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Mass Communication:
The Eucharist and Authorship in Early Modern England

By
Christopher Jason Mead

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
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Committee in charge:

Professor Joanna Picciotto, Chair
Professor Jeffrey Knapp
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Abstract

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Professor Joanna Picciotto, Chair

This dissertation argues that in the two centuries following the incunabula, one group of authors writing for the press understood the feeling of being “in print” through the language and form of a much older technology, the Eucharist. The Eucharist’s role in distributing Christ to believers over time and space made it an irresistible analogue for the author’s publication through the printing press. The defining characteristics of print—namely, theoretically exact replicability and massively increased distributivity—are the same characteristics celebrated by Christ at the Last Supper when he shared his body. Far from robbing texts of aura, the press transmitted it. Like priests who personate and impart Christ, these writers were able to disseminate typographic versions of their own “real presences” to far-flung yet virtually gathered readers in an equally amplifying and exposing experience. Revealing the influence of the Eucharist on writers who identified the experience of authorship with the technology of the printing press, I show how mechanization—so often associated with the loss of aura—in fact made a powerful new mode of auratic presence available to writers whose engagement with print production and priestly identities led them to a new conception of what it meant to be a modern Protestant author. For John Foxe, technical and deictic innovations available only in print make the *Actes and Monuments* into a vessel in which the textual presences of the martyrs and even himself are stored, ready to be witnessed and consumed in the endlessly iterable moment of reading. For Robert Burton in the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, the commercial market reveals the tendency of the eucharistic miracle to turn to waste as one’s work is buried under ever-increasing piles of freshly-printed books, pamphlets, and “new news.” For John Milton, the vulnerability of publication leads to his consecration as a living textual martyr in the controversial prose—an act of self-fashioning that shapes our understanding of his protagonists in *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. I conclude by examining the eighteenth-century subsumption of the author’s eucharistic voice into the collective journalistic voice of an entire nation—the beginning of a process that culminates in mass communication in the fully modern sense.

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Introduction

We know that particular morning and evening editions will overwhelmingly be consumed between this hour and that, only on this day, not that. [...] The significance of this mass ceremony—Hegel observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers—is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. Furthermore, this ceremony is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the calendar. What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community can be envisioned? At the same time, the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life.

—Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 35-36

This dissertation explores a mode of authorship that arose after the incunabula but before the rise of the daily newspaper. I show how one group of authors who wrote for the press experienced their typographical distribution through the readily available grammar provided by the Eucharist—the medium of communication by which Christ made himself materially present to believers scattered over space and time. The defining characteristics of print—namely, fixity and massively increased distributivity—are the same characteristics celebrated by Christ at the Last Supper and emphasized by those who manufactured the host and sought to protect it from desecration and decay. Like the priests who personate and impart Christ, authors were able to disseminate typographic versions of their own “real presences” to far-flung yet virtually gathered readers in an experience that was both enlarging and excoriating. What I call “eucharistic authorship” challenges Walter Benjamin’s account of the destructive effect that mechanical reproduction has on the aura of the work of art and the reader’s experience of authorial presence, offering a striking exception to his famous assertion that even the most perfect reproduction lacks “the here and now of the work of art—its unique existence in a particular place” (21).

Because it aligns the medium of print with that of the wafer, eucharistic authorship differs from other modes of authorship in which the writer’s sacrifice is thematized in Christological terms. It differs, for example, from the experience of the playwright who figures his loss of sovereignty to collaborative performance as a sacrifice.¹ As we shall see,

¹ Dramatic authors must acknowledge “the formative power of actors and audience on his playwriting” (102). Knapp complicates the secularizing accounts of critics such as C.L. Barber by suggesting that the tragic hero is also often the author himself. Seizing on a key difference between the anonymously authored *Corpus Christi* plays and those of the Elizabethan stage, Knapp describes how in the last two plays of his Lancasterian cycle, Shakespeare “conceptualized the author as both a king and a martyr—two seemingly disparate identities that Christ made one on the cross” (102). In this reading, the dominance of

the author who writes for the press must also embrace a loss of sovereignty, though this loss differs from that of the author who writes for the stage. Like the eucharistic wafer, the printed page is ephemeral, susceptible to desecration, rot, and abuse. The fixity and regularity of print are not only advantages; they also heighten the author's vulnerability to mistakes and polemical attack. In order to understand how and why authors made what might be seen as an unlikely turn to the Eucharist as they sought to conceptualize their dissemination through the press, we must first reconsider the Eucharist itself. In this introduction, I explore the history of the Eucharist as a medium of communication, rather than as the source of doctrinal debates, highlighting the remarkable similarities between the eucharistic wafer and the printed page. In the following four chapters, I show how authors' engagement with print production and priestly identities led them to construct a new conception of Protestant authorship.

In my first chapter, "Being Yet Alive," I take up John Foxe's memorializing effort in the *Actes and Monuments* to create a "Book of Martyrs." Using deictic features that only became widely available in print—features such as indexes, page numbers, and discrete editions—Foxe makes the *Actes and Monuments* a vessel in which the textual presences of the martyrs, his Catholic enemies, and even himself are stored, ready to be witnessed and consumed in the endlessly iterable moment of reading.² In his book, Foxe does not merely

the "the literary model of authorship" leads Shakespeare to idealize the loss of sovereignty he experiences at the hands of the collaborative mass entertainment that is the theater. For Knapp, the Christological aspect of Shakespeare's authorship is found in Shakespeare's reaction to the limitations of drama, the genre that hides the author from the audience. For the dramatic author, this loss of sovereignty could never be otherwise: it is identical with dramatic form. Ironically, drama both produces *and* obscures the author's suffering; his sacrifice is never his own, but must be parceled out to actors who perform it on his behalf. The dramatic author does not mediate but rather is mediated.

Shakespeare's loss is taken less sanguinely by other authors whose decision to print their plays attempts to mitigate their loss of sovereignty on the stage. The epitome of this remediating type is Ben Jonson. Joseph Loewenstein describes Jonson's mentality as a key early instance of the "bibliographic ego, a specifically Early Modern form of authorial identification with printed writing" that is characterized first and foremost by "possessiveness" (1). Both Knapp and Loewenstein describe modes of authorship that cross media types—Knapp, of an author who adopts a model of singular literary authorship for the stage; Loewenstein, of an author who remediates the works who wrote for other "milieux" into print as a means of enacting his ownership over them. Neither scholar considers the author who writes specifically *for* the press.

The phenomenology of dramatic authorship is fundamentally different from that of printed authorship. Performance is immaterial: it is oral, differs each time, and is, in the end, ephemeral. The amplifying effects of performance are temporary and diffuse—akin to Mass without the wafer. And while each dramatic performance might be understood as enacting the revival of the author, these revivals are hardly eucharistic—the chaos and unpredictability of performance have little in common with the regularity of the wafer or the printed page. Print reifies the performance of the Mass, containing it within the wafer of the printed page, as it were.

² As Ann Blair notes, only a few features of the printed books were true innovations. Title pages and certain types of section break were new, but concordances, indexes, and layout-independent numbering were not. Nevertheless, "printing spread familiarity with the trappings of consultation reading to larger and more diverse audiences" (46). The familiarization wrought by print made the "trappings" of discourse deixis into positive features that authors could count on being able to exploit.

represent the past, he incarnates it in a bibliographic form of real presence. It is less the details Foxe selects than the status he confers on those details once they are incorporated into his book that characterizes his eucharistic style. This style encompasses an important object in later editions of the *Actes and Monuments*, where Foxe sacramentalizes himself, treating polemical attacks on his book by Catholics as passionate wounds on his physical body.

My second chapter, "Content to Be Pressed," explores the intersection of eucharistic authorship and the rapacity of a burgeoning commercial print market in Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. I argue that Burton's Christological vision of scholarly self-sacrifice and resurrection drives his compulsive expansion of a work that he published in six successively expanded editions during his lifetime. Promising to cure his melancholic readers from within, Burton transforms himself into something to be consumed. This textual performance is threatened, however, by the democratic nature of the commodifying technology that makes it possible: while only Christ can be disseminated through the Eucharist, the press is theoretically available to all. Print amplifies the author at the same time that it forces him to compete in the marketplace, where he is exposed to the whims of public opinion and insatiable appetite for "new newes." While generations of scholars puzzled over the status of consecrated hosts left over after the Mass, asking "*quid mus sumit?*," the fate of bibliographic leftovers is never in question: amplification gives way to waste and decay as a constant stream of freshly printed materials leaves one's work buried and forgotten in the "dunghill." It is the inevitability of this process, I suggest, that leads Burton to write "in cento." Stitching together a patchwork collected "out of divers Writers," he performs for others what he hopes will one day be done for him: resurrection through quotation. Unlike Christ's resurrection, which was once and for all time, textual resurrection is an ongoing sacerdotal process that the author must finally leave to future members of the commonwealth of letters.

In "Tortured Syntax," the first of two chapters on John Milton, I consider Milton's depiction of himself in his polemical prose as a living martyr. Steadfast in his refusal to "write himself *Martyr*" (as he accuses Charles I of doing), Milton nevertheless applies the corporal punishments received by Puritan writers such as William Prynne to his own textual body, describing Joseph Hall's "bloodthirsty" effort to "dismember" and "slit" his sentences. This conflation of physical and bibliographic bodies is reprised in *Areopagitica*, where the championing of a good book as the "life-blood of a master spirit," far from being a Catholic bogey (as many critics have argued), compactly expresses a topos of incarnated textuality that stretches from the early prose works through to his final major poem. By showing how closely Milton's sense of suffering is related to his identity as a polemicist in print, I recontextualize what have traditionally been understood as expressions of disability and vocational doubt. The passivity required by publication, a process that leaves authors helplessly exposed for others to read, dissect, misquote, and "mutilate," motivates Milton's celebrated strategy of self-justification in which action and waiting, strength and weakness, are radically reconfigured.

My final chapter, "Milton's Passion," traces Milton's fullest effort to wrestle with the

opportunities and liabilities involved in thinking of publication Christologically. I read *Samson Agonistes* as a passion play in print, showing how Milton's supplementary addition to *Paradise Regained* presents a diminished version of the death that the brief epic suggests but does not present. In both *Paradise Regained* and "The Passion," Milton's vocational rivalry with the Son and difficulty in representing the crucifixion result in foreshortened works: Milton's sacerdotal efforts are redundant in the face of Christ's commemorative self-sufficiency. By turning to Samson—a radically imperfect type of Christ whose unmiraculous corpse lies buried in rubble as the poem comes to an end—Milton takes up a figure whose inability to commemorate himself creates a need for the sacramentalizing power of the poet in print. Samson lies where he fell; it is only in *Samson Agonistes* that the chorus's otherwise wishful fantasy of him as a self-resurrecting phoenix is fulfilled.

In my epilogue, I describe the subsumption of eucharistic authorship into the journalistic style of writers such as Daniel Defoe and "Mr. Spectator," the fictional author of *The Spectator*. Early in the eighteenth century, the individual author's eucharistic voice is transformed into collective journalistic voice of an entire nation—beginning a process that culminates in mass communication in the fully modern sense.

Remembering the Eucharist

Over the past several decades, medievalists have drawn an especially rich picture of eucharistic culture prior to the reformation. The fullest accounts of this culture in England continue to be those of Miri Rubin in *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* and Sarah Beckwith in *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings*. Beckwith challenges what she describes as the critical tendency to understand Christ's body in totalizing terms. Far from a merely "unified or unifying symbol" at the center of the sacramental system, Christ's body exceeds "clerical fantasy" and "functionalist anthropology" to encompass a variety of "social functions and imaginative effects" in the hands of both devotionalists and their lay readership (*Christ's Body* 43, 1).³ A similar statement might be made about the Eucharist itself. As both Beckwith and Rubin stress, the Eucharist was not (indeed, cannot be) understood simply through doctrinal articulation; it must also be understood in relation to the myriad of cultural, literary, and material practices that sometimes confirmed but just as often confounded its formal theological articulation.

The complexity of the medieval inheritance continues to be imperfectly appreciated by early modernist literary critics whose employments of the Eucharist tend to be both highly selective and one of two types. The first type traces the transformation of *Corpus Christi* drama into the commercial theater of Elizabethan London. This story is familiar,

3 Beckwith suggests that Christ's body is the central "site of conflict" between the clergy and the laity: eucharistic piety [...] is one symptomatic model of the deployment of the central symbol of the mass, the body of Christ, outside its liturgical, ecclesiastical setting and into the urban landscape, a departure which constitutes simultaneously an appropriation and an expansion of the terms of reference of Christ's body, and which changes its orientation and the potentialities of its meanings. (*Christ's Body* 31)

involving the conversion of the scriptural drama performed for religious audiences in towns such as York and Chester into nationalizing productions put on for paying audiences in London. For these critics, Elizabethan dramas are secularized versions of the Catholic Mass, offering audiences “the compensatory mystique of its own spectacles” (J. Knapp 98). In C.L. Barber’s classic account, the early modern theater is a “new place apart,” one that replaces the “traditional place apart, the church” (20). Christ’s tragedy becomes that of Lear.

The second type brings the Eucharist to bear on early modern poetics. In what Kimberly Johnson has recently called a “minor fad,” literary critics seek to draw a line between sacramental theology and linguistic signification in general (1).⁴ These accounts focus on doctrinal articulations of the Eucharist by medieval thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas, as well as by reformers such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Huldrych Zwingli. The appeal that these formal articulations of eucharistic doctrine have for literary critics is clear: eucharistic controversy contains some of our profoundest reflections on how language and signification work. The reformation is particularly rich in this regard: controversialists tirelessly discussed *hoc est corpus meum* in an intensification of what we might now describe as the ultimate new critical puzzle.⁵ These critics are less focused on the Eucharist *per se* (i.e., on the Eucharist as a material practice) than on theological attempts to explain the linguistic mystery that lies at its heart.

Whatever differences separate these two critical tendencies, a common complaint can be made against them: by picking and choosing with respect to the Eucharist, rather considering the Eucharist in its fullness as a set of cultural and material practices, critics instrumentalize it for the purposes of literary criticism. In “The Mousetrap,” a chapter published in *Practicing New Historicism*, a book co-authored with Catherine Gallagher, Stephen Greenblatt offers three observations about the relationship between the Eucharist

4 Johnson suggests that critics remain “focused not on poetics—that is, not on *the way poems work* as literary artifacts—but rather on whatever opinions concerning sacramental theology Renaissance literature seems to offer (1). While this complaint overstates the extent to which the work of critics such as Regina Schwartz, Robert Whalen, Eleanor McNeese, and Theresa M. DiPasquale is driven by the desire to assign poets “confessional stability,” Johnson successfully registers the extent to which critical assessments of the relationship between the Eucharist and early modern poetry tend to depend on partisan doctrinal accounts.

5 According to scholars such as Regina Schwartz, poetry, like C.L. Barber’s commercial theater, attempts to compensate for religious loss. For Schwartz, sacramental poetics are, above all, a response to loss. Poetry addresses and absorbs the linguistic component of eucharistic loss; the cultural aspects of the Eucharist—such as the ability to create community—are taken up elsewhere (Schwartz suggests in the emergent nation-state, though the more popular answer is of course the commercial theater).

For Ryan Netzley, post-reformation poetry attempts to teach readers how to live in a world in which God’s presence means something other than what it once did. Netzley recognizes that the “ostensibly reformed Anglican ceremony” does not fall into what Malcolm Ross identifies as the debased metaphor of the Zwinglian memorial, but rather contains a god who is “is immanently, even insistently present.” Thus in the English poetry of the seventeenth century, “reading can no longer be a procedure for filling in or supplementing a poem with its absent, transcendent meaning. [...] Getting God is not the problem; taking, desiring, reading and loving this presence, for its own sake, is the task that these lyrics set for readers” (3-4).

and literature, prefacing them with a warning that the diversity of the Eucharist must be respected:

As Miri Rubin's [...] *Corpus Christi* [...] argues, eucharistic interpretations are too complex, various, unpredictable to submit to any overarching theory [...] We have no intention of trying to do anything of the kind. But we want to make three observations: first, most of the significant and sustained thinking about the nature of linguistic signs centered on or was deeply influenced by eucharistic controversies; second, most of the literature that we care about from this period was written in the shadow of these controversies; and third, their significance for English literature in particular lies less in the problem of the sign than in what we will call "the problem of the leftover," that is, the status of the material remainder. (Gallagher and Greenblatt 141)⁶

Despite its attempt to justify its selectivity by appealing to Rubin's diversity, Greenblatt's use of the Eucharist in this essay has come under sustained criticism by medievalists such as Beckwith and David Aers. In her extended critique of Greenblatt's description of medieval religious culture in both "The Mousetrap" and *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Beckwith complains about Greenblatt's "profound functionalism, a way of seeing that has played an enormous role in mystifying the relations between what we call the medieval and early moderns periods":

Greenblatt tends to isolate doctrine about the Eucharist and purgatory from its ritual, social, and liturgical settings in medieval and Reformation culture. He has also chosen to cut off post-Reformation theater from its medieval forebears. Both decisions tend to have the effect of reifying the Eucharist, of assimilating it to late medieval dogmatic formulations about it. ("Hamlet" 269-270)

As Aers points out, the reifying tendencies of *Practicing New Historicism* begin early; in the book's introduction, the Eucharist is invoked as perhaps "the closest analogy" to new critical investments in the poem's freedom from the intentions of the poet: "the miracle of

6 This is not the first time this passage (or rather, one very much like it) appeared in print, and it is for this reason that I treat the argument as if it is Greenblatt's alone. In "Remnants of the Sacred in Early Modern England," Greenblatt offers a similar set of suggestions:

Cranmer's terms, which are central to English Protestantism, point us to two observations that link the sublime object of Early Modern ideology to the period's language and literature: first, most of the significant and sustained thinking in the period about the nature of linguistic signs, and particularly about figuration, centred on or was deeply influenced by Eucharistic controversies; and second, most of the literature that we care about from this period was written in the shadow of these controversies. To these observations, I want to add a third more speculative one: the significance of the Lord's Supper for the literature produced in Protestant England lies less in the problem of the sign than in what I will call the problem of the leftover, that is, of the material remainder. (27)

Working from Cranmer's declaration that Christ's words are meant to be taken figuratively rather than literally, the first version of the argument is wholly unapologetic about its tight focus on early modern eucharistic controversy.

transubstantiation does not depend, after all, on the intention of the priest” (12). Aers objects to this analogy, suggesting that it relies on a mischaracterization of the Eucharist, which is a rite “enmeshed in complex webs of relationship. It is the sacrament of Christian unity, the sacrament of charity, the consummation and completion of all the sacraments. This does not seem the ‘closest analogy’ one could find to those fantasies of autonomous and ‘self-enclosed’ entities rightly opposed by so many modern critical discourses” (243). Aers is right to condemn this instrumentalization of the rite that structured life throughout Christendom for thousands of years in an effort to describe how cultural conservatives view the work of art.

Yet the fact remains that despite its diversity, the Eucharist was contained within an object. Aers’ rebuttal of Gallagher and Greenblatt’s “claim that the Catholic Eucharist provided ‘the closest analogy’ they could find to fantasies of autonomous, self-enclosed aesthetic objects” fails to acknowledge or even mention the eucharistic wafer, the autonomous, self-enclosed object that lies at the heart of the eucharistic rite (245). To Beckwith’s complaint, then, I would like to add another. If one set of critics have divorced the Eucharist from its “ritual, social, and liturgical settings”—to “reify” it, as Beckwith puts it— then we must also take care lest we dematerialize it. Our attention to affective practices must not ignore the fact that the Eucharist was also a manufactured object made by a press. The objectness of the Eucharist has returned to the radar of medievalists only recently, having been made the subject of renewed attention by Aden Kumler:

All too often when we look at the medieval Mass we see a staging of doctrinal demonstration, we attend to the eruption of the miraculous, we anticipate apparitions at the altar and parse the liturgically coordinated spectacle of it all. What we have failed to see is precisely what medieval people flocked to see: the mute object at the center of the Mass.

Asking “What would it mean to see the thing in the midst of the Mass?,” Kumler directs our attention to the wafer, an object that Greenblatt, along with many others, have incorrectly described as “common baked bread” (181; Gallagher and Greenblatt 140). While the mundaneness of the eucharistic wafer was the subject of contemporary comment, to suggest that it was quotidian—that it looked like the bread that one would eat at home—is to mischaracterize it. Kumler describes how late in the eleventh century, the eucharistic bread began to look more like a cracker than a loaf, taking on the physical dimensions of the object still used in the Catholic rite. Round, white, and flat, the host was a “real oddity or aberration,” an object whose strangeness has been lost on modern scholars for whom mass production is the rule rather than an exception:

we have yet to recognize two interrelated issues of real importance for our vision of the Middle Ages and its material world of circulating things. [...] It was a serially produced monochrome multiple in a world filled with handcrafted *unica*, objects that laid bare their facture in chisel marks, stitches, brushstrokes, and thumbprints. With the Eucharistic wafer a strategic removal of the hand intervened in the process of making. The wafer was an object produced by mechanical means whose exceptional value

within medieval Christian culture was paradoxically linked to its infinite repetition, to its presentation of the same details of form and facture week after week. (187)

What we have lost sight of, then, is the fact that the host was made by a machine, a press that converted the blank and formless dough into identically stamped and circumscribed objects.

The wafer's combination of seriality and presence had few medieval analogues. One such analogue was the coin, an object whose physical similarity to the wafer is immediately apparent. Indeed, "both in analogic and material terms, the medieval host formally resembled the coin far more than it visually approximated the incarnate, crucified, and resurrected body of Christ" (187–188). The coin and the host existed in what Kumler describes as a relationship of

similitude: a mutual mimicry that encoded rivalrous claims for universal currency, guaranteed value, privileged substance, and profitable exchange. The comparison of host and coin discloses a contest for the status of ordinary referent, a sibling rivalry in which monetary and sacramental species compete for semiotic priority (191)⁷

The rivalry between the wafer and the coin encoded a larger rivalry between the rarefied subject positions of Christ and monarch. Kumler describes how a series of French monarchs beginning with Philippe IV le Bel minted coins that "explicitly mimicked the form of the Eucharistic wafer in an effort to rehabilitate a currency with a reputation for debasement" (189). Needless to say, this sort of self-fashioning mimicry of the Eucharist remained limited to those powerful enough to order their image stamped in precious metals.

7 Marc Shell's discussion of the relationship between the Eucharist and money is illuminating; as he explains, the begetting of money (minting) and the getting of things by means of money (exchange) were among the most important medieval analogues invoked in explanations of the trinity. Furthermore, medieval theories of metallic money tend to share with discussions of the Eucharist the problem of homogeneity and heterogeneity, or confusion of representation with production. For it is unclear whether metallic money is a member of the group of commodities (a group that includes coins *qua* metal) or another kind of thing (a symbol). (32)

Drawing from the work of Gerald Ellard, Kumler historicizes this coincidence of coin and wafer in a parallel shifts in the physical characteristics of the host and the type of offering presented by congregants: It seems to have been in the late eleventh century—a point in the history of the medieval Mass when the congregation's offering began to be contributed in coins, rather than kind—that the wafer began to be made *in modum denarii* (in the manner of a coin). In the early Middle Ages the people had been responsible for bringing the baked loaves and wine that were offered as a sacrifice in the Mass; by contrast, a late-twelfth century text notes: "we are accustomed to offer four things in the Mass: bread, wine, coin and candle." Soon an offering of coins replaced both bread and wine, and candles came to be offered only on certain liturgical occasions. (188)

Imagining Duplicative Transcendence

Most of the Renaissance megalomania from Aretino to Tamburlaine is the immediate child of typography which provided the physical means of extending the dimensions of the private author in space and time.

—Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* 131

Coins were not the only object with which the Eucharist existed in a relationship of “mutual mimicry.” Like the wafer, the wax seal “was produced by a process of impression and it incarnated the presence and authority of its human referent” (Kumler 187). Late in the Middle Ages, the similarity between the incarnation of Christ’s presence in the wafer and that of the sender in the wax was taken to its analogical limit in a remarkable body of lyric poems collectively known as the Charters of Christ. As my chapter on Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* explains more fully below, the Charters of Christ are a signal example of how human writers worked to transcend the material limits of wafer and wax, transposing the incarnational qualities of these materials onto the manuscript pages upon which they wrote. The Charters of Christ analogize Christ’s body as a legal document, understanding the promises of salvation in contractual language. Christ, the speaker of the poems, describes his wounds as ink, his skin as the parchment upon which the poem is written, and the Eucharist and the indenture that both creates and authenticates multiple copies of the deed:

Oon undentur y lafte with þe
 Wher-of þou shalt euer sykur be
 In þe preestus honde on þe rode
 Ho-so-euer hit be þat beleueth þer-on
 Endeles payne shall he fynde none [...] (Spalding 77)⁸

Mapping the Eucharist onto regular documentary practices, authors were able to imagine duplicative transcendence in the first person. Adopting Christ’s voice as their own, writers played with and extended extant technologies of amplification, enacting a vision of perfect reproducibility without limit. This affective practice was both orthodox and radically new. It also anticipated the coming revolution in print. Despite the turn in recent decades to the history of the book, we still lack a meaningful account of how the manufacture and materiality of the wafer relates to that of the printed page. Like a poem, the Eucharist is both a symbol and an object that can be held in one’s hand.⁹ With the advent of the printing press and theoretically unlimited replicability, it became possible for the author to speak in his own voice for the first time. Rather than ventriloquize Christ, authors traced

8 In her Ph.D dissertation, *The Middle English Charters of Christ*, Mary Caroline Spalding notes that “examples of the type represented by the Charter of Christ, in which the legal form is made to subserve a literary purpose, are exceeding rare both in England and the Continent (xxxvi). While allegorical charters are indeed rare, they nevertheless participate in a larger set of documentary practices in which medieval writers began to think about textual production in startling new ways—ways that Emily Steiner groups under the umbrella term “documentary culture.”

9 We must always remember that for the vast majority of people living in medieval England, the Eucharist was not obscure and abstruse doctrine, but rather a culture and an object.

their own amplification through the press.

Auratic Reproduction

The fact that the world's most famous presence-delivery device is a mechanical reproduction feels at odds with what has become common sense. In Walter Benjamin's most famous thesis, reproduction and aura are antithetical: "In even the most perfect reproduction, *one* thing is lacking: the here and now of the work of art—its unique existence in a particular place." While aura is the product of "a tradition which has passed the object down as the same, identical thing to the present day," reproduction "detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By replicating the work many times over, it substitutes a mass existence for a unique existence" (21–22). Benjamin describes a zero-sum game in which portability and reproducibility come at the cost of the work's cultic and auratic value:

It is easier to exhibit a portrait bust that can be sent here and there than to exhibit the statue of a divinity that has a fixed place in the interior of a temple. A panel painting can be exhibited more easily than the mosaic or fresco which preceded it. And although a mass may have been no less suited to public presentation than a symphony, the symphony came into being at a time when the possibility of such presentation promised to be greater. (25)¹⁰

The key difference between a statue and a bust, then, is that the former is immobile and the latter is portable. The same difference structures the relationship between the frescoes and panel paintings. In the third pairing, however—that of the Mass and the symphony—Benjamin abandons the logic of portability and instead makes an historical claim about the *practice* of presentation at a specific moment in time. As the concession acknowledges, there would seem to be little difference between the Mass and the symphony when it comes to portability; both forms are based on scripts (the liturgy in the case of the Mass, the score in the case of a symphony) that allow for great reproducibility and limitless presentability.¹¹

By failing to take up the specific presentability of the Mass—by making an historical point about secularization instead of systematically comparing the two forms—Benjamin misses the opportunity to consider the great exception to his thesis. While the symphony conforms to the usual separation of reproducibility and cultic value, the cultic value of the Mass—materialized in the eucharistic wafer—is entirely contingent upon its reproducibility.¹² In the Mass and the eucharistic wafer that lies at its center, reproducibility

¹⁰ To put all these terms together, we must remember that "The uniqueness of the work of art is identical to its embeddedness in the context of tradition" and that "originally, the embeddedness of an artwork in the context of tradition found expression in a cult" (24).

¹¹ The symphony overcomes the Mass only in the sense that its rise in popularity marked the continued loosening of religion's grip on everyday life. Its presentability does not surpass that of the Mass in any meaningful way.

¹² Another significant difference between the symphony and the Mass: while both works can be performed again and again—can be reproduced without limit—only in the case of the Mass do these performance occur (or are imagined to occur) at the same time. Participants in the Mass imagine others doing the same

and cultic value are identical. The Mass's identification with reproducibility is superior even to that of film, Benjamin's format of choice, for despite Benjamin's declaration that "Film is the first art form whose artistic character is entirely determined by its reproducibility," the iterability of film is not identical with its format (28).

Benjamin claims that

In film, the technological reproducibility of the product is not an externally imposed condition of its mass dissemination, as it is, say, in literature or painting. *The technological reproducibility of films is based directly on the technology of their production. This not only makes possible the mass dissemination of films in the most direct way, but actually enforces it.* (44)

This initial claim does not quite stand up to the author's own scrutiny. As it turns out, films are mass distributed not because their format requires it, but because they are so expensive to reproduce: "It does so because the process of producing a film is so costly that an individual who could afford to buy a painting, for example, could not afford to buy a [master print of a] film. It was calculated in 1927 that, in order to make a profit, a major film needed to reach an audience of nine million" (44). But virtual causation is not the same as causation itself. Mechanical reproduction is less inherent in film than made necessary by it, the cost of production being so high that the product must be reproduced, distributed, and sold to paying audiences in order to recoup one's initial investment.

What Benjamin claims is true of film is actually true of the Eucharist, where reproduction is not just a requirement but the point. From its inauguration at the Last Supper, when Christ recalls the duplicative miracle of the fish and loaves by once again breaking bread, the Eucharist is motivated by replication. Indeed, it is replication. And the Eucharist's status as *the* technology of reproduction does not come at the cost of its cultic value. Rather, the cultic value of the Eucharist is entirely contingent on its reproducibility. In this key respect, the wafer challenges Benjamin's declaration that "Film is the first art form whose artistic character is entirely determined by its reproducibility" (28). When John Guillory, writing in "Genesis of the Media Concept," claims that "the concept of a medium of communication was absent but wanted for the several centuries prior to its appearance, a lacuna in the philosophical tradition that exerted a distinctive pressure, as if from the future, on early efforts to theorize communication," he does not mention let alone take up the case of the Eucharist, a technology that both mediates between God and humankind and is a medium operative through both time and space (341). Although Guillory later mentions the "'mediation' of Christ as Redeemer," he does so merely in passing, to name Christ's mediation as the "grandest example" of "intercession between alienated parties." Strangely, he does not consider the *medium* by which this mediation continued to be delivered after its first instantiation at Golgotha.

The mediating (grace-imparting) effects of the Eucharist are familiar; the role of the Eucharist as medium is less so, perhaps owing to the fact that the Eucharist contains Christ twice remediated (from heavenly essence into human flesh and then from flesh into flesh that appears under the accidents of bread). While some Protestants understood the

all over Christendom, while those who attend a symphony do not imagine others doing the same.

Eucharist as a representation—a memorial to a sacrifice—Catholics understood it as both a sacrifice *and* the gracious means by which that sacrifice was communicated (i.e., as a technical medium). If the formal ritual is mimetic, the latter is a mode of communication. Herein lies a strange inversion of our usual expectations with respect to Protestant and Catholic practices: the Protestant practice imitates (makes art) while Catholic practice communicates. Thus what Guillory describes of the nineteenth century medium—“A person believed to be in contact with the spirits of the dead and to communicate between the living and the dead”—applies as well to the priest, who personates Christ as a “channel of mass communication” (“medium”). Guillory’s assertion that nineteenth-century spiritual medium “marks a transition from the notion of communication premised on face-to-face exchange to one premised on distance” is disrupted by the eucharistic scene, a scene that collapses the presence/distance binary altogether (348). A paradoxical moment of physical contact (communication in the older sense) and something “associated with an action often involving distance in time and space,” the Eucharist both imputes distance to the scene of communication and brings the communicator and the communicant together in a remarkable display of incarnated presence (331).

