

“THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY”: THEATER AND THE MIND IN EARLY
MODERN ENGLAND

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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As critic Jonathan Gottschall notes, “The literary scholar’s subject is ultimately the human mind – the mind that is the creator, subject, and auditor of literary works.” The primary aim of this dissertation is to use modern cognitive science to better understand the early modern mind. I apply a framework rooted in cognitive science – the interdisciplinary study of how the human brain generates first-person consciousness and relates to external objects through that conscious framework – to reveal the role of consciousness and memory in subject formation and creative interpretation, as represented in period drama. Cognitive science enables us as scholars and critics to read literature of the period through a lens that reveals subjects in the process of being formed prior to the “self-fashioning” processes of enculturation and social discipline that have been so thoroughly diagnosed in criticism in recent decades. I begin with an overview of the field of cognitive literary theory, demonstrating that cognitive science has already begun to offer scholars of the period a vital framework for understanding literature as the result of unique minds grappling with uniquely historical problems, both biologically and socially. From there, I proceed to detailed explications of neuroscience-based theories of the relationship between the embodied brain, memory, and subject identity, via detailed close reading case studies. In the primary chapters, I focus on what I consider to be three primary elements of

embodied subjectivity in drama of the period: basic identity reification through unique first-person memory (the Tudor interlude *Jake Juggler*), more complex subject-object relationships leading to alterations in behavioral modes (*Hamlet*), and finally, the blending of literary structures and social context in the interpretation of subject behavior (Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*).

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

“All the world's a stage,” Jaques famously notes in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, “[a]nd all the men and women merely players” (2.7.138).¹ Shakespeare's original audience would have understood Jaques' statement as both metatheatrical – in the theater, the stage represents the world – and broadly philosophical.² All men and women live their lives as if they were actors on a stage, following a script of unknown origins and passing over the stage in a brief span of time. Even today, we have a tendency to believe that we follow Jaques's model and proceed across the stage of the world in seven sequences from birth to old age, each having various exits and entrances, playing many parts – “first the infant,” and on through the rest to “second childlessness and mere oblivion” (2.7.142-164). Yet from the perspective of cognitive science – an interdisciplinary field studying how the brain internally generates first-person consciousness and relates to external objects through that conscious framework – Jaques' model, while compelling, is deeply flawed.

In the opening pages of his provocative and pivotal book, *The Feeling of What Happens* (1999), neuroscientist Antonio Damasio confesses to having long taken an interest in the moment when “the door to the stage opens and a performer steps into the

¹ All references to works by Shakespeare throughout are to *The Norton Shakespeare*, second edition, edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al.

² Francis Meres' list of plays, published September 1598, does not contain a reference to *As You Like It*, and given the play's entry into the Stationer's Register on August 4th, 1600, it's likely that the play was written late in 1599 or early in 1600, thereby making a first performance at the Globe all but impossible to definitively determine. In her introduction to the play in *The Norton Shakespeare*, Jean E. Howard suggests that Jaques's statement, “All the world's a stage,” is close enough to the motto of the Globe Theater, *Totus mundus agit histrionem* (All the world plays the actor) that the character is likely referring to The Globe. See *The Norton Shakespeare*, Greenblatt et al, 1623.

light; or, to take the other perspective, the moment when a performer who waits in semi-darkness sees the same door open, revealing the lights, the stage, and the audience.” He further notes that the “moving quality of this moment... comes from its embodiment of an instance of birth,” and thus, the act of stepping into the light becomes “a powerful metaphor for consciousness, for the birth of the knowing mind, for the simple and yet momentous coming of the sense of self into the world of the mental” (3). Damasio's statement provides an interesting and pivotal twist on the visual model suggested by Jaques's metaphor. We believe that we are the leading actors in the great drama of human consciousness. We believe that we are the ones who step out into the light, taking our cues from the play text of social and cultural norms that are handed to us in that moment. It is the opposite that is true: we are not the actor, but the audience; not the protagonist, but the silent spectator, watching the proceedings from the darkness, taking up the position of viewers and interpreters rather than actors and agents. And just as Jaques's statement intimated, the world is indeed a stage – or at least, a theater – insofar as the play of life unfolds in a purely internal, mental space, in the “theater of the mind.”

As Jonathan Gil Harris observes in his explication of the etymological link between the word “theater” and the Greek “*theorein*,” the theater “is a theoretical space inasmuch as it is a space of *theorein*, of viewing and contemplation. And it is all the more theoretical for being a public rather than a private space.” Noting that the *theoria* of ancient Athens were a class of people dedicated to watching public debates and deliberations in order to “[affirm] certain states of affairs as facts,” Harris suggests that the theater of Shakespeare's era “not only offered public entertainment; it also repeatedly tested ideas about the world, affirming some and unsettling others. Moreover, it made its

spectators *theoria*-like participants in its theatrical deliberations.” Thus, he maintains, “when we contemplate Shakespeare's writing – whether by viewing the plays on the stage or by speculating about the texts on the page – we enter into theory, whether or not we know it” (4-5). The theater was thus able to engage with audiences in ways that poetry and prose could not, by staging interactions and exchanges between characters in front of a live audience who, simply by virtue of attending and observing a performance, became part of the action of the play itself – some in less tasteful fashion than others.³

Certainly, audience members could not have ignored their position as such. Despite the presence of what often appears as verisimilitude on the page, there was no mistaking the fact that the event taking place on stage was a fiction, a performance, a product of both the writer's imagination and the actor's skill.⁴ Nevertheless, the position

³ In one of the more amusing chapters in his treatise on the behavior of young gallants, or “gulls” in early sixteenth century London, *The Gull's Hornbook*, Thomas Dekker describes the practice of arriving late to a performance and literally clambering up onto the stage to perch upon a stool, laughing loudly and ridiculing the play being performed. As he assures them, “[b]y sitting on the stage you have a signed patent to engross the whole commodity of censure; may lawfully presume to be a girder; and stand at the helm to steer the passage of scenes. Yet no man shall once offer to hinder you from obtaining the title of an insolent overweening coxcomb.” Andrew Gurr draws on Thomas Platter's 1599 account of attending a performance of *Julius Caesar* to indicate that “during the performance food and drink are carried around the audience, so that for what one cares to pay one may also have refreshment” which Gurr opines was likely apples and nuts, although he locates references to gingerbread and bottled ale as well. The lack of amenities for relieving oneself of the byproducts of these refreshments is also noted; Gurr contends that “the Globe offered no privy for the defecation of solids closer than the river, and that buckets served for the passing of urine.” See Dekker 99 and Gurr 37-38.

⁴ Part of this awareness came from the fact that the spectacle of the theater was not just confined to the stage, but included the equally colorful, fantastical, and highly distracting antics of theater-goers as well. Nor was it confined to the early modern theater, as Bruce McConachie observes. Audience members at opera performances in Paris in the eighteenth century frequently arrived late, chatted and gossiped loudly throughout the performance, and left long before the final aria. Research also indicates that audience members at the Bowery Theatre in nineteenth century New York behaved similarly, using the theater as a space for socializing with one-another. Michelle O'Callaghan notes that prior assumptions regarding the “superior” class of clientele at the Blackfriars and other private, indoor theaters have come under suspicion of late. The Blackfriars, for example, was in a busy market area, frequented by lawyers from the nearby Inns of Court, various gulls and gallants browsing nearby booths selling books and various craft goods, and so forth. Audiences at these theaters were likely made up of much more diverse classes of people than previously assumed. See McConachie 2008 2, 187 and O'Callaghan 2009 23-24.

of the spectator, of the *theoria*, is one of great power and appeal, and what's more, represents a position that increased in value as the seventeenth century advanced; Descartes portrayed himself as a spectator in the theater of the world, in his *Discourse on Method* (1637) that during the nine years prior to beginning to record his vision for an objective scientific methodology, he "did nothing other than wander around the world, trying to be a spectator rather than an actor in the dramas that unfold there" (*Discourse* 22). With the advent of the Cartesian split, human consciousness became permanently rooted in the position of a spectator, a thinking thing, *res cogitans*, relying on observations of physical reality to reify its status as such (or so the story goes).

It is quite fitting, then, that Descartes and his theories have of late become intertwined with a different sort of theater metaphor, via philosopher and cognitive theorist Daniel Dennett's model of the Cartesian Theater, which represents the idea (mythical, in Dennett's perspective and my own as well) that there is a singular, central location in the human brain where "it [the input of multiple streams of sense data] all comes together' and consciousness happens" (*Consciousness* 39). Dennett's theater is wholly modern, equipped, in Damasio's somewhat fantastical expansion of the model, "with a large CinemaScope screen equipped for glorious Technicolor projection, stereophonic sound, and perhaps a track for smell too" (*Feeling* 94). Technology has of course outpaced even Damasio's description, but what is important about this version of the model is that there is no physical actor to step into a light. Instead, there is a lone audience member, left in darkness, waiting motionlessly for the screen to light up and sense data to be provided.⁵ Yet even this model fails to bear scrutiny; Damasio joins

⁵ Thomas Metzinger has recently hypothesized that the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC in neuroscience parlance) in fact *does* operate as a place where "it all comes together" during moments of

Dennett in dismissing the efficacy of the Cartesian Theater metaphor as a representation of the function and operation of human consciousness. “There is no homunculus, either metaphysical or in the brain, sitting in the Cartesian theater as an audience of one and waiting for objects to step into the light” (*Feeling* 11). The truth is something far more intriguing: Until the light comes on, *there is no one there*. When the light finally does come on and we are simultaneously born of it and into it, the world depicted is one constructed from the memories and experiences of a singular, uniquely embodied brain, what modern neuroscience recognizes as a materially embodied mind, a unique human brain in a unique human body. Thinking and the brain come together as embodied cognition.⁶

The relationship between the audience, the actor, and conscious introspection forms the basis for my interest in the theater as both a place *and* structure for staging theories of mindfulness in the context of the early modern era. I argue that the theater, as a unique organism incorporating actor and audience alike, provided a space for theorizing identity as the product of not just social and cultural forces, but of the unique experiences of particular minds and particular bodies – uniquely embodied minds represented and signified in the first-person, as an “I” that experiences itself as an immutable, essential entity in its engagements with the world-at-large.⁷ I do not posit here that the early

lucid dreaming. “One part of the brain—the seat of the executive ego—wakes up and watches, or even directs, the dream show thrown up on the consciousness screen by the activation of the pons, thalamus, cortex, and limbic system.” See Metzinger 2009 157.

⁶ In a recent and detailed exploration of the concept of embodied cognition, Lawrence Shapiro acknowledges that the definition of the concept is still a matter of debate. He sees that the stakes in the debate between theories of embodied cognition and traditional, more dualistic concepts of cognition as being “nothing less than profound and entrenched ideas about what we are – about what it means to be a thinking thing.” See Shapiro 2011 1.

⁷ One of the most prominent ways the theater participated in this project was through the spectacle of the

moderns were developing or theorizing perspectives on consciousness, cognition, and embodiment that are somehow prescient or prophetic when viewed from the standpoint of contemporary cognitive science, but rather the opposite. I understand period drama as an early form of modern cognitive theory which places a particular emphasis on the embodied nature of cognition and fundamental states of selfhood and self-awareness; in other words, contemporary theories of cognition, embodiment, and conscious, memory-based self-identity owe perhaps just as much to the heritage of early modern drama as they do to empirical data and research.

The materialist and new historicist trends in scholarship that have been the dominant literary critical modes over the last few decades have sought to map and critique the social and cultural intersections that form social identity, and have produced a rich and complex narrative. I do not seek to call the efficacy or application of these methodologies into question in any way. The results of the work of cultural studies critics from across the humanities have rightfully drawn attention to the incredible power and richness of social and cultural influences on all aspects of early modern subjectivity.⁸

stage itself – through costumes, through the complexities of gender roles and the resultant concerns of Puritans and Reformers regarding the effects of such stagings on the impressionable minds of audience members. The issue of male cross-dressing was something of a flashpoint for anti-theater Reformers in particular. In his 1583 tract, *Players Confuted in Five Actions*, Stephen Gosson warned that “For a boy to put on the attyre, the gesture, the passions of a woman... is by outward signes to shewe them selves for otherwise than they are.” John Rainolds expresses a similar concern in *Overthrow of Stageplayes* (1599) when he castigates actors as “coosening varlets, base parasites” who “by often repetition and representation of the partes shall as it were engrave the thing in their [actor and audience alike] minde with a penne of iron, or with the point of a diamond.” Such concerns persisted well into the seventeenth century; in his 1625 *A Short Treatise against Stage-Playes*, Alexander Leighton expressed concern for “men [who] change their apparell, and put on womans apparell, without which exchange they cannot act some partes in their Playes... this change of apparell maketh the man effeminate, and the woman manish, as some can testifie if they would.” See Gosson C4, Leighton 17-18, and Rainolds 22.

⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, who is credited with coining the term “new historicism” in his paradigm-shifting book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* in 1980, has argued that the term was not intended to be a catch-all phrase for an entire field of study, suggesting that the term “poetics of culture” may be more apt. Some have argued that the “new” historicism is really no different from the “old” historicism, and even further, have suggested that that previous historical scholars, such as E.M.W Tilyard and E.K. Chambers, have

What remains far too often overlooked in this discourse, however, is the cognitive foundation of the self, the foundation that ensures that there is something *available* to be fashioned by the various disciplining influences of social and cultural norms. Part of the reason for this oversight has been a conscious attempt on the part of literary critics to avoid supporting any notion of biology, physiology, or psychology as providing an essentializing discourse that would portray the self as existing prior to or outside of social and cultural engagements.

To be sure, these concerns are well-intentioned, well-grounded, and entirely justifiable. But as the growing interest among literary critics in advances in cognitive science attests, focusing solely on social and cultural forces offers an incomplete (albeit provocative) picture at best.⁹ The last couple of years have seen an ever-growing field of interdisciplinary scholars encompassing but not limited to performance studies, linguistics, evolutionary psychology, and literary criticism, embracing what has widely come to be known as the “cognitive turn” (Fludernik 926, McConachie vii, Tribble 17-18, Zunshine *Cognitive* 5).¹⁰ This “turn,” as Monika Fludernik glosses it in a 2010 essay, has arrived in the form of “interdisciplinary transfers from cognitive science [via Daniel

been unfairly scapegoated by Greenblatt, Raymond Williams, and many others, in their zeal to differentiate their work from those who have come before. For a brief overview of what new historicism looked like at the end of its first decade in 1989, see Veaser ix-xvi; for an extended critique of new historicism and cultural materialism, see Lee 5-127.

⁹ In her commentary on Francis Barker’s identification of the early modern period as giving rise to a process whereby the body was subjected to confinement, disciplined, and separated from cultural discourse, in ways that lead to the modern sense of subjectivity, Mary Thomas Crane also critiques Judith Butler’s lost opportunity, in *The Psychic Life of Power*, to take note of “the brain as the material site where discourse enters the body, where entry into the symbolic occurs, and therefore where the subject is constructed.” See Crane 5-7 and Butler 2.

¹⁰ In a 2010 PMLA article, narratologist Monika Fludernik announced that “the cognitive turn has meanwhile arrived in literary departments,” noting that cognitive science has found a welcome home in “narratology and stylistics, where cognitive concepts and terminology were already familiar.” See Fludernik 926.

Dennett and Antonio Damasio, among others],” leading to a “renewed emphasis on consciousness... [which has] reinvigorated the cognitive analysis of literature” (926). The result is a turn towards the role and representation of consciousness in literature, with a shift of focus away from the processes of enculturation as a *primary* point of interest for many scholars.

The world outside of academia has also begun to take notice of the burgeoning relationship between the fields of literary studies and cognitive science. A 2010 article in the New York Times hailed the arrival of what journalist Patricia Cohen dubbed “Neuro Lit Crit” as the salvation of the humanities within the academy, and was followed, in a “Room for Debate” weblog section, by a series of perspectives from writers and literary scholars, including Blakey Vermeule, a literary formalist and scholar of cognitive theories of literary character.¹¹ Among those scholars cited in the article directly is Jonathan Gottschall, who identifies extant literary critical methodologies (in this case, post-structuralism, a popular target for cognitive science and cognitive literary theory alike) as “entailing a 'kind of despair' about the Enlightenment-derived public functions of reason,” equating this tendency with a disavowal “of the entire concept of human nature.”¹² The result is a blind subscription “to a precisely codified theory of what human

¹¹ Cohen's article strikes a sardonic and skeptical stance, drawing the conclusion that cognitive literary studies is mostly interested in mapping the regions of the brain activated and exercised during the process of reading. Although her brief article turns to work by prominent literary scholars who have enthusiastically embraced the utility of science and scientific methods in literary criticism, including Elaine Scarry and Jonathan Gottschall, there is ultimately little perspective supplied with regard to either actual brain science or a suggestion as to what the utility of neuroscience research might be for understanding the meaning-making processes literary texts engage the mind in. See Cohen 2010.

¹² Cognitive literary critics and cognitive scientists alike often point to cognitive science as a corrective of sorts to the so-called problem of poststructuralist literary theory. Jonathan Gottschall dismisses “Derrida's neon declarations” regarding the instability of textual interpretations as unsurprising news for scientists, who follow Karl Popper's theory of falsifiability, which states that no experiment can ever fully *prove* a hypothesis. Keith Oatley contends that the “bridges” between cognitive science and literary criticism provide solutions to the “dead ends to which the fingers of Derrida, Harfe, and Cixous

nature is: generally, that our nature is to spoon up whatever culture happens to feed us (and that we are what we eat)” (Butler *Postmodernism* 11 and Gottschall *Literature* 17-18). Literary criticism takes an unnecessarily pessimistic stance towards the “capacities of humans,” and thus has lost sight of the fact that “[t]he literary scholars' subject is ultimately the human mind – the mind that is the creator, subject, and auditor of literary works” (*Literature* 17). Gottschall raises a very important point. Whether by design or accident, any literary theory that does not take the mind itself into account, as both an individual subject and a subject of study, is viewing an incomplete picture of the production, reception, and interpretation of literary texts.

Furthermore, literature scholar Lisa Zunshine observes in her introduction to the recent critical introduction to cognitive cultural studies, it would be wrong to assume that the “cognitive turn” involves abandoning the “traditional paradigms of [one's] own field, be it gender studies, feminist criticism, postcolonial theory, poststructuralism, performance theory, psychoanalysis, or cultural studies.” Zunshine seeks to cast a wide net that brings cognitive cultural studies into the fold of literary criticism, suggesting parallels between the work of Raymond Williams and current work by cognitive literary theorists that highlight the “dormant” status of the cognitive-evolutionary components of cultural studies in general (*Cognitive* 5, 8). With a nod to Derrida, she eloquently suggests that a “student of cognitive cultural studies would do well to think of herself as a *bricoleur*,” adapting elements from traditional literary criticism, cultural theory, and cognitive science in order to construct a tool set better suited for the work of criticism in

so accusingly point.” However, not all cognitive literary critics agree with the assumptions such statements are grounded on. Ellen Spolsky argues compellingly in favor of close parallels between Derridean models of poststructuralism and cognitive-evolutionary theory, calling cognitive theory a “species of post-structuralism.” See Gottschall 2008 11, Oatley 2006 16, and Spolsky 2002 43.

the twenty-first century.

Cognitive science is a rhizomatic field, where rapid shifts in neuroscience and neurobiology, aided by quantum leaps in technology, force even the most grounded cognitive scientists to continuously reassess their hypotheses and conclusions. As a result, theories and interpretations are subject to continuous shifts in position, and this can be a daunting field for any literary scholar to locate himself within. However, two prominent areas within the field of cognitive science stand out as both popular and practical entry points for literary scholars seeking to get a better sense of the field. The first is found in the work of cognitive linguist George Lakoff and cognitive philosopher Mark Johnson, whose 1979 *Metaphors We Live By* receives frequent reference as a pivotal and influential text, if not one of the founding works in cognitive science as it exists today (Cook *Neuroplay* 2-11, McConachie 7-8, Richardson 1, Tribble 17). Lakoff and Johnson also acknowledge the cultural and social influences of the experiences that give shape to these metaphors, but note that some experiences are “more” physical than others, and may be better investigated through physiology and biology than by critiques of cultural forces (56-68, 57). These concepts are expanded on in their more recent collaboration, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999), where they begin by stating three vital assumptions for work in cognitive theory going forward: “The mind is inherently embodied. Thought is mostly unconscious. Abstract concepts are largely metaphorical.” Noting that these assumptions have been made possible by decades of neuroscience research in which the various interpretive abilities of the brain have been carefully mapped in a multiplicity of laboratory experiments, Lakoff and Johnson further suggest that philosophy itself must be open to abandoning cherished assumptions in the face of scientific evidence which

undermines them (3). What emerges from their extensive work in this text is an expansive, yet eloquent, critique of the roots of Western philosophy, with the power to destabilize the foundations of many precepts not just of philosophy, but also psychology, anthropology, and literary criticism, to name just a few.

The second entry point, and the primary one used throughout this dissertation, is found in the work of neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, whose 1994 book *Descartes' Error* may be credited with opening the eyes of humanities scholars (and indeed, even the general reading public) to the advances modern cognitive science has made in critiquing the notion of Cartesian dualism and the Cartesian ego. There, Damasio critiques the Cartesian *cogito* as being illustrative of

precisely the opposite of what I believe to be true about the origins of mind and the relation between mind and body. It suggests that thinking, and the substrates of thinking, and awareness of thinking, are the real substrates of being... Yet long before the dawn of humanity, beings were beings. [With the first signs of elementary consciousness and complexity of mind] came the possibility of thinking, and, even later, of using language to communicate and organize thinking better. We are, *and then we think*, and we only think inasmuch as we are, since thinking is indeed caused by the structures and operations of being (248).

Throughout the book, Damasio presses forward with the case for embodied cognition – for thought and consciousness as not just *using*, but *arising*, from physical experiences, from the memories of a unique mind as it navigates the world-at-large.

In *The Feeling of What Happens*, Damasio expands on the thesis that

“Consciousness... is the unified mental pattern that brings together the object and the self” (11) by depicting consciousness as a multi-tiered process, or series of states, rather than simply the state of being (or not being) aware. The states that he identifies here – the proto-self, core consciousness, the transient core self, extended consciousness, and the autobiographical self – arise in sequence from beginning to end, each relying on the activation and stabilization of the previous state in order to operate. Any interruption of this process results in the interruption of that stage of consciousness, and the inability to access the next stage. The catalyst for this process, he contends, is when our organism perceives that it has been “changed” by encountering an “object” (not just a physical item, but also the *object* of attention, such as a memory).¹³ The result is the formation of an individual sense of self, which responds to this object from a first-person perspective (131-276). The clarity and accessibility of Damasio's work have made his theories a popular starting-point for many non-cognitive science interlocutors, while his research as a neuroscientist, often conducted in partnership with his wife, neuroscientist Hannah Damasio, has been widely credited as an influence for many cognitive scientists and philosophers of mind (Metzinger *Being*), and the list of publications on cognitive science over the last decade which cite Damasio's work as a primary influence is rapidly approaching the point where it would require its own book-length bibliography.

Damasio's work departs from the linguistics of Lakoff and Johnson, as he contends that language is simply an evolutionary byproduct of consciousness. From his perspective, “[l]anguage –that is, words and sentences – is a translation of something

¹³ I join Damasio in using “organism” in the place of “body” in my overview of cognitive science here and in Chapter Two, as the former carries stronger implications of biological stability as opposed to the latter's connotations of a socially and culturally constructed and constrained image or shape. However, I use “body” extensively in the remainder of the dissertation for the sake of synchronization with social construction theories.

else, a conversion from nonlinguistic images which stand for entities, events, relationships, and inferences” (*Feeling* 108). This idea, he notes, flies in the face of the conventional outlook of a few decades gone by, wherein it was assumed that language *produced* consciousness. Instead, language is a translation of words, images, and emotions into a narrative in which we, as conscious selves, appear to take center stage as protagonists. However, as Damasio’s extensive work with patients experiencing a variety of neurological disorders attests, disrupting the ability to use and express language does not necessarily equate to a loss of selfhood.

Observing that “patients with major language impairment remain awake and attentive and can behave purposefully... or [detect] the humor or tragedy of a situation,” he highlights a series of case studies from his own practice which suggests the reverse is not always true. An elderly woman, experiencing severe aphasia following a stroke, was shown a series of photos of famous people and asked to identify them. Upon seeing a photograph of Nancy Reagan, she said “If *you* had that much money, *I* would be like that *either*” [his emphasis]. Damasio points out that her inability to locate the correct pronoun for herself – “I” – demonstrates that “language could not provide a stable translation for her *self* or for another” (112). Yet she was quite openly conscious and aware of *who* she was – just unable to firmly anchor a sense of identity on a consistent basis.

Another, more extensive case study is also worth glossing here, in the instance of David, who suffered a severe attack of encephalitis that left him unable to recall any memories before the age of forty-six (his age at the time of the attack), or to create and store new memories that lasted more than a few seconds. Yet he had no language impairment whatsoever, and was able to conduct “conversations” fluidly and with ease.

During his work with David, Damasio found that even when he met with him on a daily basis, David would forget who Damasio was within three minutes of being separated, and, when urged to name him, would simply label him with whatever name immediately sprang to mind – and would do so with confidence and enthusiasm, as if he were unassailably certain of Damasio’s identity. David’s sense of self is continuously in the process of being constructed; he knows his name is David, he knows certain facts (ninety degrees Fahrenheit is a warm temperature), but he has no sense of past or future (113-121). From this, Damasio builds his hypothesis for two primary states of consciousness – *core consciousness*, which is the sense of self and knowing that “materializes when you confront an object,” and *extended consciousness*, which projects that same sense of self and knowing both forwards and backwards (126, 195), thereby enabling the sense of self as an individual protagonist, a unique “I” who seems to exist across space and time.

I will expand my view of Damasio's theories in much greater detail over the chapters that follow. I will take a moment to note here, however, that I have found Damasio's work to be particularly compelling, thanks to his keen awareness of the historical nature of his own theories.¹⁴ “Shakespeare,” he writes, “understood deeply the nature of extended consciousness and virtually planted it in the literary form within Western culture.” This comment arrives at the end of a passage in which he outlines the distinctions between *consciousness* and *conscience*. From antiquity onward, in his estimation, writers and thinkers explore interior subjectivity as conscience, and not as consciousness; it is only in Shakespeare's era that the modern concept of consciousness comes into being. The Greek philosophers were “probably on the path to both conscience

¹⁴ Besides dealing intensively with Descartes, Damasio has also dedicated a book-length project to the roots of his own theories in those of Spinoza. See Damasio 2003.

and consciousness,” but “none of them deal with the notions of consciousness that preoccupy us now.” Even in the works of such foundational figures as Plato and Aristotle, “it is not just that the word for consciousness is not to be found” but “[t]he concept is not there, either” (*Feeling* 231). Damasio also notes that when the weary Prince Hamlet exclaims, in his famed soliloquy, that “conscience does make cowards of us all” (3.1.83), Shakespeare really did mean conscience, as a concept separate and wholly distinct from consciousness.¹⁵

I must be clear here – Damasio in no way suggests that the concept of consciousness, or of interiority, was unheard of, not discussed, or otherwise not at issue for readers and writers prior to Shakespeare. Most Christian writers and philosophers of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were influenced by the perspective of Augustine, who urged readers not to “desire to search outwards, but rather return into yourself; truth dwells within man” (Taylor *Sources* 129).¹⁶ Michel Foucault also underscored Augustine's influence on concepts of interior, conscious selfhood, noting that “[t]he self... [is] not a modern trait born of the Reformation or of Romanticism [...but] one of the most ancient Western traditions. It was well established and deeply rooted

¹⁵ Not all cognitive theorists go to the same pains as Damasio to emphasize that the concepts of conscience and consciousness were becoming separate, distinct concepts during the era. Owen Flanagan opens *Dreaming Souls: Sleep, Dreams, and the Evolution of the Conscious Mind* with the observation that circa 1600, the term conscience was largely taken to refer to what we understand as consciousness today. His goal, however, is not to comment on Shakespeare or any other playwrights' theories of mind, but to explain to a lay audience that he takes the two terms to be equal in this singular example. See Flanagan 2000 2.

¹⁶ From Augustine, *De Vera Religione* 34.72. Cited in Taylor 1989. Augustine's influence can certainly be extended to Descartes as well, as evidenced by the similarities between Descartes' pronouncement of *cogito ergo sum* and Augustine's similar admission of *fallor ergo sum* (I am deceived, therefore I am). This connection has also been noted, prominently, by Antonio Damasio, as well as Descartes' scholar John Cottingham. See Damasio 1994 249 and Cottingham 1993 36.

when Augustine started his Confessions” (*Technologies* 27).¹⁷ Reaching back even further, the mysterious, gnomic carving adorning the oracle at Delphi, with its injunction to all who would enter to “know yourself,” points to a conversation about interiority, consciousness, and subjectivity that predates Augustine by centuries. Damasio himself notes that even though Shakespeare vividly explored the realm of extended consciousness, he “could never name it as such” (*Feeling* 232). This does not suggest that consciousness, as we would recognize it in the modern sense, was not an item of interest for Shakespeare and his contemporaries; it simply means that the early moderns were struggling to find a way to express “that within,” a phenomenon we understand as “consciousness,” but which lacked an appropriate, correlating signifier in Shakespeare's era.

The final element in the equation of the increasingly diverse and complex engagements between literary criticism and cognitive science comes, unsurprisingly, from theorists and neuroscientists themselves. Cognitive scientist and analytical philosopher Thomas Metzinger openly announces in *Being No One* (2003) that he seeks to “build a better bridge... connecting the humanities and the empirical sciences of the mind more directly. The tool kits and metaphors, the case studies and the constraints are the very first building blocks for this bridge.” Furthermore, Metzinger believes that “there already is a deep (if sometimes unadmitted) mutual respect between the disciplines, between the hard sciences of the mind and the humanities, I believe that the chances for

¹⁷ Foucault often broadly identified the Enlightenment era as the first moment when the disciplined, culturally and politically constructed subject came under greater scrutiny. However, in the later lectures published in 1988's *Technologies of the Self*, Foucault acknowledged traces of discourses (such as those found in Augustine) of interior subjectivity that reached much further back than the early seventeenth century. Nevertheless, he maintained the stance that the differentiation and disciplining of interiority became prominent during the Restoration era. See Foucault 1988.

building more direct bridges are actually better than some of us think” (1, 4). In his own work on representations of reality in Shakespeare, cognitive scientist Keith Oatley points to the work of Patrick Colm Hogan as one “bridge” that has already been built between the two fields, and proposes that “these bridges allow approaches to Shakespeare that do not lead to the dead ends” (“Simulation” 16) which he feels many popular literary critical frameworks so often end up in.

These bridges are already being built, an assessment that is borne out by even a brief survey of the field. One of the most methodologically rigorous scholars in this category is early modern drama scholar Mary Thomas Crane, whose book *Shakespeare's Brain* (2001) opens by asking whether or not “Shakespeare [had] a brain” (1), a provocative, tongue-in-cheek question which she then uses to argue for a “consideration of Shakespeare’s brain as one material site for the production of the dramatic works attributed to him.” Crane's work is at its most compelling in its polemicist tone against cultural critics who would seek to dismiss cognitive science altogether, a tone which is all the more stringent for the early arrival of her book in the field of cognitive literary criticism. She suggests that “cognitive theory offers new and more sophisticated ways to conceive of authorship and therefore offers new ways to read texts as products of a thinking author engaged with a physical environment of culture” (3-4). Crane takes to task those critics who would seek to deny the role of the biological and material brain in subject and identity formation, chastising them for a “failure to think about the brain” and thus preventing “most contemporary accounts of subject formation in the body from nothing that just as surely as discourse shapes bodily experience and social interactions shape the material structures of the brain, the embodied brain shapes discourse” (7).

Ultimately, however, Crane strikes a conciliatory position: “Within Shakespeare’s brain, culture and biology met to form him as a subject and to produce his texts” (14-15).

Crane’s work opens a space for discourse on the biology of literary creativity, by drawing on embodied metaphor theory to suggest that the parity between biological processes and the cultural milieu of a uniquely embodied authorial brain (Shakespeare’s, in this instance) informs the author’s work in a way that can only fully be explored through scientific frameworks.

The bulk of the engagements between theater, drama, and cognitive science more recently has come from performance scholars. Evelyn Tribble notes that as science uncovers more and more of the elaborate architecture of human cognition, performance scholars in particular should “rejoice in the fact that our psychological claims are on firmer footing,” thanks to empirical studies and tests that can now be cited as evidence in their favor. Tribble turns to work in the field of Distributed Cognition – a subset of cognitive science contending that cognition is not a “brain-bound activity,” but rather “extends across social, technological, and biological areas” (*Globe 2*) – as a useful tool for studying complex coordination among groups. In the case of her recent work, the groups in question are the acting companies of Elizabethan and Stuart London, and the “coordination” she explores is the way physical objects, elements, and spaces in the world of the theater enabled memory, performance, and complex physical movements amongst early modern actors. She stresses that her aim is less to “apply” cognitive theory to early modern contexts, than to “seek two-directional communication between the sciences and the humanities.” Tribble contends that cognitive science provides a framework with “new insights into pressing questions within theatre studies,” and hopes

in turn that her own work will “modify and illuminate work in the cognitive sciences” (7-8), a suggestion that echoes Metzinger and Oatley's comments regarding the desire to work with humanities scholars in meaningful ways.

Another prominent theater scholar to embrace cognitive science as a methodological framework is Bruce McConachie, who opens his recent book on spectating in the theater with the acknowledgment that turning his attention to cognitive science opened new avenues for exploration for his own work. While completing a previous project on the cold war, he “began to see that cognitive science had the potential to disprove or alter most of our usual scholarly paradigms in theatre and performance studies” (xii). McConachie provides yet another perspective on the interplay between players and audience members by emphasizing the doubled meaning encoded in the title of his book-length work, *Engaging Audiences* (2008). The theatrical engagement is two-directional, as the actors engage the audience, and vice versa (1). Yet, he contends, theater and performance criticism has largely overlooked or mischaracterized the engagement between the audience and the actors. Theories of audience participation tend to speak of “passive spectators” and “resistant readers,” concepts which cognitive science dispels through studies demonstrating that the human brain is anything but passive in the act of spectating, which also differs significantly from the act of reading” (3).¹⁸ McConachie further critiques the dominant trend in literary studies to assume that social and cultural learning (which he dubs “nurture”) operates independently from genetic and so-called

¹⁸ One of the more recent and intriguing discoveries of cognitive science, which has quickly become a focal point for performance studies, are mirror neurons. In a decade-old study, Vittorio Gallese found that the same neurons were activated in monkeys who simply watched an action take place, as were activated in those actually engaged in the action itself. Hypothesizing that humans actually have the ability to mirror emotions, Gallese refers to this system as the “basis of social cognition.” Antonio Damasio also discusses mirror neurons in *Looking for Spinoza*, where he identifies them as the basis for the “as-if-body-loop” mechanism, which enable us to literally *feel* empathy and sympathy. See Damasio 2003 115-118.

“hard-wired” drives (aka “nature”). This perspective, he maintains, is “no longer tenable. Social experiences and genetic endowments come together in the constructions of our brains and minds in so many ways that they are inseparable from infancy onwards.” Certainly, as he recognizes, “it is likely that the late stages of human evolution depended as much upon the nurturance of culture as on the operations of nature... There is no culture without cognition and no cognition without nature” (4). One cannot help but think back, here, to Zunshine's statement, referenced earlier, that the cognitive aspects of the culturally-influenced and socially disciplined “self” are nothing new, but rather have been there all along, awaiting a new set of interpretive and investigative tools in order to be discovered and unpacked.¹⁹

While all of the critics that I have cited here have produced thoughtful and detailed work, performance studies scholar Amy Cook has emerged as one of the clearest and most deeply committed cognitive theory interlocutors yet. While almost all scholars in the field begin, as I have done here already, with an acknowledgment of the complexity and ever-evolving nature of cognitive science itself, Cook refreshingly contends that any controversy over “which model of human cognition is correct” is only a chimera. Instead, she expresses the necessity of foregrounding the model any critical intervention seeks to employ, and suggests that “the process of applying the various theories can operate as a kind of natural selection” (83-84).²⁰ In her initial summary

¹⁹ McConachie also echoes Tribbles's desire to open a two-way channel between cognitive science and the humanities (albeit less directly) in his expression of the necessity for humanities scholars to realize the gains to be made by such a relationship. Writing specifically for performance scholars, he suggests pairing with cognitive psychologists and linguists to design long-term, empirical projects that explore the nature of audience participation in ways that can reach beyond the customary exit surveys and questionnaire. See McConachie 15.

²⁰ Cook points to the debate, first published in a 2001 issue of *SubStance*, in which Ellen Spolsky defended Daniel Dennett's theories of embodied cognition against John Tooby and Leda Cosmides' assertions that

assessment that “cognitive literary theory complicates and challenges traditional theories of suspension of disbelief and clear distinctions between truth and fiction” (“Staging” 97), Cook joins the aforementioned critics in suggesting that cognitive literary theory is not designed to dismiss or dismantle the work of cultural studies theory, but rather, to provide a necessary supplement to the interpretive toolkit of literary scholars of all backgrounds.

Coming full circle back to the discussion of the audience and theater metaphor for consciousness and cognition that begin this introduction, Cook also notes that while a spectator or a reader is an individual, an audience is an organism, “part of a whole,” and therefore, the audience's interaction with stage and players alike “involves elements of... biology” that only the sciences can fully explore. Cook further identifies the theater's role as similar to that outlined earlier here via Harris’s concept of the *theoria*, as being less a place than a method of staging and challenging culturally, socially, and biologically significant categories, concluding that “theater does, in a substantial way, make up our minds” (*Neuroplay* 1-2).

It is only possible to fully realize the nature of this relationship when we understand that any model of the theater equating to a model of the mind and consciousness must include not only the audience, but also (in terms of a modern-day theater) “the lobby, the ushers, and the parking lot” (*Neuroplay* 22). In other words, the theater of the mind is an incorporation of more than just the experience of watching the actors pass fretfully across the stage; it must also consider the physical experience of arriving at the theater, entering the building, negotiating various gatekeepers and hallways, and finally of sitting down in the seat where, we may say, Damasio's lone

Chomsky and Pinker's computational linguistics models were more accurate. See Cook 2006 83.

protagonist steps into the spotlight and consciousness begins – to say nothing of the social and cultural forces that impinge upon every step of this process.

In fact, there is an excellent parallel to be made between this very example – the experience of the theater as incorporating so much more than just the performance itself – and Damasio's identification of the multi-stage, multi-state functionality of consciousness. If the experience of conscious introspection is, as Damasio says, like the moment of sitting in the audience and watching the actor step into the spotlight, then we may think of the stages of consciousness and selfhood as the literal process of arriving at that seat. We must first prepare for the journey at home, travelling by car, bus, or perhaps subway; we turn our tickets over at the door and are escorted in and down the aisle, shown our seats, and sit patiently until the lights at last dim and our attention becomes focused on the first actor to step onto the stage. This process is mirrored in the journey through the proto-self, core consciousness, and the transient core self, to the rise of the autobiographical self, enabled by extended consciousness. As noted sociobiologist E.O. Wilson puts it, “the brain is a narrative machine” (*Literary Animal* ix). It takes the aforementioned memories, dispositional attitudes, and constant influx of sense-data, and constructs a story wherein our conscious self-model becomes a unique protagonist in the grand narrative of life. But this is only a model – *we* are not the ones onstage, but the ones in the audience, constructing the story that we are watching, unwittingly directing and coordinating the movements of the actor in the spotlight.

