creation of Adam* God’s right hand touches Adam’s left hand and this distinction, between right and left, draws on God as the perfect creator and Adam as a subject that can potentially sin.

Such binary symbolism is evident on the early modern stage. Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587), for example, depicts the distinction between left and right as Don Andrea describes his experience in the underworld by the ‘three ways’:

In keeping on my way to *Plutos* Court,
Through dreadfull shades of euer glooming night:
I saw more sights then thousand tongues can tell,
Or pennes can write, or mortall harts can think.
Three waies there were, that on the right hand side,
Was ready way vnto the foresaid fields.
Where louers liue, and bloudie Martialists,
But either sort containd within his bounds.
The left hand path declining fearfully,

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Raymond Tallis points out that the division between left/right is still frequently present in today’s language as it is ‘used to allocate or divide possibilities: “on the one hand” or “on the other hand.” The thesis is on the right, the antithesis on the left’ in *The Hand: A Philosophical Inquiry into Human Being*, p. 124.

Was ready downfall to the deepest hell.
 Where bloudie furies shakes their whips of steele,
 And poore *Ixion* turnes an endles wheele.¹⁴³

Here antithesis is grounded in the bilateralism of the human body. Don Andrea's speech demands the actor's body to move and gesture using the hands as cognitive maps based on the distinction between the right and left binary. Don Andrea's hands, actions, gestures and positioning become powerful tools that enable the actor to engage the spectators' understanding of good and evil as reflected in right and left. Eleanor Tweedie writes upon the importance of the 'play's total image— not just the verbal imagery, but the cries, pistol shots, and silences; not just the actors' words but their stance, gestures, and relative positions.'¹⁴⁴ The hand as an instrument of antithesis and negation is further exemplified when Balthazar describes Horatio by his hand which 'brandished a sword,' 'fiercely waged a war,' (II.i.119-120) and forced him to yield to him as master. The object and the hand interconnect as, for example, by the bloody handkerchief, the rope and dagger Hieronimo holds on stage and the bloody letter written by Bel-imperia to underscore the hand's centrality to the play as a memory site that can distinguish between good and bad or right and wrong.

The left hand as a subversive agent able to commit crime is seen in early modern drama, as, for example, in *The Winter's Tale* when the cheating Autolycus tricks the Clown to accept his hand whilst using his other free hand to pick his pocket:

Clown: Lend me thy hand, I'll help thee.
 Autolycus: [*Helping him up*] [...]
 [*Picks his pocket*] (IV.i.65, 72)

¹⁴³ Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. by J.R. McBryne (London: Benn, 1970), line 55-66. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

¹⁴⁴ Eleanor M. Tweedie, "'Action is Eloquence": The Staging of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*', in *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 16 (1976), 223-239 (p. 224).

Although Shakespeare does not specify which hand enacts which action to apply Bulwer's assertion that the left hand is 'the Hand that lyes more out of sight, and is farre lesse observed than the Right Hand is' (134) would suggest that it would be 'natural' for Autolycus to offer the conventional right hand to help, while his left 'nimble hand' (IV.iv.661) commits the crime. Autolycus' subversive hands could stimulate in the spectator's own neuronal system that they are playing a role in the crime. In this moment hands are serving various functions, from evoking feelings of pleasure for spectators who may enjoy witnessing misdeeds carried out by another's hand, to serving as a signal as to the ease by which the hand can be used for good or bad. This subversion of the traditional handshake would have been an uncomfortable notion and one that would rest in the hands of the spectator as they look to their own and to others.

Albumazar also plays upon the left and right hand as both evidence of innocence yet at the same time as an agent for disguise and criminality. This scene displays a frantic Trincalo, who believes he is transformed as Antonio, being robbed by the thief Ronca:

Tri: O my purse, my purse! [...]
 Ron: What's your pleasure sir?
 Tri: Shew me your hand.
 Ron: Here 'tis.
 Tri: But wheres th'other?
 Ron: Why here.
 Tri: But I meane where's your other hand?
 Ron: Thinke you me the Giant with a hundred hands?
 Tri: Give me your right.
 Ron: My right?
 Tri: Your left.
 Ron: My left?
 Tri: Now both (III.vii.53-65).

This scene is particularly humorous as it plays upon the perception of the bodies of the actors on stage and the spectators in the theatre as they attempt to distinguish

between the right and left both on and off stage. To stage Ronca holding both his hands behind his back and switching the purse between hands in order to deceive Trincalo by revealing his empty palms in succession would certainly create a pantomimic effect. Cognitive sciences show that we are impelled to move our own bodies by the actions and movements of others. In this instance the spectators, who are able to watch Ronca's playful hands and Trincalo's growing frustration, would feel an instant connection with the characters on stage and their complicity with Ronca would add to the comedy of the scene. Through mirror neuron activity, the spectators could either feel part of the trick or, indeed, mirror Trincalo's frustration and wish to shout out to offer guidance. This scene holds much potential for cognitive neuronal activity between actor and spectator depending on the stage direction.¹⁴⁵ The active duplicitous left hand that works with the right hand to trick and deceive could, for example, be staged by the direction of juggling. If Ronca employed his hands to juggle the purse above Trincalo's line of vision, the spectator could witness the complete and utter lack of perception and control Trincalo feels as he states: 'My life, he stole't with his feet' (III.vii.77).

Such depictions of the corrupt left hand illuminate the gestural discourse used by the cunning Edricus in *Edmund Ironside*. Edricus attempts to deceive others into believing he has fought in battle and has been wounded. He enters with his hand in a scarf and mockingly cries:

Witness this arm, this serviceable arm
That in despite of death did save my life
Witness these scars, which if your grace will see
They'll tell my foes into their face they lie (V.i.1710-1715).

¹⁴⁵ I would like to extend my thanks to the conference delegates and the actors from The Rose Company who helped shape my ideas during the workshop for the conference I co-organised titled 'Embodiment and New Materialisms in Premodern Literature and Culture 1350-1700' (2017).

This scene lends itself to humour if considered by the use of the suspect left hand and its gestural implications. If it was staged that the left hand was chosen as the subject of Edricus' lie, the spectator would discern the ailment as being feigned. In Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, Titus' right hand is severed leaving him only his left hand, by Hertz's definition of 'devilish disposition'. This left hand slits throats and bakes the flesh of his enemies, which I examine in relation to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the phantom limb in the final chapter.

As the above has shown the hand allows us to physically orientate ourselves within the world. The plays in performance show that the hand is a crucial body part for understanding early modern subjectivity. Hand gestures, and the touch between hands and others, binds human beings together as being-in-the-world by a shared body schema and an awareness of one's own corporeality.



Counting and Making: Hands Shaping the Physical World

The hand's technical relationship with mathematics, measurement of time and material objects is another means to create mastery. Looking at the works of Merleau-Ponty, Leroi-Gourhan and Stiegler, this section considers how the display of *techné* on stage demonstrates a human-centred process of self-fashioning, albeit one that is usually enjoyed by male characters.

For Leroi-Gourhan, freedom 'of the hand almost necessarily implies a technical activity different from that of the apes, and a hand that is free during locomotion [...] commands the use of artificial organs, that is, of implements.'¹⁴⁶ The freeing of the hand is pivotal to humanity in its ability to employ cutaneous and kinaesthetic inputs to derive information about the world of surfaces and objects in order to interact with them. Indeed, according to Leroi-Gourhan,

¹⁴⁶ Leroi-Gourhan, p. 19.

hapticity is ‘one of the first instances of human evolutionary exteriorization’.¹⁴⁷ This contemporary point resonates with Crooke’s understanding of the instrumentality of the hand in *Mikrokosmographia*, published in 1614, where the hand is described as the ‘first instrument so it is the framer, yea and employer of all other instruments.’¹⁴⁸ The hand is liberated and so distinguishes man above all creatures through the action of its making and ‘possession of movable implements’ that is ‘truly the ‘fundamental criteria of humanity.’¹⁴⁹

Stiegler’s theory of technics helps to read early modern understandings of the hand as a tool for mathematical calculation and for the measurement of time. Indeed physical calculation universally relies on the use of body parts, most commonly the fingers. Karl Menninger explains that many anthropological studies show the word ‘five’ has links to the words ‘fist’ and ‘hand’ in several languages.¹⁵⁰ Georges Ifrah argues in *The Universal History of Numbers* (2000) that the hand, as an instrument of counting, is ‘the earliest calculating machine.’¹⁵¹ This demonstrates the hand to be a conduit for human perception and subjectivity, presenting directly the awareness of its technicity. Here it extends into Stiegler’s incorporation and understanding of technics. Stiegler’s *Technics and Time I* discusses the ‘technical’ understanding of the world in relation to the understanding of the passage of time. As Christina Howells and Gerald Moore explain:

This is because it is only through technics that we create time, inventing ourselves a future through the inheritance of acquired experience and the horizons of expectation to which this gives rise. We are defined and more *constituted* by an externalised memory of a past that we never lived, namely culture, which is composed of technical objects that embody the knowledge of

¹⁴⁷ Bradley, p. 111.

¹⁴⁸ Crooke, p. 729.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Karl Menninger, *Number Words and Number Symbols* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1969), p. 35.

¹⁵¹ Georges Ifrah, *The Universal History of Numbers*, ed. by David Bellos (New York: Wiley, 2000), p. 47.

our ancestors, tools that we adopt to transform our environment, enabling us to anticipate and stave off death.¹⁵²

According to Stiegler, it is through a process of ‘exteriorisation’, achieved by the process of mnemotechnics (the technical prostheses), that memory is recorded and transmitted. As Arthur Bradley explicates, technics ‘is the only basis on which “we” as human beings can temporalize time: the exteriorization of human consciousness through flint tools, writing and so forth is the only basis of our transcending the “now”’.¹⁵³

The first chapter of Bede’s *De temporum ratione liber* entitled ‘De computo et loquela digitorum’ [On computing and speaking with fingers], published in the eleventh century, outlined the fingers as tools used to calculate and count.¹⁵⁴ Pacilio’s finger-reckoning system, in *Somma di aritmetica, geometria, proporzioni, et proporzionalita* in 1494 (Fig.8), altered Bede’s system and proposed that each digit represented a place value. This model was copied and ‘widely recognised by sixteenth-century mathematicians.’¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Stiegler and Technics, ed. by Christina Howells and Gerald Moore (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p. 43.

¹⁵³ Bradley, pp. 193-194.

¹⁵⁴ Saint Bede (The Venerable), ‘Calculating or speaking with fingers’, in *Bede, The Reckoning of Time*, trans. by Faith Wallis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), pp. 9-13.

¹⁵⁵ Luca Pacioli (Lucas de Borgo), *Somma di arithmetica* (Venice: Paganinus de Paganinis, 1494) I owe thanks to Sherman’s *Writing on Hands* (2000) for bringing Pacioli’s finger-reckoning system to my attention.

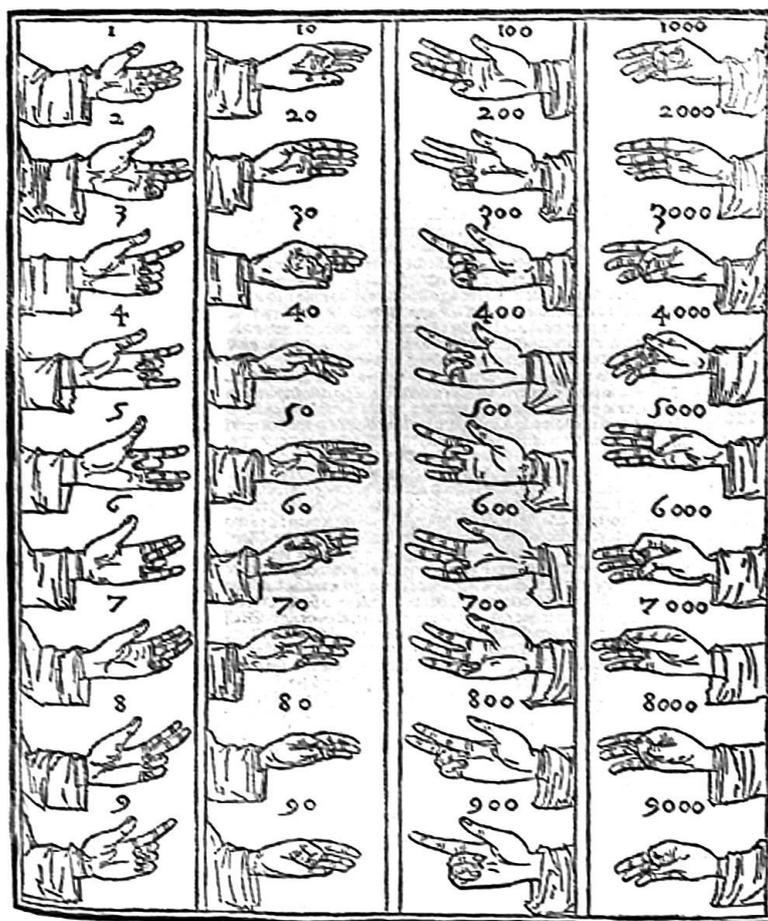


Figure 8: Anonymous, *Pacioli's Finger-Reckoning System* (1494) [Woodcut]. The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland

Critics have not yet noted the significance of the finger-reckoning system on stage. Looking at Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and De Flores' loathsome and wandering hands in relation to physical finger-reckoning allows the opportunity to envisage a powerful staging of his gestural discourse. Physical finger-reckoning can be utilised to demonstrate his consuming desire for Beatrice-Joanna as in Act 2 Scene 2 he states:

For if a woman
 Fly from one point, from him she makes a husband,
 She spreads and mounts them like arithmetic,
 One, ten, one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand,
 Proves in time sutler to an army royal (II.ii.59-63).

Using Pacilio's model of counting and calculation, De Flores' hands could extend and close incorporating the recognised symbols, allowing his hands to materialise the all-consuming desire he holds for Beatrice-Joanna. The photographs below show the hand modelled according to the woodcut that accompanied *Somma di aritmetica* (Fig.8), 'one, ten, one hundred,' and demonstrate how this could be staged.



Figure 9: Angela Felstead modelling Pacilio's finger-reckoning system. Hand gesture 'one'.



Figure 10: Hand gesture 'ten'.



Figure 11: Hand gesture 'one hundred'.



Figure 12: Hand gesture 'one thousand'.

The physical shape of the 'O' made by the finger and thumb in Figures 10 and 12 could be seen as manually representative of Beatrice-Joanna's vagina in De Flores' fantasy. His fingers can be read as mimicking Beatrice-Joanna's body, just as he does using her glove, further discussed in Chapter Two. As Pacilio's system does

not propose a hand gesture for the number ten thousand, De Flores' expression of Beatrice-Joanna's abundant sexual appeal would appear beyond rational thought and, quite literally, beyond human calculation. De Flores' grasping physicality, his active calculating hands, dramatise his avaricious desire for Beatrice-Joanna as his object. Applying Bulwer's understanding that 'the Hand alone, doth intimate our strong or faint desires' (13), De Flores' hands soon possess Beatrice-Joanna and, as Michael Neill points out, this 'sexual possession destroys what it desires, reducing the woman's treasure to the more proverbial "nothing" of a hole waiting to be filled and refilled.'¹⁵⁶ De Flores' hands and fingers that splay as he calculates become instruments that grotesquely prefigure Beatrice-Joanna's body later in the play: her body that is spread open and mounted. This objectification by physical calculation would have undoubtedly provoked different responses from spectators. For a female spectator, who had been reduced to an object by the male hand, the mirror neurons would react here in response to an observed action that is familiar, that of De Flores' hands frantically moving to count and calculate. The hand is symbiotically, then, both a value, by the counting of the fingers representative of the value of Beatrice-Joanna's body and also a result, by the hands that physically grasp Beatrice-Joanna's body later in the play.

As Claire Sherman points out, the body, '[a]s a mnemonic model, [...] has an advantage over imaginary structures as a site always available for reference in uniting numbers with places'.¹⁵⁷ The hand becomes a tool in which to interact with the exterior world. In Thomas Dekker's *The Honest Whore* Part 1 the hand is described as an instrument of time whereby the calendar is 'Mark'd with a marginal finger' (i.96). Here the pointed finger unites the dates with Infelice's dead

¹⁵⁶ Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 173.

¹⁵⁷ Sherman, p. 165.

and decaying body as Hippolito calculates she was on ‘Thursday buried, and on Monday died’ (i.87). The marginal finger, or manicule, acts as an index for Hippolito to express his despair at Infelice’s death.¹⁵⁸ For Hippolito the dismembered, free-floating, pointing hand is a lasting paradigm for remembrance and mourning. The marginal finger has not only marked the date as a permanent reminder for ‘every Monday’ (i.112) but has also opened ‘the wizard’s book’, the trace of touch polluting the calendar where it is opened to be chosen by ‘thieves, [...] villains, and black murderers, | As the best day for them to labour in’ (i.95-98). Accompanied by his friend Matheo, the two discuss Hippolito’s future actions and Matheo predicts, despite his lamentations, it is only a matter of time before Hippolito is found within a bawdy-house, taken ‘with a wench’ (i.112).

The hand’s ability to ‘play out’ or express mental calculations in mathematics and time is also evident in Ben Jonson’s *Epicoene* (1609). Morose, who wishes to be surrounded by silence, asks his servant Mute to tell him by physical signs what time Cutbeard is due to arrive:

Morose: And you have been with Cutbeard, the barber, to have him come to me? — Good. And he will come presently? Answer me not but with your leg, unless it be otherwise; if it be otherwise, shake your head or shrug.—So [...] How long will it be ere Cutbeard come? Stay, if an hour, hold up your whole hand; if half an hour, two fingers; if a quarter, one—
[*Mute holds up a finger bent*]
Good; half a quarter? ’Tis well (II.i.16-25).

Jonson employs the hand as a free and self-affecting agent. Mute’s hand would be the focal point on stage as the spectators are compelled to watch his gestural response. Adrian Curtis points to the significance of Mute’s ‘ingenuity in raising half a finger to cover an option that Morose did not anticipate’ that marks a ‘point

¹⁵⁸ Thomas Dekker may also here be referring to bibliomancy.

of resistance.’¹⁵⁹ Further subversion may also have been created, for the early modern spectator, by reason of the finger Mute holds up to his master. In the early modern period each finger had a name and was associated with a certain function. Defined by medieval records such associations would, Chris Woolgar argues, have been understood by early modern spectators. Woolgar lists the fingers’ names and associations, beginning with the thumb:

The thumb — *pollex* — had the most virtue and strength: the origin of the name was ascribed by Isidore to *pollere*, “to be strong or powerful.” The forefinger, known to Isidore as the index (or pointing) finger and the *saluteris*, or “greeting” finger (its meaning in Antiquity was “beneficial” or “useful”), was referred to additionally in Trevisa’s translation of Bartholomew as “the lick-pot” and “the teacher,” from its demonstrative functions. The middle finger was known as *impudicus*, literally “unchaste” or “shameless”, according to Isidore because of its association with insulting gesture. Next came the ring finger, *anularis*, also known as “the leech,” “leechman” or doctor, *medicus*, as it was this finger that was used to administer a salve around the eye. The little finger was known as the *auricularis*, or “ear-finger”, from its use for cleaning the ears.¹⁶⁰

Although there is no stage direction as to which finger should be raised in reply, the scene could take an amusing, subversive and vulgar turn by Mute placing out his middle finger straight. This would allow enough time for both Morose and the spectators to feel alarmed at the presentation of the *impudicus* middle finger. Mute could then bend his middle finger slowly causing Morose to audibly sigh in relief. At this point Mute would briefly hold both the spectators and Morose in his own hands until he folded his finger down to change the gesture’s meaning and quantify the length of time to half a quarter. By raising the middle finger, Mute would play with and express further the polysemic quality of gesture, as the middle finger that slowly bends into a half would allow Mute to demonstrate his utter contempt for

¹⁵⁹ Adrian Curtis, ‘Dumb Reading: The Noise of the Mute in Jonson’s *Epicoene*’, in *Comparative Drama*, 43 (2009), 45-62 (p. 51).

¹⁶⁰ C.M. Woolgar, *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 32. Tom Tyler notes that the ‘one finger salute’ is widely recognised in many countries across the world and was a gesture employed at least as far back as Roman times in ‘*Rideto Multum et Digitum Porrigito Medium* Laugh Loudly and Flip Them the Bird’, in *Ciferae*, pp. 77-108.

Morose.¹⁶¹ It is through the hand and the theatrical devices or technical prostheses it holds such as, the speaking tube for Mute, the horn, Otter's cups, Morose's sword and the pen and ink, that characters are able to assert their identity on stage and connect with the spectators.



Handwork

Theatrical depictions of technical prostheses offer a perspective from which to view identity formation and conceptions of early modern selfhood. The hand, the object and identity are all closely associated. As a critical lens through which to read this interconnection, 'thing theory' offers useful expositions of the subject-object relationship pertinent to my discussion. Whilst 'thing theory' principally focuses on human-object interactions, what follows in my own exploration is a focus on the agency of the subject and how the hand forms subjectivity through skilful interactions with objects or creative handiwork.

Craftsmanship and a relationship to material objects forge masculine identities as Roger Ascham describes:

Euery hand craft man that works best for hys owne profyte, works most semelye to other mens sight. Agayne in buyldynge a house, in makynge a shyppe, euery parte the more hansomely, they be joynd for profit and laste, the more cumlye they be fashioned to euery mans syght and eye. Nature it selfe taught men to ioynge alwayes welfauourednesse [with] profytablenesse. As in man, that ioynt or pece which is by anye chaunce depriued of hys cumlynesse the same is also debarred of hys vse and profytablenesse.¹⁶²

For Ascham, the hand of man constructs and validates their masculinity and worth to other men. Their craftsmanship of their hands will be recognised in the present

¹⁶¹ The middle finger was a subversive gesture that symbolised displeasure. It referred to the 'unchaste finger' and male genitalia. For early modern spectators, thumb-biting would have also been understood as a powerful gesture to signify disrespect evidencing the staged hand's active potential to insult. See Miranda Fay Thomas, *Shakespeare's Body Language: Shaming Gestures and Gender Politics on the Renaissance Stage* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019)

¹⁶² Roger Ascham, *Toxophilus: the schole of shootinge, conteyned in two books* (1544), sig.c1v cited by Tribble, *Shakespeare's theatre: thinking with the body*, p. 16.

and remembered in the future. This is dramatised in Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* when Ralph gives Jane a pair of shoes, made by himself and his fellow shoemakers, as a farewell and a token to remember him when he leaves for war:

Ralph: Rich men, at parting, give their wives rich gifts,
 Jewels and rings, to grace their lily hands.
 Thou know'st our trade makes rings for women's heels:
 Here take this pair of shoes, cut out by Hodge,
 Stitch'd by my fellow Firk, seam'd by myself,
 Made up and pink'd with letters for thy name.
 Wear them, my dear Jane, for thy husband's sake,
 And every morning, when thou pull's them on,
 Remember me, and pray for my return.
 Make much of them; for I have made them so
 That I can know them from a thousand mo (I.i.188-196).

The technical ability of Firk's, Hodge's and Ralph's hands that exercise motor function to cut, stitch and seam demonstrates an extension and transformation of their body schemae. From a phenomenological perspective, body and object become one and they are tied together by the process of making. The body is familiar with the object and uses it proprioceptively in order to assert agency even in circumstances where they are disempowered, as when Ralph is drafted into the army. The worker performs a part in a sequence of craft using the objects to hand. Merleau-Ponty, in the chapter titled 'The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motility', discusses the phenomenological dimension of the materials available to the hand such as '[t]he workbench, the scissors, and the pieces of leather' that would be presented to the 'subject as poles of action; they define, through their combined value, a particular situation that remains open, that calls for a certain mode of resolution, a certain labor' (108-109). The examples Merleau-Ponty describes here would be the exact materials available to the shoemaker that demonstrate the 'body as the power of determinate action' (108). The subject produces 'certain' imposed oriented actions which are thereby situated within their

environment and surroundings ‘as the collection of possible points for this power to be applied’ (ibid).

The scenes that show the shoemakers at work, their hands cutting and stitching, create a psychological sense of community or, as Leroi-Gourhan terms it, a ‘group aesthetic’. Leroi-Gourhan suggests that ‘[e]verything humans make—tools, gestures, and products alike—is impregnated by group aesthetic and has an ethnic personality’. The hand that creates, then, allows the worker a sense of individuation: ‘[i]ndividuals introduce their personal variations into the traditional framework and, safe in the knowledge of belonging to their group, draw some of their sense of existing as individuals from the margin of freedom allowed them’¹⁶³. This sense of individuation is clear at the opening of Ralph’s speech when he declares he is not a rich man and the shoe becomes representative of his identity and individual action. The shoes made by Ralph’s hands are not just representative of him as a maker but also as a hand-made symbol of love and dedication distinct from the rings and jewels bought by men of a higher class.

The shoes that Ralph gifts to his beloved are a signifier of Ralph’s devotion to Jane and the community that supports him. The workmen create their own subjectivities and inter-relational, personal associations with Jane and Ralph by the physical lettering of her name on the shoes. Ralph asks Jane to ‘remember me’ when she ‘pull’st them on’ each morning. Ralph’s hands and body become ingrained into Jane’s hands’ habitual action. Ralph’s speech corresponds with the philosophical framework outlined by Stiegler regarding the passing of time. For Jane, the shoes evoke technical memory as Ralph’s actions of the past permeate her present. This also extends to the spectators who are able to apprehend the passing

¹⁶³ Leroi-Gourhan, p. 245.

of time through the technical ability of the hand. Jane's touch evokes somatic connections to the remembrance of his love that continues into the present.

The action of pulling on the shoes becomes marked with the reminder of Ralph's active hands. His hands that once grasped the scissors, manipulated and cut leather are transformed into hands that defend and fight, grasping the sword and cutting the skin of the human body. The shoemakers are defined by the craft of their hands and this extends beyond their workspace as later in the play they band together, armed with weapons, to help Ralph. The name of Hans which Lacy chooses to adopt in disguise demonstrates the defining quality of the Han(d)s of the shoemaker. It is through the craftsmanship of Lacy's hands, as Hans a brother of 'the gentle craft', that he is able to disguise himself to find Rose and secretly marry her.

The artisanal detailing of Jane's shoes is significant again when Ralph, who has returned to the shoe shop in London injured from the war, is handed the pair of shoes with the request from a servant that a similar pair be made for an upcoming wedding. By manual exploration, Ralph recognises his handiwork and journeys to the church in order to stop the wedding. The shoemakers enter, according to the stage direction, '*all with cudgels or such weapons*' (V.ii.SD) and Hodge asks if Ralph is sure she is his wife, to which Ralph answers 'This morning, when I stroked on her shoes, I looked upon her and she upon me' (V.ii.2). Ralph's active hand with the object, the shoes made by his hand, determines perspectives toward his past life and before he left for war. The hand, as a perceptual agent, provides an understanding of the intertwining relationship between the material world of objects and somatic bodily experience. The unmediated physical touch of Ralph stroking the pair of shoes coordinates Ralph's desire to hold Jane in his arms once

more. The contact evokes emotion and changes as he knows, reacts, feels and can even perceive her bodily presence in the room before him.



The W(right)ing Hand

The hand's relationship with objects is once again underlined through the pen and paper as a form of *techné*. This was fundamental in early modern drama because it allowed masculine subjects to assert mastery across time and space, even when their physical hands and voices were absent. Jonathan Goldberg discusses the hand writing and the human written word in reference to technics:

There is [...] a history of technology that is also the history of “man,” the programmed/programming machine: the human written. The human cannot simply be returned to the divine/oral origin; the hand is there from the start, as the locus of retroactive redetermination. Thus, from the start, the written being and the writing being are coincident and differential, opening and enclosing at one and at the same time interiority and exteriority, the human and the technological, the mind and the body, speech and writing in their narrow sense.¹⁶⁴

Here Goldberg situates the hand as an agent that is there from the beginning as the written word derives from the handedness of the human. The hand writing with pen and ink, and the written being proves a series of deconstructions of binaries such as human/technical, exterior/interior, mind/body and origin/supplement. The act of writing is at once private and public. It can distinguish and position the subject as being-in-the-world and yet, turning to Stiegler, with the pen and ink as ‘technical prostheses’, represent exactly what the human body lacks. As a prescriptive skill taught and learnt as habitual action, it simultaneously frees and regulates the subject.

The permanence of the signature is central in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and serves as a paradox: the signature defines Faustus as distinctly human and yet

¹⁶⁴ Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter from the Hands of the English Renaissance* (California: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 24.

places him outside of humanity and into the hands of another. Faustus traps himself into a diabolical pact by the action of his hand and his signature which cannot be disputed. Goldberg explains that ‘[l]etters themselves, which ground the world, are not grounded in speech; the materiality of letters themselves and the literal investment of materiality grounds “being” in the hand.’¹⁶⁵ The signature has grounded Faustus’ ‘being’ in the hand and it is the hand that assumes power over his body by joining the letters to write his name. This signature situates Faustus outside of his lived being and places him into the world of sin. Faustus’ blood congeals as a warning: ‘But Mephistopheles, | My blood congeals, and I can write no more’ (II.i.61-62). Here his hands become the agents of his fall, the blood begins to flow again and his hand guides his signature which places him in a hedonistic and self-absorbed world. The signature establishes a relationship between the hand and the tool, a relationship which Leroi-Gourhan understands as ‘exclusively characteristic of humanity’¹⁶⁶. Faustus’ hand signifies his past, present and future actions and the ultimate loss of humanity that is ‘marked’ by his name. His body, quite literally, becomes the implements of writing as his blood becomes ink and his skin parchment.

Considering the play in performance, Maria Aberg’s 2016 direction of *Doctor Faustus* presented the imprisoning hand by technical prostheses using paint and brushes.¹⁶⁷ Mephistopheles and Faustus paint a pointed star on the surface of the stage where the lines eventually meet. It becomes impossible to determine whether it is Faustus’ own hands that confine him, or Mephistopheles’ hands, as an instrument of the devil, or indeed both their hands working together in disturbing harmony. The unsettling sense of the hand’s actions was exemplified further by the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 228-229.

¹⁶⁶ Leroi-Gourhan, p. 262.

¹⁶⁷ *Doctor Faustus*, dir. Maria Aberg (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2016)

use of a lit match before the play began. The actors entered, lit matches and the first to burn out was ‘chosen’ to play the damned Doctor.

It is not only the hand written that condemns Faustus but also the printed word through the object of the book. The books absorb him and allow him access to ancient languages and symbols that lead him away from the Scriptures. The shapes on the page intoxicate Faustus: ‘Lines, circles, signs, letters, and characters - | Ay, these are those that Faustus desires’ (I.i.53-54). Faustus’ hands are engaged in action by the books as he unfastens clasps, lifts and turns pages, lays books down and picks books up. The Good Angel advises Faustus to ‘lay that damned book aside | And gaze not on it’ (I.i.72-75) while Mephistopheles taunts ‘Hold, take this book. Peruse it thoroughly | The iterating of these lines brings gold’ (II.ii.162-165), holding the possibility to ‘turn thyself into what shape thou wilt’ (II.iii.173). In Matthew Dunster’s 2011 production this was strikingly realised as Act 1 Scene 1 opened with Faustus at his desk surrounded by books and with his right hand heavily stained with ink.¹⁶⁸ The influence of the printed word over Faustus was presented in a disembodied way as actors holding books, dressed in black with white gloved hands, circled Faustus whilst opening and closing the volumes. This gave the books a presence and agency of their own: they became disembodied and powerful technical instruments that inhibited Faustus’ movements and spatial, proprioceptive awareness and represented the imprisonment of Faustus’ body schema. Faustus quite literally ‘loses touch’ with reality and becomes unbalanced by the words that take hold of him. His hands invent a future by the technical object of the quill that not only transports Faustus into the ‘now’ but also into a landscape that is inescapable.

¹⁶⁸ *Doctor Faustus*, dir. Matthew Dunster (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2011)

In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, the written word is a duplicitous instrument employed to deceive and imprison. The letter is a 'device' (II.v.172) used by Maria to 'taunt [...] with the license of ink' (III.i.39). For the recipient, Malvolio, reading the feminine hand becomes an act of kinaesthesia as the letter is stamped with the seal of Olivia's Lucrece embodied on the ring worn by her hand. The letter perversely becomes representative of Olivia's body and Malvolio reads the body parts of Olivia he desires the most: 'this is my lady's hand: these be her very c's | her u's, and her t's' (II.v.77-80), the choice of letters suggesting his grotesque fascination with her genitalia. Here hand writing functions metonymically as a sign for the hand and is representative of the hand and, by extension, the absent body. The feminine hand later becomes doubly absent by Olivia's claim 'this is not my writing | Though I confess much like the character | But, out of question, 'tis Maria's hand' (V.i.333-335), a point I return to in the following chapter.

Malvolio relies on a feminine hand to give him access to the writer's most private and hidden parts as he imagines the presence of Olivia's body by her very absence. The engravings within *Moda di Scrivere Cancellaresco moderno* by Giacomo Franco and *Alphabeta et Characteres* by De Bry, published in 1596, depicted the relationship between corporeality and sexuality and between pen and paper. The letters of the alphabet are bodies wrapped together, bending and twisting:



Figure 13: Giacomo Franco, *Del Franco Modo di Scivere* (1596) [Engraving]. Victoria and Albert Picture Library, London.¹⁶⁹

The body being so intricately intertwined with the written word is further exemplified by the sixteenth-century spelling reformer John Hart who explains punctuation by reference to the human body. A colon, for example, is ‘the space, or the bone, fleshe and skinne betwixt two ioyntes’ and a comma ‘doth but in manner devide the small parts (betwixt the ioynts) of the hands and the feet.’¹⁷⁰ In reading the letter, and believing it to be Olivia’s hand, Malvolio could indeed be so overcome by the idea of Olivia’s corporeality that even the punctuation could be representative of her entire body being open for interpretation.

As the example from *Twelfth Night* shows, the written word, and the circulation of power from it that can so easily be placed in another’s hand, is a

¹⁶⁹ Giacomo Franco, *Del Franco Modo di Scivere Cancellaresco modern* (Venice, 1596), p. 42 cited by Goldberg, p. 227.