Benjamin and Guillory’s preoccupation with collaboratively produced industrial commodities is shared by Benedict Anderson. Anderson is more interested in books than are the other two critics:

In a rather special sense, the book was the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity. The sense I have in mind can be shown if we compare the book to other early industrial products, such as textiles, bricks, or sugar. For these commodities are *measured* in mathematical amounts (pounds or loads or pieces). A pound of sugar is simply a quantity, a convenient load, not an object in itself. The book, however—and here it prefigures the durables of our time—is a distinct, self-contained object, exactly reproduced on a large scale. One pound of sugar flows into the next; each book has its own eremitic self-sufficiency. (34)

Anderson’s emphasis on the identity, circumscription, and ephemerality of the book anticipates his subsequent description of the daily newspaper as “‘extreme form’ of the book, a book sold on a colossal scale, but of ephemeral popularity” as he moves toward his great thesis about imagined communities:

this ceremony [of newspaper reading] is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the calendar. What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community can be envisioned? At the same time, the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life. As with *Noli Me Tangere*, fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations. (35–36)

Anderson describes a secular mass in which thousands of individuals read the same text at

the same time, a modern version of the older, sacred ceremony through which millions are led daily throughout Christendom. Focused on the reception of the newspaper by its recipient—the readerly consumption of news—Anderson does not take up the question of who communicates or is communicated—of who plays the role of Christ or priest in this modern “mass ceremony.” This may be because the newspaper has no one priest: the collaborative nature of its production means that it makes little sense to identify them with any one author. While the reader of the newspaper experiences simultaneity and the amplifying power of the press, knowing that she reads at the same time as thousands of others, the writer does not experience these characteristics as producer. Made by a team from start to finish, the modern newspaper is an industrial production that, like film, does not permit any one author or contributor to adopt the subject position of that great communicator, Christ. Indeed, the newspaper, Anderson’s “extreme book,” is heavily invested in appearing unauthored.¹³

Anderson’s singular focus on the newspaper deemphasizes the radically new subject position that the book’s new-found status as a “distinct, self-contained object, exactly reproduced on a large scale” had made possible for authors earlier in the print era.¹⁴ What Anderson occludes, in other words, is the question of what the fixity, multiplicity, and disposability of the book meant for the authorial ego. Many critics have pondered answers to this question. One of the most famous, Elizabeth Eisenstein, argues that print wrought changes in the way that authors thought about fame:

The wish to see one’s work in print [...] is different from the desire to pen lines that could never get fixed in a permanent form, might be lost forever, altered by copying, or—if truly memorable—be carried by oral transmission and assigned ultimately to ‘anon.’ Until it became possible to distinguish between composing a poem and reciting one, or writing a book and copying one; until books could be classified by something other than incipits; how could the modern game of books and authors be played? (2.121)

Fabvre and Martin make a similar argument, suggesting that “Contemporary writers who had their names attached to hundreds and thousands of copies of their works became conscious of their individual reputation. This new kind of stimulus was also the sign of a new age when artists began to sign their works, and authorship takes on an altogether new significance” (261). But claiming that print allowed for new forms of recognition and social advancement is not the same as describing how these changes were conceptualized in the minds of authors, and Anderson’s focus on a genre that rises some two hundred and fifty years after Gutenberg raises the question of what happened in the meantime. Too few histories of the book take up the question of what it felt like to be both communicated and

¹³ The principal sign of this investment is in the unsigned article, whose anonymity testifies to its ostensible objectivity.

¹⁴ Not only does Anderson focus almost exclusively on the consumer—on one who takes communion—he is also mainly interested in what lies *after* the newspaper: the electric age of the telegraph and especially the radio. His is a teleological thesis that looks forward to thoroughgoing capitalism, the mature nation-state, and globalization.

commodified in the new medium. To tell this story, we must begin earlier, after the incunabula, when authors had a stronger sense of what the new medium was capable of, but before the rise of collaboratively authored editorial forms such as Anderson's daily newspaper. In this moment, authors understood their publication through the readily available grammar of the Eucharist, the means by which Christ made himself into a "commodity" for believers everywhere, the very first mass-produced durable whose ubiquity coexisted with its planned obsolescence, the means by which worshippers were motivated to return week after week, year after year.¹⁵

This dissertation suggests that between the miracle of the Eucharist and the commodity of the collaboratively produced newspaper comes a moment in which Christ's subject position does become available to human authors. Surprisingly, this moment comes relatively early in the history of mechanical reproduction—after the period of the incunabula, but well before the advent of the daily newspaper. Long before print created the nation, the seemingly magical ease with which it can be replicated aligned it for some authors with the miracle of the Eucharist, where the priestly transfiguration of the bread into Christ's body propagates the salvific power of the crucifixion to believers everywhere. The defining characteristics of print—namely, theoretically exact replicability and massively increased distributivity—are the same characteristics celebrated by Christ at the Last Supper when he shares his body, and print makes Christ's subject position available to human authors for the first time. This continuity between the Eucharist in its role as a singularly efficacious replicative technology and the printing press reveals a way in which typological amplification led to an increase in authorial presence. In the next four chapters, I consider what it felt like for authors, rather than readers, to have their "exact replicas [...] being consumed," to adapt the Andersonian formulation. Understanding their textual dissemination in terms of presence and the Eucharist, these writers conceptualized their authorship in ways that both extended and capitalized upon the Eucharist's challenge to the assertion that only unique objects can contain presence. Before tracing these conceptualizations in the works of John Foxe, Robert Burton, and John Milton, I first would like to clear the theoretical ground when it comes to a question closely related to Benjamin's thesis: what is the difference between speech, manuscripts, and printed texts when it comes to "presence"?

Presence and the Word

A theology of the Word of God as word will not of course explicate everything, if only because the history of the Word of God among men is not identical with the history of the human word.

—Walter Ong, *The Presence of the Word*, 240

Not only does eucharistic authorship depend much of what we thought we knew about the relationship between presence and mechanical reproduction, it also disrupts

¹⁵ The "multitude of books" is usually understood as a readerly problem; the author's experience has rarely been considered.

how we have come to understand the difference between speech, manuscripts, and printed texts. The primary theorist of the latter differences has long been Walter Ong. For Ong, orality is the Edenic state from which we fell into the deadening effects of literary. While “sight isolates, sound incorporates. Whereas sight situates the observer outside what he views, at a distance, sounds pours into the hearer” (*Orality and Literacy* 72). Writing turns communication into an alienated thing; spoken language, on the other hand, involves a “special relationship to our sense of presence”:

When we speak of a presence in its fullest sense—the presence which we experience in the case of another human being, which another person exercises on us and which no object or living being less than human can exercise—we speak of something that surrounds us, in which we are situated. [...] Being in is what we experience in a world of sound. (*The Presence of the Word* 130)

In Ong’s theological account, the shift from speech to writing accompanies the secularization of the world, a process that intensifies with the invention of the printing press, a machine that completes the “spatialization” of sound by literally locking words into place in the typographic *forme* (*The Presence of the Word* 47).¹⁶

Harold Love describes this thesis as a “heady synthesis of Thomistic theology, structuralist anthropology and McLuhanite media analysis” (141). It can also be characterized as simply Platonic. Ong’s complaint about the deadening effect of writing rehearses that of Socrates in the *Phaedrus*. In the story Socrates recounts to Phaedrus, Theuth, the inventor of writing, tells Thamus, the king of Egypt, that writing is an improving “potion [*pharmakon*] for memory and for wisdom” (274e). Thamus famously asserts the opposite, claiming that writing diminishes the memory by encouraging one to offload the task of remembering onto books, which are external to the self. Writing also lacks interactivity, disembodiment both the speaker and the hearer, and it circulates at random, leaving the author unable to control its reception and interpretation. For Socrates, nothing can replace what Phaedrus describes as the “living, breathing discourse of the man who knows, of which the written one can be fairly called an image” (276a).

At the dawn of the digital age, Ong was deeply invested in a new era of secondary orality in which radio, television, the telephone, and the barely envisioned internet offers a new sense of presence, this time across great distance:

the increased sense of human presence enjoyed by man today is thus filled with promise. [...] time and place as foci of the human life-world have been complemented and in part supplanted by the sense of conscious interchange of man with man, a sense of human presence, of intersubjectivity, of psychic participation even with persons in the most distant lands. [...] modern means of *communication* [...] have annihilated *time* and *space*. It is not merely that time and space are lesser handicaps than they used to be. More

¹⁶ While Ong acknowledges the problems associated with reducing “religion to a particular condition of the sensorium” he nevertheless proceeds to do so in describing Hebrew’s “highly auditory sensorium” (*The Presence of the Word* 9).

than this, time and space no longer carry the psychological weight they once carried. Presence has penetrated through them and come to outweigh them as never before. In the totality of being which is the universe, physical and conscious conjointly, despite the known immensity of this universe, time and space bulk smaller and the sense of human presence and of shared consciousness immeasurably larger than ever before. (*The Presence of the Word* 312)¹⁷

As his utopian language makes clear, Ong had extremely high hopes for the future. He thought that the technology would undo the alienation caused by writing and especially, by the printing press, an invention that seemed anything but revolutionary. The new oral technologies, on the other hand, were for Ong nothing less than a way of going back in time—of undoing the alienating effects of the fall and bringing people back into communion with one another. One might say that his excitement about the future was neo-Edenic.

Ong's vision of a new electronic Golden Age is disrupted by his inconsistent description of the "presence" that secondary orality promises to restore. On the one hand, presence is the empirical difference between speech and writing. Presence in this case is empirical, a measure of physical proximity at a specific moment in time. Speech manifests presence because it involves sound waves produced by one body entering and inhabiting the body of another.¹⁸ This claim about the difference between speech and writing is good as far it as it goes. Ong is on much shakier argumentative grounds, however, when he extrapolates from this empirical difference between speech and all types of writing to describe an imagined difference between manuscripts and printed texts:

manuscripts, with their glosses or marginal comments (which often got worked into the text in subsequent copies) were in dialogue with the world outside their own borders. They remained closer to the give-and-take of oral expression. The readers of manuscripts are less closed off from the author, less absent, than are the readers of those writing for print. (*Orality and Literacy* 132–133)¹⁹

¹⁷ The network that would become the internet had barely been invented. It was called the "ARPANET," a network whose first public message would be sent in 1968, the year after Ong's *The Presence of the Word* was published.

¹⁸ Hearing has advantages over both sight and touch:

To test the physical interior of an object as interior, no sense works so directly as sound. The human sense of sight is adapted best to light diffusely reflected from surfaces. [...] The eye does not perceive an interior strictly as an interior: inside a room, the walls it perceives are still surfaces, outsides.

Taste and smell are not much help in registering interiority or exteriority. Touch is, but touch partially destroys interiority in the process of perceiving it. [...] Hearing can register interiority without violating it. (*Orality and Literacy* 71)

¹⁹ Print "situates words in space more relentlessly than writing ever did. Writing moves words from the sound world to a world of visual space, but print locks words into position in this space" (*Orality and Literacy* 121). Ong's mistake lies in misconstruing the residual orality manifested in manuscript culture as a sign that manuscripts themselves were more oral than print: "Manuscript cultures remained largely

Here Ong describes marginal annotations as one half of a “dialogue” between author and reader. The slip into metaphor reveals a dubious analogy in which an imagined difference between manuscripts and printed texts conflated with the real difference between speech and writing. After all, Ong’s suggestion that the annotated page is like a dialogue could be just as persuasively made (if not more persuasively made) about printed polemic.²⁰ To make a similar argument about printed polemic would perpetuate Ong’s larger mistake, however, reifying what is, in the end, only an analogy. If presence is physical proximity and not just a feeling, then there is no demonstrable difference between the presence contained in manuscripts and the presence contained in printed texts. Neither manuscripts nor printed texts contain their author’s presence, and to think otherwise is to confuse the representation of presence with presence itself. In other words, Ong misconstrues manuscript culture’s place between oral and print culture as evidence that the ontology of the manuscript lies closer to that of speech than does that the ontology of print.²¹

Although the metonymic connection between writing and the body is more direct than is the case with print (the hand touches the pen, which touches the paper), the hand that writes does not necessarily belong to the author. Furthermore, Cathy Shrank and other critics have shown that the “rhetoric of intimacy” was effectively deployed by *both* manuscript writers and those who wrote for the press (295). Furthermore, under certain circumstances, manuscript writers “attempted to efface the very attributes of intimacy and presence that have become identified with the scribal form.”²² Indeed, “It might therefore be more useful to say that the early moderns subscribed to a *rhetoric* of presence that they developed, perpetuated, and manipulated” (296).²³ What Shrank says gently I would like to

oral-aural even in retrieval of material preserved in texts. Manuscripts were not easy to read, by later typographic standards, and what readers found in manuscripts they tended to commit at least somewhat to memory” (*Orality and Literacy* 119).

- 20 The rapidly conducted, quotation-heavy printed exchanges of prose polemicists bear a closer relation to oral dialogue than do manuscript annotations—annotations that, after all, may never make their way back to the original author. See D.F. McKenzie’s description of how printers “tried to ‘set forth’ in their own terms at least something of the social space of dialogue.” This “alternation of texts and counter-texts” in a “typographic drama” is much older than McKenzie acknowledges (135).
- 21 The rhetorics associated with different media types do intermingle, particularly during periods of technological transition. Marshall McLuhan’s characterization of this co-mingling as that an “interface” or “galaxies” is well known: “two cultures or technologies can, like astronomical galaxies pass through one another without collision; but not without change of configuration” (149). Problems only arise when one uses the “massive oral-aural commitments” of manuscript culture—rhetorical commitments—to make unsustainable claims about how “presence” manuscripts contain relative to print (Ong, “Wired for Sound” 246).
- 22 As Shrank’s use of the present tense “have” registers, we continue to attribute intimacy and presence to scribal texts.
- 23 Harold Love registers and then ignores Ong’s confusion of oral tropes in manuscripts and presence in his important account of scribal publication, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*: “The notion of ‘presence,’ whether or not regarded as philosophically sustainable, provides us with a method of discriminating between modes of signification as being more or less distanced from a *presumed* source of self-validating meaning” (144). Having registered but not

say more strongly: there is no difference between manuscripts and printed texts when it comes to the author's physical presence. Both media evince the absence of the author, a fact that no amount of "intimation" can change in the slightest. All writing testifies to and compensates for the fact that addresser and addressee are not face to face. The "presence" we identify with handwritten documents is nothing more than a sign of our nostalgia for an obsolete medium.²⁴

In the early modern period, such nostalgia was often motivated. The first few centuries after the invention of the printing press are awash with expressions such as that of John Donne, here writing in a Latin letter to a Doctor Andrews:²⁵

What the printing-presses bring to birth with inky travail we take as it comes; but what is written out by hand is in greater reverence. [...] A book which, if it has been baptised merely in the blood of the printing-press, goes to shelves resigned to moth and dust; let it but come to us written by the pen, and it is received with reverence and wings its way to the high-perched cases which shrine the ancient Fathers. (Trans. Garrod 40)²⁶

elaborated this small doubt about the viability of Ongian presence, Love goes on to suggest that a spectrum exists within speech itself to the extent that the capacity of an utterance to invoke the authority of presence is exercised at descending levels of plausibility by the sound of one's own voice, by that of another person addressing one directly, by a voice heard over the telephone, by words heard indistinctly over a public address system in a busy airline terminal, by the raised pitch levels of a diver speaking from within a diving helmet, by the voices of the dead from old recordings, and so on. Moreover, there is a point on the spectrum at which certain forms of writing might be regarded as bearing stronger intimations of presence than certain forms of speech. (144)

As his choice of words such as "authority," "plausibility," and "intimations" makes clear, Love's differentiation of various types of media is based on the rhetorical investments of the communicants, rather than something in medium itself.

²⁴ It is telling that no one spoke of the "presence" of manuscripts prior to the invention of the printing press. Wendy Wall suggests that: "Attempts in this period to reflect and conserve manuscript features were not only rhetorical. The mid-sixteenth century also saw a burgeoning endeavor to mimic in the dedicatory epistles of printed works the material form of manuscript letters" (306). The opposite of "rhetorical," then, is not "actual," but rather "commercial."

²⁵ Not Lancelot Andrews. See H.W. Garrod, "The Latin Poem Addressed By Donne to Dr. Andrews," *The Review of English Studies* 21, no. 81 (January 1945), 39.

²⁶ Edmund Blunden's better-known (and pithier) verse translation of the passage omits the birth metaphor:

What printing-presses yield we think good store
But what is writ by hand we reverence more:
A book that with this printing blood is dyed
On shelves for dust and moths is set aside,
But if't be penned it wins a sacred grace
And with the ancient fathers take its place. (11)

Donne's attempt to differentiate writing and print applies the same metaphors to both forms, acknowledging print's sacrificial potential even as it seeks to downplay it. The shift in register from birth to baptism is striking, a product of the author's effort to register the deluge of ink put forth by the press. Ann and John Thompson's *Shakespeare: Meaning & Metaphor* offer one account of the transposition of writing metaphors for the press in what they call the "sex is printing metaphor" (181). This topos plays with the older metaphor of inscription in which the male writer is figured as a pen and the female lover as

Donne's complaint is mere a drop in the bucket; many early moderns gave invested descriptions of the relative intimacies of speech, manuscripts, and printed texts.²⁷ The problem with these anecdotal expressions is that they are investments in the notion of presence, not evidence of presence itself.²⁸ Far from delineating any of the actual differences between scribal and typographical publication, these highly reflexive reflections construct differences of their own making, working to describe the presence that the author either feels or wishes others to feel. Critics register these investments but generally fail to fully identify them as representations when they employ weaselly terms such as "scribal intimacy" and "residual orality."²⁹ While presence can be measured empirically, intimacy is a fiction constructed by parties who as often as not have something specific to gain by evoking the feeling in their readers. Donne, for example, has a vested

an inscribed page. In the typographic version of the metaphor, the press's ability to produce an unlimited number of identical copies is understood as the man's ability to produce an exact reproduction of himself—an ability that Leontes praises in *The Winter's Tale*: "Your Mother was most true to wedlock, Prince / For she did print your Royal Father off, / Conceiving you" (*The Norton Shakespeare* 5.1.123–125). The fullest account of this type of metaphorical transposition between media remains Wendy Wall's *The Imprint of Gender* (Ithaca, 1993). See also Jonathan Goldberg in *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* (Stanford, 1990) and Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts*, 150–152.

27 Shrank's article contains many more examples of the "latent intimacy of the scribal form," as does Harold Love's *The Culture and Commerce of Texts* (300). Alexandra Walsham and others have shown how some preachers were quick to invoke the difference between the liveliness of oral communication and the deadening effect of putting that communication into print. In their attempts to associate print with absence, scholars often cite the accounts of preachers, playwrights, and lawyers—those in professions whose primary mode of communication is oral. John Marston apologizes to the reader of the 1604 printing of *The Malcontent*, asking that "unhandsome shape which this trifle in reading presents, may be pardoned, for the pleasure it once afforded you, when it was presented with soule of lively action" (A2). By the mid-seventeenth century, these types of complaints were clichés; as D.F. Mackenzie has noted, "almost every printed sermon in the first half of the century has something to say by way of apology for the loss of the preacher's presence" (91). In 1644, Peter Smith expressed regret that his printed sermon "will now want that little life it seem'd to have when it was uttered viva voce" (A2), and in 1645, John Ward noted that his sermon, "as to the life of it, is scarcely the same in the hearing, and in the reading" (A2). Walsham suggests that at least some Protestant ministers were slow or even reluctant to embrace print as a proselytizing tool, "regarding the mechanical press as the handmaiden of the pulpit and books as a poor substitute for sermons. The 'dead letter' of a dusty tome on a shelf, protested dozens of dedicatory epistles, was vastly 'lesse effectual' than the living, spoken Word. Typography could never capture its quasi-sacramental and kinetic qualities" (76). While preachers and playwrights acknowledge the difference between listening to a sermon and reading one, in general, they do not differentiate between handwritten and printed texts.

28 That is, these anecdotes are representations, not empirical data demonstrating the ontological difference between scribal and typographic modes of publication. Not only is the superior presence of the handwritten text an illusion, it is an illusion made possible by print. Prior to the invention of the press, manuscripts were largely understood as the compensatory prostheses that they are. It is only later—after the invention of the printing press—that the manuscript became invested with presence.

29 "Intimacy" is, of course, a representation rather than an ontological state. Shrank suggests that Ong's promotion of presence as "a quality inherent in the chirographical form" overlooks "the possible functionality and anonymity of manuscripts and the fact that some hands were more personalized than others" (296).

interest in making his manuscripts seem intimate, for to do so is to make his writing more efficacious with the potential patron who reads it. For the authors I consider in the chapters that follow, presence and intimacy are communal, diffused to a multitude of anonymous readers.

“Beyng yet alyue”: John Foxe’s Eucharistic Style

The punishments of them that be dead, be wholsome documents to men that be aliue.

—John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* [...] (1583) 12.2104

There is so hot a summer in my bosome,
That all my bowels crumble vp to dust:
I am a scribled forme drawne with a pen
Vpon a Parchment, and against this fire
Do I shrinke vp.

—William Shakespeare, *King John* 5.7.30-34

Questions about John Foxe’s style in the *Actes and Monuments* have never been thought to be particularly important; even for literary critics, historical concerns about his book have always loomed much larger.³⁰ Despite all the attention that has been paid to Foxe’s skill as a narrative historian, it is a rare critic who admits to serious interest in his prose. Part of the reason for this neglect is found in the multivocality of his book, which patches together a multitude of voices and genres.³¹ Another reason is that the author himself encourages this neglect, proudly suggesting that his apparent failure to polish his prose is a virtue rather than a defect. Writing in the second edition, Foxe fends off an attack from “Alan Cope,” who is actually Nicholas Harpsfield, English Catholic and author of *Dialogi sex contra summi pontificatus, monasticae vitae, sanctorum, sacrarum imaginum oppugnatores, et pseudomartyres* (1566), a thousand-page polemic whose targets include both the *A&M* and its Latin predecessors:³²

If you (maister Cope) or any other can better my rude doynge, and finde

³⁰ In the twentieth century, these historical concerns were of two main types. The first, rooted in Victorian confessional debates, focused on the trustworthiness of Foxe’s facts, usually concluding that according to contemporary historiographic standards, he is generally reliable. For an account of the Victorian debates, see D. Andrew Perry, “John Foxe’s Victorian Reception.” The second, less preoccupied with questions of veracity than purpose, sought to understand the changes that were made in the four editions published during Foxe’s lifetime in the context of Elizabeth’s long reign—a task that often drew attention to Foxe’s rewriting of both English and ecclesiastical history.

³¹ As Evelyn B. Tribble observes, “No page is more peopled than those in John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* [...] Foxe orchestrates a wide variety of materials to construct his narrative. [...] The effect is of a polyphony of voices—the interrogator, the “unlearned” believer, the scholar, the royal proclamation—guided from the margin and within the text by Foxe himself” (112–113). In their recent article, “The Style of Authorship in John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*,” Thomas S. Freeman and Susannah Brietz Monta suggest that it is in fact “futile” to discuss questions about Foxe’s authorship “on the basis of prose style” (524). While it is true that the multivocality of Foxe’s book presents a number of challenges, it does not follow that we cannot assess Foxe’s prose style on the basis of what he did write—Freeman and Monta go on to read “the rhetoric of Foxe’s prefaces” (526). As we shall see, Foxe also “peoples” his pages in another, more literal, way as well.

³² Freeman notes that Harpsfield’s attacks were in large part responsible for the great expansion of *A&M* between 1563 and 1570 editions. See “Harpsfield, Nicholas (1519–1575)” *ODNB*.

thynges out more finelye, or truely, withall my hart, I shall reioyse with you & with the common wealth, takyng profit by you. In perfection of writing, of wyt, cunnynge, dexteritie, fines or other indumentes required in a perfect writer, I contend neither with you, nor any other. I graunt that in a laboured story, such as you seme to require, conteyning such infinite varietie of matter, as this doth, much more time would be required: but such time as I had, that I did bestow, if not so laboriously as other could, yet as diligently as I might. But here partly I here what you wil sai: I shuld haue taken more laisure, & done it better. I graunt & confesse my fault, suche is my vyce, I can not sit all the day (maister Cope) finyng and mynsing my letters, and coming my head, & smothing my self al the day at the glas of Cicero. (1570 5.712)³³

Foxe's response to Harpfield's complaint about historical errors in the text confuses historical accuracy with rhetorical polish. Protesting that the book's "infinite varietie of matter" leaves him without time to burnish his sentences to a Ciceronian gleam, Foxe deliberately misconstrues Harpfield's demand for accuracy as a call for a baroque or "laboured" style. The exigencies of time notwithstanding, Foxe's "rough" style also serves to favorably align him with the modest stylistic gifts of Eusebius, Constantinian bishop of Caesarea and author of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, as well as distance him from the more recent (and labored) stylings of Jacobus de Voragine, author of the *Aurea Legenda*, a book whose fanciful hagiographies were published in English translation by William Caxton in 1483 and had long been the subject of Protestant complaint.³⁴

But despite this prominence of place in the author's self-fashioning, the supposed gracelessness of Foxe's prose has been the source of little critical comment. Most literary critics offer silent assent to his self-appraisal; others, such as C.S. Lewis, simply call him "drab."³⁵ For Lewis, Foxe's drabness is historical, a consequence of the fact that Foxe wrote

33 All quotations from the *Actes and Monuments* are from *The Acts and Monuments Online* (hereafter TAMO) (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011), available at <<http://www.johnfoxe.org>>. Page numbers are the originals (rather than the modern repagination of TAMO). Editions of the *Actes and Monuments* are identified by year throughout (1563, 1570, etc.).

34 For an article-length treatment of Foxe's vision of himself as a second Eusebius and depiction of Elizabeth as a new Constantine, see Gretchen E. Minton, "'The same cause and like quarell': Eusebius, John Foxe, and the Evolution of Ecclesiastical History." See also Thomas S. Freeman's full treatment in his Ph.D. dissertation, "'Great Searching out of bookes and auctors': John Foxe as an Ecclesiastical Historian" (Rutgers, May 1995). Freeman argues that Eusebius's text provided Foxe with both a "stylistic model" and a model for "research and historical methodology," ultimately concluding that Foxe's "superficially 'modern'" emphasis on "documentation over rhetorical elegance and [...] reliance on archival research" is less the result of his imitation of ancient models than a specific strategy enacted in "response to sixteenth-century polemical, didactic and pastoral concerns" (ii). Freeman also traces Eusebius's "total break from the conventions of classical historical writing"—writing in which, as Pauline Allen describes, "historical method and verbal elegance were inseparable" (Freeman 46; Allen 49). For more on Eusebius' break from the standards of Greek historiography, see Arnaldo Momigliano's "Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century A.D."

35 Lewis places the "neo-Latin" Foxe in the section on "Drab and Transitional Prose," suggesting that his "English style has no high merits. The sentences have not energy to support their great length" (300).

in advance of the great flowering of English prose. Somewhat more recently, Helen White and Warren Wooden, perhaps taking their cue from the author himself, have come to understand the author's unadorned style as a source of strength. White praises Foxe's skill in selecting "striking and dramatic detail," suggesting that it makes his storytelling ability "one of the greatest of a great age" (160).³⁶ Echoing this praise, Wooden claims that "Foxe's genius in the presentation of the figures is to bring them alive" (60).

Lewis, White, and Wooden are each persuasive enough, raising the question of how Foxe manages to be both drab and lively at the same time. While the following is an unusual argument for a literary critic to make, I would like to suggest that it is in fact less *how* Foxe presents historical material than what this material *becomes* once it is incorporated into his text that makes the Marian sections of the book so gripping.³⁷ While Foxe's subject matter in these sections is exciting in its own right, the thing that makes the book come "alive" is found in his almost miraculous transformation of what would otherwise be merely linguistic representation of the past into the past itself. Foxe's constant references to his own narration, combined with a declared indifference to his actual prose, conspire together to make the book itself feel like the arena for the continual performance of the narrated action. Foxe is not self-referential for aesthetic effect, nor is he terribly invested in being the reader's boon companion. In this chapter, I argue that the vitality of Foxe's prose is less a product of his eye for detail than of his discovery of a new incarnational technology for collective remembrance in the form of print. Foxe refuses to concede that the historian merely represents the past, materializing it in the pages of his book. Flouting Paul Ricoeur's assertion that the historian must work from the "trace," he does not approach the past as an "insolvent debtor" but rather writes it back into existence (1). This conversion of ineffable history into the real presence of the page is made possible by print, an amplifying technology that reifies and disseminates the martyr's presence to

³⁶ While White praises Foxe for selecting the right detail, the author of that detail is usually not Foxe, but rather the historical actor. While many of the stories Foxe tells are gripping, his sensuous presentation of these stories is rarely the reason that this is so. The emblematic details for which White praises Foxe so highly are often the details that mattered long before he got to them, and these same details are often emphasized by his Catholic opponents, albeit for different rhetorical ends. While it is far from clear that vividness that White identifies is a product of the author's style rather than of the martyrological event itself, White makes a point of expressing her admiration for Foxe's "genius for the full sensuous presentment of a situation that will bring it to life in the reader's imagination" (161). White's lack of clarity on this point is connected to Foxe's choice of subject matter: early-modern executions were famously subject to manipulation by the authorities and the condemned, both of whom were eager to impose their own scripts.

³⁷ D.R. Woolf traces the turn from providential, unified, history to individual Marian presences in the 1570 edition, observing that the common running header "Actes and Monuments / Of the Church" disappears at

precisely the points at which Foxe's account is ceasing to become the tale of the church through its elite and their enemies and is instead growing populated by the common folk whose presence on the stage threatens to stretch the boundaries of the historical. From the margins, the individual story now moves into the center of the page, and the providential-historical connection is from this point on a subdued presence rather than a driving narrative engine. (246)

As we shall see, this shift of "common folk" into the "center of the page" is no mere figure.

the community of the faithful.³⁸ This mode of remembrance is fundamentally ironic, predicating textual liveliness on the deaths of the subjects it narrates.³⁹ This intersection of narrative life and historical death is no mere coincidence, but rather the signature feature of a narrative method whose ability to produce vibrancy, or presence, is contingent on the reiteration and rehearsal of historical killing.

The text's mobilization of both real and imagined pain for rhetorical ends is strikingly similar to the strategy enacted by the Marian regime that Foxe condemns. Perhaps more than any other mode of execution, burning at the stake seeks to convert the "absolute pain" of the condemned into the "fiction of absolute power," epitomizing a process that Elaine Scarry calls "analogical verification" (27):

the felt-characteristics of pain—one of which is its compelling vibrancy or its incontestable reality or simply its "certainty"—can be appropriated away from the body and presented as the attributes of something else (something which by itself lacks those attributes, something which does not in itself appear vibrant, real, or certain). (13–14)

In Elaine Scarry's important account of the semiotics of torture, the ability to lift the "felt-attributes of pain [...] into the visible world" and attach them "to a referent other than the human body" is a two-sided coin with "radically sadistic" and "radically benign" potentials. While for Scarry these potentials are "not simply distinct but mutually exclusive," this distinctness is blurred in Foxe's text, where the historical pain originally produced in a terrible display of magisterial power is instrumentalized by the author as a moment of sympathy that nevertheless recapitulates the punishment (13).⁴⁰

In the reformation context in which Foxe writes, this reifying methodology is best called by the other name Scarry gives it, "analogical substantiation." Scarry inadvertently alludes to a process whose historical roots extend beyond the scope of her book. The sadism and benignity of Foxe's conversion of historical pain into an expression of piety are rooted in the structure of the Eucharist itself. Taking Christ's historical sacrifice at the hands of the Roman magistrate and making it into a gift, the Eucharist reenacts that sacrifice in the present. Confounding Scarry's assertion that the analogical substantiation of pain can proceed only in one of two directions, the *Actes and Monuments* follows the structure inaugurated by Christ at the Last Supper, where his proleptic conversion of his soon-to-be tortured body into salvific bread epitomizes and confounds the version of

³⁸ The consequences of this reappropriation are significant and intimately related to what I would like to suggest is Foxe's real achievement. This achievement lies in the extent of the author's conviction that his text contains historical events rather than merely represents them. Foxe's incarnational style is testimony to his certainty on this point, an expansive style only being necessary if one writes diegetically rather than mimetically.

³⁹ Though White's repeated elliptical references to "the horribleness of his material" or simply "the horrible" would seem to register this irony, neither White's and Wooden's accounts add explicitly to it (161).

⁴⁰ For Scarry, this is the difference between the work of the torturer, or soldier, and the "carefully controlled" work of the "patient, physician, Amnesty worker, lawyer, [or] artist" (13).

torture that Scarry describes.⁴¹

The transubstantiating power of Foxe's text is made possible by print. In the remainder of this chapter, I argue that Foxe's mobilization of this new literary technology for collective remembrance creates a text that is more-than-mimetic, manifesting the historical dead as real textual presences whose sacrifices are reprised in the moment of reading. Foxe's frequently literal conflation of historical and narrational events—his confounding of the conventional differences between time and space, verbs and nouns—is the primary sign of this investment; commingling mimesis and diegesis, Foxe makes to erase the difference between the historically real and its representation in text. Such erasure is not limited to the martyrs, but also extends to the Catholic persecutors that Foxe holds responsible for the deaths of his compatriots. In a mode that extends to martyr and magistrate alike, Foxe fixes historical deaths as endlessly performable events in the textual reliquary that is the "Actes and Monuments," a work whose dually verbal and nounal title anticipates the substantiating work done by the author inside its pages. This transformation of the historical past into textual present also has consequences for the author himself: the systematic conflation of his book and his physical body opens up a new theater of martyrdom as Foxe figures polemical attacks on his book as physical threats to his body.

Particularly in the Marian section of his text, the uncanny similarity of Foxe's reiterative method to transubstantiation and the traditional mass is all the more striking for lengthy condemnation of them at the beginning of Book 10. As for most Protestants, Foxe's problem with the Catholic mass lies in its repetition of what he understood as a sacrifice that was once and for all time. In a section that only appears in the editions of 1563 and 1583, Foxe calls the mass "clouted & patched vp of diuers additions."⁴² As he goes on, however, this initial complaint about supplementarity fluctuates into one about repetition:

To reiterate a thing once done, for the atteinig or accomplishing of the ende wherefore it was begon, declareth the imperfection of the same thing before. [...] The Masses Priestes do reiterate the sacrifice of Christ once done for the end wherefore it was begonne [...] Ergo, Masse Priestes make the sacrifice of Christe to be vnperfect, and so are they iniurious to the sacrifice of Christ.
(1583 10.1397)

⁴¹ For a different reading of Scarry and Foxe, see Janel M. Mueller, "Pain, persecution, and the construction of selfhood," *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England* (Cambridge, 1997), 161–187. Mueller argues that Foxe's accounts challenge the "transhistorical validity" of Scarry's description of the structure of torture: "In place of unmade selves, voices, or worlds, Foxe's narratives record triumphant makings on the part of the condemned heretics, and, on the part of their prosecutors (or persecutors), correspondent unmakings" (162). This account tends to confuse the momentary resistance of the martyr with ultimate resistance; however strong the martyr is in the moment, she is still unmade, at least from the perspective of the magistrate. More crucial, however, is Mueller's neglect of the fact that both Foxe and the magistrate participate in what Scarry calls "analogical verification"—that is, both parties make something of the martyr, however much that something may differ.