Earlier, I suggested that my thesis could be distilled to the statement that early modern drama functioned as a place for theoretical engagements with the relationship between the conscious self and the world-at-large. I also indicated modern cognitive

science is, after a fashion, the progeny of sorts of these dramatic engagements. It will be the goal of this project to actively put these contentions to the test, by pairing close readings of key Tudor-Stuart plays with specific cognitive science methodologies. In the chapters that follow, I demonstrate the use of cognitive science in revealing the process of selfhood as it is being biologically constructed and, subsequently, reified through the first-person perspective of the uniquely embodied human mind. I will also explore the use of cognitive science in explaining how the brain itself participates in the experience of giving meaning to and interpreting dramatic texts and performances, therefore functioning as the aforementioned “theorin.”²¹ I begin with an in-depth overview of work on embodied cognition, memory, and layers of consciousness, and move from there to three case studies. These chapters highlight the relationship between anti-essentialist Reformation rhetoric and memory-based embodied identity in Tudor drama, and then shift focus to the vital role of the organism / subject – object relationship in providing an individual subject with access to previously inaccessible memories. I close with a shift in perspective towards the more traditionally literary aspects of cognitive science,

²¹ In this stage of the project, I have decided to temporarily side-step the somewhat thorny issue of reading fictive characters as “real,” multi-dimensional individuals. This is one of the areas that cognitive literary theory has taken a great interest in, unsurprisingly, and the work done there over the past decade has been quite extraordinary. The generally accepted view is that while fictitious characters are certainly not multi-dimensional, or otherwise “real” human beings, particularly well-written characters are understood as being multi-dimensional because the human brain is primed to fill in the gaps, as it were, and create dimensionality in response to emotional stimuli. Resistance to such concepts remains strong in many circles, however, prompting Bruce Thomas Boehrer to complain that literary criticism often treats the notion of character as a fundamental “problem.” Boehrer points to L.C. Knight’s accusation that a “habit of regarding Shakespeare’s persons as ‘friends for life’... is responsible for all the irrelevant moral and realistic canons that have been applied to Shakespeare’s plays, for the sentimentalizing of his heroes” which has resulted in an “incalculable” loss. Blakey Vermeule draws on the work of Antonio Damasio and cognitive anthropologist Robin Dunbar to explore the tactics authors use to “capture our interest by appealing to our mind-reading capabilities.” Meanwhile, Joseph Carroll has argued convincingly for the way “[l]iterature reflects and articulates the vital interests of human beings as living organisms,” a fact which helps explain the way “literary representations commonly organize themselves around problems of reproduction, especially mate selection and family relations, given the centrality of reproduction to human motivational systems. See Boehrer 542, Carroll 129, Dunbar 2000, Knights 30, and Vermeule 2009 246.

demonstrating just one way that the brain functions as a “narrative machine” in the face of unstable or otherwise unclear narrative structures in order to bridge gaps in generic conventions. Throughout, I argue that the primacy of the biological subject is both demonstrated and reified in the way these characters turn to memories of individual experience enabled by a uniquely embodied brain in order to grapple with their newly found doubts about the essentialist nature of the human self.

My initial approach to this undertaking, unfolding in Chapter Two, will be to provide a detailed exploration of Damasio's theories of consciousness, pairing them with cognitive theorist Owen Flanagan's theory of the connection between the embodied mind and memory as a set of indexes, in which the “mind's I,” or “indexical I,” uses memory to construct a seemingly seamless narrative of a conscious history (*Problem* 223-225). I also unpack Thomas Metzinger's theory of the Phenomenal Self Model, or PSM. The PSM is composed of the “content of the conscious self: [our] bodily sensations, [our] present emotional sensation, plus all the contents of [our] phenomenally experienced cognitive processing” (*Being* 299). The PSM initiates what Metzinger refers to as the “appearance of a world,” which in turn enables the PSM to project itself as a first-person entity, a unique protagonist; this in turn allows for the “ability to turn the first-person perspective inward, [in order] to explore our emotional states and cognitive processes” (*Tunnel* 15-16). This perspective is foregrounded in the chapter by a review of early modern theories of mind predicated on the Galenic humors, and debates over the seat of consciousness (the brain or the heart).

In Chapters Two and Three, I explore the immediate after-effects of the Reformation and the dismissal of the doctrines of transubstantiation and Purgatory on the

early modern theater of mind. In the first of these chapters, I begin with a discussion of prominent period anti-transubstantiation rhetoric and doctrine, drawing on the works of Peter Vermigli and Thomas Cranmer among others, which mockingly connect the ritual of the Eucharist with the act of “juggling,” reducing a vital element of Catholic theology to a trivial sleight of hand. I use this as a bridge into the anonymous mid-century interlude *Jake Juggler*, wherein the hapless protagonist, Jenkin Careaway, finds his identity questioned by the titular Vice figure. I read Jenkin’s struggle to reify his identity not through social or cultural status, but through reliance on memories of unique first-person experiences, as an early, rudimentary theory of memory-based, embodied cognition as a locus for individual self-identity. Throughout the chapter, I look to work in anti-essentialist cognitive theory, first from a literary critical perspective as provided by Lisa Zunshine, and then a comparison of Jenkin’s self-model with the Phenomenal Self Model described and defined by Thomas Metzinger. This model, I contend, allows us to see the struggle with essentialism that is at the heart of *Jake Juggler*, a play which requires the audience to believe in the essential, transcendent nature of the human soul, but which unwittingly uses that belief to affirm a vision of human identity as wholly embodied.

I transition into *Hamlet* by moving initially from a dissection of transubstantiation to the dismantling of Purgatory. I review a recent critical trend that dismisses the possibility that there is any *thing* “within” Hamlet himself; here I take issue not with the assumption (I agree that there is “no thing” within Hamlet), but with the interpretations predicated upon it. Hamlet's sense of “that within which passeth show” is identical to our own, precisely because we can see Hamlet's consciousness under construction, following

the framework that Damasio's theories provide. Hamlet's ultimate fear, I contend, is not that he will never be able to express “that within,” but that there may actually be some “thing” inside which will not die when his organism, his body, perishes. I provide a particularly detailed reading of the graveyard scene as presenting a pivotal moment in the play, wherein Hamlet's organism targets Yorick's skull and is given fresh access to a bank of memories. These memories calm his worries over the possibility that death may be nothing more than infinite mindfulness – eternal consciousness persisting in unison with the decaying organism, until it is possible to theorize that even Caesar is aware that his flesh is being used to stop a beer cask.

In the final chapter, I take up a different direction in my exploration of early modern theater as a nascent form of cognitive theory. Here I turn to Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT), an evolved strain of the embodied metaphor work of Mark Johnson and George Lakoff.²² Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier expand on Flanagan's “mind's I” in multiple directions, contending that “The mind is not a Cyclops; it has more than one *I*; it has three – identity, integration, and imagination – and they all work inextricably together” (Way 15). CBT demonstrates the way the three “I's” work in unison to simultaneously dismantle notions of form as inherently equating to meaning, while also unpacking the way meaning is developed in the mind of the audience member through linked “blends” of various input spaces, themselves comprised both of actual (remembered) and imagined (fictional, or literary) experiences. Conceptual Blending Theory ultimately allows us a clearer picture of the cognitive processes underlying the formation of literary form, genre, and eventually interpretations and meanings of specific

²² Mark Turner – the originator of Conceptual Blending theory, as introduced in *The Literary Mind* (1996) and further developed in collaboration with Gilles Fauconnier in *The Way We Think* (2004), has also collaborated directly with Lakoff, most notably in *More Than Cool Reason* (1989).

texts.

The chapter begins with a survey of critical engagements with Middleton's play that identify the troublesome nature of the so-called "redemptions" of the protagonists, Witgood and his courtesan, Jane, aka the Widow Meddler. Whereas most critics tend to dismiss their sudden claims to redemption in the closing lines of the play as either careless work on Middleton's part, or assume these claims are believable only when the characters are read in direct opposition to even less redemptive figures in the play, I demonstrate that their redemptions are made possible by a blend powered by individual imaginations. Along the way, I provide insight into historical conceptions of prodigal son figures and the redemptive qualities of wealthy widows in order to suggest the sorts of blends imagined by Middleton's original audiences.

CHAPTER II

“SEEK NOT OUTSIDE YOURSELF”: EMBODIED COGNITION THEN AND NOW

In this chapter, I examine compelling evidence suggesting that Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights were openly involved in defining the notion of conscious interiority as we understand and express the concept today. I will begin by pointing to two prominent period sources – Sir Anthony Van Dyck’s 1637 portrait of the cavalier poet and theater enthusiast Sir John Suckling and Phillip Massinger’s play *The Maid of Honour* – as unusual, yet persuasive items in the case for a pre-Enlightenment origin point for the modern concept of consciousness in dramatic works. From there, I will carefully trace a map of current perspectives on first-person subjectivity from the view of modern cognitive science, with a focus on Antonio Damasio’s theories of embodied cognition and layered states of consciousness, before returning to direct engagements with dramatic works of the Tudor-Stuart era in the next three chapters.

The second goal of this chapter is to then place this map over a broad outline of the dominant theory of the embodied cognition and selfhood in the early modern period, the Galenic theory of the humors. Humoral theory has been a popular source for modern critics seeking to engage with concepts of physiology and mentation in the early modern period, although none have perhaps been as thorough or thought-provoking as Gail Kern Paster’s *Humoring the Body* (2004). Paster explores the “intellectual dominance of psychophysiology” in the period, presenting a vivid picture of moralists, philosophers, and physicians alike who, “writing from their porous humoral bodies, experiencing the volatility of their willing animal spirits, . . . had no choice but to take psychophysiology seriously, because it was their governing paradigm for theorizing the bodily wellsprings

of human behavior” (20). But humoral theory has severe limitations as an interpretive tool, not the least of which is that it was rapidly becoming obsolete by the time Massinger first used the term “consciousness” in the 1630s. As Carol Falvo Heffernan notes, “asserting that disease arose from an imbalance in the humours of the body was on its way to obsolence even as Shakespeare employed it” (30-31), thanks to William Harvey’s discovery of the circulation of the blood. Her comment here may be regarded as a caution against conflating what early moderns *believed* about physiology with the actual functions and cognitive processes of the early modern human body. But the fact remains that humoral theory is a theory of embodied cognition and behavior, and, as Paster rightly stresses throughout her book, thus offers our best perspective on theories of embodied cognition in the pre-Cartesian, pre-dualism era.

My goal in taking this approach is two fold. First, I seek to provide a thorough and detailed explanation of the way the self is constructed in the conscious brain – the way Thomas Metzinger’s Phenomenal Self Model (PSM) that I gestured towards in the Introduction (and unpack in greater detail in Chapter Two) comes into being. This is a task that has yet to be attempted in any work of cognitive literary criticism that I have thus far encountered. Although many in the field gesture broadly towards Damasio’s work at some point, with tips of the hat here and there to other cognitive scientists, no literary scholar has yet offered a rigorous overview of embodied consciousness and its appearance in the human brain that does more than whet the appetite for more. I blame this lack of attention on the completely understandable drive for those literary scholars, whose purview is within a deeply historically contextualized era such as the early modern period, to devote their energy to rigorously historicizing their arguments, with the result

that necessarily extensive treatments of theoretical principles often fall by the wayside.²³

As a fellow historical scholar, I recognize the difficulty of this position, and this project certainly demonstrates just how hard it is to serve both the historical period and the modern cognitive science framework without compromising integrity in one area or the other. However, I firmly believe there are valuable gains to be realized by delving into the cognitive science framework in the fashion that I do in the remainder of this chapter. A more thorough understanding of the perspective cognitive science provides on the function and process of human cognition will enable us to gain a deeper understanding of how early modern subjects actually thought, rather than how they *believed* they thought.

The 1637 portrait of Sir John Suckling, painted by Anthony Van Dyck, is a remarkable thing.²⁴ Suckling is portrayed standing in an alcove of rock, set against a

²³ Such attention is equally necessary of course for those working in more recent periods who also need to foreground their work in specific generic conventions that post-date the early modern era, such as Lisa Zunshine's very rich work on Theories of Mind in novels from the eighteenth through the early twentieth century. Theory of Mind is a descriptor for the tendency of human beings (and certain non-human animals) to project consciousness, intentionality, and motives onto other organisms, or even (in Daniel Dennett's conception of animism) physical objects, both organic and inorganic. In an eloquent and extremely thorough work, 2008's *Human*, Michael Gazzaniga compares human and animal brains in an attempt to discover what about the brain, specifically, makes us human. He joins many theorists in asserting that while many non-human organisms possess many highly specialized cognitive functions, only humans *appear* to be able to project consciousness onto other organisms (Theory of Mind / TOM), display an expanded and intuitive grasp of the laws of physics, and "reason about unobservable forces" or abstract concepts. He admits that whether or not non-human organisms experience metacognitive states is still a frontier of sorts, but agrees with Damasio that non-human organisms likely have the ability to experience a degree of extended consciousness—although which organisms, and to what extent, remains unknown. Zunshine, whose work I address in more detail in the next chapter, has become a pivotal figure in cultural cognitive literary criticism, having recently edited the excellent *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* (2010) collection, which includes essays from other prominent critics in the field such as Mary Thomas Crane, Blakey Vermeule, and Bruce McConachie. This is in addition to Zunshine's separate work in *Why We Read Fiction* (2006) and *Strange Concepts and the Stories they Make Possible* (2008). Zunshine takes a broad interest in theories of mind and levels of representation in early novels from the 1700s through modern detective fiction. See also Dennett 2006 119-120, and Gazzaniga 2008 274 and 321.

²⁴ The son of Sir William Suckling, Secretary of State under James I, John was a poet, playwright, and all-around raconteur, as described in Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, rumored to be the inventor of cribbage and a habitual gambler of such great proportions that his sisters are said to once have appeared at a lawn bowling match to beg him not to gamble their inheritance away. See Aubrey 287 and Rowe 2009 42-43.

mountainous horizon, backlit by a hazy orange sky, wearing a red mantle with a gold fastener over a blue tunic and a brown girdle (Figure 1). Beside him, on a rocky ledge, is a book with a ribbon extending from it emblazoned with the word “SHAKESPERE.” The book is open to the first page of *Hamlet*, but even though Suckling appears to be gesturing towards the book, he is gazing off into the sky on the opposite side of the portrait, away from the book, with an expression of pensiveness and contemplation. Underneath the book, there is a Latin inscription on the rock – “NE TE QVAESIVERIS EXTRA,” which is part of a line from the *First Satire* of the stoic satirist and philosopher Persius (34-62 CE), and translates as “do not seek outside yourself” (Rogers 740).²⁵



Figure 1: "Sir John Suckling." Sir Anthony Van Dyck. Oil on canvas. 1638.

²⁵ The translation is credited to Malcom Rogers. The *First Satire* is written as a dialogue between Persius and an unknown friend. The former indicated disapproval for the decadent literary tastes of Rome, and recites a poetic line that his friend expresses admiration for, declaring astonishment that the Romans would not applaud it. Persius replies “non, si quid turbida Roma / elevet, accedas examenque improbum illa / castiges trutina, nec te quasiveris extra” (If thick-headed Rome disparages anything do not go and put the right tongue in that false balance of theirs, nor look to anyone outside yourself.” The final half-line does appear elsewhere in the early modern period, most notably as an emblem in Continental books where it is often accompanied by the image of a snail crawling along despite an arrow protruding from its body, which Rogers interprets as suggesting “it pays not to venture out of your shell.” See Rogers 1978 742-748.

The appearance of a copy of Shakespeare's works (we may assume that this is a copy of either the First or Second Folios, published 1623 and 1632 respectively) here is of great interest to scholars of the period in general. As art historian Malcom Rogers notes, Suckling's portrait appears to be the first portrait produced in England which included an "identifiable book in the vernacular (apart from the Bible and [Book of Common Prayer]) not written by the sitter. *To Suckling's contemporaries the inclusion of the Shakespeare Folio must have seemed a startling gesture*" [my emphasis] (742). That it is Shakespeare's Folio that Suckling points to here and not the work of another playwright – Ben Jonson, perhaps – says much about Suckling's personal taste in drama and literature, for, as a playwright and poet himself, Suckling was known to have traveled in a rich literary circle.²⁶ Nevertheless, taken together, the primary elements of the portrait – the Folio, the inscription ("do not seek outside yourself") and the clear visual representation of Suckling hidden away from the foreboding landscape in the background – provide a clear picture of one early modern subject wordlessly pointing to a dramatic text clearly meant to be used as guide to explorations of the interior dimensions of the self.²⁷

I point to Suckling's portrait here because it provides an excellent visual representation of the important turn in early modern theories of mind and internal selfhood that I seek to explore across the next three chapters. Not only does the portrait point to drama as a crucial guiding light for explorations of the interior dimensions of the

²⁶ An anecdote from Nicholas Rowe's 1709 *Life of William Shakespeare* notes that Suckling was a friend of both William D'Avenant and Ben Jonson; he was said to have wildly disagreed with the latter over the talents of William Shakespeare, arguing that Shakespeare's work was superior to that of the Greek and Roman playwrights. See Rowe 2009 42-43.

²⁷ Shakespeare scholar John Lee offers the only other direct reference to Suckling's portrait that I have yet uncovered in literary criticism, and his very brief commentary is far less detailed than what I have provided here. See Lee 100.

self (and it should not go without notice that Hamlet is offered up as an idealized figure in this regard), but the fact that it does so at all is extremely telling. As I noted in the introduction, the predominantly Christian early moderns were accustomed to self-reflection and internal explorations, via instructions from influential thinkers such as Augustine, who expressed the need for Christian seekers not to “search outwards, but rather return unto yourself [for] truth dwells within man” (Taylor *Sources* 129). Injunctions such as Augustine's, however, were designed for a completely different purpose. Man was to look inward to find the truth about himself in relation to God and His divine will, to search his conscience in order to realize what was necessary to reconcile his path with that laid out by God.

Suckling's portrait is not the sole link between drama and explorations of consciousness in the early seventeenth century, however. The OED cites the first appearance of the word “consciousness,” in the sense of signifying “[i]nternal knowledge or conviction; knowledge as to which one has the testimony within oneself” (“consciousness” def. 2), in an English play, Philip Massinger's *Maid of Honour* (1632).²⁸ On the surface, there is nothing remarkable about Massinger's play in the context of theories of consciousness. The plot (adapted from Boccaccio) centers around the titular maid, Camiola, who has fallen in love with Bertoldo, a Knight of Malta and the

²⁸ The title page of the play indicates that 1632 is the year it was published, and also notes that it was acted by Queen Henrietta's Men at the Phoenix (originally the Cockpit, until it was rebuilt following a fire in 1617, and symbolically renamed) in London. This is the only firm evidence for dating the play, and is corroborated by its entry into the Stationer's Register on 16 January 1632. In their 1976 edition of the play, Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson also note that Massinger wrote a series of plays for the master of the Phoenix, Christopher Beeston which were performed between 1621 and 1622, and date the play accordingly. However, Beeston formed Queen Henrietta's Men (he also previously managed Prince Charles' Men and continued to manage a troupe of child actors, Beeston's Boys) only in 1625, so it is not unreasonable to consider the publication date to be relatively close to the date of composition. For more details regarding the date of the play, see Edwards and Gibson 105-107.

bastard brother of King Roberto of Sicily. Bertoldo shares her feelings, but his holy vows prevent him from marrying without a dispensation, and the ever-noble Camiola will not allow him to ask for one, as she supports the purity of his vows. Yet in the second act of the play, Bertoldo comes to Camiola to press his suit, and asks “what diverts / Your Favour from me?” Camiola reveals here that it is nothing that Bertoldo has said or done, but instead, the “*Consciousnesse* [my emphasis] of mine own wants” (2.2.118-120). Camiola expresses awareness of a unique state here, that of being “conscious” of her conscience at work, telling her that she and Bertoldo are “not parallels, but like lines divided / Can nere meete in one Centre,” and thus, as “true love should walke / On Equall feete, in us it does not” (2.2.121-122, 157-158). Massinger’s use of the term thus stands as the lexical origin of the concept of consciousness as awareness of an interior condition or cognition.²⁹

To be sure, even when taken together, Suckling's portrait and the reference to consciousness in Massinger's play may simply be the first wisps of a concept that only begins to take shape in the Enlightenment era. The second source listed by the OED for the term “consciousness” as “[i]nternal knowledge or conviction” (“consciousness” def. 2) is John Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* (1690), where the connections between consciousness and individual memory are laid out quite clearly. Locke begins his discussion of consciousness by dismissing the concept that ideas are innate or otherwise essential things:

If there be any innate *Ideas*... which the mind does not actually think on;
they must be lodg'd in the memory, and from thence must be brought into

²⁹ In *The Feeling of What Happens*, Antonio Damasio also identifies the year 1632 as the first use of the word “consciousness.” Although he does not offer a citation for this source, either in the body of the work or in notation, my assumption is that the OED is his source. See Damasio 1999 232.

view by Remembrance; *i.e.* must be known, when they are remembered, to have been perceptions in the mind before... For to remember is to perceive anything with memory, or with a *consciousness* [my emphasis], that it was known or perceived before: without this whatever *Idea* comes into mind is new, and not remembered: This consciousness of its having been in the mind before, being that, which distinguishes Remembering from all other ways of Thinking... Whenever there is the actual perception of an *Idea* without memory, the *Idea* appears perfectly new and unknown before to the Understanding: Whenever the memory brings any *Idea* into actual view, it is with a consciousness, that it had been there before, and was not wholly a Stranger to the mind (49).

By way of example, Locke compares the connection between memory and consciousness by first describing a person born with good vision who slowly goes blind over the course of his life, and then another individual who is born without sight. The former is able to describe certain colors, when prompted, because he remembers seeing them in previous days, whereas the latter, having never seen colors, has no concept of what they may look like (49-50).³⁰

What Locke describes in these passages is the unique relationship between an individual subject (the individual calling ideas into consciousness through memory) and a target object, which in this case is another abstract idea (a color). Without prior experience of this particular target object (the color blue, for example), the subject has no object to focus on, and can neither describe nor reflect upon what that color is, looks like,

³⁰ The edition I have used is the 2008 Oxford Press edition by Pauline Phemister and is based on P.H. Nidditch's authoritative edition.

appears to be, and so forth.³¹ This relationship is more than just the focal point of consciousness; it is the *origin* of consciousness. In his most recent book-length work, *Self Comes to Mind* (2010), Antonio Damasio describes consciousness occurring as the result of the “*organization of mind contents centered on the organism that produces and motivates those contents*” (10) [his emphasis]. This definition builds on his insistence, in *The Feeling of What Happens* (1999), that consciousness is defined in terms of the relationship between an organism and an object, wherein the organism is represented *in relation* to an object causing a change in the organism (133). I add that this is not an object in the sense of a physical thing, but the *object of attention*, the target of the subject’s focus at a given point in time. This could be a sense of discomfort, the sound of a passing vehicle, or a familiar face appearing in our field of vision.

In order for such a change to be represented internally, the mind must form images of both organism and object. Representing the object is a relatively simple task, so long as necessary sense-data modules are functioning correctly – a person suddenly appears, visual characteristics about their physical form are collated with our memory

³¹ The question of “what _____ is like,” or “what it is like to be an _____” is one that has been fruitful for many cognitive scientists and philosophers, particularly those interested in more directly phenomenological problems. Thomas Nagel uses this tactic in exploring non-human subjectivity by asking what it is like to be a bat; if we find ourselves able to suggest an answer to this question, we must assume the non-human organism (the bat in this case) has conscious subjectivity. Many cognitive scientists take an interest in the elements of conscious experiences through discussions of qualia, the experience of individual elements and events as they occur in the brain. As an example, one could argue that an object may be conceived of or labeled as being colored green because it has inherent *qualities* that the brain perceives as being or belonging to some essential category of things displaying elements of green-ness. The utility of qualia has been a matter of great debate in cognitive science circles, with perhaps the most famous feud arising between John Searle and Daniel Dennett. Searle argues that specific experiences are so visceral (physical pain) that they must be accounted for, while Dennett argues that because qualia cannot be empirically measured, science should take no interest. Damasio does not deny the existence of qualia, but perceives it as simply a singular aspect of the biological processes that allow a conscious organism to perceive itself as such. See Blackmore 3-11 for a broader overview of various perspectives on qualia and Nagel’s concepts, Damasio 1999 17-19 and Flanagan 1992 61-85 for a detailed analysis of qualia, and Searle 1997 12 for his own perspective.

banks, and we recognize the person as a friend. Representing our organism is another task altogether, and it is here that consciousness assumes its most powerful role, by constructing a sense of unique individual subjectivity, a singular protagonist that is represented as an “I” via a narrative composed of specific memories and experiences.³² This is the level of conscious attenuation required for Locke’s argument to work – the man who was once able to see must remember a time when “I’ was not blind,” when he saw or experienced a specific color. The man born blind may be of a similar age as his comparator, but without a memory of an experience where “I’ saw this specific color,” he will have no way to represent the experience, let alone give it linguistic signification.

However, no matter how remarkably similar Locke’s formulations are to certain of those posed by modern cognitive science, Locke’s work remains rooted in a specific moment in the past, at a time when modern science was just beginning to take shape. Certainly, the seventeenth century saw the rise and eventual acceptance of a number of scientific principles, theories, and ideas, ranging from Galileo’s notions of a heliocentric universe and William Harvey’s accurate descriptions of the circulation of blood in the human body in the first quarter of the century, through the complex theories of mathematics and physics from the likes of Descartes, Huygens, Newton, Leibnitz, and Pascal, each in their own way informing the perspectives of political and social theorists such as Hobbes and Locke. Yet no matter how quickly scientific knowledge expanded during the seventeenth century, it would be a grave error to assume that Locke’s concepts

³² The “problem” of how consciousness emerges in the brain has come to be referred to, popularly, as the “hard problem,” signaling the puzzling issue of determining how something as abstract as consciousness and phenomenological experience are produced in a “hard,” physical organ such as the brain. The notions of “hard consciousness” and the “hard problem” are attributed to David J. Chalmers and a paper he delivered at the 1994 “Toward a Science of Consciousness” conference at the University of Arizona. For more, see Chalmers 1995.

of human consciousness are altogether closely aligned with those of Damasio and other cognitive scientists. After all, Locke himself was already living in a Cartesian world, wherein Descartes's formulation *cogito ergo sum*, "I think, therefore I am," was to have a powerful and lasting impact – one which lingers even in our present era (*Discourse* 25). Descartes' division of the human subject into *res cogitans*, "a thinking thing," and *res extensa*, the external form, remained influential in various ways into the twentieth century; some modern thinkers even see latent dualisms as being deeply enmeshed in everyday culture.³³

One of the primary goals of cultural criticism has been to dismantle the notion that there is anything like an "essential," transcendent, immutable self, or some "thing" that is always already at the heart of who we are as individual subjects, and is always able to effectively resist the processes of enculturation to some degree. In terms of early modern literary criticism, one prominent perspective on this issue comes from Francis Barker. Rightfully suggesting that "the fact of our personhood – and its vicissitudes – is historical," Barker displays concern for modernity's alleged placement of the individual subject "in a lonely, self-apprehensive and usually troubled existence at the apparent centre of a febrile 'consciousness.'" The "exclusive prioritization of consciousness" that he perceives as wholly pervading Western literature is, he argues, "a kind of madness" in that it celebrates "the essentialised thinkingness of the subject" while considering the body inessential. But this "essentialized" subject remains haunted by the body and is

³³ In his famous 1949 book *The Concept of Mind*, Gilbert Ryle expressed scorn for those in the fields of medicine and science who still looked to Cartesian dualism as the "official doctrine" on consciousness. Ryle coined the term "the ghost in the machine" as a mocking descriptor of the mind's relationship with to the body under Cartesian dualism. In *Kinds of Minds* (1996), Daniel Dennett notes that "[t]he legacy of Descartes' notorious dualism of mind and body extends far beyond academia into everyday thinking: 'These athletes are prepared both mentally and physically,' and 'There's nothing wrong with your body – it's all in your mind.'" See Dennett 1996 77-78 and Ryle 11, 17.

“sceptical of its body and guilty of its sexuality.” Thus, the “discoursing subject... is forever constrained to its own self-alienation and is conscious, in the end, of so very little” (*Tremulous* vi-vii). Barker is certainly on target with his critique of the notion of an “essential” conscious self as well as the identification of the importance of examining the self as it emerges, dialectically, from this misconstrued belief in essentialism that so clearly conflicts with the history of the body. However, human consciousness is hardly – certainly no longer, if it ever was – a “febrile” and “privative place,” and the discursive power structures that the subject continually engages with do not constitute the totality of human subjectivity and identity.

We cannot avoid the fact that we are conscious subjects, and we experience ourselves as such via the false sense that we are unique, essential “selves” and protagonists, Cartesian Egos expressible as an “I” that stands against the forces of enculturation, immutable and transcendent. Cognitive theorist and philosopher Owen Flanagan puts it thusly: “[B]ecause each of us is a continuous individual organism attached uniquely to our own nervous system, we have a unique first-person sense of ourselves. But if we look closely, it is a sense of our self as a complex and relatively continuous entity, not as something permanent and simple, and certainly not guaranteed never to change” (*Problem* 162). The attachment between the individual organism and the nervous system is absolutely crucial, and is at the heart of what cognitive science takes to be one of the most fundamental assumptions about human consciousness – that it is a phenomenon arising in embodied brains. Embodiment here is not understood in the abstract sense of *encapsulating*, or *representing*, but in the sense of the brain and the

body being unified in a completely non-divisible relationship. In other words, separate one from the other and the subject ceases to exist, both consciously and physically.

Philosophers have used thought experiments to imagine the effects of separating the brain and the body on subject identity for decades. Among the most prominent is Daniel Dennett's essay "Where Am I," in which he presents a wild hypothesis regarding the surgical separation of his body and his brain, which remain in contact via a sophisticated neuroelectrical network. In terms of consciousness, nothing has changed, but Dennett is able to literally stand and look at his own brain. Following an accident to his body, his brain is then connected to a new body, prompting Dennett to ask the question of whether or not he would still experience himself as himself (*Mind's I* 217-229). Another famous thought experiment is Derek Parfit's teletransporter example, in which technology allows him to step into a machine and be entirely dismantled, then completely reconstructed, down to the last molecule, in another, distant location moments later (199-201). Both experiments envision scenarios in which the subject must come face-to-face with himself in another form. For Dennett, this occurs when the brain looks at itself in a vat of fluid through the eyes of the donor body, and for Parfit, this happens via the subject watching himself on a video screen at the other location after a system failure. In both cases, the subject enters a self-reflective feedback loop in which the subject and object are the same entity, and yet not – a brain-melting exercise demonstrating the implausibility of the self as surviving either encounter intact, without assuming something like an ephemeral soul or ego which would experience the "new" body in either instance as being "me."

An embodied brain has a unique history which provides the individual ideas that Locke earlier pointed out must be called into conscious attenuation via “remembrance.”

Flanagan elaborates on the relationship between embodied cognition and subjectivity:

Plunk my incorporeal mind in a different body at a different time and its history would have been different. If there is something that is really me, really my essence, it should not be simply reducible to its career while embodied. My essence might make my contingent experiences possible and it might, as it were, hold my character or personality as expressed or revealed in my lifetime, but still it seems as if my essence should be something more than just my embodied mind's life history (*Problem 163*).

Flanagan identifies this sense that “there is something that is really me” which should somehow exceed the “embodied mind’s life history” as the “phenomenology of ‘I’” (163, 196). Language is the culprit enabling the perpetuation of this idea.³⁴ “[L]anguage can trick us. We may think that ‘I’ refers to more than a being-in-time with depth and rich texture, to more than a genuine character with certain stable personality traits and aspirations... We might think that the ‘I’... in fact refers to the ‘I’ that accompanies [us] through life, [our] transcendental ego” (223). But we are not composed of anything of the sort, and the phenomenological I, which we may think of as the “mind’s ‘I’”³⁵ as it is

³⁴ As I mentioned in the introduction, cognitive linguistics, most notably the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, are often cited as being at the forefront of the modern cognitive science movement. Their research arose in response to Noam Chomsky’s assertions that consciousness is a byproduct of generative grammar structures which are an inherent feature of the human brain, a notion expanded upon by Stephen Pinker in order to include Darwinian models of evolutionary traits and behavior. However, most current cognitive scientists reject the notion that language is an a priori condition for consciousness. Daniel Dennett observes that anthropological findings indicate hominid brain growth spiking dramatically as early as 150,000 CE, long before the emergence of language, and uses this data to suggest that the human brain became conscious long before this date. See Dennett 1991 190.

³⁵ Daniel Dennett and fellow cognitive theorist Douglas Hofstadter have also co-edited an anthology of

only in the mind that this first-person perspective arises and exists, is simply the result of an evolutionary adaptation, designed to protect physical life by enabling individual organisms to store knowledge and experiences for repeated use.

For Flanagan, the mind's I is indexical, arising from the brain's ability to access indices of recorded memories, experiences, and dispositional attitudes. These indices are accessed whenever "we find it important to think or report what we are experiencing or doing... [t]his is the best way to locate in time what is happening, what we are feeling, thinking, and doing" (*Problem* 225). Here we may recall the earlier definition of consciousness, courtesy of Damasio, as arising when an organism takes an object as a target of its attention, and is altered by the object in some fashion as a result. Because it exists purely as a mental state, the mind's I does not initially perceive itself as having been altered in the interim between an indexical memory and the present moment. This is perhaps most easily demonstrated in the common cultural practice of playfully mocking the change in physical appearance as we age as juxtaposed against the sense that "I" do not feel as old as I look. Dinner with friends on one's birthday will call to mind memories of other similar occasions, in which "I" was chronologically younger, but otherwise unchanged.

As I briefly noted in the Introduction, Thomas Metzinger has helpfully suggested that we think of this sense of being an innate "ego" or self as, instead, a Phenomenal Self Model, or "the conscious model of the organism as a whole that is activated by the brain" (*Ego* 4). The PSM provides the *content* of the mind's I, and thus, whatever is part of the

prominent theories and philosophies of mind from the early 1970s through the mid 1990s, which is also titled *The Mind's I*. Although many of the thinkers and writers presented in the anthology have influenced this project in a myriad ways, I use the term "mind's I" in this chapter as a referent for the indexical internal self. See Hofstadter and Dennett 2000.

PSM, “whatever is part of your [consciousness], is endowed with a feeling of ‘mineness,’ a conscious sense of ownership” (5).³⁶ The foundations of this belief are linked to the “surprisingly flexible” nature of our mental body image, the picture of the body and all of its parts as it appears in the mind. Take, for example, the use of a simple tool to accomplish a basic, everyday task, such as eating your morning breakfast cereal with a spoon. The PSM enables the sensation that the spoon is “integrated into [our] bodily self,” allowing us to “process, optimize it, form concepts about it, and control it in a more fine-grained manner – performing what we today call *acts of will*” [his emphasis] (75, 59-80). This sense of an extended body enabled through interactions with simple tools such as the spoon, writing on a piece of paper with a pen, and so forth, is known as “peripersonal space” (*Being* 349).³⁷ For the duration of your breakfast, the spoon is perceived by your brain as being part of the body – you “feel” the last clumps of soggy cereal at the bottom of the puddle of milk because the spoon has been temporarily grafted onto your body image, at least until breakfast is over and you put the spoon down.

³⁶ Metzinger points to a 1998 experiment by University of Pittsburgh psychiatrists Matthew Botvinick and Jonathan Cohen as an example of the linkage between one's PSM and a sense of essential ownership. Subjects were seated at a table, with a fake, rubber hand placed before them on the table, and asked to place their corresponding hand behind a screen. A stick was then used to gently stroke the back of both the real, hidden hand, and the fake, rubber hand. In a short matter of time (Metzinger notes that it was about a minute or so in his own experience), the subject “feels” the stroking in the fake hand, experiencing a connection to it, and even perceiving it as being attached to themselves via an arm, resting on the table – although no such thing is, of course, taking place. See Metzinger 2009 3-4 and Botvinick and Cohen 756.

³⁷ Metzinger elaborates on the connections between peripersonal space and visual representations of the PSM in his first book-length work, *Being No One* (2003), where he notes the way a man shaving in the mirror may perceive the razor as being part of his own body, even though he is visually aware that it is not. In *The Ego Tunnel* (2009), he elaborates on the experience of gaining distance from oneself in order to consider the effects of peripersonal space via the study of out-of-body experiences. Metzinger uses this discussion as a jumping-off point into speculations regarding OBEs as the reason for the belief in the human soul, via the activation of the PSM during such an event. See Metzinger 2003 349-50 and 2009 82-89.

Not only is this emphatically *not* the case, however – the spoon is certainly not part of “you” – but furthermore, there is not even anyone *available* to eat the cereal, no “I” to eat breakfast without the prior activation of a complex hierarchy of states of conscious attention and resultant experiences of selfhood that vary in intensity and duration. While there is no unified and unanimously supported theory of how this process functions and what initiates it, Antonio Damasio’s theories of tiers of conscious attenuation have been the most widely embraced by cognitive scientists.³⁸ As a neuroscience researcher, Damasio represents a specific group of interlocutors within the broad field of cognitive theory who have extensive experience working with various conscious human subjects under a variety of circumstances. He is well-versed in analytical philosophy and literature, and, across four book-length works, has worked admirably to bridge the divide between the humanities, the social sciences, and the so-called “hard” sciences, with remarkable success.³⁹ Damasio’s work is enthusiastically and widely embraced across the disciplines, placing his work at the center of an expanding interdisciplinary network of scholarly interlocutors.

Damasio breaks consciousness down into two fundamental states, each rising from *and* enabling a different level of selfhood. These are *core consciousness* and *extended consciousness*, which variously rely upon and construct three different levels of selves: the *proto self*, the *transient core self*, and the *autobiographical self*. The “mind’s

³⁸ The caveat here, of course, is that Damasio’s theories remain relatively new (a little over a decade in age), and the call for a self-contained theory of consciousness is only slightly older. Owen Flanagan was among the first, in his 1992 book *Consciousness Reconsidered*, to call for a “unified theory of consciousness,” or a combined theory for the way consciousness emerges, operates, and is experienced in the human brain, as opposed to the many dissenting and often contradictory viewpoints presented by theorists across the sciences and philosophy at that time. See Flanagan 1992 213.

³⁹ Damasio is joined in this aspect by Metzinger, who also calls upon humanities scholars to join cognitive scientists in the project of “building a better bridge” between the disciplines. See Metzinger 2003 1.

I” is a signifier for the autobiographical self, as it denotes a protagonist who – as Flanagan has already shown us – draws upon indexes of memories, experiences, and dispositional attitudes to construct a narrative in which the protagonist experiences himself as an essential, immutable subject, or self. The proto-self is “a coherent collection of neural patterns which map, moment by moment, the state of the physical structure of the organism in its many dimensions,” and importantly, “emerges dynamically and continuously out of multifarious interacting signals that span varied orders of the nervous system” (*Feeling* 154). The proto-self represents the continuous real-time flow of information about the status of the body, in the form of a continuously changing map of the body and its interactions with extrinsically affective subjects and objects. It is vital to grasp the sense imparted here, that the proto-self is neither a “thing” nor a “location” – it is not the “rigid homunculus of old neurology” (154) – but an unconscious state, the product of various neural networks that simultaneously construct a wordless image of the body and its status – in pain or not, hot or cold, and so forth. All living organisms with brains share this function, from birds to human beings; what we do not share, at least according to most available research, are the functions that follow from the proto-self.

Although we do not experience the proto-self as a conscious state, the proto-self enables core consciousness. Whenever the physical organism experiences a noticeably altered state – pain, hunger, thirst, a sound – core consciousness is activated. Core consciousness is what imparts to us our “subtle sense of knowing, the feeling essence of our sense of self” (*Feeling* 171). The result is metacognition, or the awareness of “knowing” and the ability to “know” that we know: “We become conscious, then, when our organisms internally construct and internally exhibit a specific kind of wordless

knowledge – that our organism has been changed by an object” (168-169). The brain takes up the map of the organism provided by the proto-self, and forms images, “such as a face, a melody, a toothache, the memory of an event” (170). As these images subsequently affect the status of the organism, the brain quickly maps out affective and causal relationships. Let's say that a melody is coming from a violin, via the radio, and is being experienced through the mechanism of the ear. Core consciousness arises out of awareness of these affective relationships, and not directly from the proto-self. The ear picks up the strains of the violin and the proto-self re-maps the change in the organism's state. Ambient silence is replaced by ambient music, as picked up by the ear, while the eyes detect a source and attention is now focused on it, and we become conscious of knowing that we hear something. It is also vital to note that the stimulus, be it an object or an event, need not be present; a memory can suffice to construct core consciousness as well. The awareness of an object or event affecting the proto-self forces a focus on that object or event, leading to the enhancement of its mental image. As these images become more prominent, they are set out from other lesser images of non-affective objects or events, and they become established as fact in the brain (music is playing).

