



The Crisis of Masculinity: Twins, Early Modern Medicine, and Drama, 1594-1655

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**The Crisis of Masculinity: Twins, Early Modern Medicine, and
Drama, 1594-1655**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the representation of twins in three early modern medical works and eight dramatic texts which were published between 1594 and 1655 in relation to the idea of a crisis of masculinity. It will analyse the illustrations and descriptions of two people who shared the same birth in midwifery manuals by Eucharius Rösslin, Jacques Guillemeau, and Jakob Rüff alongside the twin characters of dramatic works. The plays range from the very well known to the relatively obscure, while the gender configuration of twin characters is split evenly between wholly male and mixed-gender twins. Chapter One examines William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* (1594) and William Ryder's *The Twins* (1635), while Chapter Two focuses upon John Fletcher's *The Bloody Brother* (c.1617) and Francis Quarles' *The Virgin Widow* (c. 1639). John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614) and John Ford's *The Broken Heart* (1628/29) are analysed in Chapter Three, with Chapter Four exploring William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1600/01) and John Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* (c. 1610). Through these four chapters, I argue that gynaecological writers, medical illustrators, and playwrights all employed twins in order to highlight factors which could cause a devaluation in masculine identity. A singular view of masculinity, the practice of primogeniture, the notion that men who shared power were effeminate, and the connection between violence and masculinity are all suggested to have the potential to plunge this form of identity into crisis. At the same time as medical and dramatic twins suggest that a crisis of masculinity could destroy this form of identity, however, they also indicate that such an event could strengthen it if the right conditions existed. This thesis therefore demonstrates that early modern medical and dramatic representations of twins were used in order to acknowledge how masculinity was presently constructed, and how it might be constituted if

attitudes and practices changed. It makes an original contribution to knowledge in that it is the first full-length study to analyse the way that medical and dramatic representations of twins related to early modern constructions of masculinity.

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Acknowledgements

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<<https://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=38827>>.

Sections of Chapter 3 are adapted from ““It Seems She Was Born First”: The Persistence of Twinship in *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*”, first published in *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 26 (2017), 1-15.

Sections of Chapter 4 are adapted from ““And Shall We Now Grow Strangers?”: The Persistence of Twinship in *The Bloody Brother* and *Monsieur Thomas*”, *Parergon*, 34.1 (2017), 143-61.

When I have used quotations from early modern texts, I have retained their variant spellings.

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Introduction

Representations of two people who shared the same birth abound in multiple genres of early modern writing. Twins are present in religious tracts, love poetry, mythological retellings, and charged political pieces, but they are most notable in medical and dramatic works, where they feature as the subjects of gynaecological texts and prominent characters in tragedies, comedies, and tragicomedies. Despite the fact that medical works were designed to save lives whereas the plays were intended as a form of entertainment, there is nevertheless a key similarity in the use to which these forms of writing put twins. Both sets of texts employ their representations of two people who shared the same birth as a means of highlighting some of the ways in which early modern masculinity could be plunged into crisis. This thesis will argue that the idea that all men were inherently powerful and purposeful was placed under significant stress during the early modern period. Specifically, I will propose a parallel between men who worked as gynaecological surgeons and dramatists, and argue that engaging with the idea of twins helped them to recuperate their imperilled masculinities. With varying degrees of subtlety, the writers of gynaecological works and plays use their jointly-born figures in order to demonstrate that masculinity could be devalued by a refusal to acknowledge the inner differences between men, the privileging of the eldest son which the practice of primogeniture necessitated, or an expectation that men are violent. They also occasionally employ their twins in order to suggest that a crisis of masculinity can be turned to men's advantage, but acknowledge that broader societal changes have to occur before such a transformation can take place.

In this thesis, I will examine medical and dramatic representations of twins which were written or published between 1594 and 1655. I will combine an analysis of gynaecological texts and embryo-images which write about or illustrate two children who shared the same birth with an exploration of twin characters from eight plays. My thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge in that it is the first full-length study to connect early modern medical and dramatic representations of twins to contemporaneous understandings of masculinity. It argues that the idea of two people who shared the same birth proved an attractive one to early modern writers who wished to acknowledge the problems and pressures surrounding the way that masculine identity was constructed. As many of the representations of twins are used in order to raise the same arguments which scholars of masculinity studies make almost four hundred years later, this thesis also makes an argument for a reappraisal of the way in which cultural theory regarding identity politics is conceptualised within the field of early modern studies.¹ It demonstrates that twentieth- or twenty-first-century criticism regarding masculinity does not constitute a more ‘advanced’ mode of thought which has to be retrospectively applied to early modern texts, for it is actually a continuation of the types of discussions which were ongoing during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As well as extending the scope of current scholarship regarding early modern twins and