⁴² According to *TAMO*, the preface was omitted from the 1570 and 1576 editions in an effort to manage their size.

Again, this complaint is utterly conventional, and Foxe quotes other Protestants through the passage to help prove his point. The presence of the passage here—at the beginning of Book 10—is ironic, given how readily its logic can be applied to Foxe’s reiteration of Protestant deaths in the pages that follow.

While Foxe makes no claim for the martyrs’ perfection, he, like Christ, recognizes that history requires reification—the past must be substantiated, to use Scarry’s vocabulary. Eucharistically transforming the ineffable it into a revived textual present, Foxe preserves the otherwise ephemeral martyrological moment in print, materializing it as a thing that can be endlessly called up by readers. While Foxe would have disavowed this structural similarity between his eucharistic style and a rite he abhorred, the methods and risks of the two modes of substantiation are the same.⁴³ Before turning to Foxe’s accounts of the martyrs, however, I would like to begin elsewhere, with his treatment of Catholics who were neither martyred nor tortured, for their freedom from historical punishment helps make their punishment in text that much easier to discern. In a book that so consistently intermingles historical and narrative punishments, the best place to begin is elsewhere, with the author’s description of the fates of those he holds most responsible for the killing of his friends and peers but who did not themselves undergo martyrdom.

Dangerous Rehearsals: The Marian Catholics

In his descriptions of the lives of Catholics such as Stephen Gardiner and Edmund Bonner, Foxe leverages the presence-making ability of print to enact punishments in real time. One of the Marian Catholics that he takes up at greatest length is Edmund Bonner (c. 1500-1569). Foxe describes the positions that Bonner holds under Henry VIII and Edward VI, but whatever the period being discussed, the text is inflected with knowledge of Bonner’s future actions under Mary. At times, Foxe mentions Bonner in his accounts of periods in which Bonner was not even alive, as is the case in the account of Lollard priest William Thorpe, where Bonner appears in the margin as a type of vindictive persecution.⁴⁴ This type of anticipation of Bonner’s future cruelty under Mary becomes more frequent in the sections that cover Edward’s short reign, a period in which Bonner spent much of his time imprisoned in Marshalsea.

In general, Foxe is ambivalent about Edward’s tenure, which serves as a prolepsis of

⁴³ The vocabulary of reiteration and rehearsal—the vocabulary that is so central to the Eucharistic debates—is also the vocabulary employed by Foxe when he describes the dangers of narrative repetition. Here he speaks of John Glover, a man who did *not* undergo physical martyrdom:

And this I rehearse of hym, not so much to open his woundes and sorowes, as for that by hys example all we wyth hym may glorify the sonne of God, who suffereth none to be tempted aboute his strength, but so tempereth and seasoneth the asperitie of euylles [...] that we may beare it, but also turneth it to our further cōmodity then we can thinke. (1570 11.1885)

⁴⁴ Beside the description of Thorpe’s examination by Thomas Arundel, Henry IV’s archbishop, a marginal note observes that “Yet this bishop plucketh hym not by the beard, nor burneth not of hys hande, as Boner did” (1570 5.657). Here Foxe looks forward to Bonner’s infamous encounter with Thomas Tomkyns, where the Bishop orders the weaver’s “ryghte hande to be put into the burnyng flame, supposyng that beyng made afrayde by the great payne and greefe, he woulde leaue of the defence of the doctrine that he had receyued” (1563 5.112).

both the joy of Elizabeth's accession and the misery of her sister's intervening one. While Book 9 celebrates a number of Protestant triumphs, such as the repeal of Henry's Statute of Six Articles, it also carefully tracks Bonner's activities, including many of the proceedings in which he is examined before Somerset and the Privy Council. Large parts of these latter sections consist of wholesale quotation of the letters sent between Bonner and the council, as well as of the conciliar injunctions that were eventually served upon the bishop. The attention that Foxe gives these materials is incommensurate with Bonner's importance at the time, again reflecting the author's recognition of the bishop's future prominence.

This sort of attention to a person's story prior to their becoming better known is of course a historiographic necessity. In this case, however, Foxe's account is complicated by his obvious enjoyment of the bishop's punishments at the council's hands. This pleasure is anachronistic, depending on a sense of justice done for deeds that Bonner has yet to commit. More than merely passive *schadenfreude*, Foxe's pleasure manifests itself formally as a punitive syntactical treatment that intensifies the Privy Council's original and instructs the reader to relish it. The emplotment of this authorially enhanced punishment begins with the archival materials cited above and culminates in the command given by the Privy Council to Bonner to "abyde and keepe residence in your house there [in London], as in the Citie, Sea, and principal place of your Dioces, and none other where for a certaine tyme, vntill you shalbe otherwise licenced by vs." At this moment, Foxe abandons citation and concludes the section in his own voice:

And thus hauyng brought Byshop Boner home to his owne house, their to leaue him a while to take hys ease in his owne lodgyng till we returne to him again, we will in the meane tyme make a litle intercourse into Cornwaile and Deuonshyre to discourse some part of the disordered and disloyall doynge of those men agaynst their so meke and excellent a Prince, hauyng no cause ministred therunto: yea hauyng cause rather to yelde prayse and thankes to the Lord for such a quyet & peaceable Prince in his mercy giuen vnto them.
(1570 9.1534)⁴⁵

Here, in recounting Bonner's house arrest, Foxe conflates historical and narrative time. Having cited the Privy Council's order, he goes on to give an account of rebellions in Cornwall and Devonshire. Before doing so, he enhances the council's historical sanction by adding a syntactical one of his own, meting out a textual punishment that makes the narrative itself into a space in which Bonner is forced to take "hys ease." The textual punishment is predicated on the narrator's freedom from geographical and temporal

⁴⁵ This moment is an extreme intensification of a narrative conceit of which Foxe is fond. An analogous, though more conventional, moment in which he plays with space, time, and text can be found in his recounting of the pause in Protestant burnings that was occasioned by the death of Stephen Gardiner. The interlude leads him to the continent:

NOwe we wyll for a tyme depart, and leaue the coastes and countrie of Englande, wherupon our style hath now long stayed: and with open sayles, as it were folowyng þe tempestes of persecution, passe ouer into Portugale emonges the marchauntes, whereunto William Gardiner, an English man, of necessity calleth me, who was burned in Lishboune the chiefe citie of Portugale, in the yeare of our Lord. 1552. (1563 4.930)

constraint; while Foxe is free to move on to other places and events, the bishop must sit and cool his heels, trapped in house and text. If the reader wishes to confirm the fact of the bishop's imprisonment, she need look no further than the domesticating page on which he has been textually fixed (page 1534 in the 1570 edition).

Foxe does not need to describe Bonner's compliance with the council's command: the text has already confirmed that the historian has moved him from freedom to house arrest. And it is the historian who brings the narrative back to Bonner: having given an account of the "Troubles & Insurrections" in which Devonshire and Cornwall play central roles, Foxe reminds his reader where he left the bishop, i.e. "where wee lefte hym before, that is, in hys owne house, where hee was by the Counsaile commaunded to remaine, as is aboute signified, pag. 1496" (1570 9.1539).⁴⁶ The return to Bonner takes place through the collective effort of a "we" consisting of Foxe and his readers, and Foxe claims that it was this same plural subject who left Bonner in the house constructed for him on page 1496. The shift from the singular to the plural both allows and requires that in the present tense moment of reading, readers participate in the bishop's fate by imaging the historical punishment and reiterating the textual one. Turning the singularity of history into a repeatable grammar, Foxe enhances the damage wrought by the conciliar injunction. Foxe is sufficiently invested in this textual enhancement that he encourages the reader to reenact it, gratuitously offering up a page number in confirmation of Bonner's current location.

The miracle that makes this transposition possible is print, which not allows Bonner's dual punishment to be fixed, indexed, and thus easily repeated, but also dispenses it to a readership that ritually reactivates it as in pleasurable acts of confessionally determined consumption. Yet the image of Bonner, textualized and distributed to the masses, depends on a version of bodily presence that radically opposes Zwingli's ultra-reformed contention that a body can only exist in one place at a time. By making the past present, Foxe contains the past, rather than merely representing it, converting what was previously singular history into endlessly amplifiable material.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ As D.R. Woolf notes, Foxe "repeatedly exercised a narrative freedom of movement that has more in common with romance than with classical historical models" (248). The page number is dropped in 1583: "nowe lette vs returne againe to Boner Byshop of London, where we leaft hym before, that is, in hys owne house, where he was by the Counsaile commaunded to remaine, as is aboute signified" (1583 9.1309).

⁴⁷ "The recusation of the Iudgement of Sir Thomas Smith, made by the Byshop of London the first tyme" similarly convert a textual punishments into a corporeal one. The bulk of the passage contains Bonner's refutation of the judgement that Smith makes against him. Foxe then recounts a conversation between Bonner and Smith in which Bonner says the following:

But the great matter that greueth me, and perceth my hart, is for that this Hooper and such other vyle heretickes and beastes be suffered and licenced to preache at Paules Crosse, & in other places within my Dioces & Cure, most detestably preachyng and railyng at the blessed Sacrament of the aulter, & denying the veritie and presence of Christes true body and bloud to be there, and so infecteth and betrayeth my flocke. (1576 9.1306)

The faithfulness of Foxe's transcription is less important than the marginal note that accompanies it: "Here Boners obedient hart bursteth out" (1576 9.1307). By reversing the directionality of the action (in the note, the heart bursts rather is pierced) and by making Bonner the agent responsible for this bursting

A similar logic governs Foxe's treatment of other Catholics, usually when he describes the end of their lives. Often ridiculed as some of the book's least reliable passages, these descriptions offer insight into the vindictive feeling in the wake of Mary's death and participate in the author's habit of bringing the historical moment forward into the present. As is the case with John Rockwood: "For tediousnes I will rehearse but onely þe horrible end of þe sayd Rockewood þe chief stirrer vp of all the afflictions afore spoken of: who euen to the last breath staryng and ragyng, cried [...] all to late" (1570 8.1445).⁴⁸ The key word here is "rehearse," whose root "herse" (L. *hirpex*, a large rake used as a harrow) manifests itself here in the form of a pen that turns the story over and makes it new, revivifies the persecutor's body in order to confirm and repeat its death, and fixes it in the textual display that is its final earthly destination.⁴⁹

The text's entombing abilities are later confirmed in a passage labeled "A warning to Doctor Boner," where Foxe replaces Gardiner's stone epitaph with a textual one of his own making:⁵⁰

Here I could bringe in the friuolous Epitaph which was made of his death,

(i.e. in Bonner's words, a "great matter" pierces his heart, while in the marginal gloss, the heart does damage to itself), the text literalizes Bonner's figure of speech as proleptic divine retribution.

48 The phrase "For tediousness I will rehearse but onely" is only one part of Foxe's apophatic habit when it comes to Catholic demise. Compare this moment to the one in which he considers the question of Gardiner's deformed feet:

I wil not here speake of that which hath bene constātly reported to me, touchyng the monstrous makyng and mishaped fashion of his feete and toes, the nailes wherof were said not to be like to other mens, but to crooke downeward, & to be sharpe like the clawes of rauening beasts. What his learnyng was in þe Ciuil & Canō law, I haue not to say" (1570 11.1951).

It is telling that the only other appearance of "rauening beasts" in the 1570 edition is found in Book 1's account of the death of Blandina, the second-century French martyr who, "being fastened vpon a stake, was cast to the rauening beasts to be deuoured" (1570 1.70). Foxe's disingenuous disclaimers are in keeping with his usual treatment of miracles, which tends to recount the miracle in full while making it clear that the primary account is not his. At times, the effect is neurotic:

But (as I sayd before) of vncertaine thinges I can speake but vncertaynly. Wherefore as touching the maner and order of his death, how rich he dyed, what wordes he spake, what litle repentaunce hee shewed, whether hee dyed with his tounge swolne and out of his mouth, as Thomas Arundell Archbishop of Caunt. pag. 700. or whethr hee stonke before he dyed, as Cardinall Wolsey dyd, read before pag. 1133. or whether he dyed in dispayre as Latomus and others dyd. &c. all this I referre either to their reportes of whom I heard it, or leaue it to the knowledge of them which know it better. (1570 11.1952)

49 It is instructive to compare this passage to the equivalent passage from the 1576 edition, where "rehearse" is replaced by "induce" and a page number is added:

Further, to returne a little backward to Kyng Henryes tyme, here might be induced also the example of Iohn Rockewood, who in his horrible end, cryed all to late, with the same woordes whiche he had vsed before in persecutyng Gods poore people of Calyce, pag. 1199. (1576 12.1992)

While "rehearse" does reflect its common early modern meaning of "relate," its use throughout the *A&M* tends to be reserved for weightier matters than with verbs such as "tell." It lies, then, somewhere between "reiterate" (the word Foxe uses to describe what Catholics do to Christ's sacrifice during the Mass) and the wholly neutral "tell."

50 If meant as a sincere warning, it was for naught: Bonner died September 5, 1569. The fact that the 1570 edition nevertheless treats him as if he is still alive is no doubt a product of the time it took to go to press.

deused of a Papist for a popish Bishop, but I pretermit it, and in stede thereof I haue here inferred certayne gatheringes out of his Sermons, wordes and wrytinges, wherein may appeare first what an earnest and vehement enemy he was to the Pope if hee would haue bene constant in him selfe.
(1570 11.1952)

Rejecting the papism of the initial effort in stone, Foxe takes “gatheringes” from Gardiner’s writings—writings that epitomize Gardiner to such an extent that inconsistency in them is inconsistency in Gardiner “him selfe.” Having gone on to describe the promised “Matters” exposing Gardiner’s hypocrisy, Foxe summarizes what has been learned, announcing “Here hast thou (good Reader) this stout Prelate of Winch. with all hys properties, doinges, and qualities as in a certaine Anatomie proportioned out vnto thee” (1570 11.1959). Conflating Gardiner’s nounal “properties” and verbal “doings” into a paradoxical figure that is both complete and dissected, Foxe portions Gardiner out to his readership and demands that they judge him by the “fruites” of his vacillation.

Foxe finally kills off the textually resurrected Gardiner for good by providing the long promised (and long delayed) details of his death; announcing his intention “to leaue [Gardiner] to hys iudge, and to let hym go,” Foxe promises to “returne & proceede [...] to prosecute the residue of CHRISTES Martyrs” (1570 11.1959).⁵¹ This release is not merely chronological, a product of historical necessity and the need to move on to subsequent events, it is also spatial. The moment that Foxe releases Gardiner confirms Gardiner’s entombment in text as a series of pages to be referenced, browsed through, and indexed. This textual monumentalization is singular; Foxe later refuses to repeat himself with respect to Gardiner, “Of whose poysoned lyfe and stincking end, for so much as sufficient hath bene touched before pag. 1952. I shall not neede here to make any new rehearsall therof” (1570 12.2298).⁵² Again, the gratuitous employment of the page number confirms the bishop’s textual entombment and invites the reader to verify it in a remarkable exploitation of print’s potential as a presentation technology.⁵³

These textual conversions of Catholic bodies into consumable readerly experiences differ from the Eucharist in that the bodies they propagate are heretical rather than holy. As we shall see, however, Foxe’s method is determined less by the quality of the objects it

51 Foxe’s inability to move past Gardiner and his misdeeds despite multiple promises to do so borders on farce; even this ultimate fragment is prefaced by yet more delay.

52 There are numerous other moments in Foxe refuses to repeat himself and points to a page number instead. Furthermore, entire sections of Book XII consist of indexes in which the reader can look up references to “Gods punishment vpon Persecutors and contemners of his Gospell.” For one particularly vivid example, see John Twyford’s “miserable end” (1576 12.1995 c.f. 12.1251).

53 The page number was updated for both the edition of 1576 (“pag. 1680”) and that of 1583 (“pag. 1786”) (1576 12.1990; 1583 12.2123). Foxe’s practice of fixing bodies in space also extends to Catholics who are not yet dead. In Book XII, he rehearses the punishments of a number of surviving Catholic persecutors. Listing their various punishments, he furthers their infamy by extending their sentences to textual perpetuity: “The residue that remained of the persecutyng Clergy, and escaped the stroke of death, were deprived, and committed to prisons: the Catalogue of whose names here followeth.” The rest of the passage consists of two columns, one listing names and one listing three different locations: “In the tower,” “Ranne away,” and “In the Fleete” (1570 12.2301).

transforms than by its ability to manifest all types of bodies in a corporeal text that can then be distributed to a broad community of readers. This method is consistent and operates irrespective of sympathy or faction.

Prosecuting the Martyrs

The paradoxical moment in which Foxe “releases” Gardiner, confirming his textual imprisonment, is also one of transition in which the author moves from his discussion of Catholic persecutors and returns to the martyrs, as well as to the woodcuts for which the work is most famous. Foxe’s method remains unchanged throughout this transition, as he takes up the persecutory baton dropped in the wake of Gardiner’s death and promises to be led by “the course of these dolefull dayes” and “proceed [...] to prosecute the residue of Christes Martyrs” (1583 II.1794). In doing so, he undertakes to both “persist” in telling the martyrs’s stories (“prosecute,” def. 1a) and “pursue vindictively; to persecute” the martyrs themselves (“prosecute,” def. 7). This second meaning appears further down the same page, where Foxe links narration and persecution:

And thus these foresayde Martyrs of Christ, beeyng brought (as I sayde) to the stake, and there compassed about with a chayne, were burnt and consumed all thre together in one fire at Canterbury, abidyng most patiently their torments, and countyng themselues happy, & blessed of the lord, that they were made worthy to suffer for Christes Gospels sake. (1583 II.1794)

Deictically, the sentence is overdetermined. “Foresaide” and “(as I sayde)” refer to the preceding paragraph’s description of the executions of John Web, George Roper, and Gregory Parke, while “Beeyng brought” is doubly indexical, referring to both the historical moment in which the men were brought to the stake and Foxe’s narrative recapitulation of the same.⁵⁴ This doubling quietly collapses the difference between the historical moment and its textual narration, and the collision of passive and active constructions in repeated phrases such as “beeyng brought (as I sayde)” create the impression that Foxe himself has dragged the men to the site of their deaths in Canterbury.

In the story of Robert Smith, shifts in tense create a similar effect:

Thus hast thou (good Reader) not onely to note, but also to folow in this man, a singular example of Christian fortitude, [...] And as thou seest hym here boldly stand in examination before the Bishoppe and Doctours: so was

⁵⁴ Similar diction governs Foxe’s treatment of hostile witnesses who appear against the martyrs. In a passage that only appears in the 1563 edition, Foxe announces that “as we are come to the publication of the witnesses, beyng in the actes before produced, here to perfourme that we haue so oft promised before, it remaineth nowe to declare and bryng forth all suche the foresayde wytnesses in order, as they were examined” (1563 7.860). “Publication” here is multivalent, referring to both the historical appearance of the witnesses and Foxe’s textualization of the same. Adopting the vocabulary of dramatic performance, Foxe announces the imminent appearance of the witnesses to “perfourme” their part in his history, though he is careful to note that the witnesses were “not all produced and sworne at one tyme (as in the actes doe appeare)” —that is, they depart from their scripts. The net effect of all these puns and plays on “production,” “publication,” and “performance” is a general collapse of difference between legal order, history, the moment of writing, and the moment of reading.

he no lesse comfortable also in the pryson among his felowes. (1583 11.1695)

Foxe's initial acknowledgment of the chronological difference that separates the reader from Smith quickly gives way to contemporaneity in the form of the present tense and the deictic marker "here." Spatially, "here" would seem to point to the woodcut that is present on the same page, but for the fact that the image shows Smith in a prison cell while Foxe would have us see him "boldly stand in examination."⁵⁵ "Here," then, must refer to the previous page, where Foxe has copied out Smith's examination in full (and perhaps, as well, to the episode in general). This conflation of historical time and textual space is structurally analogous to Bonner and Gardiner's hybrid punishments, marking the consistency of the author's effort to understand history through the physical parameters of the book.

Any consideration of the martyrs invariably leads one to the woodcuts and to what has long been intuitively known about his book, and this is that more than anything, including the prose style, it is the woodcuts that make it "lively." Critics are often eager to remind us that these images were collaboratively produced and that much of this collaboration did not involve Foxe.⁵⁶ While this fact is important, it does not imply that prose and image proceeded in ignorance of one another. In fact, the opposite is usually the case—the instance of Robert Smith cited above notwithstanding—and the images and text frequently interact with one another in sophisticated ways.⁵⁷ For the purposes of this

55 The caption of the woodcut reads "A picture describing the maner and place of them which were in bondes for the testimony of the truth, conferring together among themselues."

56 Foxe not produce the woodcuts, and it is unlikely that he commissioned them either. The task fell to his printer, John Day. While the precise history of the woodcuts remains uncertain, the general critical consensus is that most of the illustrations were commissions fulfilled by continental artists fleeing the counter reformation. The extent to which either Foxe or Day had a hand in the design of individual woodcuts is also unclear, though it is certain that they did not make any of the woodcuts themselves. For a summary of the debate, see James Knapp, *Illustrating the Past in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2003): 132-133, Margaret Ashton and Elizabeth Ingram, "The Iconography of the Acts and Monuments," *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, (Aldershot, 1997): 66-142, and Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2011). For an excellent summary of the history of Protestant book illustration, see Andrew Pettegree, "Illustrating the Book: A Protestant Dilemma," *John Foxe and His World* (Aldershot, 2002): 133-144.

57 As James Knapp observes, "not only do the Foxe illustrations mark a high point in the construction of the visual page in sixteenth-century England, the care with which they were coordinated with the text reveals a belief that the images added something valuable to the book" (135). Despite his strong emphasis on the collaborative character of the *A&M*, Knapp's use of the phrase "Foxe's illustrations" troubles the emphasis he places on the fact Foxe did not compose (or likely even choose) the images, testifying yet again to the strength of the coordination between image and text.

But despite the explicitness with which the woodcuts and text reference one another—or perhaps for this reason—critics continue to suffer from a sense that one must be subordinated to the other, usually following what they assume would be good Protestant practice and understanding the image as secondary to the text. This habit has led critics to describe a number of fanciful pedagogies in which Foxe's book teaches the reader to ultimately rely on the text rather than the image.

I am not fully convinced, for example, by the suggestion that the woodcuts draw the reader in, only to redirect her toward the textual account, for this would require a level of compositional foresight that the often hastily constructed text simply does not evince. Knapp argues that the image incompletely

chapter I will mainly focus on what Ruth Luborsky calls “small non-narrative repetitive ones of martyrs.” Unlike the “announcement” and “narrative” cuts, these images are relatively simple, consisting of five central elements: the martyr, the stake, faggots, flames, and smoke.⁵⁸ In some of these images, the martyr speaks by way of a banderole or gesture.⁵⁹ These woodcuts are synchronic; tightly bound by frames that hew closely to the martyr’s body, they deprive the viewer of context.⁶⁰ The near-identicalness of these woodcuts testifies to D.R. Woolf’s contention that “If there is a Burkean ‘master-trope’ underpinning the *Acts and Monuments* [sic], it is certainly metaphor, the figure of sameness” (258).⁶¹ These woodcuts’ constrictive framing also reflects the xylographer’s attempt to depict the

emblemizes the narrative, enacting a strategy in which the reader is driven to the textual account in order to find the information that will allow her to successfully interpret the emblem. I do not think that this is incorrect, exactly, though it misconstrues the limit of the woodcut’s ability to convey narrative as a deliberate strategy. If the inadequacy of the image is what motivates its inclusion, one wonders if the better lesson would be to leave it out altogether. As Evenden and Freeman note, book illustration in England was operating at an “extraordinary propitious moment”; Calvinist iconophobia increased rapidly after 1580, “with realistic religious pictures being a particular casualty” (225).

58 All of these terms are Luborsky’s. Most of the “small non-narrative repetitive [woodcuts] of martyrs” appear for the first time in the second edition of 1570 and, as Luborsky notes, these images of “icon-like martyrs are repeated and are ordinarily reidentified on repetition and reuse” (68). The boiled-down simplicity of these images give material form to what D.R. Woolf suggests is Foxe’s narrative strategy: “By localizing his characters in time and space, and by bringing out their differences in circumstances, education, social degree, and occupation, Foxe was able to demonstrate to the reader that these were mere accidents, external features that conceal inner similarities” (264). Ashton and Ingram make a similar suggestion, arguing that the images “could become mental references for users of the book (not necessarily readers), implanting generic martyr icons in the memory, as earlier generations had implanted icons of saints” (80).

King also calls these woodcuts that “undergo repetition” but “undergo a degree of individuation through the use of changeable captions and type settings” “non-narrative” (193–194). Evenden and Freeman are content to leave this group as part of what they call the “narrative woodcuts,” but they have virtually nothing to say about these small woodcuts that lack historical and identifying features. For reasons I will make clear below, I ultimately disagree with the adjective “non-narrative.” While Luborsky suggests that “the images of anonymous martyrs burning at the stake become cumulatively affective as semi-icons,” this label does not get to the heart of how these small generic woodcuts operate, especially in relation to the text that accompanies them (366). For more on the other types of woodcuts, see Luborsky 66ff and Evenden and Freeman 200–203.

59 John Rogers declares “Lorde receiue my Spirite,” Laurence Saunders cries “Welcome lyfe,” and John Hooper, armless, asks “Lord Iesu receiue my soule,” while Thomas Tomkyns, William Hunter, and John Laurence raise their hands, either in prayer or toward heaven, conveying physically what others convey in words.

60 There are exceptions to this mode. “The description of the horrible burning of Iohn Badby, and how he was vsed at his death,” has as much in common with the narrative prefatory images described above as it does with prototypical non-narrative ones such as that of William Sawtre. Like the image of Sawtre, Badby’s woodcut focuses on his burning figure, and the accompanying banderole, “Mercy Lord Iesu Christ, mercy,” corresponds to the instantaneous moment of translation in which he gives up his earthly body. These synchronic elements only make up part of the image, however. Badby is also surrounded by figures whose presences correspond to specific moments in the narrative account. On Badby’s left is the Prince of Wales (later Henry V), a man who had previously “admonished and counselled [Badby].” On his right is William Courtenay, then chancellor of Oxford, who “preached vnto him, and enfourmed hym of

ephemeral moment that lies at the heart of martyrdom—the moment at which the body of the condemned is destroyed and the martyr is born. It is no coincidence that the moment that these images show is also the moment that the textual account is least able to access and substantiate.

It stands to reason, then, the text often directs the reader to the woodcut, indicating whether the image lies above or below the reader's current place in the text. The captions are deictical in turn, using "foresayd" to indicate when the image lies below the textual account. Crucially, the participle always modifies the noun, either "man" or "woman," rather than the gerund, "burning" (I.e., "The burning of the foresayd man and foure women" and "The burning of the foresayde sixe men at Colchester"), suggesting that the text does not contain the moment of martyrdom but rather the life that leads up to it, along with the remembrances that follow the ending of that life. That which is not foresaid—indeed, cannot be foresaid—is the moment of "burning" displayed in the woodcut, for within the woodcut's frame "burning" exists as a present tense phenomenon free of both past and future participle. That which can be captured by the textual account is; the instantaneous and ineffable remainder belongs to the woodcut. The woodcut reserves the martyrological moment for itself, the only mimetic vehicle capable of offering the reader access to an otherwise fleeting moment of virtuous steadfastness that, by virtue of its newfound fixity and repeatability, now surpasses the historical event itself.

The repeatability of the experience of viewing the woodcuts is emphasized by the frequency with which their captions employ the gerund "burning" rather than the past participle "burned."⁶² The nounal and verbal qualities of "burning," which are contained in the image and are never "foresayd," indicate both a physical location in the text and the present tense moment of reading.⁶³ Considered as a noun, "burning" is historical moment materialized as a specific place in the book. Considered as a verb activated in the moment of reading, "burning" revivifies the scene, allowing the flames to continue to sear the martyr's body. This dualism reflects the complication that Foxe's book brings to the

the fayth of holy church" (1570 5.644). Aware of these synchronic and diachronic elements, the caption calls the image a "description," using "and" to acknowledge that it displays more than a single moment in time. "Description" registers that the image contains more than "burning," even while its partitive relation to the gerund draws attentions away from this fact. This middling style of woodcut—neither fully narrative nor non-narrative—is often used to portray martyrdoms that precede the lives of Foxe and his readership; specific examples include the woodcuts of John Hus and John Oldcastle. As Foxe moves into the Marian era in Book 9, however, the style changes, becoming much more like that contained in earlier images such as that of Sawtre.

61 Woolf goes on: "What strikes the reader most about the many successive accounts of persecutions, trials, and martyrdoms is how little they differ from one another: it is almost literally true that if you have read one martyr's death you've read them all" (258).

62 Constructions such as "The burning of Thomas Wattes, Martyr" far outnumber ones such as "Three godly Martirs burned in Smithfield."

63 In these captions, "martyrdome" is frequently given a similar present tense quality by virtue of its alignment with "burning," as is the case in "The burning and Martyrdome of Kerby," a caption glossed in the margin as "The constant Martyrdome of Kerby," confirming both Kerby's constancy and the consistency of his availability as an eternal textual presence (1583 8.1232).

conventional process by which historical actions are made into textual things. Like all histories, the *A&M* makes acts into monuments; at the same time, it also reverses this conventional flow, revivifying dead monuments as living textual experience.

The grammar of the woodcut and accompanying text, then, parallels that of Foxe's purely textual treatment of Catholics whose punishments both fancifully describe the historical past and prescribe the readerly present. As the gerund's nounal aspect cannot be divorced from its verbal one, so is it impossible to separate the woodcut's historical claim from its life as readerly experience. Dialectically reversing the conventional historiographic transformation in which verbs become nouns, the woodcut allows past action to reemerge in the moment of reading as a powerful experience of historical presence.⁶⁴ This quintessential Foxean procedure in which acts become monuments only to re-emerge as acts *and* monuments offers martyrdom to the reader in the primary etymological sense of μάρτυς, or witness. Whenever the reader casts her eyes on "The burning of William Sawtre," she reactivates martyrdom as a verbal phenomenon and makes it reoccur in real time.

The characteristic style of Foxe's most talented xylographer demonstrates the extent to which this revivifying grammar is oriented toward and dependent upon the participation of the reader. In this xylographer's prototypical image—an image type that is imitated throughout the *A&M* by less skilled artists—a rosette of flames begins at the martyr's feet and extends to both the left and right along the central axis defined by both the martyr's body and the stake.⁶⁵ Spanning out in two directions from this axis, the flames divide the image, recto from verso, creating a mirror effect that is strongest in the images in which the martyr faces the frame head-on.⁶⁶ At the same time, the alignment of the flames

64 The text, then, enacts in print what Mueller describes as "a Catholic ontology of presence." While Mueller is correct in noting that "the Marian protestant ontology of presence" displaces "the crucial site of human access to divinity from the Mass to the stake," in Foxe's text, this ontology is centered less in the "physical body and agency of the believer" than in the pages of the book itself (171). See also Jennifer Rust, *The Body in Mystery* (Evanston, 2014). Like Mueller, Rust hones in on the sacramentalism of the martyrs, suggesting that

Foxe's martyrs effectively become an alternative *corpus mysticum* via their sacrificial deaths, which are narrated to accord with the expectations of medieval Christianity, frequently including transsubstantive language and liturgical gestures that associate their bodies with the very sacramental systems which they appear overtly to abjure. (29)

Expanding on the work of Geraldine Thompson, Rust describes the "Eucharistic subtext of Foxe's work" as his recalibration of the "mystical body" formerly believed to coalesce in the Mass" into "a unity founded in identification with the very martyrs who contest this Mass" (30). This "distinct liturgy of martyrdom" allows the audience to "recognize the martyr as embodying the corporate life of the *corpus mysticum*, even it also encourages them to disavow the doctrines of the Catholic Church (54, 56). While Rust's identification of a "paradoxical pattern in which denunciations of the Mass are juxtaposed with paraliturgical performances" is deeply convincing, I go a step further, arguing that paraliturgy extends to the grammar of the text and reprises the Catholic ritual (56).

65 See Appendix for a list of illustrations that fit this description.

66 This effect also appears in images that show multiple martyrs, such as "The burning of Iohn Claydon, and Richard Turming" (reprinted as "The burning of Thomas Barnard, and Iames Mordon" and "The burning of William Sweting and Iames Brewster"), "Three godly Martirs burned in Smithfield," and "The burnyng

and the stake works perspectively, thrusting the martyr forward in the frame.⁶⁷ Together, these effects create a visual pun in which the martyr's body lies open like a book, with the stake serving as the spine upon which his bodily pages are bound. This conflation of reading and witnessing is the central experience offered by the martyrological sections of the book.