The result of all of this is the formation of the transient core self, as the proto-self has been altered and core consciousness has focused on the cause of the alteration, leads to the sense of “knowing” that we exist. Narrative, or rather, conscious narrative, begins here. This presents the first moment when the mind begins to experience itself as a protagonist – an independent, real-world agent, capable of movement and possessing free will. As Damasio puts it, “you know you exist because the narrative exhibits you as a protagonist in the act of knowing... [t]he first basis for the conscious you is a feeling

which arises in the re-representation of the *nonconscious proto-self in the process of being modified*" [his emphasis]. Awareness of hearing the violin play leads to an awareness of other objects and events, and thereby constructs a brief narrative, wherein "I" am hearing music. For Damasio, "[k]nowing springs to life in the story... [but] [y]ou hardly notice the story telling because the images that dominate the mental display are those of the things of which you are now conscious" (*Feeling* 172). In other words, "I" am aware that "I" am not only hearing a violin, but that the music is coming from a radio, which is on a desk, inside of a room, which has many bookshelves, and so forth.

But as its name implies, the transient core self is just that – temporary, in flux, a product of and for the moment only. Only a trace of this momentary "self" remains, but, thanks to our brain's complex capacity for memory formation and storage, an image of this moment is recorded in autobiographical memory, which Damasio defines as "an aggregate of dispositional records of who we have been physically and of who we have usually been behaviorally, along with records of who we plan to be in the future." Here is where the full picture of conscious experience and conscious selfhood begins to finally emerge, due to our brain's powerful ability to continuously record, index, re-access, and revise the autobiographical memory. The resulting autobiographical self "is stable and invariant," and "its scope changes continuously as a result of experience, [rendering it] more open to refashioning than the core self, which is reproduced time and again in essentially the same form across a lifetime" (*Feeling* 173). It is this stage of conscious experience that enables the "self-fashioning" ability that has driven the discourse of early modern literary studies over the past three decades; without a functioning autobiographical self with a stable autobiographical memory, there literally is no thing,

no subject or “self,” for the various networks of power regimes and disciplining structures to act upon.

Finally, the autobiographical self both precedes and enables the final layer, extended consciousness. “[A]utobiographical memories are *objects*, and the brain treats them as such, allows each of them to relate to the organism in the manner described for core consciousness” (*Feeling* 197). The task of core consciousness here is to support the brief construction of the autobiographical self, by generating “a sense of self knowing.” Given that its perceptions are restricted to a mini-narrative of the present, core consciousness remains “flanked by the past” and “the anticipated future,” which are provided by extended consciousness (195). Core consciousness enables the transient core self to conceive of itself as an “I” that exists and is being affected by immediate objects and events, leading to the autobiographical self that locates the subject organism as a unique protagonist in a memory-derived narrative of events and experiences. Extended consciousness provides “the capacity to be aware of a large compass of entities and events,” generating “a sense of individual perspective, ownership, and agency, over a larger compass of knowledge than that surveyed in core consciousness” (198). While core consciousness enables the transient core self to be aware of sitting in a room and listening to music, extended consciousness fleshes out the narrative by drawing on autobiographical memory.

Thanks to this process, I am able to say that “I arrived in my office ten minutes ago, and turned on the radio to find Bach's *Orchestral Suite #3 in D* playing. When the piece is finished, I will turn off the radio and open my laptop in order to check my email. But for now, I will simply sit here and enjoy the music.” Autobiographical memory is

key here. Rather than simply being aware of a room, and music playing, this scenario is only made possible by the ability to simultaneously recognize and recall a multiplicity of objects. This enables the identity of the music (thanks to records of previous encounters with the piece), recognition of the specific location (not just “a room” but “my office”), and a sense of progression through time (I have just arrived, and need to do something else in a short period of time from now. The construction of this scenario is made possible only thanks to the fact that my organism has experienced elements of this situation before (Bach's Suite #3, the office), and the mind is able to pull together relevant selections from autobiographical memory, matching them to the altered map of the proto-self, using core consciousness to situate the transient core self in this moment in time, and from there, to extrapolate an extended sense of the mind's I at this point in time.

Thus, the “mind's I” exists solely in the realm of extended consciousness, and by seeming to represent a transcendent, immutable form of identity, effectively hides the nature of consciousness from the mind itself. The mind's I is predicated upon the autobiographical self's ability to access extended consciousness and posit itself as a protagonist, an individual entity, stable across a span of time and space – a Cartesian ego, a singular “self” with a fixed identity. But this is only an illusion. The truth is, as Metzinger puts it, “no such thing as selves exist in the world: Nobody ever was or had a self.” Instead, as he continues, “[a]ll that ever existed were conscious self-models that could not be recognized as models” (*Ego* 1). Flanagan elaborates on the fictive nature of this self-model, describing it as “a complex, dynamic, retrievable, and expandable dispositional structure of who I am. It gains in complexity and texture as I experience and do new things” (*Problem* 244). Thus, “whatever else we mean by the 'self,' it is

constituted only by a subset of all the memories [which] a person...could hold in mind” (241-2). As I have already noted, these memories are unique to each conscious self-model, and that is thanks to the uniquely materially embodied nature of each human brain. Every alteration in the state of the physical organism, no matter how minute, results in a new dispositional record of the proto-self, which in turn activates core consciousness and the transient core self, which records the memory of the altered condition; when that memory becomes relevant for making a decision about a current situation, the autobiographical self accesses that memory, and considers its ramifications via extended consciousness.

The self, as an individual, unique, conscious subject, is therefore the result of a series of processes. In his most recent book, *Self Comes to Mind* (2010), Damasio articulates his latest viewpoint thusly: “There is indeed a self, but it is a process, not a thing, and the process is present at all times when we are presumed to be conscious.” Here he elaborates on this sense as being specifically a sense of the self as “*knower*, [the result of a] process that gives a focus to our experiences and eventually lets us reflect on [the experiences we recall from memory]” (8). This sense of “self as knower” is the one in which individual subjectivity arises, using the mind’s I to make the experiences called to mind from the indexes of memory “*ours* [his emphasis], making them belong to their rightful owners, the singular, perfectly bounded organisms in which they emerge” (10). From an evolutionary standpoint, the function of consciousness is to enable temporal-spatial relations with respect not simply to present events, but both past and anticipated events which have or will alter the mind's I in one fashion or another. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Even in a moment of nostalgic revelry, when (like the poet with

a “perjur'd eye”) it seems that “I” am most “myself,” layers of consciousness and selves are at work, effortlessly gilding over any and all seams that may cause confusion or disruption in the progress of my narrative self-model.

But of course, as I again alluded to in the Introduction, Damasio himself noted that Shakespeare could not name extended consciousness as such, even though much of his work clearly relies upon the sense of “self as knower” that the former’s theories delineate. Earlier in the chapter, I indicated that I would return to early modern theories of mind and physiology, both in order to ground the work of this project in the era it seeks to interrogate as well as to suggest what we can learn from the inadequacies of such models. Setting aside the interest in consciousness as a state of awareness and self-reflection as hinted at in Suckling’s portrait and Massinger’s play, the wealth of period materials available on theories of physiology tells us that the source of cognition and interior subjectivity was clearly a topic of interest for the early moderns as well. No fewer than five separate terms were used, sometimes interchangeably, to refer to the nature of the mind: *psyche*, *pneuma*, *anima*, *spiritus*, and *mens*. These terms were used in addition to those I have already used here, *brain* and *mind* (Stevens 265).⁴⁰ Furthermore, there was also a lack of consensus as to which of two organs – the heart or the brain – actually was home to the self. Under Galenic theory, the phlegmatic humor originated in one of these two organs, although the debate extended back before Galen to a disagreement between Plato, Democritus, Diogenes, and Aristotle. Plato and his camp favored the brain as the

⁴⁰ Gail Kern Paster argues that Shakespeare and his contemporaries did not necessarily distinguish the latter terms in any prominent fashion, and places the blame for any distinction between them on a tendency in modern literary criticism to “disembody human psychology.” See Paster 245.

primary overseer of bodily functions and activity. Aristotle favored the heart, the home of the soul and therefore the locus of all individual subjective agency.⁴¹

However, particularly in the mid-sixteenth-century and onwards, Galen also received mention in the debate, after positing the brain was the supreme ruler [*hegemonikon*] of the body and its other organs.⁴² In fact, Galen is sometimes credited with being the first to identify the brain, and not the heart, as the seat of specific mentation and cognitive activity, an analysis he arrived at after observing the changes in people who had suffered various forms of brain trauma.⁴³ Then again, Galen also conceived of the brain as being composed of spermatazoa, and operating on the principle that the brain received and stored sense-data via literal, physical impressions on its surface. Thomas Wright alludes to this concept in *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1604), arguing that the seat of the passions is not the brain but the heart, “for, as the brayne fitteth best, for the softnesse and moysture, to receyve the formes and printes of objects for vnderstanding; even so the heart endued with most fiery spirites, fitteth best for affecting” (33). It was not until Descartes that the brain's preeminence really began to enjoy widespread acceptance, and by that moment, mind and brain, self and thinking organ, would never be one and the same. Given that Descartes shifted the seat of cognition to the brain and the seat of the soul / self to the pineal gland instead of the heart (267-269), Stevens also argues that Descartes' impact on this shift in perception is so

⁴¹ Following the Middle ages, it was sometimes argued that the heart was, if not a *thinking* organ, then a *perceiving* organ, given its understanding as having received enlightenment via the Holy Spirit. See Stevens 271.

⁴² It has also been argued that Galen's assertion was overturned, during the Middle Ages, by Avicenna; however, there is sufficient evidence for Galen's theories exerting more influence once they began being translated into English in the mid sixteenth-century. See Stevens 266

⁴³ See Stevens 265.

significant that in some contexts the “mind-body” split engendered by Cartesian theory may perhaps have been thought of as the “mind-brain” split.

Galenic principles exerted an enormous influence on early modern concepts of anatomy, physiology, psychology, and the role of individual organs well into the early seventeenth century. This was due in part to Galen's work only having recently become available in English, as part of a 1542 compilation entitled *The Questyonyary of Cyrurgyens*.⁴⁴ In 1579, Thomas East, a London printer, published George Baker's translation of prominent twelfth century French surgeon Guy de Chauliac's work on Galen, *Guydos Questions*.⁴⁵ Nor did the popularity of Galenic theory diminish as the seventeenth century dawned and advanced; in addition to Wright's 1604 treatise, Robert Burton's immensely influential *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) refers to Galen throughout, and the famed herbalist Culpeper's translation of Galen, accompanied by his own commentary and explanations, was published in 1653, and proved popular enough to merit reprinting in 1662 and 1671, long after Culpeper's death in 1654.⁴⁶

By the mid-seventeenth century, the efficacy of Galenic theories was called into question by advances in science such as Harvey's aforementioned treatise on the circulation of blood in the human body. The advent of Cartesian dualism hastened the obsolescence of humoral theory as well. Just as Paster notes, Descartes' dismissal of

⁴⁴ It has been estimated that some 500 editions of Galen were printed during the sixteenth century alone. See Schoenfeldt 1999 2.

⁴⁵ East also published Thomas Gale's 1586 treatise on surgery, containing segments from Galen, as well as John Read's 1588 translation of Francisus Arceus' treatise on the treatment of wounds to the head and other prominent body parts.

⁴⁶ Information pertaining to these period treatises has been obtained directly from manuscript facsimiles of the original texts. Carol Falvo Heffernan also offers a gloss of several of these sources, focusing on the theoretical roots of late medieval Galenic thought, with insightful commentary on the possible influences of Paracelsus, Elyot, and Bright on the plays of both Marlowe and Shakespeare. See Heffernan 1995 16-31.

Aristotelian hierarchies of souls (vegetable, sensitive, rational) by distilling the three “spirits” of humankind into a single category, that of the animal spirit, was both a blessing and a curse. While Cartesian theory separated the human body and the human mind into separate entities and simultaneously removed man’s embodied connections to the natural world, Descartes nevertheless initiated the “gradual epistemic process towards abstraction that overtakes early modern discourses of the body and mind [interactionist dualism]” (246). Of course, this was just one of the first tentative steps in the direction of Enlightenment thought, as I have suggested earlier.

Meanwhile, drama of the late Elizabethan and early Stuart eras continued to look to the humors for physiology-based explanations for moods, emotions, and behaviors. As prominent cognitive literary critic Mary Thomas Crane suggests, Shakespeare would have “experienced his embodied mind in ways that were shaped by his understanding that both body and mind were controlled by the humors” (27). The fact that “the brain constitutes the material site where biology engages culture to produce the mind and its manifestation” requires that readers “keep in mind Shakespeare’s culturally determined sense of how the mind was embodied” (35, 27). Crane’s comment is indicative of a growing sense of acceptance of the idea that biological factors must no longer be considered as either separate from, or subservient to, processes of enculturation in the formation of subjectivity, even in historically-oriented criticism.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ More recent applications of humoral theory to issues of embodiment, cognition, and emotion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries suggest that there is still some resistance to accepting biological factors as key players in forming subjectivity, however. In a thorough and thought-provoking article on the role of the stomach in humoral balance and emotion, Jan Purnis suggests that “in discourses and representations of complex emotion in medical texts, treatises on the passions, and fictive literature, the stomach is a site through which gender, ethnicity, and class hierarchies are mapped and maintained.” Although she joins Paster et al in arguing that humoral theory is a theory of embodiment and that modern cognitive science offers a similar vantage point, Purnis maintains a focus on the social and gender-oriented implications of period concepts of the stomach and its role in humoral balance.

The work of Paster, Heffernan, Schoenfeldt, and a veritable legion of scholars who have and continue to engage with humoral theory have produced compelling and vital historical work, and many – Paster and Crane stand out vividly here – recognize that in order to understand what knowledge of early modern beliefs about the humors means for current scholarship, we need to look to cognitive science (Crane 11-35, Paster 244-45). But I maintain that relying solely on humoral theory – as close of a comparison point as is currently available to us regarding a period companion to cognitive science – is deeply limited, as an investigative methodology. As modern thinkers, we inhabit a world deeply rooted in Cartesian dualism. The influence of lingering Cartesian forms of thought can be found even in certain areas of cognitive science, to say nothing of popular culture.⁴⁸ The work of extricating ourselves and our understandings of biological and phenomenological reality is underway, and, as should be clear by now, this project seeks to aid in that task, although we still have far to go. As a result, I maintain that no amount of historical research can satisfactorily recover an early modern perspective on embodied cognition, at least not to the extent that we might be able to more or less share in the experience of the humoral subject. We can come close, perhaps, but the assumptions we can make, and the arguments that result from those assumptions, must always remain a little hazy at the edges.

I hasten to note here that I am not suggesting that scholars such as Paster et al are conducting anachronistic and therefore suspect arguments – on the contrary, it is thanks

However, others have suggested ways to incorporate humoral theory with more modern views on mind-body connectivity, as in Lisa Wynne Smith's work on the experience of physical pain and corporality in eighteenth century literature and culture. See Purnis 2010 and Smith 2008.

⁴⁸ See footnote 10 above.

to such rigorous work as theirs that we can even begin to discuss the notion of embodied cognition in the pre-Cartesian era, which has opened up fascinating new avenues for exploration.⁴⁹ Just as Crane points out, understanding how the early moderns *believed* their internal states functioned provides a point of entry into understanding how they represented these beliefs in literature – but it does not mean that their physiognomy was actually culturally constructed. I want to stress the importance of understanding that explorations of humoral theory are simply one avenue for examining embodied cognition in the early modern period. After all, to paraphrase Crane, the early modern playwrights must have had normal human brains (14-15). Even if a playwright such as Shakespeare or Middleton perceived himself to be a walking humoral ecosystem, the picture afforded by cognitive science tells a much different story.⁵⁰

In the fourth chapter, I will shift perspectives slightly to more recognizably literary frameworks provided by the Conceptual Blending Theory of Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier, work informed by Turner’s collaborations with George Lakoff, as well as the latter’s research into embodied metaphors with Mark Johnson.⁵¹ CBT is not a

⁴⁹ One of the most intriguing and thought-provoking areas here is that of early modern concepts of animal cognition. Far from rudimentary forms of Descartes’ supposition that animals were merely automatons, scholars such as Erica Fudge and Bruce Thomas Boehrer have made great strides in demonstrating that the early moderns had much more complex understandings of animal cognition, let alone the so-called human-animal divide, than most had previously thought. Over two book-length projects, Fudge has worked to “recover animals from the silence of modern scholarship,” arguing that “to explain the human... is to explain the animal.” While Fudge takes a more directly philosophical approach, Boehrer has concentrated on anthropomorphism, attempting to distinguish levels of anthropomorphism in early modern contexts and, more recently, suggested that Cartesian theory functioned to effectively eliminate animalistic behaviors as actual signifiers of species categories. See Boehrer 2002 and 2009 545-546, and Fudge 2000 and 2006 4-6.

⁵⁰ Paster continually advances the notion that the humors were perceived as functioning as an ecosystem, in which each of the humors was dependent on balance with the others in order to achieve a parallel balance in behavior, emotion, and so forth. See especially her first chapter, in *Humoring the Body*, entitled “Roasted in Wrath and Fire: The Ecology of Passions in *Hamlet* and *Othello*,” in Paster 2004.

⁵¹ See the Introduction for an overview of conceptual metaphor theory as a foundation for cognitive literary theory.

theory of neurobiology or a means of explaining how consciousness is experienced in the human brain, but rather (as Amy Cook so eloquently describes it) “seeks to understand the way in which language creates emergent structure” (*Neurplay* 91) in the embodied brain. CBT thus offers a framework for exploring the operation of imagination in bridging gaps in literary structure and form by describing how meaning can be comprised of unique blends drawing from multiple input spaces and frameworks. I will save a full overview Conceptual Blending Theory for that chapter, as CBT itself takes the conclusions laid out by Damasio et al as given assumptions, and thus is not a theory of consciousness as such.

This is not to dismiss the effects of either social and cultural influences in the formation and shaping of individual identity, nor to suggest that an understanding of neurobiology somehow obviates the usefulness of deconstructing those forces, as cognitive science considers these elements to be of equal importance in the overall picture of human life. Damasio agrees: “Naturalizing the conscious mind and planting it firmly in the brain does not diminish the role of culture in the construction of human beings, does not reduce human dignity, and does not mark the end of mystery and puzzlement.” Indeed, as he goes on to note, “connecting personhood to biology is a ceaseless source of awe and respect for anything human” (*Self* 29). Yet we must also admit that a laser-beam focus on enculturation and social influences runs the risk of ignoring the biological and physiological story of subjectivity. The benefit of this approach is to demonstrate that by expanding our understanding of the processes of neurobiology and their roles in the formation of conscious selfhood, we can gain a vital new perspective on the early modern subject. We are able to see the early stages of

conscious subjectivity being constructed in the human brain, and observe its struggle for identity and signification separate from the disciplinary processes of enculturation that modern literary criticism has discovered to be a fascinating and fruitful object of attention.

In closing this chapter, I return to the theater as metaphor for consciousness that I outlined in the Introduction. There I gestured towards Jonathan Gil Harris' identification of the etymological link between the Greek "theorein" (a space of "viewing and contemplation) and the theater itself (4-5), and noted the way Damasio likens the experience of consciousness to that of the moment when the audience observes an actor step onto the lighted stage (*Feeling* 3). This is an image that Damasio stresses in his most recent work, taking great pains to point out that his continual use of nouns such as *witness* and *protagonist* are "not meant as mere literary metaphors [but are intended to] help illustrate the range of roles that the self assumes in the mind... A mind unwitnessed by a self protagonist is still a mind. However, given that the self is our only natural means to know the mind, we are entirely dependent on the self's presence, capabilities, and limits" (*Self* 12-13). What cognitive science best affords us as scholars and appreciators of early modern drama, then, is a way to simultaneously expand our view of period theater as "theorein," a place for theorizing modes of subjectivity and subjective experience, as well as understanding how the early modern mind is laid bare for our observation. In this way, we can participate both in an extension of the early modern theater as "theorein," as well as bear witness to the historical birth of consciousness.

CHAPTER III

“I AM I”: MEMORY, SELFHOOD, AND TRANSUBSTANTIATION IN *JAKE*

JUGGLER

The English Reformation exerted a powerful influence on the evolution of drama during the sixteenth century. Many of the earliest playwrights of the era – John Bale, John Heywood, and John Rastell are prominent examples – were reformers themselves, and used their craft to disseminate reform propaganda to the literate and illiterate alike.⁵² Plays began to take on an increasingly secular tone as the century wore on, thanks in no small part to the 1543 act of Parliament designed to regulate the religious content of dramas, and the Marian injunction that followed shortly thereafter which banned unauthorized interludes from performance (Bryant 45).⁵³ Dramatists responded to the swift changes in culture and religious beliefs that followed in the wake of the Reformation, presenting plays that depart from the format of simple allegories predicated upon the central theme of a *psychomachia*, instead emphasizing characters with increasingly complex – and often questionable – moral compasses.

⁵² Bale's penchant for strong pro-reformation and anti-clergy rhetoric led to his expulsion from the pulpit. He later joined Cromwell's company, where he penned one of the most openly pro-reformation plays of the pre-Reformation era, *King John* (c.1538). Heywood was also active at this time, given that at least one of his earliest plays was performed before the young Princess Mary in 1538. What's more, records indicate that Heywood was among the entertainers tapped to present works at court during the final illness of Edward VI in 1553, indicating that Heywood held favor with more than one of his regents, despite being implicated in an assassination plot against Archbishop Cranmer in 1544. He was allowed to publicly recant his position, however, a signal to many, such as Sir John Harrington (First Baron Harrington of Exton, Rutland, and eventual guardian of James I's daughter, Elizabeth), who noted that Heywood's light punishment was likely due to Henry's conclusion that Heywood "could not have any harmful conceit against his proceedings." Perhaps most interesting, however, is Heywood's status as a devout Catholic; his sons, Jasper and Ellis, became moderately radical Jesuit priests, and joined their father in a self-imposed exile from England early on in Elizabeth's reign. See Bryant 1984 regarding Bale and *King John*, and Johnson 1970.

⁵³ Howard B. Noland observes that the popular Christian morality play genre took on increasingly secularized motifs as the sixteenth century progressed. Among the most intriguing observations in his assessment of English drama from 1485-1558 is that prior to the Reformation, the only extant play titled after a vice figure is *Hick the Scornor* (1514), while vice figures are featured prominently in titles later in the century. See Lancashire 22 regarding the dating of *Hick the Scornor*, and Noland 47.

The differences are obvious to even the most casual of readers; contrasting Bale's *King John* (c.1538) with Shakespeare's play of the same name, even a glance at the list of dramatis personae is suggestive of the massive shift in dramatic practice from one play to the next. Bale's play employs such figures as Sedition, the Vice; Civil Order; Usurped Power (conflated with "The Pope" via the casting of a single actor for the role); Treason; and Verity, to name just a few.⁵⁴ This contrasts sharply with the cast list for Shakespeare's play (c.1595), where allegory has given way to imaginatively drawn historical figures. Shakespeare's *King John* trades verbal blows with Philip, King of France, and the Pope Innocent III's avatar in the play comes in the form of Cardinal Pandolph. The divide between character representations in the two plays demonstrates the space between a playwright reaching to urge a lay audience to overthrow the boldly tyrannical rule of the Church, and one whose audience is altogether too familiar with the decades of political strife and even bloodshed that followed just this act. Bale's audience is just becoming dimly aware of the events on the horizon; Shakespeare's audience is well-accustomed to thinking of the English throne's relationship to the Catholic Church in a highly politicized and historically contextualized framework.⁵⁵

Thus the question at hand becomes, what exactly is the nature of the relationship between the Reformation and the increasing complexity of English dramas from the

⁵⁴ Bryant also notes that the mix of allegorical figures with real-life figures conflates the latter with the former, and contends that the use of this tactic suggests its primary audience was popular and unlearned in the intricacies of Church politics. See Bryant 1984 80-81.

⁵⁵ However, as Leah Marcus suggests, there are risks to reading Tudor drama through a developmental lens, as if drama of the pre- and immediate post-Reformation eras were simply the "void" out of which Shakespeare and his compatriots forged a world, an "uncouth, dark time with nothing to offer England's first master poet." To address Tudor drama from this perspective is, as she rightly notes, to assume that Tudor plays are a purely transitional form, representing the half-formed attempts of poets and playwrights struggling to break free from the simplistic forms of medieval drama, yet lacking the vision to realize the possibilities that Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson, and others would present in their own work. See Marcus in Kinney 2000 132.

Tudor through the early Jacobean eras? Scholars have increasingly turned their attention to this question, and none has articulated their response as well as Huston Diehl. As she argued in *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage* (1997), “Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists represent, reflect on, and sometimes seek to redress the ruptures caused by the English Reformation” (*Staging* 3). Huston’s primary assumption throughout the work is that the iconoclastic tendencies of reformers, who sought to cleanse the church of all visual imagery and ceremonies that would detract attention from the word of scripture, led to an increasingly complex relationship between individuals and visual signifiers. This relationship is exemplified in dramas of the late Elizabethan era in particular, as crucial physical objects – skulls in *Hamlet* and *Revenger’s Tragedy*, Othello’s handkerchief, paintings in *Arden of Feversham* and *The White Devil* – became used with increasing frequency to signify interior states and internal relationships. The allegorical and symbolic qualities once attached to human stage characters were increasingly projected onto physical objects and visual phenomena, with the result that stage characters themselves became more complex and multi-dimensional in contrast.

Ellen Spolsky has pressed even further on the relationship between the Reformation and the complexity of later sixteenth century drama, questioning what biological motivations may exist beneath the desire for visual imagery on the Elizabethan stage. She argues cogently that the prevalence of objects and images in drama of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras resulted from “cognitive hunger,” or the human brain’s need for “information about the [surrounding] environment” in order to “make sense of [the environment] and predict its challenges” (*Hunger* ix). Via her own studies of Reformation iconoclasm, Spolsky came to be unsatisfied with the reformers’ own

explanations of for the “rejection of learning from images”; following her roots in cognitive science and evolutionary biology, she voices the belief that since “people clearly need as much understanding as they can acquire and just as clearly have all kinds of trouble obtaining it, a prohibition against learning by seeing images seemed counter-intuitive, even self-destructive.” Thus, she contends that the reformers’ emphasis on texts and scripture as the transmitter of Christian doctrine was “never a reasonable strategy for feeding the hungry. Reading is harder than seeing, and offers different rewards. Words simply aren’t a substitute for pictures” (x). This hunger for physical images, then, is at the heart of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists’ emphasis on objects and images, and represents a systemic response to a systemic failure – namely, the reformers’ overestimation of the speed with which most early modern English subjects would transition from thinking in images to thinking in words.

Spolsky’s work in this regard is quite compelling, and her assertion that “if the Christian religion was to be reformed, the bodies and brains of Christians would have to be re-formed – would have to be retrained to react and behave in new ways” (*Cognitive* x-xi) suggests a broad field of possibility for further engagements between cognitive science and early modern drama specifically. However, while I join both Diehl and Spolsky in drawing attention to the powerful interest in subject-object relationships that emerges in late Elizabethan and Jacobean drama (I address this topic in the next chapter), I maintain that it behooves us to cast a more critical glance on late Tudor and Early Elizabethan plays as well. After all, it is in this period that playwrights were tasked not with initiating a reformation (as Bale was), nor with interpreting it (as Shakespeare was), but with directly responding to it. Playwrights of the mid sixteenth century struggled with

the need to portray the relationship between human identity, human behavior, and moral virtues in an increasingly (even radically, by the standards of the era) secularized context.

As a location for my argument, I turn to *Jake Juggler*, an anonymous, mid-century interlude.⁵⁶ *Jake Juggler* offers the perfect site to conduct an investigation into the relationship between the reformation and secular concepts of identity and virtue, in that it largely avoids a broadly moralistic message in favor of an attack on one of the key tenets of Catholic doctrine, and a favorite target of reformers: the “juggling,” or obfuscating ceremony of the Eucharist, used to beguile foolish and unlearned innocents alike into believing in transubstantiation, the process whereby the substance of the bread and wine of the Sacrament was transformed into the body and blood of Christ.

The anti-transubstantiation elements of the play are noted going back a century, although the most theoretically inclined interaction comes from Jackson Cope, addressing actor and audience relationships in his 1973 book *The Theater and the Dream*.⁵⁷ Here,

⁵⁶ Nicholas Udall's comedy *Ralph Roister Doister* relies on some of the same forms of trickery as *Jake Juggler* for plot devices, highlighted in W.H. Williams's 1912 analysis of textual and structural similarities between *Jack Juggler* and *Ralph Roister Doister*, and prompting many to speculate that Udall was the likely author, although there is much debate over this possibility. Elaborating on Williams's research, G. Dudok suggested, in 1916, that Udall had written the play in the 1550s, although it does not appear in the Stationer's Company Register until 1562. Further evidence is often cited in the fact that Udall was the translator of Vermigli's anti-transubstantiation text, the *Discourse... concerning the Sacrament of the Lordes Supper* (c1550), and therefore was likely to be familiar with current reform positions on the subject. Tracey Sedinger notes that Frederick Boas, Marie Axton, and Paul Whitfield have all attributed the play to Udall; William N. West cites Axton as a reference for the authorship issue as well. See Axton 2, Dudok 60-62, Sedinger 240, West 2009 FN 3, and Williams 290-292.

⁵⁷ Scattered scholarly works do address the play in brief here and there, but often simply as an aside or else in reference to a different argument. This is the case in Bruce R. Smith's *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English stage 1500-1700* (1988), where Smith's primary interest is in the adaptation of Greco-Roman rhetoric in English drama. Smith concludes that the seemingly contradictory tones of the Prologue and the Epilogue are either the result of the anonymous playwright's use of *occupatio* (“I'm not going to tell you this, but of course, I'm telling it to you by telling you I'm not going to tell it to you,”) or else, as David Bevington has suggested, the Epilogue was merely attached to the print version of the play years after the play's composition. There is reason in such a suggestion; the play seems likely to have been written during the reign of Edward or Mary, yet was printed early in Elizabeth's reign. However, as my reading demonstrates, the play offers considerable thematic evidence

Cope identifies the play as displaying an “exaggerated insistence upon theatricality throughout, in that its confusion is so manifest as to demand attention.” He finds that attention as being rewarded in the final lines of the otherwise conventional Prologue, which tells the audience “You may report and saye ye have heard nothing at all,” which Cope reads as a defense of the play itself as being both “philosophic and trivial.” He contends that the play is, indeed, about “nothing,” insofar as it stages the annihilation of “existent entities... through the spontaneous combustion of simultaneous contradictions... And it is further a nothing which is ontological in that it implicitly represents the doctrine of transubstantiation” (108). Commenting on the close of the play, Cope argues that “Jenkin has been reduced to nothing by the paradoxical doubling which is acting; transubstantiation is reduced to nothing by demanding what the audience (and Boungrace) realize... Jack has demanded of Jenkin (‘to believe that one man at one time may be in two places’)” (110). It is the audience which ultimately provides the substance of the play, although Cope observes that the “attentive spectator” would have understood the play’s warning that “reality could become a cheap drama at the altar as easily as drama could become cheaply transparent to those watching” (111). Cope’s brief, yet powerful reading affirms the play’s connection to Reformation discourses rejecting transubstantiation, while simultaneously stripping the veneer off even this discourse to reveal a deeper, non-religious ontological orientation between substance and non-substance, being and nothingness.

Despite the rich possibilities his reading produces, Cope’s designation of *Jake Juggler* as a play that will “repay” critical attention has not been widely heard (107).

to suggest that the Epilogue was part of the original composition, and not simply attached at a later date. See Bevington 1968 124-126 and Smith 1988 147-149.

However, two critics – Tracey Sedinger and William N. West – have recently turned their attention to the play, each emphasizing a different aspect of the play’s connection to transubstantiation as part of a broader argument, yet paying considerable attention to the play itself. In an excellent analysis of the play’s relationship to Reformation efforts to denigrate transubstantiation, Sedinger follows Diehl’s lead to argue that Protestant officials “frequently used the stage as an instrument of godly reform in order to shape subjects emotions and perceptions as Catholic ritual had done” (239), an assertion that flies in the face of long-held assumptions that strict Protestants were only interested in demonizing and abolishing stage drama. Sedinger asserts that the play’s attempts to recontextualize and stage Catholicism’s “dramatic, juggling practices” represent a real and present threat to the social order of Tudor England. Although her focus on the cultural and social implications of the play’s contents examines a different vein than the one I explore in this chapter, I share Sedinger’s belief that *Jake Juggler* is a play worthy of greater critical scrutiny than it has heretofore received. Its proximity, via publication (1562) to longer and more intricate late Tudor and early Elizabethan comedies (*Ralph Roister Doister*, *Gammer Gurton’s Needle*) should not be taken as a sign that *Jake Juggler* is in any way underdeveloped or poorly conceived; on the contrary, as this chapter will demonstrate, it should more accurately be thought of as a microcosm of period perspectives on important Reform issues, wrapped in the guise of a brief Plautine interlude.

West also demonstrates that the play is home to more complex discourses on period issues than may be readily apparent. For West, *Jake Juggler* serves as a jumping-off point for an exploration of the Aristotelian metaphysics underlying Shakespeare's own

explorations of substance, form, matter, and dual identities. In search of answers to the questions of how “one body [can] be in two places at the same time” and how “two identities [can] share the same body” in an effort to better understand what the answers might “offer to, and take from, the practices of playing in 'Shakespeare's theatre',” he turns to *Jake Juggler* as a site where “these questions are pressed to their limits” (103). Reading the play as presenting “a Reformist *reductio ad absurdum* of the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation,” West suggests that Protestant reform took up the issue of the Eucharist as a rhetorical, rather than a physical or metaphysical issue, proving that “[s]cience and religion and rhetoric were not so distinct in the sixteenth century as they may seem to us” (106).⁵⁸ Although West ultimately uses *Jake Juggler* as an entry into an investigation of the way “Aristotelian physics provides a background” for the motivations, actions, and depictions of characters in Shakespeare's *Richard III* (121), his choice to begin with *Jake Juggler* demonstrates the play's openness to scientific theory and investigations, an openness which I contend is only made possible by the play's desire to suggest an answer to the issue of human identity by questioning the efficacy of the doctrine of transubstantiation and the assumptions one must necessarily hold in order to believe in that doctrine.

More important from my perspective is the play's use of an identity crisis, via the attempt of the titular vice character, Jake, to convince the hapless everyman, Jenkin Careaway, that it is in fact Jake who is the “real” Jenkin, which I feel invites a cognitive science reading of the play. I read *Jake Juggler*'s anti-transubstantiation argument as an

⁵⁸ West also notes that Archbishop Thomas Cranmer himself draws attention to the aforementioned Plautine precedent for *Jake Juggler*, *Amphitryon*. Cranmer suggests that Alcmena's inability to perceive any difference between Jupiter and Mercury and those they mimicked, her husband Amphitrio and his servant Soscia, was an example of the “illusion of our senses, when a thing appeareth to our senses, which is not ye same thyng in deed” that belief in transubstantiation demanded. See West 2009 105.

attempt by an early modern playwright to tie human identity to the unique memories of a singular, immutable, “essential” individual. Through this reading, I suggest that one of the ways mid-sixteenth-century drama responded to the ruptures of the Reformation was to offer an unintentionally secular solution to the issue of human identity in the sudden absence of the Church’s mediating presence between God and Man. *Jake Juggler* predicates identity as the product of a uniquely embodied mind, figured by locating the conscious individual as a unique protagonist within a narrative composed exclusively of personal memories. This narrative serves as a foundation for identity, anchoring it when all other forms of identification – personal appearance, clothing, social status – fail. Finally, I consider the play’s treatment of stolen identity through the lens of Damasio’s multi-stage structure of consciousness and levels of selfhood. Indeed, Damasio’s assertion that “A mind is so closely shaped by the body and destined to serve it that only one mind could possibly arise in it” could easily serve as a single-sentence summary of the argument of the play, and his insistence on the fact that “for any body, [there is] never more than one mind” (*Feeling* 143) doubles as an eloquent paraphrase of the logic the play relies on to support its aims.

Identity crises are, of course, not unique to late Tudor dramas; *Jake Juggler* itself is based on an episode from Plautus’s *Amphitryon*, wherein Jupiter and Mercury take on the appearances of the great general Amphitryon and his servant, Soscia, so that Jupiter may trick the general’s wife, Alcmena, into sleeping with him. Plautine plots involving identity theft, identity swaps, and cases of mistaken identity are popular and prominent sources of plot material in plays throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; Shakespeare also borrowed from Plautus, as *The Comedy of Errors* is an adaptation of the

former's *The Twin Menaechmi*. Shakespeare's play offers a similar perspective from which to critique essentialism in period drama, as Lisa Zunshine notes in *Strange Concepts and the Stories They Make Possible* (2008). Here, she identifies the use of twins in plots concerning mistaken or switched identity as representing a conscious effort to predicate difference not as physical in form or structure, but as an "essential" quality that will eventually allow anyone who studies the twins' behavior long enough to distinguish between them quite easily. Zunshine writes, "plays featuring twins give us a 'cognitively enjoyable' opportunity to exercise our essentialist biases at the same time that they tacitly assure us of the social value of such an exercise," and suggests that plays staging representations of twins "thus may derive much of their emotional appeal from engaging our essentialist biases... but they delight by pretending to instruct" (30-37).⁵⁹

Jake Juggler, however, denies its audience the cognitive pleasure of realizing that the central problem of the play can be reduced to a literal, physical doubling of visually-identifiable characteristics, as is the case with the twins in *Comedy of Errors*. Instead, much as in Damasio's model of the theater, where the conscious mind watches a performer step into the spotlight, *Jake Juggler* enlists the audience's participation in the task of reifying Jenkin Careaway's identity through memory. They are witness to the events that he recalls from his memory, and can serve to verify his account of those events, even when he is being untruthful about his motivations.

As its full title – *A New Enterlued for Chyldren to Playe Named Jacke Jugeler* (Axton 65) – suggests, the play initially appears to be simply a run-of-the-mill schoolroom exercise. Barely a thousand lines long, it consists largely of a scene of

⁵⁹ Zunshine supports her arguments here via a survey of the ways numerous productions of *Comedy of Errors* have handled the issue of staging the two Dromios, and offers a brief overview of critical opinion on twinship in the play. See Zunshine 2008 30-37.

dialogue and physical confrontation between two primary characters: Jake, the title character and an obvious trickster, and Jenkin Careaway, a lazy gadabout of a household servant whose predilection for shirking his duties in favor of gambling and pinching food has roused Jake's ire. After observing his prey making sport and quite literally frolicking his cares away, Jake rushes ahead of Jenkin to meet him at the door to the home of his master, Boungrace, where – dressed in the same livery and other items of clothing that Jenkin wears – Jake proclaims himself to be not just the *real*, but the *only* Jenkin Careaway, thereby initiating a debate about the possibility of one mind occupying two bodies simultaneously. After much back-and-forth and a good deal of physical violence towards Jenkin, Jake scampers away in a moment of confusion, leaving the distraught Jenkin to attempt to explain his lax service to his master and mistress, who mock his explanation openly. It seems as if the play exists solely as an exercise in physical comedy, a perception greatly aided by the fact that Jake never returns to the stage and thus, never receives his comeuppance. It was this loose and free-wheeling structure that led twentieth-century drama scholar George E. Duckworth, a translator of Plautus, Terence, and others, to dismiss the play as “a series of comic situations rather than an organically constructed comedy” (Tydeman 19), an impression that is certainly hard to argue against, and which is apt enough, given that the Prologue openly embraces the influence of Plautus (64).⁶⁰

⁶⁰ A number of editors have commented on the resemblance between Plautus's *Amphitryon* and *Jake Juggler*. William Tydeman remarks that the entire play can be read as a focus on the interaction with Mercury and Sosia in the original, although he considers the play merely simple entertainment for the “little boyes” who first performed it. Marie Axton, the most recent editor, suggests a more complex relationship between the play. She argues that *Jake Juggler*'s “[d]ebt to Roman comedy lies rather in the skillful adaptation of single speeches than in plot or structure,” as Mercury's lines in the original are shared between Jake and Jenkin. See Axton 17 and Tydeman 19-21.