¹⁷⁰ John Hart, *An Orthographie, conteyning the due order and reason, howe to write or paint thimage of mannes voice, most like to the life or nature*. (London, 1596), p. 40.

dangerous and unstable concept. Nevertheless, the hand holding the quill is a recurrent motif in Elizabethan writing manuals and emblem books such as *Silenus Alcibiadis Sive Proteus* (1618) by Jacob Cats:



Figure 14: Jacob Cats, *Silenus Alcibiadis Sive Proteus* (1618) [Engraving].¹⁷¹

Here the hand, grasping the quill and writing on the tree, is disembodied and emerging from the clouds. This is the divine hand of God and reiterates the hand of the powerful and divine creator as I examined in George Wither's later dated emblem at the beginning of this chapter. To recall Merleau-Ponty's concept of the duplexity of the actor's body as the 'great phantom', here the hand is literally detached from the body and becomes a tool, the 'instrument of instruments', free-floating and completely autonomous. I return to such concepts of dismemberment and dislocation in Chapter Three.

¹⁷¹ Jacob Cats, *Silenus Alcibiadis Sive Proteus* (Middleburgi: Ex officina typographica Iohannis Hellenij, 1618), p. 57.

This chapter has argued that the hand is pivotal in understanding early modern embodiment. To know the hand was to know the body, mind and heart and the multiplicity and magnificence of the hand is made clear when examining the medical, oratorical and gestural textbooks of the period. When looking at the hand's centrality on the early modern stage, the active hand is a crucial body part to apprehend interconnections between interior/exterior, mind/body, emotion/gesture and actor/spectator.

The actors' skilled, technical hands on stage were expressive tools that served as cognitive maps of performed character and identity alongside creativity and selfhood. When looking at the early modern staged hand through a phenomenological lens, it is through gesture and the touch of the hand that we are able to conceive the bodies of others and our own bodies, as the two co-exist by an intercorporeity. From this perspective the staged, active hand is representative not only of displays of extreme masculinity, but also of the forging of homosocial bonds through touch and technical communality. The neurocognitive link between the hand of the spectator and the hand of the actor bind the two into a shared body schema, a 'handshake', if you will, creating a *chiasm* where senses, experiences and emotions crossover or intertwine. In the following chapter I further consider 'co-existence' and 'double sensation' by depictions of the feminine hand that betray the attendant awareness that women's hands were not merely passive objects of display but unnerving autonomous agents.

Chapter Two

Double Sensation

Hir eies shrowd pitie, pietie, and pure,
 Hir face shields Roses, Lillies, and delight,
 Hir hand hath powre, to conquere and allure.
 — *The Phoenix Nest* (1593)¹⁷²

Perceptions of the feminine hand in early modern drama and culture are strikingly different from those of the masculine hand of authority and action explored in Chapter One. While the masculine hand is perceived as central and affirming, the feminine hand is typically conditioned as both a signifier of unequivocal purity *and* sexual enticement. The quotation above, written by an anonymous poet, describes the subject's eyes and face which display her objectified beauty and purity, with symbolism of the rose and lily relating to the Virgin Mary. This objectification, however, is challenged by the hand, the use of 'hath' implying an assertion of will. The subject's hands articulate dual possibilities both as objectified beauty and a site of agency, her hands capable of skilfully mastering the people and objects around her. In the poem the hand is praised for its potential to move itself, and so, even more unsettlingly, its potential to move others. This chapter focuses on the agency of the feminine hand that is able to negotiate a position of both submission *and* resistance within a space of hegemonic control.

I address the liminal position of the feminine hand embedded within *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, *The Roaring Girl*, *The Late Lancashire Witches*, *Twelfth*

¹⁷² *The Phoenix Nest*. Built vp with the most rare and refined workes of noble men, worthy knights, gallant gentlemen, masters of arts, and braue schollers. Full of varietie, excellent inuention, and singular delight. Neuer before this time published. Set foorth by R.S. of the Inner Temple Gentleman. (London: By Iohn Iackson, 1593), p. 50, lines 4-6.

Night, The Duchess of Malfi and *All's Well That Ends Well*, alongside intertexts which give a perspective of how the feminine hands in these scripts might have been understood by early modern spectators. Using Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'double sensation' and Nancy's formulation of 'co-existence', the first section of this chapter examines how the hands of early modern women are passed between men within a historical and cultural context. I then apply this within a theatrical context to investigate the feminine hands staged by boy actors that were simultaneously acted upon *and* active, in constant oscillation between object/subject and passive/active. I explore how, whilst women's hands were the object of counsel and instruction, they were, at the same time, both active and powerful technical instruments of resistance both on and off the public stage.

The hands of Queen Elizabeth I, the most authoritative icon in the kingdom, exemplified the paradox of the female hand as both an unnerving instrument of female command and, simultaneously, an object of desire. The Queen was both seductive and protective, a passive object and an active subject. As object she solicited the viewer's gaze whilst as subject she asserted her sovereignty. The Virgin Queen influenced received standards of beauty which were 'emulated by her followers at court' during her lifetime and beyond.¹⁷³ In Shakespeare's *All Is True (Henry VIII)* (1613) the new-born Elizabeth is an 'unspotted lily' (V.v.63) and cosmetic instructions and treatises of the period followed this as the ideal, advising women to paint their hands with lead-based white *fucus* (cosmetic paint).¹⁷⁴ Shakespeare retrospectively alludes to Elizabeth's hands in *Timon of Athens* (1605-1606) by reference to the 'sovereign lady' Fortune, who sits

¹⁷³ Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama*, p. 18.

¹⁷⁴ Farah Karim-Cooper, Education Fellow, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, private correspondence via e-mail (24/02/2013).

See also *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage*, p. 61.

‘throned’ on a hill and ‘with her ivory hand wafts’ to Timon to show respect and adoration (I.i.80-83). This description parallels the first-hand account by Paul Hentzer, who visited the Queen in 1548, who witnessed a Bohemian Baron presenting letters and noticed that ‘after pulling off her glove, [Elizabeth] gave him her right hand to kiss, sparkling with rings and jewels, a mark of particular favour.’¹⁷⁵

The grandeur associated with Elizabeth’s gloves and rings was recorded in a ceremony in Oxford in 1566 where Elizabeth wore a fine pair of gauntlets that she ‘pulled off and put on [...] over one hundred times so that all might enjoy her graceful movements.’¹⁷⁶ In this instance for the material of the Queen’s glove to widen and become pliant, all individual fingers would have to be active: the gloves being picked up by her hands with delicate, conscious movement and the whole performance enacted like a striptease. Here Queen Elizabeth playfully, and skilfully, flirts with control to demonstrate public/private solicitation. These accounts reveal that Elizabeth’s hands were important signifiers of mind/body that oscillated between public and private spheres.¹⁷⁷

Several critics have noted, as a female body in a position of traditionally male-held political power, Elizabeth I was an object of political and cultural anxieties for her subjects.¹⁷⁸ Elizabeth constructed her own royal image through the

¹⁷⁵ Paul Hentzner, *A Journey into England by Paul Hentzner in the Year 1548*, rpt. by Horace Walpole, trans. by R. Bentley (Reading, 1807), p. 26.

¹⁷⁶ Mike Redwood, *Gloves and Glove-making* (Oxford: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2016), p. 26.

¹⁷⁷ Janet Arnold suggests that whilst the action of Elizabeth taking her gloves on and off so notably during an audience could, indeed, be viewed as ‘a nervous habit’, ultimately the action ‘drew attention to her graceful and beautiful white hands.’ in *Queen Elizabeth’s Wardrobe Unlock’d* (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 1988), p. 11.

¹⁷⁸ See David Moore Bergaron, *English Civic Pageantry, 1558-1642* (London: Edward Arnold, 1971); Louis Adrian Montrose, ‘“Shaping Fantasies”: Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture’, in *Representations*, 2 (1983), 61-94; Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Macmillan, 1995); Susan Doran, ‘Virginity, Divinity and Power: The Portraits of Elizabeth I’, in *The Myth of Elizabeth*, ed. by Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003),

objects she held in her hands as depicted in allegorical paintings. These objects served to augment the subject's royal status, signalling both her virtue and her power by holding, for example, books, fans or typically masculine accessories such as swords or helmets. In George Gower's portrait *The Plimpton 'Sieve' portrait of Queen Elizabeth I* (1579), Elizabeth's right hand holds a glove and rests on a chair while her left hand is holding a golden sieve, alluding to the Roman story of the Vestal Virgin Tuccia. As Louis Montrose suggests, the object of the sieve produces a multi-dimensional icon representative of 'impermeability and (selective) permeability simultaneously.'¹⁷⁹ It is particularly significant that Elizabeth's left hand, the hand which would traditionally wear the wedding ring, is the hand that holds the sieve. This directly corresponds with the idea that the Queen specifically intended the association with Tuccia to combat rumours of unchastity. Her body, watched over by both courtiers and commoners, threatened social order by her refusal to marry. When Parliament asked Elizabeth to marry she proffered her hand to reveal her Coronation ring as a symbol of her marriage to the kingdom. This gesture itself is emblematic of the Protestant marriage ceremony and Elizabeth's sovereign autonomy removed from patriarchal rule, specifically the rule of Parliament.

The Armada Portrait (1588) reveals the sovereign power and divine right the Queen's hands symbolised as she is surrounded by signifiers of imperial majesty. The Queen's right hand touches a globe with her fingers covering, as Andrew and Catherine Belsey attest, 'the portion of it which represents America indicating the dominion of the seas', whilst in her left hand she holds a fan, a

p. 171-200; *Goddesses and Queens: The Iconography of Elizabeth I*, ed. by Annaliese Connolly and Lisa Hopkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

¹⁷⁹ Louis Adrian Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender and Representation* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), p. 125.

prized accessory at court and the product of colonial exploration and importation.¹⁸⁰ Surrounded by a variety of objects related to navigating and mapping ‘new worlds’ across the globe, Elizabeth is focused on the continued expansion of her country’s territory by ‘hands-on’ action. Whilst such paintings display Elizabeth in her cosmetic glory, with her hands conforming to the Renaissance ideal of feminine beauty, they also implicitly demonstrate the active role her hands played during her reign. The indeterminate and reversible qualities of Elizabeth as both passive and active aptly brings to the fore the contemporary philosophical notion of ‘double sensation’ and the reversible position of the early modern feminine hand as both object *and* subject, touched *and* toucher.



Communion, Co-existence, Community

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty describes ‘double sensation’ as two hands that are ‘in the relationship of touched and touching’.¹⁸¹ By touching inanimate objects and other embodied subjects using the hand, we touch ourselves upon them and are thus both touchers and touched:

When I press my two hands together, it is not a matter of two sensations felt together as one perceives two objects placed side by side, but of an ambiguous set-up in which both hands can alternate the roles of ‘touching’ and being ‘touched.’ What was meant by talking about ‘double sensations’ is that, in passing from one role to the other, I can identify the hand touched as the same one which will in a moment be touching. In other words, in this bundle of bones and muscles which my right hand presents to my left, I can anticipate for an instant the integument or incarnation of that other right hand, alive and mobile, which I thrust towards things in order to explore them (109).

The touching-touched paradox demonstrates that the body is ‘intrinsically joined’ (329) as active subject, ‘alive and mobile,’ and passive object, ‘a bundle of bones

¹⁸⁰ Andrew Belsey and Catherine Belsey, ‘Icons of Divinity: Portraits of Elizabeth I’, in *Renaissance Bodies, The Human Figure in English Culture c.1540—1660*, ed. by Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), pp. 11-36 (p. 14).

¹⁸¹ Merleau-Ponty’s work expands on Husserl’s understanding of the touching hands in *Ideas II* and his lectures concerning ‘passive synthesis’ given between 1920-1926. See Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, trans. by Anthony J. Steinbock (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001)

and muscles'. Merleau-Ponty further conceptualises this in his later work *The Visible and the Invisible* (1969) by the figure of the *chiasm*, a term which derives from the Greek letter *chi* ('x') and indicates an intertwining or a crossing-over. He explains that the touching and the being touched always involves a gap [*écart*] which establishes the spacing between one hand and the other and the touching-touched are never simultaneous or coinciding. The hand-to-hand encounter suggests that whilst one is aware of the hand as a 'physical thing', at the same time 'an extraordinary event takes place: here is my left hand as well starting to perceive my right, *es wird Leib, es empfindet*. The physical thing becomes animate. Or, more precisely, it remains what it was [...] but an exploratory power comes to rest upon or dwell in it.'¹⁸² The touched hand becomes the touching hand and the body 'accomplishes "a sort of reflection"'. That is, the hand is a "'perceiving thing", a "subject-object"'.¹⁸³

Merleau-Ponty's concept that the body is 'in' the world as a feeling subject and felt object establishes a theoretical framework to read the chiasmatic qualities of the feminine hand in the early modern world and performance. It is important to note that my argument does not dismiss the subjugation and patriarchal constraints that existed for early modern women. Whilst women's hands were objectified and representative of their virtue, Merleau-Ponty's conception of 'double sensation', where passivity of the touched hand is 'intrinsically joined' to the activity of the touching hand, offers new readings and interpretations of the opportunities for, and perceived limitations of, agency in women's hands that were simultaneously touched *and* touching.

¹⁸² Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 166.

¹⁸³ Merleau-Ponty, 'The Philosopher and His Shadow', pp. 168-169.

Merleau-Ponty touches Husserl's work by quoting his ideas of subject-object in *Ideas II*.

Additionally, Nancy's understanding of double touching, *partes extra partes* [parts outside parts], helps to read early modern understandings of the feminine hand by 'co-existence' and 'exposure.' For Nancy, the overlapping and divergent properties created through touch reveals both a contact with the world and a separation from it. The dualistic properties of contact and separation is one of Nancy's central theoretical preoccupations. He argues that neither 'the same nor the other is primary; rather both identity ("I") and (in)difference ("one") are derivative from a prior and unatomized "we".¹⁸⁴ Nancy postulates:

The one/the other is neither 'by', nor 'for', nor 'in', nor 'despite', but rather 'with'. This 'with' is at once both more and less than 'relation' or 'bond', especially as such relation or bond presupposes the preexistence of the terms upon which it relies; the 'with' is the act contemporary of its terms; it is, in fact, their contemporaneity.¹⁸⁵

For Nancy, then, subjects are *always* already a part of relations with others as being-with is representative of exposure and 'the body consists in being exposed'.¹⁸⁶ The body is 'not a closed unity but is opened onto the world, fundamentally exposed and affected by it – vibrating, resonating, trembling.'¹⁸⁷

Nancy's discourse on ontological community or co-existence alongside Merleau-Ponty's understanding that sensation is a 'communion' (21) provides a useful theoretical framework to study the early modern feminine hand that forged communities and networks. The idea of a community reaching out beyond into visualisation of itself is explicated by Benedict Anderson's conception of an 'imagined community'. In Anderson's words, a nation is imagined because 'the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-

¹⁸⁴ Christopher Watkin, 'A Different Alterity: Jean-Luc Nancy's "Singular Plural"', in *Paragraph*, 30 (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 50-64 (p. 52).

¹⁸⁵ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, pp. 34-35.

¹⁸⁶ Nancy, *Corpus*, p. 124.

¹⁸⁷ Paul Simpson, 'What remains of the intersubjective?: On the presencing of self and other', in *Emotion, Space and Society*, 14 (2015), 65-73 (p. 68).

members, meet them, or even hear of them,’ yet, he continues, ‘in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.’¹⁸⁸ The early modern form of imagined community, where the feminine hand is set to specific tasks, such as needlework, offers important social foundations for ‘co-existence’ and individuation. The creation of such a community gives rise to mutual respect, friendship, instinct and pride. The hand reaches out and articulates a sense of interconnection by the knowledge that even when women are not physically in the same space, they can be aware of thousands of other women’s hands carrying out the same tasks.

The hand playing a vital role in forging relationships with others, and belonging within communities, is highly apposite to technics or prosthetic supplement with reference to theoretical frameworks of Leroi-Gourhan and Stiegler as outlined earlier. Following Leroi-Gourhan’s understanding that the movement and action of hands is ‘impregnated by group aesthetic’, I examine the technical activity of the early modern feminine hand as an important aspect of being-with to integrate ‘with the technical field’ and to transmit the ‘individual experience of people from generation to generation.’¹⁸⁹ As shown in the previous chapter, Stiegler understands that ‘epiphylogenetic’ memory or ‘epiphylogenesis’ is embodied in ‘tools that we adopt to transform our environment’, tools that open up understandings of lived experience and enable subjects to establish social relations and form individual identities.¹⁹⁰ This parallels with the critical viewpoints of Margreta de Grazia, Peter Stallybrass and Maureen Quilligan who suggest that we must understand the interconnecting relationship of the ‘reciprocal makings and unmakings’ of object/subject since ‘interrelating the object and the

¹⁸⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 6.

¹⁸⁹ Leroi-Gourhan, p. 37.

¹⁹⁰ Christina Howells and Gerald Moore, *Stiegler and Technics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 3.

subject in the Renaissance is a sense of how objects have a hold on subjects as well as subjects on objects.¹⁹¹ To examine the tools held by the women on and off the early modern stage, such as the needle or the pen, is to examine the communal and individual experience. In order to understand the affective theatrical qualities of the staged hand; however, it is first important to consider the ambiguous nature of the feminine hand in an early modern cultural context.



The Feminine Hand as Active Object

Many critics have noted that, in the premodern period, feminine tactility was viewed as gravely dangerous. The hands in particular, as the primary instruments of touch, were understood to wield and secure the senses. Indeed, as Carla Mazzio explains, '[w]hile one "gives a hand" to collaborate or help in some act of labour,' if the hand were to represent touch, 'it is to signify the palm and receptive digital tips that were said to enable the most exquisite forms of tactile pleasure.'¹⁹² How women used their hands in public, then, 'reflected their moral character, their virtue, their sense of duty as wives, their modesty and their inferiority to their male counterparts.'¹⁹³ This is apparent in the medieval conduct book *Le Ménagier de Paris* (c.1392-1394) which instructs the reader on the duties and conduct for a pious and faithful wife. The husband-narrator advises his bride to keep 'vigilance over the five bodily senses' since these are 'the five doors and windows through which the devil comes to steal chastity from the castle of the soul and of the weak body.'¹⁹⁴ The motor function of the hands and feet should be kept 'from impure

¹⁹¹ Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass, 'Introduction', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 1-17 (pp. 11-12).

¹⁹² Carla Mazzio, 'Acting with Tact: Touch and Theater in the Renaissance', in Harvey, pp. 159-187 (p.159).

¹⁹³ Karim-Cooper, *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage*, p. 54.

¹⁹⁴ *The Good Wife's Guide Le Ménagier de Paris A Medieval Household Book* trans. by Gina L. Greco and Christine M. Rose (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 84-85.

touching [and] entering evil places.’¹⁹⁵ The feminine hands are viewed as active agents, able to vigorously interact with the world and so must be carefully monitored and controlled under male instruction.

Such vigorous interaction is reflected in The Limbourg Brothers painting of the empress in the Belle Heures manuscript (1408) and shows the potential for pain, bloodshed and, ultimately, bodily dismemberment for men if women’s hands are not kept vigilant. The painting shows an impure woman tempting a Christian youth by caressing his body with her hands.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.



Figure 15: Limbourg Brothers, *Saint Paul the Hermit witnessing a Christian Tempted* (1408) (detail) *The Belles Heures of Jean de France, Duke de Bery* [Tempera colours and gold on parchment]. The Cloisters Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The hands of the Christian youth are completely inactive demonstrating the paralysing power of feminine touch. In order to gesture piety the touched youth compels himself to extreme self-mutilation by biting his tongue off and spitting it into the woman's face. In contrast to self-mutilation, dismemberment of the body by other hands to obtain control is condoned in the prefatory poem to Thomas Underdown's *The Excellent Historye of Theseus and Ariadne* (1566) entitled 'Rule for Women to Brynge up Their Daughters', which outlines the consequences of feminine transgression. If the daughter fails to obey, their mother is advised to blind her, sew her lips together, break her legs and, finally, cut her 'handes

away.’¹⁹⁶ The threatened physical and visual assault upon the female body is particularly explicit regarding the hands, which, as instruments of action and power, are the only body part to be completely severed. For, as premodern writers anxiously acknowledged, feminine hands were just as active as male ones and needed to be occupied in useful tasks within the household. Underdown commends ‘where the handes is occupied: there, the harte muste needes do somewhat’ and advises they be confined to their household ‘close in their Howses, vsynge them selues discretelye with companye’. He alludes to the virtuous Penelope who was honoured ‘in her tyme, and left eternal memorie of her good renowne to vs after her death’ as an example of good conduct and behaviour. Penelope was engaged in the domestic as she ‘dyd paynfullye spyn and keepe her howse’ and never left her work ‘to dallye and toye’ with the suitors, even though her husband was away. Another example he cites is that of the biblical Lady Lucrez spinning with her ladies which ‘taketh awaye all vayne thoughtes, and occupyeth the minde with honest studyes: for all the Senses be moued by it’ including ‘the hands with turning it aboute, so that no place is voyde of somewhat’.¹⁹⁷ Whilst the third section of this chapter focuses on the feminine hand at work in more detail, Underdown’s view offers a starting point to understand the contradictions placed on women’s hands in the early modern period. Women were advised to keep their hands busy at all times because it occupied the mind but, at the same time, such activity made the feminine hand a potent symbol and eroticised and objectified by the male gaze.

Early modern perceptions of the feminine touching hand, explored in engravings such as Jan Saenredam’s embracing *Touch* (1596), show the

¹⁹⁶ Thomas Underdown, *The Excellent Historye Of Theseus and Ariadne* (London: by Rycharde Iohnes and are to be sold at his shop, ioynng to the south west doore of Paules Church, 1566), sig. A.6v-A.7r

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, sig.A.4v-A.5r

licentiousness of feminine touch by the hand that can cause one person to be lost in, or to, another.¹⁹⁸



Figure 16: Jan Saenredam, *Touch* (1596) [Engraving]. Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

The woman's right hand is completely immersed within the skin of her lover, whilst her left hand grips her lover's neck as she pulls him close. The inscription, by Cornelius Schonaeus, reads 'Do not grasp in your hands those things which are harmful once you have seen them, in case you are soon seized by a worse evil', warning the viewer against the dangers inherent in feminine tactility.¹⁹⁹ Indeed, as Karim-Cooper observes, the hand as an all-encompassing agent that can grasp,

¹⁹⁸ Saint Ambrose, *Hexameron*, trans. by John J. Savage (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1961), p. 275.

¹⁹⁹ Carl Nordenfalk, 'The Five Senses in Flemish Art before 1600', in *Netherlandish Mannerism Papers Given at a Symposium in the National Museum, Stockholm, 21-22 September 1984*, cited by Sherman, pp. 136-137.

seize and control the senses of man features in Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 128' (1609).²⁰⁰ In contrast to Saenredam's depiction of physical touch in the embrace, Shakespeare observes a woman handling an object, playing the virginal, and describes the sensory imaginings of wanton fingers walking with 'gentle gait' over his body:

How oft when thou, my music, music play'st,
 Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
 With thy sweet fingers when thou gently sway'st
 The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
 Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap,
 To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
 Whilst my poor lips which should that harvest reap,
 At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!
 To be so tickled, they would change their state
 And situation with those dancing chips,
 O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
 Making dead wood more bless'd than living lips.
 Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
 Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.²⁰¹

The tactile and kinaesthetic imaginings of touch reveal the simultaneous sexual appeal and power of the feminine hand that is both an object of desire and a desiring subject. The subject in 'Sonnet 128' is described only by how her hand moves and this objectification metaphorically severs the hands from the rest of the female body.

Such active potency of the dismembered feminine hand is realised in *Les Blasons Anatomiques du Corps Féminin* (1543). Published in the same year as Vesalius's *Fabrica*, which focused on the significance of dissection and the 'anatomical' view of the body, *Les Blasons* displays the female body 'disembodied, divided and conquered,' as a figure of erotic pleasure and

²⁰⁰ Karim-Cooper, pp. 170-172.

²⁰¹ William Shakespeare, 'Sonnet 128', in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. by W.G. Ingram and Theodore Redpath (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), p. 299.

consumption.²⁰² The agency and autonomy of the subject is, as Nancy Vickers explains, defined and decided by ‘the “*anatomiste*’s” touch.’²⁰³ The quill, held and guided by the hand of the poet, equates to the medical instruments held by the surgeon as it cuts the female body into parts. Jonathan Sawday explains that ‘the word blazon was derived from the heraldic device worn as shield (*OED*)’ and so, the body of the woman, in the form of a coat of arms, is situated within the language of exploration, economy and exchange.²⁰⁴ ‘Blason de la Main’, by Claude Chappuys, determines the objectified beauty of the virtuous feminine hand, the delightful pleasures created by its touch and by its ability to captivate and control.²⁰⁵

Ô douce main, main belle, main polie,
Main qui les cœurs fait lier et délie,
Main qui le mien a pris sans y toucher,
Main qui embrasse et semond d’approcher,
Main qui à moi dois ouvrir, ô main forte,
Qui fors à moi, à tous ferme la porte.²⁰⁶ [...]

Main qui peut mieux par écrit assurer
Que l’œil par voir et bouche pour jurer.
Ô digne main, qui jusqu’au ciel approche,
Main qui fait honte à la neige at reproche,²⁰⁷ [...]
Main qui chatouille en toute honnêteté,²⁰⁸ [...]

²⁰² Nancy J. Vickers, ‘Members Only’, in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 3-23 (p. 8).

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 19. The blazons and counter-blazons were associated with the work of dissection and anatomical treatises and so the authors of the blazon poems were called ‘*anatomises*’.

²⁰⁴ Sawday, p. 191.

²⁰⁵ *Sensuient les blasons anatomiques du corps féminin, : ensemble les contreblasons de nouveau composez, & additionnez, avec les digures, le tout mis par ordre: / composez par plusieurs poetes contemporains. Avec la table desdictz blasons & contreblasons imprimez en ceste annee.* (Paris: Pour Charles Langelier, 1543)

Translated with help from Alison Findlay and Lynn Meskill.

²⁰⁶ O sweet hand, beautiful hand, refined hand

Hand which ties and unties hearts

Hand which has taken mine without touching it,

Hand which embraces and invites to approach,

Hand, which must open to me (O strong hand)

Who shuts the door to all, except for me. [...]

²⁰⁷ Hand, which could better guarantee the rules [prescriptions, what is prescribed]

Than the eye for seeing or the mouth for judging.

O worthy hand, who approaches just to the heavens

Hand, which makes the snow ashamed, and reproaches [...]

²⁰⁸ Hand which tickles [teases, titillates] everything honestly [...]

Main qui du luth doucement sais jouer,²⁰⁹ [...]

Main qui autant que la bouche peux dire,
 Main qui trop plus d'heur envoies en absence
 Que l'œil n'en peut octroyer en presence.
 Main frétilante, ôtez vos gants, ôtez,
 Et vos plaisirs par vos doigts me comptez.
 J'entends ceux-là, don't faut que sois témoin.
 Et quand de toi, hélas, je serais loin,
 Main, je te prie, fais réponse à la mienne,
 Main récris-moi que soudain je revienne.²¹⁰

The '*anatomiste*' praises the tactile materiality of the hand as severed from the female body and reduces it to an object of consumption. The erotic partition of the female body is made evident when the poet orders that the hands 'must open to me'. The unsettling imagery of the wandering, severed hand, which caresses, teases and pleases, demonstrates its perceived value. The feminine hand becomes a passive object which serves the man and the household. The question, however, remains, to whom does the hand belong?

The hand, which has the ability to put nature to shame with its whiteness and clarity, is self-evidently able and aware. The immediacy and primacy of touch, superior to sight and speech, is reflected by Chappuys' description of the hand which can communicate and be actively present in its absence through the written word. The feminine hand is perceived to have its own independent desires and powerful agency, both in its presence *and* in its absence. The woman's fingers count her own pleasures and move with a knowingness to stroke, play, count, embrace and possess. Such depictions of the feminine hand betray Merleau-

²⁰⁹ Hand which knows how to gently play the lute [...]

²¹⁰ Hand which as well as the mouth can speak
 Hand which in absence sends more happiness
 That the eye cannot grant in presence.
 Hand, frisking, take off your gloves, take off,
 And count your pleasures on your fingers.
 And when, alas, I would be far away,
 Hand, please, answer mine,
 Hand write back to me that suddenly I come back.

Ponty's conception of the *chiasm* where subjectivity and objectivity coincide. The hand is not just a passive object of display but also an active agent with its own movements. Although the poem seeks to objectify and fetishise the individual parts of the female body at the same time it describes the hand in relation to its subversive and active qualities. This same duplexity of the feminine hand is explored ninety-four years later in William Austin's *Hæc-Homo, wherein the Excellency of the Creation of Woman is described, by way of an Essaie* (1637). Austin, a barrister at Lincoln's Inn, advocates legal and public liberties for women and distinguishes the feminine hand as 'much more *delicate* then in man: and hath qualities *equall to all his*, and some farre above them' for, he continues,

[S]he doth not only such *grosser* workes and actions of *meaner* estimation, as well as *he*: but expresseth all musicke, with as swift motion and performance (together with such *arts* and works of *curiosity*) by slender *softnesse* and *nimblenesse* of her hand; as are too hote for his fingers.²¹¹

Austin reflects on the early modern humoural division where men were distinguished by hot/dry and women by cold/wet to suggest that the feminine hand is capable of tasks equal to and above men because a woman's hand is both delicate *and* nimble. The perceived qualities of the feminine hand, which are naturally virtuous and objectified, are also agents that cannot be absolutely controlled. Further concerns regarding the active feminine hand, from maiden to wife, are apparent in related treatises, dialogues and sermons on marriage where the hand and the heart intertwine.

²¹¹ William Austin, *Haec-Homo: wherein The Excellency of the Creation of woman is described* (London, 1637), p. 117.



Give me your Hand

The feminine hand in marriage demonstrates the hand as a body part that should be carefully controlled precisely because of its potential for action and autonomy. As I explored in Chapter One, the request ‘give me your hand’ is very common between men as a symbol of bonding. For women’s hands, however, the gesture is markedly different as their hands are *to be given* by men, reducing the female hand to an object of male control. T.E.’s *The Lawes Resolutions of Women’s Rights* (1632) considers the legal operations and principles that constitute women differently from men:

In sorrow shalt thou bring forth thy children, thy desires shall be subject to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. See here the reason of that which I touched before, that Women have no bayle in Parliament, They make no Lawes, they consent to none, they abrogate none. All of them are understood either married or to bee married and their desires [are] subject to their husband, I know no remedy though some women can shift it well enough. The common Law here shaketh hand with Divinitie.²¹²

The handshake signifies an alliance between secular and spiritual domination over women. The female body is led by her superior and defined only by her status as married, or to be married. T.E. suggests there is ‘no remedy’ for this as the joining of the hands binds secular law and divine law as one.

The betrothal, which was usually held before witnesses and viewed as a binding contract, was led by the man who would begin by reciting:

‘I, A. take thee, B. to my espoused wife, and do faithfully promise to marry thee in times meet and convenient’ then the woman, again taking the man by the hand, should say, ‘I, B. take thee to my espoused husband, and do faithful promise to yield to be married to thee in times meet and convenient.’²¹³

²¹² T.E., *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights: or, the Lawes Provision for Woemen: a Methodicall Collection of such Statutes and Customes, with the Cases, Opinions, Arguments and Points of Learning in the Law, as doe properly concerne Women* (London: Printed for John Grove, 1632), sig.B.3v.

²¹³ *The Autobiography of Thomas Whythorne*, ed. by James M. Osborn (Oxford, 1962), p. 95, 150-171 cited by David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle of Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 270.

The vows draw clear distinctions between the role of the man and woman in marriage: control and authority are claimed by the man's faithful promise *to* marry, while the woman is understood as an object that yields *to be* married. The vows, as David Cressy explains, were 'enhanced by the joining and loosing of hands' and a recitation of prayers and blessings.²¹⁴ The movement of the hands confirms the spoken word in the ritual of 'giving' woman to man and so the feminine hand is acted upon as an object, transferred from one patriarchal domain to another, as she passes from her father's hands into the hands of her husband.

The Elizabethan theologian Richard Hooker (1554-1600) considers the feminine hand with the ring which 'putteth women in mind of a duty whereunto the very imbecility of their nature and sex doth bind them, namely, to be always directed, guided and ordered by others.'²¹⁵ The hand of the bride is reduced to the status of gift, they become passive hands, directed and controlled and perceived as receptive and dependent. Such restriction is outlined in Francesco Barbaro's treatise *De re uxoria* (1415), with particular instructions for the feminine hand in the significant moment of binding that was betrothal and marriage. Barbaro advises that '[e]xcessive movements of the hand cannot be done without loss of dignity, and such actions are always joined to vanity and are signs of frivolity' and that wives should take care that their gestures 'be applied to the observance of decency.'²¹⁶

The betrothal ceremony is depicted in Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) which shows a married couple and renders the ritual act of betrothal by the arrested motion of their expressive hands. Giovanna Arnolfini's right hand is

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Richard Hooker, cited by Ibid., p. 339.

²¹⁶ Francesco Barbaro, 'On Wifely Duties' in *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society*, ed. by Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witts, trans. by Benjamin G. Kohl (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1978), pp. 189-231 (p. 202).

turned palm upward and is placed into the hand of her husband in a deferential gesture. Her left hand rests over her womb indicating her fertility and to mark the role she is soon to embody, from wife to mother. Indeed, as Craig Harbinson suggests, the man's raised hand in the portrait is a gesture of annunciation, blessing the fruit of his wife's womb.²¹⁷

The hand's actions were central to the early modern wifely ideal and women were constrained by the notion they must always be a virtuous and obedient object. The female hand was prescribed with a set of instructions to follow and boundaries to remain within. In the above examples it is shown that the feminine hand would be passed, quite literally, from one male hand to another and never left unsupervised. What happens, then, when external, worn objects such as the glove and ring, can be removed as and when the women choose?



The Touch of G(love)s

Gloves owned and worn by early modern women were unquestionably invested with sexual promise of the female body, a sexual promise which could be both concealed and revealed. Taking off the glove could be indicative of discarding these traditions to free a woman's hands for work or play. When worn, gloves were understood as 'external organs of the body,' and signified feminine beauty: the fine leathers, doeskin, silks and threads used all demonstrate the eroticism of the soft and pliable female body.

²¹⁷ Craig Harbinson convincingly argues that the London couple are Giovanni Arnolfini and Giovanna Cenami whose marriage was 'a political one meant to produce heirs who would unite and strengthen the interests of two powerful Italian families living in northern Europe' and so the desire for fertility and the bearing of offspring is a principle concern in the portrait in 'Sexuality and Social Standing in Arnolfini's Double Portrait', in *Renaissance Quarterly*, 23 (1990), 249-291 (p. 261). Such depictions by artists of the feminine hand as object continued throughout the early modern period as is clear in the painting by Anthony van Dyck, *William II, Prince of Orange, and his Bride, Mary Stuart* (1641). William II's hands join with Mary Stuart demonstrating sexual unification.