Martyrological Authorship

In the sections above, I have sought to describe the procedures by which the *A&M* uses printing technologies such as typography and the woodcut to make the past present and real. Until now, however, I have said little about how these eucharistic technologies signify for the author himself. In the section that follows, I examine Foxe's sense of himself as a living martyr in text. I would like to begin, however, with the close association between books and martyrs in early modern England. In many cases, this association was a product of the martyr's desire to be as unchanging as the Word of God itself. Foxe records many instances of this desire; in one of the most memorable, William Wolsey and William Pigot hold up New Testaments that were to be burned alongside them as expressions of constancy and hope that their deaths will be understood as exemplary to witnesses.⁶⁸

Suffering bodies and suffering texts are most poignantly linked in Foxe's book in the case of authors, even when those authors remained unmartyred. Of this group, fourteenth-century dissident John Wyclif is the most famous. Wyclif's resistance to Papal power in England, championing of vernacular scripture, and continental influence all appeal greatly to Foxe, and while he acknowledges the presence of "some blemishes" in Wyclif's beliefs, he ultimately declares him "a mā that might erre, [rather] then which directlye dyd fight against Christ our Sauour" (1570 5.544). While Wyclif did not die a martyr, Foxe nevertheless portrays him in Eusebian terms as a Herculean champion of the Lord, conflating Diocletian's Colosseum and Edward III's Smithfield in a description of the "whole glut of Monkes and begging Fryers [who] were set on a rage or madnes, which (euen as Hornets w^t their sharpe stings) dyd assaile this good man on euery side" (1570

of two Women." A related effect can be seen in images with even more figures in them; in both "The Burning of the foresayde sixe men at Colchester" and "The burnyng of fiue Martyrs at Caunterbury," two stakes divide the image in three, creating a triptych effect.

67 The stake is positioned in front of the smoke but behind the martyr, while the flames are both in front of and contiguous with the martyr. This latter effect is strongest in images like "The burning of William Sawtre," where the lines depicting the flames are one with the ones that mark the lower part of the martyr's torso and robe.

68 Wolsey and Pigot take New Testaments, "clapping them close to theyr brestes saying the 106. Psalme, desiring all the people to say Amen, and so receiued the fire most thankfully" (1583 11.1716). Liturgically combining the psalmist's "amen" with the amens they hope to hear from onlookers, Wolsey and Pigot express their hope that their actions will be acclaimed as in accord with scriptural precedent. Other instances include that of Syr Robert Outred, a Henrician martyr burned alongside a book of the Apocalypse "he was wont to read vpon" (1570 8.1496). A more fanciful episode is that of John Hillier, whose burning is momentarily interrupted by the communion book that falls into his hands "by chaunce." The episode is also remarkable for the fact that after Hillier's flesh is consumed, his "bones stode vpright euen as if they had bene aliue" (1570 12.2197).

5.546). Foxe's vespine vision of Wyclif's suffering is remarkably similar to the image he paints of the attacks he suffered after publishing the 1563 *A&M*. In his response in the 1570 preface "To the true and faythfull Congregation of Christes Vniuersall Church," he complains "Of such stingyng waspes & buszyng drones I had sufficient triall in my former edition before." In both of these scenes, attacks against the text are construed as attacks against the author's physical body.

In Wyclif's case, the intermingling of textual and authorial bodies is historical, a product of Pope Martin V's command that Wyclif's bones be exhumed, burned, and the ashes scattered throughout the waters of the River Swift. The edict was carried out in the spring of 1428 by Richard Fleming, bishop of Lincoln, finally fulfilling decrees first made at the Council of Constance (1414-1418), where Wyclif had been declared "leader and prince" of those who "are led on by proud curiosity *to know more than they should*" (Tanner 2.411).⁶⁹ In Foxe's case—and in the case of others—the basis for conflating authorial and textual bodies is somewhat less certain. Here he uses the vocabulary of torture to describe the brutality of Catholic interpretations of Protestant texts:

thou mayst now (louyng reader) easely perceauē, cōferryng the Articles and places together, what truth and fidelitie these bloody Catholickes haue vsed, toward the children of God: first in burnyng vp their bodyes, then in consuming and abolishing their bookes, and afterward drawyng out Articles, such as they lystē them selues out of their woorkes, [...] In all whiche Articles, there is not one (speakyng of these writers, which here they haue condemned) but either it is a perfect truth, and a principle of Christian doctrine, or els it is falsely gathered, or peruersely recited, or craftely handled and maliciously mangled, hauyng either some thyng cut from it, or some more added, or els rackte out of hys right place, or wrasted to a wrong meanyng, whiche the place gyueth not, or els whiche some other place folowyng doth better expound and declare. [...] So began they with Steuen, the first Martyr of Iesus Christ, and so haue they cōtinued still, and yet do to this present day. (1570 8.1467)

This type of complaint about Catholic reading practices is conventional, as are figures in which textual misinterpretation is understood as a type of torture. The identification of out of context reader as "wresting" is so conventional as to be a cliché. In the *Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale laments those who "perverte they the hole scripture and all doctours wrestinge the[y] vnto their abhominable purpose cleane contrary to the meanyng of the texte a[n]d to the circumstaunces that goo before and after" (lxiiij). Like Foxe, Tyndale employs the conventional metonymy in which the author stands for his text ("all doctours"). In Foxe's hands, however, the already confused difference between the damage done to book and the damage done to bodies is muddled further by dint of the fact

⁶⁹ These declarations were themselves an enhancement of a pontifical order of 1412 pronouncing him a heretic, demanding that all of his "books, treatises, volumes, and pamphlets should be [...] publicly burnt," and ordering that "his body and bones [...] be exhumed [...] and] scattered far from a burial place of the church" (Tanner 4.414-416).

that it appears in the middle of a scene of actual torture. Describing the selective quotation of texts as “drawing out,” he compares unfair hermeneutics to the punishment for high treason in which the organs of the condemned are removed (drawn out) and displayed in front of him. Ironically, this textual version of hanging, drawing, and quartering in which words are “wrested,” “wrasted,” “maliciously mangled,” and “rackt” reflects Elizabeth’s treatment of Jesuit bodies, not Mary’s treatment of Protestant ones.⁷⁰

Prime sites of factional contention, martyrologies are particularly vulnerable to this type of polemical violence. As we have seen, the *A&M* sets out to be a fitting permanent monument for the godly, undoing the evil of those who burned them or buried their bodies in dunghills or at crossroads. At the same time, Foxe knows his book is itself vulnerable to similar attack and desecration. In his responses to polemical opponents such as Nicholas Harpsfield, Foxe extends the eucharistic properties of individual martyrological episodes to the book as a whole; in doing so, he shifts focus from the martyr’s body to his own body. Writing in the dedicatory preface of 1583, he speaks of his inspiration to further authorial service:

When J first presented these Acts and Monumentes vnto your maiesty [...] I

⁷⁰ Books receive more Elizabethan tortures below, where the text is gibbeted:

For after that the fire hath consumed their bodyes, thē they fall vpon their bookes and condemne them in like maner to be burned [...] first, they gather Articles out of them, such as they lyste them selues, and so peruerslye wrast and wryng them after their owne purpose, falsely & contrary to þe right meanyng of the author, as may seme after their puttyng downe, to bee most hereticall, and execrable. Whiche beyng done, and the bookes thē abolished, that no man may conferre them with their Articles to espie their falsehode: then they diuulge and set abroad those Articles in such sorte as Princes and people may see what hereticke they were. (1570 8.1495)

Whatever sense we have that these descriptions are merely metaphorical—that they describe crimes committed against texts *as if* they are crimes committed against bodies—is undercut by the following account of a sermon given by James Pilkington:

And forasmuche as he had made mention of the Bohemians, hee sayd it was a most apte example that was reported of their captaine zisca: who when he should dye, willed his body to be flayne, and of his skin to make a parchment to couer the heade of a drom. For it shoulde come to passe, that when his enemies heard the sound of it, they should not be able to stand agaynst them. The like counseil (he sayde) he him selfe nowe gaue them as concerninge Bucer. That like as the Bohemians did with the skin of zisca, the same shuld they do with the argumentes and doctrine of Bucer. For as soone as the Papistes shoulde heare the noyse of hym, their gewgawes should forthwith decay. For sauing that they vsed violence to such as with stode them, theyr doctrine contayned nothing that myght seme to any man (hauinge but meane vnderstanding in holy scripture) to be grounded vpon any reason. (1563 5.1557)

Žižka’s fashioning of his posthumous self evokes William Wolsey’s effort to wrest interpretive control of his execution by clutching a New Testament to his chest. For Žižka, however, his sacrificed body is not merely *like* a text, it *is* a text that sounds fear into the hearts of his enemies each time it is played. Pilkington’s subsequent comparison of Žižka’s conversion of himself into parchment to the abuse that Bucer’s doctrine suffers at the hands of its Catholic opponents ignores the difference between damage that is done at one’s request and damage wrought at the hands of one’s enemies. This focus on skin appears again below in the form of the Colchester martyrs, “redy to geue their skins to be pluckt of for the gospels sake” (1563 5.1563). As we will see, Žižka makes an importance appearance in Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

well hoped, that these my trauailes in this kinde of writyng had bene well at an ende: wherby I might haue returned my studies agayne to other purposes, after myne owne desire, more fit then to write histories, especially in the English tounge. But certaine euill disposed persons, of intemperant tounge, aduersaries to good procedynges would not suffer me so to rest, fuming and freatyng, and raising vp suche miserable exclamations at the first appearing of the booke, as was wonderfull to heare. A man would haue thought Christ to haue bene new borne agayne, and that Herode with all the Citie of Ierusalem had bene in an vprore. Such blustryng and styrring was then against that poore booke through all quarters of England, euen to the gates of Louaine: so that no English Papist almost in all the Realme thought him selfe a perfect Catholicke, vnlesse he had cast out some word or other, to geue that booke a blow. (1570 np)⁷¹

In the first half of this passage, “trauailes” (meaning both “labour” and “journey”) denotes the historian’s role in moving through time and space, from the early church to the Elizabethan present, from Jerusalem to Rome, and from London to Paris. For Foxe, it also signifies the unglamorous struggle of writing in the vernacular rather than in Latin. In the passage’s second half, however, “trauailes” is radically reconfigured as both the author’s maternal labors and the filial text’s passionate suffering at the hands of its enemies. In the first of a series of figures that evoke his complex relationship to a text that both is and is not part of himself, Foxe transforms the conventional trope in which textual labor is figured as maternal labor into something a good deal more provocative, appearing as a Marian figure who creates, shapes, and controls a text that both is and is bigger than himself.⁷² Alternating between and ultimately conflating descriptions of himself and his book, Foxe reprises the scene in which Christ stands before Pontius Pilate in the form of Catholic polemicists ready to give the book a “blow.”

Having efficiently conflated Jewish and Catholic apostasy, Foxe then warms to the task of Biblical conceit-making in his condemnation of “Catholike Phormiones [who] thinke now to dash out all good bookes, and amongst others also, these Monuments of Martyrs”:⁷³

[S]purne they so vehemently against this booke of histories, with all kinde of

⁷¹ Page 7 in TAMO’s modern repagination.

⁷² This Marian aspect of Foxe’s authorship also manifests itself in his putative reticence about writing the book in the first place; both the book’s existence and its vernacular aspect are, like the immaculate conception, things unasked for.

⁷³ The pun on “dash” signifies both the censorial dash of the pen in crossing out offending text and the blow one delivers to an enemy’s body. For the former usage, see Thomas Stapleton’s *A counterblast to M. Hornes vayne blaste against M. Fekenham*: “Wherefore as I sayed, let vs dashe out these wordes, and then no reasonable man shall haue any great cause to quarell against the Title of M. Fekenhams Treatise” (9). A typical example of the latter usage is found in 2 Kings 8.12: “For I knowe the euyl thinges that thou shalt do vnto the children of Israel: for their strong cities shalt thou set on fire, and their young men shalt thou slay with the sword, and shalt dashe out the braynes of their sucking children, and al to teare their women with childe” (Geneva).

contumelies, and vprors, rayling and wondering vpon it: much like as I haue heard of a company of theeues, who in robbing a certeine true man by the high wayes side, when they had found a peece of gold or two about him, more then he would be acknowen of, they cried out of the falshode of the world, marueiling and cōplaining what litle truth was to be found in men. (np)⁷⁴

Exchanging one scriptural image for another, Foxe analogizes the reception of his book to that of the Samaritan in Christ's parable. Left for dead at the side of the road by Catholics all too eager to abuse it, the text must be nursed back to health by means of the author's prefatory poultices. Altering the parable to accommodate the errors contained in his first edition, Foxe awkwardly makes the robbed man somewhat culpable for his fate by adding "a peece of gold or two about him, more then he would be acknowen of." The change admits both authorial and textual imperfections while maintaining that neither author nor text deserve the rough treatment they have received. This admission is repeated on the following page, where Foxe points out that "in accusing these my accusers I do not so excuse my self, nor defēd my boke, as though nothing in it were to be sponged or amēded" (1570 np).⁷⁵

Tying the parable of the Samaritan to the moment in the Passion when the Roman soldier traditionally known as Stephaton offers Christ a sponge soaked in wine vinegar, the appearance of the sponge signals yet another change in Biblical context. Long understood as the complement to the spear Longinus uses to pierce Christ's side, here the sponge promises to erase the dashing wounds inflicted by Catholic pens.⁷⁶ The image reappears in Book 5, where Foxe responds directly to his principal antagonist, Nicholas Harpsfield:

But let vs passe now from Polydore [...] examinyng and perpendyng what sayth Edward Halle, an other witnes in this matter: vpon whō maister Cope byndeth so fast, that he supposeth his knot is neuer able to bee loosed. And moreouer so treadeth me down vnder his feete in the dyrte (as a mā would thinke hym some dyrttaubers sonne) so that the spottes therof, he sayth, will neuer be gotten out while the worlde standeth and a day longer. Notwithstanding I trust maister Cope pt your dyrtie pen with your cockish bragges hath not so bedaubed and bespotted me, nor yet conuicted me to

74 Page 8 in *TAMO's* modern repagination.

75 Page 9 in *TAMO's* modern repagination.

76 The complementarity of the two instruments is visible in the iconography of the *Armi Christi* roll: <<http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/ds/huntington/images//000988A.jpg>>. Like the pen, the sponge signifies with respect to both the authorial and textual body; editorially, it symbolizes the task of correcting an often hastily composed text. Responsibility for these perfecting efforts does not fall solely to Foxe and subsequent editions, but forms part of a great commission in which the reader is charged with the task of improving and perfecting the textual body *in situ*. In the editions after published 1570, this commission follows the list of errata: "besides these castigations aboue noted, if thou finde any other cōmitted in the printing hereof, gently I desire the gentle reader, to bestow a little paines with thine owne hand to amend them" (1576 12.2008). The charge makes every reader a potential Samaritan and participant in the perfection of Christian history.

bee such a deprauer of historyes, but I hope to spunge it out. (1570 5.709)
 Combining a number of now-familiar tropes, Foxe describes the desecrating effect of Cope's "dyrtie pen" as damage on his physical body, expressing hope that the sponge of his addition will offer somatic relief.⁷⁷ Given its blasphemous potential, this Christological figure in which inky wounds manifest themselves on the author's passionate body is difficult to sustain, leading to a split in which the author comes to occupy multiple subject positions. While Cope appears as a pen-wielding Longinus, Foxe take the roles of both Christ and Stephaton, suffering Cope's assaults and seeking to mitigate them by publishing a new edition in which the errors Harpsfield describes have been expunged. Paradoxically contiguous with and separate from his text, Foxe proves susceptible to a similar fate as that of the martyrs he describes, as the wounds of Catholic invective on his passionate body testify to the strength of his identification with his text, the eucharistic means by which the martyrs are cast into ubiquity.

The intermingling of textual, martyrological, and authorial bodies comes to a remarkable climax in controversy over the fate of musician John Marbecke. In the 1563 edition, Foxe confused Marbecke with Henry Finmore, churchwarden of Windsor, declaring that Marbecke was burned and Finmore pardoned when in fact the opposite was true. In the 1570 edition, the mistake having been brought loudly to his attention, Foxe acknowledges the error:

COMmyng now to the story and tyme of the foure Windsore mē troubled and persecuted for the true testimonie of Gods worde, wherof iij. were martyred and sacrificed in fire, the iiij. (whiche was Marbecke) had his pardon: first I haue to shewe the originall of their troubles in seueral partes: secondly þe maner & order of their death as they suffered together, which was an. 1544. thyrdly to aunswere partly in purgation of my selfe, agaynst certeine clatterers, whiche haue hetherto takē their pleasure in railing against my former edition of Actes and Monumentes, for mistakyng the name of Marbecke, whom in one place I reported to haue ben burned, albeit in þ^e end of the story, correcting my selfe agayne, I declare hym not to haue bene burned. (1570 8.1425)

Slipping with characteristic ease between descriptions of himself and his text, Foxe links personal purgation and textual correction. His correction takes the form of a speech act. But while conventional speech acts intervene in the present, Foxe applies his speech act to the past, and the necessity of fixing his error becomes the occasion for demonstrating the extend of his authorial power—his declarations control the historical record (as well as the subsequent present). Foxe goes on to offer an amended account, recording Marbecke's survival and eventual pardon, before opening the promised third section—a section whose marginal gloss reads "The story doth purge it selfe":

I openly say, affirme, professe, hold, maintain and write, the same as I sayd

⁷⁷ This passage also invokes the medieval topos of the Charter of Christ in which Christ's wounds are understood in textual terms. The Charter figures prominently in my discussion of the *Anatomy of Melancholy* below.

and wrote before in the latter castigations of my booke: that is, that Iohn Marbecke was with the other condemned, but not burned, cast by the law, but by pardon saued, appointed with the rest to dye, and yet not dead, but lyueth (God be praised) and yet to this present day singeth merely, and playeth on the Organs, not as a dead mā, amongst Foxes Martyrs (as it hath pleased some in the court to counter against me) but as one witnessed and testefied truly in the booke of Foxes Martyrs to be a liue. (1570 8.1438)

This remarkable turn from Marbecke, “dead mā, amongst Foxes Martyrs,” to “one witnessed and testefied truly in the booke of Foxes Martyrs to be a liue” corrects the 1563 error even as it remains unwavering about the book’s vivifying power. For despite Foxe’s protest that he cannot be everywhere at once, the truth remains the same: an event that goes unwitnessed by the *A&M* is one that does not actually happen. Foxe’s book is a world unto itself—a world in which Marbecke exists, either dead “amongst Foxes Martyrs” or as “as one witnessed and testefied truly in the booke of Foxes Martyrs to be a liue.” Both enthralled and intimidated by the power he wields, Foxe lightens his load by allowing for the possibility of improvement over time. After all, no man can “be in all places, to see all thinges,” and so Foxe asserts his right to “that law, which all other bookes haue, that is, to recognise & reforme myne own errata” (1570 8.1438). Conflating object and agent, Foxe avails both himself and his text to the bibliographic equivalent of the rejected means by which the Catholic dead are purged of their sins.

Near the end of the 1563 edition, the yet-to-be purged author recounts the following miracle, reported to him by a witness:

Here is to be noted by the way emongest these that suffered at Baineforde, one there was of the said company, who at their burning desired of God some token to be geuen, wher by the people might knowe that they dyed in the ryghte. After, comming to the place of execution, and being in the fyer, there appeared in him that so prayed, in his breast, a maruelous white crosse, as whyte as the paper, the bredth wherof extended from the one shoulder to the other, the length being as much as the bredth. The cōpas therof in euery place was a brode as a hand. This crosse appeared so long, tyl he fel downe flat to the fyre. Maister Deane afore sayde dyd see it with his eyes, and he that sawe dyd iustify it, & him selfe declared it to me with his owne mouth, anno. 1561. Oct. 14. (1563 5.1670)

Subsequently attacked by Harpsfield, the passage was dropped from later editions.⁷⁸ Indeed, its credulity with respect to the miraculous cross is uncharacteristic for Foxe, and further objections might be made to its iconophilia.⁷⁹ But while all of these reasons serve as sufficient explanations for the passage’s disappearance, we should also consider the possibility that the “whyte as the paper” cross disappears because it and the perfect

⁷⁸ See *Dialogi sex* 962.

⁷⁹ This passage compares particularly unfavorably to the iconoclastic behavior of John Milles described several pages below: “Thē Boner bid him make a crosse in his forehead, which he [Milles] refused at that time to do” (1563 5.1690).

Christly body it implies are not really longer necessary, having been supplanted by the increasingly pure pages of the continually revised text that can themselves be gazed upon and ritually consumed.

In her book on martyrdom in early modern England, Susannah Monta describes the *Actes and Monuments* as a book that “fosters methods of interpretation that confirm [...] readers themselves as self-assured claimants to the martyrs’ faith” (20). However successfully this effort was, it did not satisfy all of Foxe’s readers: as Monta outlines, a number of the letters that were sent to Foxe asked him to help with the writer’s doubts about salvation. It would seem that Foxe was particularly “expert in comforting people with regard to the doctrine of election,” and in their letters, “writers poignantly lay bare their unsettled consciences and fervently hope that the martyrologist could prescribe some remedy” (21). While we do not know how efficacious Foxe’s replies were in calming the fears of his correspondents, we do know that this sort of Calvinistic fretting over the problem of election did not go away. As we shall see, the persistence of the problem led at least one author to take his priestly role as the textual provider of remedies both more and less seriously than did Foxe, seizing even more strongly on the potential of the printed text to transform readers from within, even as the middling outlooks promoted by both Elizabeth and James led him to gently mock those for whom questions of election were utterly debilitating.

“Content to be Pressed”: Robert Burton and the *editio princeps hominis*

Invenias etiam disiecti membra poetae

[You would still recognize the limbs, however dismembered, of a poet.]

—Horace, Satires 1.4.62

A life-thief stole my world-strength,

Ripped off flesh and left me skin,

Dipped me in water and drew me out,

Stretched me bare in the tight sun;

The hard blade, clean steel, cut,

Scraped-fingers folded, shaped me.

—Anglo-Saxon Exeter Book, riddle 24.1–6

I do not know a more heartless sight than the reprint of the Anatomy of Melancholy. What need was there of unearthing the bones of that fantastic old great man, to expose them in a winding-sheet of the latest edition to modern censure?

—Charles Lamb, “Detached Thoughts of Books and Reading,” *London Magazine* 6 (July 1822): 34

In a note added to the last leaf of the fifth edition of the *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1638)—the last edition published before the author’s death in 1640—Robert Burton prefaces the list of *Errata* with an attack on his printers. Addressed *Lectori*, the Latin complaint shares a number of details about the publication history of the volume that the reader holds in her hands:

Listen, good friend! This edition was begun at Edinburgh a short while ago, but was at once suppressed by our printers. After a time, with the consent of the printers of Edinburgh, it was continued at London, and finally completed at Oxford; and now, such as it is, it makes its fifth appearance in public. If the beginning does not match the end, nor the middle part either of them by reason of the numerous blunders and omissions, whom will you blame? The corrector, the printer, this man or that, or every one who has had a hand in it? As far as I am concerned, you may blame any one of them you like,—or the whole lot. Meanwhile I, the author, who have been almost cast on one side by them, am subjected to these worries, and pay the penalty for their waywardness. At their whim I am first drowned in the deep, and then caught up again and brought upon the scene, fastened to doors and posts, and exposed for any one to buy. But methinks I had better remember Harpocrates, lest I say anything too harsh against these my masters. For all my anger I keep myself in check, and,—what better—correct their faults and blunders thus: (Duff 85–86)

After four editions that identify their printers, the fifth does not name one. It was, as E.G.

Duff puts it, “nobody’s child,” printed in parts in Edinburgh, Oxford, and London that were then collected and put together in Oxford (84). The details of what led to this arrangement are unknown and subject to a good deal of speculation (Duff suggests they involve the effort of Henry Cripps, half-owner of the book’s copyright, to bring Robert Young, Scot and piratical printer, to heel).¹ Burton describes the broadside title-pages posted by booksellers around town as if they are his body—a literalization that makes more sense when we remember that from the third edition (1628) onward, the title-page included a likeness of Burton as “Democritus Junior.” As we shall see, this paratextual scene in which the author is rescued from the oblivion of Lethean waters only to be publicly affixed to doors and posts (*auctor [...] portis & postibus affixus*) corresponds to the moments in the text proper where he identifies publication with a series of humiliating punishments wrought on his passionate body. At the same time, Burton accepts and even embraces the punishment of print publication, for it is also the means by which he hopes to cure his melancholic readers. In printed pages of the *Anatomy*, Burton enacts a fantasy in which his body is distributed and then consumed by distant readers who are, as a consequence, transformed from within. Paradoxically self-amplification brings the author not just fame but also oblivion: while print allows him to communicate to a multitude of readers distant from him in time and space, the nature of the print market is such that ever-increasing amounts of printed materials ensure that his effort will soon be buried under piles of new publications. On one hand, then, the press makes theoretically unlimited amplification available to human authors for the first time. On the other hand, however, the press’s amplified product is also a commodity bound for market. The author’s feeling of enlarged distributivity is only temporary: soon he will be forgotten, replaced by newer products—unless, of course, he is resurrected in the form of a new edition.

These passionate scenes of authorial display, often dismissed by critics as characteristic bits of Burtonian excess, testify to the remarkable historical period in which *The Anatomy of Melancholy* circulated. As I have argued, the long transitional period between the small print runs of the incunabula and the rise of the corporately authored newspaper in the early eighteenth century gave rise to authors who turned to the Eucharist—Christ’s chosen means for communicating his bodily presence to believers separated from him in time and space—as they sought to conceptualize their mechanical amplification through the press. For Burton, the Eucharist offers a way to think through the still novel feeling of being amplified “in print.” Doubly Christological, his dissemination in type involves suffering and fame in equal measure.

It is no accident that the eucharistic potential of typographic life is felt most strongly in England, where late-medieval expressions of sacramental culture like the Charters of Christ allowed writers to imagine duplicative transcendence by adopting

¹ According to Duff’s hypothesis, Young was in the middle of producing a pirated edition of the *Anatomy* when Cripps forced him to sell him the material he had printed thus far. Young already had a roguish reputation from illegally producing Bibles and Duff suggests that a desire to avoid further trouble caused him to come to terms with Cripps.

Christ's subject position as their own.² Under manuscript conditions, the author's ability to write eucharistically is limited, the writer's textual amplification constrained by the slowness and irregularity of chirographic reproduction, a method of duplication that differs greatly from that of the eucharistic wafer, recently described by Aden Kumler as "serially produced monochrome multiple in a world filled with handcrafted *unica*" (187). In the Charters, writers imaginatively transcend these conditions by mapping the human technology of the charter onto the divine technology that is the Eucharist; with the rise of print, however, they are able to overcome these conditions altogether. Of course, while the Eucharist and print are analogous, they are not identical: Christ's miracle binds Satan, but publication in type is Faustian at best, involving a loss of agency to capital, public opinion and, as Burton describes in his prefatory note, to the *dominators* who own the mechanical means of literary reproduction. To understand the logic behind what might otherwise seem like an unlikely alignment of eucharistic and typographical reproduction, we must turn to the recent history of the salvific technology that Burton seeks to emulate.

Self-Reproducing Artifacts

The Charters of Christ are a body of popular English lyrics in which Christ's crucified body is understood as a legal document granting salvation to those who read it. Each Charter claims to be what Miri Rubin describes as "a document inscribed on the crucified body, with the wounds as its script [...] Skin is the parchment, the wounds, its letters, the blood, its sealing wax, and the eucharist, that section of the charter left for safekeeping in the hands of those striking the legal transaction" (306–307). "Sacramental symbolism carried to the limit," the Charter "is at once evidence of a sacrifice, and the sacrificed body itself" (308). In the *Fasciculus morum* (ca. 1325), a preacher's manual that includes a Charter, the commentator's gloss is typical:³

Just such a charter did Christ write for us on the cross when he [...] stretched out his blessed body, as a parchment-maker can be seen to spread a hide in the sun. In this way Christ, when his hands and feet were nailed to the cross, offered his body like a charter to be written on. The nails in his hands were used as quill, and his precious blood as ink. (Wenzel 212–213)

This characteristic analogy between manuscript production and the treatment of Christ's body is beautifully expressed in one particularly evocative exemplar (fig. 1). As Emily Steiner notes, the image draws from both the Man of Sorrows and the *arma christi* traditions. In it, Christ gazes down from the cross at the unfurled lower half of his body

2 For an account of what made English documentary poetics unique, see Emily Steiner's *Documentary Culture*, especially the chapter "Lyric, genre, and the material text." As Steiner notes, *dictamen* studies "often display highly fictional situations" that "demonstrate the capability of official formulas to accommodate new, even imaginary situations, as well as to express the authorial subject." This type of fictionalizing was not new but appears as early as the twelfth century in Italy. However, the imagining performed by figures such as Thomas Sampson, whose model documents are striking for their "personal and often self-promoting character," pales in comparison to the type of imagining performed by the Charter writers (58).

3 See *Documentary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 50.

upon which the verses of the *Short Charter* are written.⁴ The blood that flows from his wounded hands and heart drips down onto this page made of skin, supplying red ink from which the capitals are composed.

In her important account of medieval documentary culture, Emily Steiner suggests that charters were used to represent Christ's body "because they were perceived to be inherently public texts directly addressed to a universal audience of readers and listeners." Charters and patents are "transhistorical and performative," making them uniquely suited for representing the miracle of Christ's plenitudinous presence in the Eucharist (203). Even so, Christ's miraculous charter enjoys a significant advantage over its quotidian counterparts when it comes to the key issue of reproducibility. Laura Ashe makes this point most clearly: under normal circumstances, a charter,

being the thing itself—not the record of the deed so much as the enactment of the deed—is not appropriately open to reproduction beyond the date of its inception. Charters are not by nature referential, but actual [...] However, this charter [i.e., Christ's charter] is available for eternal reproduction because of the extra-temporality of its promise: the "sele," Christ's wound, is a symbol both fixed inside these three days and refracting out into all time; the body of the text, similarly, is "given" at Calvary, and held and touched by the reader in the fifteenth century, and is thereby materially symbolic of both the fifteenth-century man's connection with the Passion, and the Passion's with eternal life. (39)⁵

The exceptionality of Christ's charter lies in its unlimited ability to propagate its promises through time and space, overcoming the usual technological limits associated with documents handwritten on skin. Under normal circumstances, charters were duplicated through a procedure in which two copies were written on a single piece of parchment, the gap between them bridged by the word "CYROGRAPHUM." The copies were then separated by an indented or jagged cut that spanned this bridge and provided a mechanism for authentication. Because Christ's charter is his body, its reproducibility is limitless, vastly exceeding the usual chirographic procedure. While the analogical mapping of the Eucharist onto the indenture marks the unique status of the charter among human documents, the two modes of replication are in fact radically incommensurate.⁶

Adaptable to other forms of media, these efforts to compare Christ's replicative miracle to human technology are not limited to single parchment pages. In "A Sermon Preached on a Good Friday," John Fisher adapts the charter conceit to the codex. While many of the original Charter details are maintained, others are adjusted to fit the book that he holds in his hand:

4 On the differences between some of the Charter variants, see Mary Caroline Spalding, *The Middle English Charters of Christ* (Baltimore: J.H. Furst Company, 1914).

5 Ashe differentiates the "Long Charter" and the "Short Charter," arguing that the Long Charter's "imaginative restructuring of the text as a devotional route to contemplation of the Passion has re-sited the significance of the text far beyond the manuscript itself" (35).

6 See Kaye, J. M. 2009. *Medieval English Conveyances*. Cambridge Studies in English Legal History. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 8-10.

But you maruell peradventure why I call the crucifix a booke? [...] Fyrst I saye that a booke hath two boardes: the two boardes of this booke is the two partes of the crosse, for when the booke is opened and spread, the leaues be cowched vpon the boardes. And so the blessid body of Christ was spred vpon the crosse. The leaues of this booke be the armes, the handes, legges and feete, with the other members of his most precious and blessed body. Neuer anye Parchement skynne was more strayghtlye stratched by strength vpon the tentors then was this blessed body vpon the crosse. [...] And so they reared vp this body a loft against the sunne, euen as a parchement skinne is sette foorth before the heat of the Sun for to drye. It was set vp a loft to the entent that all the worlde might looke vpon this booke. (303–304)

Following convention by describing the book's pages as Christ's skin, the red of illuminated capitals as blood, and black ink as bruises wrought by "stroakes and lashes," Fisher holds a handwritten codex made of parchment. Lifting the book up in front of the congregation like the Roman soldiers who set Christ aloft on the cross, Fisher mimics the priestly display of the consecrated host confirming the replicative miracle by which bread becomes Christ's body.

Fisher is less interested than the Charter writers in making the Eucharist part of his conceit—perhaps because the handwritten codex cannot be duplicated in a way that is easily compared to the miracle of transubstantiation. Nevertheless, he advances a habit of thought in which human and divine technology are mapped onto each other, drawing an analogy between the lines of the cross and those formed by the gutter/spine and the pages of the book he holds up. As with the Charters, the miraculousness of the document is found in the presence of "the sonne of God which by the holie Ghost was written in the inward syde of thys parchement"—presence without which the book would remain as singular and unsalvatory as an unblest piece of bread (303). Fisher's understanding of the book's power is conservative: as with the Charters, Christ is the source of power; Fisher's priestly role is to channel that power.⁷ At the same time, his mimetic posture testifies to the strength of the human desire to adopt Christ's salvatory and duplicative powers as one's own.

In the age of the manuscript and for manuscript-minded individuals like Fisher, duplicative desire must be channeled through Christ, for hand-copied documents have little in the way of amplifying power. The particular genius of the Charter conceit lies in its ability to absorb the apparent contradiction between what it is and what it claims to be: the fact that the writing surface claims to be Christ's skin despite being made from that of an animal provides the occasion for taking Christ's proverbial role as the *Agnus Dei* literally. Sarah Kay observes that "As a piece of parchment [Christ] resembles the skin of a spotless sheep or calf killed, flayed, and stretched for manuscript production" (71; "Legible Skins" 13). With no similar metaphor at hand to justify their claims to be vellum, human authors must await the arrival of a less ideologically laden substrate to arrive in the form of paper.