And indeed, the Prologue sets the tone for a pleasant and light-hearted comedy, aimed at the same goals of Plautus and his compatriots: to provide “som quiet mirthe and recreation” for those whose “mynde...in serious matters [is] occupied,” as per Cato’s insistence (15-16).⁶¹ The Prologue reminds the audience that the poet Ovid himself cautioned that “Nothing may endure... without sum rest,” and that Cato was joined by “Plutarke, Socrates, and Plato” in considering “convenient pastaunce, mirthe, and pleasures” to be “a thing natural / And Naturally belonging to all living creatures” (35-41). As the Prologue would have it, the anonymous playwright “hath don this matter, not worthe an oyster shel, / Except percaze it shall fortune too make you laugh well. / And for that purpose oonlye this maker did it write / Taking the ground thereof out of Plautus first comedie” (61-64); in other words, the poor, unassuming playwright is merely offering his audience a mildly amusing story as a mental break from the thoughts and cares of every day life. The audience is prepared to experience a broadly moralistic play, sprinkled liberally with doses of physical comedy, the chastising of immoral and lustful individuals, and an ending in which the vice character receives his comeuppance, while the protagonist emerges victorious in some fashion. What follows is instead an attempt to systematically break down Jenkin’s belief in his own identity by forcing him to admit that he is not, and has never been, Jenkin Careaway.

This goal is revealed in the Epilogue, which strikes a sharply contrasting tone to the pleasant, mild-mannered Prologue. Instead, the play is revealed as a call to arms of sorts, an injunction to those in the audience who might be unwittingly seduced by Popish doctrine to prepare themselves for the subtle tricks used by the Catholic Church. “Such is

⁶¹ All references to the text of *Jake Juggler* throughout the dissertation are to Marie Axton’s 1986 edition of the play.

the fashyon of the world now a dayes / That the symple innosaintes ar deluded, / And an hundred thousand divers wayes / By suttle and craftye means shamefullie abused / And by strenth, force, and vyolence oft tymes compelled / to believe and saye: the mounne is made of a grene cheese” (1000-1005). To drive home the point, the Epilogue continues in this vein for nearly sixty more lines, thereby highlighting the real danger: that innocent and well-meaning English subjects will inevitably be faced with situations just like Jenkin’s, in which their beliefs in what they know to be right and true about the world around them will be put to the test by wicked, “juggling” people like Jake, and that they had best be prepared for the situation.

In fact, the phrase “juggling” is one heavy with anti-transubstantiation meaning. As an adjective used to describe “the playing of tricks... [as being] cheating or deceptive,” the term “juggling” has deep roots in the Reformation; the OED traces its beginnings to theologian John Frith’s 1531 *Disputation of Purgatory*, where Frith implores his readers to use the light of God’s word to reveal the truths hidden by the “iugling mistes” of Popish doctrine” (“juggling, adj.”, sig. a3v).⁶² The OED also notes the term’s use in a Reformist context in Shakespeare’s *King John*, where King John tells King Phillip of France that he despises him and “all the kings of Christendom” for supporting the “juggling witchcraft” of the Pope’s sale of indulgences (a key point in Luther’s indictment of Leo X for corrupting the Church), while John himself stood alone in opposing Catholic trickery (3.1.88-96).⁶³ Chief among the acts of deception

⁶² A.G. Dickens has argued that Frith deserves consideration as being the “perhaps the first to echo in England” the Reform precepts of Zwingli, Philip Melancthon, and others. See Dickens 1978 438.

⁶³ The story of King John’s struggles against the Pope was a popular point of reference for Reformers throughout the sixteenth century. In *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528), William Tyndale urged readers to “Read the story of King John” in order to see the history of the Church’s attempts to subvert the English throne. Simon Fish, in *Supplication of the Beggars* (1528), took a more pointed tone: “Here

perpetrated by the Church was the complicated and secretive ritual of the Eucharist, which – in the minds of reformers – resembled the antics of a performer or court jester, nimbly juggling objects in a deft display of showmanship, only appearing to alter the objects under his control.

In a 1549 disputation at Oxford, Peter Martyr Vermigli, a noted reformer and devotee of the Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli, argued that when Jesus had given his disciples bread and wine, telling them “This is my body, which is giuen for you; doe this in remembrance of me” (*Geneva Bible*, Luke 22:17-20), he had intended that they be understood as mere symbols or signifiers.⁶⁴ Vermigli contended that the phrase “this is my body” was a trope, “whose nature and property is to bear a sign of signification of a thing to be remembered, which thing, after the substance and real presence, is absent” (Sedinger 243-44).⁶⁵ As Tracy Sedinger observes, Vermigli’s denial of transubstantiation and the real presence – the theory that the bread and the wine of the Eucharist literally become the body and blood of Christ when the rite of Sacrament is completed by an

[in the story of King John] were an holy sort of prelates that thus cruelly could punish such a righteous king, all his realm and succession, for doing right!” James C. Bryant identifies Bales’ *King John* (1561) as the epitome of Reform propaganda in dramatic form, and compares it to Shakespeare’s *King John*. See Bryant 1984 45-82 and 129-150, and Levin 1980 24-25.

⁶⁴ “And he toke the cup, and gaue thanks, and faid, Take this, and deuide it among you. For I fay vnto you, I wil not drinke of the frute of the vine, vntil the kingdome of God be come. And he toke bread, and when he had giuen thankes, he brake it, and gaue to them, faying, This is my bodie, which is giuen for you: do this in remembrance of me. Likewise alfo after supper *he toke* the cup, faying, This cup *is* the new Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” See “Luke” 22:17-20 in the *Geneva Bible*, ed Lloyd E. Berry.

⁶⁵ An Italian priest whose thirst for knowledge led him to encounter Zwingli’s forbidden works critiquing Catholicism, Vermigli fled from a summons to answer for his radical preaching and took refuge across Northern Europe before accepting Archbishop Thomas Cranmer’s invitation to come to England in 1547. As a friend of John Cheke, tutor to the young Edward VI, Vermigli enjoyed a position of immense influence. He subsequently helped produced propaganda supporting the image of Edward as the Biblical Josiah to Henry VIII’s Solomon – the purifier and restorer of the faith, following in the footsteps of the builder. His connections to Cranmer, coupled with his status as a successor of sorts to Zwingli, put Vermigli in a position to contribute heavily to the influential 1552 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*. See MacCulloch 2002 20 and 172.

ordained priest – was nothing short of monumental. By “refusing the Eucharists’ allegorical personification of the Crucifixion,” she contends, Vermigli – via his roots in Zwingli’s earlier arguments – “refused the permeability of the boundary between this world and the next, effectively declaring that Jesus’ natural body could not violate the physical laws of nature in the temporal world” (243-244). Reformers broadly rejected the notion that a physical body of any substance – human flesh or otherwise – could be in two places at the same time, and argued that believing the Eucharist to be the substance of Christ was literally to remove the savior from heaven for the purpose of a mortal ceremony.

Vermigli was supported in his mockery by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, who dismissed the Eucharist as just another example of the foolish beliefs of “the Papistes... As that two bodies be in one place, and one body in many places at one tyme.” By remaining beholden to their belief in transubstantiation and the ceremony of the Eucharist, Catholics treated Christ as if he were only “a crafty juglar, that made thinges to appere to men’s sightes, that in dede were no such thynges, but forms only” (Sedinger 250, West 105). For his part, Vermigli likewise denounced the “iuglyng sleights of the Romish Babylon” and argued that “Christ is no iugler neither doth he mocke or daly with our senses... such iugling castes as the adversaries would have here in this matier of the sacrament” (Axton 19).

In short, while “juggling” may have seen widespread use as an adjective describing trickery and deception, in the context of the Reformation, it was used as a synonym for obfuscation, for the support and perpetration of doctrines designed to cloud the senses and lure the foolish innocents into believing that matters of weight and

substance were taking place behind the ornate ceremonies of the Church. As Cranmer's comment attests, the reformers continuously dismissed Catholic practices and beliefs as acts of juggling, designed to make "thinges to appere to mens sightes, that in dede were no such thynges, but formes only." Cranmer's statement is indicative of even more deeply-rooted divisions between Reform beliefs and Church doctrine, in that it conceals a belief in essentialism; "thinges" are what they are, regardless of the form they take, and the "juggling" act of the Eucharist could do nothing to disguise the fact that bread was essentially bread, and wine was essentially wine – not the body and blood of Jesus. Moreover, as Frith so confidently asserts, those acquainted with the word of God should be able to see through the deceptions of the Church – the "iugling mistes" – and learn this truth for themselves.

The "juggling" begins in the play itself with Jake's entry. Jake greets his audience in benevolent terms, offering the wish that "Our lord of hevене and swite Saint Jhone / Rest you merye my maistirs everychone / And I praie too Christ and swete Saint Steven / Send you all a good evine" (84-87). After a few more lines of similar introductory prattle, he tips his hand, revealing that he will "playe a jugling cast a non, /... / Or elles let me lose my name forever" (107-109). This is a crucial moment in the play. Jake's use of the term "juggling" indicates to the general audience that he is a trickster, and to those paying closer attention, simultaneously signals the play's connection to anti-transubstantiation debates. Furthermore, he also draws a link between essentialism and identity by suggesting that he, as Jake Juggler, *is* the embodiment of obfuscation and trickery; thus, he *must* be successful in his trick on Jenkin, or risk revealing his claims regarding identity to be similarly false. If Jake does not manage to convince Jenkin that he is not who he

believes he is, Jake can no longer consider himself a “juggler,” and common sense will have prevailed, as the Epilogue will ultimately suggest it does.

Jake's motivations for engaging in this act are unclear at best, however. Calling Jenkin “as cursed a lad / And as ungracious as ever man had / An unhappy wage and as folishe a knave with all / As any is now within London wall,” he notes that the two of them have “been fallen at great debate for a mattier that / Fell betwine us a late”; yet, he also admits, neither Jenkin nor his master, Boungrace, “knoweth me werie well,” noting only that he is jealous that a scalawag such as Jenkin has a good position and a steady wage, while Jake does not (114-117). Jake then proceeds to set the scene for the remaining action in the play. He has been observing Jenkin and Boungrace together, and tells us that Boungrace has sent his servant home to fetch his wife to join him for dinner at a friend's home. However, Jenkin being who he is, he first is lured into gambling with some friends, where he wastes a considerable amount of time. Next, we learn, he is caught stealing from a costard-seller and throws her basket over, spilling all of her wares; not only does he escape in the confusion, he also manages to steal several more, hiding them in his sleeve. A short while later, he is again enticed into gambling, where, Jake tells us, he will waste the rest of the afternoon, “For I knowe his old gise and condicyon / Never to leave tyll all his mony bee goon, / For he hath noo mony but what he doth stell / And that woll he plaie awaie every dell” (166-169). Having left Jenkin at this last gambling parlor, Jake now reveals, he is on his way home, and furthermore, has dressed in household livery identical to Jenkin's, in order to better fool his target. His “purpose is / To make Jenkine bylive if I can / That he is not him selfe, but an other man” (177-179),

and makes his exit in short order, after noting that he hears Jenkin's voice as he approaches.

Jenkin hails the crowd and cheerfully admits to being the good-for-nothing that Jake has described him as. Urging them to "let all sorow passe," he notes that "I woll ere too morrow night be as rich as ever I was, / Or at the forthest within a day or twaine / Me maysters purse shall paye me agayne" (196 - 199). He then provides an introduction to the play's two female characters. Dame Coye, he tells us, is, "as all other weomen bee, / A verie cursed shrew... / And a verye divell ... an angrie pece of fleshe and some displeasy'd / Quickly moved, but not liyghtlye appesed" (208-215). For all of her ranting and railing, it is his master that he fears more, for he "is worse then she, / If ons he throughlye angryd bee" (222-223). Jenkin also describes the household maid, Alice Trip-n-Go, a coquettish figure who "simperith," "prankith," "minceth," "bridelethe," "swimmith to and fro," and, chatting like a "[magpie] all daye," is a "sptifull, lying girlie and never well / But whan she may sum yll tall by me tell" (226-239). In the process of describing these hectoring and hellish authority figures who control his life, Jenkin appears to have reminded himself of why it was a bad idea to waste his time and money on his journey home, for, as he reaches the door to Boungrace's house, he claims that "my here standith up under my cape / ... / I feare hanging wher unto no man is hastie" (325-327). Even so, with no visible alternatives in sight, he knocks on the door to gain admittance, and the play begins in earnest, as he is immediately challenged by Jake.

Although Jake uses verbal humiliation and trickery to confuse Jenkin as the game commences, his willingness to use physical intimidation to accomplish his goal is obvious from the start. Hearing Jake's threat to "fett thee by the swet lookes, so God me

save,” Jenkin first wonders whether “the horesoon [will] fight, in ded,” for he doesn't even know who this strange person is; yet, he excitedly notes, “he [Jake] beginnith to strike up his sleve,” a sure sign that his tormentor is ready for physical violence from the start” (341-347). Still, Jenkin is undeterred, vowing to “knoke such a peale [on the door] that all Englond shall wonder,” initiating Jake's comedic address to his own balled-up hands: “Now fistes, me thinkithe yesterdaie seven yers past / That four men a sleepe at my fete you cast. / And this same daye you did noo manar good, / Nor were not washed in warme blod” (364-367). Being the peaceable rogue that he is, Jenkin attempts to defuse the situation with humor; when Jake asks if he is “disposed to ete any fist met,” he replies, “I have supped... / Geve it to them that are hungrie” (378-380). But Jake is not amused, and retorts that “[It] shall do a man of your dyet no harme to suppe twise” (381). His despair mounting, Jenkin finally begins to show signs of breaking, asking if Jake speaks “in earnest or in game,” and wonders if he has “doone [Jake] any maner displeasure” (388-392). His confusion is compounded when Jake tells him that it is his job to guard the house of his [Jake's] master, Boungrace, and orders Jenkin to go “While thou maiest, for this fortie dayes / I shall make the not able to goo nor ryde / But in a dungcart or a whilberrow liyng on one syd” (414-417). The final bombshell drops, however, when Jake declares that Boungrace is *his* master, and what's more, “I am Jenkin Careaway, his page” (440). Jake's violent potential is realized as he immediately exclaims “What, ye drunken knave, begin you to rage,” and repeatedly strikes Jenkin (441). Although the stage directions indicate only that Jenkin is struck at this moment, his plaintive address to the audience to “Helpe! Save my life, maisters, for the passion of

Christ / ... / "Save my lyfe! Helpe or I am slaine / ... / Helpe, helpe, helpe!" (457, 460) indicate that Jake is striking him throughout the interrogation scene.

Jake's use of violence in his attempt to convince Jenkin of the former's newly-assumed identity is certainly not at odds with the dramatic tradition as Tudor playwrights received it. Violence between vice and "everyman" figures abounds in the late medieval morality plays that represent the native generic heritage of *Jake Juggler*, to say nothing of the Greco-Roman tradition as well. One is reminded of the comic violence that permeates the comedies of Aristophanes and Plautus alike, as well as English morality plays such as *Mankind* (c.1470), where the character Mankind makes use of a spade to beat the three Worldlings and their temptations away early on in the play. Even so, Jake's violence is noteworthy in that it is not intended to punish Jenkin – as is the case in so many comedies, wherein an authority figure beats a subordinate to teach them a lesson – or to drive Jenkin away, as is the case with what we may consider "righteous" violence in the morality plays, but to coerce Jenkin into agreeing with him.

Still more important is the fact that Jake's beatings serve to disrupt Jenkin's ability to consciously orient himself in relation to his memories. Recalling Damasio's hierarchies of consciousness and representations of selfhood from Chapter Two, we are reminded that the transient core self arises in response to changes in the organism; here we may think of this as the moment when Jenkin realizes "I am in pain" as Jake beats him. As Damasio writes, "the self is built in stages," emerging first from the protoself, which "consists of a gathering of images that describe relatively stable aspects of the body and generate spontaneous feelings of the living body." This representation thus is perceived as experiencing a relationship with an "object-to-be-known," and results in the

formation of the core self, where “the relation between organism [protoself] and object is described in a narrative sequence of images.” This final stage “allows multiple objects, *previously recorded as lived experience or as anticipated future*, to interact with the protoself” [my emphasis], and results in the autobiographical self, which occurs “when objects in one's biography generate pulses of core self that are, subsequently linked in a large-scale coherent pattern” (*Feeling* 180-181). We must recall here that “objects” are not necessarily physical items in the world-at-large, but rather, objects of attention.

For Jenkin, the object of attention is the pain caused by the beating. Were Jake to simply strike him once, his brain would still be able to quickly construct a coherent narrative, moving from the first realizations of the transient core self (“I am in pain”) to extended consciousness (“I am in pain because someone is beating me”) and the realization of the autobiographical self: “I was walking home, and knocked at the door; then a strange person appeared, claimed he was me, and now is beating me because I have argued with him – and it hurts!” However, the fact that Jake persists in his beatings represents a key part of his strategy. The beatings will remain the object of attention *for as long as they continue*. This means that Jenkin's sense of self risks being permanently disrupted for the duration of the beating, as the autobiographical self may never form. As we can again recall from the last chapter, it is the autobiographical self which makes possible the belief that we have of “owning” our bodies, and of being *someone* in the world, via what Owen Flanagan dubs the “phenomenology of 'I.'” The autobiographical self uses the first-person signifier as an indexical marker, searching back through a vast archive of emotional images, or dispositions, of pulses of the core self to construct a master narrative. So long, then, as the brain remains healthy and its ability to utilize what

Flanagan thus calls the “indexical 'I'” remains intact, then the autobiographical self is able to construct a sense of self in which many series of pulses of core self are strung together in narrative form and subsequently projected into the future.⁶⁶ This creates the sense we have of being a transcendent, immutable, essential being-in-time, an “I” that knows *who* it is, because of *what* it is – an embodied, conscious mind, made aware of its own existence thanks to the body that it is united with.

Turning back to *Jack Juggler* with this in mind, we can back up to the moment Jenkin first approaches Jake, unawares, and break the scenario down, watching the various stages of selfhood in action. As he talks through his concerns over the harsh treatment he will surely receive for being so lax in fulfilling his master's wishes and speedily summoning Dame Coye to dinner, Jenkin's autobiographical self is seen in the act of collating pulses of core self, stringing them together in narrative fashion. Thus, he is able to move from his comment, also quoted above, that Dame Coye is “a verye divell” and “an angrie pece of fleshe,” one that is “[q]uikely moved, but not lyghtlye appeased,” to his dread that, as he stands before the door of the house, “I would knocke but I dare not, by our ladye, / I feare hanging where unto no man is hastie” (326-327). By drawing on past experiences with his mistress's displeasure, Jenkin is therefore able to project, via his autobiographical self and the “indexical 'I,’” that he is about to suffer greatly at her hands on account of his poor behavior earlier.

But by repeatedly beating Jenkin, Jake manages to disrupt the autobiographical self, because Jenkin's consciousness cannot progress beyond the stage of constructing the core self. The beatings cause the protoself to continuously reconstruct new images of the

⁶⁶ “When we find it important to think or report what we are experiencing or doing we make use of the magical indexical 'I.' This is the best way to locate in time what is happening, what we are feeling, thinking, and doing.” See Flanagan 2003 225.

body's relationship to the feelings which are the object of its focus, which in this case is the pain caused by the beatings. When combined with Jake's verbal threats and mockery, Jenkin is never able to collect his wits and determine what is going on. Any attempts to assert identity in the face of these beatings inevitably fail, as we see in Jenkin's assertions to Jake's earliest challenges: "My maisters servaunt I am, for veritie / ... / Marye, I defye the, and planly unto the tell / That I am a servaunt of this house, and her I dwel / ... / I am a servaunt of this house, by thes ten bons!" (399, 412-413, 418). This is not sufficient for Jake, however; his plot requires that Jenkin be the first between them to argue that he is, in fact, Jenkin Careaway, and when he finally does so, Jake pounces on him. "What, ye drunken knave, begin you to rage / [strikes him] / Take that! / ... / Darest thou too my face saie thou art I?" Jenkin, now more confused than ever, attempts to make a joke: "I wolde it were true and no lye, / For then thou sholdest smart, and I should bet, / Where as now I do all the blowes get" (440-447). And when Jenkin still does not recant his statement that "I am Jenkin Careaway, [Boungrace's] page," Jake unleashes a string of beatings that, as we have seen earlier, have Jenkin crying to the audience for assistance (439, 448-464).

When Jake finally asserts that *he* is the real Jenkin, and asks him "Who art thou *now* / Tell me plaine," the latter's first instinct is to placate his tormentor: "Noo bodye but *whom please you*, sertayne" [my emphasis] (467-469). Jenkin's meek pose here prompts us to recall that he is accustomed to being beaten for any number of small infractions, and thus, he adopts a classic "victim" stance; tell the aggressor what they want to hear, stroke their ego, and wait for the anguish to be over. Jake is not easily mollified, however, reminding him that "Thou saydest even now thy name was Careawie," to which Jenkin

replies, “I crye yow marcye, syr, and forgivenes praie. / I sayd amyssse because it was soo too daye / I [thought] it should have continued always.” Jenkin’s doubt appears to Jake as a sign of weakness, and, sensing that he has finally gained the upper hand, he presses his point home: “I am he that thou saidest thou were / ... / Thou art noo poynte Careawaye, thy witts dou thou the fayle,” and Jenkins seems to agree, hesitantly asking if he “might... be bolde too saye on thinge / Without any blouse and without any beatynge?” (470-485).

It is here that Jake commits his first mistake. So certain is he of his success that he agrees to let Jenkin speak, and in the seconds he is given to catch his breath, Jenkin reorients himself and takes the offensive. There is suddenly no question as to who he is: “[T]he name of mee / Is Jenkin Careaway / ... / And yf thou woll strike me... / And beate on me tyll I stink and tyll I dye / And yet woll I stieell saye that *I am I*” [my emphasis] (493-497). Thus emboldened, Jenkin explains himself, in a lengthy passage that I quote here in its entirety:

No by God, for all that, I am a wyse lad
And can cale to remembraunce every thyng
Tht I dyd this daye sithe my uperysinge:
For went not I with my maister to daye
erelie in the mornynge to the tenis playe?
At noone whyle my maister at his dynner sate
Played not I at dice at the gentylmans gate?
Dyd not I wayte on my maister too supperward?
And think I was not chaunged the way homward.

Or ells, yf you thynke I lye,
Aske in the stret of them that I came bye.
And sith that I came hether into your presens
What man lyving could carrye me hens?
I remembre I was sent to feache my maisteris
And what I devised to save me harmeles.
Doo not I speake now? Is not this my hande?
Be not these my feet that on this ground stande?
Did not this other knave her knoke me about the hede
And beat me tyll I was almost dede?
How may it then bee that he should bee I
Or I not my selfe? It is a shamefull lye.
I woll home to our house, whoseever say naye,
For surelye my name is Jenkin Careawaye! (499-521).

Here we see Jenkin carefully reconstructing himself, step-by-step, as he proceeds through the events of the day, following his sudden, epiphanic realization that “I am a wyse lad / And can cale to remembraunce every thyng / That I dyd this daye sithe my uperysinge.” Jenkin’s address is really a reflection of his autobiographical self, able to find stable footing at last in the temporary truce that he has brokered with Jake.

Jenkin now has the space he needs to remember who he is. His autobiographical self is finally given the split-second breathing room it necessary to collate the recent pulses of core self (“I have been being beaten”), construct an explanation (“because this other fellow believes that he is *me*”), and process a conclusion (“something is wrong with

this man, because I know that I am I"). And when Jake calls him a "mad," "bedelem knave" (498), Jenkin's autobiographical self begins to flesh out the picture. Now Jake remembers "every thyng / That I dyd this daye sithe my uperysing," including accompanying Boungrace to the tennis match, playing a game of dice and, as he points out to the audience, "sith that I came hether unto your presens / What man lyving could carye me hens?" Completing the narrative up through the present moment, he excitedly notes: "Did not this other knave her knoke me about the hede / And beat me tyll I was almost dede? / How may it then bee that he should bee I / Or not my selfe?" In this last comment, we are at last made to understand that there *is* no way that this could be possible, except for through the violent "juggling" tricks which Jake has deployed.

The game is not up yet, however. When Jenkin attempts to turn the tables on Jake, challenging his nemesis to "tell me what *I thou* hast doone / Ever sythe five of the cloke this after noone" [textual emphasis] (524-525), he gets a surprise. Jake, who has been following Jenkin about all afternoon, stuns his prey by noting that he was commanded upon reaching "the gentyلمان's place /... / Too fet my maisteris," and that while returning home, "I dyd a good whill at the bukellers playe." What's more, as he "came by a wife that did costerds sell / And cast down hir basket," he not only describes how he "gatherid as many as I could gete," he also notes that he put some in his sleeve, and "here they bee yet!" Jenkin is understandably flabbergasted: "How the divell should thei cume there? / For I dyd them all in my own sleve bere!" (528-537). But the autobiographical self does not give in quite so easily; there's more to the story, and Jenkin further challenges Jake to tell it. The latter plays his part with palpable glee, even striking a tone of remorse as he appears to be too bashful to tell what he did between the costard-seller's and the present

location: “I could tell – if me lusteth – a good token, / But it may not here very well be spoken.” When Jenkin presses him, he tells all: “*I thou* lost all thy mony at dice, Christ geve it his curse! / Wel and truelye pycked before out of an other man's porse” [textual emphasis] (546-551). This last detail finally spilled out into the open, Jenkin appears to have been defeated. This final narration of events brings him right to the door of the house, where he expresses his fear of being beaten for his misdeeds.

However, although utterly flabbergasted – “Godes bodye, horeson thife! Who told thee that same?” – and nearly ready to throw in the towel, Jenkin is still not ready to believe that he is not who he knows he is. When Jake challenges him anew – “How now! Art thou Careawaye or not?” – Jenkin reveals he is not yet ready to admit defeat, although, “[b]y the lorde I doubtte.” Jake, sensing that his game has nearly run out of time, makes one last push: “Ye mary, I tell the, Careawaye is my name.” In a crucial moment, Jenkin makes another attempt to seize the offensive advantage as, pushed to the point of violence himself, he roars, “And by these tene bones, myne is the same!” Doubt immediately creeps back in again, however: “Or ells tell me, yf I be not hee, / What my name from hensforth shall be?” Now, smelling victory at last, Jake plays his final card. “By my faith the same that it was before – Whan I lust too be careawaye no more. / Looke well upon me and thou shalt see as now / That I am Jenkyne Careawaye, and not thou” (556-565). Jake urges Jenkin to quit looking for *differences*, by challenging him to narrate the events of the afternoon, and instead to embrace *similarity*. By telling his poor victim to “Looke well a pon me and by every thyng / Thou shalt well know that I make no leasing” (566-567), he counts on the fact that he has so expertly disguised himself as Jenkin to prove to be the final act in his little game of unravelling Jenkin’s sanity.

Jake's insistence on calling attention to the physical similarities between him and Jenkin returns us to the concept of essentialism, as his new strategy is to convince Jenkin that they are *essentially* the same because they "appear" to be the same. Here, audiences and readers familiar with the concept of "juggling" in connection to reformist critiques of transubstantiation will call to mind thoughts similar to those of Frith, Cranmer, and Vermigli; "juggling" seeks to obscure the truth of what things *are* – what their *essence* is – in the "mists" of obfuscation. But as Zunshine also observes, the concept of essentialism is simply a "belief," or "that which describes the way we perceive various entities in the world and not necessarily the way they really are" (*Concepts* 6). Zunshine draws on a survey of several decades of fieldwork, laboratory research, and psychological experiments conducted by evolutionary psychologists and neuroscientists to provide a summary viewpoint of the scientific community's position: belief in essentialism is a biological, evolutionary trait. Defining selfhood by social position – represented in *Jake Juggler* by clothing, specifically the livery of Boungrace's household – is only satisfying from the perspective of ideology. Visual signifiers such as this help satisfy the brain's "hunger" for information about the surrounding environment, as Spolsky's earlier comment indicates. However, as Zunshine notes, defining identity via such visually obvious signifiers of social position is "never *quite* satisfactory [because]... the 'essences' that we attribute to individuals cannot be captured... some nervousness will always accompany any failed endeavor to capture the 'core' of the person" (28-29). We engage in various cultural discourses and social practices in an attempt to mitigate the concerns stemming from our concerns that visual signifiers do not provide us with *enough*

information to accurately predict and respond to the behaviors agents we encounter in our environment.

Jake Juggler similarly rejects the utility of visual signifiers in locating and fixing identity, via Jenkin's increasingly strong belief in the power of his memories to reify his internal sense of being an essential, immutable self. This is reflected by his tenaciousness in clinging to the belief that, no matter "yf [Jake] woll strike me ... / And beate on me tyll I stinke and tyll I dye," he will still say "that I am I" (494-497). Jenkin's belief in an "essential" self, an "I" that has always been and will always be the same "I" as it always was, recalls Owen Flanagan's concept of the phenomenology of "I" from earlier chapters. Flanagan defines this as the sense we each have that "my stream of consciousness is not only mine, it moves forward in time... [and thus] 'I' have strong feelings that my self – that 'I' – will continue to exist even after my body dies." It *seems* to Jenkin that his "mind's I" which conceives of itself as an essential, innate, transmutable *thing*, has "survive[d] all manner of bodily change," and therefore, will likely never die, regardless of the brutal treatment the body is subjected to (*Problem 191*).⁶⁷ It is precisely this sense of the self as comprising an immutable, essential "I" with a fixed identity and constant presence in the world that Thomas Metzinger works to deconstruct in *The Ego Tunnel* (2009). Here he complicates the notion of an essential "I" by mapping it onto his theory of the way the brain represents itself, as an embodied organ, via the phenomenal self-model, or PSM, "the conscious model of the organism as a whole that is activated by the brain" (4). The PSM is what provides the *content* of the mind's I – those events and emotions of which we are conscious and able to reflect upon – and as a result, whatever is

⁶⁷ See Chapter Two, Dennett and Hoffstadter 2001 and Flanagan 2003 222-225.

part of the PSM, “whatever is part of your [consciousness], is endowed with a feeling of 'mineness,' a conscious sense of ownership” (5).⁶⁸ This sense of ownership is what enables us, again like Jenkin, to say not only that “I am I,” but that “I am I, *and that can never change.*” Or, as Metzinger puts it, “[o]wning' your body, its sensations, and its various parts is fundamental to the feeling of *being someone*” [his emphasis] (75). When we combine the concept of the PSM with Damasio’s hierarchies of consciousness and representation, we are able to see how the PSM translates into an autobiographical self, wherein Metzinger’s “feeling of *being someone*” becomes Jenkin’s certainty that “I am I.”

Where Metzinger’s theories become particularly useful for understanding this moment in *Jake Juggler*, where Jenkin attempts to move the burden of proof from individual memories to external signifiers, is in his work with the concept of gaining distance from oneself in order to “see your own body as a tool,” or an object of attention that can be interacted with and manipulated. Metzinger turns to research in out-of-body-experiences, or OBEs (82-89). Many cognitive theorists, neuroscientists, and philosophers of mind, Metzinger included, consider such experiences to be quite valuable from a scientific standpoint; he refers to them as a “well-known class of states in which one undergoes the highly realistic illusion of leaving one's physical body, usually in the

⁶⁸ Metzinger points to a 1998 experiment by University of Pittsburgh psychiatrists Matthew Botvinick and Jonathan Cohen as an example of the linkage between one's PSM and a sense of essential ownership. Subjects were seated at a table, with a fake, rubber hand placed before them on the table, and asked to place their corresponding hand behind a screen. A stick was then used to gently stroke the back of both the real, hidden hand, and the fake, rubber hand. In a short matter of time (Metzinger notes that it was about a minute or so in his own experience), the subject “feels” the stroking in the fake hand, experiencing a connection to it, and even perceiving it as being attached to themselves via an arm, resting on the table – although no such thing is, of course, taking place. See Botvinick and Cohen 756 and Metzinger 2009 3-4.

form of an ethereal double, and moving outside of it” (5).⁶⁹ In his estimation, OBEs are simply another manifestation of the above tool-body-image extension phenomenon. “The phenomenology of OBEs inevitably leads to dualism and to the idea of an invisible, weightless, but spatially extended second body,” prompting Metzinger to conclude that this may be “the folk-phenomenological ancestor of the notion of a 'soul'” (85). He thus speculates that “the 'soul' may not have been a metaphysical notion but simply a phenomenological one: the content of the phenomenal Ego [we may substitute “mind's I” here] activated by the human brain during out-of-body experiences,” and thus, simply “having a mind meant having a soul” (85-86).

In Metzinger's estimation, speculating about the connections provided by extensions of the body image, the relationships between OBES and the phenomenology of souls is a crucial component of any attempts to explore the “conceptual *essence* of selfhood” [his emphasis] (101). This is because the experiments involved in exploring these concepts demonstrate that “agency is not necessary” by “selectively manipulating only two dimensions: *self-identification* (within the content of a conscious body image) and *self-localization* (in a spatial frame of reference),” and do so whether or not the subject is in a passive condition, thereby eliminating the effects of bodily agency and will [his emphasis]. Thus, “minimal” self-consciousness (or the bare minimum of thought *about* the body and body image) “is not control, but what makes control *possible*” [his emphasis]. This allows us to transition from “selfhood as embodiment,” or the basic state in which we perceive that we exist and are conscious simply because we are *aware* of our

⁶⁹ Metzinger notes that OBEs have long been considered a taboo subject in scientific and medical circles alike, at least as a topic worthy of academic exploration. However, he notes that these attitudes are beginning to change, thanks to current trends towards theories of embodied consciousness. See Metzinger 2009 85.

bodies and their approximate position in time and space, to “selfhood as subjectivity” wherein the first-person perspective is first constructed. Metzinger argues that “this happens exactly when we discover that we can control the focus of attention,” and understand that we have the ability to “draw things from the fringe of consciousness into the center of experience... thereby controlling *what* information appears in our mind” [his emphasis]. Thus, “we become self-directed,” and “[i]nwardness appears... [s]elfhood as inwardness emerges when an organism for the first time actively attends to its body as a whole” (101-102). In other words, it is only when we are able to step outside of ourselves, so to speak, and consider ourselves as a whole entity, rather than an immutable essence, that we begin to draw distinctions between internal status – emotions, physical feelings – and external status – clothing, visual signifiers.

Jake’s decision to move the support for his argument from autobiographical records to external signifiers thus proves to be the undoing of his plot. True, the initial result of this strategy is an increase in Jenkin’s doubt. Noting that he has “sene my selfe a thousand times in a glass,” looking upon Jake makes him Jenkin feel as if he had never managed to look quite “lyke my selfe as he is.” Jake “hath in every poynt my clothing, and my geare, / My hed, my cape, my shirt, and notted heare.” Even further, both characters appear to have the same “eyes, nose, and lypps, / ...chekes, chyne, neak, fyt, legs, and hypes,” and seem to be “[o]f the same stature, and hyght, and age.” Based on this evidence alone, Jenkin admits, Jake certainly appears to be “even I myne own selfe without any faile.” Jake takes this as a sign of victory, and departs, with one final gesture towards violence, demanding that Jenkin go “[h]ens! Or by God’s precious -----, I shal

break thy necke.” As Jake exits, Jenkin puzzles over the “wonderfull case / That a man should lease himself soo in ony place” (572-597).

But Jake’s victory is proved to be just as false as the tricks he played on Jenkin, who proceeds to slowly work through the problem of who is and is not the real Jenkin Careaway. He continues to dwell on physical similarities: “There was never ape so lyke unto an ape / As he is to me in feature and shape” (622-623). It is vital to the successful anti-transubstantiation message of the play, however, that Jenkin does not quite manage to untangle the mental knots he has been tied in, as he theorizes that somewhere along the way, his substance – his essence—managed to split, producing two Jenkin Careaway’s in the same time and place. “Good lorde of hevyn,” he wonders, “wher dyd I my selfe leave?” / ... / For I am sure of this in my minde / That I dyde in no place leve my selfe byhynde” (601-605). Ever true to character, Jenkin proves too dimwitted to grasp the fact that nothing like this has taken place. In the eyes of a reformed audience, Jake has been the victim of the same logical falsehoods behind the “juggling” act of the Sacrament; the substance of what makes Jenkin who he is cannot be split, doubled, transported, or otherwise shifted into another body or form. Only Jenkin can be Jenkin, and to assert or believe otherwise requires accepting the logic underlying the “juggling” tricks of Jake and other scoundrels like him.

At his point, the play undergoes a shift in tone and action, as the two female characters – Dame Coye and Alice Trip ‘n’ Go – enter the play, in another echo of Plautine conventions. Dame Coye plays the part of the angry, aggrieved housewife fuming over the careless behavior of Boungrace, and Alice, as her maid, seeks to soothe the former’s nerves by reminding her that Jenkin is the likely source of her problems.

Lest the audience forget the primary point of the play, however, Jake makes a brief appearance after Coye and Alice depart. Merrily congratulating himself for having “handelyd [Jenkin] after a good sorte,” he pronounces that he will now “go do of this myne apparel / And now let Careawaye be Careawaye agayne,” although he reserves the right to “take the selfe same wede / Sum other tyme agayne for a like cause and nide” (768-773). Jake assumes that his “juggling” tricks have not only convinced Jenkin that his identity is questionable, but the audience as well. What’s more, he aligns himself with Catholic clergy by indicating that he alone has the power to administer a version of the Eucharist, implying that by putting Jenkin’s clothes back on, he will again “become” Jenkin, no matter if the latter is even present to witness it. Like a priest, Jake implies, the mysterious and dubious process of transubstantiation functions at his will and his alone, and furthermore, he need not justify his actions or motivations to anyone else.

The arrival of Boungrace himself carries great comic potential (which is realized when his bluster fades before Dame Coye’s withering attacks), yet also serves to prime the audience for the stern warnings expressed in the Epilogue. As West astutely notes, the moral of the entire play can be located in Boungrace’s angry dismissal of Jenkin’s complaint, wherein he calls him his servant a “naughtye vyllayne” who dares believe “That one man may have too bodies and two faces? / And that one man at on time may be in two placys?” (784-787). Just as West notes, “as far as the play is concerned, Boungrace is right – one man cannot have two bodies and two faces” (104). And as Sedinger also argues, Boungrace’s tirade “demonstrates the absurdity of [Jenkin’s] belief in the ubiquity of his own body – and by extension, the Real Presence” (239). Boungrace’s message to Jenkin is thus also a message to the audience: if they are good,

reformed Protestants, they should know that it is not possible for one man to have two bodies and two faces, not even Christ.

If anyone in the audience has, like Jenkin, apparently been confused by Jake's trickery, then they are in need of a good dose of reality, which the Epilogue provides. Noting that it is the "fashyon of the worlde now a dayes / That the symple innosaintes are deluded / ... / And by strenth, force, and vyolence oft tymes compelled / To believe and saye: the mounne is made of a grene chese," the Epilogue casts shame on those who, with "Force, strength, power, and colorable subtlete / Dothe oppresse, debare, overcum, and defeat ryght" (1000 – 1009). The tone becomes increasingly dire; Not only are good English subjects mistreated and tormented by those who are stronger than they, but they are also forced to commit falsehoods and accept as truth such things as they know are not true, such as to "saye the croue is whight, yf he be so commaunded" (1019). Finally, to warn the audience against those who would seek to "compell and make poore symple foles / To say as they commaund them in all maner matiers" (1037-1038) (to perjure themselves), the Epilogue draws attention to the "example playne" that they have just witnessed: "An other felowe, being a counterfeat page, / Brought the gentyelman's servaunt out of his brain." This last line carries a unique valence following the reading I have conducted here, as we can now understand both *how* Jenkin was brought "out of his brain," in the sense that his autobiographical self has been constructed from within his brain over the course of the play. Moreover, when Jake was not able to bring this "to passe by reason / He made [Jenkin commit falsehood] by compulsyon" (1049-1055). These last lines are not to be lightly dismissed: the audience is encouraged to look only at their own "essential" self, predicated on autobiographical memory and *nothing* else, to

assert that “I am I.” The play suggests that the audience can now use this knowledge to defeat the “juggling” acts of the Church.