The Worshipful Company of Glovers of London retain a collection of Elizabethan gloves held at Bath Fashion Museum which reveal the intricate design and workmanship of the early modern glove.



Figure 17: Pair of embroidered gloves with long extended fingers c. 1595-1605. White leather dyed buff, suede side uppermost. Worked in silks, metal threads, seed pearls, coiling gold strip tendrils and enclosing a phoenix rising from the flames. 37cm long(Bath Fashion Museum). Mike Felstead photography.²¹⁸

The construction of the glove, incorporating overly lengthened fourchettes and surface stitching to the knuckles, gives the effect of the elongated fingers Elizabethan women displayed and Elizabethan men desired.²¹⁹ Typically gloves were gifted and owned as embodied forms of social acts and were commonly used as erotically charged love-tokens handed to the woman by the man. Such gifts, as

²¹⁸ Bath Fashion Museum, '23342', *The Worshipful Company of Glovers' of London (1595-1605)* <<http://glovecollectioncatalogue.org/23342+A.html>> [accessed 17/03/2015].

²¹⁹ Thanks to Elaine Uttley, Curator at Bath Fashion Museum, for allowing me to access the archives and to give me the opportunity to touch with my own gloved hands.

David Cressy explains, were not ‘simple items of value but potentially complex signifiers of promise and obligation.’²²⁰



Figure 18: Pair of embroidered leather gloves c.1600-1605. Worked in sequins and gold embroidery, blue and green floss self-flowering plants, edged in gold wire and spangles. 29cm long (Bath Fashion Museum). Mike Felstead photography.²²¹

The received Elizabethan standard of beauty and the glove is exemplified in Baldassarre Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier* (c.1528). The Count writes that the hands ‘being delicate, smooth and faire’ would indeed ‘leave a very great desire of themselves,’ but would be ‘especially’ arousing ‘after they are covered with gloves agayne [...] whether they be in sight or no, and that they are fair by

²²⁰ Cressy, p. 265.

²²¹ Bath Fashion Museum, ‘23355’, *The Worshipful Company of Glovers’ of London* (1600-1620) <<http://glovecollectioncatalogue.org/23355.html>> [accessed 17/03/2015].

nature, then by any studye or diligence.’²²² Here gloves serve as corporeal extensions of the feminine body and as an example of the paradox of the feminine hand: the glove can signify both the agency of the feminine hand and, by covering it, conceal the sensual power the Count so fervently anticipates.

The emphasis on ‘especially desirous’, by Castiglione, shows that the gloved hand itself becomes a fetish. Such eroticisation of the glove echoes Lacan’s *objet petit à* in that the desire of feminine tactility is always postponed in the glove. To separate the glove from the body thus fetishises the fetish and sets the imaginings of desire in motion. Whilst the blazon attempts to objectify the feminine hand by separating it from the corporeal whole, the gloves worn by a woman can be used to sever her from male authority. The glove is an extension of the body schema of the female body. As Head and Holmes suggest, ‘[a]nything which participates in the conscious movement of our bodies is added to the model of ourselves and becomes part of our schemata’. Thus ‘a woman’s power of localization may extend to the feather in her hat.’²²³ Gloves, then, as objects which can be removed, serve as powerful floating signifiers and can be appropriated by either male or female subjects. The relationship becomes more volatile when considering the early modern staged glove appropriated by the boy actor. This is examined in the following section when considering the significance of touching and being-touched as an intercorporeal experience.

The glove as an ‘external organ of the body’ could represent life after death, as in the late Middle Ages custom of maidens’ crowns in commemoration of young, female virgins (Fig.21 and Fig.22). The gloves rest in permanent elevation as icons

²²² Baldassarre Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier from the Italian Count Baldassarre Castiglione*, ed. by W.E. Henley (London: Strang, 1900), p. 80.

²²³ H. Head and H.G. Holmes, ‘Sensory disturbances from cerebral lesions’, in *Brain*, 34 (1911-1912), 102-254 (p. 188).

of legitimised voyeurism and signify the untouchable bait of virginity. Relatives of the deceased would request a crown if the dead maiden had been born, baptised and lived in the parish unmarried, which was viewed as a tangible testament of having died in a ‘state of virginity’. The crowns were typically made out of black and white paper rosettes with gloves owned by the recently deceased suspended from a hazel wood frame.²²⁴ They were carried by two girls, aged between twelve and sixteen, dressed in white and with their heads covered, at the beginning of the funeral procession. The crown was laid on the coffin until the body was committed to the ground and then it was suspended from a hook in the church gallery so that all who entered the church would pass by it.

The gauntlets attached to the crown represented a challenge thrown down to anyone to defame the character of the deceased. If unchallenged after three weeks the crown was hung from a hook near the ceiling of the church bearing an escutcheon recording the name and dates of the deceased. All extant examples of maidens’ crowns date from the post-Reformation period with the largest collection situated in the church of St. Mary the Virgin in Abbots Ann, Andover. Positioned at the apex of the walls, the surviving crowns signify the corporeal presence of the women. The material dimension of the garland produces, as Rosie Morris suggests, a ‘visible and ephemeral record in the church fabric.’²²⁵ The untouchable quality of the maidens’ crowns is the ultimate blazon, the detached body part enticing to the male members of the church who can never own it.

²²⁴ Virgin Crowns information kindly provided by Abbots Ann Church. In 1879 *The Shropshire Word Book* defined them as ‘chaplets of white-paper flowers, with a pair, sometimes more than one pair, of gauntlet-shaped gloves [...] suspended from the frame.’ cited by Rosie Morris, ‘Maidens’ Garlands: A Funeral Custom of Post-Reformation England’ in *The Archaeology of Post-Medieval Religion*, ed. by Chris King and Duncan Sayer (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011), pp. 271-283.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

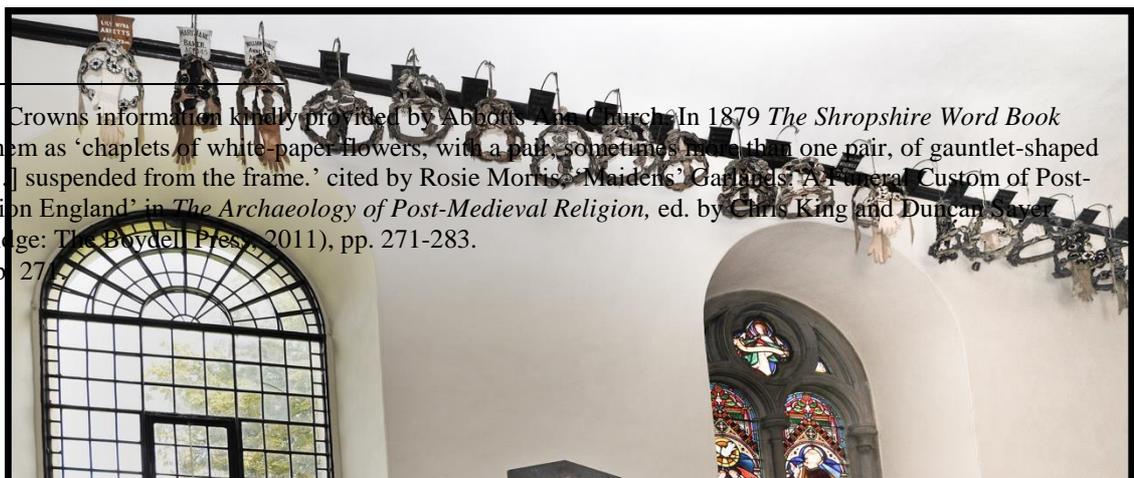


Figure 19: Maidens' Crowns on ceiling at St. Mary the Virgin, Abbots Ann,



Andover. Mike Felstead Photography.

Figure 20: Surviving Maidens' Crowns at St. Mary the Virgin, Abbots Ann, Andover. Mike Felstead Photography.

The maidens' crowns demonstrate passivity and compliance, as gloves can, when extending the female prosthetic hand of affection. However, gloves can also be indicative of activity and power. Such 'reversibility' is reflected in the glove itself as the physical ability, when turned inside out, to reverse the function of the glove from left to right, or right to left indicates its potential for deviation. Merleau-Ponty reflects on the distinction between the interior/exterior and left/right as demonstrated by the glove that is a 'double "representation"'.²²⁶ This points to the reversibility that paradoxically consists of the traditional and the aberrant: the glove and gloved hand perceived as passive object and the glove and gloved hand

²²⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 317, 263.

perceived as active agent. Considering all the theoretical complexities outlined, I now focus on the female hand as materialised in early modern drama where both the male and the female parts are played by boy actors.



The Feminine Hand on Stage

The paradox of the passive/feminine and active/masculine hand is literally embodied by boy actors on the early modern stage. The boy actors' white feminine staged hands are a combination of male physical body parts and lead-based cosmetic paints, a form of enhancement conventionally used by women. The performed feminine gestural discourse on stage is incorporated into the boy actor's body schema. The boy actor's hands, which take on gendered roles, make him an object of desire in the eyes of the spectators. Susan Zimmerman uses the phrase 'sexual deconstruction' to suggest that the 'androgynous beauty of the cross-dressed boy actor blurred socially inscribed sexual categories,' and thereby fused 'disparate erotic impulses in the experience of the male spectator.'²²⁷ Boy actors, as Peter Stallybrass contends, were 'both boy and woman, and he/she embodies the fact that sexual fixations are not the product of any categorical fixity of gender.' This suggests that 'all attempts to fix gender are necessarily *prosthetic*: that is, they suggest the attempt to supply an imagined deficiency' that suggests gender 'itself is a fetish, the production of an identity through the fixation upon specific "parts"'.²²⁸ The female hand remains always off stage, alluded to by prosthesis such as cosmetics and gloves.

²²⁷ Susan Zimmerman, 'Disruptive Desire: Artifice and Indeterminacy in Jacobean Comedy', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 39-62 (p. 46).

²²⁸ Peter Stallybrass, 'Transvestism and the "Body Beneath": Speculating on the Boy Actor', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. by Susan Zimmerman (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 64-83 (p. 77).

This section situates the boy actor's hand as a crucial instrument within the discourse of early modern femininity by enacting the paradoxical qualities of the feminine hand, those of sexual objectification and socio-political defiance. How, then, does the theatrical medium articulate with Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the overlapping and intertwining 'double sensation'? I suggest it extends the effect further as a prism-sensation with several ramifications to consider: the boy actor; the other actors on stage and the male and female spectators. At such moments of heightened artifice, the painted white hands of the boy actor signify a dual-consciousness between prosthetic fantasy and reality.

For example, when Rosalind counsels Silvius in *As You Like It* (1599), she uses Phoebe's rough hands to direct the playgoers to expressions of gender and class as performed by the body:

I saw her hand — she has a leathern hand,
 A freestone colour'd hand; I verily did think
 That her old gloves were on, but 'twas her hands;
 She has a housewife's hand (IV.iii.24-27).

The 'leathern hand' becomes a portrait representative of Phoebe and distinctly separates her from the signs of nobility as evidenced in the white and smooth hands of the aristocratic Celia and Rosalind. Shakespeare employs the descriptive devices of the ivory hand in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-1596) to simultaneously ridicule and perpetuate the received beauty standard using high comedy. After Demetrius' vision is tainted by love juice, he awakens and fervently admires Helena's hands:

That pure congealèd white, high Taurus' snow,
 Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
 When thou holdest up thy hand. O, let me kiss
 This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss! (III.ii.141-144)

In contrast to Demetrius' previous chastisement of Helena, which makes her believe she is as 'ugly as a bear' (II.ii.100), here he becomes a ridiculous and exaggerated courtly lover. This could be further materialised on stage by the physical appearance of Helena's 'pure white' hands, which may be far from white given her adventures in scrambling through the forest. If Demetrius were to raise her muddied hands to his lips whilst declaring 'O let me kiss | This princess of pure white', it would draw the audience's attention to the extent to which Demetrius' faculties have been altered.

For early modern spectators, the boy actors' hands represent a gap to be filled through interpretation and would have been shaped by their own ideologies, memories, prejudices and social norms. This extreme level of artifice in the examples above would undoubtedly draw laughter from the crowds as in *As You Like It* when the character who plays Rosalind is, as Lesley Soule describes, a 'boy pretending not to be a boy, when he is dressed like one, talks like one, and unmistakably *is* one.'²²⁹ Whilst it is important to note that the boy actor playing a woman provided an opportunity for ribaldry and dramatic entertainment, and that the stage was an exclusionary space for women who could participate only as a spectator until around 1660, this does not diminish the powerful agency of women's hands. I follow Catherine Belsey's position to focus on the early modern hand in passages which 'disrupt gender' to examine how early modern boy actors' hands gave gestural authority to female subjects who otherwise would not have had such opportunities.²³⁰ Boy actors' hands can bring attention to and subvert

²²⁹ Lesley Anne Soule, 'Subverting Rosalind: Cocky Ros in the Forest of Arden', in *New Theatre Quarterly*, 7 (1991), 126-136 (p. 131).

²³⁰ Catherine Belsey, 'Disrupting Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies', in *Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. by J. Drakakis (London: Routledge, 1985), pp. 166-190.

customary early modern principles such as gendered power relations and class-consciousness.

This subversion is inherent in *The Winter's Tale*, a play centred on the feminine hand as a symbol of agency and the silent power of its touch. Here the hand's power to instigate change and emotion is viewed as being dangerous and duplicitous. Leontes reads promiscuity and deceit, 'paddling palms and pinching fingers' (I.ii.115), when he witnesses Hermione's hand touching Polixenes. Touch makes Hermione suspect by the acting agency of her 'white hand' (I.ii.76) which becomes an 'infection' (I.i.24). Hermione's hand and habitual gestures become representative of the belief that although sexual temptation arises from all five senses, particularly potent is the sense of touch.²³¹ The placement of Hermione's hand on Polixenes is for Leontes a re-enactment of handfasting as he observes she is 'Virginal | Upon his palm' (I.ii.158-159). The ease with which Hermione touches Polixenes enrages Leontes further as he remembers it took him three months before he persuaded Hermione to 'open thy white hand | And clasp thyself my love; then didst thou utter | "I am yours forever"' (I.ii.103-105). Leontes' obsession feeds on itself as he asserts he would have Hermione 'given to the fire' (II.iii.8) to be burnt as witches were.

Leontes' response, to imprison his wife for a single touch, demonstrates a conscious and violent display of masculinity. His assertion of power is indicative of the instabilities of the English court where James I's martial leadership and masculinity were in question despite the royal children Queen Anna had given birth to. Leontes being unable to control the hands of the women around him including his own wife, new-born daughter and Paulina, may have intensified the

²³¹ L. Vinge, *The Five Senses: Studies in a Literary Tradition* (Sweden: Lund, 1975), p. 44.

audience's perception of the fragility of absolutist male rule under James. It is through the 'very mould and frame of hand, nail, finger' (II.iii.102) that Paulina asks Leontes to recognise his own child Perdita and to identify his role as father. Leontes is prompted to remember that his paterfamilial hand does not exist in autocratic isolation but rather in relation to others being representative of authoritative power, as king to his court and country and as husband and father to his family.

Leontes' response is made even more absurd on the early modern stage where the spectators would have been aware, despite the costume, make-up and gestural movement, of Hermione as a boy actor. The boy actor's hand has a considerable potency as the very nature of his touch can pollute a man: the fingers are not passive but depicted as 'pinching' and 'paddling' the flesh of another, suggesting an ability to provoke and sexually awaken by their movement. His hands thus become hyper-visible, their movements traced and closely inspected by subjects on and off the stage.

Later in the play at the unconventional betrothal ceremony of Prince Florizel taking Perdita's hand in his, an action unlicensed by Florizel's father, Perdita is transformed into her condemned mother who is perceived as a threatening, powerful enchantress. Florizel takes her hand in his and declares:

I take thy hand – this hand
 As soft as dove's down and as white as it,
 Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd snow that's bolted
 By th' northern blasts twice o'er (IV.v.354-357).

He describes Perdita's hand with reference to the natural world and in doing so describes a softness and whiteness that is unattainable. The qualities of Perdita's hands are exaggerated, and depicted as white, soft and untouched by labour and so conforming to the beauty ideal. Perdita's hands become a construct of the male

fantasy of feminine virtue. Indeed, as this chapter has previously explored, in the early modern period touch had a simultaneously ‘exuberant and deprecated link to materiality, to the body, to eroticism’ and so the touching hands of Florizel and Perdita causes Polixenes to intervene.²³² Polixenes attacks Perdita for being ‘a fresh piece | of excellent witchcraft’ (IV.iv.422, 433) demonstrating the dangers of the hand of the maiden that are associated with witchcraft and voracious sexuality.

Here Perdita’s touch pertinently demonstrates the staged ‘prism-sensation’ in that she is simultaneously present in the spectators’ minds as a boy actor who is playing a princess who is playing a shepherdess who is dressed up as queen of the feast. When Perdita’s hand is touched by Florizel it is viewed as an active and dangerous instrument. The spectators’ mirror neuronal response could have made them react to this dangerous instrument in varying ways ranging from absolute horror, that everything is not what it seems, to pure delight that class structure could be interchangeable. Or, indeed, they could be overcome by feelings of illicit pleasure witnessing the boy actor’s hand touching or being touched.

Hermione’s hands, that previously created discord and disruption by double-touching, are frozen when she is a passive statue formed by the ‘hand of man’ (V.iii.17), imitating the Renaissance expectation of ‘rectitude and physical erectness.’²³³ Paulina warns Leontes, and the spectators in the theatre, to ‘resolve you | For more amazement’ in preparation for making the statue move, descend and take Leontes by the hand (V.iii.85-86). When Hermione begins to move, the boy actor is reined back into the confines of the female body schema and Leontes asserts male dominance by taking Hermione’s hand, which now signifies ‘worth and honesty’ (V.iii.144), to restore her through touch. Hermione ‘hangs about

²³² Harvey, p. 3.

²³³ Boyle, p. 94.

[Leontes'] neck' (V.iii.112) in an embrace, the act of which John Bulwer describes 'TO EMBRACE THOSE WE LOVE as if we would bring them home into our heart and bosome as some dear and precious thing' (122).

Although Hermione extends her hands and arms to embrace Leontes, her touch retains an ambiguous quality as the audience are left to read her gestural discourse once more. Julia Reinhard Lupton explores the statue scene to suggest that, despite witnessing 'the bodily compass of her full embrace', the audience are also left with her silence which could be indicative of Hermione not being able to forgive Leontes at this moment.²³⁴ Hermione's blessing and benediction to her daughter Perdita 'prepares the ground for a forgiveness to come while calling attention to the fact that sometimes forgiveness is most conducive to transformation when it remains incipient rather than achieved'²³⁵. The discourse of the boy actor speaking or, as here, being silent and using the motor function of their hands is a means of performing feminine identity and dramatises a dialectic between authority and female transgression.

Hermione's tactile perception and motor activity consists here in its double function, by proprioceptive and exteroceptive direction, as shown by the phenomenon of 'double sensation'. When the spectators witness Hermione embrace Leontes the hands operate a form of self-construction that enables both Hermione and the spectators to acknowledge her body as both an object and a sensing/acting subject. In being touched Hermione's gestures speak of, to use Nancy's phrase, a body 'exposed', and so could motivate different reactions for the spectators to interpret the act of judgement. The play is thus constructed by the

²³⁴ Julia Reinhard Lupton, 'Judging Forgiveness: Hannah Arendt, W. H. Auden, and *The Winter's Tale*', in *New Literary History*, 4 (John Hopkins University Press, 2014), 641-663 (p. 648).

²³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 655.

feminine hand, the potent power of its touch leaving the spectators without a conclusive ending.



Boys with Gloves

The fetishisation of the feminine hand is more pronounced in *The Changeling* because of the presence of the staged glove. The gloves symbolise the boundary as an almost ‘second skin’ between Beatrice-Joanna’s aristocratic body and that of the servant De Flores. The action of Beatrice-Joanna dropping her glove is viewed as a sexual invitation by De Flores who picks it up and reveals his desire to ‘thrust [his] fingers into her sockets’ (I.i.230). Here De Flores’ sensory apprehension is a displacement of the foretasting of Beatrice-Joanna’s flesh. The glove becomes a physical extension of Beatrice-Joanna’s aristocratic body schema that De Flores can grasp, press into his palms, interchange between his hands and fit his fingers into one by one. As Figures 19 and 20 above show, gloves designed for women and for boy actors on the stage were fashioned by reference to the beauty ideal with long and slender fingers. In many cases, due to under sizing, gloves often ripped and unravelled at the seams.²³⁶ Although there is no stage direction to suggest this takes place, Beatrice-Joanna’s glove tearing at the moment De Flores thrusts his fingers into it could be an explicit and grotesque representation of the tearing of Beatrice-Joanna’s hymen. The fingers being pushed in and pulled out of the glove, alongside the possible tearing of its fabric, would undoubtedly trigger mirror neurons for the spectators who may have been gifted with a pair of gloves themselves. The glove is an explicit fetishised object and could create feelings of excitement, mirroring De Flores’ anticipation, or horror as it confirms Beatrice-

²³⁶ See Valerie Cumming, *Gloves*, ed. by Dr Aileen Ribeiro (London: Batsford Ltd, 1982)

Joanna's impending downfall at the hands of both herself and others. By placing his fingers within Beatrice-Joanna's glove, De Flores acquires a new skin: a skin so desirous to have Beatrice Joanna for his own that he kills for it. Beatrice-Joanna's gloves are objects of desire which can be touched and moulded by her own hands and, significantly, touched and remoulded by the hands of others.

Beatrice-Joanna later throws her retained glove to the ground, asserting her disgust by pairing the two once again:

Mischief on your officious forwardness
 Who bade you stoop? They touch my hands no more:
 There, for t'other's sake I part with this,
[She takes off the other glove and casts it down.]
 Take 'em and draw thine own skin off with 'em (I.i.227-230).

Derrida's theory of the fetish in relation to the unpaired object can be examined alongside this. As a pair, gloves are bound to "normal" usage; however, Derrida suggests the fetish emerges when the unpaired object is no longer bound to this i.e. the single glove.²³⁷ Beatrice-Joanna throwing her retained glove to the ground to once more pair them could be suggestive of reclaiming her body as subject rather than object.

The gloves become representative of both Beatrice-Joanna's combative positioning towards the servant whilst also a material form of the power De Flores will later hold over Beatrice-Joanna's bare skin: skin that has previously only been touched by her hands. This direction could further evidence Beatrice-Joanna's awareness of her hands being simultaneously the subject and object of De Flores' lingering sexual longing. There remains a disturbing sense of violation as even in pairing the gloves De Flores' fingers 'haunt her still' (I.i.231) as he commands of Beatrice-Joanna's body 'I'll have my will' (I.i.232). The action of her throwing her

²³⁷ Derrida cited by Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Fetishizing the Glove in Renaissance Europe', in *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2001), 114-132 (p. 128).

glove for him to collect whilst encouraging him to ‘draw thine own skin off with em’ could indeed be linked to masturbation and is an act which prophesies her eventual self-surrender to him. As Heather Hirschfield suggests, this moment in the play concerns both class and sexual hierarchy in that it opens showing Beatrice-Joanna as a commanding force but ends with her ‘kneeling to her new master.’²³⁸

The boy actor and the gloves that are worn by him act as both material and physical signifiers of the cultural expectations of the feminine hand controlled by the hand of man. De Flores’ sensual appetites increase, awakening his senses, as he declares ‘her fingers touch’d me | She smells all amber’ (II.ii.80-81):

Oh, my blood! Methinks I feel her in mine arms already,
Her wanton fingers combing out this beard,
And being pleased, praising this bad face (II.ii.147-149).

Beatrice-Joanna’s body schema exceeds the confines of her skin as her touch lingers in De Flores’ imagination, so much so he apprehends he can ‘feel’ her in his arms. At this point in the play, De Flores’ sensory and haptic perception of his world is pure fantasy. The imagined touch allows him to enter a world where Beatrice-Joanna’s fingers become ‘wanton’ and willing by his design. The motor-cognitive function of De Flores’ hands observed by male spectators would have possibly mirrored the homoerotic fantasy they share with De Flores towards the boy actor as object. Activated by mirror neuron responses, male spectators thus feel in the mind what De Flores imagines he feels on stage: the stroking hands of Beatrice-Joanna.



Feminine Hands as Active Agents

²³⁸ Heather Anne Hirschfield, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 112-113.

See also Cristina Malcolmson, “‘As Tame as the Ladies’: Politics and Gender in *The Changeling*”, in *English Literary Renaissance*, 20 (1990), 320-339 (p. 334).

Where the glove can be a prosthetic object of fetish and reinforce women and boy actors as objects of desire, the ring in *The Duchess of Malfi* serves as a prosthetic to represent feminine self-assertion and is used to subvert institutional, patriarchal norms. The boy actor playing the Duchess destabilises the hierarchal binary of the hand in marriage by the hands of her private and public body when she marries below her status to the steward Antonio. After asking Antonio to ‘take pen and ink’ to write her will, she instigates the wooing:

Fie, fie, what’s all this
 One of your eyes is blood-shot; use my ring to’t.
 They say ‘tis very sovereign; ‘twas my wedding ring,
 And I did vow never to part with it.
 But to my second husband.
[She puts the ring upon his finger] He kneels.
 [...] Raise yourself;
 Or, if you please, my hand to help you: so.
[Raises him] (I.i.403-407, 418-419)

As in *All’s Well That Ends Well*, *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-1599) and *The Changeling*, here the ring is not merely a marital symbol but transfigures into an extension of the feminine body, specifically vaginal. The ring, associated with the hand and the heart, is not only a signifier of personal identity, as proof of the Duchess’ body, but transforms into an eternal, fleshy testament marking the beginning of a relationship led by the feminine hand. Indeed, as Frank Whigham asserts, the Duchess ‘rewrites the rules’ and, in doing so, establishes a vulnerability to the aristocratic bloodline.²³⁹ In placing the ring, which was given to her by Duke Malfi, on Antonio’s finger and then taking his hand in hers, she elevates Antonio both physically and socially. At the beginning of the play Antonio is celebrated as the winner of riding at the ring (I.i.88), a courtly sport where players would ride horseback to successfully carry off a ring on the tip of their lance. The chivalric

²³⁹ Whigham, p. 197.

and courtly values Antonio is associated with are reduced to insignificance as his body, which now wears the ring instead of winning it, yields to the Duchess. The Duchess' hands become representative of her refusal to submit to the church and the state and so enact a criticism of the traditional court. Here the boy actor's hands recall the activities of Elizabeth I, a ruler who transgressed traditional notions of sexuality. Elizabeth's hands, like the boy actor's hands of the Duchess on the public stage, mastered the political sphere in a space dominated by men. Antonio and the Duchess' 'loving palms' (I.ii.392) join together in an 'emblem of a peaceful marriage' (I.ii.393) to reveal the failure of the martial hand of authority and action.

In contrast to the Duchess' hands raising the man, the handfasting ceremony in *All's Well That Ends Well* permits the woman to move up in a society she was once excluded from. Helena's movements and gestural discourse invoke masculine connotations of power and spiritual authority and serve as a threat to social and political hierarchies. Because the common betrothal ceremony is successfully inverted, led and directed by the boy actor's hand, Bertram becomes an effeminised figure lacking masculine authority. The exchange of rings affirms Bertram's body that must yield to Helena as she requests of the King: 'Then shalt thou give me with thy Kingly hand | What husband in my power I will command' (II.i.192-193). The King advises Bertram to 'Take her by the hand | And tell her she is thine; to whom I promise' (II.iii.169-170). Bertram, unwilling, rises and replies, 'I take her hand' (II.iii.173). For Bertram, the ritual gesture becomes a device to trick Helena into believing he will marry her with specific regulations:

When thou canst get the ring upon my finger which
never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that
I am father to, then call me husband; but in such a "then" I
write a "never." (III.ii.55-58)

The bed-trick, cunningly devised by Helena in collaboration with Diana and her mother, involves a further exchange of rings. Diana promises that ‘on [his] finger, I’ll put another ring’ (IV.ii.61-62), this ring symbolising Helena’s body, specifically her vagina. The ring becomes physical proof of the confirmation of their marriage as the Countess affirms, in direct opposition to her son, ‘That is his wife | The ring’s a thousand proofs’ (V.iii.200-201).

The boy actor’s hands are disruptive and disturbing forces for the spectators from the play’s outset. Helena, by the use of the ‘prescriptions | of rare and prov’d effects’ (I.iii.219-220) left by her father, predicts she can cure the King by her healing hands. The boy actor is a Christ-like and monarchical figure as the monarch’s hands in premodern England were perceived as restorative conduits held to possess sacred powers capable of healing. This would have seemed particularly poignant due to the underlying anxiety in the early modern period concerning the feminine hand as active agent in the medical sphere. Indeed, the mystery of the miraculous feminine hand was frequently associated with witchcraft. The work of wise-women was understood as illegitimate and untrustworthy. Their hands became emblematic of unrestrained, sinister power as they were ‘selfe-singular’ and ‘their own instructresse’ with access to their own education unauthorised by man.²⁴⁰ By healing the King, Helena enters the masculine dominated world of medicine and she does so with ease. The boy actor employs the early modern gestural discourses of traditionally masculine qualities, such as dominance and restoration, in order for the spectators to connect with and identify explicit feminine transgression.

²⁴⁰ Richard Braithwait, *The Good Wife: Or, a Rare One amongst Women* (London, 1618), B_{2V}-B₃. Braithwait instructs men ‘to loath formalist, *She-doctors*, who have sought | To teach more then ever they were touch.’

Indeed, by the active agency of her hands Helena is, as Carolyn Asp suggests, able to break ‘out of both the cultural (historical) and psychic (transhistorical) strictures’ typically applied to women ‘by the assertion of desire.’²⁴¹ To advance Asp’s argument of Helena escaping the patriarchal domain through desire, I believe Helena further transgresses the boundaries by utilising the assisting hands of Diana, the Widow Capilet and The Countess of Rossillion. The proverb ‘many hands make light work’ is realised in the play as it stages the co-operative labour that was typical of female ways of working.²⁴² By the women’s helping hands working in unison the play demonstrates the power of female community and bonding. The helping hands of the women reposition Helena, who begins the play as the poor physician’s daughter, to triumph and to succeed in marrying the husband she desires. Helena’s hands are thus agents which exercise agency, as they heal, and resistance, as they position her in control.



Helping Hands: Creative Production and Consumption

The boy actor’s hands, governed by the same paradoxical duality between active and passive, were invariably able to subvert the marital hand as an object of desire on the stage by dramatising the technical skill of the feminine hand as an instrument of power and agency. The next section draws on the notion of creating subjectivity through skills or *techné* and refers back to the theories of Anaxagoras, Leroi-Gourhan and Stiegler. The neuro-scientific ideas of thinking with the body, or ‘skilled viewing’, applies also to the activities I discuss below, such as needlecraft, and translates to the on-stage display of the boy actor’s helping hands.

²⁴¹ Carolyn Asp, ‘Subjectivity, Desire and Female Friendship in *All’s Well That Ends Well*’, in *Shakespeare’s Problem Plays: All’s Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida*, ed. by Simon Barker (Harmondsworth: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 74-95 (p. 75).

²⁴² Christine Ammer, *The American Heritage of Dictionary of Idioms* (Boston: HMHS, 2003), p. 291. Ammer contends that the proverb appears in proverb collections from 1546.

Although the plays are written by the hands of men and enacted by a boy actor's hand, the staged hands that reclaim material environments by handiwork or craft offer spectators insight into female communities, same-sex bonds and individuation in the early modern period.

This would also have drawn attention to the skills of the boy actor. Boy actors underwent training as apprentices to senior members of the acting companies and so enact *techné* by learned 'enskilment', that is, by the imitation and trained conscious movements of their hands. As Tribble outlines, the process of 'enskilment' refers to 'the processes by which novices are inducted into a skill environment, their absorption into its practices and norms, and the training of the body and the nervous system that marks skilled, deliberate practice.'²⁴³ The boys' skill to convincingly impersonate the women's roles required that the spectators engage also in 'skilled viewing' to recognise such expertise. Tribble argues that:

On the one hand, imitation and deliberate practice are necessary if the younger actor is to gain the skills of personation and the smooth integration of "action" and "accent" that is the hallmark of the trained player. But on the other, the boy actors also display the results and processes of the training, revealing glimpses of their own "enskilment" through moments of animation, meta-theatricality, and feigned ineptness.²⁴⁴

The 'enskilment' undertaken during the apprenticeship also played a part in, as Catherine Belsey suggests, 'training the boys for their future roles' and, beyond that, 'in the construction of childhood itself'.²⁴⁵ The hand's skill and role in practicing or mimicking the assertive gestures of the female roles, then, linked to the boy actors' futures as men, both on and off the stage.

²⁴³ Evelyn Tribble, 'Pretty and Apt: Boy Actors, Skill, and Embodiment', in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment: Gender, Sexuality, and Race*, ed. by Valerie Traub (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 628-641 (p. 631).

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Catherine Belsey, 'Shakespeare's Little Boys: Theatrical Apprenticeship and the Construction of Childhood', in *Rematerializing Shakespeare*, ed. by B. Reynolds and W.N. West (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 53-72 (p. 53).

This extends also to the manipulation of objects by a boy actors' hands when demonstrating feminine technical skill. Merleau-Ponty's suggestion that the glove signifies a 'double "representation"', in its reversibility, can also be applied to the objects wielded by the boy actor on stage and by the women off stage within the domestic space of the household. This opens up opportunities to subvert traditional 'norms' and to conceal and reveal passive and active agency. The needle, for example, grasped and manipulated by the hand, serves as an extension of the body schema and connects the subject to the exterior world. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty defines the hand as the 'centre-point' between the needle and the body. The hands are already mobilised by the perception of the needle, as the centre-point of the 'intentional threads' that links the subject to object (108). De Grazia, Stallybrass and Quilligan note that 'in working upon [the object], the bondsman comes to recognise her or his identity as "an objective being" or "objective personality"—that is, a being in need of outside objects and in need of being an outside object to another.'²⁴⁶ The hand demonstrates great skill by the employment of tools and, in the early modern period, was able to shape and cultivate cognitive and social connections.