⁷ For a different reading of this sermon, see James Kearney, *The Incarnate Text: Imagining the Book in Reformation England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 5–8, 12–21.

As we shall see, while great technological change made secular forms of theoretically limitless duplication available to human authors for the first time, typographic writers continued to turn to Christ's subject position as they struggled to conceptualize their newly amplified status.⁸

Anatomical Passions

With the rise of paper and the press, Christ's monopoly on sacrificial duplication comes to an end, as human authors adopt the miraculous reproducibility of the Charters as their own. The fluidity of this transition is wonderfully illustrated in the rise of printed anatomical textbooks, where paper substrates and human contents freely intermingle. While I will argue that this history culminates in Burton, it begins with the most famous of flagellated martyrs, Bartholomew, patron saint of parchment-makers and bookbinders. Although the story of Bartholomew is apostolic, it is its later iterations that concern us here. De Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* (c. 1261-1266) contains the best known medieval accounts of Bartholomew's death; working from Jean de Vignay's French translation (c. 1333-1348), Sarah Kay notes that the illuminations conform to two basic types: early, literalistic ones in which Bartholomew is shown being flayed by others and later, so-called "traditional representations" in which the apostle, skin intact, is shown "fully clothed with a book in one hand and a large knife in the other" ("Original Skin" 48). The rule that separates the two types is straightforward: Bartholomew holds the knife only when his skin is intact. Correspondingly, in the earlier images, his hands are empty and the knives held by his tormentors. Neither type shows Bartholomew as the author of his own fate; he is either composed by others—his fate literally inscribed on his body—or shown in post factum glory, his hand holding the sign of his completed destiny in the form of a tanner's knife.

The separation of these two types ends in the Renaissance, and the most important expression of this change is also the most famous. Michelangelo's fresco *The Last Judgment*, painted on the Sistine Chapel's altar wall between 1535 and 1541, shows Bartholomew in a new and complicated way. Christ stands at the center of the work; in the middle of a cast of hundreds and with his face pointed down and to the right, he looks directly at Bartholomew. The saint, crouched on a cloud, returns his gaze. As with the iconic images of the *Legenda Aurea*, Bartholomew is shown with his skin intact. This is wholly expected, given the presence of the knife he holds in his right hand. More unexpected, however, is the flayed skin that he holds in his left.

8 Richard of Bury (1287-1345) offers a different example of what attempts to write eucharistically look like before the rise of paper and the press. Bury begins his confession in the *Philobiblon* with what Steiner describes as "an official ecclesiastical document": "To all the faithful in Christ to whom the tenor of the present writing may come, Richard of Bury [...] wisheth [...] to present a pious memorial of himself before God, while he yet liveth." As Steiner notes, Bury's confession "shows how a life constituted by books might be expressed through the fictions of the written record;" at the same time, it also must be noted that this document incapable of reproducing itself. While the salutation provides the "occasion for 'mapping out' or 'stretching forth the life' of its clerly author," it does so as a dead memorial, not a living document (59-60).

For almost four hundred years, from shortly after the painting was completed until well into the twentieth century, much was made of this apparent duplication in signification. During this period, the dominant view held that the flayed skin belonged to Bartholomew, despite the fact that he appears unflayed.⁹ As Michelangelo's contemporary Don Miniato Pitto recognized and Leo Steinberg explains, this doubleness is not merely redundant; from a Catholic perspective it is heretical as well. While in Italy, early medieval depictions of Bartholomew had long since given way to the later type in which the intact saint displays a knife in what Steinberg calls "sufficient token of martyrdom," Michelangelo's doubled conceit is in fact more unfamiliar than it is original, with early sixteenth-century precedents in works by Lucas Cranach, Hans Baldung, and others, all of whom were associated with the *luterani* (Steinberg 423). This alone does not fully explain the mystery of the skin. Despite evidence of Lutheran influence and the lucidity of Don Miniato's observation that there are clear differences between Bartholomew's features and those of the skin, it was not until 1925 that physician and art history outsider Francesco La Cava declared that the skin belonged to the artist himself.¹⁰ Not only was this observation quickly proclaimed to be correct, the "rumped ragface" is now considered to be the Michelangelo's "only certain self-portrait" (428).

As a figure of excoriated authorship, Michelangelo appears to have much in common with the Christ of the Charters. Most significantly, the altar wall and the flayed skin offer the viewer an immediate visual experience whose scale and tactility bespeaks the artist's laborious investment. This is the power of what Nelson Goodman calls "autographic" art—art whose authenticity depends on its historical connection to the artist who produced it. But while this substantive connection between the artist's body and the painting produces a sense of authenticity, this feeling is also a sign of the work's technological limit. Because the fresco is autographic, even the most exact duplication of it would not count as genuine, for such a duplication would break the material link to the author's body. Christ, by contrast, provides the Eucharist as the notative means (the "musical score") by which his body can be authentically reproduced. While Michelangelo testifies to the sacrificial nature of authorship, he cannot do so in a way that transcends the limits of his physical body. As we shall see, however, he does not remain on the altar wall for long.

This image of Michelangelo has a prodigious afterlife in printed books such as Juan Valverde de Hamusco's *Historia de la composición del cuerpo humano* (1556), where the Vesalian and the Michelangelesque meet in Gasparo Becerra's self-dissecting figures. On Hamusco's title-page, Becerra's self-dissecting figure stands, knife in hand, proudly

⁹ This belief existed despite the protests of contemporaries like Don Miniato Pitto, a man troubled by the work's "thousand heresies [...] above all in the beardless skin of Saint Bartholomew, while the skinned one has a long beard; which shows that the skin is not his" (qtd. and trans. Steinberg 424). For a history of the painting's interpretation and how an "interpretive tradition feeds on itself," see Steinberg, "The Line of Fate in Michelangelo's Painting," especially 421-426.

¹⁰ An account of La Cava's discovery is found in Avigdor W.G. Posèq's "Michelangelo's Self-Portrait on the Flayed Skin of St. Bartholomew" in *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 124 (1994). La Cava's finding was originally published as "*Il Volto di Michelangelo scoperto nel Giudizio Finale.*"

displaying his flayed skin (fig. 2). While Becerra draws inspiration from the *Last Judgment's* depiction of Bartholomew and Michelangelo, where the saint holds the artist's flayed skin, he also alters Michelangelo's vision, combining flayer and flayed into a single figure that holds a skin that he has removed from his own body.¹¹ In Becerra's improvement, excoriation and artistry are revealed to be one and the same.¹² The *écorché* fills the title-page and supplies the book with content: rather than sacrifice himself for a work that exists outside of himself, he makes himself into it. He *is* the work, or, to be more precise, most of him is: while the *écorché's* internal organs are identified and labeled on the book's inner pages, his skin is not. Skin is waste, the drossy baggage in which the spiritual and scientific content of the inner body is held.

The dualism implied by this separation of the dermal envelope from its contents is still familiar to us today. It is the model adopted by Vesalius in a work full of figures whose liquefied skin drips onto the ground like melted candle wax. If this trope seems natural to us, however, this speaks more of the enduring influence of Descartes than of its ubiquity in its own day. In a competing trope of self-dissection, the skin is not discarded but rather retained and used as animal skin had been for millennia, repurposed as the material upon which bibliographic content (in this case, musculature, organs, and commentary) is displayed. In this model, the self-dissector effort in flaying and dismembering himself not only supplies the book with its anatomical content, it also provides the pages upon which this subject matter is displayed.

This trope antedates both Michelangelo and Vesalius, beginning with one of the most important pre-Vesalian anatomies, Berengarius's *Carpi commentaria [...]* (1521). An important precursor of the *Fabrica*, the *Commentaria* is the first anatomical text to include illustrations in which the dissected figure poses in naturalistic settings. In an early series of these illustrations, male figures stand and face the reader. In all but one of these images, the model stands, half-flayed, obligingly pulling back his skin to allow the viewer to peer more easily into his bodily interior. In the most remarkable and least naturalistic of these images, the figure, again half-flayed, stands and faces the frame (fig. 3). As with the rest of the illustrations, the skin that once covered the upper half of his body now hangs about his

11 The *Last Judgment's* influence on anatomical illustrations lasted well into the seventeenth century. Lola L. Szladits was one of the first critics to seriously examine similarities between Michelangelo's Bartholomew and the anatomical muscle-men. More recently, Daniela Bohde has written on the connection between Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* and the work of the Anatomists in "Skin and the Search for the Interior: The Representation of Flaying in the Art and Anatomy of the Cinquecento," *Bodily Extremities. Preoccupations with the Human Body in Early Modern European Culture* (2003): 10–47. While Becerra's indebtedness to Michelangelo is readily apparent, it becomes even more so when one realizes that the opposite handedness of the images is a reversal introduced by the stamping of the woodcut. Gregor Horst, a German contemporary of Burton's, deploys a similar figure on the title-page of *De natura humana* (1612), while English texts like Helkiah Crooke's *Microcosmographia: A description of the Body of Man* (1615) reproduce Becerra's figure exactly.

12 While Leo Steinberg argues that reading Michelangelo's flayed skin as an image of tortured authorship is reductive, in Becerra's image, this interpretation is inescapable, forced on the viewer by an *écorché* eager to show off what he has made of himself. See Steinberg, Leo. 1980. "The Line of Fate in Michelangelo's Painting." *Critical Inquiry* 6 (3): 411–54.

hips, but this time the figure also holds a knife, confirming that what we see is something that he has done to himself. Folded back, his skin wraps around his torso in a “V” that extends from his groin up and around to the middle of his back. Behind him, a nimbus figuratively extends the skin to the edges of the frame. At the center of this bright composite of light and skin, the dark lines of the inner body stand in testament to the fact that skin is more than a mere covering and container; it can also serve as the substrate upon which previously hidden matter is exposed and displayed.¹³

This illustrative practice continues into the seventeenth century, reaching an apotheosis on the title-page of the 1651 edition of Thomas Bartholinus’s *Anatomia reformata* (fig. 4).¹⁴ Following Berengarius, Bartholinus’s figure stretches his skin out. This time, however, the image is unrelentingly realistic: The figure’s flesh and bone have been almost completely evacuated and removed, and all that remains is his skin, head, and lower arms. Rather than use light to figuratively extend the skin to the border of the image, Bartholinus attaches it to the surrounding frame, stretching it as one would parchment or a canvas and creating a documentary effect intensified by the niche in which the figure stands. Nailed by the elbows to this frame, the figure slumps forward in an anatomical *imitatio Christi*, having succumbed to its injuries.¹⁵ In death, he has achieved what he set out to do: his inner organs lie inside the book, where they are displayed and labeled. On the inner portion of his skin—skin that once covered his torso—the book’s title and the author’s name are printed in a typographic version of the Charter conceit. The illustration suggests that the book is literally made from the self-dissector’s body, with skin serving as the pages upon which the figure’s musculature and organs have been laid.

The rise of this illustrative practice coincides with the long decline of manuscript publication (i.e., of chirographic texts written on parchment). While it is tempting to understand the shift from parchment to paper manufacture as involving a type of loss for which these depictions of human sacrificial effort nostalgically compensate, this is only part of the story. The wholesale appropriation of Christ’s pose by Bartholinus’s figure suggests that what is on display is a new covenant rather than a merely nostalgic throwback to a nearly bygone era of manuscript production.¹⁶ The conflation of paper pages and human bodies marks the seeming fulfillment of a longstanding eucharistic fantasy,

13 Jonathan Sawday offers another interpretation of this image: “This dramatic semi-Vitruvian figures, etched within a surrounding aura of light rays (whose source is the figure itself), symbolized not anatomical knowledge of the body-interior, but philosophical and religious knowledge of the interior of the whole, or scripturally complete, individual. The human body is here redeemed even as it peels back the surface covering of skin, which falls like discarded cloth over the subject’s thighs” (118). The dualism underlying Sawday’s account hardly needs pointing out.

14 c.f. an even later iteration in Johannes von Muralt’s *Anatomisches Collegium* (1687).

15 Skin’s role as substrate is accentuated by the niche in front of which all of this takes places; if not for the covering that skin provides, the frame would only contain empty space. The fact that the scene is one of self-dissection is confirmed by the figure’s unevacuated lower arms and legs: the bisection and removal of his central organs were all he was able to accomplish before he succumbed.

16 The use of animal skin as parchment had long been understood as a sign of the old law in which animals bear the cost of human sinfulness.

enabling human authors to claim Christ's amplifying sacrifice as their own.¹⁷ Second only to the advent of print itself, the rise of modern anatomy marks a critical step in this process, cloaking what would otherwise be blasphemous in the legitimizing guise of scientific inquiry.

Claiming that anatomy provides both its topic and its form, Bartholinus's text is *about* anatomy at the same time that it *is* one. The fictional identity of paper and flesh preserves the author's sacrificial claim in the face of amplification, for unlike books made from skin, the typographic/xylographic text printed on paper can be easily and non-miraculously reproduced.¹⁸ Even so, the *Anatomia Reformata* only imperfectly fulfills the requirements of Christ's disseminative performance in the Eucharist. While the book claims to be made of its anatomical subject, this subject is not in fact the author but rather his substitute, for three pages below the passionate title-page we find Bartholinus, Regius Professor, sitting clothed and unperturbed in a traditional portrait. The difference between the author and his sacrificial subject reveals the limit of illustrative and anatomical attempts to analogize the eucharistic miracle: while anatomy disguises Christological fantasy as scientific inquiry, dissected corpses cannot speak for themselves, necessitating the strange appearance of a second, living author. To resolve these two figures—i.e., the commenting dissector and sacrificing dissected—into one requires the typographic *Verbum*.

Typographic Propitiation

In his anatomy, Burton offers more than a merely textual version of the latter's illustrative fantasy. Like Bartholinus, Burton claims that textual production requires bodily sacrifice, but rather than sacrificing someone else's body, he offers his own, and instead of disguising his mechanical reproduction, he thematizes it, all the while continuing to insist that his body and the printed page are one and the same. Both his platform and his punishment, the press is the fate that Burton resists and embraces in a stream of retractions whose questionable sincerity testifies to his sense of purpose. Alternating between bluster and abjection, he addresses his reader directly:

I owe three nothing, (Reader) I looke for no favour at thy hands, I am independent, I fear not.

¹⁷ Andrea Carlino discusses the relationship between print and anatomy at some length in *Paper Bodies: A Catalogue of Anatomical Fugitive Sheets*. His observation about the practice of superimposing fugitive sheets with flaps as a way of mimic the layers and depth of the body is helpful: "This technique of illustration provided a virtual three-dimensional representation of the printed object and of the subject represented, and allowed the internal organs to be depicted in terms of the functional and spatial relationships between the physiological systems. In short, it translated on to paper the whole concept of anatomical dissection, mimicking the progressive unveiling of the body, from skin to guts" (58).

¹⁸ Lest we too quickly dismiss Bartholinus's conceit as a gimmick, we must remember that what he attempts by figural means others attempted literally by cladding books with human skin. The most famous case of anthropodermic bibliopeggy in England is probably that of *A True and perfect relation of the whole proceedings against the late most barbarous traitors, Garnet a Iesuite, and his confederats [...]* (1606). Rumor held that a single copy was clad in the skin of Henry Garnet, who had been executed for his foreknowledge of the Gunpowder Plot.

No, I recant, I will not, I care, I fear, I confesse my fault [...] I have overshot my selfe, I have spoken foolishly, rashly, unadvisedly, absurdly, I have anatomized my own folly. (1.112)

Like the figure who fronts Bartholinus's text, Burton composes a book whose subject is himself, and his effort to anatomize melancholy marches in lockstep with his self-dissection. As he himself describes it: "I have layd my selfe open (I know it) in this Treatise, turned mine inside outward" (1.13). As we shall see, his anatomizing effort both exposes his melancholic organs to public view and gives over his skin to be pressed.

Before turning to the specifics of Burton's typographical appropriation of Christ's eucharistic miracle, I would like to begin with the propitiating impulses that motivate both it and the text in general. At the beginning of the First Partition, Burton laments the "pittifull change" that transformed man from a "noble Creature" to "*miserabilis homuncio*, a cast-away, a catiffe, one of the most miserable creatures of the World" (1.122). Notwithstanding the catalogue of causes that follows, the Fall is the ultimate source of all melancholic feeling; other miseries beyond "the sinne of our first parent Adam" and its "concomitant cause [...] Gods just judgement" are merely "instrumentall" (1.123, 1.125). After establishing that curing melancholy will require a Christ-like work of redemption and exhaustively listing both its causes and symptoms, Burton begins the Second Partition, appropriately titled "The Cure of Melancholy." He rejects the "Unlawfull" efforts of the "Divell & his Ministers," declaring that cures "must first beginne with prayer, and then use Physicke, not one without the other, but both together" (2.1, 2.5). The work of physicians, "Gods intermediat minists," is relegated to that of second among equals (2.5).

Despite its subordination of the physical to the spiritual, the rest of the partition does not contain prayers but rather the author's herculean effort to list all the cures offered by physic. These sections have long been favorites of medical historians, but to take any of these cures as the one that the author would have the reader apply to herself is miss their fullest meaning, for they—and indeed the book itself—are framed by the author's prefatory explanation that his comprehensiveness stems from a desire to keep both himself and his readers busy, there being "no greater cause of Melancholy then idlenesse" (1.6). In other words, to read only prescriptively would be to overlook the one great prophylactic that is the distracting power of the text itself. Far from diminishing the book's contents, this distractive program literally expands them in five successively expanded editions published during the author's lifetime. This expansive attempt to offer a more than merely symptomatic treatment of a disease whose lapsarian origins demand the shedding of blood consumes Burton, for the strength of his effort to distract the reader from the pains he feels is one with his willingness to sacrifice himself on the stage of public opinion.

Burton's attention to the means by which a text can be made redemptive is just one sign of his ambitions for his book. In "Democritus Junior to the Reader," he tells the story of Gregorius Titianus, who "out of a charitable minde no doubt, wisht all his bookes were gold and silver, Jewels and precious stones, to redeeme captives, set free prisoners, and relieve all poore distressed soules that wanted meanes" (1.93).¹⁹ Skeptical about the viability

19 The anecdote is taken from Dugo Philonius, as Burton acknowledges. Bamborough identifies the title as

of a method that encourages future ransoms, Burton notes that this practice would exhaust even “*Croesus*[’s] wealth.” Operating under a monetized version of Mosaic law, the efficacy of Titianus’s books lies in their exchange value and loss. “Religiously done,” these efforts are not rejected out of principle but rather because they are unsustainable. In the Second Partition, Burton is more dismissive of the redemptive efforts described by Catholic authors like Giraldus Cambrensis and Jacobus de Voragine, who speak of “*S. Johns* Gospell about [a woman’s] neck” and the names of “the three Kings of *Colen* [...] written in Parchment, and hung about a Patients necke, with the signe of the Crosse.” In these cases, the object’s efficacy is a product of its metonymic connection to a powerful individual rather than in its exchange value. Relics epitomize this type of power, and so it comes as no surprise when Burton sweeps these and all other “familiar” examples of Catholic superstition aside, triumphantly declaring that “we on the other side, seeke to God alone” (2.9).

Nevertheless, the boast testifies to his interest. When it comes to making his own book salvific, Burton has something more radical in mind than pecuniary ransoms or empty metonyms in which the book draws power from its author’s name. In his sacrificial economy, gold is stripped of its purchasing power, redeployed as an aid to delivery in the form of the artful style he uses to disguise the taste of his cure from dysphagic readers:

But mine earnest intent is as much to profit as to please, *non tam ut populo placerem, quam ut populum juvarem*, and these my writings I hope, shall take like gilded pilles, which are so composed as well to tempt the appetite, and deceave the pallat, as to helpe and medicinally worke upon the whole body, my lines shall not onely recreate, but rectifie the minde. (3.5)

But if style is the gilding that makes the Burton’s sentences go down smoothly, it remains to be seen what exactly these pills contain that promise to re-create and transform the reader from within. In the section that follows, I suggest that the answer is never any one medical or spiritual cure but rather the author himself.²⁰

Two key terms help reveal how this is so. The first is the titular “Anatomy,” a term that signals the author’s simultaneous commitment to a scholastic genre (*ἀνατομία*) and a dissective method that takes Burton as its subject. While the former might be understood as a sign of what Burton describes as his isolation up at Oxford, the latter demonstrates his unconscious awareness of what Gordon Teskey calls a “corporeal apocalypse” in which the body’s interior is shown to be “absolutely unique [...] unlike anything outside it in the physical structure of the natural world” (*Allegory and Violence* 84). Burton’s description of himself as a vulnerable textual body literalizes the conventional Ramist conceit that structures the book, differentiating his anatomy from those of different topics by writers like John Lyly and Thomas Nashe, whose subjects lie far from their bodies.²¹

Tilianus, vel de scientia bene moriendi (1553), noting that Burton owned a copy.

20 By focusing on Burton’s redemptive mission, I hope to reframe a critical debate that has too often focused on questions about genre. Rather than try to untangle Burton’s medievalism from his modernism, I will show how his redemptive mission requires both.

21 The author’s description of himself as vulnerable textual body radically recontextualizes the Ramist charts

The second term is intimately connected to the first; in fact, it is the first called by its true name: crucifixion. Throughout the *Anatomy*, Burton describes melancholics who “crucifie their own souls,” giving way to “violent passions of feare, grieffe, shame, revenge, hatred, malice, &c” (1.256). The desire to self-crucify stems from “phantasie,” a product of an imagination that “doth more fully examine the Species perceived by common sense [...] recalling them to mind againe, or making new of his owne” (1.152).²² Only rarely non-reflexive when employed by Burton, crucifixion is something one does to oneself.²³ Burton’s doubly figurative usage takes Christ’s death as a metaphor for individual human suffering and torment, moving the site of this suffering from the body to the minds of melancholics who “torture and crucifie themselves” (3.416–417).²⁴

that serve as a prefatory guide to the book. As Walter Ong observed long ago in his landmark work on Petrus Ramus, it was commonplace to use anatomy as a structuring metaphor for scholarly exploration: Medicine at this time makes its own special fad of thinking of scientific or quasi-scientific treatises as presentations of ‘bodies’ of knowledge. It also encourages the related fad of performing intellectual ‘anatomies,’ which are analyses or ‘dissections’ of such ‘bodies’ of knowledge undertaken sometimes in a friendly and sometimes in a polemic spirit.” (*Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* 315)

Burton’s innovation lies in neglecting Ong’s “as if,” rejecting metaphor in a move that separates him from other anatomical writers.

22 Early in the First Partition, Burton suggests that the universality of the crucifying imagination is an epistemological byproduct of the moment that impressions begin to produce entirely new things in the mind. The dangers of the imagination are particularly visible in the insane, whose tendency to confuse its products with objects in the physical world means, in the words of ninth century physician Rhasis, that they are often “afraid to be burned, or that the ground will sinke under them, or swallow them quicke” (1.385–386).

23 Burton is the first English author to use “crucify” figuratively with human beings as objects. The speed with which it is adopted testifies to its appeal, particularly for descriptions of printed labors. See “crucify 2c.” Pope’s employment in the *Dunciad* is typical: “Old puns restore, lost blunders nicely seek, And crucify poor Shakespear once a week” (1.163–164). Mary Ann Lund has discussed the importance of “crucify” in the *Anatomy*. Lund suggests that the word be understood classically as a synonym for “torment” (177–178). While Lund brings welcome attention to Burton’s use of this term, her appeal to Greek and Latin analogues neglects the certainty that the word cannot be heard by Christian ears without bringing Christ’s Passion overwhelmingly to mind. The strongest statement Lund makes about the word’s Christian resonances is that “Melancholy is not only a metaphor for all human suffering, but is inextricably connected to sin, and hence to the cross” (178).

Burton exploits the traditional association between scholarship and martyrdom, drawing on Augustine, who describes being “tortured in mind for learning Greek” and laments the “cruel terrors and punishment” that made his education a “martyrdom” (1.133). Burton uses this association to critique the crucifying tendencies of scholastics of all stripes in conventional humanist attacks on scholasticism’s labyrinthine tendencies, particularly in predestinary debates. While Angus Gowland and others emphasize the importance of the predestinary debates for the *Anatomy*, and while these debates do form an undeniably important backdrop for Burton’s text, I am more interested in exploring the ways in which their vocabulary is also used to describe the trial of authorship in particular. See Angus Gowland, *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy: Robert Burton in Context* (Cambridge, 2006).

24 Carrying out inside her head what was once the drama of the world, the melancholic gives ear to a conscience that is “a thousand witnesses to accuse [...] a continuall testor to give in Evidence, to empanell a Jury to examine us, to cry guilty, a persecutor with hue and cry to follow [...] still accusing, denouncing, torturing and molesting.”

Yet crucifixion is not just for other melancholics; it is also what Burton claims to have done to himself. While he leaves explicitly Christological pretending to blasphemous madmen and heretics, his mission is, despite its anatomical pretenses, overtly messianic.²⁵ In an effort to save his readers from themselves, Burton reaches out, passionately offering his body in a textual sacrifice whose neurotically recanting form mirrors the self-crucifying doubts of those he seeks to cure. His description of this effort borrows from the Passion, along with a number of other judicial punishments, reflecting his conformity to the requirements of a press that employs his body as the substrate upon which the text is printed: “Be it therefore as it is, well or ill, I have assay’d, put my selfe upon the Stage, I must abide the censure, I may not escape it. [...] I have layd my selfe open (I know it) in this Treatise, turned mine inside outward, I shall be censured, I doubt not [...]” (1.13). In a passage that echoes his complaint at the beginning of the fifth edition about bringing brought upon the “*scenam* [stage, scene],” what initially appears as a theatrical stage on which the author stands and soliloquizes is quickly revealed to be a surgical one upon which he cuts himself apart.

“Inside outward” identifies skin as the medium of this sacrifice, demonstrating the author’s knowledge that propitiation requires a corporeal act of sacrificial inscription. Burton’s act of excoriating inversion has a number of precedents, one of which culminates in Bartholinus’s self-dissector. Another Burton identifies by name. Here, he outlines the process by which his body-made-text will heal melancholic readers by invoking the example given by the great Hussite general and proto-Protestant Jan Žižka:

And as that great captaine *Zisca* would have a drumme made of his skinne when he was dead, because he thought the very noise of it would put his enimies to flight, I doubt not, but that these following lines, when they shall be recited, or hereafter read, will drive away Melancholy (though I be gone) as much as *Zisca*’s drum could terrify his foes. (1.24)

Seeking to overcome the limits of his body, Žižka commands his followers to make a drum from his flayed skin. But while this postmortem transformation of his skin into sonic instrument preserves and extends Žižka’s postmortem presence, it offers only a marginal improvement in distributivity. The skin-drum can only be in one place at a time and cannot be copied; in this sense it is no different than any other talismanic object.²⁶

As Žižka converts his body into a drum, so Burton turns his into a printed book. The resultant work is vastly superior to that of Žižka’s drum: a mechanically reproduced text

25 While the urge to self-crucify is felt most strongly by false martyrs, suicides, and enthusiasts—those afflicted by what the author calls “ferall diseases”—it also extends also to the more benignly melancholic (1.210). In this latter sort of person, the faculty of imagination remains “most Powerfull and strong, and often hurts,” but rather than destroy, it produces a creative urge, causing “many times a divine ravishment, and a kind of enthusiasmus, which stirreth them up to be excellent philosophers, poets, prophets, &c” (1.152). While these offices (all ones to which Burton lays claim) offer something more promising than immediate self-destruction, insanity and artistic production stem from a common Dionysian seed, they also draw Burton toward the type of enthusiasm from which he is otherwise eager to distance himself (1.400).

26 In this sense the drum is even less distributable than a manuscript, which can at least be copied.

distributable to a vast community of readers. No less unsparing of his body, Burton sacrificially transforms himself into a typographic vehicle for the comfort that he hopes to provide in a procedure that requires his self-dissection. Pledging himself eucharistically, the author looks forward to his death, mirroring Christ's language at the Last Supper and at the Ascension when he promises the Holy Spirit, the parenthetical "though I be gone" suggesting that the author considers himself present even though he is indeed already gone.

The Christological nature of this sacrifice is further specified by the author's relation to his namesake, the pre-Socratic Greek atomist "Old Democritus." In a conversation that Burton imagines taking place between Old Democritus and Hippocrates, the philosopher explains to the physician that he does "anatomize and cut up these poore Beasts, to see these distempers, vanities, and follies, yet such prooffe were better made on a man's body, if my kinde nature would endure it" (1.36).²⁷ Like a priest under the old covenant, Old Democritus operates according to a law in which animals bear the cost of human sinfulness. He wishes it could be otherwise but cannot think of a solution that does not involve the spilling of human blood. Into this void steps Democritus Junior, fulfilling his forebear's desire to make proof on human bodies by offering his own to be anatomized and pressed. This willingness radically recontextualizes Burton's later claim to have followed Old Democritus in eschewing vivisection, proclaiming "I need not be so barbarous, inhumane, curious or cruell for this purpose to torture any poore melancholy man, their symptomes are plaine, obvious and familiar" (1.381). The disingenuous claim about the obviousness of melancholic coyly neatly sidesteps the fact that Burton does not need to find a melancholic subject to experiment upon because he already has one in himself.

Of course, the author's claim that his body supplies both senses of Old Democritus's desire for "proof" (i.e., supplies both melancholic symptoms and proofed pages) is also a dodge—one that asks the reader to ignore the fact that the book is not made of the author's body but is in fact a manufactured commodity printed on paper and sold at market.²⁸ Despite the seriousness with which the author asks his readers to suspend disbelief in his transubstantiated textual presence, the consequences of the book's parallel status as commodity are in the end inescapable:

Yea but I am ashamed, disgraced, dishonoured, degraded, exploded, my notorious crimes and villainies are come to light, (*deprendi miserum est*), my filthy lust, abominable oppression and avarice lies open, my good names lost, my fortunes gone, I have been stigmatized, whipt at poast, arraigned

²⁷ Burton adopts this conversation from the pseudo-Hippocratic "Epistle to Damagetus." For differences between Burton's version and his original source in Fabius Calvus' Latin translation, see Lund, *Melancholy, Medicine and Religion in Early Modern England*, 152–158.

²⁸ The earliest attestation of the latter meaning of "proof" dates from 1602 ("Proof, N." 15b). While proof positive is found in the body's melancholic symptoms, the proofed page is a product of the same body's miraculous ability to be instrumentalized and reproduced. The pun captures the contradiction of a printed text that is also a body, figuring reproducibility and singularity in one object. Working under the Old Covenant and unable to overcome this paradox, Old Democritus turns to animal sacrifice instead.

and condemned, I am a common obloquy, I have lost my eares, odious, execrable, abhorr'd of God and men. Bee content, 'tis but a nine daies wonder, and as one sorrow drives out another, one passion another, one cloud another, one rumor is expelled by another, Every day almost, come new newes unto our eares, as how the Sun was eclipsed, meteors seene i'th' aire, monsters borne, prodigies, how the *Turkes* were overthrowne in *Persia*, an Earthquake in *Helvetia*, *Calabria*, *Japan*, or *China*, an inundation in *Holland*, a great plague in *Constantinople*, a fire at *Prage*, a dearth in *Germany*, such a man is made a Lord, a Bishop, another hanged, deposed, prest to death, for some murder, treason, rape, theft, oppression, all which we doe heare at first with a kinde of admiration, detestation, consternation, but by and by they are buried in silence. (2.200)

In this remarkable passage added in the second edition (1624), Burton interrupts his advice to readers who find themselves victims of “scoffs, slanders, contumelies, obloquies, defamations, detractions, pasquilling libels, and the like,” launching into a searing description of his own pain. Unlike that suffered by libeled readers, his pain is self-inflicted, a product of his insistence on going to press again and again.

In the lead-up to this passage, the seriality by which sin, disaster, and indeed all things are rendered impermanent is positive, linked to the homeopathic principle in which a disease is best cured by its likeness. The certainty that all news will be forgotten, replaced by “new newes,” offers relief from the shame of having one’s sins made public. The idea is familiar, linked to the author’s earlier claim that writing about melancholy allows him “by being busie to avoid Melancholy” (1.6). But what in the first case is homeopathic is in the second an effect of serial publication, and what Burton begins by describing as the healthy exchange of one passion for another quickly devolves into an etiology of stimulation and “rumor.” Rumor is not gossip but rather what we now call “news”: an unrelenting stream of information that brings the reader the latest happenings from around the world again and again and again. Forgetting is less a product of memory’s failure than of modern media, which overwhelms the memory with a cascade of new things that bury the ones that came before it.²⁹ Burton describes this inundation as the sound of animated discussion and

29 Burton’s persistence on this point presents a challenge to Luc Boltanski’s suggestion that the “[distant] spectator’s dilemma [...] has been dramatised by the development of these [modern] media over the last thirty years, and especially by the development of television” (xv). In the preface he speaks of television, and while I find it hard to believe that he really thinks that the cathode ray tube is doing something that photography or print do not, he never revises this implausible account of the moment in which (real) distant suffering first appears. The historical story he does tell is that of fictional suffering—from the stage to Steele’s comment in the *Spectator* on the pleasures of watching theater unobserved—straight through to Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

Burton’s description also undermines the chronology offered by Mary Favret in *War at a Distance*. Favret describes how “Already in 1798,” Samuel Taylor Coleridge was able to “lament that reading the morning news only dampened his ability to respond feeling to distant warfare.” Favret links what Coleridge calls “un-joined feelings” to the rise of newspapers and their tendency toward “euphemism and abstraction” (14). The numbing effects of seriality do not appear to enter into her calculus, perhaps because her thesis about “the advent of the mass media, in the print culture that rose in the eighteenth

“table talke,” but this clamor is in fact largely second-order. The sound news makes is virtual: the reader feels as though she hears an uproar but that which confronts her is as noiseless as the silence in which it will all soon be “buried” and forgotten.³⁰

Thus does Burton’s interruption mark not solidarity with suffering readers but rather his difference from them. In the context of the continual conversion of lived experience into consumable media into oblivion, the author positions himself as one piece of news that cannot be buried—news that supplants fire and eclipse, murder and monstrous birth. Interrupting his message of readerly comfort with a passionate description of his own experience of typographic life, Burton interposes a description of his humiliated body between the slander suffered by his readers and the solution that will be its eventual burial in silence. While Burton’s suggestion that he is worse off than his readers may indeed be true, his pain and punishment are self-produced effects of his constant effort to keep himself in print. Looking at the first edition self that “lies open” before him, the Burton of the second edition speaks both to and from his printed text, declaring *hoc est corpus meum* in a textual version of Helkiah Crooke’s “living dissection” (18/C4v).³¹ Performing what Steiner identifies as the “paradox implicit in every Passion lyric,” he “is at once the prescribed formula of public ritual, the lament of the self that repeatedly suffers through the ritual reenactment of death, but is at the same time the performative Word, the Author of ritual itself” (66).³²

century” assigns to the Romantic period what Burton insists more properly belongs to the early seventeenth century (13). Perhaps Coleridge does not complain about seriality and an excess of printed materials because he lived in a culture that had long since become inured to it. It would seem that Favret’s argument that “The wartime writing of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period gives expressive form to this experience of mediated distance—distance spatial, temporal, epistemological, and, in the end, mortal—and the responses it generates” applies just as well to Burton’s period (14).