Whereas *Jake Juggler* does not attempt to openly explain the connections between *consciousness* and identity, it nevertheless argues that identity is the product of a unique, embodied mind – “a whole embodied being with a history,” in the words of Owen Flanagan (*Soul* 225). Jenkin knows who he is because he knows where he has been and what he has been doing – not because he can look in the mirror and correctly name the visage peering back at him as Jenkin Careaway. The history of the body and the history of the mind are one and the same, and even if it were possible, within the logic of the play, for a mind to occupy two bodies simultaneously, they would not identify themselves in precisely the same ways. Unspoken and yet implicit in the play's threadbare accounts of the activities which Jenkin partakes in before first arriving at Boungrace's house are all of the little details that go along with the routines of ordinary, everyday events. The feeling of bumping into the costard-seller at a certain angle, the sight of her wares spilling out of her basket and rolling through the muck-laden street, in and out of the shadows of other people and buildings, the feel of the dice cupped in his hands – these are the little things that help Jenkin recall where he has been, and remind him of who he was. The beatings he has endured at the hands of Boungrace and Mistress Coye have no doubt left particular bruises which only make Jake's blows that much more painful; should Jenkin actually turn his fists on Jake, even if he struck him in precisely the same places, the effect would not be the same. A blow to the cheek would not remind Jake of a particular beating from Boungrace last week, whereas Jenkin's mind would

make the connection immediately: “He just hit the same part of my face that Boungrace’s cane struck me on last Wednesday.”

But while the play does not make these connections explicit, its rejection of dualisms, via its refutation of transubstantiation and its embrace of memory as the seat of identity, places it in a unique position to offer us a glimpse of notions of embodiment and identity in sixteenth century drama. What's more, *Jake Juggler* uses the logic of essentialism (staying within the secular realm by mostly avoiding overt Christian terms such as “soul”) in such a way that it opens that very logic to critique, via cognitive science. As Metzinger demonstrates, essentialism is reducible to an evolutionary “juggling” act of sorts, which reveals that the brain is structured to accept this belief in order to orient itself in the present environment with respect to the remembered past and a predicted future.

What’s more, *Jake Juggler* clearly assumes the connections between memory, cogitation, and identity to be predicative of an immutable, essential element, an “I” that may well take other forms *yet can never take on more than one at a time*, effectively foreshadowing many of the assumptions Descartes would later rely upon in his *Discourse on Method* (1637). As a cognizant subject, Descartes came to the conclusion that “I, who was thinking...was *something*” [my emphasis] rather than nothing. Importantly, the latter condition—being *something* as opposed to being *nothing*—satisfied a logical demand that was already old by the sixteenth century, the Augustinian supposition of *ex nihilo fit* (“nothing comes from nothing”). Descartes proceeded to surmise that “this truth, 'I think, therefore I am’” [*cogito ergo sum*], must be a truth “so firm and certain that all the most extravagant assumptions of the sceptics were unable to shake it” (ibid). For Descartes, the

next steps were relatively simple, and completely logical; the realization of one's own presence in the world, the *presence of presence*, could be used as “the first principle of philosophy,” enabling him to understand that *what* he was:

I was a substance, the whole essence or nature of which was to think and which, in order to exist, has no need of any place and does not depend on anything material. Thus this self—that is, the soul by which *I am what I am*—is completely distinct from the body and is even easier to know than it, and even if the body did not exist the soul would still be everything that it is [my emphasis] (25).

It is this most basic assumption, “I am what I am,” a soul “completely distinct from the body and... even easier to know than it” that served to satisfy Descartes in his search for a foundational criterion to build an observation-based, empirical method of epistemology upon.

Of course, *Jake Juggler's* treatment of essentialism and identity can hardly be said to openly anticipate Descartes' philosophy, especially as Descartes used his theories to question “*what in fact this 'I' is that now necessarily exists; so that from now on I must take care in case I should happen imprudently to take something else to be me that is not me, and thus go astray in the very knowledge [cogitatione] that I claim to be the most certain and evident of all*” [my emphasis] in his 1641 *Meditations on First Philosophy* (18).⁷⁰ Even so, this same question remains at the core of *Jake Juggler*: “What am I? An

⁷⁰ Joseph Almog contends that the question “what am I” is *the* fundamental question at the heart of Descartes' philosophy, and takes recent scholarship to task for focusing on the logical conditions and assumptions of Descartes' proof rather than the philosophical implications of his work. This focus is evident in recent arguments from Descartes scholars. Andrea Christofidou calls into question the assumption that Descartes presents, in his *Mediations*, an argument from “bare possibility,” or, in other words, conjuring forth metaphorical demons and other hypothetical situations as a means of questioning the inherently truthful nature of internal sensory experience. She argues that such notions are patently

ethereal, transmutable substance that can be made, without warning, to be split into multiple pieces and housed in other forms? Or am I a singular entity, whose substance and form are so uniquely joined that they – let alone 'I' – could not possibly exist in any other way?"

By answering the latter question in the affirmative, the play openly opposes “the abyssal separation between body and mind, between the sizable, dimensioned, mechanically operated, infinitely divisible body stuff, on the one hand, and the unsizable, undimensioned, un-pushpullable, nondivisible mind stuff,” or the very notions Damasio has identified as representing the heart of the the “error” which Descartes would later commit in mapping out his theories (*Feeling* 250). The effect of this is to suggest a largely (albeit certainly unintentionally so) secular, non-dualistic answer to the question “what am I?” Leaving aside any and all other nascent theological underpinnings, *Jake Juggler* thus can be seen as anticipating models of identity predicated upon the sort of dualistic concepts of mind-body existence that Descartes would later propose, instead embracing a wholly consciousness-based foundation for human identity and selfhood.

false, and works to demonstrate that for Descartes, “[t]he truth of his judgments does not depend upon how he feels, or upon his *seemings*, or upon his sensory conscious awareness, or upon a state of doubt. Rather, in subjective certainty, the emphasis is on the logical or intellectual form of cognition... it involves having good reasons to know that a proposition is true, reasons that depend upon what is clearly and distinctly understood.” See Almog vii, Christofidou 291, and Wabricht 121-122.

CHAPTER IV

“THE REST IS SILENCE”: INTERIORITY, REVENGE, AND THE DISRUPTION OF EXTENDED CONSCIOUSNESS IN *HAMLET*

In this chapter, I turn towards another play with strong ties to reformist debates: William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. The mockery of Catholic belief in transubstantiation is evident in *Hamlet*, although to nothing like the extent that we find it in *Jake Juggler*. The only truly prominent moment as such occurs in Hamlet’s exchange with Claudius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern when they ask him to reveal the location of Polonius’s body, to which he snidely responds “At supper... Not where he eats, but where a is eaten. A certain convocation of politic worms are e’en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet” (4.3.18-22), a punning reference to the Diet of Worms which publicly rebuked Luther as a heretic. As Stephen Greenblatt has noted in his thought-provoking work on *Hamlet* and the play’s relationship to post-Reformation theology, we may read Hamlet’s comments here as joining with those “Protestant polemicists [who] had returned throughout the sixteenth century to the moment of eating God’s body; it was for them a way of mocking what they took to be a crude materialism of the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation” (*Purgatory* 240). Such mockery occurs on a broad scale in this instance, a sharp contrast to *Jake Juggler*’s treatment of transubstantiation at a much more narrowly focused level.

Yet, while Polonius’s body and the body of God are hardly comparable, the message is nevertheless clear. Rather than being translated from a mortal to a heavenly substance, as Catholics argued was the case with transubstantiation and the Eucharist, Polonius’s body was in the process of being digested by worms – digested and expunged

in the form of earth, dust, dirt. Whereas transubstantiation suggested that the essence of a thing might occupy multiple forms, the example Greenblatt highlights here suggests a mode of *translation* instead; the “essence” of Polonius is being altered, converted, changed, from the body of a man into bare earth. Thus, as Hamlet says: “A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm” (4.3.27-28), an idea which effectively denies even the possibility of the transubstantiation of mortal substances. There is no illusion or trickery involved here, no act of “juggling” to make the substance of a man “seem” to be what it is not, merely nature at work in reducing man, *imago Dei*, the image of God, into the dust and soil.

The most prominent element of Reformation theology present in *Hamlet*, however, is the play's obviously conflicted relationship with the Catholic institution of Purgatory, via the emotional fallout resulting from the Church of England's attempts to distance itself from belief in Purgatory. As Greenblatt keenly observes, *Hamlet* arrived on the stage during a “time in the wake of the great, charismatic ideological struggle in which the revolutionary generation that made the decisive break with the past is dying out and the survivors hear only hypocrisy in the sermons and look back with longing at the world they have lost” (248). Moreover, Hamlet's description of the worms that feast on what was once Polonius represents obvious reformist logic. His mockery of the “material left over, the matter subject to consumption and rot, is a way of insisting that Christ – single, whole, and beyond corruption – dwells in Heaven at the right hand of his father. This is the logic of Protestant polemics against the Mass, and this, too is the logic that seems to drive Hamlet” (242). Small wonder, then, that Hamlet himself should come to

be understood as a character in conflict, torn between his duty to his father's spirit and his own principles.

Hamlet is a play that presents us as scholars, and in Greenblatt's view, with an array of questions, each of which produces a "multiplicity of answers... [where] opposing positions challenge each other, clashing and sending shockwaves through the play" (*Purgatory* 240). The result is a text that leaves many scholars with the false impression that "these were questions that could be decisively answered if only we were somehow clever enough," although in Greenblatt's estimation, the play deliberately leaves this and other prominent questions unanswered— is Hamlet mad or simply pretending to be, does he delay overlong in his revenge or simply chastise himself for delaying at all, is Gertrude innocent or did she collude with Claudius in killing her husband, and so forth — open to an affirmative answer in either direction (238-240). Here, Greenblatt gestures towards the question which I take up in this chapter, a variation of one offered above: why does Hamlet delay in taking his revenge?

One answer, following in the path Greenblatt carves out, would be to suggest that Hamlet's dilemma is representative of the theological confusion gripping the everyday English subject at the dawn of the Jacobean era. Hamlet's confusion could be read as endemic to all who struggled to reconcile the comfort of traditions, customs, and beliefs deeply engrained by centuries of Catholicism, handed down to staunchly Protestant children by parents who could not quite bring themselves to let loose of all of the old ways, with an earnest desire to shed the encumbrances those traditions ultimately present in a bid to reap the benefits of a streamlined, less complicated relationship with God and the afterlife. Such a reading would explain Hamlet's reluctance to kill Claudius while he

prays for his sins, for if he were to “take him in the purging of his soul, / When he is fit and seasoned for his passage” (3.4.85-86), Claudius might avoid the torment that Hamlet's father now suffers. In this context, Hamlet's decision to delay his action would be suggestive of the incursion of Catholic beliefs into a purportedly Protestant mindset. Rather than take his revenge on Claudius and leave the judgment to God, Hamlet instead considers the possibility that his timing will result in Claudius's redemption, and thus determines to await a more apt moment: “Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent. / ... / Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven, / And that his soul may be as damned and black / As hell whereto it goes” (3.3.89-95).

However, I take a different approach in my attempt to understand the reasons for Hamlet's delay. Drawing on Antonio Damasio's theories of tiered structures of consciousness and selfhood, I maintain that cognitive science offers a unique perspective on this particular aspect of Shakespeare's play. Expanding on the explorations of first-person experience, memory, and consciousness conducted via my reading of *Jake Juggler*, I argue that Hamlet's delay in taking action is the result of a disruption of the structures of consciousness and memory that construct Hamlet himself. This is not to say that Hamlet suffers some form of identity crisis, but rather to suggest that his ability to locate himself in the first person in relation to memories of past events and future plans is compromised. The goal of my argument is to demonstrate how cognitive science reveals the solution to Hamlet's dilemma to us, by emphasizing the necessary relationship between subject and object that, as we saw in Chapter Two, is so crucial to the success of the autobiographical self.

For Hamlet, plagued throughout the play by questions of whether or not things “seem” to be or actually “are,” unable to fathom the divide between “to be” and “not to be,” the “undiscovered country” of death presents itself as a solution to his problems. If the grave is not the final resting place, then things in the natural world only “seem” to be permanent, and have the potential for translation into other forms, such as spirits of dead fathers. However, if there literally *is* “nothing” after death – if the translation of the body from human flesh to literal dirt, as Hamlet believes to be the case with Polonius is final – then there is no need to fear the repercussions of his actions. But coming to this realization is not as simple as it seems for Hamlet, whose preoccupation with this question is evident from the first moment he enters the play. His encounter with his father’s spirit is the catalyst for the disruption of his autobiographical self, with the result that Hamlet is all but paralyzed by the thought of “what dreams may come” in the uneasy sleep of death. Lacking any other object of attention but his own self-reflections, Hamlet – as a self-aware, self-conscious subject – is in need of a new object of attention, one which will reorient him with respect to the past and allow him to construct a new narrative of the future, one in which the grave is not so unquiet.

This is precisely what he finds when he encounters Yorick’s skull in the graveyard, in the most pivotal scene in the entire play. As an object, there is nothing remarkable about it; after all, one skull is as meaningful as the next when one stands in a graveyard pockmarked with exhumed graves. But when he learns that the skull (presumably) was once that of Yorick, a beloved childhood figure, Hamlet is presented with the opportunity to begin revising his current narrative, in which one father-like figure (Yorick) went to the grave and, like Polonius, was translated into quiet, peaceful

earth. Thus empowered by a vision of nihilism as being akin to liberation, Hamlet is primed to take action and write an ending to his own story. He promptly initiates this by approaching the grieving Laertes with a challenging cry, “what is he whose grief bears such emphasis,” proclaiming that “This is I, / Hamlet the Dane” (5.1.238-242). Here, Hamlet expresses both a renewed sense of identity (“I am Hamlet the Dane”) and questions the substance of those who remain trapped in the paralytic stages of grief (“*what* is he”).

Prior to this moment, Hamlet has been cut off from the complete indexes of his memories, which would enable him to locate himself in the present moment with respect to the past, via his “mind’s I.” Access to this would further enable him to project a sense of presence into the future via the autobiographical self and extended consciousness. Without this access, Hamlet cannot form a complete state of extended consciousness, and thus his autobiographical self is trapped in a recurring loop, always returning to the present moment with no clear sense of how to move forward in either time or space. Of course, such a status is practically the natural state of the revenger, who, as Michael W. Neill comments, is engaged in a task which may be thought of as the continuation of memory and remembrance by non-conventional means (246-7). This is a concept which Hamlet contemplates to an unusual degree in comparison to other revengers, such as Kyd's Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy*, or Vindice, Hamlet's successor in Middleton's *Revenger's Tragedy*. Hamlet's position is made all the more drastic by his intensive, insular, inward focus; his tendency to place examinations of “that within which passeth show” (1.2.85) above social obligations, relationships, and even family creates an infinite feedback loop, in which any attempts to synchronize the past with the present and create

a plan for future action are inevitably defeated by the inability of the mind's I to access the complete index of memories which will provide Hamlet with the perspective he needs to move forward.

The concept of an “infinite feedback loop,” or an attempt to “synchronize” past and present may seem to be suggestive of words that belong to us in the present age, and possibly have even less bearing on Shakespeare’s play than our modern versions of “consciousness.” But this is the point at which cognitive science becomes of great utility in an endeavor to redefine interiority as a non-essential concept – not a “thing within,” a “soul,” or Cartesian Ego of any kind, but a process. This concept is explored by Douglas Hofstadter in his recent book-length work, *I Am A Strange Loop* (2007). Here, Hofstadter attempts to “pinpoint the nature of that ‘special kind of subtle pattern’ that... underlies, or gives rise to... a ‘soul’ or an ‘I,’” which he describes through phrases such as “‘having a light on inside,’ ‘possessing interiority,’ or that old standby, ‘being conscious.’” (23). Hofstadter characterizes brain structure as a thinking machine comprised of multi-level systems, in which the basic physical and chemical components work together to produce “elusive mental phenomena such as perception, concepts, thinking, consciousness, ‘I,’ free will, and so forth” (30). As he elaborates later on, the need for a self-referential pronoun is a crucial clue to the way the brain is structured. A living creature that had “evolved rich capabilities of perception and categorization,” such as human beings, yet was “constitutionally incapable of focusing any of that apparatus onto itself would be highly anomalous. Its selective neglect would be pathological, and would threaten its survival” (74). In other words, consciousness is predicated upon both the success of an internal feedback loop – what am “I” feeling / thinking / doing at this moment – as well

as on the successful ability to halt that loop to focus on external objects – what is x doing, and how will it affect “me”? An *infinite* feedback loop, then would be a disaster of another kind. Imagine a living creature unable to break free from a self-reflective loop to focus on objects and agents in the immediate environment – such a creature would not survive long in most circumstances.

Owen Flanagan offers a helpful way to reframe the self-reflexive “I” in a manner that more easily conflates with Damasio’s hierarchies of consciousness and selfhood as well as Hofstadter’s “loop” concept, via his identification of the indexical ‘I’ (*Problem* 225). This term is particularly useful, as it encapsulates both the way the autobiographical self operates – by accessing the indices of memory banks in core consciousness and extrapolating information there in order to construct a picture of who “I” was, who “I” am, and who “I hope to be” – and the seamless way this is accomplished. Thinking in these terms, we can already begin to grasp the idea of what enables Hamlet to assert an “I” that “know[s] not seems,” as he tells Gertrude,” and which has “that within which passeth show” (1.2.76-85). Hamlet’s “I” is an indexical I, continuously tapping into the memory banks of core consciousness in order to construct a sense of itself that can be projected back and forth in time. But all is not well in Denmark; the time is, after all, “out of joint,” and the grief-stricken Prince displays the effects of that fact even before his encounter with the Ghost. Hamlet’s “I” is stuck in a recurring (it would be incorrect to call it “infinite”) loop, where it remains fixated on his father’s death, Hamlet’s resultant grief, and the uncertainty about what happens to the “mind’s I” after the moment of death.

Thus, whatever “that within” Hamlet may be, it is trapped in a seemingly seamless, “inky cloak” of grief (1.2.77). The time is indeed “out of joint” in Denmark

because Hamlet cannot accurately perceive exactly *what* time it is. Here, we must think of “time” not in the sense of days and hours passing – Hamlet clearly understands that a certain measure of time has passed, as it is “within a month” (1.2.145) since his father died as the play begins – but in a different sense. Time becomes a measure of changes to me, to myself, to the “I” that experiences the present moment, since a given memory. Hamlet’s fixation on “that within which passeth show” is indicative of someone who measures all experiences of the *literal* present against an *imagined* present, which is constructed entirely from the remembered past. In other words, Hamlet experiences every waking moment as a continuation of the initial raw, visceral instantiation of grief that his father’s death engendered.

It is Claudius who reminds Hamlet of the relationship between grief and the passage of time, at least according to the rules of nature. He tells Hamlet that “your father lost a father; / That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound / In filial obligation for some term / To do obsequious sorrow” (1.2.89-92). Hamlet’s “unmanly” grief denotes “a will most incorrect to heaven, / A heart unfortified, a mind impatient, / an understanding simple and unschooled” (1.2.94-97). In pointing out both the natural course and history of grief, Claudius underscores the extent of Hamlet’s disorientation. Death occurs, a son grieves, time passes, and the grief lessens, yet Hamlet remains fixated on the sharpness of newly-felt grief. Even when he himself recognizes that the “time is out of joint,” and expresses an understanding that he “was born to set it right” (1.5.189-190), Hamlet reveals he does not understand that it is *he* who is out of step with the times, whose fixation on grief has disarmed the healing effects of time, and who remains so fixated on

his father's death that one may be forgiven for wondering if the Ghost is not a projection of Hamlet's own imagination, sprung to life like Athena from the forehead of Zeus.

In order to understand the nature of Hamlet's fixation, and, eventually, the processes at work that cause him to reorient his sense of time and anticipation of the future following his encounter with Yorick's skull, I must assume that Hamlet has an interior-focused sense of self. This supposition is at the heart of cognitive science itself, yet one that many literary critics have sought to do away with, particularly with respect to *Hamlet* and its namesake character. Perhaps the most famous dismissal of Hamlet's interiority comes from Francis Barker, who reads Hamlet's claim to "that within" as one which "asserts against the devices of the world an essential interiority...an I, which if it encounters the world in anything more than a quizzical and contemplative manner, must alienate itself into the environment which inevitably traduces the richness of its subject by its mute and resistant externality (36-37). In other words, Hamlet's comment resists the manipulations of the world by asserting belief in the existence of an essential, innate interiority, which must approach the external world via questioning and contemplation, or else be always already rendered the subject of the external environment.

Barker's commentary rests on a set of assumptions that have guided many literary critics in recent decades – namely, that identity is either the product of an essential interior self, or else it is entirely the product of external pressure, of social and cultural forces exerting influence on an individual's motivations and desires, molding them to fashion an identity that is predicated upon a degree of similitude with social norms.⁷¹

⁷¹ John Lee directs scathing criticism at new historicist and cultural materialist scholars in *Shakespeare's Hamlet and the Controversies of Self* (2000), where he accuses new historicists of seeking to "diffuse the 'I' – whether that is the 'I' of dramatic person, text, critic, reader, or author," and thus, of embracing anti-humanist tendencies. He views cultural materialists, meanwhile, as having little interest in

Thus, for Barker, because Hamlet is never able to describe what “that within” might look like, we must conclude that “[a]t the centre of Hamlet, in the interior of his mystery, there is in short, nothing” (36-7). However, this assessment necessarily overlooks Hamlet's own frustration at his inability to find a means of signifying “that within.” Hamlet’s “inky cloak,” “customary suits of solemn black” and “windy suspiration of forced breath” can be said to, “indeed ‘seem,’” for they are “but the trappings and the suits of woe” (1.2.83-84). But he has no words or actions that can satisfactorily describe or convey his sense of “that within.” This may indeed be indicate there is *no thing* at the heart of “Hamlet's mystery,” but it need hardly lead us to the conclusion that there is *nothing* at the center of Hamlet.⁷²

Paul Cefalu has argued that any tendency to understand Hamlet as having complex “inwardness” is based on the persistence of Hamlet’s family and peers to attempt to “pluck out” his mystery, thereby conflating first-person reports of thoughts and feelings with third-person comments upon those thoughts and feelings. These reports, Cefalu feels, “aim to understand the role of behavior, habit, and custom in knowing and acting, rather than to explore any Cartesian theater of the mind”; he suggests instead that Hamlet be read as a “radical 'Rylean' behaviorist, inasmuch as [Hamlet] believes mental phenomena and predicates gain meaning only when they are identified in a one-to-one

Shakespeare beyond demonstrating how the latter’s oeuvre has been appropriated for ideological purposes by dominant political and cultural forces, and believes that cultural materialists see themselves as recovering Shakespeare’s works from oppressive ideologies. See Lee 34 and 73.

⁷² This is not to suggest that interiority is never discussed in relation to early modern literature – indeed, critics such as Anne Ferry and Joel Fineman have looked to Shakespeare in order to define models of interiority. For Ferry, Shakespeare and Sidney develop a discourse of interior and exterior difference that may be part of the inspiration for later philosophers such as Bacon, Descartes and Locke. Fineman argues that Shakespeare's sonnets created a new kind of subjectivity, which “historically established itself as the hallmark and the all-encompassing paradigm of literary subjectivity in general.” See Ferry 1983 and Fineman 25.

relationship with behavioral predicates” (145-146). Mental states must correspond to physical action in order to be meaningful, in other words. Thus, Cefalu further reads Hamlet's insistence that “I know not 'seems'” as drawing an unclear distinction between propositional and existential attitudes. “I am” necessarily differs from “I act” (the first suggests an ontological truth, the second argues that an action has occurred or will occur), but Hamlet does not claim “*how* he acts and *how* he is are not identical states. Hamlet's remarks suggest that there can always be a one-to-one or parallel connection between a certain behavioral event and a certain psychological even, even though acting and being would be two templates that comprehend the same event” (149). In Cefalu's reading, Hamlet's inability to distinguish significantly between these states suggests that there is in fact no gap between “is” and “seems,” and that Hamlet is simply grieving; there is no “particular” expression of grief, calculated or otherwise, because there is no difference in the interior and exterior experience of his grief.

The strongest argument against exploring Hamlet's interiority comes in the form of Margreta de Grazia's estimable 2007 book, *Hamlet Without Hamlet*, which opens with the bold declaration to “do without... the modern Hamlet, the one distinguished by an inner being so transcendent that it barely comes into contact with the play from which it emerges.”⁷³ Her rationale for this dismissal of Hamlet – or a version of Hamlet – as a

⁷³ Despite a genuine enthusiasm for the project of returning Hamlet to the context of the play and its era, de Grazia nevertheless expends little energy in defending her rationale, glossing over hundreds of years of scholarship in less than a paragraph in the first chapter. The least convincing moment arrives with her dismissal of Jacques Derrida's powerful engagement with the play, *Specters of Marx*, with a shot at the self-effacing Derrida: “It is not until almost four centuries later (in 1994) [this is incorrect--Derrida's lecture was actually delivered in 1993] that the right scholar finally does come along, as Derrida wryly intimates.” Derrida's referent here is, of course Marx, and not himself; while the chapters of de Grazia's book directed at *Hamlet* present a powerful and overdue reading of the play and its context, such unbecoming moves in the Introduction and Chapter Two weaken the premise hinted at by its title. See de Grazia 2007 1, 22.

character focused on interiority, is that “Hamlet's deep and complex inwardness was not perceived as the play's salient feature until a good two centuries after the writing of the play,” leading early nineteenth-century readers such as Coleridge and William Hazlitt to wax ecstatic about the interior qualities of Shakespeare's Danish prince (1). She contends that “[i]n all events, as the majority of the allusions from the seventeenth century indicate, it was the hoary old Ghost rather than the bright young Hamlet who stole the show,” although she does admit to one period source – Anthony Scoloker, writing in 1604 – as crediting the popularity of the play to Hamlet, and who also hoped that his own work “would please all, like Prince Hamlet” (8).

In her view, “scholarship has been content to treat the plot as inert backdrop to the main character who can readily leave it behind to wander into other and later works, no strings attached” (3). Thus, the notion of Hamlet as a “modern” subject has led scholars to ignore the primary premise of the play, which she contends “is this: at his father's death, just at the point when an only son in a patrilineal system stands to inherit, Hamlet is dispossessed – and, as far as the court is concerned, legitimately” (1). De Grazia maintains that despite her wish to avoid the “traditional” focus on Hamlet, she does not intend for the character himself to “lose his centrality or his complexity, but they will be a function not of his intransitive and unfathomable depth but of his worldliness as dramatized by the play's dialogue and action” (5). It becomes easy to sympathize with de Grazia's position when one considers the perspectives of such critics as A.P. Rossiter, who, in a mid-twentieth-century reading, enthused that Hamlet was the “first modern man” (*Angel* 187) or Harold Bloom, who has zealously praised Hamlet as “a frontier of consciousness yet to be passed” (*Hamlet: Poem Unlimited* 7). Yet from my own vantage

point and that of cognitive science, it is unnecessary to assume that to address Hamlet's interiority is to take "that within" the Prince to be "transcendent," "intransitive," or "unfathomable." I maintain that the Prince's interiority is very much grounded in his words and actions (or, as this chapter will demonstrate, the lack thereof), and that to read Hamlet as a multidimensional individual with a complex and meaningful interior landscape does not necessitate the sort of broad, effusive, essentialist perspectives that de Grazia and others have criticized.⁷⁴

What even such a brief survey of recent critical encounters with *Hamlet* suggests is that the inwardness of Shakespeare's brooding Prince remains a focal point of scholarly discussion – whether it be in the form of perhaps overly-enthusiastic, Bloomian readings of both the Bard and his most famous character as a point of evidence for claims that Shakespeare "invented" the modern notion of humanity, or in the more nuanced perspectives provided by a legion of other scholars. As Greenblatt has also suggested, any scholar of Hamlet is bound to encounter a dizzying and venerable array of preceding interlocutors, and a proper survey of the scholarship on the play through the present date would be a truly Sisyphean task (*Purgatory* 239). I point here to excellent work by Michael Neill, who (as already mentioned) has explored *Hamlet's* engagement with Protestant anxieties over post-Reformation rites for the dead, arguing that the play is evocative of a period tendency to place a greater burden on personal memory and

⁷⁴ One of de Grazia's targets, Alexander Welsh, is worth of some small attention, partially because I feel her commentary on his book does not provide a full picture of his argument. It is true that Welsh openly contends that "Hamlet became a modern hero... as soon as Shakespeare put his hands on him four hundred years ago" (*Guises* ix), yet Welsh also draws a subtle distinction that seems to actually sync with de Grazia's own frustrations. He draws attention to Shakespeare's Hamlet as distinctive in relation to the Amleth of Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest's Hamlet, and argues that Shakespeare's Hamlet is more "modern" than his predecessors, which is a far cry from assuming the Prince to possess any "intransitive" forms of inwardness. In addition to Welsh, Bloom, and Rossiter, de Grazia also draws attention to scholarship from Jonathan Bate (1997) and Marjorie Garber (2004). See Welsh 2001 xi-ix.

memorializing the dead “by other means,” indicating that *Hamlet* may simply have a higher degree of “conscious engagement” with this project than other Elizabethan tragedies (*Issues* 27-28). Robert Watson's thought-provoking work on death and mourning in Elizabethan tragedy is also noteworthy; his identification of the “fear of death as annihilation” in Shakespeare's oeuvre, where this fear “criticizes and parodies traditional promises of immortality,” provides a partial blueprint for both Alexander Welsh and Neill's work (*Annihilation* 1).⁷⁵ Eleanor Prosser's venerable, yet still powerful discourse on Elizabethan revenge tragedies remains a good starting source on both social concepts of revenge and dramatic engagements with those concepts, while Richard Wilson's recent survey of the engagements of powerful French post-Structural engagements with Shakespeare – covering essays, books, and commentary by the likes of Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, and Cixous – echoes the sentiments of Kiernan Ryan: “Today's criticism offers few sights more ironic or depressing than that of old or new historicists straining to immure *Hamlet* in the Elizabethan matrix from which it has striven to extract itself” (*King of Shadows* 230-1).

Perhaps it is precisely the nature of these engagements with the play – widespread, often effusive and praise-full (Rossiter, Bloom), sometimes polemical (de Grazia, Ryan), and quite often thought-provoking, intense, and ambitious (Neill, Watson, Welsh) – that has led to a surprisingly low number of intensive interactions between the play and cognitive literary scholars. Although (as earlier chapters have mentioned) cognitive literary theory has been a developing concern for a good number of years now,

⁷⁵ Alexander Welsh argues that “grief is not reducible to metaphysics; the loss of another person is not strictly commensurate with death, which primarily renders the loss irreversible rather than terrifying.” In the case of *Hamlet*, he notes, grief only makes the Prince wish to die, not feel as if he were dead. See Welsh 2001 27.

many proponents of the practice have approached *Hamlet* with caution, tending to leave questions of identity and interiority to the hands of cultural studies critics. Instead, many cognitive literary critics and theorists take an interest in performance aspects of the play, as Amy Cook does in “Staging Nothing” (2006), where she explores applications of cognitive science in revealing how theatrical performances are interpreted as “blends [which] illuminate some of the same cognitive illusions used in our daily life.” Here, she takes an interest in the connections between the embodied metaphor theories of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and our ability as audience members to understand that a stage actor playing Hamlet simultaneously embodies an ordinary man (the actor), a character (Hamlet), a historical figure (Hamlet), and the “nothingness” that Hamlet expresses a desire to embrace (87).

Cook also draws on Damasio to express an interest in the ability of human brains to experience emotions (as in feelings of sadness or horror aroused by the deaths at the end of *Hamlet*), yet not drive the viewer to take action (leap on stage to help Hamlet). She concludes that “[i]n its imitation of action on stage, theater creates an imitation of action in the brain that in turn creates emotion” (95). Thus, her interest is not in the mind of Hamlet as a character, but in the minds of the audiences who participate in making meaning of performances. Cook's view of *Hamlet* tends toward performance theory applications in a global sense, exploring the use of specific metaphors in key scenes and speeches as a means of considering how potential cognitive dissonance is avoided by audiences.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Cook maintains this focus in her most recent, book-length work, *Shakespearean Neuroplay* (2008). Here she is particularly invested in the possible gains to be realized by applications of Turner and Fauconier's Conceptual Blending Theory as pertaining to the blending of performance space and objects used in performance with literary metaphors and spaces of imagination. See Cook 2010.

Often, representation is the primary point of focus for scholars approaching *Hamlet* through a cognitive science framework, as Keith Oatley does. Exploring *Hamlet* for notions of representations of human behavior and empathy, Oatley contends that this is the play in which Shakespeare realizes a vision of

theater as a model of the world... be explored and transformed, much as in early developmental versions of this space the self was transformed in play with parents or peers into fire-fighter or shopkeeper, or doctor, each with their goals and roles. Such exploration needs a space of the imagination not just because our goals are unavailable to direct consciousness, but because even our emotions, which are available introspectively and can point to these goals, are often obscure, often transform, and often require exploration in many contexts (27).

In other words, Oatley reads *Hamlet* as indicating that the stage provided a world-shaped laboratory, as it were, where one might test various hypotheses about moral virtue, human needs and desires, and general human behavior. These hypotheses could then be extrapolated into the world at large, whereby the individual actor comes to represent something not just “a man,” as it were, but rather all humankind.

In Oatley's estimation, when Hamlet expires and Horatio mourns him, saying “Good night, sweet prince, / And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest” (5.2.301-302), “[o]ur emotions expand from Hamlet, an individual character in fiction with whom we feel intimacy, to an inclusive empathetic understanding of the plight of all humankind” (28). Representative models such as Hamlet and Iago offer audiences “a theory of character that [they] might apply to others for purposes that range from understanding someone whom one loves to manipulateness,” simultaneously providing an exemplar

“that allows us to take steps towards transformation of our own character” (22). Here, representation is a matter of ethics, and as Oatley reads both Prince and play, Shakespeare's goal was to construct characters with multi-faceted personalities and drives in order to represent the complexity of human interaction, on the stage itself. The great downfall of Oatley's argument is that while it may provoke interest in cognitive scientists unfamiliar with literary critical practices and, certainly, unschooled in the English dramatic tradition, it necessarily elides the fact that Shakespeare had inherited the notion of the theater as a laboratory for human behavior from the morality plays of his childhood, to say nothing of the Tudor tradition he may well have studied.

Even so, the ethical component Oatley invokes is central to the most recent cognitive-science-based engagement with the play, Angus Fletcher's *Evolving Hamlet* (2011). Opening with the bold declaration that his purpose is to “suggest that *Hamlet...* can help address the challenge posed to ethics by the theory of natural selection,” Fletcher contends that *Hamlet* opposes Darwin's assumptions of the way human nature changes by working “in concert with the way we already are” (xi, xiii). Not unlike Spolsky, Fletcher considers the genre of tragedy, particularly as practiced in the early seventeenth century, to be a “particularly promising resource for engaging with the question of intentional behavior in an unintentional cosmos.” Tragedies of this era, he argues, “emerged at a moment in which the driving force behind ethical inquiry was not a unified (and generally accepted) method, but rather the need to engage with a host of new problems,” which ranged from Luther's reforms to the Copernican revolution, through the dawn of Cartesian thought and Hobbesian political theory (12). Although not directly concerned with representation *qua* representation, Fletcher follows a path similar to

Oatley in emphasizing the representative power of the play (moral virtues of a group being represented through the actions of an individual) *and* the space in which it was both performed and watched. Ultimately, Fletcher takes little or no interest in the mind of Hamlet at all, instead taking the approach that evolved representations of the character can be viewed in a variety of philosophical engagements throughout the seventeenth century.

A handful of critics have turned their attention to issues of the mind and interiority in the play, however, and none has done so with as much care as Mary Thomas Crane. She suggests that “cognitive theory offers new and more sophisticated ways to conceive of authorship, and therefore offers new ways to read texts as products of a thinking author engaged with a physical environment and a culture” (4). Crane strives to identify and explore key words and phrases used by Shakespeare “as focal points for explorations of the spatially centered experiences of cognitive subjectivity, as it figured in the development of the 'individual' in the early modern period and as those new individuals were represented by fictional characters on the space of the platform stage.” Using cognitive science to explain how “[w]ithin Shakespeare's brain, culture *and* biology met to form him as a subject and to produce his texts” (14) [my emphasis], she contends, can offer alternative interpretive methodologies to the Derridean and Foucauldian post-structuralisms she considers as dominant in the field.⁷⁷

Turning her attention to Hamlet directly, Crane notes that the play “asks precisely what it is that lies within the human subject; however, *Hamlet* is more directly concerned

⁷⁷ Crane also suggests, although she does not directly elaborate upon, the way Derridean theories may actually fit cognitive science frameworks in unique and powerful ways. “A Derridean reading focuses on contradiction because it *expects the mind* to work rationally and because it assumes (in order to deconstruct) the rigid binary categories of classical logic. Derridean 'play' or difference could be reinterpreted as a trace of the prototype effect and the radial structure of meaning.” See Crane 2001 24.

with early modern cognitive theory [than Shakespeare's other plays] and explores a number of cognitive processes that might suggest an answer to this question” (116). Also taking an interest in Hamlet's lack of action, she suggests that the words “*act*, *actor*, and the coinage *enacture*, unique to this play, form the lexical category through which Shakespeare meditates on [questions of interior subjectivity] in this play, and his sense of the word *action* has been significantly inflected by his reading of a near-contemporary cognitive treatise, Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholy*” [her emphasis] (116). Crane's detailed reading of Bright's treatise, which she feels provided Shakespeare with “not a specific clinical diagnosis but instead contradictory accounts of the cognitive process[es] 'within' that result in (or prevent) purposeful action in the world,” leads her to claim that the graveyard scene demonstrates a reversal of Bright's theory, whose treatise describes the interior processes that enable physical action in great detail (120, 143).

I agree with Crane completely when she argues that Hamlet “gives up any sense that what is within is an immortal and transcendent soul untainted by its immersion in bodily matter; indeed, he was never able to do much more than entertain this as a possibility” (145). Indeed, it will be the goal of the remainder of this chapter to demonstrate how it is that Hamlet comes to the realization that his sense of immutable, transcendent interior selfhood is a false one, both by exploring the cognitive theories explaining the way the mind contemplates this possibility, as well as by demonstrating how Hamlet's encounter with Yorick's skull provides the catalyst for his epiphany. However, I cannot bring myself to ally with Crane's perspective completely; her assertions that what Hamlet instead realizes is that his “self [is] shaped, performatively, by its action, actions that cannot easily be distinguished from actions that a man might

play” (148-9) strike me as a step *away* from the sort of conclusion that cognitive science enables us to arrive at.

For Hamlet, the existence of an interior “self” is not at issue, nor, for that matter, is he concerned with whether, by putting on mourning clothes and weeping, he may find a means of expression that will “denote me truly,” or whether he can verify that the world he perceives as an “unweeded garden,” a thing “rank and gross in nature” (1.2.135-6) does indeed exist. He is only too aware that his body, his “too too solid flesh” cannot “melt, / Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew” (1.2.129-30), and, again, fears “what dreams may come” after the body has died (3.2.68). His concern is instead with the possibility that consciousness is not embodied, because if this is true, then the repercussions appear to be devastating. If the “I” that knows not seems, the “I” of Hamlet's mind, which appears to perceive itself as an immutable, transcendent being, is indelibly linked with his “too too solid flesh,” then it will pass away along with his body. But if it is disembodied, then there is no rest to be had for the grieving Prince, and the sleep of death is not at all silent, as his closing words to Horatio seem to indicate: “The rest is silence” (5.2.299). These last words – like so many others in the play – remain clouded by uncertainty. Hamlet tells Horatio that he is to tell Fortinbras “th'occurents, more and less, / which have solicited,” a statement which – at least grammatically – offers no substantial clues or cues as to what Hamlet intends, beyond giving Fortinbras his “dying voice” (5.2.297-299).⁷⁸ My reading of these words indicates that Hamlet is at peace with the silence of the

⁷⁸ Christopher Warley, who reads Horatio's role as paralleling that of the reader / audience member, performing the task of a “just interpreter,” considers Horatio to be the representative of the new (to the period) social class of scholar. In his estimation, Horatio's delivery of Hamlet's message is an acknowledgement “that he is the means by which Hamlet... will continue to live in the world.” Mary Thomas Crane meanwhile considers Hamlet's command to Horatio to give Fortinbras his voice “suggests the extent to which Hamlet has become like Fortinbras.” See Crane 2001 145-146, and Warley 1024 and 1036.

grave his body will soon be placed in – a silent rest that is to be a far cry from the unquiet rest of his father's spirit.