Before I analyse dramatic examples, I wish to first examine female manual activity as outlined in intertexts which demonstrate both female limitation and the potential for the hand to design its own desires, wants and wishes. The upkeep of the household was dependent on women's hands and handiwork. Conduct books across the premodern period demonstrate the need to instruct and counsel the feminine hand as idleness was thought to lead women astray, whereas the hand set to domestic tasks was a fundamental virtue. Proverbs, speaking of a good woman,

²⁴⁶ De Grazia, Quilligan and Stallybrass, p. 4.

says '[s]he selects wool and flax and works with eager hands' with both hands occupied:

In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers
She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy
She makes linen garments and sells them.²⁴⁷

The reason that both hands should be occupied is exemplified in Reverend Thomas Becon's *The Catechism* (1564) where Becon instructs the hands of maidens to 'never be idle' for, he states, an occupation is the 'most certain patrimony':

Idleness is a great occasion of many evils: as the wise man saith, idleness bringeth much evil [...] out of which springeth all mischief, as pride, slothfulness, banqueting, drunkenship, whoredom, adultery, vain communication, betraying of secrets, cursed speaking, etc. To avoid these pestilences it shall become honest and virtuous maids to give themselves to honest and virtuous exercises: to spinning, to carding, to weaving, to sowing, to washing, to wringing, to sweeping, to scouring, to brewing, to baking and to all kind of labours without exception that become maids of their vocation, of whatsoever degree they be, rich or poor, noble or un noble, fair or foul [...] all godly women from time to time have learned and practised some art or occupation, whereby they might get at least some part of their living if necessity should require.²⁴⁸

Becon defines virtuous women by the corporeal motricity of their hands in prescribed domestic tasks. Because hands are cognitive instruments by which women are able to see, speak, grasp, create and think, for Becon it is crucial to employ the hands in domestic labour to place women on the path of righteousness. Tasks, such as those outlined by Becon, would typically be actions passed down through generations regardless of class or skill.

John Taylor's prefatory poem in *The Needle's Excellency* (1631) entitled 'Praise of the Needle' describes the needle in the hands of the female who not only serve man's purposes, but creates, shapes and forms them:

And for my country's quiet I should like,
That women kind should use no other pike,

²⁴⁷ Proverbs in The Bible, 31. 17-31.

²⁴⁸ Thomas Becon, *A New Catechism set forth dialogue-wise in familiar talk between the Father and the Son* (London, 1564), pp. 367-368.

It will increase their tongue less, and their needles more,
 The needle's sharpness profit yields, and pleasure,
 But sharpness of the tongue, bites out of measure.
 A needle (though it be but small and slender)
 Yet it is both a maker and a mender
 A grave reformer of old rents decayed,
 Stops holes and seams, and desperate cuts displayed.
 And thus without our bibs and biggins be;
 No shirts or smocks, our nakedness to hide,
 No garments gay to make us magnified:
 No shadows, chaparoons, cauls, bands, ruffs, cuffs
 No kerchiefs, quoifs, chin-clouts, or mary-muffs,
 No cross-cloths, apron, hand-kerchiefs, or falls,
 No table-cloths for parlours or for halls.
 No sheets, no towels, napkins and pillow-bears,
 Nor any garment man or woman wears.
 Thus is a needle proved an instrument
 Of profit, pleasure and of ornament.
 Which mighty queens have grac'd in hand to take,
 And high born ladies such esteem did make
 That as their daughters up did grow,
 The needle's art, they to their children show.²⁴⁹

The poem advocates that women should be confined within a domestic space, their agency and autonomy constrained by the activity of the hands which are occupied with the needle to establish their unassailable purity. The pamphlet *Women's Sharp Revenge* (1640), by pseudonymous authors Mary Tattle-Well and Joan Hit-Home, offers a satirical response to the tracts of John Taylor, the 'Water Poet'. The pamphlet writes upon the confinement of the female hand 'set only to the Needle':

We, whom they style by the name of weaker Vessels, though of a more delicate, fine, soft, and more pliant flesh and therefore of a temper most capable of the best Impression, have not [been allowed] Education, lest we should be able to vindicate our own injuries, we are set only to the Needle, to prick our fingers, or else to the Wheel to spin a fair thread for our undoing.²⁵⁰

The authors describe the power structures that confine women. The women's hands become the focus, or primary instruments, and are under constant surveillance and

²⁴⁹ John Taylor, *The Needles Excellency: A New Booke Wherein are Divers Admirable Workes Wrought with the Needle* (London, 1631), sig. A1V.

²⁵⁰ Mary Tattle-Well and Joan Hit-Him Home, *The Women's Sharp Revenge: or an answer to Sir Seldome Sober that writ those railing pamphlets called the Juniper and the Crabtree lectures* (1640) in *The Women's Sharp Revenge: Five Women's Pamphlets from the Renaissance* ed. Simon Shepherd (London: Fourth Estate, 1985), p. 140.

instruction. However, as John Taylor notes, the needle is both a ‘small and slender object’ and, paradoxically, an active ‘maker and mender’ corresponding to the feminine hands which use them. Although the hands are objects that should be counselled and instructed, they are simultaneously instruments of self-expression and markers of active feminine identity.

Domestic tasks situated women in a particular space, a space where women could, as Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones suggest, ‘record and commemorate their participation not in reclusive domestic activity but in the larger domestic world.’²⁵¹ Penelope’s tapestry in Homer’s *The Odyssey* (c.675-725 BCE) bears witness to this. The tapestry serves as a cunning barrier constructed by Penelope to deter the penetrating gaze of the suitors and disguise her intentions. She describes her strategy in Book XIX:

I simply wear my heart out in longing for Odysseus. Meanwhile they are pressing me to name my wedding-day and I have to think out tricks to fool them with. The first was a real inspiration. I set up a great web on my loom here and started weaving a large and delicate robe, saying to my suitors: “I should be grateful to you young lords who are courting me now that King Odysseus is dead, if you could restrain your ardour for my hand till I have done this work, so that the threads I have spun may not be altogether wasted. It is a winding-sheet for Lord Laertes. When he succumbs to the dread hand of Death that stretches all men out at last, I must not risk the scandal there would be among my countrywomen here if one who had amassed such wealth were laid to rest without a shroud.” That is what I put to them, and they had the grace to consent. So by day I used to weave at the great web, but every night I had torches set beside it and undid the work. For three years they were taken in by this stratagem of mine.²⁵²

Penelope cunningly weaves and unweaves, both literally and metaphorically, constructions of the female paradigm. She is the master of herself by the creation of the tapestry which ties her hand to her beloved Odysseus. Her hands are never still as she takes to the web by day and night to demonstrate private and public

²⁵¹ Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 134.

²⁵² Homer, *The Odyssey* trans. E.V. Rieu (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1946), pp. 291-292.

notions of virtue and obedience. On the early modern stage, in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* (1605-1608), the sewing hands of Volumnia and Virgilia act out such bodily consciousness: the needle becoming a 'centre-point' to express their individual identity and, ultimately, to become reflective of their inner power. Virgilia becomes Homer's Penelope as she swears to keep occupied by sewing in order to 'not step out of the threshold till my lord returns from the wars' (I.iii.70). For Volumnia, in contrast, the needle is a fetish for male action and power as a symbol of the sword and an object she can take in her hands to emulate her son's actions on the battlefield. The technical incorporation of the needle into the boy actor's body schema signifies feminine production. The boy actor, as the apprentice who may move on from playing Volumnia to play Coriolanus, can practice the technical qualities of wielding the needle as the sword. This would affect the feminine spectator as they experience a dual-consciousness of fantasy and reality and witness the hand wielding a needle that may soon turn to the hand wielding the sword.

The boy actor's hand wielding the needle in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* is a fetishised object that both attracts the male gaze and defies it. In contrast to the hands of Ralph who must fight for honour of 'the gentle craft', Jane's hands wield the needle to work as a seamstress for her living. Eyre requests to see Jane's hand and distinguishes it as an active object of purpose: 'This fine hand, this white hand, these pretty fingers must spin, must card, must work; work, you bombast-cotton-candle-quean; work for your living, with a pox to you' (I.i.182). Her hand which she places out for Eyre and the spectator to read is an identifier of her status, both as a labourer and active subject and as woman and passive object.

Later in the play, Jane's technical hands become a focal point for Hammon's rising lust as he gazes upon her working in the sempster's shop. After the failed betrothal to Rose, Hammon longs for the feminine touch of Jane's hands at work, he exclaims 'How prettily she works. O, pretty hand. | O, happy work!' (IV.i.12-13) Hammon falls into a state of fervent anticipation as he remembers 'Thrice have my hand been moistened with her hand' (Scene IV.i.4). The semiotics of the word 'moistened' perversely detail the contact of Jane's hand with his as it, quite literally, whets his sexual appetite. Whilst the description of 'moist' infers rising temperatures, the definition of 'moistened', as according to the *OED*, refers to the ability to soften and make tender.²⁵³ Jane's hands thus act by their ability to stimulate as an agent of change. Hammon sexualises both Jane's body and economic commerce as her hands act as corporeal advertisements to express both their practical and sexual services.²⁵⁴

To recall 'Blason de la Main' here, Jane's body is cut into parts and consumed by Hammon's eyes as he watches her hand take up the needle and insert the thread in and out of the fabric, an overtly sexual movement. It is only when Hammon enters the commercial space of the shop and proposes to purchase Jane's hand, just as easily as he could purchase the handkerchiefs, ruffs and bands, that Jane is able to control her own narrative as she asserts 'My hands are not to be sold' (IV.i.26). Although there is no stage direction at this point, Jane's request for Hammon to 'Let go my hand' (IV.i.36) reveals Hammon's expressive movement as he clings to Jane's hand whilst speaking of the manipulating power of her digits

²⁵³ 'moisten, v.', in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online] <<https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.lancs.ac.uk/view/Entry/120781?rkey=M7reFI&result=1&isAdvanced=false>> [accessed 9 February 2018].

²⁵⁴ On the ideological implications of the interconnecting sexualisation of the woman's body and commerce see Theodore B. Leinwand, *The City Staged: Jacobean Comedy, 1603-1614* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), pp. 73-76.

which wound the cloth and consequently wound him (IV.i.32). The staging of this is important as, for example, if the gesture was staged with Jane physically removing her hand from Hammon's grip to then wield the needle, this would function as a cohesive device for Jane to reject the role enforced upon her and to present her loyalty and virtue. The masculine hand of authority remains a constant threat in the play as previous to this Hammon has attempted to handle Rose who pulled her hand away and asserted 'I mean to live a maid' (III.i.30). The boy actors' hands of both Rose and Jane expose subversions of the homosocial world of exchange. For the spectators Hammon's failures and the fact that the feminine hand cannot be restrained could create feelings of frustration or feelings of excitement, especially for the women, as the feminine hand affirms boundaries and stays true.

When Rose weaves the flowers to make a garland for Lacy her hands 'work' in a different way. They work alone and enact skill and self-reflection to invert the male gaze she has previously been subjected to previously. The garland serves as both a psychological escape from her father's rule and a memorial for the male body that she longs for:

Here sit thou down upon this flow'ry bank,
 And make a garland for thy Lacy's head.
 These pinks, these roses, and these violets,
 These blushing gilliflowers, these marigolds,
 The fair embroidery of his coronet,
 Carry not half such beauty in their cheeks,
 As the sweet countenance of my Lacy doth.
 O my most unkind father! O my stars,
 Why lower'd you so at my nativity,
 To make me love, yet live robb'd of my love?
 Here as a thief am I imprisoned
 For my dear Lacy's sake within those walls,
 Which by my father's cost were builded up
 For better purposes. Here must I languish
 For him that doth as much lament, I know,
 Mine absence, as for him I pine in woe (II.i.1-17).

This is a particularly poignant and intimate moment which once again focuses on the movement and fine craft of the feminine hand. This scene has the potential to be extremely sensual if the boy actor were to move the delicate flowers between his fingers and stroke or touch them individually. By the process of the hands creating, moving and weaving Rose eventually becomes more determined and unsettled in her wish for Lacy to be hers. The flowers, fingered and caressed by the hand, become extensions of Lacy's body schema and serve as instruments of invention for Rose to maintain her connection and loyalty.

The creative production and consumption of women's hands and their relationship to objects is exemplified in Dekker and Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* by the boy actor's hands appropriating male gestures and objects. The point of desire shifts into the capable hands of Moll who longs to show her strength and ability in typically male-related activity. The title-page from the 1611 quarto shows Moll in a gallant's outfit holding a sword in her left hand and smoking a pipe with her right hand. Throughout the play Moll's hands take up phallogentric appendages such as the smoking pipe, the sword and the 'unmannerly' (IV.98) musical instrument of the bass viola da gamba. By taking up this instrument Moll transgresses the model of virtue, as associated with feminine accomplishment, for, as Raphael Seligmann notes, in 'shape, tone, and playing posture, the instrument bore attributes of both genders' enabling Moll to subvert normative gender and class hierarchies.²⁵⁵ If the bass viola da gamba is an extension of Moll's body schema, it signifies both a private experience and a public spectacle. Whilst she

²⁵⁵ Raphael Seligmann, 'With a Sword by Her Side and a Lute in Her Lap: Moll Cutpurse at the Fortune', in *Musical Voices of Early Modern Women: Many Headed Melodies*, ed. by Thomas LaMay (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 187-211 (p. 206).

may play the instrument privately for herself, she is also playing to an audience both on and off the stage.

Moll's musical dream not only challenges prejudices and exposes the hypocrisy of the citizens' wives but also crosses social boundaries and forges a shared affinity between Moll, the young gallant Sebastian Wengrave and the spectators. The boy actor further questions gender divisions present in Mary Frith, or Moll an outlaw of low-class who never truly finds her 'place' within the play, but also in Mary Fitzallard. As Marjorie Garber suggests, if Moll is Mary and 'if the similarity of their names indicates that one is a projection of the other,' this is a 'sign of the double division of the concept of the "roaring girl" (female/male; Mary/Moll).'²⁵⁶ Moll and Mary enter into a 'prism-sensation'. That is, the boy actor's hands represent, to employ Merleau-Ponty's terminology, a *chiasm* where they are separate and yet 'intrinsically joined' as active and passive instruments working with and beside the hands of Sebastian. Sebastian, Moll and Mary enter into a homoerotic *ménage à trois*, particularly explicit when Sebastian enters the stage with Moll and Mary, boy actors playing women and dressed as men, and Moll comments 'How strange this shows, one man to kiss another?' and Sebastian replies 'I'd kiss such men to choose, Moll, | Methinks a woman's lip tastes well in a doublet' (IV.47-9). Watching a boy actor performing a woman with socially and politically transgressive masculine gestures and actions, such as Mary Frith and by extension, Mary Fitzallard, would coalesce in the spectators' minds. The hand plays a central role for the spectators who are simultaneously aware of the theatrical performance alongside their own concepts of gender and class outside the playhouse and within their daily lives.

²⁵⁶ Marjorie Garber, "'The Logic of the Transvestite" *The Roaring Girl* (1608)', in *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, ed. by David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York/Oxon: Routledge, 1991), pp. 221-232 (p. 229).

Further to successfully uniting Sebastian and Mary, Moll's hands become emblematic of rescue and justice and serve to put people in their rightful place. She saves Jack Dapper from imprisonment and proclaims, 'If any gentleman be in scrivener's bands, | Send but for Moll, she'll bail him by these hands!' (VII.214-215) and when Laxton mistakes Moll for a male musician Moll affirms 'he that can take me for a male musician, | I cannot choose but make him my instrument, | and play upon him' (IX.219-220). Like the viol she places between her legs and skilfully fingers, Moll configures Laxton into an object to be picked up and played with. Moll actively employs her hands to realise this by drawing a sword to force Laxton's body into submission. Here the boy actor plays a woman who performs authoritative and conventionally masculine gestures to reveal the contradictions of patriarchal ideologies. This is made clear when Moll extends her hand to Laxton (III.265) to both confirm her attendance and demonstrate her authority. Following my analysis of the handshake in Chapter One, as a significant gesture associated with masculine agency and in contrast to the hand being taken up by the man in marriage, here Moll is actively dominant by her hand being extended by her own volition.

The tactile connection between hand and implement thus undermines the image of woman as lack and unites the individuals on the stage. The scenes analysed above show the technical ability of Moll's hands which subvert gendered and class relationships. Although Moll is ostracised by the citizens' wives she serves as an extension of their mastery and her dominant influence legitimises Mistress Tiltyard, Mistress Gallipot and Mistress Openwork, all of whom follow Moll's lead as authoritative agents within the city. Their hands work within a public space, able to access money and exercise control by the running of their

businesses. The fact that they ally themselves with each other through ‘women’s work’ shows that their hands represent a threat to socio-political hierarchies in their formed female community. Mistress Openwork chastises her husband:

Openwork. Mass, I had quite forgot!
 His honour’s footman was here last night, wife:
 Ha’ you done with my lord’s shirt?
 Mistress Openwork. What’s that to you, sir?
 I was this morning at his honour’s lodging
 Ere-such a snail as you crept out of your shell.
 Openwork. O, ‘twas well done, good wife.
 Mistress Openwork. I hold it better, sir,
 Than if you had don’t yourself (III.142-147).

Openwork’s leadership of the shop and the household is equated to a snail creeping out of its shell. Mistress Openwork ostracises the masculine hand for being weak and unable to take hold of the business. Later in the play, her hands work to entrap Goshawk to punish him. This act mirrors Moll’s previous entrapment of Laxton. Adopting the same deceptive behaviour and presumed sexual activity, the citizens’ wives and their productive, economic agency plays on anxieties about feminine unruliness and dissidence.

A female-centred community that creates disorder so extreme that it is demonised is explored in Heywood and Brome’s *The Late Lancashire Witches*. Theorists of order and demonologists alike in the early modern period established the dangers of the intoxicating active agency of the hands of the witch that could transfigure and control. The magistrate Nicholas Remy, for example, condemned their active hands in *Demonolatry* (1595) as the ‘touch of a witch is noxious and fatal [...] to those whom the witch wishes to injure.’²⁵⁷ Indeed, as Classen suggests, ‘one of the most disturbing characteristics of witchcraft from a social perspective was that its supernatural challenge to the established order was based

²⁵⁷ Nicholas Remy, *Demonolatry*, trans. by E. A. Ashwin (London: L.B. Tauris & Co, 1930), p. 244.

on ordinary women's work' in manual tasks which involved the hands such as 'cooking, cleaning and care taking.'²⁵⁸ The witches in *The Late Lancashire Witches*, with their communal activity and legitimised female light-handedness, invert social order and reject the conventional 'natural order' of the traditional household.

The Sabbath at Malkin Tower subverts the 'traditional' duties of womanhood, to nourish and to nurture, as the witches instigate chaos. The witches draw on the ropes 'for the great wedding feast' (IV.i.57), where food and drink appear above their heads, and pull it to the table. This is described by Sara Mueller as a double effacement between the productive value of the banquet and women's labour in the early modern household to the 'public vilification' of it in *The Late Lancashire Witches*.²⁵⁹ The banquet, and the creative agency of the witches in disrupting it, is 'not simply a diminishment of their threat but a strategic trivialization of their power that facilitates their containment.'²⁶⁰ Heywood and Brome demonstrate the inherent dangers of women's hands and their creative agency in production even when 'contained'. Whilst the hands of the witches are agents of work, production and creation paradoxically they are also agents of disorder and carnivalesque consumption.

Just as there is a kinaesthetic element to the banquet where the hands work together to display disorder to the spectator, this sense of kinaesthetic disruption is apparent in the wedding scene. As Brett Hirsch's work on the reel and dancing a hornpipe asks: '[w]hen the rest of the wedding party are dancing a hornpipe, what if the bewitched bride and bridegroom instead "reele in the duance" – that is, dance

²⁵⁸ Classen, *The Deepest Sense*, p. 92.

²⁵⁹ Sara Mueller, 'Banqueting and Women's Work in *The Late Lancashire Witches* and Receipt Books for Women', in *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 56 (John Hopkins University Press, 2016), 373-393 (p. 379).

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

a reel', an entirely different dance, one associated with witchcraft?²⁶¹ Indeed, as Hirsch suggests, if the seventeenth century spectator 'could distinguish between the two dances' the scene would be 'comedic in its dissonance and futility.'²⁶² The joining of the hands in the reel, alongside the sensory conflict between sight and sound, demonstrates a tangible world of chaos for spectators. This could induce feelings in some women, or lower class marginalised individuals, to revel in the unfamiliar freedom of the chaos and feel more at home there than in the hierarchical structures of order which marginalise them.

When Mistress Generous' hands take over the household the play gives her a voice to explicitly question the patriarchal imperative. In response to Robin's accusations about her disregard of her husband and self-directed rule she counters:

Oh is it so? And must he be made
Acquainted with my actions by you and must
I then be controlled by him and now by
You? You are a saucy groom (III.ii.96-99).

Mistress Generous then bridles Robin and uses her hand to obtain complete control of his body as she states, 'Where I point thee carry me' (III.ii.104).

The Late Lancashire Witches reveals the witches' intoxicating power and freedom of their hands. Their authority is situated outside the symbolic natural order of action and language which signals a refusal to submit to patriarchal male dominance. As Meg Pearson and Eleanor Rycroft suggest, the rituals, ceremonies, and spectacles the witches construct allow them to identify a community of their own, a community that has the ability to transform 'even mundane parts of [...] society.'²⁶³ For example, in Act 2 Scene 5 Witch Dickieson exhibits the

²⁶¹ Brett D. Hirsch, 'Hornpipes and Disordered Dancing in *The Late Lancashire Witches*: A Reel Crux?', in *Early Theatre*, 16 (2013) 139-49 (p. 143).

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p.145.

²⁶³ Meg Pearson, 'The Late Lancashire Witches: The Girls Next Door', in *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, 3 (2014), 144-167 (p. 147).

supernatural agency of her hands when she reels back the Boy who attempts to run as she exclaims: ‘Nay, sirrah, though you be young, and I old, you are not so nimble nor I so lame but I can overtake you. [*She reels him in on an invisible line.*.]’ (II.v.948) This scene would be magnificent to witness following the stage direction where Witch Dickieson’s hands open and close on the invisible line in a persistent rhythm and the young boy, unable to move forward, is influenced by the pace and pull of the feminine hand. This would, undoubtedly, be particularly exciting to observe as a female spectator as their hands, which have followed socio-cultural expectations, could become agitated and disturbed by the witches’ ability to exercise and wield power. Conversely, for the male spectator, Heywood and Brome replay old wives’ tales which, as Mary Ellen Lamb has shown, represent the cultural fear of the ‘dangerously effeminizing power’ with its ability to shape and unsettle concepts of the masculine and ‘exert permanent influence over young minds’²⁶⁴. Such rising anxiety regarding the pace and pull of the feminine hand is further apparent when considering the female hand and the written word.



Pen, Ink and Paper

Writing as a form of handiwork directly contradicts patriarchal interests in the household and potentially beyond it. Such misogynistic ideology is reflected in the puritan teachings of Thomas Salter in his work *The Mirrhor of Modestie* (1579). This warned women to put their hands to the ‘Distaffe, and Spindle, Nedle and Thimble’ in place of ‘the skill of well using a penne or wrighting a loftie veorce with diffame and dishonour’ for:

²⁶⁴ Mary Ellen Lamb, *Oral Traditions and Gender in Early Modern Literary Texts*, ed. by Karen Bamford (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), p. 505, 531.

[I]t is not mete nor convenient for a Maiden to be taught or trayned up in learnyng of humaine artes, in whome a vertuous demeanour and honest behaviour, would be a more sightlier ornament, then the light or vaine glorie of learnyng, [...] the handes of her that is geven us for a companion in our labours [...] every woman ought wholelie to be active and diligent about the governement of her householde and familie, and touchyng recreation by learnyng that cannot bee graunted her, without greate daunger and offence to the beautie and brightnesse of her mynde; seyng then that the governement of estates and publike weales are not committed into the handes of women, neyther that is lawfull or convenient for them to wright lawes whiche men should bee ruled and governed [...] let them be restrained to the care and governement of a familie²⁶⁵.

Salter asserts that since hands can be mobile and responsive their activity should only be practised within the private realm of the household when focusing on tasks associated with ‘women’s work’, such as the bringing up of children. Salter’s view of the positioning of women’s hands is clear: they are only ‘given to’ accompany their male counterpart and to support the family and not to take up the pen and write. Goldberg’s analysis of the writing hand argues that the written being and the writing being are, from the very beginning, chiasmatic. That is, the written hand and writing hand are at once ‘coincident and differential, opening and enclosing’ and so reveal ‘interiority and exteriority, the human and the technological, the mind and the body’.²⁶⁶ Arguably, for women even more so than for men, writing is an important skill “for making things” that, as Leroi-Gourhan argues, enables subjects to realise their individuated existence. The female hand holding the pen thus signified anxieties of female authorship and served as material for dramatic works in the period.

The representation of the boy actor writing on the early modern stage is invariably loaded with the tensions produced by this social context. In Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* Maria exposes and challenges the traditional role of

²⁶⁵ Thomas Salter, *The Mirrhor mete for all Mothers, Matrones, and Maidens, intituled the Mirrhor of Modestie* (1579) in *Lay by Your Needles Ladies, Take the Pen*, ed. by Suzanne Trill, Kate Chedgzoy and Melaine Osborne (London: Arnold, Hodder Headline Group, 1997), pp. 44-50 (pp. 46-47).

²⁶⁶ Goldberg, p. 24.

the woman by picking up the pen. At the beginning of the play Maria is introduced as Olivia's 'handmaid' (I.i.25) and the letter she writes transforms her staged presence. The idea that Maria's hand, as servant, can easily mimic the hand of a higher class individual would have been a particularly perturbing thought for the spectators of a higher class. The subversive servant's hands working against the household and creating discord and disarray could also trigger feelings of enjoyment for some spectators, primarily those whose hands are tired of serving others.

The boy actor's hand mimics female identity as Maria's comment, 'I can write very like my lady your niece; on a forgotten matter we can hardly make distinction of our hands' (II.iii.49-50) may be taken as a reference to the youthful male who is playing her. The metatheatricality created in this instance not only draws the spectators' attention to the boy actor's 'enskilment' but also creates an indeterminacy challenging the period's confinement of women's hands as it draws attention to the fact that there is no difference between women and young men learning to write. The spectator, witnessing the boy actor's hands as agents of feminine manipulation by the technical skill of handwriting, would be made aware of women's hands marginalised by social class reaching out beyond the domestic sphere. Maria is, Karen Robertson argues, both 'a witty revenger and a feminine writer', showing the virgin who is 'allowed to rise and triumph' and cross class boundaries to become the wife of Sir Toby Belch at the end of the play.²⁶⁷

Maria is only one early modern dramatic example of the boy actor demonstrating the potency of the female hand that writes. In other Shakespearean plays, the characters of Imogen, Cordelia, Goneril, Regan and Cleopatra are just

²⁶⁷ Karen Robertson, 'Revenging Female Hand in *Twelfth Night*', in *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*, ed. by David Bergaron (London: Associated University Press, 1996), pp. 116-129 (pp. 124-125).

some of the women who either read or write texts. In the plays writing can act as a form of feminine subversion as, for example, when Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice* writes a letter revealing her plan to elope, or Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* (1606) writes on a piece of paper and, as I will explore in the next chapter, Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* writes the names of her rapists in the sand. It should be noted, however, that, at the same time boy actors' and male authors' hands were shaping feminine identities, female writers such as Lady Mary Wroth and her friends in the court-circle were taking part in court masques and writing their own plays.²⁶⁸ Although this area is beyond the scope of my thesis, the writing hand on the stage enacted by the boy actor highlights the importance of the feminine hand that is situated between active/passive, public/private and ornamental/political.

Whilst it is evident that early modern women's hands were constrained by the patriarchal order and established writing upheld that order, this chapter has argued that the feminine hand was situated within a paradox of both submission and resistance. I have addressed this liminality by reference to Merleau-Ponty's theorisation of 'double touching' which suggests that the touching-touched hand is 'intrinsicly joined' (329) as active subject and passive object alongside Nancy's understandings of *partes extra partes* to show that the feminine hand was both connected and separate, both as an individual and belonging within a community. This division between active/passive was embodied by the hands of the boy actors on the early modern stage. Their hands were objects of desire and at the same time proof of their 'enskilment' and their potential in future, adult male roles.

What begins to surface out of the paradoxical ambiguities is the hand as an instrument that can be used for potential empowerment and subversion. This is

²⁶⁸ See Alison Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

evidenced by the activity of the technical feminine hand that is advised to never be idle. The creative production of the feminine hand and the object, such as the needle or the pen, have their own temporal and spatial life, able to generate agency and a sense of community and belonging. The notion that the ‘status as “part” implies by definition a relation’ by Hillman and Mazzio is an important one. The feminine hand separated from the body by works such as *Les Blasons* suggest that although publicly the feminine hand may appear calm as framed by the male gaze, below the surface there is a frenzy of activity.²⁶⁹ The very fact the feminine hand is dismembered from the body by the desirous male gaze presents an opportunity for the female to sever herself from the political and patriarchal constraints. The dismembered hand, as both a part *and* a relation, is an unsettling notion and is the subject of my final chapter.

²⁶⁹ David Hillman and Carla Mazzio, ‘Introduction: Individual Parts’, in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. xi-3 (p. xii, xv).

Chapter Three

The Hand Without the Body and the Body Without the Hand

‘Witness the earth that sucked up my blood, | Streaming in rivers from my trunked arms’ (XVI.13-14) is an intensely chilling form of self-presentation by the counsellor Aga to his master Bajazeth in Robert Greene’s *Selimus* (1594). The grotesque onstage spectacle of bleeding stumps escalates in horror when Aga bids Bajazeth, ‘Witness the present that he sends to thee | Open my bosom: there you shall it see’ (XVI.15-16) and his robe is opened to reveal his two amputated hands. Aga’s hands serve as markers, as anxious attachments to the past alongside suspensions of the present and of a future charged with threat.

The previous two chapters have explored how, as Michael Neill observes, an ‘intense intimacy’ between hand, mind, will and heart makes the hand into a ‘metonymic extension of the self.’²⁷⁰ What, then, occurs for both spectator and actor when the hand as agent is severed on stage as it is in the case of Aga? How do these ghostly limbs give us insight into epistemological and ontological questions about the early modern body and embodiment? And how, indeed, do you stage a phantom limb? I suggest some answers to these questions by tracing the staged severed hand and phantom limb in both personal and political terms in *Titus Andronicus*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Changeling*, *The Late Lancashire Witches*, *Selimus* and *Edmond Ironside*. In these plays the body without the hand and the hand without the body and the phantom limb that remains after amputation persist on stage as autonomous, unsettling and powerful agents. I argue that the phantom limb phenomenon is a recurrent transhistorical feature that engages with

²⁷⁰ Michael Neill, “‘Ampitheatres in the Body’”: Playing with Hands on the Shakespearian Stage’, in *Shakespeare Survey*, 48 (1995), 23-50 (p. 23).

phenomenology and can be used to read a culture that is experiencing a shift away from the haptic, material sense of being-in-the-world with the emergence of Cartesian ontology and consciousness. The severed hand fluctuates between inclusion/exclusion and self/other, serving as a metaphor for the physical and psychological damage occurring in the early modern social sphere.

The first section of this chapter reviews critical work on dismemberment and introduces the theoretical framework which principally informs my argument: Merleau-Ponty's assertion that phantom limb syndrome and anosognosia is 'not a representation [...] but rather the ambivalent presence' (81, 94). I outline the theory with reference to my own experiences of the phantom limb following my accident. The second section considers, in broad terms, the personal and political meanings of the severed hand in early modern culture as a foundation for understanding severed hands on stage. My subsequent analyses of the dramatic texts are focused in a third section on the martial hand and a final section on the marital hand.



Dismemberment and Phantom Limbs

Susan Zimmerman's argument that the corpse is 'in between death and life', situated within a paradox of absence and presence, provides a useful context to consider the ambivalence of the dismembered hand. Phantom limb syndrome is a further element of this fragmentation as the hand without the body and the body without the hand is a fluctuating and often contradictory agent of death/fragmentation and change/potential. Research on dismemberment in early modern drama and culture by Margaret Owens, Katherine Rowe and Farah Karim-Cooper has yielded valuable insights that have inspired my own work. As Margaret Owens suggests, visceral and violent displays of corporeal fragmentation offer a

‘highly malleable visual vocabulary’ for voicing ‘fears about personal security’ and exploring ‘ruptures and upheavals in the social sphere.’²⁷¹ I suggest that the spectator psychologically experienced the loss and trauma of the physical dismemberment and that this also related to personal insecurities concerning the early modern socio-political events that played out beyond the theatrical space.

Katherine Rowe suggests that wandering or ghostly severed hands symbolise the ‘loss, theft or withering of an individual’s capacity to act with real political or personal effect’ and their ‘tenuous, prosthetic affiliation to the body raises questions about whether the powers they embody are in fact proper to any person.’²⁷² As an independent material entity the severed hand takes on its own identity: the hand transfigures into a lone prosthesis separated from the primary motor and cognitive function of the body to which it once belonged. The hand is at ‘once severed and vital, [and] symbolizes both possession and dispossession of those faculties that master unpredictable events’; the hand is at the frontier between ‘unpredictable environment and adaptive innovation.’²⁷³ I extend Rowe’s assertions that the hand without the body and the body without the hand have both volatile and stimulating properties through my analysis of the phantom limb phenomenon.

I also critically engage with Farah Karim-Cooper’s study of amputation positioning the severed hand as prop which, she argues, would have evoked both a visual and semantic spectacle of horror and wonder for early modern playgoers. I extend such considerations and apply mirror neuron theory to understand the visceral trauma and disturbance of witnessing the body without the hand and the hand without the body which would be felt by the early modern spectator and is

²⁷¹ Owens, *Stages of Dismemberment*, p. 12.

²⁷² Rowe, *Dead Hands*, p. 4.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

also experienced by playgoers today. Karim-Cooper draws on this with an analysis of The Globe's production of Lucy Bailey's *Titus* (2014) which staged the amputation using the sleight-of-hand trick. I apply mirror neuron theory to further understand the visceral trauma and disturbance of witnessing the body without the hand and the hand without the body. Since mirror neuron effects are transhistorical, according to neuroscientific research, I extrapolate from modern evidence to suggest what would be felt by early modern spectators and actors when witnessing severed hands on stage.