Like that of Coleridge after him, Burton’s concern about “new news” is a product of war. The interest in news was particularly acute leading up to the first publication of the *Anatomy* (1621) as the election of Frederick V by the Estates of Bohemia in 1618 gave rise to what would become the Thirty Years War. Joad Raymond describes an increase in English occasional news pamphlets in 1620-1 that displaced foreign imports and led to Nathaniel Butter’s *Mercurius Britannicus*. Serial publication by London stationers began in 1592; exact periodicity did not appear until late 1641 (see Raymond’s *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, 101-102, 106-7, 133-4). While Raymond suggests that seriality creates the expectations of updates and encourages future consumption, “perhaps enhancing appetite,” Burton clearly sees things more negatively (380).

30 Burton’s description of silence recalls the famous passage in Augustine’s *Confessions* when the author visits the Bishop Ambrose: “But when he was reading, his eye glided over the pages, and his heart searched out the sense, but his voice and tongue were at rest.” Of course, what Burton describes is a far cry from Ambrose’s relaxing scriptural contemplation. While Ambrose’s reading retreats from the world and the “din of others’ business,” the reader of news hears the din of the world inside her head (Hook 390).

31 Multiple editions of the *Anatomy* allow Burton to speak about being in print from the pages of the title that first offered him the experience. Typographic editions allow the author to perform the otherwise impossible feat of speaking to and from a textual body that both is and is not part of himself. To compare the two passages, see 424/Dd6v (misprinted as 428) in the 1621 edition and 290-291/Pp2v-Pp2r in 1624, where the added passage stretches from “Yea but I am shamed and disgraced [...]” to “Doth the Moone care for the barking of a dogge?”

32 Steiner’s discussion of Chaucer’s famous apostrophe in *Troilus and Criseyde* helps further define the

Yet the overstated savagery of this self-description reminds us once again that Burton does not actually physically suffer, nor did he ever. Neither punishing nor sacrificing his body to make his book, he instead employs print as a technological medium of distributive sacrifice. While print offers huge advantages over Žižka's skin-drum, these advantages come stripped of the heroic agency displayed by the Hussite general, replaced by a humiliating exposure to the market. Burton complains about this lack of agency but he is helpless to remedy it. In moments like these, his Christological vision of himself as a new Democritus—or “Democritus Christianus,” as he puts it in the preface—meets the reality that is typographic fame in an era of cheap print. As subject as anyone to the vagaries of public taste and the market's demand for newness, Burton realizes that the comfort that he offers the reader—the rumors about you will be forgotten, buried under piles of “new neues”—is also a guarantee that he too will be forgotten. Because the source of his power is theoretically available to all, it remains a source of deep ambivalence. Both his platform and his scaffold, the stage upon which he both soliloquizes and is cut to bits, the press amplifies Burton's voice at the same time that it condemns it to being only one among many. While print delivers good news, this news is always already about to become yesterday's news, buried under fresh sheets produced by “mercenary Stationers” willing to publish “Any scurrile Pamphlet” (1.16).

It would seem that the only way to respond to this constant threat of obsolescence is to produce more text. This Burton does in five editions. Thus in the confessional passage above, he both offers empathy and makes good on the promise made by the second edition's title-page to supply something “augmented by the Author.” By providing this supplement, Burton sympathetically describes the experience of being news; he also becomes it, conforming to the market requirement that he write something new.³³ In doing so, he fulfills his prefatory declaration, “I am content to be pressed with the rest,” punningly acquiescing to life as textual commodity (i.e., being *feeling* and *being* content) as he works to forestall the work of those who would pick him apart as they “finde out all the ruins of wit *ineptiarum delicias*, amongst the rubbish of old writers.”³⁴

In the end, Burton realizes that this renewing effort cannot go on indefinitely. He knows that eventually he will die and with him, the loquacious effort that keeps him out of the dunghill. Magical though they seem, the eucharistic effects of print are only temporary: amplification gives way to excess and finally to putridity as initially fresh pages are reemployed as wrapping paper and waste fit only to be placed “under Pies, to lap Spice in, and keepe Rost-meat from burning” (1.9). And yet he proceeds nonetheless. While his ultimate reasons for doing so remain largely inscrutable, refracted through a fog of compulsion and regret, I would like to suggest that one reason stems from the satisfaction

uniqueness of Burton's Charter-like voicing: Chaucer “speaks of his poem, that is, as his offspring but not as a double for himself” (60).

33 While seriality is the promise of another issue of the same title at some point in the future, periodicity is the same promise accompanied by the specific date that the next issue will emerge. See *Cheap Print* 384.

34 Holding up his “hand at the Barre”—the hand that literally wrote the crime—he chirographically submits to the typographic means of mechanical reproduction (1.102).

he finds at writing not in folio or in quarto but rather in “cento.” Putting together a patchwork collected “out of divers Writers,” Burton seeks to do for other writers what they cannot do for themselves: posthumous resurrection by name. For while he claims that he is as guilty as anyone of stealing from other authors, his practice differs from that of the common plagiarist:

For my part I am one of the number [...] I doe not denie it, I have only this of *Macrobius* to say for my selfe, *Omne meum, nihil meum*, ‘till all mine and none mine. As a good hous-wife out of divers fleeces weaves one peece of Cloath, a Bee gathers Wax and Hony out of many Flowers, and makes a new bundle of all, [...] I have wronged no Authors, but given every man his owne [...] I cite & quote mine Authors [...] I can say of my selfe, whom have I injured? The matter is theirs most part, and yet mine, [...] which nature doth with the aliment of our bodies, incorporate, digest, assimilate, I doe *conquoere quod hausit* [digest what I have consumed], dispose of what I take.
(1.11)

Here, out of “*Democritus*[’s] Pit”—a “vast *Chaos* and confusion of Bookes”—rises Democritus Junior, a corporate person gathered together out of the ingested remains of old authors, resurrecting them even as he transforms them into something greater than themselves (1.12). This grand vision of bibliographic incorporation is fleeting; Burton undercuts it almost immediately with yet more descriptions of textual excess and filth. Nevertheless, it points a way forward. While printed pages provide the fabric for Burton’s cento, no garment lasts forever. And although mechanical reproducibility may indeed allow him to “adde, alter and see farther” than his predecessors, the bare fact of this advantage does not convey immortality (1.12). Immortalization is a task that he must finally leave to others—future writers who will do for him what he has done for so many. As he himself acknowledges in the passionate expiration added to the fifth and final edition: “I will not hereafter add, alter, or retract; I have done” (1.20).



Figure 1.

The crucified body of Christ inscribed with the text of the *Short Charter*. British Library MS Additional 37049, fol. 23r. Courtesy of the British Library, London.

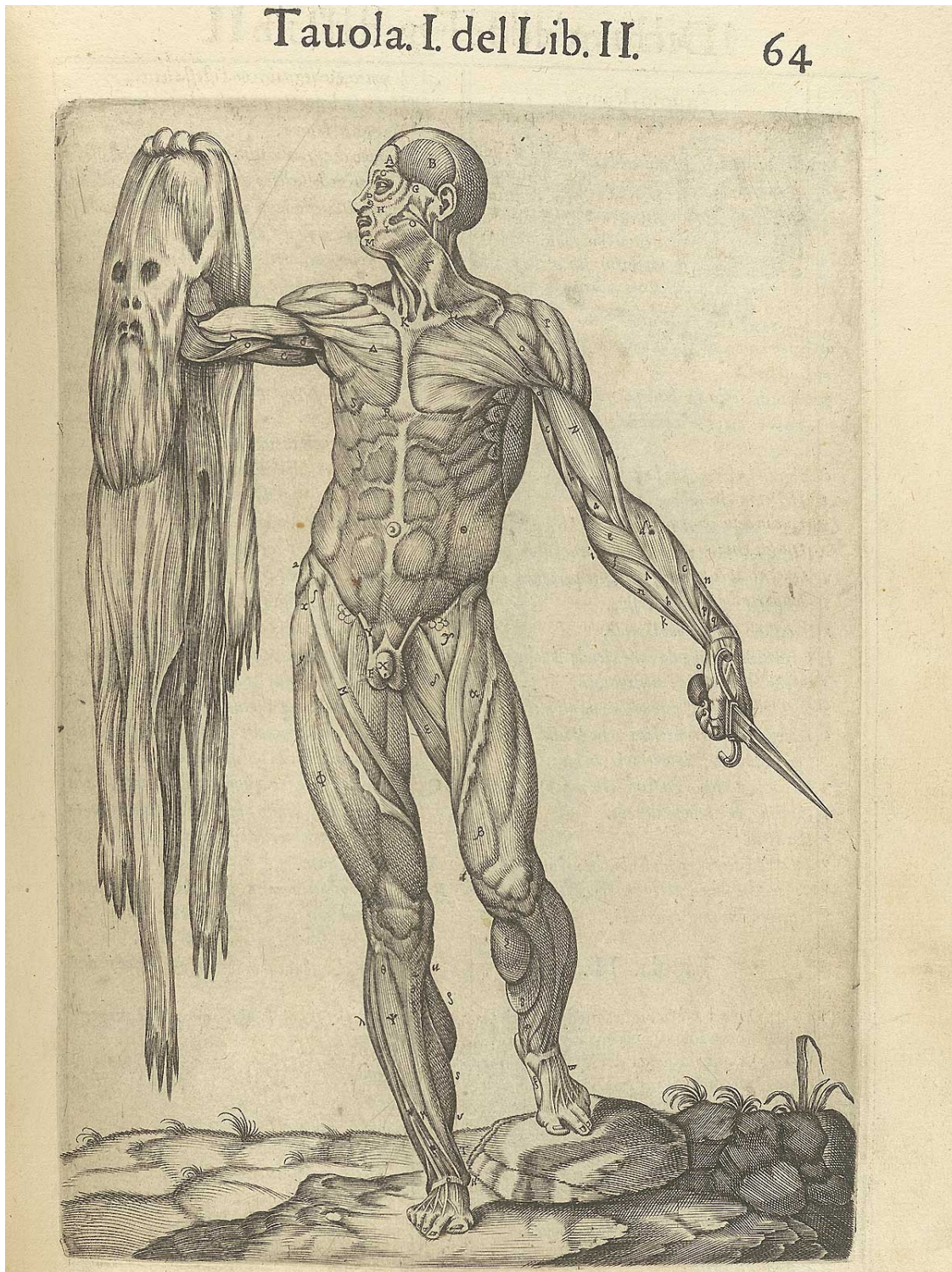


Figure 2.
Self-flayer holding skin. Gaspar Becerra. *Anatomia del corpo humano*, 63. Courtesy of the U.S. National Library of Medicine, Bethesda.

DE ANATOMIA

In hac fi-
gura hęc du-
os musculos
obliquos ascē-
dētesq; se ieru-
ciāt cū duob⁹
descēdētib⁹ in
alia figura po-
sit⁹: qui qdē de-
scēdētes sunt
supra istos a-
scēdētes: ⁊ to-
tus vnus ex p-
dictis muscu-
lis descēdenti-
bus supra po-
sit⁹ i alia figu-
ra cum corda
sua superquirit
obliq; muscu-
lū vnū ex istis
ascēdētib⁹ ob-
liq; ⁊ faciūt si-
mul figurā .x.
litterē græce: ⁊
istoz musculo-
rū ē pars tar-
nea ē a lateri-
b⁹: Lorde ho-
eoz sunt i me-
dio ventris: q;
sunt ēt duarū
pellicularū: ⁊
hñt vnā pellicu-
lā tñ super-
quiritē muscu-
los lōgos: a-
lia vero pellicu-
la ē infra mu-
sculos lōgos:
q; adheret cor-
dis latitudina-
liū musculoz:
⁊ istae cordae
ēt terminant i
līnea: q; ē ime-
dio ventris: vt
vides.



Figure 3.
Self-flayer. Hugo da Carpi. *Isagogae breues* [...], 6v. Courtesy of the U.S. National Library of
Medicine, Bethesda.

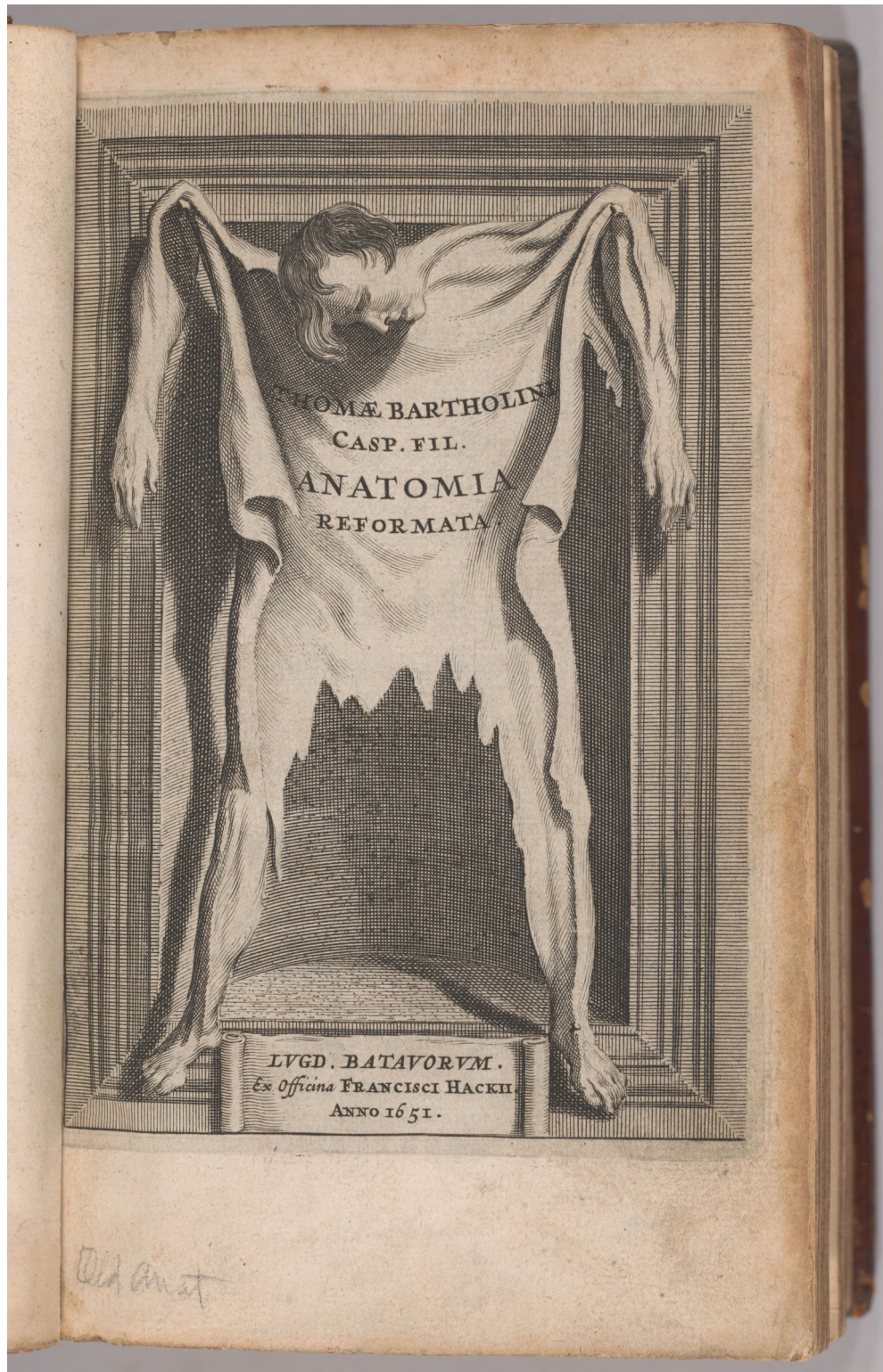


Figure 4.
Self-flayer as title-page. *Anatomia reformatata*, *1r. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library,
Berkeley.

“As in his book alive”: John Milton and the Writing of Martyrdom

With the coronation of King Charles, who was considered a crypto-Catholic by many of his contemporaries, and particularly with the rise of Archbishop William Laud, Protestant martyrdom in England ceased to be merely a figure for crippling self-doubt. In this new era in which the bodies of hotter English Protestants once again bore the costs of their beliefs, John Milton stands as an equivocal figure whose suffering manifests itself both in body and in text. Milton’s martyrological aspirations are shaped by the onset of physical disability, his increasing confidence that his primary contribution would be constructed in words, and his certainty that he did “not wish to passe this life unpersecuted of slanderous tongues” (CPW 1.833). In this chapter, I suggest that the intermingling of textual and physical bodies in Milton’s anti-prelatical tracts redefines writing as a kind of martyrdom. This conflation of physical body and textual figure manifests itself in a series of strange images that most critics have described as excessive; I read them rather as signs of the author’s entirely serious effort to textualize his physical body. Milton’s sense of himself as a living martyr is inextricably linked to his sense of being an author who suffers in print.

The equation of books and bodies culminates in *Areopagitica*, a tract that revives and generalizes the conflating habits of the earlier tracts. Milton’s championing of good books is his most compact expression of a topos of the writer’s body suffering in print. The difference that Milton delineates between the death of a good book and that of an average man is less a product of a Platonic idealization of books than of his interest in revising sainthood, not merely as a Protestant office, but also and more significantly through print and his own person (CPW 2.553). The remarkable conflation of the author’s physical and textual bodies in this most famous of Milton’s prose tracts has long fascinated critics:

We should be wary therefore what persecution we raise against the living labours of publick men, how we spill that season’d life of man preserv’d and stor’d up in Books; since we see a kinde of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdome, and if it extend to the whole impression, a kinde of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elementall life, but strikes at that ethereall and fift essence, the breath of reason it selfe, slaies an immortality rather then a life. (CPW 2.493)

The ostensible problems with this passage are familiar to Miltonists. While the tract’s celebration of books as the “eye” of the image of God valorizes the word in a properly Protestant way, it is less clear why, both in this passage and in the work as a whole, Milton should treat books as bodies liable to “the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to.” Stanley Fish has memorably suggested that *Areopagitica*’s personification of books and exaltation of the “dead letter of a physical object” is simply a trick meant to test the reader, who ought to recognize and reject what Milton would describe (according to Fish) “as a papist idolatry of relics” (“Driving from the Letter” 237).¹ The logical gymnastics required

¹ John Knott observes that Milton “extends the language of martyrdom to the struggle for free expression that he saw as crucial to the advancement of reformation in English,” but fails to appreciate how directly

to sustain this argument, while impressive, render the argument unpersuasive in the end. A number of other critics are largely dismissive of this truly strange image; J.K. Hale simply notes that the early modern “resemblance of books to men was commonplace: the hangman destroyed both when told to” (65).

More promisingly, Genelle Gertz-Robinson suggests that Milton’s equation of books and bodies reflects his effort to retrieve “a mythic Protestant past in order to direct present action” by adapting and modernizing the apocalyptic histories of John Bale and John Foxe for the new Laudian landscape (966). Building on Damian Nussbaum’s studies of Foxe’s 1630s reception and the 1632 reprinting of the *Actes and Monuments*, Gertz-Robinson argues that persecuted Puritans adopted Foxe’s idiom as a means of tying their experiences to those of the Marian martyrs. In this reading, Milton puts aside the Athenian model of parliament with which he begins the tract in favor of a “modern and sinister” one in which English MPs “resemble Spanish Inquisitors who repress worthy speech by means of torturous instruments like the Index and imprimatur.” Milton’s personification of books, then, is part of a larger effort to incorporate parliamentary censorship into “master martyrological narrative of pain and persecution that legitimates the need for further reformation” (963).

Providing a historical context for *Areopagitica* that is often either missing (*pace* Fish) or too tightly focused on Milton’s “immediate political strategy” early in the Commonwealth period, Gertz-Robinson reads Milton’s call for the “reforming of Reformation it self” as one that marks a new episteme in which “books are being persecuted as people had a century before” (Kendrick 20; Gertz-Robinson 966).² This oppression of books instead of people is not a step on the road to toleration, however; as Gertz-Robinson acknowledges, mid-seventeenth century magistrates continued to punish human bodies, and William Prynne, John Bastwick, and Henry Burton had all recently been tortured for their writings. But if the Laudian and then the republican magistrates were still applying the rod to deviants, then we are no closer to answering the question of why books should be figured as bodies than we were before. Why should the suppression of books be understood as a kind of bodily torture when there was no shortage of actual bodies being tortured for the books they produced, particularly in the years that led up to the abolition of Star Chamber in 1641? Our knowledge of Milton’s interaction with figures such as Prynne confirms Michael Lieb’s assertion that “Underlying Milton’s application of the language of suffering to books [...] is an awareness of the nature of the persecutions the seekers after Truth were in fact bound to endure in their attempts to advance her cause,” but again, this gets us no closer to knowing why books should be bodies (22).³

Milton felt the consequences of this extension (158).

- 2 Wilding makes a similar suggestion, arguing that Milton’s strategy reminds the reader that “Licensing [...] is to be identified with the Laudian repression of the 1630s” (8).
- 3 Lieb’s observation that the punishments offered by the Star Chamber Decree of 1637 and the Licensing Order of 1643 threatened violators with corporal punishment and the destruction of their presses does not in itself explain Milton’s conflating habit. Stephen Dobranski similarly claims that books are like men in a straightforward way, suggesting that “the expressions of cutting that would have reminded Milton’s readers of authors and stationers’ punishments can also be seen as allusions to a book’s material

I would like to suggest that the answer to this question lies in Milton's sense of himself as a living textual martyr.⁴ Milton's books-as-bodies rhetoric not only makes books into sites of authorial suffering in general, the intensity of his application of this rhetoric to his own work suggests that it is in print that his own martyrological longings are ultimately fulfilled. *Areopagitica* is the culmination of this process, however; in the anti-prelatical tracts, the damage done to books is not abstract and general but real and personal. Milton's description of bishop Joseph Hall's efforts to mutilate his textual body reveals how just how closely Milton's sense of himself as a suffering author is related to his sense of being in print.⁵

As with *Areopagitica*, the imagery of these tracts has long been identified with a putative gap between Milton's "argument" (or "logic") and his "rhetoric." Lana Cable—seeking to solve the puzzle of what she calls "Milton's penchant for purveying affective power as moral truth"—suggests that metaphorical overflow in tracts such as *Of Reformation* are the result of a youthful author "who, at this stage in his literary career, quite ingenuously equates moral conviction with affective intensity" ("Agon and Logos: Revolution and Revelation" 239; 66).⁶ For Cable, Milton's "impulse toward the linguistically and affectively sensuous" explains his unsparing "surgical" treatment of the prelatical martyrs Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, and Nicholas Ridley; Milton's "physical assault on a moral problem [...] provides an almost visceral satisfaction in the metaphoric realm of moral truth" that in the "historical realm [...] would be ludicrous" (70). While critical interpretations of the divide between Milton's "ostensible rational argument and the affective rhetoric of his imagery" vary, they all appeal to Milton's apparent sensuousness in order to explain what would otherwise be ludicrous. Rather than take incompatibility of Milton's argumentative logic and his imagery as a given, I would like to step back and consider the possibility that his metaphors are less out of sync with his rhetoric than we have been led to believe. While "affective intensity" forms an undeniably important part of Milton's prose style, the identification of this important does not lessen but rather increases the need to further define it. Milton's effort in *Of Reformation* to "open the faults and blemishes of *Fathers, Martyrs, or Christian Emperors*" cannot be dismissed out of

production. [...] That Milton's imagery can potentially point to physical torture and a book's production suggests the conflation of book and body that underlies the punishment these agents endured" (122).

What Dobranski does not consider are the ways that Milton's own books are like himself.

- 4 While there has been a spate of recent attention to martyrdom as topic in Milton's oeuvre, no one calls him a martyr. John Knott takes up the topic most comprehensively, arguing that Milton "reveals a tension between the martyr as militant Christian and the martyr as victim not apparent to Foxe" (151).
- 5 The polemical battle between the two men was over the question of what to do with the bishops. Milton entered an ongoing debate between Hall, a liberal Anglican, and the Smectymnuans—a group that spoke for and were mostly moderate Puritans, but who also drew in radicals such as Milton and John Lilburne. Hall argues for Apostolic succession and tends to come off as a somewhat naive conciliator. Milton, of course, wants to get rid of bishops altogether.
- 6 Christopher Kendrick makes a similar argument about "argumentative overflow" in *Areopagitica*, where "rhetorical vigor [...] resists methodical discourse" (23). Other critics whose arguments depend on this putative divide include K.G. Hamilton, Stanley Fish, and Keith Stavely. Explanations for the divide range from a failure of dialectic to the author's intentional strategy. For a summary, see Cable 65.

hand as “the prerogative of the satirist,” for to do so not only delimits the historical context in which Milton writes, it also ignores his practice in other anti-prelatical tracts (CPW 1.535; Cable 70).

In his unsigned postscript of one of the Smectymnuan tracts, *An Answer to a Booke Entituled, An Humble Remonstrance*, Milton employs a dissecting style too fully shaped to be simply dismissed as satirical or the product of undifferentiated affective overflow.⁷ The most compelling internal evidence of Milton’s authorship of the postscript comes near its end, where the author turns his attention to the bishops in place under Edward:

The deficiencie of zeale and courage even in those Bishops who afterwards proved Martyrs, witness the sharp contention of *Ridley* against *Hooper*, for the ceremonies. And the importunate suit of *Cranmer* and *Ridley* for toleration of the Masse for the King’s sister, which was rejected by the Kings, not only reasons, but teares; whereby the young King shewed more zeale than his best Bishops. 839. The inhumane butcheries, blood-sheddings, and cruelties of *Gardiner*, *Bonner*, and the rest of the Bishops in Queene *Maries* dayes, are so fresh in every mans memory, as that we conceive it a thing altogether unnecessary to make mention of them. Onely wee feare least the guilt of the blood then shed, should yet remaine to be required at the hands of this Nation, because it hath not publicly endeavoured to appease the wrath of God by a generall and solemne humiliation for it. (CPW 1.974–975)

Milton repeats this indictment of Cranmer and Ridley in other tracts, most notably *Of Reformation*, where he calls them “*Prelat-Martyrs*” (CPW 1.603). Yet the frequency with which he mentions the episcopal Marian martyrs testifies to his interest in them. Cranmer and Ridley are men deficient of zeal and courage, yet they are also men who died at the hands of men Milton believes to be far worse: Edmund Bonner and Stephen Gardiner. Theologically defective though they may be, the saintly sacrifices of the bishops hold great appeal for Milton, whose investment in his own legacy is one of the primary forces shaping his career. The Marian persecutions are “so fresh” that reminders of their relevance would be “altogether unnecessary,” but for the promising possibility that more blood “should yet remaine to be required at the hands of this Nation.” Milton’s call to reform reformation leaves us unsure whether he fears the spilling of blood so much as he wishes for it, and if the latter is indeed the case, we must ask whether the blood of which he speaks is his own.

With this possibility in mind, I would like to turn to the series of tracts that follow the *Answer*, tracts in which Milton stops pretending to be one of the Smectymnuans and speaks as one who defends them. In the biting *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence against Smectymnuus*—a pamphlet that Don M. Wolfe calls “a vehicle of

7 The Smectymnuan *An Answer to a Booke Entituled, An Humble Remonstrance* appeared in March 1641—two months before *Of Reformation*. The work is the most ambitious Smectymnuan answer to Hall’s initial tract, the *Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament*. The postscript to the *Answer* bears signs of Milton’s influence, if not his hand, in its choice of sources and the vehemence with which it ends, along with early evidence of his preoccupation with the Edwardian and Marian bishops. I won’t rehearse the usual evidence for Miltonic authorship because he himself more or less acknowledges it in the *Animadversions*.

unrestrained bitterness”—Milton responded to Hall’s *A Defence of the Humble Remonstrance*, itself a response to the Smectymnuan *Answer* (CPW 1.123). Hall then responded (belatedly) to both *Animadversions* and *Reason of Church-Government Urged against Prelaty* in *A Modest Confutation of a Slanderous and Scurrulous Libell, Entitled Animadversions*, a work to which Milton would offer a reply in *An Apology against a Pamphlet* (better known by its repackaged title, *An Apology for Smectymnuus*). In the *Apology*, his fifth and final anti-prelatical tract, Milton describes his experience as the target of an opponent who would have him killed.⁸ Early in the *Modest Confutation*, Hall had cited Milton’s “Horrid blasphemy” in *The Reason of Church-Government*, demanding that “You who love Christ, and know this miscreant wretch, stone him to death, lest yourselves smart for his impunity”—an imperative that was hardly softened by Hall’s naming of Milton as a “*Sword and Spear*” carrying “Goliah” in the sentence that followed (B1r).⁹ Responding by way of a consonance that he will repeat in *Areopagitica*, Milton condemns Hall as one who would “give the watch word [...] to a mutiny or massacre,” copiously suggesting that his behavior is that of a bloodthirsty Guisian, anti-Christian crusader, and Jesuit (CPW 1.895–896). In attacking Hall’s “Butcherly speech,” Milton asserts himself as a type of David, not simply in order to undo Hall’s characterization of him as Goliath, but also to force the bishop to hold onto the stones he has picked up by calling him a “cursing Shimei a hurler of stones, as well as a rayler” (CPW 1.896).¹⁰ The coordinating conjunction establishes stone-hurling and railing as distinct behaviors—Milton’s characterization of Hall as a thrower of stones is less a product of the satirical convention in which one treats one’s opponent physically than of his conviction that Hall actually wants him dead.

This is not to say that Milton treats polemical and corporeal attack as fundamentally different categories. In fact, quite the opposite is the case. As his complaint on the previous page that Hall has “mangl’d” his sentences makes clear, he has no qualms

8 Appearing in April 1642, the *Apology* responds to Joseph Hall’s attack in *A Modest Confutation of a Slanderous and Scurrulous Libell* and is famous less for the strength or originality of its argument than for the autobiographical sections in which the author defends his upbringing, his chastity, and outlines his ambitions as a poet. Supposedly about public business, the tracts convey Milton’s sense of being personally present in the fray, most famously in the *Apology*’s declaration that “He who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem.” These autobiographical passages respond to Hall’s relatively oblique attacks on Milton’s character, but it is important to recognize that Milton also responds—albeit in a very different way—to attacks of Hall’s that are a good deal sharper and more immediate. Milton opens the tract with an apology for writing, given the superior example provided by those “noble or religious” men who sit “with a meeke silence and sufferance under many libellous endorsements” (CPW 1.870). While he ultimately declines to follow the meekness of their example, Milton nevertheless makes some effort to justify his response in a way that avoids selfish appeals to his sense of wounded pride. His primary strategy for doing so is by emphasizing the bloodthirstiness of Hall’s attack.

9 It is supposed by most critics that Robert Hall, the bishop’s oldest son, may have had a hand in the *Modest Confutation*—particularly in the prefatory section “To the Reader” that Milton responds so strongly to. Whatever the case, the language of the preface is certainly a departure from what the senior Hall seems capable of.

10 Shimei threw stones at David in the wake of Saul’s death.

about combining these two registers as he expands on his belief that Hall's homicidal impulses extend equally to his textual and physical bodies. This literalizing interpretation of Hall's bruising rhetoric intensifies Milton's more conventional treatment of Hall, a man who "lies [open] to strokes," so full of "infection" that he is liable "to swell and burst with his owne inward venome" (*CPW* 896–897). The pun on "strokes" marries Hall's textual rhetoric to his physical body, allowing Milton's pen to simultaneously lash the bishop's words and body in a punitive fantasy. While the pun is chirographic, rooted in ability of the author's pen to double as a rod, the image is made possible by a typographic conceit in which the text and the body are formally conflated.