Living or dying is not the ultimate issue for Hamlet; what is at issue is the consideration, as cognitive theorist Owen Flanagan nicely states it, “that we might not find eternal rest 'in that sleep of death' but instead have hellish dreams for all eternity.” As Flanagan further observes, “Hamlet is in anguish... the thought of death and the worry that after death he might continue to exist in some horrible dreamland could just as easily worry a happy Hamlet as it does the actual distraught Hamlet” (*Dreaming* 1-2). Contrary to Robert Watson's assertion that Hamlet expresses early modern “fear[s] of death as annihilation,” Hamlet fears that his interior self, his “mind's 'I,’” will not be annihilated when the body dies, but endure to suffer the hellish dreams that “may come / When we have shuffled off this mortal coil” (3.1.68-9).

Cognitive science confirms that Hamlet's suspicions are not at all unfounded. While we may be no closer to understanding the precise nature of death, that “undiscovered country from whose bourne / No traveller returns” (3.1.81-82), we do know a great deal more about the mind itself. To many even today, the self-referential, first-person signifier “I,” which Hamlet asserts “is” against the vagaries of things which only “seem” to exist (1.2.75-76), appears to represent a fixed, stable interior self that remains immutable across time and space – a being-in-time that, paradoxically, seems to exist separate from time, or, more specifically, history. And not just any history, or even history in the broadest sense, – a narrative of events prior to the present moment – but the history of our own, specific, unique human bodies.

No one has expressed this idea quite as succinctly as Flanagan, perhaps, in his observation that “We think with our brain. We think with thoughts. But it would be best to say, ‘the person himself is the thinker.’ A person is what thinks – a whole embodied being with a history” (*Problem 225*). The self-referential signifier “I” does not refer to anything even remotely similar to a transcendental or Cartesian ego, an immutable soul that may – under certain models – evolve, but never fundamentally change:

[L]anguage can trick us. We may think that “I” refers to more than a being-in-time with depth and rich texture, to more than a genuine character with certain stable personality traits and aspirations... We might think that the “I” in fact refers to the “I” that accompanies us through life, [our] transcendental ego... [but] *I am an embodied historical being all the way through* [my emphasis] (223).

Hamlet falls prey to this very trick. The “I” which marks Hamlet in his first conversation with his mother is not, in fact, the same “I” which proclaims “This is I, Hamlet the Dane” (5.2.241-2) as he leaps into Ophelia's grave to confront Laertes. Instead, the “I” expressed on both occasions is only the “mind's 'I,’” as it were.

The self-referential signifier “I” is the way we, as living, conscious beings, represent our understanding of the embodied, historical being that we are through language. Just as Hamlet recognized that “it is common” that “all that lives must die, / Passing through nature to eternity” (1.2.72-4), clearly implying a belief in a transcendent soul, we also often assume that the “I” we are aware of being in the present moment represents a transcendent, immutable “ego.” This tendency is referred to as the “Phenomenology of 'I” or the way stream of consciousness appears to always move

forward, chronologically speaking: “My stream of consciousness is not only mine, it moves forward in time. 'I' accompany the ride upstream. It is 'my' accomplishment that makes this stream 'my stream.' I have strong feelings that my self – that 'I' – will continue to exist even after my bodies dies. I already have evidence that 'I' survive all manner of bodily change. Why not death?” (*Problem 191*). In short, the sense that the mind's I carries of itself as remaining *essentially* unchanged enables an illusion of transcendence.

The signifier “I” is an evolutionary development designed to access a specific set of autobiographical data—data collected and interpreted by sense organs, collated across various levels of consciousness and subconsciousness as memories and experiences. Again, Flanagan summarizes the concept quite nicely: “When we find it important to think or report what we are experiencing or doing we make use of the magical indexical 'I.' This is the best way to locate in time what is happening, what we are feeling, thinking, and doing” (*Problem 225*). However, we are mistaken whenever we assume that the temporal-spatial marker of the “self-locating thought 'I'” is something more, something actually *fixed*, or at least *stable*, across time and space: “The mistake is to think that [I]...now refers to the same 'I' it refers to when I think about my past—to the exact same self that performed some act in the past.” In other words, the embodied self is an entirely plastic, mutable self – but is not aware of itself as such.

One prominent early modern perspective on the mutability of the conscious self comes in the form of Montaigne's *Apology for Raymond Sebond*, a work highlighting both Montaigne's faith as a Christian and his training in humanist skepticism. It is here that Montaigne writes the phrase which many take to be emblematic of his work in the *Apology*, his *Essais*, and elsewhere: “Que sçay-je,” or “what do I know?” (477).

Montaigne uses this expression to set up a perspective on the inability of the human senses to provide complete certainty about both one's interior states and the external world. He writes:

[T]here is no existence that is constant, either of our being or of that of objects. And we, and our judgment, and all mortal things go on flowing and rolling unceasingly. Thus nothing certain can be established about one thing by another... We have no communication with being, because every human nature is always midway between birth and death, offering only a dim semblance and shadow of itself, and an uncertain and feeble opinion.... Thus, all things being subject to pass from one change to another reason, seeking a real stability in them, is baffled, being unable to comprehend anything stable and permanent; because everything is either coming into being and not yet fully existent, or beginning to die before it is born (553).

The truth of this statement is borne out, he maintains, by simply observing our own mental and emotional states. “[I]f we always remain one and the same, how is it that we rejoice now in one thing, and now in another? How is it that we love opposite things or hate them, praise them or blame them?... For it is not plausible that we take up different passions without changing.” As a consequence, he notes, “the senses of nature are mistaken and lie, taking what appears for what is, for want of really knowing what it is that *is*” (554-555).

Of time itself, Montaigne notes, it “is a mobile thing, which appears as in a shadow, together with matter, which is ever running and flowing, without ever remaining

stable or permanent...time is not a thing that is” (555). Montaigne's ruminations come together here to construct a picture of consciousness as always a step behind the flow of time itself, always attempting to make sense of what has already happened – be it a decade or a split second ago – and then attempting to consider the meaning of that for a future moment – the next breath or the next decade – that has yet to take place. We can detect an echo of this premise down through the centuries in Damasio's work as well:

At each moment the state of self is constructed from the ground up. It is an evanescent reference state, so continuously and consistently *reconstructed* that the owner never knows it is being *remade* unless something goes wrong with the remaking... *Present continuously becomes past, and by the time we take stock of it we are in another present, consumed with planning the future, which we do on the stepping-stones of the past. The past is never here. We are hopelessly late for consciousness* [my emphasis] (*Descartes' Error* 240).

The mind's I believes that it exists and operates in the present moment, when in reality it is “always already late” for the event it responds to.

But for Hamlet, it seems inconceivable that there may be any difference between the “I” who “knows not 'seems'” and the one who encounters the Ghost at Elsinore, kills Polonius, or realizes that he “knew” Yorick, in the graveyard (5.1.170). And indeed, there is no better place than a graveyard for coming face-to-face with the embodied reality of consciousness, particularly consciousness that no longer “is” a being-in-time. The graveyard in *Hamlet* presents a staging ground for powerful engagements with memory and history, specifically histories of bodies and minds. Here, the disarmingly

cheerful gravedigger, whose “custom,” as Horatio remarks, “hath made it [his profession] in him a property of easiness” (5.1.63), is observed in a moment of apparent light-heartedness. As Hamlet and Horatio quietly approach him, he sings “In youth when I did love, did love, / Methought it was very sweet / To contract-O-the time for-a-my behove, / O methought there-a-was nothing-a-meet,” (5.1.57-60), expressing a belief that the same “I” which has dug graves since “the very day that young Hamlet was born” (5.1.136) is the one who once carelessly spent time in the pursuit of love. Yet the gravedigger reveals himself to be the only character in the play who understands that he is *not* the same “I” who thought there to be “nothing-a-meet” in passing the time in such a way. The final stanza of his song speaks volumes: “Age with his stealing steps / Hath caught me in his clutch, / And hath shipped me intil the land, / *As if I had never been such*” [my emphasis] (5.1.66-9). The “I” who now digs graves *seems* to be the same “I” who foolishly wasted hours pursuing love, yet is not.

The gravedigger's sense of history, or, more specifically, his recognition of the gap in time that history represents, the distance between the “seems” of the youthful, lustful “I” of the gravedigger's mind and the hard, cold “is” of his present moment, literally unearthing the remnants of other “I's” who have gone before him, provides another link between the history of the body and the mind's “I.” The gravedigger's song, redolent with melancholy and nostalgia, bears echoes of the realization that the “present continually becomes [the] past,” and now, as he takes stock of his misspent youth, he is “in another present,” his time “consumed with planning the future,” an action completed “on the stepping stones of the past.” Here, the present moment occupied by the gravedigger is focused on planning for a specific future, a future of dead bodies and now-

silent "I's," who will need a place to "lie i'th' earth ere [they] rot" (5.1.152). And given that the process of decomposing will take "eight or nine year," unless of course the body in question is "rotten before a die," (5.1.155, 153), then the past must continually be disrupted, overturned, and tossed out onto the ground to make way for the next generation of corpses. Thus, "[t]he past is never here," and no matter how self-aware and present the mind's "I" perceives itself to be, as the gravedigger knows, we are never on-time when it comes to consciousness, but instead, always awoken to the realization that it is "[a]s if I had never been such."

Hamlet, however, has yet to come to an understanding of the lessons the gravedigger has already learned so well. Instead, he perceives reality and history to be seamlessly integrated, a series of moments, wherein time progresses, as in "Sonnet 60," "Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore, /... / Each changing place with that which goes before" (1, 3).⁷⁹ Time progresses, certainly, and the mind's "I" seems to move with it, forever asserting itself as a transcendent, immutable ego against the forces of the world. Time will, as Hamlet knows altogether too well (and, as Shakespeare reiterates throughout the *Sonnets*), eventually triumph over the body, eroding the mind's "I" until all that remains is an empty skull in a graveyard; however, the reality of what he believes to be the present moment is always a realm of "infinite space," at once boundless, yet as secure as the "prison" he imagines Denmark itself to be (2.2.239).

⁷⁹ Shakespeare draws on book fifteen of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the latter states "nothing / endures in this world! The whole of it flows, and all is / formed with a changing appearance; even time passes, constant in motion, no different from a great river, for neither a river nor a transitory hour is able to stand still." See Ovid 2004 15.222-228.

The reason that Hamlet suffers from his fears in the first place, is, of course, the return of his father's spirit, the ghost of King Hamlet.⁸⁰ The Ghost demands not only that he be avenged, but more prominently, that he be remembered. Memory is, after all, recollection of a specific relationship between a specific being-in-time and a specific object or secondary being, in this case, the Prince and his father. The indexical “mind's I” accesses a series of experiences, unique to the body it occupies, and constructs a narrative which links these experiences. But the grieving Hamlet has no previous relationship with the disembodied consciousness, in the form of the Ghost of Old Denmark; focused on memories of a now-dead father, Hamlet recognizes that “the time is out of joint,” and that “I” was “born to set it right.” Hamlet’s problem suddenly becomes a little clearer. The “I” born in the aftermath of the encounter with the Ghost and its injunction to “remember me” (1.5.91) has only this moment as a referent. This is an “I” born out of an unnatural encounter with the past, with no hope of a future, always too late to realize the possibility of an action that might restart the clock and change the narrative.

The vivid nature of Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost colors his later contemplations on reality in his famed speech, foregoing the sort of complex, multidimensional states that Montaigne identified (coming to be, coming to no longer be) for the stark binaries of “to be, or not to be,” which is, indeed, “the question” for Hamlet henceforth (3.1.58). But these categories are deceptively simple, as we have already seen Montaigne point out. In more contemporary parlance, Jacques Derrida explores the strong sense of opposition between being and non-being, one which returns us to the

⁸⁰ Leslie Croxford provides a solid, well-rounded reading of Hamlet's attempt to investigate the Ghost's claim to be the spirit of his father, most notably through the dumb-show and the “death” of Gonzago, the Player King. Croxford ultimately suggests Hamlet's approach is phenomenological, in that truth is not self-evident, but can only be achieved by experiencing, interpreting, and understanding sense-data. See Croxford 2004 24.

issue of history, or specifically the end of history. For Derrida, whose concern here is with developing a form of ontology that can comprehend both states at once, which can comprehend “the discourse of the end [of history] or about the end [of history],” this is a seemingly impossible task.⁸¹ He remains skeptical that it is possible to every fully comprehend, in full, the opposition between “to be, or not to be.” In his famous soliloquy, Hamlet attempts to explore the possibility of just this opposition, pondering “Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer / The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, / Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, / And by opposing, end them” (3.1.59-62). However, Hamlet immediately strikes upon a problem similar to the one Derrida articulates, how can “I” cease to exist, to enter a state of non-being? The Ghost's appearance has prompted Hamlet to believe in the probability that consciousness transcends the body in death, and therefore is disembodied. How, then, is one to consider the possibility of ending consciousness, which means, in the end, to cease thinking?

Importantly, Hamlet does not actually refer to himself in the first person throughout this speech. This moment represents the most deeply introspective, purely consciousness-based meditation in the play, a moment where the “indexical 'I'” is openly fixed on itself with no distractions. Tellingly, Hamlet has already implied that this is a question that can only ever be addressed, and answered, “in the mind.” He realizes that it is only “in the mind” that one can weigh such questions as whether suffering the “thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to” can be conceived of as being “nobler” than taking “arms against a sea of troubles.” For Hamlet, “to be” in the world as he is now is

⁸¹ Derrida suggests one term that may be useful for this task, which is “hauntology,” a concept that seeks to encompass not only ontology, but also teleology and eschatology; in other words, not only extant reality but also its foreseeable end *and* the discourse about that end. Since Derrida's concern is with deconstructing what he terms the “fatality of vengeance,” which he maintains is a concept that is inextricably linked to the notion of history itself. 2006 10, 25.

“to suffer” or else “to take arms” against the forces that bind him to this wearisome existence. “To take arms” may mean to take his own life, thereby ending the troubles he faces, or, as we may otherwise read the line, it may indicate the need to find some measure of courage within himself in order to confront the people who surround him with their demands and questions: Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Ophelia. To take up arms is to act upon memories of a series of experienced relations between an organism and an object; but how does one take up a sword and fight, literally, against a battlefield arrayed with metaphorical troubles?

Hamlet acknowledges the frustration of this problem by noting that to die may only be “to sleep,” and questions whether to sleep means “to say we end / The heartaches and the thousand natural shocks / The flesh is heir to--'tis a consummation devoutly to be wished” (3.1.63-5). Hamlet reveals that he cannot easily envision the end of a specific history, the history of suffering, a history that cannot be separated from his reality as an embodied, conscious, knowing being. Although there seems to be hope in the thought that to die might initiate a transition to nothing more than a state of extended sleep, a state of not-being in the world, he is unable to think of the existence of even a state of not-being where suffering (and therefore, a form of being) does not exist. There is, in fact, no end of history for Hamlet, and here we understand history not in the linear sense of *chronos*, but in the sense of a cognitive map of knowledge and memory sets, accessible through the illusory, indexical “I.” Hamlet's consciousness experiences itself as purely seamless at this moment, a fixed, immutable, transcendent ego that can discern no cracks or seams in its construction that may unravel and lead to “non-being.” Thus, Hamlet's consciousness must reach out for a different analog, one rooted in experiences, but not

bodily experiences—only those which belong purely to the realm of consciousness, which leads, of course, to the problem of dreams. If “to die” is “to sleep,” then it is also, “perchance, to dream” (3.1.66-7).

For Hamlet, this means coming to grips with the problem that dreams are not external to the mind, for it is only *in* the mind that they can and do occur. Dreams represent a form of suffering that cannot be completely eliminated by making the choice “not to be.” After all, although in the world of dreams it may be possible to simultaneously “suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,” it is not possible to ever completely “take arms against a sea of troubles, / And by opposing, end them.” Dreams, which can only happen in the mind, remain a disruptive force throughout *Hamlet*; not only do they seep through the apparently seamless, yet porous barrier of the interior world of the mind's “I,” they also threaten to continue beyond death, creating an infinite loop of conscious suffering.⁸²

Here we return to the graveyard, where the realization of the relationship between the embodied mind's “I” and the history of the body first dawns on Hamlet. In fact, it arrives at precisely the moment that the gravedigger unearths and tosses up the third skull, Yorick's. At this moment the connections between the mind's “I,” embodied reality, and the history of the body come together most forcefully in the play. The stage

⁸² In his research on consciousness, experience, and dream states, Owen Flanagan observes that “Dream consciousness is especially puzzling. Everyone dreams. But unlike conscious sensory experience, which is also universal and which generally yields reliable information about the world, dreams don't seem to track the truth reliably. We entertain the false and the bizarre in dreams.” The intensely vivid nature of dreams posed an interesting problem for another prominent early modern thinker, Descartes, who addressed dreams in the first segment of his *Meditations*. Descartes observed that “in my dreams I have all the same experiences as these madmen do when they are awake – or sometimes even stranger ones[.] How often my sleep at night has convinced me of all these familiar things – that I was here, wrapped in my gown, sitting by the fire – when in fact I was lying naked under the bedclothes.” The vividness of such dreams creates a lingering problem for Descartes, as he goes on to admit that even after thinking this over “more carefully I see so clearly that waking can never be distinguished from sleep by any conclusive indications that I am stupefied; and this very stupor comes close to persuading me that I am dreaming after all.” See Descartes 2008 14 and Flanagan 2000 4.

directions note that just as the final notes of his song are fading away, the gravedigger “throws up [the first] skull” and Hamlet promptly exclaims “That skull had a tongue in it and could sing once...This might be the pate of a politician which this ass o'er offices, one that would circumvent God, might it not?” (5.1.70-75). The appearance of a second skull prompts him to wonder whether or not it might “be the skull of a lawyer,” and if so, “Where be his quiddits now, his quilletts, his cases, his tenses and his tricks?” (5.1.90-92). Indeed, as Hamlet goes on to speculate, this “fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries” (5.1.94-6). The empty skull no longer has a brain which could process legal precedents and construct rhetorical arguments, and it also is no longer attached to a body that may have relied upon that same brain to advance its own status in the world, acquiring land and other property through the mind's knowledge of “statutes” and “recognizances.” Furthermore, whatever property this skull may once have laid claim to has vanished along with the mind that used to occupy it: “The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must th'inheritor himself have no more, ha?” (5.1.100-102).

Of course, these are all mere speculations; there is no way of knowing to whom this skull once belonged, let alone what sort of history its mind's “I” had been able to access, interpret, express, and construct. All that an empty skull—named or otherwise—proves is that the brain, which provided quiddits, quilletts, cases, tenures, and tricks, has progressed in its stage of decomposition. This is still no indication that the mind's “I” which once occupied this skull is not still aware, does not perceive the tortures continually visited upon it in its transition from that “piece of work” known as “man, who

is “noble in reason” and “infinite in faculty...the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals” to the body’s final status as a “quintessence of dust” (2.2.294-8). For Hamlet, all of this still points to terrible possibility that the mind’s “I,” cut off from sense-data and all relationships with other objects and organisms, would not die with the body, but would continue to perceive itself as a being-in-time, albeit in a seamless, never-changing reality that is “bounded in a nutshell,” as it were.

It is thus a particular skull, one that Hamlet “knew” (the significance of the past-tense here should not be overlooked) that brings his understanding full circle. There is nothing specific for him to gain by picking up a random skull and examining it, speculating on whether it may have once been a politician, a lawyer, or even that of “Cain...that did the first murder!” (5.1.71-2). Yorick’s skull is something altogether different, for as Hamlet asserts, he did indeed know the mind that once occupied that skull, which defined “a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy” (5.1.171-2). Hamlet was well-acquainted with the body that the skull once was a component of, whose lips he had kissed “I know not how oft,” and upon whose back he rode “a thousand times” (5.1.173-175). For Hamlet, Yorick’s skull carries a very different significance, for Yorick’s history is one with which Hamlet is intimately acquainted. He experiences a connection to Yorick via the indexical “I” that he does not experience anywhere else in the play, with anyone else, living or dead. After all, it was Yorick who dandled the young Hamlet on his knee, carried him on his back, and to whom Hamlet reacted with joyful kisses. Hamlet’s entire comportment shifts dramatically following his recollections of Yorick, for he understands at last that the “I” which knew the warm, jolly old jester is not the same “I” who now stands in the graveyard, holding the skull of that

same man. The situation is too absurd to be otherwise—Hamlet has only reconnected with Yorick because the skull was named as such, and there is nothing other than this name, which has conjured memories of the “I” who “knew him,” to prove that the skull is, indeed, Yorick's.

For Hamlet, the event experienced in this moment is not unlike that described by Antonio Damasio, in his recollections of his own early meditations on the issue of consciousness. For him, considering the problem of consciousness in relation to the concept of “self” did not produce a clearer picture of consciousness; it was not until he began considering the problem in terms of organisms, objects, and (most importantly), the relationship between them that the nature of the conscious mind began to emerge. “All of a sudden, consciousness consisted of constructing knowledge about two facts: that the organism is involved in relating to some object, and that the object in the relation is causing a change in the organism” (*Feeling* 133). This relationship—between object and organism, between body and mind—is precisely what Hamlet begins to grasp here in the graveyard. It is here then that Hamlet comes to understand, as Damasio so eloquently puts it, that “A mind is so closely shaped by the body and destined to serve it that only one mind could possibly arise in it. No body, never mind. For any body, never more than one mind” (*Feeling* 143). Without a mind, Yorick's skull is not even a body, but an empty relic, significant only when named by the gravedigger himself. However, once that name is pronounced, there could only be one mind, one “I” that had once occupied that skull, and which had been influenced by the body, the lips Hamlet kissed and the back he rode upon. For Hamlet, *that* was Yorick, a fellow of infinite jest who had served as a playmate, companion, and entertainer during a period of his boyhood. The now-empty

skull has no history any longer, except to continue its decay into the very materials of the earth, dust and clay, just as the “I” who “knew him” will one day do as well.

Hamlet's musings now turn *away* from the mind and towards the body – specifically, to those “base uses” which the body returns to after death. He exclaims to Horatio, “Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till a find it stopping a bung-hole?... Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returned unto dust, the dust is of earth, of earth we make loam, and why of that loam whereto he was converted may they not stop a beer barrel?” (5.1.187-195). Taken with the idea of the absolute corruption of the flesh, which he now understands as constituting both the tortured mind and the body that signifies it, he wonders at how “Imperial Caesar, dead and turned to clay / Might stop a hole to keep the wind away. / O, that that earth which kept the world in awe / Should patch a wall t'expel the winter's flaw!” (5.1.196-199).

Here we can recall Hamlet's own awe at the might and majesty of the physical form at points throughout the play. His father, he tells Horatio, “was a man. Take him for all in all, / I shall not look upon his like again” (1.3.186-187). Even later, in Gertrude's bedchamber, his obsession with the physical majesty of his father, *as he remembers him*, springs to the surface, as he demands that she look on the portrait of King Hamlet, “A combination and a form indeed / Where every god did seem to set his seal / To give the world assurance of a man / ... / Could you this fair mountain leave to feed[?]” (3.4.59-65). And this latter instance, of course, follows his zealous celebration of Rozencrantz and Guildenstern of the “piece of work” that is man: “How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god – the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!”

(2.2.294-297). His immediate rejection of the body of man as a “quintessence of dust” which “delights not me – no, nor woman neither” (297-299) stands not as a dismissal of human beauty – the energy with which he praises the human form reveals at least that much – but as an admission of frustration with the temporality of human beauty, and the delight of men and women alike in that form.⁸³

But now, in the graveyard, Hamlet is not distracted by the awe and majesty of the portrait – either the physical one or the one he holds in his memory – of King Hamlet in all his glory and majesty, nor by the grace and strength of Alexander or the imperial mien of Caesar. What he delights in here, rather, is the thought of humanity, forced to “suffer / The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,” forced to pause at the thought of “what dreams may come / When we have shuffled off this mortal coil” (3.1.60-68), as being freed from both the physical *and* the mental torments of death. In “tracing the noble dust” of Alexander from a world-conquering god-among-men to a clay cork stopping a cask of ale, Hamlet arrives at something closer to Montaigne's conception of always already becoming dead, becoming dust and inconsequential matter. The grave, then, is not filled with restless, chattering spirits, but with silently grinning skulls such as Yorick's, their infinite capacity for jest now mingling with the worms and the soil.

What Hamlet experiences in this moment is an instant of synchronization, allowing his consciousness to shift from a recurring perspective of unfathomable origins and infinitely torturous moments in the present towards the “rest” of the silent, still

⁸³ Hamlet's musings here are satirized in John Marston's *The Malcontent* (c.1603), where Mendoza expresses his fascination with women: “Sweet women, most sweet ladies, nay, angels, by heaven, he is more accursed than a devil that hates you, or is hated by you, and happier than a god that loves you, or is beloved by you. You preservers of mankind, life-blood of society, who would live, nay, who can live without you?... In body how delicate, in soul how witty, in discourse how pregnant, in life how wary, in favours how judicious, in day how sociable, and in night how – O pleasure unutterable!” (1.5.38-59). Editors and commentators Macdonald P. Jackson and Michael Neill note that Mendoza's rapturous speech represents a “burlesque” of Hamlet's original encomium. See Jackson and Neill 1986 214.

oblivion that awaits the dead. As I have noted earlier, Michael Neill argues that the task of the revenge requires ensuring the stability of memory by means other than the traditional; in Neill's estimation, this renders the revenger as a "remembrancer," whose task is ever and always "essentially backward-looking" (247, 250). But I would argue that although the revenger's gaze must always *return* to the past, and thus the motivations for his actions, it must also be able to conceive of a future moment, a moment when the memory is securely at rest because the act has been completed – whether that act be vengeful murder, reluctant mercy, or willful forgiveness. Hamlet has been unable to complete this turn prior to this moment. He has instead remained locked in a state where he can only access memories of the past, can only consider the indexical "I" of his interior self from the perspective of the past through the alleged present – never can he project that self forward, fulling completing the structure of a stable autobiographical self in a state of extended consciousness.

True, Damasio's conception of core consciousness is that it is constructed and dismissed in the briefest span of time, providing the organism with "a sense of self about one moment – now – and about one place – here." As he elaborates it, core consciousness "does not illuminate the future, and the past it vaguely lets us glimpse is that which occurred in the instant just before. There is elsewhere, there is no before, there is no after" (*Feeling* 16). The autobiographical self – the self which makes use of Flanagan's indexical "I" to construct a vision of the interior self via a narrative based on past events and project that vision into the future – "depends on systematized memories in situations in which core consciousness was involved in the knowing of the most invariant characteristics of an organism's life [such as] the way you usually react to a problem or

conflict” (*Feeling* 17-18). When the brain is functioning according to the right parameters, core consciousness gives way to extended consciousness, where “a full construction of being” is able to step “into the light... both the past and the *anticipated* [my emphasis] future are sensed along with the here and now” (16-17). Damasio's work with patients experiencing a plethora of neurological conditions indicates that any disruption of core consciousness results in a complete breakdown of the autobiographical self and extended consciousness. In these instances, usually generated by significant physical trauma to portions of the brain, the patient – although perhaps physically stable or otherwise healthy – is unable to recognize that “they” are there in any consistent fashion.

However, his work with less-severe neurological conditions, such as disorders like prosopagnosia (the inability to recognize familiar faces) and anosognosia (unawareness of one's own physical disability or injury) suggests that core consciousness will remain intact when extended consciousness breaks down (*Feeling* 121-123). In many cases, this is a continual process – patients function in a surprisingly normal fashion, even though they may not know exactly to whom they are speaking, or have any concept of the fact that they have suffered a stroke and cannot use the limbs on the right-hand side of their body. Here we may recall Damasio's analysis of his work with David, discussed at length in my Introduction. While David was certain of his own identity, and expressed an awareness of basic facts concerning his environment (temperature, time of day), his sense of a connection *as* David (“I am David”) to the past and future was almost nonexistent (*Feeling* 113-121). To say that Hamlet has suffered from a disruption of extended

consciousness throughout the length of the play is not to make as drastic of a statement as it may first seem.

Certainly, Hamlet has not lost a sense of *who* he is, and unlike David, he has a clear sense of chronological time. It is only his sense of time with respect to the nature and extent of his grief that has been severely disrupted, and this disruption is not enough to affect his basic functionality. True, the stability of Hamlet's mental faculties are questioned in the play, most prominently in his exchange with Polonius, in which he names the latter "a fishmonger," and ridicules a writer who says "that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams" (2.2.174, 194-197). Yet even Polonius admits "[t]hough this be madness, yet is there method in't" (201). Hamlet even provides his own clues to the fact that he is possessed of more stable faculties than Gertrude and Claudius believe: "I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw" (2.2.349-350) he tells Guildenstern, indicating that any signs of mental instability are an intentional decoy.

Even so, Hamlet's ability to take action and seize the moment in the name of revenge is severely compromised by the dysfunctional status of his memory. As his thoughts turn towards the mind and the past, his brain continually skips, forcing it to jump back to a previous point in the recorded index and begin again in its construction of a stable autobiographical self. It is as if the necessary memory is missing – deleted, mislabeled, checked out for research and never returned. Indeed, it is almost as if, in his attempt to "wipe away all trivial fond records, / All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past," so that the Ghost's command to be remembered "alone shall live / Within the book

and volume of my brain” (1.5.99-103), Hamlet were perhaps accidentally successful in at least destroying any record of the still “rest” of the grave and the truth of the embodied human brain: that it is all but flesh and blood, soon turned to dust and turned to baser purposes. Whatever the case, his encounter with Yorick's skull provides the information necessary to complete the index, and sends Hamlet in a forward-looking direction once more.

Of course, while Hamlet is henceforth refocusing his gaze on the future and the actions he must take, time continues to progress. It would be grossly misreading *Hamlet* to say that the Prince immediately takes bold and decisive action following his encounter with Yorick's skull. What happens instead is a shift in mental stance and a newfound ability to (re)construct extended consciousness. No longer is his gaze fixed on the instantiation of grief, on the disjointed time that demands something be done, yet which prevents access to thoughts and memories that would reassure Hamlet about the nature of his embodied reality. These assurances in place, confident that the “undiscovered country” of death is a liberating nihilism in which there is “no thing” to torture or be tortured, he is newly endowed with a strong sense of purposefulness and a palpable sense of relief. As I noted earlier in this chapter, when Hamlet leaps into Ophelia's grave to join the grief-stricken Laertes, following his bold demand to know “what is he whose grief bears such emphasis,” loudly proclaiming that “This is I, / Hamlet the Dane” (5.1.238-242), he is not proclaiming a sense of triumph at having overcome grief, or death, but a sense of invigoration. It is as if he now agrees with Claudius in the assessment of grief as “unmanly,” prompting him to hear the desperate cries of Laertes as something decidedly unmanly (and perhaps even less-than-human).

In this newly invigorated mode, we can at last glimpse the Prince as he never was in the play before, but perhaps as he was before the play – bold, confident, assertive, and definitive. He tells Fortinbras that “I loved Ophelia” (5.1.254), whereas he only told Ophelia herself that “I did love you *once*” (3.1.116) [my emphasis], and expresses an eagerness to Horatio, in the final moments before the fateful duel, that “the readiness is all” (5.2.160). This Hamlet, so clear, so definite, so dismissive of the demands of a “disjointed time” that he is bound to set right – “if it be now, 'tis not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come” (5.2.158-159) – is, in fact, *a new Hamlet*, not an expression of an essentialist or otherwise “intransitive” inward self. His depth as a character – the sense we have, as readers and audience members, that he *is* a complex, multidimensional figure, seeming to be as real to us as ourselves whenever (William Hazlitt noted) we “become thoughtful and brooding in [our] own mishaps or those of others, [or bear] about with [us] the clouded brow of reflection... whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought, he to whom the universe seems infinite, and himself nothing” (Hoy 164). In the light of the relationship between the embodied human brain, consciousness, and the models of selves that are constructed in consciousness by that brain in order to aid itself in navigating the world-at-large, Hazlitt's commentary might seem almost prescient.

Again, as noted sociobiologist E. O. Wilson puts it, “the brain is a narrative machine.” It takes the aforementioned memories, dispositional attitudes, and constant influx of sense-data, constructing a story wherein our conscious self-model becomes a unique protagonist in the grand narrative of life. Hamlet (both Prince and play) are so deeply woven into our cultural fabric that it is possible for us to say that Hazlitt was right,

when he suggested that “we are Hamlet,” but not in the sense that quite a few recent scholars have taken him to suggest.⁸⁴ From the perspective of the narrative machine of the human brain, we actually *are* Hamlet, and thus, when we read the play, perhaps even for the first time, we recognize ourselves in the man who has “that within which passeth show,” and yet could be contained in a nutshell and count it “infinite space.” Thus, Hazlitt is not far off the mark when he notes, “Hamlet is a name; his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. What then, are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind” (164). It is true that we may, as de Grazia does, side-step our interactions with Hamlet as a character in such a way as to consider the structural and historical elements of the play that lie beneath the brooding reflections of Shakespeare's melancholy Dane (to say nothing of our own fascination with those reflections). But we cannot so easily separate our own mind stuff from that of the fictitious Prince, who openly explores the inner workings of his own mind, who turns his consciousness in upon itself to consider what he is, and to ponder just how much of the dark world of shadows around him is illuminated by a spark of his own making.

⁸⁴ John Lee offers a thorough overview of critical commentary on the play from the early seventeenth century through the mid-nineteenth century. He notes Coleridge's observation that “Hamlet himself was the character in the intuition and exposition of which I first made my turn for philosophical criticism,” and further suggests that Coleridge's impression of the possessive nature of Hamlet's expression “I have that within” indicates a kind of “transubstantiation, giving a ‘substance to shadows.’” As for Hazlitt, Lee argues that his readings do not suggest a sense of Hamlet as a “real” person (rather than a literary character), but that we invent “that within” Hamlet as we encounter the character: “Hazlitt's point is not that we identify with the Prince, but that the Prince forms part of our identity.” See Lee 128-140.

CHAPTER V

“TRUE RECLAIMÈD FORM”: NARRATIVE, PRODIGALITY, AND REDEMPTION IN MIDDLETON’S *A TRICK TO CATCH THE OLD ONE*

In the last two chapters, I focused on character interiority, demonstrating the way *Jake Juggler* represents Tudor promotion of anti-transubstantiation propaganda by staging essentialist, memory-based representations of personal identity, and the way *Hamlet* showcases the importance of certain subject-object relationships in creating a stable space for the full emergence of Damasio’s autobiographical self. In this chapter, I shift the focus of my critical gaze to the cognitive processes of the reader and audience member. My purpose in doing so is twofold; first, to suggest how cognitive science can help us understand what processes are engaged in the human brain during the act of “solving” cognitively challenging literary problems, such as disruptions of generic form or convention, and second, to offer a historically informed demonstration of these processes at work. To this end, I turn to Thomas Middleton’s city comedy *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, where I explore an oft-cited critical problem: the redemption of the play’s protagonists, the Vice-like Witgood and his one-time courtesan, Jane.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Valerie Wayne's introduction to the play takes great care to explain the reasons behind the assignation of this name to the character of the Courtesan / Widow. In Wayne's estimation, retaining the assignation of Courtesan and/or Widow “has led most readers to think like Hoard about the character,” thereby making it “difficult for readers to observe [her] shifts in identity and ground[ing] a misconception of the character's sexual competency, constructing for the contemporary reader a woman who makes her living by sexual commerce and is generally available to men.” Although she admits that there is no direct textual evidence for the name, Wayne also notes that Jane was a common slang name for prostitutes, yet also one with upper class associations. It should be noted, however, that Wayne is not the first to fix the proper noun “Jane” to the character. In a 1976 article, J.A. Bryant, Jr., also refers to the character as “Jane,” and, interestingly, his assessment of the character seems to be on par with those Wayne is attempting to forestall. Bryant views Jane as “relatively colorless” and “a nominal objective for much of the activity. I follow the practice here because, despite the truth that the original *dramatis personae* of the play lists the character as the Courtesan, she is never addressed by a “real name” in the play, only by her adopted moniker of Medlar, and I feel that the assignation of “courtesan” limits the character’s

Critics have long pondered over the conclusion of the play, where Witgood and Jane suddenly claim redemption for themselves in the very last line – a move which has struck many as both unsatisfying and unconventional.⁸⁶ J.A. Bryant Jr. observes that Jane’s redemption in particular is highly unconventional and very “sudden” in its presentation, and therefore simultaneously unorthodox and unbelievable (578-579). In his reading of Middleton’s relationship with the popular New Comedy tradition he inherits from Plautus and Terence, George Rowe notes that the conclusion “[includes] elements so potentially tragic that they cannot easily be accommodated and reconciled within a New Comedy plot,” thereby subverting “the apparently traditional comic form of his [Middleton’s] dramas” (7). Eric Leonidas agrees, consolidating several critical positions to agree that overall, the ending presents a violation of the New Comedy tradition which Middleton inherits from Terence and Plautus, rejecting both festive and Christian “social pictures” in order to “balance individual social and erotic desire with greater communal stability (Par 27). Michelle O’Callaghan contends that Middleton specifically “translates” New Comedy contentions of reconciliation and celebratory feasting into “the materialist

perceived depth beyond the level of simple allegory. See Bryant Jr. 577 and Taylor et al 2007 375.

⁸⁶ One other interpretive problem in the play receives a great deal of commentary – the inclusion of Harry Dampit, an amoral, usurious lawyer whose three brief appearances seem to contribute nothing to the overall plot. The critical consensus thus far is that Middleton includes the character as a moral touchstone. While Dampit’s health, behavior, and temperament steadily decline throughout the play, Witgood’s prodigality and questionable moral behavior appear favorable by comparison. George Rowe argues that Dampit is one tool among many used by Middleton to “resist the normal comic movement toward moderation and harmony,” a tendency revealed by his penchant for continually including elements which violate New Comedy conventions. Rick Bowers agrees, suggesting that Dampit “represents the evil, head-kicking disregard of the underworld loan shark.” Scott Culter Shershow likewise joins Rowe and Richard Levine in supporting Dampit’s role as a “foil” for Witgood, David B. Mount disagrees with this reading, however, asserting that the play contains too many elements of evil and morality for Dampit to stand out in any guise. See Bowers 211-212, Mount 259-261, Rowe 6-7, and Shershow 363-368.

and mercantile terms of the city” (36) and feels that the reformations celebrated at the end of the play are authentic.⁸⁷

But within the play itself, as Rowe also notes, the necessary elements of the traditional ending of a comic prodigal son story – “forgiving and forgetting” – are only vaguely gestured towards. As audience members and readers, “the only way we can accept the apparently traditional conclusions of [this play] is to turn our backs on much of what we have seen” (91). Their claims of redemption work because we forgive them at their behest. In the process of looking for a way to explain their access to redemption, we examine and reject their less-than-upstanding actions throughout the play in order to make sense of the conclusion. Whereas Rowe contends that Witgood is emblematic of those youthful prodigals who “do not renew their families or societies: they destroy them” (11), Leonidas suggests just the opposite (Par 27). Prodigals such as Witgood successfully sever all ties to the past to give life to the future, thereby enabling, through reconciliation and new marriages, the continuation of family lines.