¹ Indeed, the idea that masculinity could fall into crisis is not only limited to twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholars, for journalists have also reported upon how the increasing number of women in the workplace has combined with a decline in traditionally ‘male’ industrial jobs so as to produce a generation of men who no longer feel like they make a valuable contribution to society. See Telegraph Men, “‘A Crisis of Masculinity’: Men Are Struggling to Cope with Life”, *The Telegraph*, 19 November 2014 <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/thinking-man/11238596/A-crisis-of-masculinity-men-are-struggling-to-cope-with-life.html>> [last accessed 18 August 2018]; Ross Raisin, ‘Men or Mice: Is Masculinity in Crisis?’, *The Guardian*, 6 October 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/oct/06/men-or-mice-is-masculinity-in-crisis-ross-raisin>> [last accessed 18 August 2018].

masculinity, I therefore also seek to alter the somewhat hierarchical relationship which currently exists between contemporary cultural theory and historical works.

After an introduction which outlines current scholarship upon early modern twins, the medical humanities, and masculinity studies, four chapters will discuss how the twins of midwifery manuals and drama were used to acknowledge the precarious nature of masculine identity. While all four of these chapters will engage with Eucharius Rösslin's *The Birth of Mankynde* (1540), Jacques Guillemeau's *Childbirth or, the Happie Deliverie of Women* (1612), and Jakob Rüff's *The Expert Midwife* (1637), each chapter will examine two plays apiece.² These chapters are organised by theme as opposed to chronology in acknowledgement of the fact that the twin characters in plays which were written years apart from each other still engage with the same dialogues surrounding aspects of masculine identity. Chapter One will focus on how William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* (1594) and William Ryder's *The Twins* (1635) both problematise the idea of a singular form of masculinity, and use their representations of twins to highlight the need for a more plural understanding of it. Chapter Two considers how John Fletcher's *The Bloody Brother* (c. 1617) and Francis Quarles' *The Virgin Widow* (1639) demonstrate that the practice of primogeniture had an unfair impact upon the transfer of hegemonic masculinity and power between different generations of men. Chapter Three will then analyse John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614) alongside John Ford's *The Broken Heart* (1628/29) in relation to the connection between masculinity and violence. Chapter Four will argue that William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1600/01) and John Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* (c. 1610) indicate that it is possible

² Rösslin's work was reprinted repeatedly throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, hence the inclusion of a 1540 text in a thesis which examines the period of 1594-1655.

to overcome threats to masculinity, but only if the conditions are right. Finally, the conclusion will draw together these analyses of twins in medical and dramatic texts in order to consider what they ultimately suggest about the pressures which could lead to a crisis of masculinity during the period of interest.

I. Current Critical Viewpoints.

i. Deviants, Doubles, and Devices: Scholarship on Early Modern Twins

This thesis is not the first full-length study on the representation of twins in early modern drama, as Daisy Murray's monograph *Twins in Early Modern Drama and Shakespeare* (2017) claims that title. Murray examines a variety of seventeenth-century writing, including medical works, midwifery manuals, broadsides about monstrous births, and plays which feature twin characters. She asserts that there were 'intersections between the medical dialogue [about twins which was] circulating in early modern England and what is appearing onstage during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', primarily because twins were believed to be the result of superfetation or multiple conceptions, and so they cast doubt upon the fidelity or restraint of their mother.³ Murray argues that the medical belief in the link between twin conception and maternal adultery or hypersexuality proved attractive to playwrights, who saw 'the dramatic potential inherent within the early modern understanding of twin conception and the twin relationship'.⁴ Although it is never made entirely clear as to what exactly this 'dramatic potential' was, Murray's work

³ Murray maintains that 'early modern ideas about twin conception additionally carry moral implications for the mother'. Daisy Murray, *Twins in Early Modern Drama and Shakespeare* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p. 13.

⁴ Murray, p. 13.

suggests that it was rooted in the possibility of portraying physically-similar characters who exhibited or elicited lustful, adulterous, or incestuous desires.