While both Milton and Hall use "quotation and reply," as Rudolf Kirk calls it, only Milton uses it to drag his opponent into the text (*CPW* 1.654).¹¹ Of course, neither writer invented the technique, which had been used extensively during the Admonition/Vestment Controversy of 1570–1572. As both Christopher Hill and Sharon Achinstein have shown, the 1640s pamphleteers echoed the both the substance and style of the earlier tracts.¹² The technique is particularly amenable to print, a technology that allows for both speedy reply and the setting off of the words of one's opponent through the use of italic typeface. Hill observes that the technique became "old-fashioned" around the restoration. Even at mid-century, however, one might wonder if this often tedious mode of textual engagement had long since been exhausted of its imaginative potential (115).

In Milton's hands, the tired technique is reinvigorated, transformed into the means by which he discovers his opponent's textual body through a procedure he liked to refer to as "dissection."¹³ This procedure differs significantly from that of his opponent. In the *Modest Confutation*, Hall makes Milton textually present through a theatrical conceit in which Milton stands before him, "thrust forth upon the Stage [...] a scurrilous Mime" whose appearance in the *Animadversions* comes between the scenes performed by the Prelates and Smectymnuus (A3r). Warming to the conceit, Hall then transforms the stage into a scaffold upon which Milton, "new cloathed in Serge," stands in judgement before Hall and his readers (B1v). Hall goes on to quote Milton's *Animadversions*, inviting his reader to "Hear him speak." This transformation of Milton's written text into an oral performance makes Milton physically present and therefore vulnerable to direct abuse.

Milton, in contrast, focuses relentlessly on Hall's body, systematically folding the scene of oral debate back into one of textual dissection. This focus begins in Milton's response to Hall's suggestion that he be stoned, a response that conflates the bishop's stated desire to punish Milton's body with his more immediate attack on Milton's writing. In his less serious employment of this same conflating technique on Hall, Milton subjects the bishop to dubious puns in which the reader is offered a "present taste of him" in the

11 As Thomas Kranidas points out, the technique is agnostic and was used extensively by both sides. Laud used it, as did Marprelate, More, and Socrates (see *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal* 104–105).

12 And, as Achinstein points out, the "vernacular scurrility" of the Marprelate tracts built on the example of what had already been established by Luther and other early Protestant reformers (12).

13 Milton will go on to use this technique to greatest effect in *Eikonoklastes*; he also uses it extensively in the *Apology*.

form of selections from a title-page “not much addicted to blush” (CPW 1.875–876). The culinary metaphor transforms a scene in which a papal Hall sits enthroned “in the chaire of his Title page” into one of dissection by insisting that the title-page is one with its author. While this nibble would seem to set the scene for a bloodbath of Milton’s own, Milton remains constrained by his desire to seem meek in the face of Hall’s bloodthirstiness. Eager to appear gentle even as he hews Hall limb from textual limb, Milton suggests that Hall’s violence and incompetence are such that Hall enacts a “section, or rather dissection, of himself” (CPW 1.905). A similar image of the self-vivisecting Hall appears in the section that follows, where Milton again conflates the bishop’s physical and textual bodies, dryly noting Hall’s inability to stand “upon his own legs without the crutches of his margin” (CPW 1.910). Milton’s emphasis on Hall’s self-destructive tendencies is a departure from his strategy in the *Animadversions*, where he works through Hall’s *Defence* page by page and line by line in the most abusive of his anti-prelatical efforts. Holding back in this case, he attempts to retain the moral ground ceded by Hall’s violent desires.

And so it comes as no surprise that while Milton is happy to compare his previous efforts to those of Christ in clearing the temple, Hall’s intensity does not earn him a similar treatment. Rather than depict Hall as a righteously angry Christ, Milton depicts himself as a suffering one, envisioning the *Animadversions* as suffering body tortured and maimed by Hall—a body whose remains are strewn throughout Hall’s *Modest Confutation*:

Proceeding further I am met with a whole ging of words and phrases not mine, for he hath maim’d them, and like a slye depraver mangl’d them in this his wicked Limbo, worse then the ghost of Deiphobus appear’d to his friend Aeneas. Here I scarce know them, and he that would, let him repaire to the place in that booke where I set them. For certainly this tormenter of semicolons is as good at dismembring and slitting sentences, as his grave Fathers the Prelates have bin at stigmatizing & flitting noses. (CPW 1.894)

Gazing on his textual remains as they lie mangled and dismembered in the *Modest Confutation*, Milton protests that his sentences have been torn out of the *Animadversions*. While this complaint is factually true, argumentatively it is unpersuasive: Hall’s treatment of Milton’s sentences is hardly worse than Milton’s treatment of Hall’s *Defence* in the *Animadversions*, where Milton acts more comprehensively if somewhat less ruthlessly. The move is nevertheless powerful, persuasively linking Hall’s treatment of Milton’s text to what would be Hall’s treatment of Milton’s body if he were given the chance. Even while Milton’s “as” acknowledges that these two registers are not, strictly speaking, one and the same—that he is making a comparison rather than noting a straightforward equivalence—we ought not mistake his martyrological intent. This passage immediately precedes Milton’s response to Hall’s suggestion that Milton be killed. Here Milton appears as latter day type of Christ and Hall “as perfect a hypocrite as Caiaphas,” who “like a recreant Jew, calls for stones” and whose massacring ways are alternately compared with those of crusaders, Guisians, and Jesuits (CPW 1.894–895). Throughout all this, the brutality of the Confutant’s method is contrasted with Milton’s gentleness—Milton who in all his writing “spake not, that any mans skin should be rais’d,” even despite the fact that the Confutant

“lies [open] to strokes” (CPW 1.896). Comparing himself to Aeneas and his sentences to Deiphobus, whose betrayal by his wife led to slaughter at the hands of a gang that included Menelaus and Ulysses, Milton transforms the helplessness of Priam’s son in his bed into that of his sentences on Hall’s page, where they lie defenseless in the face of the bishop’s depredations. Tempering Virgil’s graphic description in the *Aeneid* of Deiphobus’s injuries (“his whole frame mangled and his face cruelly torn—his face and either hand—his ears wrenched from despoiled temples, and his nostrils lopped by a shameful wound”) Milton converts them into textual versions of the punishments suffered by reformers like Alexander Leighton, whose “Zion’s plea against Prelacy” earned him cropped ears, a slitted nose, and a branded face (Henderson 566–567).

With this vision of Milton’s “slitted sentences” in mind, I would like to return to *Areopagitica*’s image of the author who “stands by in perplexity at the foot of his Epistle” while it is depredated by the censor (CPW 2.504). Like the *Apology*, Milton’s appeal to Parliament depicts books as subject to invigilation and torture, this time at the hands of Catholics rather than crypto-Catholic Laudians. In a moment that recalls the reading of Hall’s title-page, the author describes another papal scene involving title-pages. This time, however, the author does not sit in pompous judgement over all who would challenge him but rather stands obsequiously before the papal judges who are the deciders of his fate: “Sometimes 5 Imprimaturs are seen together dialogue-wise in the Piatza of one Title page, complementing and ducking each to other with their shav’n reverences, whether the Author, who stands by in perplexity at the foot of his Epistle, shall to the Presse or to the sponge” (CPW 2.504). The comic aspect of this image of tonsured officials kowtowing over one another is troubled by the presence of an author who awaits his fate like a prisoner in the dock. Like John Foxe, Milton imagines a sponge that can be applied to both the author’s body and his text. In this case, however, the sponge is used *against* the author rather than *by* him, a change that emphasizes Christ’s rejection of a “spondge full of vineger [...] on a reede” (Geneva, Mark 15.36).

As Hans Belting points out, the sponge offered up to Christ has long been associated with iconoclastic censorship through a conceit in which the crucifixion is conflated with the icon that portrays it. This radical equation of history and the media that depicts it is not limited to portrayals of Christ’s death but is also found in depictions of the saints:¹⁴

the degradation of the Crucified, who is offered a sponge soaked in vinegar, is equated with the desecration of his image, which is being whitewashed with a similar sponge. In the legends of the saints, images that have been pierced by the Jews bleed, just like the historical Jesus, whose side was opened by a lance. [...] The equation of the Crucifixion with the mistreatment of an icon

¹⁴ Belting traces the doubling trope to the writings of Patriarch Nicephorus. Pictorially, it is expressed in the margins of the ninth-century Chludov Psalter, where “The soldier’s spears and their bucket of gall and vinegar visually parallel the brushes on long poles and the bucket of whitewash wielded by the iconoclasts, leaving the reader in no doubt that attacks on the icon of Christ are like the attacks on his body at the crucifixion (Constas 108).

in fact identifies the image with the person it depicts. [...] The pictures compare the Jews who raise the sponge to Christ with the iconoclasts who paint over his icon. (158)

Following the medieval precedents cited by Belting, Milton's sponge is the tool of oppressors who threaten both the book and its author. In Milton's innovation, however, Christ and the artist are one and the same. Linking Catholic persecution of Protestants to that of Christ and early Christians by Jews, Milton implies that Parliament will join these groups in ignominy if it continues to emulate the "jealous hautiness of Prelates" and wield the sponge against the Christly bodies and books of good authors.

The intermingling of symbolic registers reaches a height in Milton's play on "execution," which is simultaneously the carrying into effect of Parliament's legislative authority against bad books and the infliction of capital punishment:

Do we not see, not once or oftner, but weekly that continu'd Court-libell against the Parlament and City, Printed, as the wet sheets can witnes, and dispers't among us, for all that licencing can doe? yet this is the prime service a man would think, wherein this order should give proof of it self. If it were executed, you'l say. (CPW 2.528)

"Execution" recalls the capital actions against books that open the tract—actions that slay not only "an elementall life," but also "that ethereall and and fift essence, the breath of reason it selfe, [...] an immortality rather then a life" (CPW 2.493). The execution of the author-in-text is a modern iteration of the double torture experienced by proto-Protestants like Wyclif, whose dismemberment at the hands of Popes Martin V and Leo X receives special attention:

And that the primitive Councils and Bishops were wont only to declare what Books were not commendable, passing no furdur [...] till *Martin* the 5. by his Bull not only prohibited, but was the first that excommunicated the reading of hereticall Books; for about that time *Wicklef* and *Husse* growing terrible, were they who first drove the Papall Court to a stricter policy of prohibiting. Which cours *Leo* the 10, and his successors follow'd, untill the Councell of Trent, and the Spanish Inquisition engendring together brought forth, or perfeted those Catalogues, and expurging Indexes that rake through the entralls of many an old good Author, with a violation wors then any could be offer'd to his tomb. (CPW 2.501–503)

Closely following Sarpi's description in the *History of the Council of Trent*, Milton describes how, after a period of imperialist expansion, the Popes of Rome "extended their domain over mens eyes, burning and prohibiting to be read, what they fansied not," finally leading to the replacement of the Papal Inquisition with a Spanish one, the council of Trent, and an even "stricter policy of prohibiting." Through Milton identifies both Wyclif and Huss as major reasons for this increasing strictness, the rest of the paragraph traces the biography of the Englishman, outlining the papal commands that led to the exhumation of his body, the burning of his book along with his books, and the disposal of

the ashes into the River Swift.¹⁵

The simultaneous destruction of Wyclif's body and books is the antecedent for Milton's conflation of his body and text, giving an historical imprimatur to what otherwise might seem like merely punning wordplay. "Wicklef," the writing and the writer, the corpus and the corpse, logically underpins Milton's complaint about "expurging Indexes that rake through the entralls of many an old good Author, with a violation wors then any could be offer'd to his tomb." In the anti-prelatical tracts but especially in *Areopagitica*, the historical moment in which Wyclif's writings and body are drawn together in shared destruction becomes the occasion for Milton's deeply personal claim that the his authored texts are a kind of superbody—a soulbody whose communicative ability makes its death so much worse than that of a merely personal physical body. Not able to fight with his physical body, Milton aligns himself with the textual bodies whose republication is identical with his resurrection.

¹⁵ In 1427, Pope Martin V commanded that Wyclif's bones be exhumed, burnt, and that his ashes be scattered on the River Swift. This edict was carried out by order of Richard Fleming, bishop of Lincoln, in the spring of 1428. Martin V's command carried out decrees first made at the Council of Constance (1414-1418), where Wyclif was pronounced to be the "leader and prince" of those who, "desirous of the world's glory, are led on by proud curiosity to know more than they should" (Tanner 411). This declaration, made during the eighth session of the Council on May 4, 1415, goes on to confirm the order of the Roman Pontiff, given in 1412, that all of Wyclif's "books, treatises, volumes, and pamphlets should be diligently sought out by the local ordinaries and should then be publicly burnt" and that the "execution [exsequendis] and due observance of these things" be attended to with "vigilance" (414-415). The Council then adds to these orders, pronouncing Wyclif to be a heretic, calling for the "condemnation of the said Wyclif and his memory" and ordering that "his body and bones [...] be exhumed [...] and] scattered far from a burial place of the church" (415-416).

Samson and the Agonies of Form

you bakers, see that the same wordes you utter,
as Christ hym selfe spake them, to be A memoriall
of that death and passion which in play ensue after shall.

—Chester Banns, *Chester: The Chester Plays*, 7

When we see a score for the first time [...] our knowledge of the music is instantly enlarged. We see things that were inaudible to us before, and the rigorous subtlety of musical design is swiftly, unexpectedly apparent.

—Gordon Teskey, *Delirious Milton*, 54

The critical consensus that *Samson Agonistes* is a “Greek tragedy on a biblical theme” has kept us from recognizing the work’s largest generic debt. Draped in the trappings of Greek tragedy, Milton’s playscript belongs to another genre altogether, that of the *auto sacramental*, the mystery play, and *Corpus Christi* drama.¹ Indebted to a number of medieval traditions in which scriptural events were regularly performed in towns across Europe, *Samson Agonistes* is first and foremost a biblical tragedy. By “biblical,” I mean not only that its content is scriptural, but also—and more importantly—that its tragic aspect lies in familiarity, rather than in its ability to produce pity and fear through suspense. As a biblical tragedy, *Samson Agonistes* shares key features with medieval scriptural drama as it is described by Northrop Frye:

It [i.e., the *auto*] is a somewhat negative and receptive form, and takes on the mood of the myth it represents. The crucifixion play in the Towneley cycle is tragic because the Crucifixion is; but it is not a tragedy in the sense that *Othello* is a tragedy. It does not, that is, make a tragic *point*; it simply

¹ While these terms describe a number of national traditions, they all enact aspects of the Eucharist. *Autos sacramentales* are Spanish, but Northrop Frye uses the term generically to describe all kinds of medieval eucharistic drama.

David Daiches’ suggestion in his *Critical History of English Literature* that *Samson Agonistes* is a “Greek tragedy on a Biblical theme” broadly represents how most critics now understand the work’s genre (2.454). The Greek attributes of *Samson Agonistes* are both explicit (the chorus) and implicit (what William Parker describes in *Milton’s Debt to Greek Tragedy in “Samson Agonistes”* as a Sophoclean tendency to reject spectacle and Euripidean hero). In his contribution to Harold Bloom’s *John Milton: Comprehensive Research and Study Guide*, Daiches begins by suggesting that “In *Samson Agonistes*, Milton finally produced the biblical tragedy which he had long ago prescribed as the kind of literature to be encouraged in Christian society. The form is that of Greek tragedy, with Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus* and Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* serving as models” (Bloom 68). Daiches does not ask what a “Biblical tragedy on a Biblical theme” would look like, presumably because the vociferousness of Milton’s Greek branding of the work makes other possibilities unthinkable. I would like to suggest, however, that despite the strength of Milton’s effort to create a work whose formal features align it with a Greek mode of tragedy, the work is in the end scriptural in form. The real problem is less that *Samson Agonistes* fails as a Greek tragedy than that we have accepted Milton’s identification of it as one in the first place. See also Michael Spiller, “Directing the Audience in *Samson Agonistes*,” *Of Poetry and Politics: New Essays on Milton and his World* (Binghamton, 1995): 121–29; and John Steadman, “Efficient Causality and Catastrophe in ‘Samson Agonistes,’” *Milton Studies* 28 (Pittsburgh, 1992): 211–227).

presents the story because it is familiar and significant. (*Anatomy of Criticism* 282)

For Frye, the tragedy of the *auto* is found in its reprisal of an historical event with which the audience is already familiar, not in character or a plot that produces terror and pity through surprise. Stripped of suspense from its outset, the power of the *auto* lies in the audience's foreknowledge. As Frye points out, "it would be nonsense to apply such tragic conceptions as *hybris* to the figure of Christ," not just because Christ is perfect, but also because the tragic source of representations of the crucifixion is found in history rather than *hamartia* (282).²

In the critical history, the gap between the requirements of Aristotelian mimetic tragedy and the work that Milton has produced is registered in accounts of the work's missing middle. Samuel Johnson's complaint is the most famous, suggesting that while the work begins and ends in a way that "Aristotle himself could not have disapproved [...] it must be allowed to want a middle, since nothing passes between the first act and the last, that either hastens or delays the death of Samson" (2.86). Johnson's preoccupation with plot reflects his Aristotelian expectation that "the middle is connected on one side to something that naturally goes before, and on the other to something that naturally follows it" (2.82). The speed with which he identifies the work's shortcoming in this regard is, however, less a sign of its abject failure than of Milton and Johnson's shared inability to identify its real genre. Even so, Johnson's unhappiness nevertheless registers the play's biblical form, for the work's missing middle is one with its lack of suspense.

2 Samson's death is as certain as the expulsion that ends *Paradise Lost*, a fact that Milton acknowledges in a prefatory argument that lays out the plot in full. Nevertheless, the author's expansive paraphrase within the playscript of the pride that the biblical account highlights but does not elaborate raises the possibility that *hamartia*, as much as historical necessity, leads to Samson's death. In this sense, *Samson Agonistes* is perhaps best understood as a hybrid form with both Aristotelian and Biblical elements. In taking on the mood of the biblical myth it represents, *Samson Agonistes* follows the *auto*; Samson's death is a tragic because Judeo-Christian history understands it as another episode in Israel's faithlessness flirtations with kingship. At the same time, the consistency with which Samson's pride interferes with his better judgement invites the reader to understand his death through the lens of Aristotelian *hamartia*. While the hero's ultimate fate is never in doubt, Milton creates a new twist on an old story by transforming Samson's captivity into an existential crisis that plays out before a series of visitors, all of whom reflect aspects of his own personality. While the subtlety of this transformation has led to misreadings such as that of Johnson, it also differentiates Milton's work from scriptural plays about which it makes no sense to think in Aristotelian terms. If Samson's pride does not quite create a "tragic point," it does suggest the tragic possibility that he does not learn anything at all.

The problem of familiarity is inherent to all attempt to represent biblical content: how is one to make familiar stories fresh and exciting to the audience? In *Paradise Lost*, Milton solves the problem by creating something utterly new, expanding a few biblical lines into over ten thousand lines of poetry. In *Samson Agonistes*, some newness is found in the author's turn to the protagonist's psychology, but the paucity of this addition is reflected in the vexedness of the critical record when it comes to the question of Samson's psychology. If anything, Milton enhances the opacity of a Biblical account in which adumbration and opacity with respect to Samson's psychology are precisely the mysterious point. *Samson Agonistes* registers this indeterminably in a *volta* comprised of notoriously vague "rouzing motions" (1382).

The genre of *Samson Agonistes* is defined not only by Milton's choice of a Biblical topic, but also by the difference between Aristotle's requirements for tragedy and what Milton actually provides. *Samson Agonistes*' departure from its Greek models begins early in the preface, where Milton defines tragedy as a genre

said by Aristotle to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions, that is to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirr'd up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated.³

Milton draws from the famous passage in the *Poetics* in which *Aristotle* delineates the contours of tragic performance:

Tragedy is a representation of an action of a superior kind—grand, and complete in itself—presented in embellished language, in distinct forms in different parts, performed by actors rather than told by a narrator, effecting, through pity and fear, the purification of such emotions. (1449a.24–28)

Milton's conspicuous addition of "reading" and omission of "action" reflect his effort to remold Aristotle's requirements to the shape of the anti-performative work he has produced. While *Samson Agonistes*' adherence to the unities of action, space, and time might be understood as signs of the work's imitative investments, these investments remain theoretical, stripped of meaning from the outset by the author's declaration that the work "never was intended" for the stage. Denied performance, the work must be read. Frustrating readerly attempts to understand the work mimetically, the paratextual apparatus that accompanies the printed play-script disrupts the reader's effort to suspect her disbelief.

In this chapter, I first describe the features of the medieval scriptural tradition to which *Samson Agonistes* is indebted, drawing from V.A. Kolve's influential account of medieval scriptural tragedy as a *ludus*, or game. I go on to show how *Samson Agonistes* fulfills the generic requirements of the *auto sacramental*, albeit through the new medium of print. Finally, I turn to Northrop Frye's descriptions of tragedy and fiction (the genre of the printed page) in *The Anatomy of Criticism* to propose that *Samson Agonistes* is in fact the author's final attempt to both write, and write himself into, a tragic fiction of the printed page. Milton's prefatory declaration that *Samson Agonistes* "never was intended" for the stage is usually understood in negative terms: as a rejection of spectacle and theatricality of Charles' reign. Less consideration has been given to the positive opportunities made possible by the author's decision to make the work a printed playscript rather than a performance. By creating a text that must be read rather than a play that must be watched, Milton interrupts the direct voicing usually associated with dramatic form, inserting his presence into a genre from which the author's voice is typically denied, supplanting his subject even as he becomes one with it.

Blasphemy and the Theater of Illusion

The prophylactic power of estrangement lies at the heart of V.A. Kolve's seminal

³ Unless otherwise noted, all citations of Milton's poetry are from *The Riverside Milton* (hereafter *RM*).

account of medieval biblical drama in *The Play Called Corpus Christi*. Kolve argues that the *Corpus Christi* plays are characterized by an interruptive mode made necessary by their biblical topics—specifically, by the danger posed by their representation of sacred personages and miracles in performance. This danger is felt most strongly in the plays in which God appears as a character:

If the *Corpus Christi* plays had been concerned merely with human beings [...] the range of dramatis personae would have presented no real difficulty. [...] A player [...] could take the role of Noah without jeopardy: since Noah was a man and is to be acted by a man, the image and its referent are of the same nature. But a player [...] chosen to enact God ran a certain risk, as when he opens the play of *The Creation* with these words:

I God, most in maiestye,
in whom beginning none may be,
endles alsoe, most of postye,
I am and haue bene ever.

Here the image and its referent are so different in kind that blasphemy or sacrilege may be involved. The actor's human nature risks defiling the most awesome of Christian images; man is not God, and God will not be mocked. Lucifer, they believed, fell because he imitated God. [...] Might it not be analogous to the *Corpus Christi* dramatic endeavor? (9)⁴

In Kolve's account, the problem posed by the possible "mimetic maltreatment of a sacred figure" is resolved through a unique representative mode in which the drama conceives of itself as "game" or "play." Rather than attempt to "sustain an illusion of being men caught up in [Biblical] history," the *Corpus Christi* actors translate that history into a "game mode, a play equivalent whose aim "was to celebrate and elucidate, never, not even temporarily, to deceive" (26, 32). From this metatheatrical "conception of drama as play and game—as something therefore not 'in earnest'—a drama involving sacred personages and miraculous

4 Kolve implies that his "game analysis" could be brought to bear on both Elizabeth and Jacobean drama, given that naturalized theater does not take over until after the Restoration (though it has an early proponent in John Dryden, whose *Of Heroic Plays, An Essay* calls for offstage sound effects "to raise the imagination of the audience, and to persuade them, for the time, that what they behold in the theatre is really performed" (qtd. in Kolve 22)). Yet the anti-mimetic properties of medieval drama are already being undone by works such as *Henry V*, whose choral imprecation demands that the audience "Work, work [its] thoughts, and therein see a siege" employs diegesis to enhance mimesis (*Henry V* 3.0.25). But while Kolve's account overstates the extent to which Renaissance drama barred the author from the stage, he nevertheless identifies a unique dual function in the quasi-authorial narrator, or *Expositor*:

such a distinction, *sine ullius poetae interlocutione* [without any interruption from the poet], is superbly ignored by the Chester and *Ludus Coventriae* cycles, where the *Expositor* figure (by whatever name) exists solely in order to speak for the dramatist—responsible for the design of the episode—and for God—responsible for the total historical and ethical design that the cycle imitates. (28)

The special quality of the *Expositor* is not simply that he stands for the author, but rather than he stands for both the author and God.

events could be born" (17).⁵

As Kolve describes, the difficulties associated with representing Christ on the stage were generally well known in the Middle Ages. While Latin drama represented the Passion infrequently and did so in a "grave and stylized way," vernacular plays "emphasized the scorn, the jesting, and the violence, and thus the problem [of Christ's representation] was correspondingly acute" (29). Audiences did not share the scorn felt by Wycliffite preachers and anti-clerical poets toward representations of the Passion "because they [knew] that the actors are engaged in a mimetic game, and that the purpose of the game is to reveal, not to deceive (even temporarily or in part) through illusion" (30). For Kolve, the theater's status as a "special game world furnishes a generally satisfactory solution" to questions about the propriety of playing Christ. This solution is strengthened by other estranging techniques—in stepping out of character near the end of the play and emphasizing that the person onstage represents a "figure" of God and not God himself.

A key figure in the production of "game" is the narrativizing *Expositor*, a figure who keeps the audience from suspending their disbelief by "[enclosing] the action, whether natural or mythic, in a frame of commentary which puts the playing unmistakably at a distance from reality" (27). Also known as the *Nuntius*, *Contemplacio*, and *Poeta*, the *Expositor* is simultaneously inside and outside the dramatic action, "hurrying here, moralizing there, now briefly narrating a story that cannot, because of time, be played, and occasionally stepping forth to address the audience directly on what they have been watching together" (27). This metatheatrical meddling differentiates the *Corpus Christi* drama from the "heavily naturalistic" effects of what Kolve calls the "theater of illusion," a naturalistic tradition that reaches a height early in the twentieth century before being undone in the estranging works of playwrights such as Brecht, Ionesco, and Beckett. A key part of the game machinery, the *Expositor* testifies to the plays' "consciousness of the dramatic medium," consciousness that for Kolve is a precondition for the plays to exist with the approval of the Church (22).

Competition and "The Passion"

Prioritizing the playscript over the performance and Samson, a radically imperfect sacred figure, over Christ, the epitome of sacredness, *Samson Agonistes* enacts a similar strategy of estrangement. For Milton, however, the benefits of estrangement extend beyond mitigation of the risks associated with representing Christ onstage. Milton's neutering of the work's mimetic potential allows him to align himself with a Christological figure whose *inability* to commemorate himself creates a positive need for the poet's memorializing power. Not only does Samson's role as a forerunner of Christ make him a safer site of authorial identification, his commemorative neediness implies the memorializing power of *Samson Agonistes*. To recognize *Samson Agonistes* as a scriptural tragedy, then, also recognizes its place in Milton's continual effort to countenance and participate in the crucifixion.

5 While the *Corpus Christi* plays represent history, "no attempt is made to sustain an illusion of being men caught up in that history" (28).

What has often been described as Milton's lifelong aversion to the crucifixion is never so clearly expressed as in his early and unfinished effort to face the topic head-on.⁶ In the postscript he appended to the final stanza of "The Passion" in the 1645 *Poems*, Milton claims the poem's "subject" was "above the yeers he had." Within the poem itself, however, the speaker's competitive desire to supplant his subject leaves him unable to continue. The strategy that Milton enacts in "Lycidas," a poem in which the commemoration of Edward King becomes the occasion for the poet's signposting of the next step in his career, is untenable in a poem whose subject is Christ. While King's mute disappearance into the waters off Wales makes the commemorative work of "Lycidas" (and, more generally, the *Obsequys for Edward King*) necessary, Christ's death comes complete with its own form of commemoration in the Eucharist, a memorializing technology that threatens to empty Milton's effort of meaning.

In "The Passion," the self-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice manifests itself in the constraint felt by a speaker whose violent alternation between likening himself to Christ and emphasizing his difference from Christ ultimately leads to silence.⁷ The speaker's leisurely shift in the first stanza from the "joyous news" recounted in the "Nativity Ode" to the "dark and long out-living night" of the crucifixion soon becomes a task from which he cannot escape but to which he will not fully submit. The historical event to which the poet "must [...] tune" his song in the second stanza is by the fourth stanza a prison that the speaker complains "confine[s] my roving vers" (22). The tension between Christ's historical pain and the composition agony felt by the speaker in the present are concisely expressed in the speaker's description of the "latter scenes" of the crucifixion as the "horizon" to which his "*Phoebus* [is] bound" (23). Both Christ and the god of poetry, Phoebus embodies the duality of a title in which "Passion" belongs to both Christ and the poet himself.

In the poem's final three stanzas, the poet appears to emerge from this moment of confinement into something approaching freedom. Casting about from scene to scene, he moves through heaven and earth for an appropriate place from which to speak. As he does so, however, he increasingly likens his compositional pains to Christ's physical ones. By the fifth stanza, the poet has all but become the poem's subject: the sky that previously framed Christ's "starry front" has been transformed into "Heav'n and Earth [...] colour'd with my [i.e., the speaker's] wo," as cosmos that once moved sympathetically with Christ now move in pathetic response to the poet (18, 32). The speaker's pain reprises that of Christ in earlier stanzas, as the "odorous oil" that "dropt [...] down" Christ's "fair eyes" is analogized as the tears of the speaker, tears whose droppings would comprise the letters of the poem, if he were able to proceed, for what initially appears as freedom is in fact an "ecstatick fit," or "trance." The shift from the modals of the second stanza to the conditionals and subjunctives of the final stanzas demonstrate the speaker's awareness of the difficulty of

6 This aversion is sustained through both *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, first in three hasty lines in which Christ, "naild to the Cross," then "nailes [his] Enemies" and then in a sequel in which the crucifixion is played down as a "glorious work" to come (*Paradise Lost* 12.415-417; *Paradise Regained* 4.634)

7 The latter mode of address might be understood as problematically Catholic in form, demanding the speaker's formal and thematic submission as he passively gazes upon his savior.

his position.⁸ What began as a complaint *about* constraint has become a performance of it. Troubled by the Passion's liturgical demands—the rigidity required by a subject whose perfection and self-commemorating power brooks no human substitute or supplement—the speaker dissolves into a series of subjunctive possibilities before breaking off his effort altogether.

In the end, a poem called “The Passion” cannot be about the poet, unless that poet is Christ himself. Human poets must submit not only to the superiority of their subject, but also to that subject's self-sufficiency. A study in the folly of supplementing an event that not only does not require it but is fact actively defiled by attempts to enhance it, “The Passion” reflects its speaker's failure to change key from that sounded in “The Nativity Ode,” for the call to praise that brings poetic freedom in the former poem is a positive constraint in the latter. In the “Nativity Ode,” the speaker's rehearsal of a hymn that overtakes its pagan precedents is authorized by an event in which outsiders are required to give praise; as one of the parties called to Bethlehem, the speaker receives permission to share the “joyous news of heav'nly Infants birth.”⁹ From its very beginning, Christmas invites and even requires individualistic commemoration.¹⁰

The difference between the “Nativity Ode” and “The Passion,” then, is the difference between an historical event that requires commemoration and an historical event that liturgically commemorates itself. Furthermore, the success of the “Nativity Ode” reveals the poet's difficulty as one that pertains less to Christ in general than to his death in particular. Inaugurated at the Last Supper, the Eucharist reprises the crucifixion in miniature, spreading Christ's sacrifice through time and space to all believers, raising the question of what assistance Milton's poetic effort could possibly provide. The reiterative miracle of the wafer marks the difference between a self-commemorating mature Christ (the Christ of the miracle of the fishes and the loaves) and the immature Christ that Milton describes in his odes on the nativity and circumcision (as well as from merely human figures such as Edward King). Torn in “The Passion” between offering a troubling supplement to a sacrifice that Protestants had long insisted was once and for all time and passively following a poetic *Via Crucis* in which nothing new is said, Milton abandons the

8 Philip J. Gallagher suggests that “the eight stanzas of ‘The Passion’ should be examined and evaluated as the prologue-invocation to a poem about the Passion, not as themselves a poem about the Passion” (44). While the eight stanzas we have are clearly some kind of proem, the speaker does address specific passionate moments, particularly in the third stanza.

9 Christ's birth is a story about the triumph of Christian ideals over those of classical mythology long before Milton gets to it. In the proem, the speaker joins the train of “Star-led Wisards”; conflating his poetic effort with their historical one, he instructs the hymnist to “run, prevent them with thy humble ode, /And lay it lowly at his blessed feet” (24–25). In doing so, the hymnist makes his song one with that of the angels whose music echoes with the “close” of each hymnal stanza.