Whilst all the above works have offered valuable insights into the operation of the early modern hand, both attached and severed, their discussions do not draw on phantom limb syndrome in any detail. I extend the critical debate by using my phenomenological understanding of phantom limb syndrome and anosognosia, alongside drawing on my own first-hand lived experience, in order to offer new readings of the staged severed hands in the early modern period.

The subjective sensory experience following the loss of a body part is referred to as phantom limb phenomenon. This is understood to occur as the result of two main factors: firstly, 'abnormal impulses originating in the severed nerve ends, resulting in an imbalance in the activity of certain neural fibers' and secondly, the 'persistence of the body image, a factor which incorporates the psychological, emotional, and social elements.'²⁷⁴ This sensation is described by Alexa Wright's subject J.N. in the text that accompanies the portrait 'JN 1'. The subject of the portrait is sitting in a chair, her phantom hand connected to her body and yet disturbingly disconnected by its enlarged size and positioning.

²⁷⁴ Douglas B. Price, M.D. and Neil J. Twombly, S.J., 'The phantom limb: an 18th century Latin dissertation text and translation, with a medical-historical and linguistic commentary', in *Languages and Linguistics Working Papers no. 3* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1972), p. 56.



Figure 21: Alexa Wright, 'JN 1', *After Image* (1997) [digitally manipulated colour C Type prints (56 x 75 cm) unframed (mounted on aluminium); small text panels] London, The Wellcome Trust.

I seem to be able to move it like a normal limb, but the joints are very large, and its much stiffer. I am not aware of the wrist at all, not even aware that there is a wrist, but I can clench and move the fingers individually. [...] [W]hen it is itching its [sic] so real that I feel as though I can actually scratch it. I can pin point where its [sic] itching, and yet I am aware it is not there. [...] When I start trying to move the limb the phantom doesn't go with the part that I have got left. Most of the time the phantom just feels flat; I have to think about it to make it a solid form.²⁷⁵

J.N.'s phantom is both 'normal' and resting, at once abject and dynamic. Her account describes the phantom limb as ambiguous, as if situated between states of death/decay with an attached corporeal past and yet still disturbingly conscious and present. J.N.'s lived experience demonstrates that phantoms *feel* and *move*, just as an attached limb might, and it is this that enables her to feel 'whole again'. For example, J.N. describes her thoughts at the time of her accident when she was

²⁷⁵ Alexa Wright, 'JN', *After Image* (1997) <<http://www.alexawright.com/after-image>> [accessed 24 July 2016].

aware that her engagement ring cut into her finger and the unsettling sensation that it remains on her phantom hand; she explains, ‘it is so definite that nobody can convince me that it is just in my mind.’ The association of representation still remains when the association of movement has been disrupted.²⁷⁶ Patients long after the removal of a limb ‘say they still feel pain in the dead and amputated parts; and complain strongly about this, something worthy of admiration, and almost unbelievable for those, who have no experience with it.’²⁷⁷

In phenomenological terms, the phantom causes a division between the corporeality of the lived body in the present and the body schema of the past. Merleau-Ponty suggests that the phantom limb cannot be explained by physical or psychological definitions and proposes that, in both cases, ‘we are imprisoned in the categories of an objective world, in which there is no middle term between presence and absence’ (81). He believes the phenomenon can be explained by the understanding of the phenomenon of anosognosia, this condition being when a patient retains a limb while refusing to acknowledge its paralysis:

[Patients who] systematically ignore their paralyzed right hand, and hold out their left hand when asked for their right, refer to their paralyzed arm as “a long, cold serpent”, which rules out any hypothesis of real anaesthesia and suggests one in terms of the refusal to recognise the deficiency (88).

The phantom limb is sustained not as an unconscious representation but in the manner in which it reshapes the subject’s experience and possibilities. These modern examples and phenomenological understandings of phantom limb syndrome, moreover, correlate with premodern descriptions of *dolo membri amputati* [the pain that remains after amputation].

²⁷⁶ Price and Twombly compare this to when the eye looks up to the sun: ‘What wonder that [...] this false sensation is so clear and is bound to remain, if we would only bear in mind that, after looking at the sun for a few moments of time, when we close our eyes, the sun’s image lingers for a few instants before our mind with as great a clarity as though the sun were still present to our eyes.’ in ‘The phantom limb: an 18th century Latin dissertation’, p. 34.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 59.

While amputations are known to have taken place since prehistoric times, it is generally understood that the first reference to phantom limb syndrome was made in 1551 by Ambroise Paré, a military barber surgeon, in his work outlining new methods for treating gunshot wounds.²⁷⁸ Douglas Price and Neil Twombly's correlative study, *The Phantom Limb Phenomenon* (2005), however, argues that stories and legends of the phantom limb are far more extensive than once thought. They use the illumination from the Douce manuscript as a case study and the several stages of Mielot's version of the legend of John of Damascus to explain that the narratives concerning the restoration of lost limbs should be considered as a 'common mythologem that frequently represents or embodies the phantom limb phenomenon (PLP).' They suggest, therefore, that 'the recorded history of the PLP goes back at least as far as the tenth century and, as part of folk wisdom or knowledge, even farther.'²⁷⁹ I employ Price and Twombly's hypothesis to suggest that loss and restoration of the hand constitutes a metaphorical or symbolic representation of the phantom limb phenomenon in early modern drama.²⁸⁰

Phantom limbs, I suggest, manifest on the early modern stage as visual and verbal metaphors, such as an object in the place where the hands once were, or descriptions of phantom pains, such as crushing and beating, to represent political, ontological and epistemological fractures. Looking at this from an actor's perspective and experience, Merleau-Ponty's concept of the actor as a doubled subject, or "'great phantom'", is apposite. The actor's gestural discourse enables

²⁷⁸ See Stanley Finger and Meredith P. Gronski, 'Five early accounts of phantom limb in context: Paré, Descartes, Lemos, Bell, and Mitchell', in *Neurosurgery*, 52, 3 (April 2003), 675-686.

²⁷⁹ Price and Twombly, *The Phantom Limb Phenomenon: A Medical, Folkloric and Historical Study. Texts and Translations of the 10th to 20th Century Accounts of the Miraculous Restoration of Lost Body Parts* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1978), p.xxii.

²⁸⁰ Price and Twombly, 'The phantom limb: an 18th century Latin dissertation', p. 38ff.

Price and Twombly explain that the phantom limb was characterized as perpetuus 'continuous', recurrens 'recurring', or sympathicus 'sympathetic', the condition was generically subsumed under the rubric *sensatio* 'sensation', qualified as *erronea* 'erroneous', *fallax* 'deceptive', *falsa* 'false', *imaginaria* 'imaginary', or *paradoxa* 'paradoxical'.

them to detach from their ‘real’ body and place themselves in performance. This, in turn, creates a doubled subject. The hand can connect and reach out to the fictional and material world of the theatre as character and invoke ideas around metatheatricality. This profound paradox between self/otherness and association/disassociation are feelings that deeply resonate with me following my accident.



My phantom limb

I still feel to this day that my hand is not my own but rather an unrecognisable prosthesis, similar to a heavy lump of muscle and skin, indeed, like a ‘long, cold serpent’, that I am now responsible for.²⁸¹ After my accident and through the rehabilitation process my hand had to be trained to once more navigate being-in-the-world, just as the perception of the phantom limb is encouraged in individuals in order to retain the ‘totality of their physical experience.’²⁸² The accident and disruption to my body schema attested also to my newfound capabilities and to the heightened awareness of my subjectivity and ontology. The relationship with my right hand, body and world was immediately transformed and made me acutely aware of feeling present within the world. Merleau-Ponty describes this by reference to the habitual body which is at the core of our lived experience, he argues, being disrupted and occasioning a heightened awareness of selfhood and being. He explains that the ‘desire for a healthy body or the refusal of the diseased body are not formulated for themselves: the experience of the amputated arm as

²⁸¹ The assessments undertaken at Wessex Rehabilitation Centre attest to the newfound sense of my psychological state in ‘getting to grips’ with my hand, such as: The Sollerman Hand Function Test, Semmes-Weinstein monofilament test, and the Medical Research Council stereognosis evaluation test. The aim of the assessments, which focus on touch sensibility and the sensory gnosis, was to regenerate the ability to feel and recognise my hand touching an object in the absence of visual and auditory information.

²⁸² Florence M. Stattel, ‘The painful phantom limb’, in *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 8 (1954), 156-157 (p. 156).

present or of the diseased arm as absent are not of the order of the “I think that...” but, rather, can be understood by being-in-the-world with both physiological and psychological explanations (83).

Later in this chapter, I reflect on my experience of ‘Mirror Box Therapy’, undertaken at the Wessex Rehabilitation Centre, to explore the hands of the king and the phantom reflections of their perceived ‘lesser’ counterparts. The hands of the counsel, servant, or of the female that were believed to be incorporated with or coupled to the male figure of authority are in fact behind the mirror and moving of their own volition. They are simultaneously connected to the body schema of their master and ostensibly under their rule and command whilst also existing as disembodied agents that the master is unable to regulate.



Severed Hands in Early Modern Culture

In the early modern anthropomorphic model of government, where the body of the commonwealth was ruled by head of state and served by members or counsellors, dismemberment carried a politically traumatic resonance. The sovereign sought co-operation and advice through his counsel and, as Jacqueline Rose’s work explains, clerical counsel was ‘remarkably prevalent in early modern English history’ which was an arena of private interests, ‘employment and personal advancement’.²⁸³ I particularly focus on this ‘responsibility of rule’ in early modern drama which, Rose suggests, ‘enhances the capacity to perceive rule as constructed, contingent, and separable from the mere mortal occupying the office’, to suggest that the

²⁸³ Jacqueline Rose, ‘Kingship and Counsel in Early Modern England’, in *The Historical Journal*, 54 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 47-71 (p. 53).

András Kiséry, “‘I lack advancement’”: Public Rhetoric, Private Prudence, and the Political Agent in *Hamlet* 1561-1609’, in *ELH*, 8 (2014), 29-60 (p. 34).

king's counsel are the dismembered phantom limbs of the king.²⁸⁴ As such the counsel become autonomous and cunning ghosts who can move in social contexts to uphold the king whilst manipulating the scenery, orchestrating their own agenda and corrupting the body politic. Indeed, persuasion and counsel were 'the very machinery and stuff of government' and my discussion of a number of important passages and themes in the tragedies shows how the notion of the autonomous phantom hands of the monarch, able to spin their own plots, are of significant importance in early modern tragedy.²⁸⁵ Indeed, as Paulina Kewes argues, early modern drama was 'at once the most powerful and the most public form of counsel' and it represented 'insistent and penetrating judgements on the requirements and properties of public counsel for the health of church and state.'²⁸⁶

The phantom limb, I suggest, served as a metaphor for the successes and shortfalls of the political body. The hands of the servant, as the severed hands/phantom limbs of the master, reveals a further hierarchal element because the phantom limb remains kinaesthetically mimetic and can, as neurologist J. Frederiks suggests, 'possess *more awareness* than the original limb'.²⁸⁷ Indeed, as uncanny imitators, phantom limbs are thought of as mimetic replicas of the pre-amputated limb and are felt as a living and moving part of the body and they may behave autonomously out of the subject's volitional control. Cassandra Crawford explains that phantoms can move like 'living, organic extensions coordinated with

²⁸⁴ Jacqueline Rose, 'Kingship and Counsel in Early Modern England', p. 62.

²⁸⁵ David Colclough, *Freedom of Speech in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 6.

²⁸⁶ Paulina Kewes, "'Jerusalem thou dydst promyse buylde up": Kingship, Counsel and Early Elizabethan Drama' in Jacqueline Rose, *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland 1286-1707* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 1-19 (p. 1).

²⁸⁷ J.A.M. Frederiks, 'Occurrence and nature of phantom limb phenomena following amputation of body parts and following lesions of the central peripheral nervous system', in *Psychiatria Neurologia Neurochirurgia*, 66 (1963), 73-97 (p. 76, original emphasis). Elizabeth Grosz explains that the phantom limb is not a 'memory or an image' but rather a 'quasi-presence'. That is, the refusal of 'an experience to enter into the past; it illustrates the tenacity of a present that remains immutable.' in *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 89.

and to the body in both time and space’, able to behave autonomously as if they have a will of their own.²⁸⁸ Prostheses and phantoms are not fixed or determined but rather malleable ‘objects’ which have, Lucy Suchman describes, ‘affiliative powers’.²⁸⁹ The malleability ‘enables people to establish and renew social relations and identities, and in some cases, it is through such affiliations and associations’ that can ‘mediate human relationships’.²⁹⁰ The phantom limb is, therefore, not confined to the laws that govern the physiology of bodies such as ‘gravity, symmetry, time, permanence’ but holds extraordinary powers to trick the mind and govern perception.²⁹¹ This aptly demonstrates the phantom hands of the king in early modern drama that behave autonomously and are not confined to law. The very fact they are detached, I argue, means they are often subversive and dangerous. This not only displays the Reformation crisis of death and decay but also serves to uncover the anxiety surrounding the threat of the self-governing, lawless and interminable phantom that is both connected and disconnected to the body politic.

This sense of dislocation and nostalgia for the wholeness and unity of the body, as symbolised by the phantom limb, is characteristic of the early modern experience. The severed hand and phantom limb are appropriate tropes for the many ways in which the subjects of early modern culture experienced a dislocation from the past. As Frank Whigham notes, the early modern period underwent a “‘crisis of the aristocracy,” the uneven but widespread loss of confidence in the

²⁸⁸ Cassandra Crawford, *Phantom Limb: Amputation, Embodiment, and Prosthetic Technology* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), p. 150. Although Crawford’s work focuses on the modern medical understanding of phantom and prosthetic technology, I believe her understanding that phantom limbs enable ‘revolutionary insight into the most pressing questions of human ontology’ and so deserve ‘collective curiosity and concern’ should be applied when examining the phantom limb phenomenon in early modern drama and culture (p. 159).

²⁸⁹ Lucy Suchman, ‘Affiliative objects’, in *Organization*, 12 (2005), 379-399 (p. 379).

²⁹⁰ Crawford, p. 193. See also Karin Knorr-Cetina, ‘Sociality with objects: Social relations in postsocial knowledge societies’, in *Theory, Culture and Society*, 14 (1997), 1-43 (p. 2).

²⁹¹ Crawford, p. 161.

ruling account of social relations and identities’ which in turn spurred ‘a ready general field for drift, evasion, opportunity, betrayal, uncertainty, rebellion’ and dislocation.²⁹² The severed hand floated throughout the early modern period with regard to aristocracy and religion in the post-Reformation church and state. Such rising insecurity during the period, I argue, is tied to sensory loss and the hand being understood in prosthetic terms by, for example, the gage, the sword, or the printing press, all of which served to divert, displace and disrupt embodied experience.

In the early modern period material objects wielded by the hand were deemed artificial substitutes for the hand, ambiguously both disconnected and connected as dismembered extensions of the body. The martial images of the disembodied hand holding the gage or sword, for example, were typically linked to hyper-masculinity, physical authority and action. Gloves were understood in the early modern period as emblematic of transferrable power. The glove was viewed akin to a badge which denoted authority and was worn openly as a ‘constant incentive to courage – of loyalty and constancy, when none might meddle [...] and scoff’.²⁹³ In *Timon of Athens*, Alcibiades appears before Athens and the senators to ask for his glove as a pledge of protection: ‘Throw thy glove | Or any token of thine honour else, | That thou wilt use the wars as thy redress’ (V.iv.50-53). As an extension of the soldier’s body schema the glove is employed as a wager of battle, cast down by the accuser and taken up by the defendant so signifying his acceptance of the challenge. Throwing down a glove expressed a confidence of

²⁹² Whigham, p. 6, 10.

²⁹³ William Beck, *Gloves, Their Annals and Associations: A Chapter of Trade and Social History* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co, 1883), p. 11. See also M Channing Linthicum, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1863)

opinion and was symbolic of the hand engaged to fight, as in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599) when Williams and Fluellen quarrel over a glove:

Williams. Sir, know you this glove?
 Fluellen. Know the glove! I know the glove is a glove.
 Williams. I know this; and thus I challenge it (IV.viii.5-8).

This passage presents the glove as an object of bravery or defiance. Another significant and humorous example can be seen in Shakespeare's *Richard II* (1595-1596) in Act 4 Scene 1 when Aumerle throws down his gage causing Fitzwalter, Harry Percy, Another Lord and Surrey to also throw gages down in challenge. This continues until Aumerle must resort to borrowing a gage in order to continue the quarrel. The gage being thrown to the ground demonstrates early modern understandings of the hyper-masculine hand which, even when disembodied, maintains power and discipline.

Emblems featuring a dismembered right hand, or a severed arm wielding the sword, were heraldic icons of power printed in emblem and *imprese* books widely circulated throughout Europe. An example of this can be seen in Claude Paradin's emblem of an armour-clad sword grasping hand emerging from clouds, suggesting the medieval ideals of the divine hand of God as absolute sovereign whilst signifying a power that is uncircumscribed.



Figure 22: Claude Paradin, 'Without all falsehood or deceit' (1557), Folger Shakespeare Library.

But to whom does the hand belong? The symbol of the disembodied hand remains equivocal and thus the emblem proves rather unnerving as it represents a hyper-masculine, autonomous phantom limb that can never be restrained. Such iconic representations translate to the stage in examples like the exchange between Delio and Antonio *The Duchess of Malfi*, as Delio asserts: 'Lay this unto your breast: old friends, like old swords, still are trusted best' (II.ii.84). For Webster, the relationship between the sword, as an extension of the hand, is a relationship based upon trust. Webster presents the juxtaposition of friendship as a "double-edged" sword, which can be simultaneously faithful alongside inflicting irreparable harm.

In the early modern period, the hand could also be extended prosthetically following the advent of print culture. As discussed in Chapter One,

the printing press introduced the impersonal and severed hand and created a sense of dislocation from the personal to the public and the state and the government. Rachel Willie points out that this engagement with print culture ‘creates the illusion of a unified space of opposition to parliamentary intervention.’²⁹⁴ The fact that the hand could be extended, beyond the institution, to the machine-printed word increased the opportunity for subversion. Frederick Kiefer’s argument that the ‘wariness of the printed word’ tended to ‘increase distrust of the written word itself’ suggests that the written word becomes representative of the breakdown of the body schema.²⁹⁵ The written word can be employed as a seed to plant ideas and as a weapon to deceive, creating a fear of never completely knowing and controlling our hands or what they are able to create. Understanding and applying the phantom limb phenomenon, then, as an analytical tool opens up a new route to read the fragmented and unknowable self that preoccupies so much early modern drama.



The Martial Hand: Dismemberment, Restoration and Revenge

As Chapter One suggests, the right hand was central to masculine selfhood and signified a somatic manifestation of alliance and honour during the early modern period. The dismembered martial hand instead signifies unruliness which ruptures and disturbs the body politic, suggestive of a hand active in combat. In this next section I examine the martial hand in *Titus Andronicus*, *Edmond Ironside*, *Selimius* and *The Duchess of Malfi* to suggest that the phantom limb is a self-ruling and uncontrolled agent.

²⁹⁴ Rachel Willie, ‘Viewing the Paper Stage: Civil War, Print, Theater and the Public Sphere’, in *Making Space Public in Early Modern Europe: Performance, Geography, Privacy*, ed. by Angela Vanhaelen and Joseph P. Ward (London/New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 54-76 (p. 62).

²⁹⁵ Frederick Kiefer, *Writing on the Renaissance Stage: Written Words, Printed Pages, Metaphoric Books* (London: Associated University Press, 1996), p. 63.

Titus Andronicus is a play dominated by carnage inflicted upon and by the hands of individuals and the hands of the state.²⁹⁶ Hands are ‘lopp’d’ (I.i.146), cut open, ravaged, baked, devoured and targeted to ‘feed the sacrificing fire | Whose smoke like incense doth perfume the sky’ (I.i.147-148). The play uses the phantom limb as a trope for political dismemberment, restoration and personal revenge as Titus falls into Aaron’s cruel trap and dismembers his left hand, believing that, as an offering, it can save his sons’ lives. The depiction of the martial hand of the Andronici that is set to fight verges on parody when Titus, Lucius and Marcus demand that Aaron take one of their hands as ransom for the lives of Quintus and Martius:

Lucius. Stay, father! For that noble hand of thine,
That hath thrown down so many enemies,
Shall not be sent; my hand will serve the turn:
My youth can better spare my blood than you;
And therefore mine shall save my brothers’ lives.
Marcus: Which of your hands hath not defended Rome,
And rear’d aloft the bloody battle-axe,
Writing destruction on the enemy’s castle?
O! None of both but are of high desert:
My hand hath been but idle; let it serve (III.i.168-177).

Three hands compete against each other: that of Titus, the old General and the martial leader of Rome who professes ‘such withered herbs as these | Are meet for plucking up’ (III.i.178-179); that of Lucius, a younger hand that has also ‘defended Rome’ and that of the Tribune Marcus, which he claims ‘hath been but idle’, being

²⁹⁶ The work for dismemberment and hands in *Titus Andronicus* is extensive. See, in particular, for reference: Nicola M. Imbrascio, ‘Stage Hands: *Titus Andronicus* and the Disabled Body in Text and Performance’, in *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*, 6, 3 (Liverpool University Press, 2012), 291-306; *Titus out of Joint: Reading the Fragmented Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Liberty Stanavage and Paxton Hehmeyer (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012); Michael Neill, “‘Ampitheaters in the Body’: Playing with Hands on the Shakespearian Stage”, in *Shakespeare Survey*, 48 (1995), 23-50; Mary Laughlin Fawcett, ‘Arms/Words/Tears: Language and the Body in *Titus Andronicus*’, in *English Literary History*, 50, 2 (John Hopkins University Press, 1983), 261-277; Gillian Murray Kendall, “‘Lend me thy hand’: Metaphor and Mayhem in *Titus Andronicus*’, in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 40, 3 (1989), 299-316; *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays* ed. by Philip C. Kolin (Oxon: Routledge, 2015); Bernard Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968); Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

used in government rather than in martial combat. The very fact Aaron does not interrupt the exchange to specify a choice suggests that the martial, executing hand of Lucius is valued as the hand that has yet to serve. As Rowe comments, this scene ‘appears to dramatically deconstruct the possibility of [Titus’] body – or any body – holding or signifying political agency at all.’²⁹⁷ The exchange has the potential to be particularly unnerving in performance, as spectators witness the affective power of the material staged hands competing to be mutilated on stage. If the actors were to raise their hands to be chosen, or persistently point their index fingers to their chests, or consecutively lay their hands down on a surface, one on top of the other, spectators would see the familial body schema break down as its members compete to sacrifice their hands. The physicality of the struggle also makes the scene grotesquely comic, suggesting an intensity and absurdity in defending the familial body schema in order to assert masculine honour. This absurdity has wider political implications too for, as Rowe notes, the exchange of hands confirms ‘what is an already precarious and temporary attachment of the powers they symbolize’.²⁹⁸ It materialises into the literal division, the cutting of the body into parts, of Rome’s deteriorating body politic.

Titus’ severed hand, which Lavinia later carries in her mouth, not only signifies his loss of political identity and fragmentation of his body schema in the present, but, as Claire Kimball points out, functions as an affective mnemonic device for spectators:

A severed hand, when deliberately foreshadowed, associated with larger concepts of autonomy, and accompanied by the repeated gesture, eventually transforms from a merely astonishing, gory display into a poignant and thematically relevant moment. By applying movement techniques to the corporeal rhetoric of such plays, contemporary actors performing early modern

²⁹⁷ Katherine Rowe, ‘Dismembering and Forgetting in *Titus Andronicus*’, in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 45, 3 (1994), 279-303 (p. 294).

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

plays can create mnemonic devices and motifs to help the audience not only recognize the thematic significance of the dismemberment but also anticipate the forthcoming violence.²⁹⁹

Titus' hand, which once protected Rome from 'a thousand dangers' (III.i.194), is literally severed from the Roman Empire and disconnected from the powers and duties of the government. His handless body is thus, as Bernard Spivack notes, 'open to definition as a malevolent creature [...] of destruction whose energies are devoted to the ruin of others.'³⁰⁰ Titus is no longer a human, his form and condition have changed and while he can still act, he must act in a different way.

With only his right hand remaining, his body is a point of intersection between life and death and order and disorder. The severing of Titus' hand transforms him into a lawless, terrifying threat to the body politic. Titus describes the newfound sensations he experiences:

This poor right hand of mine
Is left to tyrannize upon my breast;
Who, when my heart, all mad with misery,
Beats in this hollow prison of my flesh,
Then thus I thump it down (III.ii.7-11).

Titus' right hand has become metaphorically detached from the body politic, a hyper-energised prosthesis that carries the weight of the trauma of his missing left hand. As John Bulwer explains 'TO BEAT AND KNOCK THE HAND UPON THE BREAST' is a particularly harrowing gesture used 'in sorrow, contrition, repentance, shame, and in reprehending ourselves, or when anything is irksome into us, because the breast is the cabin to the heart' (89). Titus provides a staged representation of phantom limb pain by the visual metaphor of beating and the physical act of thumping. Here, as Kimball suggests, the body without the hand

²⁹⁹ Claire Kimball, 'Staging Dismemberment in Early Modern Drama: Playing Mnemonics and Meaning' in *Renaissance Papers* (2008) ed. by Christopher Cobb and M. Thomas Hester (New York: Camden House, 2009), pp. 113-125 (pp. 114-115).

³⁰⁰ Spivack., p. 5.

serves to demonstrate to playgoers Titus' psychological state as his lone right hand becomes a site for meaning and identity. The phantom limb remembers and Titus becomes a lawless soldier who is capable of executing barbarity.

Ronald Melzack's modern understanding that the phantom represents the 'normal' experience of the body serves as a useful viewpoint here. Melzack suggests the phantom is not 'a pathological entity due to a psychological aberration, or due to an abnormal functioning of the brain' but rather it is 'the body we always feel.'³⁰¹ James Krasner similarly suggests that '[w]hile the phantom limb is an illusion, it is one based on stability; the way we have always felt our bodies stubbornly endures.'³⁰² For Titus, his right hand is his motivation to strike back as it acts on behalf of the phantom limb, which remembers the injuries he has suffered. The right hand becomes more dangerous shaped by the concept of phantom limb pain which occurs 'when the limb feels abnormally present although it is abnormally absent'.³⁰³ The phantom locates itself through agonising pain and people who experience it describe it as 'burning' 'crushing' 'itching' 'tingling', causing them to alter the manner in which they move in or through the world.³⁰⁴ My own experience confirms James Krasner's view that phantom limb pain 'occurs when the limb feels abnormally present although it is abnormally absent' and, to read Titus' situation feelingly, Titus' account is particularly harrowing because the phantom cannot be ignored and, in his case, it yearns for revenge.³⁰⁵

Titus' right hand of honour now occupies a liminal position being set to attack Rome rather than defend it. The illegitimate qualities attributed to the left

³⁰¹ Ronald Melzack, 'Phantom limbs, the self and the brain' (The D.O. Hebb Memorial Lecture), in *Canadian Psychology*, 30 (1989), 1-16.

³⁰² James Krasner, 'Doubtful Arms and Phantom Limbs: Literary Portrayals of Embodied Grief', in *PMLA* 119. 2 (2004), 218-232 (p. 223).

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

³⁰⁴ Crawford, p. 38.

³⁰⁵ Krasner, p. 226.

hand, described by Bulwer as ‘deceitfull and ominous’, have been cut off and incorporated into the formally law-abiding martial right hand (102). Titus is able to inflict barbarous actions because his phantom left hand is now incorporated into his body schema as a dual entity. As a result of the dismemberment Titus is an undefined double self with a newfound sense of his physical environment and a need to change his habitual actions. Following Merleau-Ponty’s understanding that ‘the body must in the last analysis become the thought or intention that it signifies for us. It is the body which points out, and which speaks’ (229-230), it can be seen that Titus’ fragmented body enacts his tragedy. As Mary Laughlin Fawcett explicates, in Titus’ madness he ‘makes his words exemplary by attaching them to concrete objects that embody his intention: to wound’ and so he ‘wraps his messages around armor, arrows, and a knife.’³⁰⁶ Titus employs arrows, prosthetic extensions incorporated into his body schema representative of justice and revenge, to disrupt and dispute.

Titus uses his phantom, now incorporated within his active right hand, as a self-defining instrument when he compels the spectators to ‘See here in bloody lines I have set down; | And what is written shall be executed’ (V.ii.13-15) and asks them to ‘Witness this wretched stump, witness these crimson lines’ (V.ii.22). These lines foreshadow the end of the scene where the crimson lines of text become literal crimson lines on the throats of Chiron and Demetrius. With the instruction ‘Stop close their mouths, let them not speak a word’, Titus, wielding a knife, declares ‘This one hand yet is left to cut your throats,’ whilst ‘Lavinia ‘tween her stumps doth hold | The basin that receives your guilty blood’ (V.ii.181-183).

³⁰⁶ Fawcett, p. 270.

Whilst Titus' body schema becomes a dual instrument, Lucius is literally and metaphorically severed from the Roman hierarchy as an exile 'unkindly banished' and left to 'beg relief among Rome's enemies' who open 'their arms to embrace [me] as a friend' (V.iii.104-107). He becomes a suspended figure, an almost embodied phantom moving within the spaces of the microcosm and macrocosm. His scars record his valour and sacrifice and can be read as inscriptions confirming his active hand in combat and his protection of Rome:

I am the turned-forth, be it known to you
That I have preserved [Rome's] welfare in my blood,
And from my bosom took the enemy's point,
Sheathing the steel in my advent'rous body
Alas, you know I am no vaunter, I.
My scars can witness, dumb although they are,
That my report is just and full of truth (V.iii.108-114).

The restoration of the dismembered limbs of the body politic can only begin as Titus, the destructive phantom limb, is now dead. Marcus invites the Roman people 'to knit again | This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf, | These broken limbs again into one body' rather than making 'shameful execution on herself' (V.iii.70-72, 76). Lucius' hands restore the state of Rome as it becomes a society which must close its wounds. The play ending in Lucius' hands may possibly be taken as pointing towards spectators' insecurities about the succession and the integrity of the *corpus politicum*. The newfound union with the Goths and the Romans is, however, a potentially fragile one as Lucius' scars speak of the wounds inflicted. The severed hands in *Titus Andronicus* ultimately direct an absurd commentary on the failings of the body politic.

In contrast to *Titus Andronicus*, where Titus is the head of the Andronici family and his fragmented body schema is the driving force for revenge and restoration, *Edmond Ironside* (1587) reveals the dismembered hand as an icon of

barbarism and punishment. The play dramatises the question: if you cannot trust the king's hands or the hands of the king, whose hands can you trust? It lays bare contemporary insecurities about the succession crisis in a plot where the dominant sovereign power, signified by Canutus' and Edmund's bodies, is challenged. The horrors of sovereign insecurity, fragmentation and individual disempowerment are materialised in the scene where the two pledges have their hands cut off by Canutus as their 'father did abuse their tongues in perjury' (II.iii.152). The pledges do not have the choice to hide their marked left hand and so their bodies become explicit messages to onlookers as embodied warning signs to repeat to their 'treacherous fathers' (II.iii.154) what Canutus has said. The body without the hand is depicted as the worst penalty, even more feared than beheading because cutting off a traitor's head would be futile:

Still more of the selfsame stock will sprout
 But plague them with the loss of needful members
 As eyes, nose, hands, ears, feet or any such
 Oh these are the cutting cards unto their souls (II.iii.613-616).

The pledges' bodies without their hands function as a sinister warning to Edmund and to onlookers, who are metaphorically disarmed by watching this shocking action. The loss of 'needful members' is more politically effective than death because the hand is considered as the emotive part of the body, a crucial instrument of expression and capable of executing complicated operations. This scene confirms that dismemberment of the hand is a threat to bodily integrity undermining personhood, physical integrity, productive potential and, in this case, masculine agency. Indeed, Margaret Owens explains that the severing of the pledges' hands 'attacks the possession that men hold most dear, their honour.'³⁰⁷

The neurocognitive function of the pledges' handless bodies would undoubtedly

³⁰⁷ Owens, *Stages of Dismemberment*, p. 182.

fracture the spectator-actor relationship. Where the hand connects the spectator to actor by mirror neuron theory, here the hands are very horrifically and suddenly removed from the equation. The spectators could experience empathy and anxiety because they are also rendered ‘handless’ as they are unable to alter the course of events on stage. They also would have been aware of the socio-political significance of the hand as a body part which could reveal human identity, lives, experiences and criminality.

In early modern England the severed or injured hand would be recognised as a marker of criminal behaviour and the mutilated body proof of misconduct.³⁰⁸ The victims, whose survival was desired, as John Kirkup points out, ‘had their open stumps dressed to encourage healing and survival, perhaps to ensure their stigmatization as permanent outcasts of society.’³⁰⁹ In *Edmond Ironside*, the pledges beg to be killed so they will not have to experience rejection:

But say to them, you shall be branded
Or your hands cut off or your nostrils slit;
Then shallow fear makes their quivering tongues
To speak abruptly – “rather let us die
Then we should suffer this wild ignominy.” (II.iii.628-632)

The pledges remain as unsettling figures laying bare unjust behaviour and latent barbarity and point to the cultural backdrop of political intrigue and uncertainty which existed when the play was written and performed.³¹⁰ Larry Champion argues that plays like *Edmond Ironside* thus ‘form a part of a general movement toward

³⁰⁸ B.L. Joseph explains that the left hand was commonly associated with criminality and theft was therefore ‘punished by a brand on the left thumb for a first offence.’ in *Elizabethan Acting*, p. 63. Spectators would also have been aware of the famous amputation of John Stubbes’ right hand for his inflammatory treatise openly criticising Queen Elizabeth I.

³⁰⁹ John Kirkup, ‘Elective Amputation: Early Evolution to the End of the 17th Century’, in *A History of Limb Amputation* (London: Springer, 2007), 55-67 (p. 57).