In this chapter, I wish to explore the relationship between prodigality, the redemptions or “reclamations” of Middleton’s protagonists, and the cognitive structure of the reader and audience member. I argue that the brain’s role as a “narrative machine, guided unconsciously by the epistemic rules in creating scenarios and creating opinions” (Wilson *Literary Animal* ix) guides our interpretations of the play’s conclusion towards conclusiveness, as Rowe and others have suggested, but of a different kind – structural and interpretive conclusiveness, on a cognitive level. What I mean by this is that we imagine a solution to the “problem” posed by the seemingly unearned and inappropriate

⁸⁷ O’Callaghan argues that the redemption motif occurs throughout Middleton’s city comedies, being particularly noticeable in the way that country gallants and gentlemen are perpetually drawn into the city and subjected to the machinations of “avaricious merchants.” See O’Callaghan 36.

redemptions of Witgood and Jane, by drawing on interpretive elements within the play to construct an unconscious narrative that enables us to truly “forget” their misdeeds and embrace them in their “reclaimed form” (5.2.165), as they proclaim themselves to be. The key to unlocking this solution is found not, perhaps surprisingly, in an examination of Witgood, but rather Jane, whose “form” as a fallen woman and courtesan at the start of the play provides the material for an act of the imagination which reconfigures her into the form of a chaste, generous, obedient housewife by the end of the play. Thus, as in the prodigal son parable which provides the initial framework for the play, both characters indeed manage to reclaim the “forms” they enjoyed prior to the start of the play – Witgood as a landed country gentlemen, and Jane as a chaste maid, a life of potential and prosperity ahead of her.

I believe, as the aforementioned critics have noted, that we as readers and audience members are compelled to “forget and forgive” at the end of the play, and that we are asked to do so by the fact that both characters insist that they appear in “reclaimed form” in the final scene. Since Hoard bids everyone to turn their attention to the wedding feast at hand, declaring that they are now “all friends” (5.2.203), it appears that Hoard and Lucre both forgive Witgood and Jane after their confessions. This compels the “narrative machine” of the brain to repair the disconnect between the apparent redemption of Witgood and Jane and their decidedly un-repentant, often wicked and immoral behavior throughout the play. Hoard’s acceptance motivates the brain to reevaluate the narrative of the play with a directive to “solve” the problem of joining him in accepting the redemption of two such obviously immoral characters.

The framework I use for this exploration is provided by Conceptual Blending Theory (or CBT for short, as I will henceforth refer to it). As I mentioned briefly in the Introduction, CBT is a direct descendent of the embodied metaphor theories of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and originates with another of Lakoff's collaborators, Mark Turner. Specifically, Turner builds on his work with Lakoff to suggest that the brain's reliance on metaphor and metonymy as fundamental building blocks for basic cognitive processes also indicates that the brain is "literary" in its structure, driven to use narrative as a creative framework. As Alan Richardson notes, CBT assumes that stories and narratives are composed of other, stories and metaphors, and are blended together in a manner which "enables inference that neither the source story nor the target story could supply by itself" (6).⁸⁸ Whereas Lakoff and Johnson's theories of image schemas, in which cognitive metaphors supply interpretive dispositions for simple structures that frequently recur in bodily experiences (containers, paths, and so forth), Turner's work looks towards language and literature, breaking down complex metaphorical structures (allegories and parables) into the various elements that they are composed of.

In 2003's *The Way We Think*, a collaboration with cognitive scientist Gilles Fauconnier, Turner emphasizes that the completeness of a given structure or form often belies its multi-layered construction, giving the illusion that form literally equates to meaning (as in the container schema theories of Lakoff and Johnson). Using the example of Patroclus wearing his cousin Achilles's armor in order to terrify the Trojans in

⁸⁸ Richardson also notes that neurobiologists remain the greatest skeptics of the work of Lakoff, Johnson, and Turner, which he categorizes as "cognitive rhetoric." Their distrust arises from the largely hypothetical nature of these theories; without a means of conducting controlled, double-blind studies aimed at producing quantifiable and measurable results, neurobiologists remain doubtful of the efficacy of embodied metaphor theory. He also notes, however, that Antonio Damasio and other neuroscientists have widely approved of these theories. See Richardson and Spolsky 7.

Homer's *Odyssey*, they note that "[f]orm is the armor, but meaning is the Achilles that makes the armor so formidable. Form does not present meaning but instead picks out regularities that run throughout meanings... what is behind form is not a thing at all but rather the human power to construct meanings" (4-6). They posit that even the simplest possible meaning requires the operations of three primary elements: Identity, imagination, and integration. Because identity is apprehensible in consciousness, it cannot be the most fundamental element of the three. Similarly, integration requires the presence of multiple identities to compare and either combine or dismiss, and thus, even though it operates "in the backstage of cognition," it, too, cannot be the primary element. This leaves imagination, which enables the brain, "[e]ven in the absence of external stimulus, [to] run imaginative scenarios" that we consciously identify and categorize as "fictional stories, what-if scenarios, dreams," and so forth (6). The aim of CBT, then, is to examine the interaction between these three elements, focusing on the imagination's role in generating scenarios which are integrated into unique identities – parables, stories, and allegories.

In *The Literary Mind* (1996), Turner suggests that parables are unique cognitive structures, "the root of the human mind – of thinking, knowing, acting, creating, and plausibly even of speaking" (vi). One of the primary elements of parable (as well as allegory), he notes, is personification, which he refers to as "the most thoroughly analyzed consequence of blended spaces." Here, he demonstrates the use of conceptual blending at work in generating meaning for the personification of death, in the figure of the Grim Reaper.⁸⁹ In identifying a representation of this figure, we imagine that the

⁸⁹ The deconstruction of the Grim Reaper allegory is used by Turner as an example of one of the more powerful and complex sub-categories of CBT, known as double-scope blending, where input spaces

“biological cause of death is an animate, intentional skeleton who walks, carries a scythe, wears a robe with a cowl, and comes with the goal of killing [each of us] in particular” (76). As Turner notes, we do not confuse the allegorical figure of the Grim Reaper with actual biological causes of death, which can represent one or several input spaces in this particular blend, but rather, we use this figure to help us make sense of the meaning of death. This particular blend makes use of four input spaces: 1) an individual, dying human being; 2) human reapers harvesting crops; 3) an “abstract story of causal tautology,” where we imagine death as an actor, not merely an abstract cause, and finally, 4) a story wherein an individual killer takes a human victim (76-78). By taking the concept of an individual dying human being and blending it with the abstract concept of causal tautology, we arrive at the concept of the event of a single human being dying as a result of biological causes – death.

I will note here, briefly, that because CBT takes an interest in the role of the reader or audience in producing meaning, it may initially seem to those not well versed in cognitive literary theory that it best fits the category of reception theory, and this is understandable. It is true that CBT places an emphasis on the reader’s mind as an interpretive and narrative-constructing device, and, while CBT certainly does not call for us to ignore the text in an application, it does seem to suggest that the historical and material context of the text has little bearing on an interpretation. However, if this is true, it is only because CBT has not yet been applied to historically and materially contextualized texts on a consistent basis, as I intend to do in this chapter. I believe that my reading will demonstrate the utility of applying CBT in just such a context. Moreover,

themselves may be blends arising from the “clashes” between disparate organizing frames. Much of Turner’s most recent work has emphasized double-scope blending. For a particularly cogent and insightful illumination of double-scope blending, see Turner in Leverage et al 2011.

although it is true that reception theory has, both historically and in current practice, emphasized the importance of the reader in producing meaning, reception studies also suggests that the social and cultural context of the reader has greater importance than their neurobiological and cognitive functions.⁹⁰ CBT, on the other hand, is interested in how the brain makes meaning of basic literary structures, and suggests that acts of imaginative blending produce structures of interlocking metaphor, metonymy, and other basic literary elements that construct a larger narrative.

My reading of *A Trick to Catch the Old One* identifies three primary input spaces that are integrated in the task of re-identifying Jane as a figure of chastity and prosperity – the “reclaimed form” that she professes at the close of the play. These input spaces are represented by the multi-valenced definition of the adverb “prodigally,” which Jane uses to describe the way she gave the “jewel” of her virginity to Witgood (1.1.37-38), the conflation of the value of her fertile (and fictitious) country estates with the fertility promised by her as-yet young body, and the generic nuances of the “widow-hunt” motif popular on the stage at the time of the play’s publication in 1604. Jane’s “redemption” sets the stage for Witgood, who falls to his knees to “confess my follies,” abjuring “the

⁹⁰ Wolfgang Iser suggested that the event of reading, or of *a* reading, realizes the potential of a text to produce meaning, and thus, “aesthetic response is therefore to be analyzed in terms of a dialectic relationship between text, reader, and their interaction.” In the introduction to a recent anthology of reception theory articles, James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein argue that modern reception theory seeks to constrain theoretical approaches to readings, by asking what their motivations are and assessing how a theoretical approach opens canonical texts to socially and culturally beneficial investigations. Perhaps somewhat more famously, Stanley Fish has contended that readings are the product of an interpretive community, defined as “a set of practices that are defining an enterprise and fill the consciousnesses of the enterprise’s members.” In this, he sees authors, speakers, and interpreters as being a part of the same enterprise: “[W]hen Milton puts pen to paper he no less than those in his intended audience is a reader of his own action.” Reception theory has begun to intersect with cognitive literary and cultural studies as well, through research in narratology and empathy. Suzanne Keene notes that “we are living in a time when the activation of mirror neurons in the brains of onlookers can be recorded as they witness another’s actions and emotional reactions.” From this, she suggests, cognitive science, particularly neuroscience, has much to offer response theorists by empirically researching brain activity in the process of experiencing and responding to literary texts. See Fish 36, Keen 207, Iser 1976 ix-x, and Machor and Goldstein ix-xv.

cause of youth's undoing: game. / Chiefly dice, those true outlanders that shake out beggars, thieves and panders" (5.2.186, 188-90), an act befitting a young gallant who has wasted his inheritance on gambling and brothels, learns the error of his ways, and returns to beg his uncle Lucre's good graces in order to be restored to his former position, in order to "reclaim" his form. However, as Turner and Fauconnier's work implies, these allegedly repentant, redeem-able forms – both Witgood and Jane's – are not "things" at all, but reconstructed narratives, meanings that are formed through the process of imaginative blending.

I begin with a discussion of prodigality and the trope of the prodigal son which provides the central motif for Middleton's play, not to mention many of his other comedies (*The Widow, No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's*, and *Michaelmas Term*).⁹¹ The prodigal son parable, as told in the Geneva Bible version of Luke's gospel, tells of a young man who is determined to make his own way in the world, and asks his father for his inheritance, which he then wastes on vices in a foreign country. Reduced to working as a farm hand, where the pigs are given more to eat than he is, the young man decides to return to his father and beg his forgiveness, asking only for a place among his father's servants. But when he returns home, the father openly embraces him and takes him back into the household, proclaiming it to be a day of celebration, for "this my sonne was dead, and is aliue againe: and he was loft, but he is founde" (*Geneva Bible*, Luke 15:24).⁹² This

⁹¹ Rowe compares *A Trick* and *Michaelmas* in his book chapter, noting that in the latter, Middleton deliberately juxtaposes New Comedy conventions calling for "reconciliation and festivity" with the "prodigal son pattern which calls for different responses and emphasizes opposing values" (repentance, atonement). In *A Trick*, Rowe feels that Middleton is nearly successful in integrating the prodigal son motif into a New Comedy framework, but argues that the inclusion of Dampit makes it "almost impossible" to accept the ending of the play. See Rowe 52.

⁹² "He faid moreouer, A certeine man had two fonnnes. And the yonger of the faid to his father, Father, giue me the portion of the goods that falleth to me. So he deuided vnto him his substance. So not long after,

theme, that of a young man of means striking off into the world to increase his fortune and instead squandering it on worldly pleasures, occurs so frequently in Tudor-Stuart drama that it would not be unreasonable to consider drama as the primary method of transmission of this parable to many English subjects of the time.

In *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (1976), Richard Helgerson identifies two patterns of prodigality in Elizabethan drama: the first is represented by a narrative movement within the play, from “admonition [to] rebellion, and (usually) repentance.” The second pattern he outlines is biographical – writers such as Lyly, Greene, Lodge, Gascoigne, and Sidney all conducted “short literary careers often ending in repentance” (12).⁹³ True to Helgerson’s paradigm, Middleton’s play begins with an admonition towards those who would follow the prodigal’s path. Witgood enters the play and immediately identifies himself as a prodigal, all alone and in a state of despair: “All’s gone! Still thou’rt a gentleman, that’s all; but a poor one, that’s nothing” (1.1.1-2). His inheritance has been wasted, “[a]ll sunk into that little pit, lechery,” and it is only too late, it seems, that he recognize the aphoristic wisdom he now recites: “He that doth his youth expose, / To

when the yonger sonne had gathered all together, he toke his iorney into a farre contrey, and there he wafted his good with riotous liuing. Now when he had spent all, there arose a great dearth throughout that land, and he began to be in necessitie. Then he went and claue to a citizen of that contrey, and he fent him to his farme, to feede swine. And he wolde faine haue filled his bellie with y hulkes, that the swine ate: but no mane gaue *them* him. Then he came to him self, and said, How manie hired seruaunts at my vathers haue bread ynough, and I dye for hunger? I wil rise and go to my father, and say vnto him, Father, I haue sinned against heauen, and before thee, And am no more worthie to be called thy sonne: make me as one of thy hired seruants. So he arose and came to his father, and when he was yet a great way of, his father sawe him, and had compafsion, and ran & fel on his necke, and kissed him. And the sonne said vnto him, Father, I haue sinned against heauen, and before thee, and am no more worthie to be called thy sonne. Then the father said to his seruants, Bring for the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feete, And bring the fat calf, and kil him, and let vs eat, and be merie. For this my sonne was dead, and is aliue againe: and he was loft, but he is founde. And they began to be merie.” See Luke 15:11-24 in *The Geneva Bible*, ed Lloyed E. Berry.

⁹³ Helgerson notes that this may be read as a “local variation of the familiar paradigm that Petrarch describes in his *Epistle to Posterity*: ‘Youth led me astray, young manhood corrupted me, but maturer age corrected me and taught me by experience the truth of what I had read long before: that youth and pleasures are vain.’” See Helgerson 12.

brothel, drink, and danger, / Let him that is his nearest kin, / Cheat him before a stranger” (1.1.4, 15-18). The “nearest kin” here is his uncle, Lucre, who has seized his lands and now lays claim to the debts incurred in their name. Jane aligns herself with Witgood when she enters soon after, lamenting that she “prodigally” gave Witgood the “jewel” of her virginity, and acknowledging that “Lands mortgaged may return and more esteemed, / But honesty, once pawned, is ne’er redeemed” (1.1.39-40). Here she suggests that “honesty,” read as virginity and chastity, can never be reclaimed, and therefore, redemption is not a likely possibility for her, even though she certainly seems repentant at this moment.

This is the point at which Middleton’s play departs from Helgerson’s paradigm, however. The rebellion has already occurred prior to the start of the play – Witgood has spent his inheritance and it is he, rather than an authority figure, who provides the admonition against prodigal behavior, while Jane has already lost her chastity. What’s left is repentance, and this is not a quality that either character convincingly displays throughout the play. The claims of redemption and reclamation offered by both characters in the final scene are complicated by their actions prior to that moment. Witgood tricks not only his uncle but his friends and the vindictive Creditors into believing that Jane is actually a wealthy widow named Meddler who has agreed to marry him and who does not yet know of his downfallen estate. Jane, for her part, may not be guilty of lying in quite the same fashion, but she is at least guilty of sins of omission. She tells Lucre “Nor did I ever boast of lands unto you, / Money or goods. I took a plainer course, / And told you true I’d nothing” (5.2.136-38), which is true. She has certainly not told Hoard of her prior relationship with Witgood, to say nothing of the loss of her

virginity, but she also willingly allowed Hoard to believe that she was someone who she was not, and therefore, has not truly repented.

That both characters so readily engage in fraud and duplicity in order to achieve their own goals is a problem with respect to their claims to redemption. Neither character displays any sign of remorse nor repentance over the course of the play – questioning the morality of their actions, worrying that the ends may not justify the means, and so forth. Here we can recall Rowe's comments to the effect that “the only way we can accept the apparently traditional conclusions of [this play] is to turn our backs on much of what we have seen.” In other words, Witgood and Jane's redemption works because we grant them forgiveness at their request, and in spite of their less-than-upstanding actions throughout the play. We have no incentive to do so; even in the logic of *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, where no one appears to be genuinely virtuous or innocent, Witgood and Jane have only made the moment of their redemption possible by embarking upon a strategic confidence scheme, which they never apologize for.

As I mentioned above, Jane is the key to unlocking the input spaces which enable us to imagine the repentant, redeemed, and “reclaimed” forms of both characters at the close of the play. This is true for two reasons. First, Jane comes to represent a complexly and subtly constructed figure of chastity and generosity as the play draws to a close, although the full extent of this representation is not immediately available until her confession. Second, Jane is the first of the two to fall to her knees at the end of the play, *unbidden*, and confess that she has lied to Hoard, which prompts Lucre to turn to Witgood, his nephew, and prompt him to do the same: “Ah, here's a lesson, rioter, for you” (5.2.186). It is thus Jane's confession which primes Lucre, Hoard, and the others to

believe in the redemption of both characters. Lucre's statement, which represents the only verbal response to Jane's confession, implies that she has succeeded in convincing everyone that she has repented. If Witgood were to confess first, there would be little reason to believe him, based on his actions in the play; but since Jane confesses first, redemption becomes possible for Witgood, as dispositions soften towards him.

Returning to the start of the play, we can begin to detect important differences between both characters through their initial interaction together in the first scene. Jane declares Witgood to be "My love" as she enters, to which he responds, "My Loathing! Hast thou been the secret consumption of my purse, and now com'st to undo my last means, my wits?... Hence, courtesan, round-webbed tarantula" (1.1.30-34). Even so, Jane seems to prick his conscience, reminding him "I have been true unto your pleasure, and all your lands, thrice-racked, was never worth the jewel which I prodigally gave you: my virginity." Witgood replies: "Forgive. I do thee wrong to make thee sin, and then to chide thee for't," an admission which leads him to implore her to "Stay, best invention, stay... Be not contrary" (1.1.36-50). Jane is so deeply happy to hear that Witgood has need of her that she declares "What lies within the power of my performance / Shall be commanded of thee," leading him to explain the "embryo" of the trick that only her "perfect shape" can bring to fruition; her eagerness is unabated, as she declares "[t]hough you beget, 'tis I must help to breed. / Speak, what is't? I'd fain conceive it" (1.1.54-61). And indeed, Witgood needs her for his plan to succeed. As Michelle O'Callaghan also notes, without Jane's presence to embody the shape of the Widow Meddler and thereby "conceive" his plan, Witgood is likely doomed to failure (35). When he unveils his plan, she readily assents to assist him in this endeavor: "There shall want nothing in me, either

in behaviour, discourse, or fashion, that shall discredit your intended purpose. I will so artfully disguise my wants, / And set so good a courage on my state, / That I will be believed” (1.1.77-81). Jane is motivated principally by her own positive feelings for Witgood. So deeply does she care for him, desiring his success and well-being, that she will ignore her own unfortunate circumstances and draw courage from Witgood's confidence in order to play her part.

Whereas Witgood has racked his lands to pay for his debauchery, Jane has given her abundance - her body – to Witgood out of a generous and caring spirit, for her love for him, as she will indicate in the beginning and even later in the play, is unquestionable (1.1.25, 4.1.46). Here I turn to the first input space, located in the dual, overlapping concepts embedded in Jane's use of the adverb “prodigally” to describe the act of giving Witgood her virginity. As the OED indicates, the first definition, easily applicable to both Witgood and Jane, is an act that is of “reckless extravagance; wasteful” (“prodigally” 1). The second definition, which applies readily to Jane both in her usage and as a description of her tendencies as a character, suggests an act that is lavish, generous, abundant (“prodigally” 2). This is not to say that only the second definition applies to Jane – she clearly has wasted her virginity on Witgood – but that her motivations for doing so are such that they open the act to the possibility of forgiveness. Jane indicates that even Witgood's lands “thrice-racked” (mortgaged for three times their value, or mortgaged three times over) would still not equal the price of her virginity, indicating that she knows she has given of herself with lavish abundance, that she has generously allowed Witgood to receive a prize of far more value than his own lands could ever be worth. It is her penchant for giving her “abundant” body with a “generous” spirit that first

opens Jane to reinterpretation as a figure of chastity and generosity, despite her initial status as a fallen maiden and courtesan.

A further clue is provided in her identification of the value of her virginity with the value of the land. This is both a jab at Witgood – he has mortgaged the lands he inherited to pay for his vices, in true prodigal fashion – as well as an indication of a connection between the value of her body as a source of abundance, in the form of fertility, and the economic value of land. The economics of the countryside place no value on her no-longer virginal, seemingly virtue-less body, and indeed, as the play begins, there is nothing to indicate that she herself believes otherwise. But what both Jane and Witgood fail to understand in the first act is that by donning the guise of a land-rich widow, Jane takes on an entirely new form of virtue.

Jane represents a proven, developed property in her guise as the Widow Meddler. From the perspective of a poor country girl, the connections between the use of land and the use of the female body are more than simply apt – they are quite real, palpable even, and certainly poignant. As she declares to Witgood, “Lands mortgaged may return, and more esteem'd, [b]ut honesty once pawn'd is ne'er redeem'd” (1.1.39-40). The economics of the countryside place no value on her no-longer virginal, seemingly virtue-less body, and indeed, as the play begins, there is nothing to indicate that she herself believes otherwise. Joyce – Hoard's niece and Witgood's new paramour – represents virtue in a form they can understand. Her virginity intact, a rich dowry sure to accompany her hand in marriage, Joyce can provide Witgood with “a virgin's love, her portion, and her virtues” (1.1.22). For Witgood, Joyce symbolizes a fresh start – new means of finance to

maintain his freshly-released lands, and a virtuous, unused body. Because Joyce is (via metonymy) “untilled soil,” she represents infinite possibility and redemption.

While Joyce is linked to notions of virgin, untilled soil (and therefore infinite possibility, regeneration, and so forth), Jane's used (but nevertheless young) body represents fecundity. There is nothing to guarantee that Witgood's marriage to Joyce will, literally, bear fruit; but Jane, as the wealthy, landed Widow, represents an almost guaranteed return on an investment. As Aaron Kitch notes, Jane's “imaginary transition from the service economy of prostitution to the investment opportunity of widowhood parallels the transition from wealth through credit to wealth through land” (418). Kitch slightly overstates Jane's position as a full-fledged prostitute at the start of the play, failing to take into account any concept of a courtesan as a kept mistress, rather than a sex worker in the modern sense; as we have seen already, even Witgood protests the characterization of Jane as a “common strumpet,” albeit for less-than-honorable reasons of his own.

Nevertheless, Kitch's comment points to a fundamental fact that joins both prostitutes and widows: neither one remains a virgin, and thus both have either spent their virtue, or given it away. In the economic model Kitch suggests, both courtesans and widows represent the possibility of an investment leading to increase.⁹⁴ And it is in such an economic model that the differences in these investment opportunities (courtesan or widow) become apparent. Investing (i.e., marriage) in a courtesan means risking capital (body and money alike) on a short-lived, and possibly detrimental, return. But an investment in the land-rich widow is a solid, conservative investment, almost certain to

⁹⁴ Michelle O' Callaghan argues that even a wife, “as an economic and sexual object, is in the same structural position within this economy as the prostitute.” See O' Callaghan 35.

produce a return, for if her body cannot produce an increase in the form of children, her lands certainly will provide an increase in cash flow.⁹⁵

Thus, Jane's new – albeit false – identity as the Widow Meddler points to a popular trope in Jacobean city comedies, that of the “widow hunt,” which provides the second input space necessary to reimagine Jane in redeemed and “reclaimed” form at the close of the play. The use of plots where young gallants and prodigals chase older, wealthier women was, of course, not an invention of early seventeenth century drama; prodigal-widow pairings increased in prevalence in the early Elizabethan era and gained in popularity during the Jacobean age. Both *The Trial of Treasure* (1567) and *The Contention Between Liberalitie and Prodigalitie* (published 1602, but likely written earlier) construct a morality lesson around the premise of a young prodigal gallant and an older, more sexually experienced, wealthier woman choosing to devote their time and energies to pursuing pleasure together. Predictably, both characters learn the error of their ways via interactions with various allegorical representations of sundry virtue and vice figures.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ The idea that an investment in land was a solid, stable, even conservative tactic was hardly new even in the early modern period. In the estimation of Anthony Covotta, London merchants were the only investors who had the funds to pay a premium on the land they purchased, and were willing to do so because they placed higher value on the increased social status associated with joining the ranks of the landed gentry. This was not the only reason such investors were interested in purchasing land, however. Lawrence Stone notes that “great landed estates were essential to economic enterprise in other ways than the supply of untapped raw materials; they could also be used to provide security for the borrowing of capital.” Even if London merchants and bankers funded most of the mortgages, it was the aristocracy who took on the role of risk-takers; importantly, only “aristocratic landed security” could draw mercantile capital. The issue of risk goes hand-in-hand with the problem of speculation, as Jean-Christophe Agnew suggests in his study on the speculative nature of most investments during the period. Agnew demonstrates the way geographical location had begun to separate from the *process* of production, leading to the notion of exchange value as a perceived or projected value. See Agnew 41-42, Covotta 31 and Stone 337.

⁹⁶ In *The Trial of Treasure*, the allegorical figure of Treasure is a vain woman who is courted by a gallant named Lust, who is urged on by Inclination and Greedy Gut, who dines on houses and land. Although Treasure and Lust do get to enjoy Pleasure as a companion for a brief while, they are soon laid low by Time, who converts them into Rust and Dust. In *Liberalitie and Prodigalitie*, Queene Fortune rides in a

Three of Middleton's comedies make visible use of this trope: *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, *The Widow*, and *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's*. Other notable instances of prodigal and widow pairings in the Jacobean era include Lording Barry's *Ram Alley* (1611), Chapman's *The Widow's Tears* (c. 1605), John Cook's *Greene's Tu Quoque*, aka *The City Gallant* (1611), Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625), and Rowley's *A New Wonder, a Woman Never Vexed* (1632).⁹⁷ Many other plays take up similar plot themes and devices, of course – Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) is a good example, portraying the comical attempts by Quarlous and Winwife to gain the hand of Dame Purecraft, a widow, although their plans are jeopardized by an overzealous Puritan named Zeal-of-the-Land Busy.⁹⁸ From the standpoint of social order and discipline, marriage to a widow was often seen as an act which exerted a calming and moderating influence on prodigals and gallants, in sexual and financial matters alike. While the prodigal appears

chariot drawn by kings and other noble suitors, while her son, Money, is neglected. After dallying with Prodigality, she then takes up with Tenacity, who imprisons Money, making him too bulky to move. In desperation, Prodigality murders Tenacity, but Money is rescued by Liberality, who redistributes him to the faithful servants of Elizabeth, thereby putting Money back into circulation. See Hanson 2005 225-26.

⁹⁷ Valerie Wayne suggests that Barry and Massinger's plays are essentially adaptations of *A Trick to Catch the Old One*. Taylor et al 2007 373.

⁹⁸ The proliferation of pairings of widows and prodigals in the early seventeenth century has recently drawn scholarly interest. Ira Clark notes that stage depictions of widows in the period would suggest that most widows were young, childless, and financially secure, and therefore on the lookout for sexual fulfillment via marriage, rather than social or economic stability. Meanwhile, older widows are more or less absent from the stage except as representations of undignified female lustfulness, and widows with children are all but completely absent as well. Although older women or women whose first marriage had been a long one were indeed less likely to remarry, it was in fact women *with* children who remarried most often, ostensibly based on financial *need*. The notion of the young, fertile, childless, wealthy, lustful, and eager-to-marry widow thus looks more like myth than reality. Clark offers a summary assessment of various period tracts and maxims which would only have served to whet the appetites of those younger men who, suffering under the strictures of primogeniture and a drop-off in the number of lucrative government and court positions available, combined with increasing awareness of the necessity of a steady income for maintaining social status, were hungry for a way to combine sexual fulfillment with economic security. Clark points to Francis Lenton's comment in *Characterismi* (1631) that "A Country Widdow is a broken ribbe of Adam, turned loose into the worlde againe, and is searching for a new Bonesetter." Lenton offers yet another bit of commonplace wisdom as a caveat, however, noting that because women dissemble in matters of sex, facial make-up, and economic resources, any prospective husband may end up getting "a pigge in a poke." See Clark 400-1.

to fulfill his desires by marrying the widow, he has in fact played right into the hands of socially-sanctioned strictures of morality and good citizenship. Although his fantasy suggests that he will gain a financial fortune, enthrall a sexually deprived widow with his sexual prowess and bask in the glow of success while his rivals remain in disgrace, the reality, as portrayed in dramas, was quite different. Widows were older and wiser, in both money and sexual experience, and therefore were in a better position to exert dominance in both arenas, bringing the lustful prodigal to heel in more ways than one.⁹⁹

The connections between young prodigals and wealthy widows in the context of the Tudor-Stuart stage are visible on multiple levels, Elizabeth Hanson asserts, in her recent article on the topic of the “widow hunt” trope.¹⁰⁰ Hanson draws on demographical data to dispel the one-sided picture of widows that stage drama of the period portrayed, noting that marriage licenses in London from 1598-1619 indicate that in 19% of all marriages, and 60% of marriages between bachelors and widows, the women were older than the men, by an average of 4.5 years.¹⁰¹ Though this age gap would have been more significant in an era when median life expectancy was far shorter (approximately 35 years of age, with two-thirds of all children dying before the age of four) than in our own time, it nevertheless speaks to the fact that Jane's marriage to the much-older Hoard goes against the statistical norm (Baker 47). Middleton's penchant for departures from comedic tradition is thus laid bare in yet another instance here, as it is the younger men,

⁹⁹ This bit of wisdom is echoed in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays as well, which abound with references to husbands, particularly those newly married, who have or will learn the harsh lesson that their wives are not at all what they seem while in the bloom of courtship, and thus are hazed by older, ostensibly wiser married men, who know what is in store for them.

¹⁰⁰ Philip Henslowe, she notes, was first set on the road to his position as a key figure in late Elizabethan public theater when he married his master's widow. See Hanson 220.

¹⁰¹ Hanson cites research conducted by Vivian Brodsky here. See Hanson 220.

Moneylove and Sam Freedom, who are bride-less at the end of the play, having failed in their respective pursuits of Joyce and Jane.

Of course, this distortion of reality is more fantastical than comic; the bawdy humor of an older man marrying a younger and attractive woman, thereby becoming a possible target of cuckoldry, is offset by the fact that the scenario relies upon the false nature of Jane's widowhood. Were she actually a wealthy, land-rich, childless widow, she would have far less interest in marrying rich to secure her financial position and then turn elsewhere to satisfy her sexual needs; rather, it would be more probable that she would marry a figure such as Moneylove or Sam Freedom, whose youthfulness would better complement her desires (as fantasized in the “widow hunt” trope). Ultimately, as both Ira Clark and Hanson point out, any sense of comic possibility perpetually risks being compromised by the potential for genuine violence and the obvious misogyny of the “widow hunt” trope, which supports notions of wealthy widows as sexually deprived and therefore ripe for the taking by any young, virile man.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Both critics point to the 1624 play *Keep the Widow Waking*, now lost, written by the over-large team of Thomas Dekker, John Webster, John Ford and William Rowley, which takes a comedic view of the real-life instance, related in the records of the Middlesex sessions of 1624 and 1625, of the ruin of the wealthy widow Anne Ellsden, age 61, by her suitor, Tobias Audley, age 25. Ellsden reportedly laid claim to some ninety pounds in annual income from her lands, with ownership of another thousand pounds of property, which was (quite unfortunately for her) more than enough to draw the interest of Audley. The incident itself is both grotesque and horrifying: Audley and his compatriots lured Anne to a tavern, where they drugged her and forced her to drink wine to the point of extreme intoxication. She was subsequently “wed” to Audley with the aid of one of his unscrupulous friends, a clergy member, and then raped and tortured by exhaustion – Audley refused to allow her to sleep for several days while he searched her belongings for valuable items. The violence of this and other similar episodes both undercuts the comic potential of the “widow-hunt” while reinforcing the unique valences that Jane's adoption of the guise of a widow, rich to the tune of four hundred pounds per year in land-based income (as opposed to Ellsden's ninety pounds) would have held for Middleton's audience. Clark and Hanson both provide extensive details regarding the incident; Hanson's account suggests that Ellsden's son-in-law was quick to bring charges against Audley, who died in Newgate awaiting trial, as well as moving to quash the play that arose soon after. Clark notes that even this action, however, failed to abate public interest in the episode, as a popular ballad, including a refrain instructing would-be-imitators of Audley in “keeping the widow wakeing or lett him that is poore and to wealth would aspire / gett some old rich widdowe and grow wealthye by her.” Hanson also provides an overview of similar situations, including the less-gruesome account of Elizabeth Bennett, who was unsuccessfully assaulted in the middle of the

It is important to note that Jane is aware of the power of her position, in the guise of the Widow Meddler, as her decision to use the position to her advantage represents both a worldly practicality and a rejection of the repentant attitude of the reformed prodigal. When Lucre arrives to rebuke her for doing him “infinite disgrace, / And your own credit no small injury” (4.1.35-6) by marrying Hoard when she had promised herself to Witgood, she has no patience for him:

Why, what would you wish me do, sir?

I must not overthrow my state for love.

We have too many precedents for that.

From thousands of our wealthy, undone widows

One may derive some wit (4.1.41-5).

Although she confesses that she “loved [Witgood],” she has come to grips with the truth that she has always known about him: that he is a penniless liar: “I did affect him / .../ Believed in his promises, lay here in hope / Of flattered living and the boast of lands” (4.1.46-9). Her comments at this juncture hearken back to the earlier scene in which she first plays coy, then assents to marry Hoard, and specifically, to her semi-comedic exchange with Lamprey, who has come with Hoard to vouch against Witgood's character and in favor of Hoard's. Lamprey expresses that Witgood is “a riotous, undone man, / Imperfect both in fame and in estate, / His debts wealthier than he, and executions / In wait for his due body” (3.1.163-66). She already knows, and doubtless takes no little pleasure in having confirmed within the hearing of Witgood himself (he is concealed in a location where he can overhear the conversation). “Nor land nor living, Say you? Pray

night by Dr. Raven, a one-time suitor. Bennett survived nicely and continued to court many suitors, finally settling – much like Jane – on an older, wealthier, and more powerful (both politically and economically, perhaps) suitor than the young Dr. Raven. See Clark 402 and Hanson 222-224.

take heed / You do not wrong the gentleman!” (3.1.168-69), she huffs, comically unsettling the tentative Lamprey and offering a simultaneous jab at the concealed Witgood, the poverty-stricken, landless “gentleman.”

The widespread popularity and use of the “widow-hunt” trope therefore provides the second input space in this integration network, by giving meaning to Jane’s character through her identity as the fictitious Widow Meddler. Period audiences and historically informed readers alike are positioned to appreciate the socially, economically, and sexually redemptive value of a wealthy young “widow” such as Jane, who briefly steps out of the shadow of her inheritance as a prodigal and a courtesan when she takes on this role. If forgiveness is a crucial element of the redemption of prodigals, as I and others before me have argued, and if money is able to purchase forgiveness or at least mercy (as demonstrated by Witgood’s ability to buy himself grace from Lucre and his Creditors by suggesting he stands to realize new revenue streams), then a wealthy widow should have no problem purchasing forgiveness in more ways than one – through her economic income and the use of her (sexually) experienced and generous body.

The implication of a connection between a fertile, “proven” female body and the economic gains realized by the ownership of land brings me to the third input space, wherein Jane’s body and lands are integrated to represent a single figure of increase, generosity, and abundance – Virtue, in short. While such a figure may present a powerful social and economic opportunity for a young gallant or trickster, however, the true potential of any figure of reproduction, be it land or a body, lies in the abilities of the one putting it to use. This is where Hoard enters the picture. As Lamprey expresses to Jane, “[Hoard] can join land to land, and will possess you / Of what you can desire” (3.1.191-

2). Lamprey's meaning is quite clear: Hoard, who is already wealthy and possesses property, is able to join that land together with that which Jane, as the Widow, ostensibly owns. The potential for financial increase and greater economic security is obvious, as is the doubled meaning of sexual reproduction.

Hoard is not so old, Lamprey seems to imply, that he will not be able to provide Jane with a child, a means both of increasing her body and of securing her economic future even further. As a husband, Hoard can certainly provide financial security for Jane's present and foreseeable future; a child, however, would be able to see to her needs even in the infirmity of old age. Later in the play, Hoard will reveal that despite the obvious attractions of the "Widow's" lands and money, the promise of fertility and reproduction she embodies is of no lesser value. "What a sweet blessing hast thou, Master Hoard," he exclaims, as he begins to list and praise her many favorable qualities: "Above a multitude!... Not only a wife large in possessions, but spacious in content. She's rich she's young, she's fair, she's wise. When I wake, I think of her lands – that revives me. When I go to bed, I dream of her beauty, and that's enough for me. She's worth four hundred a year in her very smock, if a man knew how to use it" (4.4.1-11). Particularly in the light of Hoard's position as a cold, calculating, money-loving usurer, his delight at the blessing and happiness resulting from his marriage to Jane presents an important moment of confession in the play. Given that he concludes his rumination with the thought that he "dream[s] of her beauty, and that's enough for me," his first interest in Jane clearly is not increased cash flow her supposed country estate will bring him, but rather, the happiness inspired by her body.

Hoard's rapturous musings are vital to our understanding of Jane's "reclaimed" form at the end of the play, because they enlist the process of conceptual blending in the aid of identifying and integrating the elements of land, fertility, and body in order to figure Jane in a new form. Imagining her fabled, fertile lands (which truly are imagined, as they do not exist) at the same time as the beauty of a body "worth four hundred a year in [its] very smock," he considers both to be both "large in possessions" and "spacious in content." He imagines Jane anew as a prodigally lavish and abundant figure, bestowing ample returns on any investments Hoard may make in both her land and her body. Thus, as a wife and a "widow" no more, Jane is an imagined blend of the beautiful land she ostensibly owns and the promise of increase it holds, as well as the beauty of her body and its promise of reproduction. Unaware of her true history, Hoard enthusiastically imagines a new identity for Jane, one which erases the previous identity of "widow" in his mind.

Hoard has also imagined his marriage to Jane as having already resulted in positive returns, and not without reason, as the readers and audience members can appreciate. Having given her virginity out of love, and having invested it in a monogamous relationship, Jane has demonstrated herself to be a figure of increase and plenitude. That she has not, in fact, matured fully into a figure of fruitful, bountiful chastity at the start of the play is not her fault at all, but Witgood's. Her former lover has instead mortgaged Jane's love and body only for his own debauched purposes. Hoard is a different matter, however; a man who knows nothing so well as how to recognize and take advantage of a good investment, he is just the sort who can "join land to land" and thus "knows how to use" Jane in a positive and fruitful manner.

What's more, by the time Lucre arrives to chastise Jane for breaking her “vow” to marry Witgood, she has already come to a similar realization. Following her admission that she still loves Witgood, a sentiment mitigated by her frank assessment of his false promises where lands, wealth, and social status are concerned, she presses on. “I find him not the man” that he has claimed to be, she notes, instead characterizing him as “[i]mperfect, mean, scarce furnished of his needs, / In words, fair lordships; in performance, hovels. / Can any woman love the thing that is not?” (4.1.50-53). Her involvement with Hoard has taught her a clear and powerful lesson – that words are not as useful as things, that wits are not as reliable as good, hard cash, and that a man who appreciates the positive potential of her virtues and all that they represent is a true husband in every sense of the word.

Her harsh judgments are not for Witgood alone, however; she accuses Lucre of keeping Witgood's estate mortgaged for two years and thus unavailable for use, and when he protests that he would have returned them to Witgood had he but known that she desired so, she mocks him: “Aye, had I / But seen any such thing performed, why / 'Twould have tied my affection and contained me / In my first desires” (4.1.59-62). As he blusters in his own defense still, she dismisses him, saying “Tut, you've ever been full of golden speech. / If words were lands, your nephew would be rich” (4.1.67-8). But words are *not* lands, of course, and thus, Witgood truly is not the thing he says he is. Witgood may be a gentleman by birth, but he has no lands, no income, and no knowledge of how to put virtue to work to earn him either one, while these are qualities that her husband, Hoard, has in abundance.