10 In the gospel accounts, outsiders are invited and even required to offer praise to the newborn Christ; angels sing and shepherds are inspired to find the stable so that they too can pay homage. A great star appears in the heavens and the wise men follow it, bearing gifts. In the proem, the poem's twin status as a reflection on the present and the past is indicated by the speaker's shift between the present and past tenses. The paraphrases of the psalms work in similar ways; praise always already has a liturgical aspect that invites an appropriating type of repetition.

attempt altogether. He does not make another for decades.¹¹

Iterability in *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*

The features that allow *Paradise Regained* to be understood as a response to the difficulties Milton experienced in writing “The Passion” are familiar to critics, even if these features are rarely understood in the context of the earlier poem. It may be more appropriate to consider *Paradise Regained* less as a sequel to *Paradise Lost* than a replacement for the poem that the younger Milton began but could not finish. While for many critics, Milton’s abandonment of the crucifixion in favor of the temptation in the wilderness is another sign of the author’s utopian hopes for the power of human virtue, this positive reading must be tempered by the possibility that Milton’s effort is compensatory.¹² The prioritization of scriptural resistance over bodily sacrifice in Milton’s brief epic is usually linked to the Father’s abdicating promise in *Paradise Lost* of a future in which “God shall be All in All,” to Milton’s theorization of bibliographic resistance in *Areopagitica*, and to his systematic break with the crucifixion as salvific event *sine qua non* in *De Doctrina Christiana* (3.341). Yet the work’s demotion of Christ’s flesh in favor of a unmiraculous scriptural virtue available to all believers must also be understood in relation to Milton’s earlier effort to countenance that flesh directly. While *Paradise Regained* articulates its decentralization of Christ’s death as a democratizing improvement, the fact remains that the poem’s scripturalizing turn—despite being valorized by critics—both involves the same kind of foreshortening first displayed in “The Passion” and jars the first-time reader who begins the work in rightful expectation that a poem called “Paradise Regained” will represent the sacrifice required by Christian orthodoxy. Although the poem is complete in the sense that it comes to a far more deliberate conclusion than does “The Passion,” the Son’s work nevertheless remains unfinished, a fact registered in his return to his mother’s house in the final lines.¹³ In the end, the dodge that is *Paradise Regained* responds to but also reifies the issues that cause “The Passion” to falter. In the remainder of this chapter, I suggest that it is only in *Samson Agonistes*, the supplemental addition to *Paradise Regained*, that Milton finds a mode of representation suitable for the task of figuring Christ’s death—a death that is also his own.

11 Rewriting the crucifixion is an infinitely more fraught undertaking than is revising Genesis’s creation account; while the latter is largely a thing indifferent, the former is the heart of Christianity itself.

12 Milton’s belief in humans’ ability to by degrees approach and then join the divine appears in “Of Education” (1644) as the articulation of a pedagogical program that creates citizens who are able to “remedy the wast that is made of good” (*The Riverside Milton* 982). This program receives its theological articulation in *Paradise Lost*, where the Father’s conciliar promise in Book 3 anticipates the moment in which “God shall be All in All” (3.341). This promise is later glossed by Raphael, who explains to Adam the laborious means by which “men / With Angels may participate [...] Your bodies may at last turn all to Spirit, / Improv’d by tract of time,” delineating a radically experimentalist and Arminian program in which reason and trial replace a more strictly Calvinist soteriology (5.493–500).

13 What Milton provides in *Paradise Regained* cannot be what Thomas Ellwood had in mind when he asked Milton for an account “*Paradise found*.” Though *Paradise Regained* alludes to Christ’s death, it is only in passing—almost as quickly as in *Paradise Lost*. This omission helps make sense of Milton’s decision to have a story about the death of one of Christ’s forebears follow a work that is about Christ himself.

Milton's choice of a printed playscript as the form in which to represent the death of a radically imperfect type of Christ is the primary sign of his discovery of a method and a medium capacious enough to accommodate his longstanding goal of Christological self-representation. Samson's shortcomings as a salvific figure are key to this breakthrough, for the Nazarite's inability to commemorate himself creates a positive need for the poet's commemorative powers. Samson's obsessive uncertainty about the means by which he will achieve fame helps make sense of the otherwise strange anti-progression from *Paradise Regained* to *Samson Agonistes*. Moving from anti-type to type and from fulfillment to promise, the turn to Samson would seem to involve a perverse reordering of both historical and covenantal time.¹⁴ This reordering is famously enhanced by a title-page announcing *Samson Agonistes* as something supplementally "added." In the Christian Bible, the story of Samson of course precedes that of Christ, reflecting his status as one who, though he does not fulfill the promise of Christ, nevertheless makes known to Israel both the potential and the need for a perfect Savior who will deliver them from bondage. An old covenant type of Christ, Samson is an imperfect shadow of the Messianic figure he prefigures, making his presence as a *supplement* to Christ provocative in the extreme.

In a reading that continues to be influential, William Parker describes the supplementarity of *Samson Agonistes* as that of a "bitter [...] relapse," mapping the disappointment Milton felt at the restoration to the difference between each work's model of heroism (2.910). While Parker is correct that *Samson Agonistes* presents a type of relapse, this relapse is not historical (reflecting England's turn back toward kingship) but part of an authorial strategy that creates commemorative need. Long before it can be allegorized as the Restoration, the shift from Christ to Samson and from the fulfillment to the promise implies that there is something insufficient about Christ's sacrifice. Yet by turning from Christ—not directly, but obliquely—*Samson Agonistes* is able to face the death that neither "The Passion" nor *Paradise Regained* are able to.¹⁵ This focus on Christ's imperfect forbear also permits Milton to layer himself on top of his protagonist in a way that would be blasphemous if that protagonist were Christ.¹⁶

14 As Arthur E. Barker asks, "Should not Samson's fallen [...] experience rather precede Christ's making possible the regaining of Paradise for all mankind, following mere historical or at any rate testamentary chronology? Or is there some deep significance in this apparently inept reversal?" (14).

15 The move is oblique: Samson both is and is not Christ, a less efficacious but nevertheless prefigurative sign of the new covenant that will be fulfilled in the latter's blood.

16 The relationship between *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* has long vexed critics. It cannot be ignored: the works are published in the same volume and are linked by a title-page that provocatively identifies the latter work as something "added," always a dangerous relationship to hold with respect to Christ, especially in the minds of Protestants who had long understood the Catholic Mass as a blasphemous addition to Christ's sacrifice. Recently, critics have rejected what Joseph Wittreich calls the "tired" strategy of reading the shift from Christ's relative passivity to Samson's active violence through the lens of English political history, suggesting that the two works are better understood as "mutually reflective and illuminating and thus interpretively significant for one another" (330). While Wittreich is correct that the political elements of these poems have not gone understudied, to understand the relationship between them as one of "mutual reflection" risks ignoring the various hierarchical relationships that exist between Christ and Samson *a priori*. It must also be noted that Wittreich employs

Milton's decision to make the work a printed playscript is corollary to this turn from the self-sufficiency of Christ to the commemorative neediness of Samson. *Samson Agonistes* is Milton's most intensive effort to write for the press, and his decision to withhold the work from the stage is at least as invested in the iterative potential of the script as it is in negative feelings about theatrical spectacle. Divorced from the historical contingencies of performance—contingencies that are strongly emphasized in Milton's earlier dramatic effort, *Comus*—the theoretical repeatability of the script coincides with the multiple copies of the pages upon which it is printed, creating a form whose iterability belongs to the author rather than to the actor.

This coincidence of genre and medium departs from Milton's usual practice. His previous works are exercises in remediation—in the conversion of oral into printed epic, in posing printed pamphlets as speeches to parliament. Lyric expressions that struggle to coincide with their printed formats, the sonnets, epics, and much of the prose evince a residual orality that is the seemingly inevitable result of Milton's bardic and prophetic roles.¹⁷ In these works, Milton's "I" draws all history to itself, seeking to make itself the medium through which truth is presented to the reader.¹⁸ While this strategy is effective as far as it goes, it is untenable when it comes to Christ, a figure who resists all remediating efforts.

After two imperfect attempts to incorporate Christ into the lyric and epic "I," Milton takes a different tack in *Samson Agonistes*, turning to a Christological analogue in the form of the printed script. Abandoning the historical and subjective embeddedness of lyric, he turns instead to the twin forms of the dramatic script and the printed page as he seeks to unhinge the poetic utterance from his physical body.¹⁹ My point here is less that print and

something of a straw man, emphasizing an interconnection between the two poems that those against whom he writes never would deny. That said, he also condemns those who describe the relationship between *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* as the product of an authorial "strategy" in which Milton moves "unconventional to the conventional, from wildly speculative theology to platitudinous Christianity. [...] The movement is illusory, probably deliberately so; but the sheer power of the illusion is registered in the history of criticism where, for a full century, Milton is portrayed as a poet converting back to the supposed orthodoxies of his early poetry, and consequently where little attention is given the possibility that *Paradise Regained* provides a deliberately widened context in which to read *Samson Agonistes*" (332). For examples of these widened contexts, see John T. Shawcross, "The Genres of *Paradise Regain'd* and *Samson Agonistes*: The Wisdom of Their Joint Publication," *Milton Studies* 17 (1983): 225-48, and Balachandra Rajan, "To Which is Added *Samson Agonistes*—," *The Prison and the Pinnacle* (1971): 82-110.

17 Even in the prose works, Milton's lyrical turns and autobiographical tendencies create an impression of orality, attaching the text to the body of the one who created it.

18 Gordon Teskey describes this tendency in Milton as that of a "poet of delirium" who "undergoes the experience himself and [...] mediates a portion of it to us" (*Delirious Milton* 15).

19 The dramatic format allows Milton to resist his characteristic slide into the historical and subjective embeddedness of epic and lyric utterance, both of which are aligned with the first person. The externality of drama is in opposition to what Jonathan Culler describes as lyric's "decontextualized expression of subjectivity" (30). Of course for Milton, lyric is less an expression of sensory experience than a subjective vision that absorbs history and genres into itself. In usual Miltonic practice, lyric expression—be it in the form of a sonnet or in the invocation of the epic voice—is always the highly contextualized product of an

the first-person are fundamentally incompatible than that Milton's choice of topic necessitates their disjunction. By turning to the eucharistic potential of the printed playscript and a diminished Christ in the form of Samson, Milton is able to both avoid competition with Christ *and* identify with him. Less an exploration of its protagonist's inner state—a state that Milton suggests elsewhere is unknowable—than of the relationship between fame and the communicative media, *Samson Agonistes* makes an ultimate point that is more presentational than it is tragic.²⁰

In this light, the motivation behind Milton's decision to withhold the work from the stage becomes more clear. Drama, of course, has long been characterized as the genre in which the author is hidden from his audience. Kolve's rehearsal of this classical description is typical: "The 'dramatic' or the 'acted' is that in which characters perform alone without any interruption from the poet speaking in his own person, as is the case with tragedy and comedy" (28). But because *Samson Agonistes* is not a drama but an unperformed printed playscript, Milton is able to both embrace and resist drama's usual status as "external mimesis" in which the author disappears and the "internal characters of the story confront the audience directly" (Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* 249). By withholding the work from the stage, Milton refocuses the reader on his shaping power by making the script, rather than

author who draws all things to himself. In all of his other works, Milton's authorial persona is easily found in the text, most often in a framing device such as the uncouth swain of *Lycidas* or the epic voice of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. In these works, the work of art is never completely unhinged from the voice of the one who speaks it: Milton's original speaking voice is always there, constraining the text in time and space, giving it context. In *Comus*, the lack of authorial voice is an externally produced requirement of a commission that calls for a work that can be performed. While both have parts, only *Comus's* part were meant to be performed, and the author's disappearance is made necessary by a commission that demands that the written work instrumentalize itself as performable aristocratic entertainment. Following J. Macmillan Brown's suggestion that Milton "abandoned from the beginning the central principle of Greek dramatic art," I believe that Milton explicitly did not intend for the work to reach the stage (56). Most critics who agree with Brown also agree with his suggestion that Milton reserves the work from the stage because "it is the Puritan student addressing a Puritan audience" (56). And then there is of course the fact that the building that Samson tears down is called a "spacious Theatre" (1605). Other critics like Ida Langdon and David Masson have argued that the words "do not imply that Milton would not willingly have consented to the production [...] on the stage had it been possible" (6:665). This chapter assumes that Milton means what he says in a literal way, in part because his argument requires it, but also because he intentionally omits the act and scene divisions that staging would require.

As Kolve's identification of the *Expositor's* quasi-authorial role admits, the author is never fully absent from the stage. See Jeffrey Knapp, *Shakespeare Only* (Chicago, 2009), and Joseph Loewenstein, *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship* (Cambridge, 2002), for other accounts of authorial presence on the stages of early modern London. As both scholars make clear, however, the author's ability to manifest himself on the stage remained limited by the collaborative nature of dramatic performance.

²⁰ In *A Defence*, Milton embodies an ambiguous attitude toward the question of what motivated Samson: "Samson, that renowned champion, though his countrymen blamed him [...] yet made war single-handed against his rulers; and whether instigated by God or his own valor only, slew not one, but many at once of his country's tyrants" (*The Works of John Milton* 7.219). Following John Rogers in "The Secret of Samson Agonistes," I do not believe that the final answer to this question lies in *Samson Agonistes*.

the performance, into the work.²¹

Milton's insistence that the printed playscript (rather than the performance) is the work gives material form to Kolve's anti-dramatic effects. This conversion throws the commemorative power of the poet (rather than the ability of the actor) into sharp relief. The estranging power of the printed playscript is like that of the Chester *Expositor*, whose bridging speech connects the *Temptation* to the *Woman Taken in Adultery*:

[The *Expositor*] has not himself "acted" in the play [...] but he is there to underline a doctrinal meaning [...] to acknowledge the genre [...] and to introduce the episode that follows. He creates in his own person a drama of play and game, *an experience, as it were, in quotation marks*. (Kolve 28)

What Kolve describes through metaphor is literalized in *Samson Agonistes*. Rather than disrupt mimesis from within, as the *Expositor* does through interruption, joke, and "play," Milton disrupts it from without, printing the performance and placing it in a book.²² Within the text, Milton employs the mediating techniques of medieval scriptural drama both directly—in the form of narratological figures such as the chorus, who comment on the dramatic action and identify the work's genre as that of "passion"—and indirectly—in a preface that suggests that the work's primary mimetic relation is to a genre (Greek tragedy) rather than an historical event (the death of Samson). These moves are transcended, however, by Milton's larger conversion of estranging technique into a medium and material form. The printed play-script forces the reader to focus on the work's mediated status, despite its internal adherence to the mimetic unities of time, space, and action. As we shall see, Samson's status as a diminished form of Christ is the corollary of this change, for the Nazirite's imperfection creates a commemorative need that the eucharistic properties of print supply.

It stands to reason, then, that in his prefatory note on tragedy, Milton mentions *Christ Suffering* as one of the tragedies by which he has been inspired, and the chorus's concluding claim of "all passion spent" recalls the title of Milton's early effort, smuggling in a Christological meaning in an Aristotelian frame. Yet Milton's relapsing reversal of the usual covenantal order suggests either that there is something insufficient about Christ's effort or that there is something positively useful about Samson's insufficiency. While both "The Passion" and *Paradise Regained* lead to but do not show the crucifixion, *Samson*

21 This focusing effort is strengthened by paratextual elements such as the preface. This is, as Joanna Picciotto puts it, a "much rehearsed fantasy" (499).

22 Two key points help define the motivation behind this shift from characterological to mediated disruption. While the *Expositor* is a quasi-authorial character in an anonymously authored play, Milton is the named author of *Samson Agonistes*. And while the *Expositor* remains wholly unconnected to his protagonist (Christ, in the crucifixion plays), Milton, as many critics have noticed, looks much like his Nazirite protagonist. Milton's decision to withhold the work from the stage, converting its "radical of presentation" from performance to print, allows him to expand his role in the drama and transcend the *Expositor's* limited ability to serve as an authorial figure. I would like to suggest that Milton's off-loading of the task of mimetic disruption onto the medium of print also frees him to partially identify with and partially lend aid to a protagonist whose status as a diminished type of Christ makes him in need of the commemorative powers of the poet in print.

Agonistes takes the crucifixion up in nascent form. While this move involves an historical reversal, the work nevertheless serves as a sequel to *Paradise Regained*, providing a neutered version of the type of death to which the earlier work alludes but does not represent. By moving from the plenitude of Christ's self-commemorating body to the relative impoverishment of Samson's, Milton creates a space in which his commemorative powers can not only be put on display but are in fact necessary. While Christ self-commemorates, Samson cannot. While the imprecation against performance distances the work from medieval *autos*—works that existed solely for the sake of performance—publication in print resupplies this removed iterability, converting what was once mass spectacle into a private reading experience. In other words, mechanical reproduction takes the place of performance. The turn to Samson is a corollary of this change, for Samson's status as a diminished form of Christ creates a commemorative needs that print supplies. This conversion of characterological effect into material form frees Milton to associate with his protagonist.

Within the drama itself, this difference is thematized in the aftermath of Samson's pulling down of the theater, when his commemorative neediness is first expressed by the hapless messenger whose inability to deliver the story of what has just taken place drives Manoa to distraction. The reader, who already knows what has happened, experiences this moment neither as anticipation nor suspense but rather as mediation. The "almost comic contest between Manoa, who wishes to be told *immediately* what has happened, and the messenger" calcifies the fact that Samson will not be telling his own story ("Spectacle and Evidence in 'Samson Agonistes'" 565). The messenger's stuttering performance introduces the commemorative themes that dominate the poem's conclusion.²³ While in Biblical accounts of the resurrection, the women's desire to visit the tomb and treat Christ's body reveals that the body is no longer there, in *Samson Agonistes*, Manoa's desire to wash his son's body confirms that Samson's body lies exactly where it fell, covered in the blood of its enemies. While Samson's final actions are the self-produced result of "rouzing motions" within him, he can only effect one iteration of the regenerative cycle for which the mythical phoenix is known. He requires commemoration that begins outside of himself; all he can do is lie amongst the rubble, his passion spent. This commemorative work begins in the chorus's mythologizing claim of self-begottenness but is taken up in earnest by Manoa, who is finally free to act now that Samson can no longer resist his desire to bring him home.²⁴ The son's fatal exhaustion marks the beginning of the father's commemorative effort, but Manoa's effort to retrieve the body is only the first step of what will be a multipart effort to preserve and sacramentalize his son.

More than any other character, Manoa understands that commemoration lies both

²³ Concerns about commemoration and fame have of course dominated the plot up until this moment; in the wake of Samson's death, however, they not only take on new urgency, but are materialized in the form of Samson's corpse, which lies amongst the rubble of the theater.

²⁴ Again, the important contrast here is less with *Paradise Regained*, where Christ returns to his mother's house alive, but rather with gospel accounts of Christ's death, where the efforts of the women to dress his body are met with the news that that body is no longer dead but risen. Samson's body, of course, remains "where it lies / Sekt in his enemies blood."

within and without the limits of the textual world he inhabits, and his final speech expresses a desire for duplicative transcendence constrained only by his awareness of technological limitations he cannot overcome. These limits are transcended in the choral speech that follows—a speech whose sonnetary form marks a return to the type of metapoetic framing that is the signature of *Samson Agonistes*. This time, however, the break in frame is not a sign of authorial takeover. That is, the sonnet does not mark the subsumption of the poem’s commemorative topic into its authorial/autobiographical one, nor does it replace the memorialized body with that of the author, for this time they are in fact one and the same. The twin iterabilities of dramatic form and printed page provide precisely the sort of commemorative vessel that Manoa wishes to provide but cannot.

In work’s penultimate speech, Manoa describes his play to memorialize his son:

Let us go find the body where it lies
 Sok’t in his enemies blood, and from the stream
 With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off
 The clotted gore. I with what speed the while
 (Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)
 Will send for all my kindred, all my friends
 To fetch him hence and solemnly attend
 With silent obsequie and funeral train
 Home to his Fathers house: there will I build him
 A Monument, and plant it round with shade
 Of Laurel ever green, and branching Palm,
 With all his Trophies hung, and Acts enroll’d
 In copious Legend, or sweet Lyric Song.
 Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
 And from his memory inflame thir breasts
 To matchless valour, and adventures high:
 The Virgins also shall on feastful days
 Visit his Tomb with flowers, only bewailing
 His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
 From whence captivity and loss of eyes. (1725–1744)

The father’s desire to retrieve his son’s body stands as a corrective to the choral fantasy of self-regeneration that precedes it. As the specifics of Manoa’s plan make clear, Samson in fact has little in common with the phoenix to which the chorus compares him. Unlike the mythical “self-begott’n” bird whose “ashie womb [...] / Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most / When most unactive deem’d,” Samson is incapable of rising in self-commemoration (1699, 1703–1705). While his final actions are the self-produced result of “rouzing motions” within him, Samson can only effect one iteration of the regenerative cycle for which the mythical bird is known. His limited ability to recreate himself becomes immediately apparent in the aftermath of his pulling down of the theater, when his body lies among the ruins and no one thinks for a minute that it will raise itself. Samson’s fame requires post-factum acts of commemoration—acts that the chorus’s mythologizing claim of self-

begottenness begin but that Manoa intends to complete not that Samson can no longer resist his desire to take him home.

While more realistic than the chorus's fantastical description, Manoa's plan is nevertheless exceedingly ambitious. Interred in a tomb built for the occasion, Samson's body will draw "Valiant youth" and "Virgins" in pilgrimage. Far from a "Vain monument of strength," the tomb will inspire and "inflare [...] breasts" (570, 1739). The means of this inspiration is distinctly literary: promising to play John Foxe to Samson's martyr, Manoa describes how Samson's "Acts" will be "enroll'd / In copious Legend, or sweet Lyric song" in an anachronistic anticipation of John Foxe's sixteenth-century effort to preserve the memory of the Marian martyrs in the *Actes and Monuments*.²⁵ The scope of this plan is more striking for being so far from fulfillment. In this moment—the moment in which the difference between Manoa's ambitions and the reality of the scene that lies before him is greatest—we realize that his plan has already been fulfilled in the poem itself. The reverse also is true; as Joanna Picciotto puts it, "The tomb draped with palm and laurel is also, of course, Milton's monument" (502). Not only does the specificity of Manoa's desire to adorn the tomb with "palm" and "laurel" reflect the martyrological and poetical investments of the work that gives them expression, it also registers the limits of Manoa's capacity as a character within the poem. While Manoa can fetch Samson's body and construct a monument in which to inter it, and while he is able to hang trophies at the site, only a writer can enroll Samson's acts.

This fact gives context to the critical commonplace that Samson looks a lot like Milton himself: blind and racked by vocational uncertainty, he contains in concentrate many of the weaknesses that the poet identifies in himself at various points in his career. Like Milton, Samson also expresses his desire for fame in literary terms, particularly with respect to his "secret." "Sole author" of all that has befallen him, he describes his lack of discretion with respect to his secret as an act of publication, lamenting that "I Gods counsel have not kept, his holy secret / Presumptuously have publish'd, impiously" (497-498). This premature act of publication takes place through the garrulous press that is Dalila, a figure who also articulates her folly in literary terms, lamenting her tendency "importune / Of secrets [...] with like infirmity / To publish them" (775-777). For both Samson and Dalila, publication is more than the mere fact of making something public (*publicus*); it is also debased form of the bodily means by which Christ disseminates his good news to humankind.²⁶ Though Samson blames Dalila and her sex for a tendency to be "importune / Of secrets," she is of course the materialization of his own impetuosity. To a far greater extent than in the Biblical account, Dalila outwardly expresses Samson's own inner tendencies, giving material form to both his promise and his weakness (as do both Manoa and Harapha). After she is rejected by him for the last time, she defies him in a

25 Manoa's plan to surround Samson's monument with laurel is an ambiguous one. Is Samson the subject of poetry or a poet himself? The answer is always "both."

26 For the Christological underpinnings of "publish," see *Paradise Lost*, where Mammon expresses hope that God will show mercy and "publish Grace to all" (2.238), as well as *Paradise Regained*, whose son asks himself "which way [to] first / Publish his God-like office now mature" (1.187-188).

rebuke that stings because it takes his hopes for himself and makes them into her hopes for herself. Reframing her prior actions as the basis of her own future fame, Dalila imagines being “nam’d among the famousest / Of Women, sung at solemn festivals, / Living and dead recorded” (955–957, 982–984). Ironically, she is led to this vision by Samson, who instructs her: “Bewail thy falshood, and the pious works / It hath brought forth to make thee memorable / Among illustrious women, faithful wives.” Nevertheless, Samson’s anger at her and at his divulgement in general remain limited by his conviction that he has nevertheless been called to some kind of future publicity. His role as a “public servant” is not merely that of *publicus* or public officer, but also of one who publishes, and he hopes that the “blot” his actions placed on “Honour and Religion” can be made into something more articulate.²⁷

While Manoa’s desire to literalize his son in lyric and legend extends this hope, it is *Samson Agonistes* that fulfills it. The articulation of Samson’s desire is achieved neither in the pulling down of the temple nor in the father’s plans but rather in the creation of the poem itself. Unhinged from the contingencies of time and space, Samson is transformed into an utterance present in the moment of reading. Whatever the script does for Samson, it also does for Milton, whose place inside and outside the text aligns him with both the protagonist and his father as both propagated and propagator. The author’s investment in both characters is the product of his oblique slide away from Christ as a model. By turning to the iterative forms of drama and print, Milton makes Samson’s previously unsacramental body eucharistic; in doing so, he makes his own as well.

²⁷ Delila’s “importunity” in obtaining Samson’s secret is not just “Troublesome pertinacity in solicitation” but also “unseasonableness; an unsuitable time” (“importunity” 4, 1). The question of seasonableness is of course of explicit concern to Milton, especially in metapoetic works such as “How soon hath Time.”

Epilogue: Periodical Culture and the Stigma of Print

Now Empress Fame had publisht the renown,
 Of *Sh*——'s coronation through the town.
 Rous'd by report of fame, the nations meet,
 From near *Bun-Hill*, and distant *Watling-street*.
 No *Persian Carpets* spread th'imperial way,
 But scatter'd limbs of mangled poets lay:
 From dusty shops neglected authors come,
 Martyrs of *Pies*, and *Reliques* of the *Bum*.
 Much *Heywood*, *Shirly*, *Ogleby* there lay,
 But loads of *Sh*—— almost choakt the way.
 —John Dryden, *Mac Flecknoe: A Satyr upon the Trew-Blue-Protestant Poet* 94-103

Combining Foxe's reforming disposition with Burton's sophisticated sense of the book as commodity, Milton reprises and extends the eucharistic style of his predecessors. Our sense that Milton's is a reprising style is a product of both history and the author's self-fashioning: persecution at the hands of those they considered crypto-Catholics led independents to understand their suffering as an extension and intensification of what their Protestant predecessors had suffered under Queen Mary. Written after long employment in republication causes—causes for which he was attacked on more than one occasion by polemical opponents who wished him physical harm—Milton's greatest poetic works reflect his conviction that he and his pages suffer together.¹⁶

Soon after Milton's death, Restoration and early eighteenth-century periodical culture bring us to the brink of mass communication in the fully modern sense. Milton's conflation of his suffering body and text was emulated by authors whose self-regard and affected resistance to the medium of print exposed them to ridicule at the hands of writers such as Jonathan Swift. In the mock apology for *A Tale of a Tub*, Swift condemns the prefatory habits of John Dryden, Roger L'Estrange, and unnamed "others," authors "*who having spent their lives in faction and apostacies and all manner of vice, pretended to be sufferers for Loyalty and Religion.*" Dryden, who "*tells us in one of his prefaces of his merits and suffering, and thanks God that he possesses his soul in patience,*" is the subject of particular censure (65). The failure of Dryden and his followers is found in both the exaggeration of their suffering and their inapposite treatment of the book form itself. Swift's attention to the Dryden's preface is no coincidence, in other words, for the preface is the paratextual element that most clearly reveals these authors' discomfort with the printed medium. Sycophantically pandering to multiple patrons, these authors fail to register how unremarkable print had become, even to the point of invisibility. Expressing their aversion to print's ubiquity by invoking its stigma, some two hundred and fifty years after its invention, these authors emphasize print's newness at a moment in which its visible as a medium had never been lower. Decrying "*what trash the press swarms with,*"

¹⁶ The most famous of these opponents was Claude Saumaise (*l. Claudius Salmasius*), author of the *Defensio regia* and a man who mocked Milton's blindness on more than one occasion.

they fail to acknowledge the extent to which print had become a form of what Mark Goble calls “ubiquitous communication” (82; 13–14).¹⁷

The scriptedness of *Samson Agonistes* represents one proto-novelistic attempt to make the thematic of authorial sacrifice congrue with the new demands of the ubiquitous printed medium. Marshall McLuhan identifies a related attempt in what he calls “equitone prose” of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele—a style that was the “auditory equivalent of the mechanically fixed view in vision”:

this break-through into equitone prose [...] suddenly enabled the mere author to become a “man of letters.” He could abandon his patron and approach the large homogenized public of a market society in a consistent and complacent role. So that with both sight and sound given homogeneous treatment, the writer was able to approach the mass public. (273)

McLuhan’s description of the shift in which the writer abandons the patron and approaches the homogenous public market identifies a key step in the book’s maturity as a commodity. Mr. Spectator’s willingness to share “just so much” of his “History and Character” marks his status as an everyman—a status to which anyone who conforms to his vision of enlightenment subjectivity can connect.¹⁸ His strategic reluctance to share the particulars of his life may seem a long way from Milton’s autobiographical eagerness; disconnected from the bodies of Addison and Steele, and largely without a body of his own, Mr. Spectator anticipates the anonymity of the modern newspaper’s editorial voice.

Yet the residue of eucharistic voicing is unmistakable. Having evasively promised to share “other Particulars” of his life and adventures in future issues, Mr. Spectator nevertheless takes up the question of just how much of himself he intends to put into print:

In the mean time, when I consider how much I have seen, read, and heard, I begin to blame my own Taciturnity; and since I have neither Time nor Inclination to communicate the Fulness of my Heart in Speech, I am resolved to do it in Writing; and to Print my self out, if possible, before I die.”
(5)

A singular figure at the intersection of individual authorship and corporate mass production, Mr. Spectator offers himself as an Andersonian “Mass Ceremony” to be bought at newsstands rather than consumed at the altar. His promise to “print himself out” before he dies offers insight into the centrality that aura and presence have in modern media theory: the terms are carry-overs from the eucharistic imagination through which the early modern print revolution first attempted to understand itself.

¹⁷ The term is meant to evoke “the complex ways technologies seem to vanish as they become more incorporated into our lives and as we come to assume their inevitable presence.”

¹⁸ The limitations of the ability to connect points of course to the limitations of enlightenment subjectivity itself.

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Appendix

The following illustrations best fit this description (i.e., are tightly framed, with bifurcated flames):

- “The burning of William Sawtre,”
- “The burning of John Claydon, and Richard Turming,”
- “The burning of Rich, Houeden” “The burning of Tho. Rhedonensis,”
- “The burning of Babram,”
- “The burning of Thomas Barnard, and James Morden,”
- “The burning of John Stilman,”
- “The burning of William Sweting and James Brewster,”
- “The burning of Christopher Shoomaker,”
- “The burnyng of Thomas Hytten,”
- “The burning of James Baynham,”
- “The burning of Thomas Benet,”
- “Collins with his dogge burned,”
- “Thee godly Martirs burned in Smithfield,”
- “The burning of Martyrdome of Kerby,”
- “The Martyrdome of M. George Wisehart,”
- “The burning of the blessed Martyr Adam Wallace,”
- “The Martyrdome of Walter Mille,”
- “The burning of the blessed Martyr, Thomas Tomkyns,”
- “The cruell burnyng of Maister Farrar, Martyr,”
- “The Martyrdome of Diricke Caruer,”
- “The Martyrdome of Maister John Denley,”
- “The burnyng of sixe godly Martyrs in one fire,”
- “The burning of the foresayd man and foure women,”
- “Two burnyng of two Women,”
- “The burning of the foresayde sixe men at Colchester,” “The Martyrdome of a blinde man, and a lame man, at Stratford the Bowe,”
- “The Martyrdom of three women,”
- “The burning of sixe Martyrs at Caunterbury,”
- “The burning of seuen Martyrs at Caunterburie,”
- “The martyrdome of three men and three women at Colchester, burned in the forenoone, besides 4 other burned at after noone,”
- “Foure Martyrs burned at Islington,”
- “The burning of Margaret Thurston, and Agnes Bongeor, at Colchester,”
- “The burning of John Noyes, Martyr,”
- “The burning of Cicelie Ormes at Norwich,”
- “The burning of W. Nicole at Herefordwest in Wales,”
- “The burning of vij. godly Martyrs in Smithfield,”
- “The burning of sixe Martyrs at Brainforde,”
- “Foure burned at S. Edmundsbury,”

“Thomas Benion burned at Bristow.”

A similar style manifests itself in a larger scene in the following images:

“A Lamentable Spectacle of three women, with a sely infant brasting out of the Mothers Wombe [...],”

“The picture of the burning and hanging of diuers persons counted for Lollardes, in the first year of the raigne of king Henry the fift.”

The following illustrations are likely by the same artist though they do not contain the characteristic flames:

“The burning of William Tailour, Priest,”

“The burning of William White,”

“The burning of Thomas Man,”

“The martyrdome of Richard Feurus,”

“The Martyrdome of Richard Bayfield.”

For more on the production of woodcuts of this style, including the fact that two were reuses from books by Miles Coverdale and Gonsalvius Montanus, see Luborsky 82.

The following woodcuts imitate the style of the woodcuts above, though I do not believe they were cut by the same artist/workshop:

“The burning of Henry Voes and John Esch, Friers Augustines,”

“The burning of John Castellane,”

“The Martyrdome of Wolfgangus,”

“The burning of William Hunter Martyr,”

“The burning of foure Martyrs,”

“The Martyrdome of Margery Pollet,”

“The burning of Myster Robert Glouer, and Cornelius Bongey at Couentry,”

“The burning of William Wolsey, and Robert Pygot, Martyrs,”

“The cruell burning of 5. Martyrs in Smithfield,”

“The burning of x. Martyrs at Lewes,”

“Three godly Martirs burned in Smithfield,”

“Three godly Martyrs burned at Norwiche,”

“The Martyrdome of Alexander Gouch, and Driuers wyfe,”

“The cruell burning of a woman at Exeter,”

“Two Godly Martyrs burned at Bristow,”

“The burnyng of fiue Martyrs [...] Canterbury.”

I am unsure of the provenance of the following images:

“The burning of Raulins, Martyr”

“The burnyng of fiue Martyrs [...]”