³¹⁰ Larry S. Champion, *The Noise of the Threatening Drum: Dramatic Strategy and Political Ideology in Shakespeare and the English Chronicle Plays* (London: Associated University Presses, 1990), p. 64.

what amounts to a new mode of historical inquiry’ and as such ‘embody their own internal dialectic’:

Through this multiplicity of perspective, they begin to view history as a process of change, as self-determined, as a struggle between aristocratic houses and the monarchic state, between military and civilian interests, as a conflict regarding matters of succession and inheritance – to view history, in a word, as founded in ideological confrontation.³¹¹

The abject bodies of the pledges without their hands reflect not just the results of brute violence but also the fragmented and severed status of political, economic and cultural thinking of the 1590s. During this time there were crises surrounding: the uncertainty of Elizabeth I’s succession; the rise of mercantile capitalism by the growth of the East India Company; the sense of Protestant isolation in a Catholic Europe; and increased Ottoman activity in the Mediterranean. As David Armitage, Conal Condren and Andrew Fitzmaurice elucidate, politics was open to corruption and ‘as the sixteenth century progressed, anxiety about corruption deepened [...] because rhetoric was understood to be integral to political life, concern with corruption and self-interest extended to the role of oratory’ as an ‘opportunity for flattery, dissimulation, demagoguery, and tyranny.’³¹²

This anxiety is dramatised by the autonomous hands of the characters Edricus and Stitch in *Edmond Ironside* that are metaphorically severed from the state and act as detached phantom limbs separate from the will of their master. The relationship comments on the play’s treatment of counsel which ‘could be invited and provided but could also get out of hand.’³¹³ Edricus and Stitch become a parody of the dual body of the monarch and the members of the counsel. Stitch becomes a manipulated puppet, following Edricus’ every word and movement,

³¹¹ Larry S. Champion, “‘What Prerogatives Means’”: Perspective and Political Ideology in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, in *South Atlantic Review*, 53, 4 (1988), 1- 19 (p. 15).

³¹² *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, ed. by David Armitage, Conal Condren, Andrew Fitzmaurice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 5-7.

³¹³ Jacqueline Rose, ‘Kingship and Counsel in Early Modern England’, p. 50.

even down to echoing his laughter as he laughs to ‘bear my master company’ (II.iii.723).

Edricus, the marginalised figure of the bastard, thrives in his independence. His wavering hands work under his own direction, dangerously detached from the body politic and always on the periphery of both Canutus’ and Edmund’s body schemae. The very fact Edricus’ hands remain detached from the conventions of the state allows him to forge other identities, identities which manipulate and manage the individuals who surround him. Edricus is the figure of the flatterer, aptly described by David Colclough as ‘parasites intent only on their own safety and advancement, [...] elevating private over public interest and having no concern for the state of the nation.’³¹⁴ Edricus works as the disembodied hand of both Canutus and Edmund, able to play an ‘Ambodexter’s part’ (II.i.30), hand-in-hand with them as their counsel and so able to play the two kings against one another. Larry Champion observes ‘clearly [Edricus’] alliance is only to himself’ and so the hand of Edricus becomes integral to the comedy as the audience watch how his speech and gesture ‘cloak, cozen, cog and flatter’ (II.i.291) the kings.³¹⁵

Edricus’ hands work as a further source of anxiety and duplicity when he writes a letter to Edmund under the pretence of asking for forgiveness. He hopes his ‘simple writing shall deceive his eye’ (III.v.197-198) and, by this, he shall be able to share Edmund’s plan with Canutus. His hand takes centre-stage and becomes explicit in its actions as the spectators watch in suspense at his craft of the written word. Here the duplicitous hand becomes instrumental to the progression of the play as Edricus’ hand pauses, makes errors and blots. Indeed, as Alison Findlay

³¹⁴ David Colclough, ‘Talking to animals: persuasion, counsel and their discontents in *Julius Caesar*’ in *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, pp. 217-233 (p. 219). See also Cathy Curtis, ‘Advising Monarchs and their Counsellors: Juan Luis Vives on the Emotions, Civil Life and International Relations’, in *Parergon*, 28, 2 (2011), 29-53 (p. 52).

³¹⁵ Champion, *The Noise of the Threatening Drum*, p. 64.

explains, the spectators thus ‘participate in the writer’s block’ and, thereby, are completely engaged in the success or failure of the letter.³¹⁶ His hand becomes a treacherous instrument as he manipulates both Canutus and Edmund with ease, allowing the spectators to observe his deceitful hands intently and play their own part alongside.³¹⁷

In contrast to this duplicity, hands create spectacular and atrocious moments of extreme violence and tyranny in *Selimus*. The many hands imbricated in shifting cycles of power for political and personal gain reflect a country on the edge of civil war.³¹⁸ *Selimus* focuses upon the passions of ‘fear, suspicion, and distrust’ (IX.15) produced by the numerous martial hands which all itch to snatch the crown. Here I explore the fragmented state of the political environment through the analysis and understanding of the prosthetic hand in *Selimus* as both a tension and connection between the metaphorical and material world. Following biomedical engineer Robert Mann’s argument that the ‘ideal prosthesis would serve its wearer as a natural extension of his human system’ I read the prosthetic here in political terms.³¹⁹ In *Selimus* the hands of Selimus, Acomat, Corcut and Aga challenge the integrity of the political body schema and expose differences between alienation and incorporation, subjectivity and objectivity, political loss and unrestrained affective power.

Greene’s play dramatises the reign of the Emperor of Turkey, Selim I (1467-1520), who in 1512 seized the throne by murdering his brothers and his

³¹⁶ Alison Findlay, *Illegitimate Power: Bastards in Renaissance Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 226.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

Findlay notes that ‘Edricus treats [the audience] as fellow conspirators by using the pronouns “we”, “us”, “our.”

³¹⁸ Louis Wann, ‘The oriental in Elizabethan drama’, in *Modern Philology*, 12, 7 (Chicago, 1915), 423-447 (p. 430).

See also Mustafa Şahiner, ‘Hellish Discourses: Shakespeare’s *Richard III* and Greene’s *Selimus*’, in *Journal of Faculty of Letters*, 29, 2 (2012), 157-166.

³¹⁹ R.W. Mann, ‘Force and Position Proprioception for Prosthesis’, in *The Control of Upper Extremity Orthoses and Prostheses*, ed. by P. Herberts et al. (Florida: Thomas Co., 1974), pp. 201-219 (p. 202).

father, Bajazeth II. As Al-Olaqi points out, Elizabethan playwrights such as Greene presented the spectators with ‘a picture of the East they desired to see, an Orient filled with treachery, cruelty and false doctrine, an Orient that was destroyed by its own rulers.’³²⁰ This, Al-Olaqi explains, shows inhuman displays of fratricide and patricide that ‘work both internally, giving a pattern to history writing, which is interspersed by frequent occasions of intra-dynastic betrayal, and externally, in the perception of the Turks as violent and defiant people.’³²¹ With the Ottoman court appealing to capitalist venture and consumer orientalism growing, the Western perception of the Turks focused around exotic appeal and intrigue. This heightened fascination renewed the fear of an Ottoman invasion and centred the dominant discourse around the demonisation of the Turks. The barbarity of the Turkish villain enacted on both private and public stages reveals the Western positioning, in early modern England, of the Turkish ‘Other’. There is, therefore, a simultaneous wonder and disgust felt by the spectators who are witness to the murderous and tyrannical hands of the Turk which never rest ‘till this right hand | Hath pulled the crown from off his coward’s head’ (IV.30-31)

Irving Ribner’s argument that Selimus’ monologue was copied from the play and circulated by enemies of Sir Walter Raleigh suggests that the Elizabethan spectator would recognise the ‘ideas associated with Elizabethan atheism, free thought, and the pseudo-Machiavellianism’ on the stage.³²² For the English theatregoers, then, the Turk was not an imaginary fiction but rather a collective

³²⁰ Fahd Mohammed Taleb Al-Olaqi, ‘Greene’s *Selimus* (1594): A Scourge of God to the Ottomans’, *International Journal of Comparative Literature & Translation Studies*, 5 (Australia: Australian International Academic Centre, 2017), 40-52 (p. 40).

See also Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Ottomans: Dissolving Images* (London: Penguin, 1993)

³²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³²² Irving Ribner, ‘Greene’s Attack on Marlowe: Some Light on “Alphonsus” and “Selimus”’, in *Studies in Philology*, 52 (University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 162-171 (p. 169). See also Jean Jacquot, ‘Raleigh’s “Hellish Verses” and the “Tragicall Raigne of Selimus”’, in *The Modern Language Review*, 48 (1953), 1-9.

force threatening their cultural identity. At the time the play was performed, Elizabeth I was making alliances and ambassadorial exchanges with Sultan Murad III and Catholic playgoers watching *Selimus* would undoubtedly feel an additional threat to the freedom of their religious beliefs alongside observing the threat of what hands could do if they did not conform to Protestantism.

The vocabulary used to describe the Ottoman expansion in Europe under Mehmet II invariably refers to actions of the hands which, in turn, is translated to Elizabethan dramatic images of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman historian Mehmed Neşri (1450-1520) points out the expansion was described in terms of: “conquest,” “seizure,” “entry,” and “taking in hand” of one fortress after another.³²³ *Selimus* proves a typical example of this kind of despotism. His ‘forward’ (XIII.11) and ‘tyrant’s hand’ (XII.44) of martial authority is described as pulling, scratching, stabbing and thrusting in his lust for power. Bajazet describes *Selimus*’ hands that:

[D]o itch to have the crown,
And he will have it – or else pull me down.
Is he a prince? Ah no, he is a sea,
Into which run nought but ambitious reaches,
Seditious complots, murder, fraud, and hate (I.177-181).

The description of hands that ‘do itch’ implies an urgency, an unassailable need to act, a need that is uncontrollable and imperative in its execution. The itch can arise without notice, is acted upon habitually, it cannot wait to be resolved and so habit, instinct and the will to action are inscribed into *Selimus*’ lawless hands.

Moreover, the hands that ‘do itch’ aptly describe the delusion and misplaced pain central to the phantom limb phenomenon. *Selimus*’ hands become representative of his complete political severance from his father’s household and political body schema. He is now a phantom as he is both physically and

³²³ Mehmed Neşri, *Kitâb-t Cihan-nümâ*, v. 2, 763-7 in Palmira Brummett, *Mapping the Ottomans: Sovereignty, Territory and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 131.

psychologically separated. Bajazet defines him not as a prince, but as a sea ‘which run nought but ambitious reaches’ and references the naval power of the Ottomans in the Mediterranean effectively enabling them to have both a disregard for borders and an ability to travel into Europe. The ‘ambitious reaches’ show Selimus’ hands as the hands of the sea ebbing and flowing like water and, as such, able to extend or drain Bajazet’s land. Ribner terms Selimus a tyrant ‘because he embraces a philosophy which is contrary to Elizabethan moral law, because he accepts doctrines which the age considered to emanate from Satan.’³²⁴ Selimus describes his desire to kill his father who he owes ‘no more to him than he to me’ (II.63) as he declares ‘perhaps I may attain [the crown] at his hands | If I cannot, this right hand is resolved | To end the period with a fatal stab’ (II.165-167).

Selimus is designated as a scourge of God, as Al-Olaqi aptly puts it, he ‘thinks nothing of greeting warmly with one hand whilst plunging a dagger in with the other.’³²⁵ Greene presents an explicit defiance of divine law as Selimus pledges to ‘arm my heart with irreligion’ (II.74). This declaration of rebellion, free-thought and act of disobedience could indeed simultaneously terrify and seduce the Elizabethan spectators as they witness the dysfunctional mindset of Selimus taking hold by the action of his hands gesturing frantically in the soliloquy as he addresses himself: ‘Now Selimus, consider who thou art. | Long hast thou marched in disguisèd attire’ (II.1-2). Here Selimus questions the integrity of his body schema which has acted as a cloak to hide his lust for power. Selimus no longer wants to be the prosthetic hands of his father but rather ‘unmask thyself and play thy part’ (II.3). His hands become executors of his own power as he proclaims ‘And seek with sword whole kingdoms to displace. [...] Make thou a passage for thy gushing

³²⁴ Ribner, p. 169.

³²⁵ Al-Olaqi, p. 46.

flood | By slaughter, treason, or what else thou can' (II.11, 19-21). Staging the sword placed in Selimus' hands at this moment would reveal the transgressive potential of the hand and appeal to the masculine ambition of Elizabethan theatregoers. *Selimus* would provide Greene's audience with exaggerated displays of their own ambitions to rise in the world by the flamboyant gestures of the protagonist. Indeed, the spectators would have been acutely aware of the anxieties concerning political succession. While the spectators cannot 'stand up' or even speak about the succession crisis, the space of the theatre allowed access to a fictional and foreign world where possibilities of disguise and the pleasure of revolt was played out and relished.³²⁶

For Elizabethan theatregoers, Selimus' lines would have been 'disturbingly transgressive, providing electrifying moments for the audience, who gasped to hear such fearless defiance of divine law,' and would become 'increasingly uneasy later in the play as Selimus' sins went unpunished.'³²⁷ Selimus relies on the ritual hand gesture to 'crave his confirmation' at Bajazet's hands by the performance of a coronation. The action of Bajazet taking off the crown and setting it on Selimus' head 'as willingly to thee | As e'er my father gave it unto me' (XVII.76-77) is viewed as the definitive marker of sovereign authority and political agency. This scene shows that sovereignty lies primarily in the hand as it places the crown upon different heads. Sovereignty is never inactive or belonging to one individual but rather shifting and fluid, moving from one hand to another.

It is clear Selimus understands emotion to be synonymous with weakness as in Scene 20 he severs himself further from the body schema of his father as he

³²⁶ John Stubbs (c.1544-1589), an Elizabethan English pamphleteer, can be used as example here. Stubbs published on the subject of the queen's marriage and had his hand cut off in 1579. That year parliament passed *Act against Seditious Words and Rumours Uttered against the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty*.

³²⁷ Daniel J. Vitkus, 'Introduction', in *Three Turk Plays in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 1-55 (p. 22).

speaks aside, directly to the spectators, that he does not feel grief after his father's death:

And though my heart, cast in an iron mould,
Cannot admit the smallest dram of grief,
Yet that I may be thought to love him well,
I'll mourn in show, though I rejoice indeed (XX.6-9).

According to Bulwer's *Chirologia*, there are numerous hand gestures the actor could choose to employ here to perform the action of mourning, such as: 'TO WRING THE HANDS is a natural expression of excessive grief, used by those who condole, bewaile, and lament' or 'TO BEAT AND KNOCK THE HAND UPON THE BREAST, is a naturall expression of the Hand, used in sorrow, contrition...' (28, 89, 91). The actor is able to use his hand as a performative prosthetic to demonstrate manipulation which serves to create an illusion to Sinam Bassa, Mustaffa and the janissaries. Gestural vocabulary and the hand's intentions, the hand as a marker of sovereign and sacred immateriality as understood in Chapter One, can no longer be trusted. The conscious employment of gestures Selimus uses here demonstrates that treatises on hand gestures, such as Bulwer's, are flawed. This suggests there is a physicality to Machiavellian deception and leaves an opening for dishonourable use. The spectators observe Selimus deliberately alter his body language and deconstruct the gestural vocabulary as understood by the Elizabethan audience. Selimus' hand gestures are not prescribed or natural but conscious and calculated. The spectators are left sceptical of gestural vocabulary both inside and outside the theatre.

Selimus displays the materiality of political sovereignty, as opposed to its mystical, divine origins, by staging it passing constantly between hands. The hands of the emperor are physically dismembered when Bajazet sends Aga as a messenger to persuade Acomat to lay down his arms. Here Acomat uses Aga's

body as prosthesis, as an object to rehearse his desires on, to dismember Bajazet and his body politic. Acomat pulls out Aga's eyes and cuts off both his hands and returns the severed limbs to Aga's possession by resting them inside his clothing:

Acomat. Here, take thy hands. I know thou lov'st them well.
[Acomat] opens [Aga's] bosom and puts them in.
 Which hand is this? Right or left? Canst thou tell? (XIV.91-92)

Aga. I know not which it is, but 'tis my hand.
 See, unto thee I lift these bloody arms
 (For hands I have not for to lift to thee)
 And in thy justice, dart thy smoldering flame
 Upon the head of the cursed Acomat! (XIV.93, 98-101)

Aga is left as an artefact, an invention of Acomat's revenge, and ordered to return to his emperor and recall the words of Acomat: 'That if [Bajazet] had but been in thy place, | I would have use him crueller then thee' (XIV.88-89). The severed hands are then pressed to Aga and assimilated once more into his body schema as objects which are, disturbingly, close to hand and within reach. The Freudian term of the uncanny, the *unheimlich* of 'what was once *heimlich*, homelike familiar', quite literally rests upon Aga's body.³²⁸ He is forced to carry the weight of his own hands within his clothes as an act of excruciating torture. The loss is addressed to 'thee', his God, the hands now unable to be used in prayer. Bulwer refers to the importance of the hand in prayer throughout *Chirologia*: 'And as God speakes to us with his *Hand* by a supernaturall way: so we naturally speak to Him, as well as unto men, by the *appeale* of our *Hands* in *admiration*, *attestation*, and *prayer*' (7). No longer having the conduit for a relationship with God, Aga's gestures materialise both his physical and metaphysical loss whilst grimly signifying the ineffectiveness of prayer.

³²⁸ Freud in 'The Uncanny' describes the uncanny as 'dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist [...] feet which dance by themselves,' which are *unheimlich* because 'they prove capable of independent activity.' in *The Pelican Freud Library* Volume 14, ed by James Strachey, Alan Tyson, Angela Richards and Albert Dickson, trans. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 366.

The body politic is now severed from political agency and diplomatic power as Bajazet can no longer send out his janissaries to act on his behalf and his ‘hands’ become incapable of reaching out beyond his own lands. Political disempowerment is made physical, intensely real and markedly unavoidable when Aga, led by a Soldier, kneels before Bajazet and embraces his legs. In this case, however, Aga does not have his hands to embrace but instead his bloody stumps are wrapped around Bajazet’s legs. The use of the adverb ‘embracing’ in the stage directions signals to Aga’s loss. Bulwer defines the action of embracing through the hands: ‘VVE PUT FORTH BOTH OUR HANDS TO EMBRACE those we love, as if we would bring them home into our heart and bosome, as some dear and pretious thing, as *Aristotle* gives the reason of the gesture’ (122). In phenomenological terms the motricity of the hand is one of the dimensions of the lived experience of one’s own body and the ‘means of communication with the world’ (218, 95). Here Aga cannot embrace his master completely, leaving an unfamiliar space, a rupture, between Aga’s handless body and the world he once existed within.

This embrace signifies both a contact and a separation: the audience are able to see Aga’s limitations as he attempts to perceive his newfound environment and wrap his handless arms around his emperor’s legs. It is Mustaffa who ‘*opens his bosom*’ and takes Aga’s detached hands from his clothing. Disconnected from his self and state, Aga’s hands become objects which no longer belong to him, or to his ruler, but to the stage. Aga guides Bajazet, Mustaffa and the spectators to see what he cannot: ‘Witness these handless arms; | Witness these empty lodges of mine eyes; | Witness the gods that from the highest heaven’ (XV.6-8). The body of the servant is now marked by the sovereign’s failings which ‘threaten still my ruin

and my loss' (XVIII.18). Bajazet, now bereft of power, is quite literally beyond reach and inaccessible. Aga's hands serve as grotesque souvenirs that unsettle territory, identity and masculine honour. In contrast to the powerful martial hands outlined in Chapter One, the dismembered hands display the psychological loss of masculinity. This could point to the 'hands of the Queen', Elizabeth I's courtiers who are emasculated at court by being unable to control and change Elizabeth's course, as it is only Elizabeth who can have an heir and thus decide the future of the country.

Whilst *Selimus* is a play focused on violence inflicted by hands and the severance of political alliances, it is also a play about re-membling. Aga, the body without hands, remains a pivotal character in displaying the notion of sacrifice for the sake of others. Indeed, as Jenny Sager explains, "Aga" is not actually a name, it is a title, which was traditionally given to the commander of the Janissaries' and so Aga becomes defined solely by his function as Bajazet's trusted servant.³²⁹ Extending Sager's analysis of Aga as instrument, I read Aga as a discursive prosthetic device and understand the character not as part of material life but as a member of Bajazet's body politic. Aga returns to his emperor: 'Witness the present that he sends to thee! | Open my bosom: there you shall it see' (XV.15). Aga's hands are returned as a public gift before numerous witnesses: the emperor, the servants of the emperor and the theatregoers. Aga's description of his severed hands as 'the present' grotesquely parodies the act of exchanging gifts which is a manual activity where both giving and receiving go hand in hand. Of course, the word 'present' has multiple meanings. It is defined in the *OED* as 'into a person's presence, esp. as an offering or gift' and related to time or being at hand from the

³²⁹ Jenny Sager, 'The Aesthetics of Violence in *Selimus*', in *The Aesthetics of Spectacle in Early Modern Drama and Modern Cinema* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 127-140 (p. 131).

Latin *praesēns* as ‘thing or person that is present; that which one has in one’s presence, about one’s person, etc.; that which is here; the affair or matter in hand; a present occasion’,³³⁰.

Aga’s hands are materially present yet spatially absent, they are present in time yet temporal markers of the past, simultaneously at hand and yet dead, visually separate yet intensely felt and inescapably connected. Aga’s severed limbs as ‘present’ parallel the definition of the phantom limb as disconnected but with a cognitive status that remains incorporated into the body schema. Mustaffa extends his hands to touch Aga’s hands but Aga is unable to reciprocate. The only sensation Aga will feel is the physical weight of his hands being removed from inside his clothing. Aga’s self is further divided as he no longer has a ‘role’ to act. Aga remarks on his hands which were once contingent, pervasive and active agents that were used:

To toss the spear and in a warlike gyre
 To hurtle my sharp sword about my head.
 Those he sends he to thee, woeful emperor
 With purpose so to cut thy hands from thee (XV.17-21).

Aga’s identity is vested in his hands, their ability understood as a form of power which once served his emperor. Aga seems consciously aware of his final role to play as prosthesis and agonises over his now severed relationship to Bajazet as his hands have been cut from his sovereign. Bajazet responds with silence, for sorrow has ‘eateth up my words’ (XV.24). Where once the emperor could place responsibility at ‘arm’s length’ he is now forced to confront the horrific realities of his actions.

³³⁰ ‘present, n.1’, in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online],
 <<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lancs.ac.uk/view/Entry/150676?isAdvanced=false&result=1&rskey=k5T9p6&>>
 [accessed 17 April 2019].

Whilst the play focuses on the tyrannical fantasies and impulses inflicted by the Turks, the relationship with Aga and Bajazet offers the spectators a respite from scenes of massacre, blood and violence. Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the body schema suggests that we experience our loved ones' bodies as connected with our own (82-3). The body schema, as James Krasner puts it, 'extends beyond our skin, across intervening space, and to our loved ones.'³³¹ Al-Olaqi argues that *Selimus* 'signifies a slight departure from the Medieval prejudiced views of Islam and Turks into open views of fascination. It witnesses some positive appreciation for the Islamic life and ways.'³³² This, I believe, is through the relationship between Bajazet and Aga. Despite Aga's loss, he still respectfully praises Bajazet for:

My parents were but men of poor estate,
 And happy yet had wretched Aga been,
 If Bajazet had not exalted him.
 Poor Aga! Had it not been much more fair
 T'have died among the cruel Persians
 Than thus at home by barbarous tyranny
 To live and never see the cheerful day
 And to want hands wherewith to feel the way? (XVIII.45-52)

In spite of Aga being named after his function and used as an object and subject of political torture, the spectators learn his story and can connect with the words he speaks because of his severed status. Perhaps particularly so since he cannot gesture to himself or beat his breast when he exclaims 'Poor Aga!'. He is no longer a prosthetic of the state but rather his own being who continues to cherish Bajazet's companionship and guidance which is necessary, more so than ever, after his dismemberment.

³³¹ Krasner, p. 225.

³³² Al-Olaqi, p. 43.

Selimus' prosthetic hands manifest in his absence when Abraham is employed 'by Selimus' instigation' (XVIII.91) to poison Bajazet and Aga. The helping hand is disguised as good when Abraham lifts the drink to Aga's mouth and instantly subverted as the poison enters his body. Rather than assisting or reaching out, the hands of Selimus, embodied by Abraham, have become an actively mobile weapon used against the emperor. Abraham's hand is at the same time an extension of absolute loyalty for Selimus. His loyalty as the king's hand is ultimately self-destructive because Abraham sacrifices himself in Selimus' name.

Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* expands this role of counsellor as phantom limb by dramatising Bosola's journey from being a slave and prosthetic hand of Ferdinand to a tragic hero. In contrast to the Elizabethan plays examined above *The Duchess of Malfi* was first performed on the Jacobean stage, at a time when King James' court was notoriously corrupt and bore witness to self-advancement, flattery and favouritism. Whilst Queen Elizabeth's rule promoted a strong sense of nationality for England, James' rule asserted religious reform and Jacobean hierarchies for kings, bishops and the people. In spite of James' patriarchal rule, deep cracks began to form in 1609 when Queen Anna severed herself from James' authority by converting to Catholicism. *The Duchess of Malfi* dramatises fragmented and contaminated rule by Ferdinand's desperate attempt to control the hand in marriage of his flesh and blood and his second self, the Duchess. He employs Bosola as his hand in the Duchess' court to enact such authoritarian control. However, both the Duchess and Bosola prove to be severed agents rather than dutiful prostheses of Ferdinand's body politic.

Bosola is, at the beginning of the play, a galley slave, perceived as a passive object and the property of his master. He seeks self-advancement and so

serves Ferdinand as a ‘true servant’ (IV.ii.332). As Whigham notes, Bosola is ‘[h]ungry for ontological ratification’ and so ‘offers up to Ferdinand all he has’.³³³ Bosola is simultaneously detached and haunted by having to govern ‘the ground of his identity’ and the idea of ‘an always pending better self.’³³⁴ This complex representation and the fact he is severed from the court situates Bosola as standing always on the periphery. He becomes an affective signifier, or to use John Russell Brown’s term, a ‘commentator’ for the spectators.³³⁵ Bosola is the ‘hand’, the neurocognitive link between the spectators and the stage, able to pull in and reach out in turn.

Webster draws attention to James I’s fragmentary rule and counsel as head of the body politic by the explicitly sadistic and dark lines of Ferdinand in Act 2 when he describes his desire to have the bodies of the Duchess and Antonio ‘Burnt in a coal-pit, with the ventage stopped, | That their cursed smoke might not ascent to heaven’ (II.v.66-68). These lines indicate that the monarch’s sacred role, as assumed by Duke Ferdinand, has become tyrannical. This is a pivotal moment for the audience who witness the corrupt court as a place of flattery, falsehood and deception reflected in Ferdinand’s incestuous and murderous imagination. Indeed, as Jacqueline Rose suggests, ‘immoderate passions in a ruler or a magistrate’, such as anger, passivity, fear or indecisiveness, ‘were thought in the early modern period to corrupt the entire body politic’.³³⁶ Bosola becomes Ferdinand’s wandering phantom limbs, changing shape to manipulate those around him and create distress. Bosola comments that:

³³³ Whigham, p. 217.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 214, 223.

³³⁵ John Russell Brown, ‘Introduction’, in *The Duchess of Malfi*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 1-35.

³³⁶ Jacqueline Rose, ‘Kingship and Counsel in Early Modern England’, p. 51.

Some would think the souls of princes were brought forth by some more weighty cause than those of meaner persons – they are deceived; there's the same hand to them: the like passions sway them (II.ii.100-101).

Bosola states that the hands of the princes that reign are equal to his hands in that they are ruled by universal human desires, passions and, implicitly, the same power. The sacred hands of the king are thereby severed from their sovereignty and meaning. It is Bosola who is the agent of Ferdinand's malevolent desires as he acts as the enabling hands for Ferdinand's schemes. Spectators who are marginalised by class, race or gender are thus invited to view their own hands as equal to, or extensions of, the hand of the king. Their hands hold potential to extend the king's will or enact their own individual character and identity.

Webster invites the spectators to question their being further when Ferdinand draws attention to the performance and offers a metatheatrical understanding of characters 'playing' a part.³³⁷ Ferdinand states:

For thee (as we observe in tragedies
That a good actor many times is cursed
For playing a villain's part) (IV.ii.287-289)

Here the spectators are drawn into a further element of dismemberment when invited to consider the doubleness of the actor and character. Merleau-Ponty's concept of the presence of the fictional character the actor embodies as "the great phantom" is here presented to the spectators, if only for a few seconds, to emphasise the fictional world of performance. Webster comments on the individuals within the establishment who 'play' a role within the political body schema. However, the reality is not fiction, the show does not end and the characters do not step out of costume. Of course, the spectators are aware of Ferdinand's fragmented and doubled self as in Act 1 when he sets out his

³³⁷ This occurs also when the Duchess in Act 4 Scene 1 states 'I account this world a tedious theatre, | For I do play a part in't 'gainst my will' (81-82).

expectations 'Why do you laugh? Methinks you that are courtiers should be my touchwood, take fire when I give fire; that is, laugh when I laugh, were the subject never so witty' (I.ii.122-125) and in Act 2 when he states he prefers flattery, as a mirroring of himself (II.i.42-44).



Phantom Reflections

This sense of mirroring felt by Ferdinand over the hands he believes to be his own, the hands of Bosola and the Duchess, can be read and analysed with reference to one of the rehabilitation exercises I undertook in hospital called 'Mirror Box Therapy' (Fig.25) which involves using a mirror to trick the brain into believing the affected limb is undamaged.

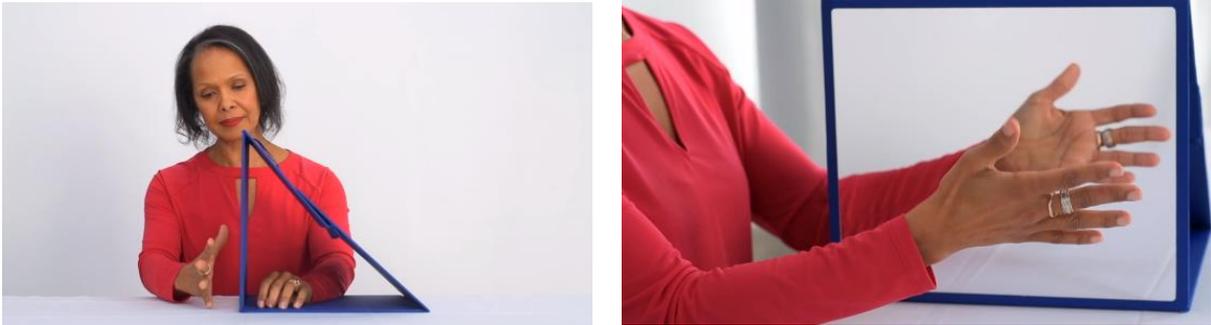


Figure 23: An example of ‘Mirror Box Therapy’³³⁸

During the exercise the affected limb is hidden behind a mirror. The movement of the functioning limb is reflected in the mirror and this allows the brain to perceive that the affected limb is moving freely and mirroring the actions of the whole limb. To apply this to the character of Ferdinand, then, demonstrates his rationale as his subjects prove not the true servants he believes them to be. Ferdinand believes the actions of his servants will mirror his own and trusts them as prosthetic extensions of his own power. However, it becomes evident that instead they are fluid, free-floating signifiers who behind the mirror are dangerous and restless, severed as they are from Ferdinand’s body schema.

This can be seen in Act 3 when Ferdinand gives the Duchess a poniard. There are 86 lines exchanged between the siblings from the moment Ferdinand places the poniard in her hand after the Duchess’ lines ‘For know, whether I am doomed to live or die, I can do both like a prince’ (III.ii.70-71). The staging of this is significant as the Duchess is holding the poniard in her hands for such a long period of time whilst in the company of her brother. Of course, as Webster later

³³⁸ Saebo, ‘Saebo Mirror Box’ <www.saebo.com/saebo-mirror-box> [accessed 21 February 2018]

calls attention to, the poniard 'hath a handle to 'it | As well as a point' (III.ii.151-152). Does the Duchess hold the handle or the point during this exchange? It would be resolutely charged with meaning if she were to hold the handle and site the point towards Ferdinand as that is the opposite direction Ferdinand wishes it to be. It would also be compelling to watch as a female spectator, especially if the Duchess were to alternate between handle and point, leaving the spectators guessing as to her next movement and wonder at her self-determination.

Bosola's hands do not follow the instructions of Ferdinand to the extent that Bosola kills Ferdinand and inexorably severs himself from the performance of being a 'true servant'. By killing Ferdinand Bosola is no longer his 'creature', but rather an agent imperative in moving the action forward and with the opportunity to reform. When the Duchess dies, Bosola becomes her hand by pledging his alliance to Antonio. In Act 5 Scene 2 Bosola is instructed to kill Antonio but contends:

Well, good Antonio,
 I'll seek thee into safety from the reach
 Of these most cruel biters, that have got
 Some of thy blood already. It may be
 I'll join with thee in a most just revenge.
 The weakest arm is strong enough that strikes
 With the sword of justice. – Still methinks the Duchess
 Haunts me (V.ii.337-345).

Here Bosola offers to protect Antonio from the hands which have inflicted injury, viciously drawn some of his life 'already' and tainted his body schema. Bosola's hands, guided by the Duchess', allow him a second chance to reform. Her hands remain invested with continued vitality after her death and become the phantom limbs which haunt Bosola from the grave.

The severed limb's errant behaviour would appeal to spectators, particularly those marginalised by early modern conventions, because such acts of

rebellion and autonomy are exactly what the establishment would have feared. Indeed, as Cynthia Marshall notes, performances can make the playgoer ‘aware of their own physical existence in the presence of other highly marked bodies on stage’ whilst also provoking questions about the spectators’ ‘fundamental ideas of bodily presence and totality’.³³⁹ The shared body schema between actor and spectator allows the spectator to be complicit in the act of severing the literal tie to the institution and subverting the norm.



The Marital Hand: Sacrifice, Separation and Subversion

This next section will focus on the feminine hand as an outlawed agent which can be both physically and psychologically separated from the body politic through its unnerving disembodied status. Following my understanding of the feminine hand in Chapter Two as an instrument shifting between object/subject, passive/active status and enacted by the boy actor, here I examine the dismembered marital hand that signifies a further level of independence or, in some cases, literal dismemberment from political and social institutions.

The Duchess’ marital hand can be better understood with reference to the context of the Jacobean court and particularly Queen Anna of Denmark. Her motto ‘*La mia grandezza dal ecceslo,*’ which translates as ‘My power is from the most high’ demonstrated that she claimed for herself both earthly and spiritual authority to rule, so challenging her husband’s role as supreme dominant patriarch.³⁴⁰ Beyond her functions as wife and mother Queen Anna exerted her agency by forming her own court and, as Susan Dunn-Hensley explains, the ‘keeping and

³³⁹ Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 108, 113.