At last, then, Jane's "reclaimed" form begins to take shape. Recalling again Turner and Fauconnier's insistence that "form is not a thing at all but rather the human power to construct meanings," we can begin to see a clearer picture of Jane as a redeemed, virtuous figure as we come to the moment of her and Witgood's confessions. On the surface, the woman who kneels before Hoard, Lucre, Witgood, Joyce, and the others is just a fallen woman, a courtesan who foolishly gave away her only valuable quality (virginity) to a man who neither understood nor cared about its significance, and who has willingly aided him in conducting an elaborate confidence scheme, thereby cementing her status as an immoral and unrepentant character. And yet, by proclaiming herself to have taken on a different form, a redeemed and "reclaimed" form, Jane in fact accomplishes just this. Since we have never seen Jane as a young, chaste maiden, full of both sexual and economic possibilities by virtue of her intact virginity, we are compelled to imagine her in this form, and the elements of that form come from the input spaces outlined in the previous pages.

Jane's prodigality represents both waste *and* generosity, and we are inclined to grant good intentions to her for giving herself generously out of love, while condemning Witgood for wasting that "jewel" he was given and which he admits now to loathing. Knowledge of the "widow-hunt" trope similarly obviates the immorality of her masquerade as the Widow Meddler, revealing a concept of wealthy widowhood as a desirable and positive social force, with potential best realized in jointure with an older, economically and sexually mature man. Avoiding the proposals of the young, prodigal-esque Sam Freedom and other gallant suitors, Jane chooses Hoard, thereby securing her economic future and avoiding further associations with figures like Witgood.

Finally, her embodiment of virtue in the form of sexual and economic increase, as the Widow Meddler, returns her to a type of the figure of chaste virtue that she once was as a young maiden, full of promise and hope, with willingness to give her virtue generously to someone who knows how best to use it. By choosing Hoard rather than Sam Freedom or Moneylove, Jane is thus given a second chance to reclaim her previous form. We do not see this change take place either on the stage or on the page, but only in the imagination, where these elements blend together to give a new meaning to Jane's physical form. In Turner and Fauconnier's example, Achilles' armor remained unchanged but took on vastly different meanings when the identity of the person wearing it was someone other than Achilles. So, too, does Jane represent a different figure when we imagine the substance of her character as composed of other materials, and as being prodigally generous and not prodigally wasteful, taking on the guise of a figure with positive social valences, in order to embody prosperity and increase.

Yet we cannot forget that Jane shares her moment of redemption with Witgood, a figure who threatens to destabilize the newly imagined meaning of the form she represents. From the start of the play, Witgood defines his own form for us quite clearly. While simultaneously painting a portrait of himself as a prodigal, he also attempts to persuade us that he is a "gentleman, that's all," even though he's a "poor one" and "that's nothing" (1.1.1-2). His respectable roots are initially reinforced by the Host, who greets him as "Young master Witgood" and "bully Hadland," a reference indicating that Witgood is a worthy, once-respectable gentleman who has simply lost his way (1.2.2, 4), and allowing us to deduce that this is the form he alludes to in his claim, at the end, to "rise / A reclaimed man, loathing the general vice." But the play never gives us a full

picture of this form beyond such scattered references. Even Hoard's niece, Joyce, whom Witgood professes to love and indeed marries, is given no indication of Witgood's former glory. His letter begs her to ignore "what the world reports of me," and instead to believe "I am still the same that I was in love, and I hope to be the same in fortunes" (3.1.16-18). Witgood may be hinting that his love for Joyce dates back to an earlier time of wealth and respectability, but the parallel structure suggests that his motives are purely monetary, and that he hopes to return to his previously wealthy status.

Furthermore, we now know that Witgood is indeed a gentleman in name only, and that anything he tells us is suspect. Indeed, throughout the play, he never swallows his pride, instead displaying an overabundance of self-confidence and conceit, providing a constant reminder of just how unrepentant he is. Witgood is so sure of the quality of his wits and the certain success of his scheme that he doesn't simply dupe the Three Creditors into extending the grace period on his debts, he tricks them into giving him money, jewels, and even free merchandise. They variously offer him forty pounds in cash, "a ruby of twenty pound price," and the offer of an open-ended note for any useful goods from a shop owned by the Third Creditor (3.1.35-64), and Witgood's response to this is anything but remorseful: "Why, is not this better, now, than lying a-bed? I perceive there's nothing conjures up wit sooner than poverty, and nothing lays it down sooner than wealth and lechery. This has some savour yet" (3.1.71-74). Far from feeling guilty for tricking the Creditors, he is awakening to the possibilities that may be realized by living the life of a poverty-stricken trickster, whose very want will "conjure up wit" that otherwise stagnates in the presence of plenty. Hunger – the driving force behind humility

and repentance in the original parable – here accomplishes the opposite, sharpening the prodigal’s wits to embark on further schemes.

Still, forgiveness might yet be more believable in Witgood's case if he were not quite so joyful in the success of his plot, and particularly with the unexpected consequences, such as Jane's marriage to Hoard. His exuberance bubbles to the surface after he eavesdrops on the moment she plots with Hoard to sneak to Cole Harbour, where the latter will “have a priest ready, and there clap it up [marry us] instantly” (3.1.223-24). Emerging from his hiding place, he exclaims, “O, for more scope! I could laugh eternally!” (3.1.235). Furthermore, he suggests that Jane will plan to cuckold her husband-to-be in the near future: “You've fell upon wealth enough, and there's young gentlemen enough can help you to the rest” (3.1.237-39). Witgood thus takes on a role that heretofore has seemed unlikely and repugnant: that of pimp. While there is no indication in the first scene of the play that Jane gave Witgood the “jewel” of her virginity for any reason other than that she simply loved him, and, as Witgood himself declares at the end of the play, “[e]xcepting but myself, I dare swear she's a virgin,” swearing that he has “banished myself forever from her,” the implication of this scene is quite strong. Should Jane find her new husband lacking in his ability to satisfy her much younger appetites, Witgood suggests to Jane that they have but to draw on “[their] wits” (3.1.239) in order to find a solution to her potential sexual frustration.

Even when we are led to sympathize with Witgood, it is not thanks to any act of humility or attempt at reconciliation on his behalf, but because we are shocked by the violent pleasure which the Creditors take upon seizing their prey once they learn that Hoard has married Jane. Hearing that Witgood has lost the “Widow” to Hoard, they re-

enter with murder on their minds. “Hang him, prodigal” (4.3.4) the Third Creditor exclaims, as all three hand him fresh bills for his now extra-inflated debts. When Witgood protests that he still cannot pay and asks for “reasonable time... [to] make you ample satisfaction,” they viciously turn on him. “We must have either money or carcass,” the Second Creditor declares. When Witgood asks “Alas, what good will my carcass do you,” the Third Creditor enlightens him: “O, 'tis a secret delight we have amongst us. We that are used to keep birds in cages have the heart to keep men in prison, I warrant you” (4.3.46-55). Witgood is quickly carried hence to prison, even as the Host attempts to update him on the status of the situation between Jane and Hoard, and in his frustration, declares “I am in hell here and the devils will not let me come to thee [the Host]” (4.3.66-67). The Creditors decry this statement, loudly shouting over each other in their zeal to speak back: “Do you call us devils? You shall find us puritans! Bear him away!... Ah, sir, am I a devil? I shall think the better of myself as long as I live! A devil, i'faith!” (4.3.68-72). Any sympathy we feel for Witgood at the close of this scene is invited entirely by the perverse pleasure the Creditors take in tormenting their prey; Witgood is, after all, deserving of their ire, and even imprisonment, although given that his crimes have yet to involve any acts of violence or physical harm, the images they conjure forth in the use of his body (carcass) for torture and proclaiming delight in imprisoning birds – speak to a tendency to assign punishment that is in excess of the crime.

Middleton's depiction of the Creditors is directly reflected in other prominent period sources as well. In *English Villainies Discovered by Lantern and Candlelight, or The Bell-man's Second Nights Walke* (1608), Middleton's fellow playwright and sometime collaborator Thomas Dekker guides his readers through a London that is figured as

“a wilderness where there are none but monsters... [ugly] in shape and devilish in conditions,” who are engendered in London itself and “are either serpents and wolves, or worse than both” (177).¹⁰³ Describing the fourteen debtors’ prisons extant in London at the time as “charnel houses where men are buried alive,” a depiction due solely in his mind to either “much cruelty in the creditor or much deceit in the debtor,” Dekker also deploys the “caged bird” analogy used by Witgood's *Creditors*: “A prisoner is a bird in a cage – when he sings, he mourns” (274). Since creditors are only apt to be kind “when grace and mercy kiss law and justice,” which only happens on days which “are seldom set down in common calendars; for a strange meridian is that almanac calculated in which they are found” (261), debtors are likely to be cast into prison where, he warns, they will find no good company to console them in their desperation. Such a grim picture, painted by a man who was no stranger to debtors’ prisons, would have been enough to elicit sympathy from many of those who attended performances of Middleton's play, even the perhaps slightly more affluent theatergoers who frequented the indoor theaters where the play was first staged, initially in the churchyard of Paul's and later, Blackfriars.¹⁰⁴ In this context, it would not have been difficult to feel pity for Witgood, whose attempted swindle seems to have led him into the clutches of truly evil men.

¹⁰³ Dekker and Middleton were frequent collaborators. While their most notable combined effort is the gender-bending city comedy *The Roaring Girl; or, Moll Cutpurse* (1611), they also collaborated on *News from Gravesend: Sent to Nobody* (1603), a poem speculating on the metaphysical origins of the most recent plague outbreak, and the wildly popular comic play, *The Patient Man and the Honest Whore* (1604).

¹⁰⁴ It may be incorrect to assume that the theaters at Pauls and Blackfriars were *only* popular with affluent merchants or those from the upper classes, however. As O'Callaghan notes, the churchyard of Paul's especially was a busy commercial thoroughfare, and a common meeting area for country rustics, would-be gallants, and the criminals that preyed on them, increasing the likelihood that such playhouses may well have had more lower-class clients than some have previously assumed. See O'Callaghan 20-24.

But Witgood is scarcely in prison long before Jane begins to plead his case before Hoard, her new husband. Calculating that Witgood's family rival will likely be magnanimous in victory, Jane tells Hoard that Witgood is blackmailing her from prison, claiming that a letter from Witgood draws upon "Some foolish words I must confess did pass [between us] / Which now, litigiously, he fastens on me" (4.4.123-24). The easiest solution, she suggests, is simply to buy him off and secure his release, at which point he will simply leave town and trouble them no further: "The slave's needy, his debts petty. He'll rather bind himself to all inconveniences than rot in prison. By this only means you may get a release from him... A pox on him! Let's be rid of a rascal!" (4.4.133-140). Witgood of course accepts Hoard's offer and signs away any claims to the "Widow's" non-existent lands and goods, a move which earns him Hoard's trust. "Before all these presents, I am friends forever with thee," Hoard says, to which Witgood replies, "Truth, and it were a pity of my heart now if I should bear you any grudge, i'faith" (4.4.279-281). Witgood's financial and physical freedom has thus been secured; his debts with the Creditors erased at Hoard's expense, and his friendship with his unsuspecting soon-to-be uncle ensured.

He is now free, and he uses this freedom to deepen our perceptions of him as a cruel and unrepentant character. In a bid to cheer his uncle up, Witgood tells him that Hoard has not actually married the "Widow," but rather, "[h]e is married to a whore, i'faith," further promising that it is he, Witgood, who has actually "married the honest woman" (5.1.11-15). Lucre's disbelief is undercut by his desire to see his rival duped in such a manner – "A quean, i'faith?" (5.1.18) he wonders, laughing as both depart the stage and the feast scene begins in earnest. What is most vital to take from this brief

scene – it lasts less than twenty lines – is Witgood's eagerness to label Jane, his Courtesan and compatriot in the extensive scheme that has made his good fortunes possible, and whom we have just witnessed coming to his aid when she certainly is not obligated to do so, as a “whore.”

Hoard's brother, Onesiphorus, is the one who finally recognizes Jane and reveals her secret to Hoard, forcing Jane to confess all. “Alas, you know at first, sir, / I told you I had nothing,” she begins, prompting howls of outrage from Hoard: “Out, out! I am cheated! Infinitely cozened!” (5.2.103-5). This in turn enables Witgood to reenter the play, with Lucre and Joyce in tow, and triumphantly declare: “You are so hard o' belief, uncle. / By my troth, she's a whore” (5.2.109-110). If Onesiphorus had not first outed Jane, Witgood would have been compelled to do so in order to keep his promise to his uncle to show that it is he who has married an honest woman while Hoard has married a whore. Lucre is quick – and quite correct – to blame Jane's status as a fallen woman on Witgood, completing the syllogism his nephew begins by telling him “[t]hen thou'rt a knave” (5.2.112), a fact the two characters play up in a satire on rhetoric in argumentation conducted partially in Latin over the course of the next half-dozen lines, ending with Witgood's refusal to admit his own culpability in this matter (5.2.112-17).

When Hoard, still reeling from the discovery of Jane's past turns on his new wife and names her a “common strumpet,” Witgood leaps to her defense: “You wrong her, sir. If I were she, I'd have / The law on you for that. / I durst depose for her / She ne'er had common use, nor common thought” (5.2.124-28). Witgood's sudden interjection here is self-serving. His affront is not at Hoard's use of the term “strumpet,” but at his use of the term “common” as an insult aimed at Witgood, for if Jane's “use” was common, then that

suggests Witgood himself is of less-than-respectable roots. Witgood turns this into an opportunity to belittle Hoard for marrying a woman whose favors he has already enjoyed, and whose company he does not wish to keep. “Alas, sir, I was pricked in conscience to see her well bestowed, and where could I bestow her better than upon your pitiful worship” (5.2.157-59) he brags, laying one final insult on Hoard and Jane simultaneously.

There is little evidence, then, to support a reading of Witgood as genuinely repentant and worthy of redemption at the close of the play, and none of the rich textual cues that prompt us to imagine, integrate, and identify Jane’s “reclaimed” form. Instead, we are given the picture of an unrepentant trickster, a lecher, a gambler, and generally disreputable figure, who uses the only thing he has – words – to construct a scheme in which Jane, now imagined as a figure of virtue and fruitfulness, is asked to represent a non-existent form of wealth and virtue, via fictitious lands and income. Her genuine love for Witgood being rejected, she remains true to him and faithfully carries out the plot he hatches, even approaching him first when she learns that Hoard intends to ask for her hand in marriage. “I am so haunted with suitors, Master Witgood, I know not which to dispatch first,” she exclaims, noting that the chief suitor is none other than Hoard, and that she “first denied him, but so cunningly, / It rather promised him assurèd hopes / Than any loss of labour,” and indicates she believes Hoard will return shortly, with friends as witnesses testifying to the truth of Witgood’s “riotous” and “consumed” condition (3.1.82-96). Witgood’s response invites skepticism. Although he tells her “’Twould ease my conscience well to see thee well bestowed. I have a care of thee, i’faith” (3.1.97), his continual, snide asides and eventual eagerness to label his consort a “whore” signal the

shallow nature of his affection for her. Still, Jane continues to remain generous towards him, even after she has realized how much she has to gain through her marriage to Hoard; she entreats Hoard to pay off Witgood's debts and sees him released, and endures his dismissive attitude towards her at her own wedding feast with more grace than, it would seem, she should be expected to.

And indeed, Witgood's redemption is only made possible by Jane, whose redemption and reclamation *must* come first. Here we see Jane in her new form, a previously fallen woman whose love prompted her to give her virginity in the spirit of abundance, who is deserving of our forgiveness and thus, redemption. Jane even signals that she deserves redemption in her confession to Hoard:

Despise me, publish me, I am your wife...

Nor did I ever boast of lands unto you,

Money or goods. I took a plainer course,

And told you true I'd nothing.

...Nor has my sin been

So odious but worse has been forgiven (5.2.129-141).

In her confession, Jane openly admits to sin, even though it is "not so odious but worse has been forgiven," and turns the loss of her virginity back on the men gathered for the fest in an accusation, wherein she identifies their complicity through willful ignorance and the adultery of their wives: "Most of you old men are content to marry / Young virgins and take that which follows, / Where marrying one of us, you both save / A sinner, and are quit from a cuckold forever" (5.2.146-9). Ridiculing the older men for believing that their younger wives will not cuckold them, she implies that by marrying

“one of us” (a no-longer-virginal woman), they sanctify both of their appetites in a marriage bed, thereby redeeming man and woman simultaneously.

Should anyone have further doubts about her worthiness where forgiveness is concerned, she subtly indicates why she will not backslide in her marriage vows to Hoard: “She that knows sin, knows best how to hate sin” (5.2.151). Jane thus neatly constructs a confession speech that confesses only a minor sin (omission) in relation to one that *all* are guilty of (adultery) in one form or another, and reminds them that she alone has the most to lose by engaging in such behavior, since she knows its consequences. Jane implies that she is less likely to return to that which has been her downfall. As a result of this confession, when Jane shortly announces “Lo, gentlemen, before you all, / In true reclaimed form I fall” (5.2.164-5), it is the figure of Jane as a virtuous, generous, bountiful woman that we imagine to be kneeling before Hoard (just as she did when she accepted his marriage proposal).

Jane’s confession paves the way for Witgood’s, even though, as I noted earlier, it is Lucre who demands that his nephew, the “rioter,” take a “lesson” from his former consort. This confession is suspect, at least in content if not intent. Witgood ostensibly follows Jane’s example, kneeling before the assemblage in order to “confess [his] follies” (5.2.187). Even here, the earnestness of his confession must be called into doubt; at its close, he purports to “defy” the list of temptations, general vices, and immoral pursuits that he has just confessed to. Yet the full line – “I do defy you all” (5.2.200) – implies general defiance towards Lucre, Hoard, Jane, Joyce, and everyone else as well. What’s more, Witgood deftly avoids taking blame for his past actions in his closing speech, instead departing upon a litany of generic, gaming-related vices. An act of repentance

necessarily involves taking responsibility for past actions, and Witgood does nothing of the sort here. Thus, not only does Witgood literally stand as a reminder of Jane's not-so-virtuous past, he presents a disruption of the redemptive conclusion of the prodigal narrative framework. But Witgood's potential for disruption is negated by the strength of the blend imagining Jane as a virtuous, reformed prodigal. Whether Witgood's confession appears genuine or not is irrelevant. The successful closure of the framework is made possible by Witgood's confession and claim of repentance – or more accurately, the proximity of that confession to Jane's. The imagined blend of the redeemed, virtuous, dutifully married character that provides Jane with a reclaimed form is stretched here to encompass Witgood. Both characters are blended together into a singular figure, that of the redeemed prodigal.

Rowe argues that “[t]he only way we can accept the apparently traditional conclusions of [*A Trick to Catch the Old One*] is to turn our backs on much of what we have seen, but Middleton makes this very hard for us to do” (91). I certainly agree, although I would add that the difficulty belongs to us by virtue of being wholly modern readers. Separated from the immediate context of the play by both time and space, we literally lack the brains of Middleton's original audience. In the introduction to *Shakespeare's Brain* (2001), Mary Thomas Crane presents her case for relying on various cognitive science methodologies to investigate “the ways in which the mind (the conscious and the unconscious mental experiences of perception, thought, and language) is produced by the brain and other bodily systems,” and further suggests that the brain deserves consideration, in the context of Shakespeare's works, as a “material site for the production of the dramatic works attributed to him” (3-4). I would argue that CBT

provides us with just the right tool to reveal the brain of the early modern theater-goer at work in the process of imagining creative solutions to the “gaps” in meaning and understanding that a play such as *A Trick to Catch the Old One* maintains. Thus, although the ending of the play remains a problem for modern readers, I stress that the reading I have provided here suggests one way a period audience member might have mentally solved the problem of redemption and reclamation in the conclusion.

Conceptual Blending Theory allows us as scholars and critics to explore form and metaphor in a way that reveals their function as cognitive bridges, allowing the brain to imagine solutions to various problems and “gaps” such as this. In evoking the concept of “gaps” in meaning in conjunction with imagination and other mental processes, I follow in the footsteps of Ellen Spolsky, who has suggested that particularly challenging works of literature are prime locations for exploring the functions of the human mind at work in the process of constructing meaning. From her perspective,

[T]here is a level of cognitive structure at which brains can be said to bridge gaps creatively in response to failures in understanding, these failures themselves produced by the neurological equipment on which we depend for that understanding of the world. The work of coordination between only partially commensurate representations of the world is the daily business of all human minds (*Gaps 2*).

Using the work of numerous cognitive theorists and elements of neuroscience, Spolsky advocates for theories of modularity in cognition – defined, in her words, as “parallel systems of knowledge acquisition,” by which human beings, like most animals and some plants, “learn about an object in more than one way at once, by seeing *and* hearing *and*

touching it, for example” (*Darwin* 45). There are drawbacks to such seemingly powerful systems, however, not the least of which is the necessity of constantly taking in, translating, compressing, and relaying mindboggling amounts of input data in order to render meaningful, interpretable and actionable information about the surrounding environment.

Obviously, some meaning-making system must be in place in order for our minds to take multiple sets of data and fashion a micro-narrative that gives us knowledge which motivates us to take a specific action. In her estimation, these gaps are best understood as “the vacancies between fragments and innovation,” or, in other words, the space between available information (when insufficient sense data is available to decisively interpret and respond to the situation at hand) and the method the brain uses to “bridge [that gap] creatively in response to failures in understanding” (*Gaps* 2). Literary texts, she argues, provide a creative response to these gaps: “These texts, and likewise the subsequent interpretive texts that read the earlier ones, are profitably understood as responses to *gaps in understanding* that are not amenable to repair in conventional ways” (7). In other words, she suggests, we would benefit from re-envisioning the role of literature as a response to problems of interpretation. If the meaning of an item or event is not readily apparent, or locatable through empirical study and analysis of quantifiable data, one way to find meaning is to *imagine* it.

A quick and effective example of the broad-scale nature of this sense of “gappiness,” from a very basic CBT perspective, can be found directly in *A Trick to Catch the Old One*. Midway through the play, Lucre's wife turns to her son (Lucre's step-son), Sam Freedom, and declares that she is hatching a plot to win him the favorable

interest of Jane. Sam immediately asks her whether it is a “tragedy plot, or a comedy plot, good mother,” at which she notes mysteriously that “Tis a plot shall vex him [her husband]” (2.2.376-7).¹⁰⁵ Nothing further comes of this comment, and indeed, Lucre's wife is never heard from again. But the question lingers over the play, and invites us to imagine the play as *both*. The ending of the play may be read quite broadly as a farce in which two scoundrels use their wits to trick two old, amoral usurers into a situation where they receive poetic justice, but only if we accept it as such. Accordingly, it could be understood as quite tragic indeed, if we sympathize with Lucre and his rival Hoard, who have been humiliated, swindled out of money that was legally their own, and yet find themselves forced to put on a smile and bestow forgiveness upon their tormentors. Either way, we imagine the definition of the play as “tragedy” or “comedy” by taking particular structural references from the two input spaces (tragic and comic dramatic form), and imagining the play as *one or the other*, separately, then comparing them for the purposes of integration, and finally identifying them.

Ultimately, CBT is not a framework for determining the “correct” status of a given reading or blend, but rather, as I articulated at the start of the chapter, for breaking down a particular imagined blend into its individual components. Thinking back to Turner’s example of the Grim Reaper, it is easy to see how the various input spaces he identifies there can be integrated in such a way as to result in an imagined entity that represents the personification of death. To speak of how it is possible to imagine two immoral – or, at least amoral – characters as being worthy of redemption and forgiveness is to invite participation in an experiment. If the input spaces are identifiable and maintain their integrity even under the scrutiny of close reading – if the distinction

¹⁰⁵ All references to works by Middleton throughout this chapter are to Taylor et al 2007.

between the two definitions of “prodigally” provided earlier, the identification of the popularity and ubiquity of the “widow-hunt” trope, and Jane’s embodiment of virtue through her body’s promise of reproduction, “worth four hundred a year” in her nightgown – then this particular input network offers one worthy answer to *how* a particular audience member or reader might forget Jane’s transgressions and embrace her new form, and why they might overlook Witgood’s obsequious “confession” to grant him a similar consideration.

My argument rests on the assumption that we *do* grant redemption to these characters, that we do forgive and forget. Here, too, we cannot assume that even an early modern theatergoer, for whom the “widow-hunt” trope in particular would have been a commonplace element of many comedic plays he or she may have attended in the early Jacobean era, would have imagined the same result as the one I have suggested. One critic, David B. Mount, points us toward one of the possible interpretations just such an observer may have produced. Following his insistence that “outward respectability is not necessarily tantamount to inner regeneration,” Mount concludes that Jane’s “fall” at the moment of her confession is both literal and figurative, and that the “form” she reclaims is that of her initial role in the play, a courtesan (261). The only changes to the “form” of either Witgood or Jane are purely aesthetic. In his estimation, Middleton’s play is devoid of moral redemption altogether: “Evil is, in fact, so pervasive in the play as to suggest that the world it represents has no moral center” (260). This is a difficult reading to support, however, in that it necessarily ignores the fact that both Hoard and Lucre grant the protagonists clemency at the close of the play. We cannot overlook the significance of Hoard – who has simultaneously been conned into paying off the Three Creditors on

Witgood's behalf as well as marrying Jane, Witgood's former consort – offering forgiveness here, which he surely does in his assignation that “all” those present are “friends,” and should join in his wedding feast. In the theater itself, this gesture would also be seen to include the audience, which signals an assumption that those of us looking on have already forgiven Witgood and Jane, and thus are ready to join them in celebration.

In closing this chapter, I suggest that further applications of Conceptual Blending Theory may benefit from a larger scope than that presented in this chapter. To readers with a degree of familiarity with CBT or Mark Turner's work elsewhere, this may seem like a contradiction; after all, Turner more often sets his sights on the task of unpacking the complexities of basic parables or allegories, as in the Grim Reaper example, and his work with Fauconnier often draws on juxtapositions of words and images in contemporary advertising and political campaigns to demonstrate the way simple elements convey a complex message in a brief moment (*Think 18-20*).¹⁰⁶ Applying the theory to a single play, such as I have done here, opens my argument to criticisms such as Mount's, which – although personally unconvincing – are not unreasonable in the context of the argument itself.

Even so, I believe the strength of the theory lies in more extensive applications, such as reading Witgood as representing a blend of prominent prodigal figures who preceded him on the Jacobean stage, particularly those prodigals who openly redeemed

¹⁰⁶ In one example, Turner and Fauconnier use CBT to make sense of the comment, made during a political campaign in the 1980s, that “Margaret Thatcher would never get elected here because the labor unions can't stand her,” a slogan requiring a blend of ideas from both Great Britain and the U.S. Thatcher of course could not even *run* for office in the United States, and thus, they argue, the slogan relies on a blended disanalogy, in which the listener is required to imagine Thatcher's defeat in an impossible election before imagining why she would be defeated in that election. See Turner and Fauconnier 18-20.

themselves. This may be the clearest meeting point for cognitive literary theory and cultural studies, by opening up stock comedic or tragic figures such as Witgood or Vindice, Middleton's most prominent revenger, to considerations of the unique blends these characters may have represented to Jacobean audiences. These audiences would have been composed of many prodigal gallants themselves, or who may have had Hamlet's much-commented delay in taking revenge at the forefront of their thoughts when Vindice steps onto the stage clutching Gloriana's skull, begging "Vengeance, thou murder's quit-rent" to "keep thy day, hour, minute, I beseech" (1.1.39-41). Here, too, the skull offers itself as a pivotal input space for Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedies, inviting a CBT-enhanced reading of prominent skulls, skulls which are named, which openly provide more than a bare *memento mori*. Vindice's Gloriana certainly must have a little Yorick in her symbolic lineage, as well as any number of other interpretive input spaces, which would provide thought-provoking material for many further explorations.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The “cognitive turn” that many have commented on (Fludernik 926, McConachie vii, Tribble 17-18, Zunshine *Cognitive* 5) is taking shape, and it should come as a surprise to no one. Literature itself, perhaps even more than literary studies, has reflected this turn with sharpness and clarity.¹⁰⁷ In the past decade, neuroscientists, neurologists, and many other cognitive theorists have stepped smartly into the role of public intellectuals, and readers have responded. I have of course already glossed widely-read work by Daniel Dennett, Antonio Damasio, and Owen Flanagan here, but publications from field luminaries such as Oliver Sacks, V.S. Ramachandran, Norman Doidge, Stephen Pinker, Maryanne Wolf and Jonah Lehrer, to name just a few, have sparked the interests of non-academic readers and scholars alike.¹⁰⁸ These interlocutors come from varying backgrounds. Some (Ramachandran, Doidge, Sacks) are neurologists; others are psychologists, neuroscience researchers, or a little of both (Pinker, Damasio, Wolf), journalists and former literary scholars (Lehrer), or philosophers, rooted in analytical traditions (Dennett, Flanagan). Regardless, these and other commentators express one

¹⁰⁷ In his recent debut novel, *You Lost Me There* (2010), Rosecrans Baldwin constructs the compelling tale of an Alzheimer’s researcher whose wife has passed away, leaving notecards detailing specific scenes from their relationship together. As he slowly works through her descriptions, he is struck by the differences between his recollections and hers, by the way he remembers himself as being a much different person than she depicts him as.

¹⁰⁸ Ramachandran, a celebrated neuroscientist and neurologist, has most recently turned his estimable intellect towards the neurobiological differences between humans and primates, aiming to determine how humans evolved such complex systems for communication and representation e.g. language. Sacks, a neurologist, has been producing books discussing a variety of brain-produced problems, ranging from synaesthesia and aphasia to anosognosia and prosopagnosia, for decades. Wolf and Lehrer’s books on neuroscience and Proust have bridged brought the concepts of the “literary brain,” as discussed in Chapter Five, to the forethought of the reading public. See Lehrer 2007, Ramachandran 2011, Sacks 2010, and Wolf 2008.

clear aim: to redefine the notion of what it means to be human in the post-Darwinian age, in the era of neuroscience research.

This call has also motivated me in the work I have done in this project. Early on in my research, as I was looking for a methodology and critical framework that would best aid in me in exploring what I found to be so fascinating about the early modern period in general and drama of the period in particular, I came across Flanagan's *Problem of the Soul* (2003). I was immediately taken by his insistence that scholars across the sciences and the humanities alike were upholding a philosophy of human existence which "suffers from the same sort of specialization and intellectual division of labor one sees across all disciplines. Philosophers are not encouraged to work on the Big Picture," although the few who do "are the ones who see that the Big Picture is built on less than stable foundations, in some cases on sand" (21). The key to meaning, as he suggests in a later work, *The Really Hard Problem* (2009), lies not in only examining the details of the "Big Picture" before us, but in asking ourselves what brings it all together, and in realizing that even by exploring the question, we are relying on the biological processes that enable conscious introspection in the first place.

Flanagan's work led me to Damasio, first in *Descartes' Error* and then *The Feeling of What Happens*, where I found a compelling new picture of human existence and meaningfulness. What's more, I was particularly struck by his comment, in the latter of these works, on Shakespeare and consciousness. I have already cited this comment in earlier chapters, but repeat it here again for the sake of convenience. Shakespeare, Damasio contends, "understood deeply the nature of extended consciousness and virtually planted it in the literary form within Western culture, [but] he could never name

it as such.” My research into the early modern lexicon confirms Damasio’s comment, that Shakespeare could not “name” extended consciousness, not just because this term signals something specific in Damasio’s own theories, but because “consciousness” had not yet arrived on the early modern tongue. But I was even more struck by the lines that immediately followed: “He may even have realized that something like core consciousness lurked behind extended consciousness, but core consciousness was not a focus of his concerns” (232). What might this mean – “may even have realized something like core consciousness lurked behind extended consciousness?” Surely Damasio was suggesting that Shakespeare’s works were deserving of critical scrutiny through a perspective informed by cognitive science and neuroscience research, a perspective designed to penetrate layers of enculturation and attendant criticism in order to consider exactly what Shakespeare’s works might have to say about the minds of early modern subjects.

In the process of conducting this investigation, it seemed to me as if the threads of this notion had to be both deeper and wider, had to reach beyond Shakespeare – the central figure of modern Western literary culture – to see if similar notions could be found in the works of contemporaries and predecessors alike. It strikes me now, as then, that this is the role of the early modern literary scholar in responding to the call of Damasio, Metzinger, and others to “build a better bridge” between the sciences and the humanities – by pushing the envelope and applying modern frameworks of human thought and behavior to portraits of early modern characters and subjects, examining the results for points where the framework fits or does not, and reassessing both hypothesis and conclusion after the fact. In this, I join Jonathan Gottschall in calling for both the

acceptance of scientific inquiry and experimentation in literary studies, as well the necessity of realizing that “[a]ll intellectuals, including literary theorists, make assertions – otherwise known as hypotheses – that they support on the basis of evidence.” The methodology will only grow stronger as long as errors or, in the parlance of literary studies, incompatible readings, are understood to “lead to honest criticism, debate, rethinking, and ultimately, more satisfactory responses to the broad variety of thorny questions we confront” (*Literary Animal* xxvi). This is the greatest strength of science-based literary research – the ability to realize that miscalculations, incompatible readings, and indeterminate meaning do not equate to a lack of rigor, a lack of utility, or a lack of fitness, but rather, to the opportunity to ask new questions.

It is this sense of experimentation and the possibility of both new venues of research and methods of reconceptualizing old questions that have recently drawn scholars like Amy Cook to cognitive literary studies. As she eloquently notes, “[t]he test for me of the application of conceptual blending theory or neuroscience to works of literature is not if it answers with finality some question, but rather whether or not it helps us get to the next question of interest” (*Neuroplay* 19). For example, she notes that Conceptual Blending Theory and other forms of cognitive linguistics – embodied metaphor theories and so forth – prompt us to ask, “what can a study of linguistic processing tell us about a historical period or the brain of the person who wrote the language?” (14). To follow this train of thought further, we might take the image schemas of Lakoff and Johnson, and ask what *kinds* of containers, objects, and dispositional stances are prominent in a given historical period, and then consider how language may have adapted both in response *to*, as well as *from*, those schemas. If meaning is indeed

embodied (and I believe that it is), then it behooves us to ask how the lexicons and linguistic practices of a given historical era reflect both the material environment of the writers and readers of specific texts, in order to reflect on the possibility that they may have processed and transmitted information differently than current models allow.

In my estimation, the most exciting work done to date in this regard has been provided by Ellen Spolsky, whose work in the field of cognitive literary studies is nothing short of inspiring. Her work begins with 1993's *Gaps in Nature*, where, as I have already shown, she argues that “[A] culture's most powerfully imaginative texts are understandable as the heroic efforts of particularly responsive minds, goaded by the inevitable asymmetry and incompleteness of mental representations to vault the gaps in the brain structure” (1993 2). In other words, the plasticity of the human brain – its ability to map new neural pathways to compensate for damaged, incapacitated, or no longer necessary sections – is what enables it to add a crucial third dimension to literary texts. We may thus think of the brain as literally painting the worlds conjured into being on the printed page or in a staged performance. In recent years, the “neuroplastic revolution” has become a topic of interest for many interlocutors (Doidge xx).¹⁰⁹ Spolsky's work continues to reflect her ability to adapt to just such dramatic shifts as this. Her argument in *Satisfying Skepticism* (2001), that skepticism may be redefined as a “brain state, like joy, or knowing geometry” (1), designed to project ambiguity onto external forces and objects as a way of imagining abstract problems in terms of subject-object relationships,

¹⁰⁹ In *The Brain That Changes Itself* (2007), Norman Doidge provides a comprehensive overview of the “neuroplastic revolution,” noting that “[a]ll of the humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences, insofar as they deal with human nature... will have to come to terms with the fact of the self-changing brain.” See Doidge 2007 xx.

leads her to compelling insights about the cognitive underpinnings of early modern literature.

Neuroplasticity is directly at the heart of her most recent and compelling book project, *Word vs Image: Cognitive Hunger in Shakespeare's England*. As I have again alluded to earlier in this project, Spolsky turns here to an examination of the way the English Reformation's insistence on a literate audience while simultaneously destroying the influential iconography of the Catholic Church left the information-starved brains of early modern subjects hungry for visual forms of information and expression, which drama supplied. As she writes, "The reformers' plan to supply all spiritual needs by spreading literacy was never, I will argue, a reasonable strategy for feeding the hungry. Reading is harder than seeing and offers different rewards. Words simply aren't a substitute for pictures" (x). The brain is designed to "forage" for information, searching and selecting relevant data, ignoring and attending to various objects and bits of information, cataloging regularities and inferring causality via proximal relationships. For a culture whose entry into God's message for their lives was primarily visual and secondarily aural – seeing images and icons, hearing sermons and prayers – the demand to switch to textual learning resulted in cognitive starvation (86-100).

Neuroplasticity, she notes, can help us understand the rapid development in dramatic images and themes from the mid-Tudor era through the start of the Jacobean age. The "ultimate achievement" that Shakespeare realized was "was to display to audiences battered by years of religious upheaval that a loving God was not only in heaven but in full control on earth, and protecting them as he always had"; after decades of cognitive disruption following tumultuous reform debates, Shakespeare was able to

“[stage] celebratorial reconciliations among the disparate parts of a fragmented culture,” (xii), by depicting vivid and visual imagery in conjunction with complex wordplay and linguistic experimentation. Illiterate audience members could feast on the performance, while the literate could track various literary allusions both in performance and in print.

Spolsky’s work here provides an important catalyst for the next direction I turn to in my research. While her book seeks to demonstrate how Shakespeare’s stage was a place where various kinds of “hungry brains” could come together and receive similar information about cultural shifts, albeit through different delivery systems, I see even more important work to be done by reaching back to the Tudor era and tracking the shifts in dramatic texts and performances in tandem with various stages of the reform agenda. As I noted in my research on *Jake Juggler*, Tudor playwrights were closely aligned with the reform movement, whether they were pro-reform, like Bale, or more closely aligned with Catholic sympathies, like Heywood. Following the first waves of reform in the 1530s, I believe that dramatists were forced to think differently about the stage – forced to think of characters whose complexity had to come from a careful blend of language and performance, rather than their position within a pantheon of allegorical depictions of vice and virtue as defined by a wholly Christian perspective.

I see rich soil for future work in the increasing complexity of the relationship between interiority and individual identity in plays from the 1530s through the 1590s and beyond. Even before the Reformation, playwrights had begun to depict the *psychomachia* in increasingly secular settings; for example, *Hick the Scornor* (1514), the first extant English play to be named after a vice figure (Noland 43-44), places the struggle between the virtues of Pity, Contemplation, Perseverance, Free Will, Imagination, and the titular

character in the suburbs of London, as Ian Lancashire indicates (35).¹¹⁰ One of the first places for the effects of the Reformation on Tudor drama to be revealed, I believe, is in the schoolroom, where the brains of a new generation of English students were being shaped by their environment, in the form of textual encounters with the Scriptures as well as the plays of Plautus, Terence, and Seneca, and very present humanist discourses of More, Erasmus, and Luther, among others. The results are made obvious in the output of a “university wit” such as Marlowe, who pushed the boundaries of dramatic convention to create complex and compelling world-conquerers and sorcerers such as Tamburlaine and Faustus. To reduce these musings to a single question, we might ask, “what internal linguistic and cognitive processes occurred in the post-Reformation period to result in a playwright such as Marlowe, who declares (via Mephistopholes) earth itself to be hell?” The answer to this question lies in a close pairing of work such as Spolsky’s with a deeply historicized depiction of reform-influenced pedagogical practices and shifting stage conventions, where I believe cognitive science can provide a clearer view of early modern minds using the theater to navigate the shifting cognitive demands of their time.

¹¹⁰ Lancashire observes that reference within the play to prominent landmarks such as the King’s Bench in Southwark, a popular performance venue, and the gallows at Tyburn indicate a London-area setting. See Lancashire 1980 35.

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