³⁴⁰ See Jemma Field, ‘Anna of Denmark: A Late Portrait by Paul van Somer’, in *The British Art Journal* 18, 2, (2017), 50-56 (p. 52).

creation of her own court proved central to Anna's political influence'.³⁴¹ With a court of her own, running in parallel to that of James, Anna separated and redefined the political sphere from its masculine focus and became a cultural and political figure in her own right within Jacobean society.³⁴² Webster's *Duchess* is arguably a dramatic representation of Queen Anna and derives her influence through the very establishment of patriarchy and masculine control that attempted to contain her. The feminine subversion that is being publicly displayed by Queen Anna and bodied forth by the actor who plays the Duchess draws the spectators into a world of shifting self-image and potential separation from the state. Moreover, the Duchess' movements and gestures elicit feelings from the female spectators in a space beyond the domestic sphere and demonstrate that their hands need not just be faithful facsimiles of their father's, brother's or husband's.

The Duchess severs herself from the early modern patriarchal feminine model by giving her hand in marriage to her steward. The Duchess' hands become representative of her refusal to submit to church, state, court and society. The Duchess' ring is a prosthetic extension of her sexual desire and power. As a signifier and semiotic object, it is physical proof of the dissoluble secular contract which ultimately removes Antonio from his family and places his masculine agency into question. The Duchess' hands intertwine in emotional receptivity with Antonio and they are united in an intricate and sacred Gordian knot: 'Bless heaven,' the Duchess professes, 'this sacred Gordian, which let violence | Never untwine [...] we are now one' (I.iii.480-481).

³⁴¹ Susan Dunn-Hensley, *Anna of Denmark and Henrietta Maria: Virgins, Witches, and Catholic Queens* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 78.

³⁴² See Clare McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage: Anna of Denmark and Female Masquing in the Stuart Court 1590-1619* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, 'Anne of Denmark and the Subversions of Masquing', in *Criticism*, 25 (1993), 341+; Leeds Barroll, *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001)

Antonio is figured as ‘thrust into a well’ (III.iv.39) as his hands plunge deep into the Duchess’ fortune and inside her body. Antonio is so intertwined that it is observed ‘No matter who sets hand to ‘t, his own weight | Will bring him sooner to th’ bottom’ (III.v.40-42). With their body parts combined as one they share the wedding ring. This ring once belonged to her first husband the Duke of Malfi and is passed to Antonio in the wooing scene and later snatched from the Duchess during the dumb show. The Cardinal and Ferdinand repossess not only her private body schema but also facilitate the death of her political body schema as the head of the Court of Malfi. The imagery of Antonio falling, an object of substantial weight, is resonant again when the Duchess and Antonio say their farewells. The Duchess observes:

Let me look upon you once more, for that speech
Came from a dying father. –Your kiss is colder
Than that I have seen an holy anchorite
Give to a dead man’s skull (III.ii.86-89).

Here the Duchess is aware that the moving and living bodies before her own and Antonio will be replaced by dead bodies. Antonio embodies her court which is cold and lifeless and which he simultaneously feels ‘My heart is turned to a heavy lump of lead, | With which I sound my danger’ (III.ii.90-91).

Ferdinand’s desire to unknot the ‘sacred Gordian’ and so remove his sister from her chosen marriage is grotesquely realised by presenting her with a dead man’s hand. As Martha Ronk Lifson suggests, this is an attempt to ‘dislocate her from her own body’ whilst Albert Tricomi reads the presentation of the severed hand to exhibit Ferdinand’s ‘desire to revoke, untie, disassociate, his sister from a marital union’ he does not approve of.³⁴³ The Duchess touches the dead man’s

³⁴³ Martha Ronk Lifson, ‘Embodied Morality’ in *Sexuality and Politics in Renaissance Drama* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), pp. 237-255 (p. 245). See also Albert H. Tricomi, ‘The Severed Hand in Webster’s *Duchess of Malfi*’, in *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 44, 2 (2004), 347-358 (p. 355).

hand that wears the ring previously given to Antonio, eerily mirroring the handfasting ceremony. The severed hand is representative both of Antonio's hand but also her own as a symbol of violent political disempowerment.

The severed hand serves as a prosthetic of Ferdinand's princely authority to 'handle' the Duchess whilst also representing his desire. Ferdinand focuses his attention on the hand and rudely inserts it as a substitute for Antonio:

Ferdinand. I come to seal my peace with you. Here's a hand
Gives her a dead man's hand.
 To which you have vowed so much to love; the ring upon't
 You gave.
 Duchess. I affectionately kiss it.
 Ferdinand. Pray do, and bury the print of it in your heart.
 I will leave this ring with you for a love token,
 And the hand, as sure as the ring; and do not doubt
 But you shall have the heart too (IV.i.43-47).

From a phenomenological point of view, if the ring given to Antonio and taken from the Duchess as a sacrificial object is the same ring which appears on the dead man's hand, the Duchess' and Antonio's bodies are fully intercorporeal and interaffective. This visceral connection between the ring and the hand which Ferdinand requests the Duchess 'bury' in her heart conjures up Antonio in his physical entirety. The ring's function is itself dislocated as it becomes a symbol of the past, representing the future as harmful and something that should be feared. It is a reminder that the Duchess cannot escape her fate and serves as a somatic memory for the loss of both personal identity and the connection with Antonio. To consider the modern example of Alexa Wright's subject 'J.N.' above, here the severed hand is a phantom situated between life/death, past/present and connected/separate.

For Ferdinand, the presentation of the dead man's hand serves to project fragmentation on to the Duchess in a process of fetishistic bodily destruction which

subtends to the Petrarchan blazon. Indeed critics such as Linda Woodbridge, Sara Morrison and Theodora Jankowski all position the Duchess' body disintegrated as blazon. However, as Roya Biggie justly points out, such criticism primarily focuses on Ferdinand's treatment of the Duchess 'rather than the Duchess' attention to the individuated body part.'³⁴⁴ Biggie repositions the discussion to focus on the Duchess' re-appropriation of Ferdinand's language which, in turn, allows her to develop her own 'rhetoric of intercorporeal exchange'. Biggie explains that:

The Duchess and Antonio are both dependent on and hyper-aware of their humoral vulnerability, recognizing at times that they may be changed not exclusively by one another, but also by their environmental circumstances, including the influence of other bodies.³⁴⁵

The Duchess is, therefore, an active participant who is able to detach herself from the blazon which allows her to connect with Antonio on a metaphysical level.

Where Biggie focuses on the 'intercorporeal exchange' between the Duchess and Antonio with respect to humoral and Neoplatonic theories, I approach the Duchess' phenomenological relationship to the body-in-parts. The writings of Merleau-Ponty, using terminology introduced earlier such as intercorporeity, *chiasm* and *écart*, allows us to read *The Duchess of Malfi* with another layer of corporeal fragmentation. According to Merleau-Ponty, perceiving or touching necessitates an *écart* that separates the body from itself as a sentient-sensible. He states that the 'unity and identity of tactile phenomenon do not come through any synthesis of recognition in the concept, they are founded upon the unity and identity of the body as a synergic totality' (317). The transitivity and mutuality of the sense of touch affirm a unity of consciousness. The Duchess is alienated through a double dismemberment: that of her husband Antonio's dismemberment

³⁴⁴ Roya Biggie, 'How to Do Things with Organs: Moving Parts in the *Duchess of Malfi*', in *Early Theatre*, 21, 2 (2018), 91-110 (p. 92).

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

as she touches the waxen hand and that of herself, as her own hand confirms the physical severance of the Gordian knot which once united them. The double-touching paradox crosses between belonging and subversion which registers for the Duchess as she is separated into sentient and sensible, interior and exterior. As Merleau-Ponty suggests, this separation is an affirmative principle of the flesh: ‘[i]n touching the other, my body and his are coupled, resulting in a sort of action which pairs them’ (317).

The significance of co-existence can be further drawn out and theorized by Merleau-Ponty’s *The Visible and the Invisible* (1969) and the reading of the subject’s experience when touching their left hand with their right hand which, he argues, opens up a field of intercorporeity. He asks: ‘If my left hand can touch my right hand while it palpates the tangibles, can touch it touching, can turn its palpation back upon it, why, when touching the hand of another, would I not touch in it the same power?’³⁴⁶ If Merleau-Ponty is able to perceive himself as sensed flesh by double-touching, then other bodies must also be able to acknowledge and perceive this. For Merleau-Ponty, interweaving with other subjects occurs in perceptual experiences and intercorporeal encounters: ‘[t]heir landscapes interweave, their actions and passions fit together exactly’. Merleau-Ponty extends this synergy of the senses as a separation and openness, sensing and the sensed, which unites a bond between bodies. He explains that the ‘synergic body [...] assembles into a cluster the “consciousness” adherent to its hands, to its eyes’ so that ‘each touching is bound to every other sense—bound up in such a way as to make up with them the experience of one sole world and one sole body.’³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 141.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-142.

The division between life/death and interiority/exteriority is further played out by the presentation of the waxen bodies which the Duchess perceives as the ‘true substantial bodies’ (IV.ii.115) of Antonio and her children. Indeed, as Margaret Owens emphasises, the figures hold an ambiguous status and are ‘seemingly poised between life and death, the organic and the artificial, the animate and the inanimate.’³⁴⁸ The dismembered hand and waxwork bodies are like phantom limbs, suspended parts that unequivocally belong to the Duchess’ body, and are sensed as intimate and important aspects of her own body schema which remind the Duchess of her own ontological mortality.³⁴⁹ Ralph Berry describes the waxwork bodies as a ‘*simulacrum* of death and violence’ and, whilst certainly the dead man’s hand and waxen bodies are abject symbols of this, I suggest they hold a more complex political significance.³⁵⁰ The waxwork body part and bodies on the stage embody the complete destruction of the Duchess’ past, present and future, both in the familial context and the political as dynastic ruler of Malfi.

As Biggie theorises, the Duchess and Antonio are spiritually and corporeally interwoven by:

[H]umoral and Neoplatonic theories, both of which are rooted in Greek thought, as well as beliefs in hidden sympathies, to dramatize a mode of intersubjective relationality that the material exchange of parts and spirits facilitates.³⁵¹

Webster’s play brings the hand to the forefront, allowing the body part to be understood in a different physical and sensory space. Indeed, as Carla Mazzio

³⁴⁸ Margaret Owens, ‘John Webster, Tussaud Laureate: The Waxworks in *The Duchess of Malfi*’, *ELH* Volume 79 Number 4 (2012), pp. 851-77 (p. 853).

³⁴⁹ Lynn Maxwell notes that the materiality of wax was used in the early modern period as conceptual aids for death masks and effigies because of its ability to ‘almost respond to touch as if it were flesh’ in Lynn Maxwell, ‘Wax Magic and *The Duchess of Malfi*’, in *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 14, 3 (2014), 31-54 (p. 34). See also Biggie, p. 103 and David Bergeron, ‘The Wax Figures in *The Duchess of Malfi*’, in *Studies in Literature*, 18, 2 (1978), 331-9.

³⁵⁰ Ralph Berry, *The Art of John Webster* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972)

³⁵¹ Biggie, p. 94.

explains, ‘to hear’ in the early modern theatre ‘was to be touched’ which is the ‘core of “touch” as a condition of emotional receptivity, of allowing one’s self to be “entered” by simply being curious.’³⁵² In a more deeply phenomenological sense, Webster foregrounds the corporeality of spectator and actor. The spectators are pulled in by the spectacle and are therefore impelled to play an active role by cognitive affect. Their sight is limited, which matches the Duchess’ view; watching from afar they experience the touch of the waxen hand as the Duchess does and the grief which subsumes her. To return to Biggie’s article, I suggest her understanding of ‘hidden sympathies’, or ‘occult affinities’, also helps us to read the phenomenological sense of the actor-spectator mutual and emotional receptivity at this moment of the play. Hidden sympathies ‘produce shared emotional and physical states’ where, Biggie explains, ‘one may feel an “enigmatically close connection” with another person, or one may contract another’s disease.’³⁵³ Religious, humoral and Neoplatonic ideas are all implicated in the occult discourse of touch. To apply this to the shared body schema of the actor and the spectator, by the very fact touch is a physical act, opens up a space for contamination. The spectators too are marked by the bodies on stage, contagiously affected and invoked. The severed hand is thus animated by its transformations and becomes restless and dangerous, pulling the Duchess down and the spectators in.

In contrast to the touching hands of the Duchess that are situated within a phenomenological confrontation zone between passive/active and life/death, Lavinia’s handless body and prosthetic rebirth in *Titus Andronicus* embody both political destruction and restoration. Following the brutal stage direction ‘*Enter Lavinia, her hands cut off and her tongue cut out and ravish’d*’ in Act 2 Scene 4,

³⁵² Carla Mazzi, *The Inarticulate Renaissance: Language Trouble in an Age of Eloquence* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), p. 201.

³⁵³ Biggie, p. 94.

Lavinia returns on stage as a phantom who is representative of the past, present and potential future of the Roman Empire. Lavinia's absent hands are mocked by Chiron and Demetrius who delight in tormenting her by requesting her to 'Write down thy mind, bewray thy meaning so' (II.iv.3). Chiron and Demetrius explain that the severance of both hands forbids her to write, end her own life or be clean in the eyes of God: 'She hath no tongue to call | Nor hands to wash and so let's leave her to her silent walks' (II.iv.7-8). Bulwer declares that the 'washing of *Hands* was used by most Nations before prayer' to further an individual's devotion. Even to imitate the posture of washing the hands 'BY RUBBING THE BACK OF ONE IN THE HOLLOW OF THE OTHER WITH A KIND OF DETERSIVE MOTION' is a gesture significantly used to profess innocence and denote the cleanliness of acts and operations of the hand to 'declare *they have no Hand in that foule businessse* [...] as it were assuring by that gesture, that *they will keepe their Hands undefiled, and wash their Hands of it: nor have any thing to doe therein*' (40, original emphasis). Whilst the most immediate comparative here is to Lady Macbeth's actions, Lavinia provides an even more disturbing contrast. Lavinia is denied the means to undo the taint and wash away the uncleanness of her rape. Her shattered body schema is trapped and her body, without her hands, is both visible and visceral proof that her innocence has been taken.

This is clear when Marcus finds Lavinia 'Straying in the park | Seeking to hide herself, as doth the deer' (III.i.88-89) and proclaims:

Speak, gentle niece, what stern ungentle hands
 Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare
 Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments
 Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in (II.iv.16-19)

The ordered rhythm of the lines and images aestheticise her violated body and invoke the missing hands through words in an effort to reconstruct her into a

conceptual whole. Marcus projects phantom limb syndrome by refusing to acknowledge her deficiencies. He attempts to re-member her as an act of shaping her phantom limbs, the limbs of her family and the body politic of Rome. The etymological roots of the terms ‘lopped’ and ‘hewed’, moreover, virtually generate Lavinia as a metaphorical symbol of the uprooted trunk of the Andronici family tree.³⁵⁴ Lavinia is not just an entity but her hands, as the branches on the trunk, embody the Andronici dynasty and the city of Rome by her name.³⁵⁵ For Marcus and Titus, Lavinia’s severed hands are emblematic of the severing of the Andronici family as Marcus presents Lavinia as a ‘hollow cage’ (III.i.84) who ‘was thy daughter’ (III.i.62). With her body painted in her blood and imitating effaced Greco-Roman sculptures, Lavinia becomes a marker of loss and a relic of the Andronici and the Roman Empire’s political alliances.

Indeed, as Jane Kingsley Smith argues, Marcus’ lines suggest Lavinia’s beauty would have promised an advantageous political marriage and her loss is thus interpreted in terms of its assault against the family and Rome as the mother country.³⁵⁶ Marcus’ reference to the ‘circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in’ recalls Lavinia’s maternal touch. Her missing hands are framed primarily as the physical and tangible attributes of femininity: the delicate ‘lily hands’ (II.iv.45) and ‘pretty fingers’ (II.iv.43) that are seen to ‘tremble, like aspen-leaves, upon a lute’ (II.iv.46) and ‘could have better sew’d than Philomel’ (II.iv.44). Marcus’ words implicitly critique the blazon that dismembers women into body parts as

³⁵⁴ The *OED* defines lopped as ‘to cut off the branches, twigs’ of a tree and hewed as ‘to fell or cut wood either for destruction or use’ and ‘to cut up by the root’. ‘lop, v.1’, in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online], <<https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.lancs.ac.uk/view/Entry/110226?rskey=jXKBTv&result=1&isAdvanced=false>> [accessed 03 March 2019]. ‘hew, v.’, in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online], <<https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.lancs.ac.uk/view/Entry/86561?rskey=WjCc7C&result=1&isAdvanced=false>> [accessed 03 March 2019].

³⁵⁵ In Roman mythology, Lavinia was Aeneas’s wife and the daughter of King Latinus and was thereby viewed as the mother of the Roman people.

³⁵⁶ Jane Kingsley Smith, “‘Titus Andronicus: A Violent Change of Fortunes’”, in *Literature Compass*, 5 (2008), 106-121 (p. 110).

discussed in Chapter Two. Lavinia is represented as an object of inspection and curiosity in Julie Taymor's 1999 film *Titus* where she stands on a tree-stump after the amputation.³⁵⁷ Vegetative twigs are attached to the sites of her amputated hands showing abscission scars where the leaves once were. Taymor's use of tree branches, and later porcelain hands, materialises the images in Marcus' description of Lavinia's hands as both vegetation and ornament.³⁵⁸

Lavinia's dismembered tongue and hands become objects of contemplation as Lucius describes the sight of Lavinia that 'kills' (III.i.69) while Titus reads Lavinia as his 'map of woe, that thus does talk in signs' (III.ii.12). The comparison of Lavinia to a map suggests that her mutilated body is a symbol of political-strategic relations and violated territory between the Goths and the Romans. The blood which marks her clothes becomes the lines embodying the paths taken and territories crossed. Lavinia's body schema is fractured and the political unit of Rome is scattered across the map she now carries on her body. Cartography and the early modern map are, as Andrew Gordon and Bernhard Klein describe, 'abstract and global on the one hand, and [...] intimate and local on the other'.³⁵⁹ Lavinia's handless body as map is on the one hand an object, an intimate and closed microcosm of Rome, and on the other, an exposed and public subject. John Gillies discusses the employment of a map as a 'hand-prop' on the early modern stage to suggest that the map could 'speak directly to the audience, unframed and uncensored, in their own cultural powerful language.'³⁶⁰

³⁵⁷ Julie Taymor, *Titus* (Clear Blue Sky Productions, 1999)

³⁵⁸ Eileen Blumenthal and Julie Taymor, *Julie Taymor: Playing with Fire: Theater, Opera, Film* (New York: Abrams, 1999)

³⁵⁹ *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain*, ed. by Andrew Gordon and Bernhard Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 1.

³⁶⁰ John Gillies, 'The scene of cartography in *King Lear*', in *Ibid.*, pp. 109-138 (p. 110)

Lavinia as map, or hand-prop without any hands, allows her the opportunity to speak to spectators. Lavinia's employment of external tools which her stumps or mouth grasp provides various didactic means whereby she can make that which would otherwise be invisible visible. Whilst Lavinia undergoes a corporeal transformation, one which removes her 'tool of tools' and renders her ostensibly docile, many critics have rightly explored Lavinia's determination and discussed the significance of the severed hands which transform her from object to active participant. I suggest that Lavinia is a hyper-visible agent and that the loss and restoration of her hands constitutes a metaphorical or symbolic representation of the phantom limb.

Lavinia is able to communicate through the written word as she takes the staff in her mouth to write in the sand and 'quotes the leaves' (IV.i.59) of the book of *Metamorphoses* using her stumps to turn the pages and is thus able to 'stir a mutiny in the mildest thoughts' (IV.i.85). Mary Fawcett defines this moment as Lavinia's 'emblem of the will to speak [and] the will to write'.³⁶¹ Correspondingly Karim-Cooper affirms that, without her hands, Lavinia 'is still able to make meaning through gesture' and so becomes the manicule, the disembodied phantom, 'pointing towards the text that can reveal the truth of her tragedy.'³⁶² To situate Lavinia's corporeal agency in phenomenological terms through the incorporation of objects, I suggest she is able to reconfigure her body schema so restructuring her perceived world. Lavinia's habitual body attempts to reconnect with her present body by engaging with the objects that surround her and by incorporating them into her body schema. Merleau-Ponty compares this form of engagement with the body familiarising itself 'to a hat, or a car or a stick,' which is transplanted and

³⁶¹ Fawcett, p. 261.

³⁶² Karim-Cooper, *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage*, p. 232.

incorporated into ‘the bulk of [the] body’ (166). The staff and book serve as Lavinia’s prostheses and come to represent her phantom limbs which embody her motive and pursuit of retribution.

The objects which Lavinia holds with her stumps offer an early form of cathartic restoration for some spectators who, like Marcus and Titus before them, attempt to re-member Lavinia prior to the tragedy. The phantom limb disrupts the body schema and body politic in order to restore it. Furthermore, the prosthetic limbs undoubtedly produce provocative and residual images of Lavinia’s body prior to mutilation. These moments are particularly challenging to watch as the audience are drawn both to the prostheses and the empty space where the hands should be and are reminded of their own lack of agency as spectator in that they cannot supply the missing, helping hands Lavinia requires.

This sense of frustration and disturbance is not only felt by spectators when witnessing the performance on the stage but is also distinct when teaching *Titus Andronicus* in the classroom. Peter Kirwan’s plenary at the 2019 symposium ‘Teaching Early Modern Drama’ focused on the use of content warnings in teaching as a way of understanding affect in the play when Lavinia writes. Kirwan reflected on a teaching exercise in which a student puts on boxing gloves and traces ‘Stuprum Chiron Demetrius’ on the floor with a stick. He explained that the boxing gloves ‘are a practical means of reducing manual dexterity, rather than a simulacrum of disability. The point of the exercise is to allow the students to acknowledge how long it might take for those words to be written’ in theatrical conditions.³⁶³ Kirwan explains that the process takes a long time and students who are watching reflect on wanting to offer their own hands or interrupt the process.

³⁶³ Dr. Peter Kirwan, private correspondence via e-mail 14/06/2019.

The students then view a clip from the 2014 Globe production, in which Marcus and Titus begin talking when Lavinia continues to trace the names in the sand during which ‘the students are often outraged’ that Marcus and Titus are not “listening” to her when she writes.’³⁶⁴

Indeed, when considering the play in recent performance, Lucy Bailey’s 2014 production *Titus* importantly magnified the felt shared body schema of the spectator and actor.³⁶⁵ This was made clear by the visceral and corporeal reactions to the violence as ‘some audience members fainted regularly and some vomited, most often at the sight of the bleeding Lavinia and sometimes upon the sound of the chopping’ when Aaron cuts Titus’ hand off.³⁶⁶ I experienced this personally as a spectator and felt overwhelmed by the sensation of wanting to offer my own hands to Lavinia. The spectator becomes like Lavinia in that they are disembodied, by means of being excluded from the stage, with no legitimacy of voice and effectively useless hands. In turn, this engenders an empathy with Lavinia, allowing the spectator to engage and immerse themselves in the shared goal of revenge and the ending of Lavinia’s life.

Lavinia’s death, carried out at her father’s own hand, is crucial, for she cannot become another Tamora. Cynthia Marshall describes the idealised Lavinia and the ‘Other’ Tamora as ‘symbolic doubles’ who are signifiers of virginity and sexual enticement.³⁶⁷ The exploration of phantom limb syndrome offers a useful theoretical framework to extend Marshall’s reading of Lavinia and Tamora. At the

³⁶⁴ Ibid. Many thanks to Dr Peter Kirwan who shared his paper and responded quickly to my questions in depth and with great enthusiasm. Many thanks also to Duncan Lees for organising the conference and putting me in touch with Dr Kirwan.

³⁶⁵ *Titus*, dir. Lucy Bailey (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2014)

³⁶⁶ Karim-Cooper, *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage*, p. 237.

³⁶⁷ Cynthia Marshall, “‘I can interpret all her martyr’d signs’: *Titus Andronicus*, Feminism and the Limits of Interpretation’, *Sexuality and Politics in Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Carole Levin and Karen Robertson (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), pp. 193-211 (p. 195). See also Marion Wynne-Davies, “‘The Swallowing Womb’: Consumed and Consuming Women in *Titus Andronicus*’, in *The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. by Valerie Wayne (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 129-151.

very beginning of the play the spectators bear witness to the pleading cries of Tamora, who clasps her chained hands together in supplication before raising them to Titus asking him to ‘spare my first-born son’ (I.i.120). This gesture not only initiates the sequence of events which follows but identifies Tamora as a mother. Indeed, as David Willbern argues, Tamora and Lavinia are symbolic personifications of female Rome: Lavinia is the pure and virtuous mother who needs protection while Tamora is the dangerous and seductive mother who threatens and from whom one needs protection.³⁶⁸ Lavinia by her name alone, which is indicative of her being the mother of Rome, irritates Tamora’s position. Lavinia’s hands signify a painful and perpetual reminder to Tamora of what she can never be, a native Roman. My experience at rehabilitation with my right hand was likewise a necessary co-habitation with a disturbing unpredictable double. As each day came I did not know what my hand would be capable of, nor how much control I would have over any of the actions I chose to use it for. Whilst I could train it to move, it began to gain senses of its own and sensed external stimuli when there were no objects around it. Despite my hand being physically connected, it was simultaneously separated with its own felt, lived experience. Just as with phantom limb sensation, then, for Tamora Lavinia’s hands always remain beneath the surface, a tingling sensation which gives an indication of what is missing.

Tamora’s role as mother consumes her or rather she consumes it, quite literally, by being forced to eat her own children. This grotesquely perverse act reunites her with her sons in an almost ‘double sensation’, such as when one hand touches another, exposing the gap [*écart*] between the past and the present, the political crisis and the personal grief Tamora embodies. As revenge and revenger

³⁶⁸ David Willbern, ‘Rape and Revenge in *Titus Andronicus*’, in *English Literary Renaissance*, 8, 2 (1978), 159-182 (p. 161).

Tamora's hands become external projections of Lavinia's phantom limbs which act beyond the patriarchal and Roman law she has previously been confined within. Tamora's vengeful hands become Lavinia's to appropriate when she assists in identifying and collecting the blood spilt from her rapists' throats. Handless Lavinia is no longer an idealised figure of chastity to be protected and Tamora becomes a crucial figure, not only in Lavinia's dismemberment and consequential death, but also in her empowerment and transgressive action. Lavinia must be killed for her phantom limbs persist in that they itch, irritate and are politically very dangerous for the future of Rome.

Such understanding of the phantom limb, even in prosthetics such as the ring, is endowed with material and spiritual powers showing its ability to manipulate and reframe the body schema even when fragmented. This is demonstrated in *The Changeling* when the household body schema is literally and metaphorically cut into parts as De Flores presents Piracquo's severed ringed finger to Beatrice-Joanna. Piracquo is chosen as the extension of Vermandero's body politic being the son and heir of his bloodline and dynasty. The decaying flesh which is bound to the diamond ring represents a political free-floating signifier of the rotting patriarchal flesh that cannot be removed from Vermandero's household.

Beatrice-Joanna's own hands are bound by gender convention so she opportunistically employs De Flores' hands which she believes will be easily disposable prosthetic extensions.³⁶⁹ She instructs him to murder, believing she can free herself from 'two inveterate loathings at one time: | Piracquo and his dog-face

³⁶⁹ Jeffrey Cole suggests that Beatrice-Jonna desires De Flores 'not because he is physically attractive or morally virtuous, but because he helps her resist the patriarchal order that constrains her other desires.' in his work "'Here's Beauty Changed to Ugly Whoredom': Calvinist Theology and Neoplatonic Aesthetics in *The Changeling*', in *Renaissance Drama*, 47 (2019), 21-39 (p. 22).

[De Flores]' (II.ii.147-148). Here De Flores' hands become extensions of Beatrice-Joanna's body schema as her prosthetic phantom limbs, her 'instrument of instruments', to act out her will. However, as this chapter has shown, phantom limbs are diverse and unreliable and can be the site of both pleasure and pain. Whilst Beatrice-Joanna believes she is being cut loose from the alliance constructed by her father, and taking back the control of her court, her phantom limbs ultimately act beyond her control and present her with a severed, ringed finger. After killing Piracquo, De Flores notices the ring:

O, 'tis a diamond
 He wears upon his finger. It was well found:
 This will approve the work.
 [*He struggles with the ring*]
 What, so fast on?
 Not part in death? I'll take the speedy course then:
 Finger and all shall off. [*He cuts off the finger*] (III.iii.22-27)

For De Flores the finger is a token of betrothal. It becomes a physical manifestation of his desires and a manicule which, like the glove in Act 1, points to Beatrice-Joanna's most private body parts that he so desires to thrust his fingers into. The wandering finger is innately disruptive and disorderly, the masculine equivalent of the 'wandering womb', and can move autonomously and dangerously, consuming De Flores' senses and mental faculties. Indeed, as Jay Zysk suggests, De Flores' new finger as relic allows him 'to write a new contract of service.'³⁷⁰ The ring, which seals the decaying and deformed flesh of the finger, is representative of the flesh of a new life. De Flores' body schema is transformed as he wields the detached finger, allowing him an unnerving power of his own. The martial hand, embodied microcosmically in the finger, is removed and disabled

³⁷⁰ Jay Zysk, 'Relics and Unreliable Bodies in *The Changeling*', in *English Literary Renaissance*, 45, 3 (2016), 400-425 (p. 415).

with ease and represents a further radical process of emasculation following the instruction for Piracquo to remove his sword.³⁷¹

As well as his carnal longing for Beatrice-Joanna's body, De Flores himself desires to be a legitimate figure in Vermandero's household body schema and it is this which ultimately undoes him. Gordon McMullan writes that when De Flores "castrates" the dead fiancé by hacking off his finger with the engagement ring, a present from Vermandero, still on it, the interconnections of father, husband, and servant are all too bloodily apparent.³⁷² Indeed, one cannot, as De Flores gruesomely states, 'get the ring without the finger' (III.ii.28) and so, just as he is unable to physically separate the two, De Flores is unable to fracture the body politic completely. Equally Beatrice-Joanna cannot be detached from the body politic, which De Flores craves incorporation into. With Piracquo's finger the two remain as one, 'stuck | As if the flesh and it were both one substance' (III.iv.39-40), even in death.

De Flores returns the finger with the ring as a 'token' (III.iv.26) and physical proof of the murder. Once the finger is presented to Beatrice-Joanna she is forced to confront the reality of her request. Maurizio Calbi argues that De Flores not only offers her the physical proof of the murder but the ability to 'see herself through the eyes of the other as a guilty identity inhabiting the difference between herself and her class and gender ideal.'³⁷³ Indeed, as Gregory Schnitzpahn explains, the flesh 'within the ring upends Beatrice's comfortable notion of

³⁷¹ Gregory Schnitzpahn notes that indeed the removal of the sword is 'both a symbolic and practical loss of phallic power' in "'What the Act Has Made You': Approving Virginity in *The Changeling*', in *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 31 (2018), 78+ (p. 80).

³⁷² Gordon McMullan, 'The Changeling and the Dynamics of Ugliness', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy*, ed. by Emma Smith and Garrett Sullivan Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 222-235 (p. 223).

³⁷³ Maurizio Calbi, *Approximate Bodies: Gender and Power in Early Modern Drama and Anatomy* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), p. 53.

symbolic reality,' as the intersection of 'artificial construct and organic flesh' ultimately communicates to the spectators 'that some disordered, unwelcome, bestial, and corporeal being—governed by instinct and impulse, irrational, loving and loathing—always lies beneath the polished surface of abstract form and order.'³⁷⁴ The handkerchief which encloses the finger would be stained with blood and serves as a microcosm of the white sheet of the marital bed so becoming representative of the hymen breaking.³⁷⁵ This has much potential for modern staging; perhaps the spectators could see the handkerchief and hear the rhythmic sound of a pulse as drops of blood fall to the stage.

Beatrice-Joanna's response, 'I pray, bury the finger' (III.iv.43), is pertinent as Price and Twombly explain that for several amputees, 'there existed various superstitions concerning the proper burial of amputated parts' as there was an underlying belief which attributed phantom pain to the 'faulty, careless, or improper disposal of amputated parts.'³⁷⁶ Even the correct positioning was seen as crucial for when a finger 'is amputated, it should be buried in a straight position; otherwise the patient will suffer pains from cramp.'³⁷⁷ The burial of amputated body parts is attested to in parish records of 1596 and the case of Mrs. Tyre. Mrs. Tyre had 'of a longe tyme a sore hand by a Fellon [abscess]' and agreed to have her right hand 'cut or sawed offe'.³⁷⁸ As recorded by the clerk, the hand which was now severed belonged to the parish church, and received its own Christian burial:

The said hand was by me Thomas Harrydance being the parish clarke in the presents of Thomas ponder being the sexten Buried Right before the dore within the Sowth churchyard the said Wednesday being the xjth day of August

³⁷⁴ Schnitzpahn, pp. 82-83.

³⁷⁵ The most obvious comparison, of course, is the bloody handkerchief in *The Spanish Tragedy* employed as a token of love and death.

³⁷⁶ Price and Twombly, *The Phantom Limb Phenomenon*, p. xii, 62.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

³⁷⁸ Quoted in Thomas Rogers Forbes, *Chronicle from Aldgate: Life and Death in Shakespeare's London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 91-92.

Anno 1596 abowte the ower of eyght of the clocke in the morning Thus god send hir good Rest and ease or healp after the same if it be gods good will and pleasure.³⁷⁹

Although phantom limb pain is not explicit in this example, the subsequent ‘ease of healp after the same’ is suggestive of the comfort felt when the amputated body part is correctly buried. Mrs. Tyre would remain connected with God and able to touch divinity in her hands despite the dismemberment. Indeed, Margaret Owens discusses the significance of this passage from the view of Christian resurrection demonstrating that ‘despite the reiteration of doctrinal assurances that on the last day’ body parts would return as one, ‘anxieties about the safety and integrity of the corpse persisted.’³⁸⁰ The buried finger becomes then not a symbol or representation of the whole body but capturing the totality of the body, even when it is fragmented. Amputees describe the sensations of the lost limb to feel like a weight and, in *The Changeling*, Beatrice-Joanna’s guilt means that the severed finger of Piracquo pulses and remains conscious within her psyche. Even without the rest of the body and considered in isolation, the severed finger cannot be ignored. Beatrice-Joanna not only asks to bury the finger to hide the evidence but to metaphorically bury the finger of patriarchy and her father’s decision to release her as an independent heiress.

Beatrice-Joanna’s chastity has been claimed and her murderous nature revealed; she is now ‘equal’ (III.iv.137) and bound to De Flores as tightly as the ring on the severed finger. He asks of Beatrice-Joanna ‘Why are you not as guilty, in | As deep as I? And we should stick together’ (III.iii.83-84). De Flores asserts that the murder has ‘made you one with me’ (III.iii.140) so that his and Beatrice-Joanna’s body schemae blend as one and her hands can no longer be trusted. This

³⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 92.

³⁸⁰ Owens, ‘The Return of the Repressed Body’, in *Stages of Dismemberment: The Fragmented Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Drama*, pp. 202-225 (p. 203).

is further evident when she employs the chaste body of her waiting woman Diaphanta as a substitute for her own. Just as Cariola's hands remain faithful to the Duchess, when she has been abandoned by her court and even after her death, Diaphanta must prove herself a worthy instrument for Beatrice-Joanna's needs.

Diaphanta's virginal body is, as Jay Zysk explains, 'connected physically and politically by virtue of her position as a female servant, to Beatrice-Joanna's own.'³⁸¹ Diaphanta's helping hands, the phantom hands of Beatrice-Joanna, show themselves as dissident when she wishes to enjoy Beatrice-Joanna's 'first night's pleasure' (IV.i.187) for her own. Due to Beatrice-Joanna's body being corrupted by De Flores, Diaphanta's body is employed as a vaginal substitute in the virginity test (IV.i.53-55). After watching Diaphanta's response to the virginity test Beatrice-Joanna's hands must now mirror the actions of her waiting woman, the memory of her own virginity haunting her whilst her hands carefully interpret and reproduce the symptoms Diaphanta has just displayed. Beatrice-Joanna's phantom hands finally bring her to her death as De Flores fatally stabs her in Alsermero's closet whilst confessing their actions to Vermandero. The intercorporeity is further realised when Diaphanta, Beatrice-Joanna's dissident phantom limb, is easily disposed of in the fire, unlike De Flores who persists.

In contrast to Diaphanta as a dissident phantom limb, the severed hand in *The Late Lancashire Witches* offers a level of agency, activity and rebellion which suspends the early modern received moral and social patriarchal structures in place. The beginning of *The Late Lancashire Witches* shows an alternate 'topsy-turvy' 'upside down' world where 'the son controls the father,' 'the man overcrows his master's coxcomb' (I.i.88, 120-123) and dissonant wives and unruly women

³⁸¹ Zysk, p. 419.

disrupt the natural order. Eleanor Rycroft notes that, indeed, the play ‘corrupts customary male/female and master/servant hierarchies.’³⁸² The physically severed hands of the play become icons for the witches’ illegitimate female power which corrupts the idea of the feminine helping hand, as explored in Chapter Two. The severed hand functions as an icon of the women’s metaphorical severing from the patriarchal family and community, both physically from the body and psychologically from the political sphere.

Like *The Duchess of Malfi*, Heywood and Brome’s play resonates with the gender politics of the royal court. When the play was written in 1634 Charles I and his wife Henrietta Maria had separate courts. Her directing hands, disturbingly separated from the body schema of her husband, managed her own quasi-Catholic platonic court. The very fact that a woman could usurp the masculine mastering hand of control spread anxieties about Charles I’s patriarchal authority and masculine identity. Furthermore, as a French Catholic, Henrietta Maria had her own *modus operandi*, itself proving a significant threat to the Protestant faithful. Indeed, as Phebe Jensen explains, witchcraft in English Protestant discourse ‘was identified with devil worship, idolatry, and Roman Catholicism’ and all these levels of anxiety and fracture are dramatised through the plot of *The Late Lancashire Witches*.³⁸³ I focus on the agency of women’s hands which, dismembered from the state, gain an expressive capacity to project themselves into different psychological and physical conditions.

The fact that the witches are able to stage such agency and enact ‘a fantasy of revenge’ could, as Charlotte Coffin suggests, play ‘on the latent fear of male

³⁸² Eleanor Rycroft, ‘Voicing Women, “Community” Drama and *The Late Lancashire Witches*’, in *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, 3 (2014), pp. 168-189 (p. 168).

³⁸³ Phebe Jensen, *Religion and Revelry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 226.

spectators.’³⁸⁴ For the female spectator the subversive hands that control the play, flamboyantly displayed in the public arena of the community in public arena of the playhouse, could stimulate ideas about the dismembered hand’s exciting potential for autonomous action. The play opens up opportunities for disruption and freedom that had not previously seemed possible and reveals the difference of affect felt by male spectators, female spectators, children, parents, servants and masters in the world beyond the playhouse. The actions of the unruly severed hands staged in the play would undoubtedly induce a form of physical spectator participation both inside and outside the theatre.

Master Generous’ traumatic experience of having to reconfigure his personal and socio-political body schema is dramatised when he discovers Mistress Generous’ wandering hands after witnessing her equine transformation. He describes his own state of metamorphosis thus ‘My blood is turn’d to ice, and my all vitals | Have ceas’d their working! [...] I, methinks, | Am a mere marble statue and no man’ (IV.99-100, 103-104) Master Generous’ body schema, his once hospitable household to which his ‘name proclaims’ (II.ii.37) and his ‘well reputed’ (II.ii.103) wife are now in fragments. The household body schema, a microcosm of the state, is immobilised. Master Generous undergoes a disruption and his body perception is altered as he proclaims:

Amazement still pursues me. How am I changed
Or brought ere I can understand myself,
Into this new world? (IV.ii.111-113)

Master Generous dissociates himself from the past and views the world in a new way. The play registers a subversion of the conventional new-world exploration narrative. Here the man of the household describes alienation and despair whilst

³⁸⁴ Charlotte A. Coffin, ‘Theatre and/as Witchcraft: A Reading of *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634), in *Early Theatre*, 16, 2 (2013), 91-119 (p. 94).

‘this new world’ refers to new geographies of political and economic opportunities, the exploration and discovery of colonies in the New World, for the women. Although the spectators do not witness Mistress Generous’ hand being physically severed until later, here the hand of betrothal is discovered to have been dismembered beneath the surface for the entirety of their marriage. Mistress Generous admits as much when she states to her husband: ‘I am such a curs’d creature’ (IV.ii.145).

The hand’s skill and acquisition of agency and mastery is further depicted by the handling of the bridle as an extension of the hand that rei(g)ns and as a microcosm of masculinity, power and control.³⁸⁵ In early modern culture equine references were used as metaphors for men’s proper mastery over women dating back to Sir Anthony Fitzherbert’s 1534 treatise on husbandry which lists the ten ‘properties of a woman’, including ‘the syxte, to be easye to lepe vpon;’ to ‘the tenth, euer to be chowvng on the brydell.’³⁸⁶ This translated into drama in plays like *Eastward Ho* (1605) by George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and James Marston, where the women are equated to horses that should be bridled, or in Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593), where women are compared to horses for their economic potential. Lynda Boose explains that the ‘underlying literary “low culture” trope of unruly horse/unruly woman seems likely to have been the connection that led first to a metaphoric idea of bridling women’s tongues’ and eventually to the literal punitive practice.³⁸⁷ Of course, in the inverted social

³⁸⁵ John Astley, *The Art of Riding* (London, 1584) described that the the husband will ‘ride’ his wife through the bridle through ‘the firme and staied direction of the hand.’ cited by Kevin de Ornellas, *The Horse in Early Modern English Culture: Bridled, Curbed, and Tamed* (Plymouth: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014), p. 51.

³⁸⁶ Master Fitzherbert, *The Book of Husbandry* (1534), rpt. and ed. by Walter Skeat (London: Trübner & Co., 1882), p. 65.

³⁸⁷ Lynda E. Boose, ‘Solding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman’s Unruly Member’, in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42, 2 (Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University, 1991), 179-213 (p. 199).

hierarchy of the ‘upside down’ world of *The Late Lancashire Witche*, male dominance is overtly challenged. Women ride men and employ the bridle, an extension of the hand, as a source of sexual and social control.³⁸⁸

Master Generous attempts to comprehend his altered body schema and looks to his own hand to find he is still holding Mistress Generous’ bridle. He exclaims:

What? What’s this in my hand, that at an instant
 Can from a four-legged creature make a thing
 So like a wife?
 Robert: A bridle, a jingling bridle, sir.
 Generous: A bridle? Hence enchantment!
 [He] casts it away. ROBERT takes it up
 A viper were more safe within my hand
 Than this charm’d engine (IV.ii.115-129).

Master Generous is unable to trust both Mistress Generous’ hand and the events at hand. The bridle becomes a phantom hand, representing control and charged with possibility. The only remedy is to ‘burn the bridle, then away with the witch’ (IV.ii.289). The bridle is imagined as a phantom limb and a separate entity with an independent existence, comparable to the venomous viper, the ‘long, cold serpent’, as ‘the basest creatures that creepe upon the ground’³⁸⁹. This analogy is used once more when Master Generous declares:

And hath that serpent twin’d me so about
 That I must lie so often and so long
 With a devil in my bosom? (IV.ii.145-153)

Heywood and Brome refer here to the serpent imagery as the form taken by the devil in the Garden of Eden. For Master Generous his wife’s hand is a slithering serpent of deceit and cunning.

³⁸⁸ See Gabriel Egan, ‘Ride me as you would be ride: the horse in Brome and Heywood’s *The Witches of Lancashire*’, Conference of *The Renaissance and Early Modern Horse* 19th-20th June 2009 (London: Roehampton University, 2009).

³⁸⁹ William Attersoll, *Three Treatises Gods Trvmpet, Sovnding The Alarme, Sommoning all perfons fpeedily to repent, and turne unto God, teaching the doctrine, removing the hindrances, and urging the practife of true repentance, before the evill days come which are at hand.* (London: T.C. for Michael Sparkes, 1632), p. 22.

As the father or secular ‘head’ of the Lancashire community, Master Generous is estranged from the body politic as his integrity and his standing challenged. All that Master Generous has been taught and organised his behaviour around, his gestural discourse and habitual action, has been fractured and distorted. Mistress Generous asks for a pardon and receives it as Master Generous declares ‘Oh, change thy bad to good that I may keep thee, | As when we passed our faiths, till death us sever’ (IV.ii.203-204). Master Generous desperately wants to believe that his wife is submissive and obedient to maintain his reputation in the household and community. The theological language here is suggestive of Mistress Generous’ hand in marriage whilst the word ‘sever’ morbidly points the audience to the detached hand which appears in the next scene.

Mistress Generous is cut off from her husband once more, this time quite literally, as her left hand is amputated by the Soldier.³⁹⁰ The Soldier is employed as Master Generous’ phantom limbs to work at the Mill. After being ‘nipp’d, and pull’d, and pinch’d | By a company of hell-cats’ (V.iii.74-76) with only his ‘trusty bilbo’ (V.iii.78) as protection, he returns to Master Generous and Arthur claiming he ‘spoil’d her caterwauling’ (V.ii.85). When asked to show his sword as physical proof, he responds ‘To look on, not to part with from my hand, | ‘Tis not the Soldiers custome’ (V.ii.87-88). The Soldier refusing to surrender his sword presents as a direct challenge to Master Generous’ already fragmented rule and is representative of the masculine ideology of the play being deeply threatened.

At the play’s first performance on 16th August 1634 in London, this moment is described by the spectator Nathaniel Tomkyns as: ‘the cutting off a witch (=gentlewoman’s) hand in the form of a cat by a soldier turned miller,

³⁹⁰ Following European tradition, Mistress Generous’ wedding band would have probably been worn on the third finger of her left hand, believed to be connected to the heart by a vein or a nerve allowing the blood to flow from hand to heart.

known to her husband by a ring thereon (the only tragical part of the story)'.³⁹¹ But who or what is the subject of Tomkyns' 'tragedy'? Mistress Generous who remains on stage with her left hand cut off? Master Generous discovering his wife's dishonesty? Or the destruction of the household body schema?

The severed, ringed hand is the physical manifestation of the breaking of the sacramental bond betrayed by the 'most infallible marks' and provokes Master Generous to ask the question, 'Is this the hand once plighted holy vows, | And this the ring that bound them?' (V.iii.98-100). The horror of the severed hand that Master Generous confronts makes him question his own integrity and existence and generates sensory and motor difficulties which mimic those of Mistress Generous' pain and desensitisation. He contends: 'My heart hath bled more for thy curst relapse | Than drops hath issu'd from thy wounded arme' (V.iv.62-63).

Mistress Generous' hand is reduced to an object or prize much like the feminine hand as blazon in *Les Blasons Anatomiques du Corps Féminin* (1543) examined in Chapter Two, where the female body is disembodied and divided. Mistress Generous' dismembered hand moves about the stage as it is grasped by the Soldier from the floor of the mill, handed to Master Generous and then carried to Mistress Generous' bed. Here, the witches' 'familiar' takes the form of a cat's paw and is representative of the subversive 'helping hands' of not only Mistress Generous but also Meg, Goody Dickieson, Maud, Mall and Gill. The 'familiar' comes to signify the witches' dismembered and unruly status where each individual is constituted without a governing body and, therefore, has no real sense of duty. The dismembered status of the 'familiar' allows the witches' hands to perpetrate anarchy. It is only when the paw retreats into a hand and the 'familiar'

³⁹¹ Letter from Nathaniel Tomkyns to Sir Robert Phelips of 16 August 1634 in Richard Brome and Thomas Heywood, *The Witches of Lancashire* ed. Gabriel Egan (London: Nick Hern Books, 2002), Appendix 1.

deserts that the inexorable truth becomes clear and the hand becomes an object passed only between the hands of men as tangible and substantiated evidence.

The severed hand, then, is an object that can be studied, both a trophy for the Soldier's work and a signature to be read as a testament of truth: 'The best is, if one of the parties shall deny the deed, we have their hand to show' (V.iii.166). The dismembered hand testifies to Mistress Generous' involvement in the events preceding and the hand is presented to Mistress Generous as the missing piece of the puzzle:

Generous. If not thy hand, wife, show me but thy wrist,
[He shows her the hand found at the mill]
 And see how this will match it. Here's a testate
 That cannot be outfac'd.
 Mistress Generous. I am undone.
 Whetstone: Hath my aunt been playing at handy-dandy?
 Nay, then, if the game go this way I fear
 She'll have the worst hand on't (V.iv.54-58).

Whetstone compares Mistress Generous' deceit by the game of handy-dandy ('choose which you please') and which is a game she cannot win.³⁹² Helen Ostovich explains that the children's game consists of a small object 'shaken between the hands by one of the players, and, the hands being suddenly closed, the other player is required to guess in which hand the object remains.'³⁹³ Mistress Generous cannot alternate between hands, or act secretly, for she has only the one hand remaining and she is, therefore, 'trapped and the game is over'.³⁹⁴ Whetstone informs the spectators that Mistress Generous has the 'worse hand', the losing cards, and that she now must play the hand she is dealt with.³⁹⁵ The

³⁹² 'handy-dandy, n., adv., and int.' in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online] <www.oed.com/view/Entry/83958> [accessed 20 July 2019].

³⁹³ Gloss in Richard Brome and Thomas Heywood, *The Late Lancashire Witches* ed. by Helen Ostovich, *Richard Brome Online* <<https://www.dhi.ac.uk/brome/viewTranscripts.jsp?play=LW&act=1&type=BOTH>> [accessed 21 February 2019]

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

spectators would be involved here as the third player as Mistress Generous' missing hand becomes the focus of their attention. Examining this scene in relation to mirror neuron theory, the spectators here are given a chance to settle back into the 'norm'. In contrast to the dangerous hands the spectators have been cognitively tied to previously, which allowed them the opportunity for their own detachment from authority through the witches' unlawful actions, here the dismembered hand is a material symbol of failure. The spectators are invited to become 'player three' and back to the 'winning' side as they come to understand that the game can never be won by Mistress Generous' one hand. As such, the spectators are 'handed back' to reality and into the present lawful hands of authority to witness the forthcoming punishment which, of course, they would have also been aware is taking place in society outside the theatre.

Even though Mistress Generous has asked for forgiveness, and is granted a second chance, the severed hand materially manifests on stage to establish that there is no return to conventional structures or re-incorporation within the body politic. Once displayed, witnessed and recognised as a severed hand Mistress Generous must be punished. What, then, does the severed hand represent? In witchcraft, Mistress Generous' detachment and freedom from the hand of the master has created a 'new world' and new body schema which enables her to act and execute agency. For the characters on stage the severed hand forces the members of the household and the wider Lancashire community to openly acknowledge the breakdown of the household and socio-political body schema, just as Master Generous has to on a personal level. Furthermore, the severed hand becomes representative of punishment in a vain attempt to reassert authority over

the severed hands of subversion and reconstruct the patriarchal body schema through punitive measures.

Master Generous asserts ‘I must deliver you | Into the hands of justice’. Certainly, this ‘remedy | So near at hand’ (V.v.107-108) where the witches ‘are all in officers’ hands’ (V.v.120) serves, as Ostovich suggests, to ‘recover [...] masculinity through a ritual of public confrontation of their female victimizers.’³⁹⁶ This would have formed an obvious allusion for the spectators to the 1633-1634 trial in Lancashire. However, who are the ‘hands of justice’ for the playgoers? Are they the legislators, the hands of ‘lawfull authority’ (V.v.95)? The court? The spectators as judge and jury? Or the playwrights themselves? Indeed, as Coffin argues, the play ‘exemplifies the contextual discourse of misrule which framed the perception of witchcraft in early modern culture and gave meaning to it’, as the severed hands linger always on the surface of the play.³⁹⁷

There is something perversely obscene about the hand returning in Act 5 Scene 5 with the Soldier, when he announces, ‘And I sliced off a cat’s foot there, that is since a | Hand whoever wants it. [*Shows the hand*]’ (V.v.186-187). There is no stage direction or mention of the hand after this line and so what happens to it is open to interpretation. The hand could be taken by Doughty or Robin to be burnt, as he intends to burn the bridle, or it could be handed to Master Generous to chillingly mimic the betrothal ceremony and the fragility of his body schema. The hand might remain on the stage for an uncomfortable period of time as the final presence of the play or handed to a playgoer as a mark of caution when the Soldier says, ‘whoever wants it’. In modern productions, the hand could be mechanical and

³⁹⁶ Ostovich, ‘Critical Introduction’, *Richard Brome Online*, p. 31.

³⁹⁷ Coffin, p. 93.

crawl off the stage like the hand in the 1963 film *The Crawling Hand* or Thing from *The Addams Family*.³⁹⁸

The phantom, endowed with material and spiritual powers, persists with the playgoers as they leave the microcosm of the theatre to re-enter the world outside. Brett Hirsch observes that despite the fact ‘other supernatural episodes that appear in the play are culled directly from the evidence given at the 1633-1634 trial at Lancashire’, the severed hand does not appear in the trial transcripts and so ‘it would seem highly likely that Boguet’s narrative – or version of it – was the source.’³⁹⁹ Hirsch concludes that it is difficult to know precisely whether Heywood and Brome would have read or heard Boguet’s narrative and, therefore, must have found their source for this episode elsewhere. Whilst it is interesting to speculate, and clear there are similarities present in both the play and the narrative, the play draws attention to the many hands which formed the stories of the Lancashire witches. Indeed, as Ostovich suggests, *The Late Lancashire Witches* explores ‘sharper critiques of credulity’ and Coffin suggests the play articulates ‘patriarchal insecurity along with pointed metatheatricality’ and offers ‘its most subversive suggestion that the actual trial is about fiction and performance-like illusion.’⁴⁰⁰ The epilogue points once more to the severed hand as proof of instability and the unknown, ‘whilst the verb “touch”, if taken literally, suggests a less than firm clutch on the situation.’⁴⁰¹ The severed hand in the play, which has been branded criminal, has written its own story separate to that of the hands of the playwright or the hands of the courts.

³⁹⁸ Herbert L. Strock, *The Crawling Hand* (A Joseph F. Robertson Production, 1963) ‘The Addams Family’ (ABC, 1964)

³⁹⁹ Brett D. Hirsch, ‘Werewolves and Severed Hands: Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* and Heywood and Brome’s *The Witches of Lancashire*’, in *Notes and Queries*, 53 (2006), 91-93 (p. 92)

⁴⁰⁰ Ostovich, p. 16.

See also Coffin, p. 92.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

This chapter has shown that the phantom limb phenomenon in early modern drama and culture is an extraordinary tool with an extensive history that has only just begun to be fully explored. Phantom limbs are historically situated with transformative effects and able to signify limits/possibilities and difference/identity. In my own experience this is exemplified by ‘Mirror Therapy’ when the subject can view the ‘missing’ limb as fully present, healthy and actively participating. On the early modern stage, phantoms are fundamentally divorced from the laws that once governed their fleshy limbs. Prostheses and the objects incorporated within the body schema restore the vanished sense of self and become central to the action. The hand without the body and the body without the hand retains a paradoxical quality. It is a source of creation whilst also presenting the potential for destruction. Of course, the plays would have closed with the spectators bringing their hands together to clap. This would lead them to a disturbing recognition of the physicality of their hands and allow an unsettling insight into the horror of the hand that can be both an open palm and a closed fist.

Conclusion

I started my research into the early modern hand following my accident in 2011, making the work both personal and cathartic. I am constantly aware of my injured hand and no longer take the function or ‘wholeness’ of my body as definitive. This thesis has drawn on my own, contemporary experience and uses modern medicine and phenomenology to examine the hand’s centrality in early modern culture and drama anew.

I have shown the wondrous versatility of the hand as understood by playwrights, actors and spectators during the early modern period, a time when many changes occurred. Inhabiting a pre-Cartesian intellectual world, the pages of my work above range across literary, rhetorical, legal, medical and religious texts in order to understand and closely examine the hand as a pivotal body part on the early modern stage. Through close textual analysis and a phenomenological approach, particularly utilising Merleau-Ponty’s terms incorporeity, *chiasm* and *écart* and Nancy’s, Leroi-Gourhan’s and Stiegler’s understandings of individuation, co-exposure and *techné*, I have extended the work of previous early modern hand studies to understand the hand as not simply a physical object but rather an embodiment of consciousness and the site where intention and meaning originate.

The philosophical works of Merleau-Ponty, Nancy, Derrida, Leroi-Gourhan and Stiegler have enabled me to articulate a new understanding of the hand as a motor which connects the early modern subject to his/her environment. This has led to a greater appreciation of the hand’s significance on stage as a tool of mediation, reorientation, awareness and agency. The hand and its tools amplified powers of language, sociality and intelligence. The agency of the hand is linked to

the sense of self, the individual's engagement and participation in the world and early modern modes of perception and subjectivity. By outlining two divergent and overlapping classical definitions of the early modern hand, those of Aristotle and Anaxagoras, I have helped the reader to understand how the hand related to human intellect in the early modern period both from theological and secular viewpoints. Early modern understandings foregrounded by the writings of Aristotle, Anaxagoras, Vesalius, Crooke and Galen show the hand that was cut open, dissected and explored to demonstrate the magnificent and complex physiology of the hand. Phenomenology has allowed me to identify how in the early modern period the hand could not only evidence dexterity, beauty and an instrumental relationship with God's own hand, but was the subject of a new epistemology. The hand became the origin of personhood, of 'I', and demonstrated great skill with its tools and was able to shape and cultivate the subject's cognitive and social connections. This early modern viewpoint stands in parallel with the modern works of Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Leroi-Gourhan and Stiegler. I have shown how historical artefacts and writings that have been preserved demonstrate some of the finest examples of the technicity of the early modern hand. Indeed, as historical phenomenology studies show, it is crucial to read sensory history to understand and approach life in the past.

Hand gestures play a critical role in early modern performance and text. By combining Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological insights such as body schema, motor intentionality and 'the great phantom' alongside cognitive performance research such as mirror neuron theory, I have constructed a new model for reading the hand as an instrument that created a shared body schema between the actor and spectator in the early modern theatre. I have argued that the actor's hand activated

a socio-cognitive relationship with the spectators as they mirrored and perceived the action through kinaesthetic understanding of their own hands. Further to this, I have used Merleau-Ponty's ideas of body schema and intercorporeity/'double sensation' to further understand what Evelyn Tribble has called 'kinesic intelligence' to show how the complex and ephemeral qualities of gesture on the early modern stage preclude a body/mind dichotomy. The cognitive link with the hand has allowed me to grasp gestural meanings and the complexities and coherences of the hand as simultaneously subject and object. Tribble's view of 'skilled spectatorship' and 'skilled viewing', whether as an actor or a spectator, has demonstrated that conscious gestures and the specific skills with objects that were wielded by the hand were central to the performance.

This model for reading intellectual and emotive responses has helped me to consider how an early modern spectator may have understood the staged hand and what meanings and feelings this could have produced. It should be noted here that what one person perceives another may not, and so such interpretations shall always be speculative.

Nevertheless, my phenomenological approach has illuminated the critical point that the staged hand would have been the connecting point for every spectator who would have been aware of distinctions such as those between the right and left hand that signified good or evil. Furthermore, the staged hand was able to speak to and play out actions that the spectators' own hands could not, perhaps constrained by class, law, religion and conventional gender roles.

By situating the hand in a liminal zone between passive/active and using Merleau-Ponty's understanding of 'double sensation' and Nancy's term 'co-existence', my thesis has aimed to trace the gestures and technical activity of the

martial hand of the man that created both active and passive status on and off stage. The passivity at the heart of activity is pertinently illustrated by the feminine hand, defined in early modern drama and culture as a controlled and corrected object. The actions of being touched and touching, however, suggests that early modern women were also active subjects and that it was their hands that awakened them to conscious intention. Moreover, the boy actor is reversible just like the glove is: objectified and artificial yet interchangeable, both simultaneously active and passive as a double representation.

Furthermore, tools that the hand grasps provided various didactic means whereby early modern women could increase their knowledge of themselves and their phenomenological being-in-the-world. I have followed Leroi-Gourhan and Stiegler's contentions to read the tool as representative of the passing of time, the inner thoughts extended out to the world and being embedded within a convivial and social community. The collective early modern experience thus permitted individual awareness of a shared body of technical mastery and active production. The paradox of how it is possible that the feminine hand is simultaneously passive and active is increased by the staged hand of the boy actor as an instrument of many worlds: the frontier between not only active/passive but also between the classification of the gender binary of man/woman.

The hand's primary and complex role in forging affective relationships with people and objects, in Chapters One and Two, opened up new ways of reading the body without the hand and the hand without the body on the early modern stage in Chapter Three. I have examined the body without the hand and the hand without the body using medical research on phantom limb syndrome whilst reflecting on my first-hand experience. My research has shown that dismembered hands are not

to be understood simply as symbols of limitation and constraints on agency in the early modern period. The hand without the body and the body without the hand is an autonomous tool, often used on the early modern stage to challenge and question political, moral and philosophical principles. The staged phantom limb in the detached, fictional world of the playhouse presented moral lessons and offered a powerful, dramatic manicule which could point towards current anxieties in the English court or political realm.

My work has offered new ways to view or read the early modern hand. The dichotomy of subject/object is intrinsically tied within a *chiasm* which creates a gap; a gap bridged by the hand. This has allowed me to understand how the subject is constituted by objects. Moreover, this reveals how, as a body, I am both an openness to the world and actively exploring it, and an object in the world. This has been pertinently displayed in recent months during the Covid-19 pandemic where people have been advised to wash their hands for twenty seconds for at least six times a day. The hand is now viewed as the opening for contagion, is covered with gloves and told to be kept away from others. The washing of hands opens up the gap between activity and passivity and perfectly encapsulates the phenomenon of double touching. The washing of hands and double touching is, of course, also evident in early modern texts. Take, for example, Lady Macbeth's hand washing as she rubs her hands together in the act of intercorporeity. Lady Macbeth's hands touching and being touched in that moment opens up a traumatic gap between the illegitimate actions of Lady Macbeth's active hands busy in the act of killing and smearing blood and her passive hands as she watches Macbeth's hands move whilst she can only watch or encourage.

Indeed, most people have two hands, a right and a left (even if dismembered as the phantom limb persists), and so the potential for passivity and activity, good and evil is always there. My thesis has served to demonstrate the hand's centrality in early modern drama and has deepened understandings of the self, identity, ontology, orientation, the phenomenological body schema, community and power in the early modern period. For me, every page I turn in looking through archives, attending the Lancaster Premodern Reading Group or presenting at conferences, emphasises that the hand reaches out and holds me close. The hand's importance looms in my own hand and meets yours as you turn the pages of this thesis. My scarred hand has changed everything, and my hand's numbness is corporeal proof of my being-in-the-world.

I hand over now to you, my reader, to notice your own hands. The hand has much to tell us still.



Appendix 1 (data)

The corpus Early English Books Online (EEBO) version 3 contains 44,442 corpus texts in total. The total number of words and texts in the time period specified 1550-1649 is 477,569,985 words and 16,914 texts. It should be noted that EEBO is printed texts rather than manuscripts and so although the corpus is very large, CQPweb can only give a limited trace of how early modern people thought about their hands.

The collocation function provides frequency lists of terms by a score of the statistical significance and frequency of appearance. In my examples, to achieve these results, I searched 'han[d,ds,de,des,dis]' text-type restriction between 1550-1609 and 1610-1649 with the defined bracket of three words to each side. The set of hits was retrieved from a large subpart of the corpus for Table 1 (208,920,885 words) and for Table 2 (268,649,100).

I have used the algorithm 'Z-score' which measures results that reflect a combination of significance (amount of evidence) and effect size (strength of connection), producing a compromise ranking relative to MI (effect size) and LL (significance).

The hierarchal assessment of this data serves to give an overview of some of the similarities and differences when reading the Elizabethan hand and the Jacobean hand. The collocation data for the Protestant period does suggest a move away from the Catholic trusting hand with 'left' rising by 44.4%, 'revenging' rising by 118%, 'strong' rising by 80%. For both sets of subcorporas, 'right' 'wringing'

‘stretch’ ‘imposition’ ‘his’ and ‘clapping’ all remain high as indicators of control with theological connections. This data demonstrates that the hand is an active instrument and the gestures it enacts are interlinked with the hand’s meaning and purpose and the centrality and importance of the hand’s role can be seen as one that continued throughout.

Table 1: Collocation Query ‘han[d,ds,de,des,dis]’, restricted to texts meeting criteria ‘Decade: 1550-1559 or 15-60-1569 or 1570-1579 or 1580-1589 or 1590-1599 or 1600-1609’, returned 159,353 matches in 4,086 different texts (in 208,920,885 words [4,779 texts]; frequency: 762.74 instances per million words)

Number	Word	Total number in whole corpus	Expected collocate frequency	Observed collocate frequency	In number of texts	Z score
1	right	484646	385.438	9909	1708	485.065
2	at	3182175	2530.775	24037	2713	427.491
3	his	9217642	7330.766	33834	2960	309.539
4	imposition	11964	9.515	792	164	253.51
5	helping	10379	8.254	691	408	237.464
6	into	1727535	1373.904	10174	1910	237.402
7	upper	32317	25.702	1190	438	229.561
8	left	284479	226.245	3478	937	216.153
9	vnwashen	116	0.092	54	37	175.837
10	on	1948583	1549.703	8414	1548	174.357
11	stretch	10952	8.71	523	264	174.09
12	thy	1346327	1070.73	6755	1491	173.699
13	clapping	1585	1.261	196	109	173.005
14	stretched	13372	10.635	551	290	165.547
15	thine	141265	112.348	1782	512	157.476
16	in	20011385	15915.001	35534	3322	155.511
17	Wringing	1510	1.201	171	137	154.49
18	their	5435041	4322.474	14192	2313	150.109
19	laying	35626	28.333	798	343	144.501
20	lay	238823	189.935	2156	861	142.621
21	with	6743369	5362.983	15361	2533	136.518
22	lift	35903	28.554	734	383	131.925
23	out	1686345	1341.146	6158	1489	131.517
24	clap	5368	4.269	271	176	128.851
25	hand	471988	375.371	2872	668	128.836
26	own	1256418	999.226	5014	1424	126.992
27	my	2492426	1982.22	6858	1795	109.502
28	your	2073026	1648.672	6047	1529	108.311

29	mighty	107406	85.42	1084	501	107.991
30	feet	102703	81.679	1027	486	104.543

Table 2: Collocation Query ‘han[d,ds,de,des,dis]’, restricted to texts meeting criteria ‘Decade: 1610-1619 or 1620-1629 or 1630-1639 or 1640-1649, returned 196,011 matches in 8,759 different texts (in 268,649,100 words [12,135 texts]; frequency: 729.62 instances per million words)

Number	Word	Total number in whole corpus	Expected collocate frequency	Observed collocate frequency	In number of texts	Z score
1	Right	484646	474.105	13907	2718	616.902
2	Imposition	11964	11.704	1507	333	436.937
3	His	9217642	9017.156	39822	5087	324.397
4	At	3182175	3112.962	20124	3917	304.882
5	into	1727535	1689.961	13752	3496	293.403
6	left	284479	278.292	5023	1349	284.39
7	helping	10379	10.153	769	508	237.994
8	stretch	10952	10.714	660	392	198.212
9	Stretched	13372	13.081	723	434	196.146
10	thy	1346327	1317.044	8232	1946	190.528
11	palms	4344	4.25	374	244	179.123
12	lift	35903	35.122	1092	620	178.25
13	On	1948583	1906.201	9621	2534	176.69
14	their	5435041	5316.827	17672	4147	169.436
15	own	1256418	1229.091	6880	2570	161.171
16	laying	35626	34.851	974	457	158.999
17	thine	141265	138.192	2007	783	158.93
18	feet	102703	100.469	1680	811	157.534
19	kiss	26340	25.767	823	443	156.957
20	wringing	1510	1.477	192	132	156.348
21	lay	238823	233.629	2514	1224	149.158
22	Clapping	1585	1.551	187	125	148.53
23	in	20011385	19576.132	40208	5865	147.457
24	lifting	8997	8.801	421	288	138.773
25	Gods	640962	627.021	3990	1389	134.282
26	Your	2073026	2027.937	8049	2502	133.693
27	under	696455	681.307	4137	2016	132.373
28	clap	5368	5.251	306	214	131.024
29	my	2492426	2438.215	8907	2656	130.995
30	imbrue	553	0.541	94	77	126.387

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