Murray's monograph convincingly argues for the existence of a link between twins and deviant maternal sexual behaviour, but I am suggesting that there was also another connection between early modern medical and dramatic representations of twins. My thesis expands the terms of the 'dialogue' which Murray identifies regarding the treatment of twins within the two genres by demonstrating that it also concerns the identity of masculinity. It reveals that both gynaecological texts and dramatic works also viewed twins as a means through which to highlight problems with contemporaneous constructions of masculine identity. In so doing, it signals both a shift in, and a continuation of, the 'dialogue' detected by Murray, for its focus upon masculinity can be understood as a partial consequence of the adulterous and immoderate overtones surrounding twin conception. Since two children who shared the same birth could potentially be viewed as evidence of an extra-marital relationship which cuckolded a husband, the presence of twins gestures towards vulnerable masculine identity, and thereby suggests that these figures lent themselves quite easily to discussions of masculinity.⁵

Another key feature of Murray's work is her assertion that 'the majority of writing about twins in this period highlights their abnormality and deviation from the norm, in a way that marks twins as not only different, but potentially monstrous'.⁶

Murray reaches this conclusion from her analysis of broadsides and chapbooks which feature conjoined twins, as well as the aforementioned discussions of the

⁵ As I have shown in other work, medical writers and dramatists alike acknowledged the idea that twins could be the product of extra-marital relationships. See Louise Powell, "'And Shall We Now Grow Strangers?': The Cause and Cure of Twinship in *The Bloody Brother* and *Monsieur Thomas*", *Parergon*, 34.1 (2017), 143-61 (pp. 148-49).

⁶ Murray, p. 26.

conception of twins. While Murray utilises these sources effectively, I have chosen to focus instead upon early modern texts which relate to twins of separate bodies, as a different set of dialogues surrounded them. I therefore analyse medical instructions which focus upon the delivery of twins who are not conjoined, and the foetal illustrations of such figures which also appeared in gynaecological works. In so doing, I am expanding the scope of the current critical dialogue surrounding early modern twins, and demonstrating that two people who shared the same birth could signify more than monstrosity or deviant behaviour.

With regards to Murray's analysis of twin characters in plays, her argument is informed by genre. She asserts that while negative, fearful representations of twins abound in tragedies, Shakespeare's comedies stand out among other works of early modern drama for the celebratory approach which they take towards twinship.⁷ This suggestion of a connection between the uses to which twins are put, and the genre of work in which they feature, is a compelling one, but I have chosen to take a different, thematic approach. By focusing upon how both tragedies and comedies use their twin characters in order to address a range of issues regarding masculinity, I demonstrate that other factors beyond genre influenced the way in which dramatists portrayed their fictional figures who shared the same birth. This contrasting structure further extends the parameters of current scholarship on early modern twins by highlighting the existence of different influences upon their representation.

While Murray's work chooses to consider how ideas surrounding the conception of twins, responses to conjoined twins, and the genre of dramatic writing influenced the way in which early modern society viewed two people who shared the

⁷ Ibid.

same birth, this thesis indicates that there were also other forms of dialogue surrounding such figures. By highlighting how the separate-bodied twins who are represented in foetal images, chapters on childbirth in gynaecological texts, and different genres of drama all problematise early modern masculinity, it demonstrates the relevance of such figures to this period's identity politics. It also analyses four plays which were not covered by Murray in the form of Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* and *The Bloody Brother*, Ford's *The Broken Heart*, and Quarles' *The Virgin Widow*, and thereby indicates that there was an even greater dramatic interest in twins than has previously been acknowledged. My thesis therefore develops the ground-breaking contribution to scholarship on early modern twins which Murray's monograph has made, and in the process it demonstrates that other approaches to this topic can help to create a better understanding of what twins represented to writers across the early modern period.

Murray's monograph attests to the fact that the presence of twins in early modern medicine and drama is a burgeoning area of fascination for contemporary scholarship, but there are other, older examples of work in this area which demonstrate that the topic has elicited critical interest for quite some time. Stephen Greenblatt's well-known article 'Fiction and Friction' draws upon early modern medical texts which discuss anatomical differences between biological sexes. He argues that because 'there [were] not two radically different sexual structures but only one – outward and visible in the man, inverted and hidden in the woman', there existed an early modern belief in 'the persistent doubleness, the inherent twinship, of all individuals'.⁸ Before a person could be clearly classified as a member of a

⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 77; p. 78.

particular biological sex, Greenblatt argues, there had to be an ‘emergence of an individual out of a twinned sexual nature’ through ‘sexual chafing’.⁹ He maintains that although this rather physical form of action was not visibly evident in performance, it was instead shown by such authors as Shakespeare in the form of ‘witty, erotically charged sparring’.¹⁰ Greenblatt’s historicist reading ultimately suggests that all early modern individuals could be considered ‘twins’ to themselves until they reached sexual maturity, at which point they had to renounce their twinship and assume a clearly recognisable biological sex.

Although this thesis shares Greenblatt’s interest in the way that early modern medical works and dramatic texts both reveal ideas surrounding twinship, it approaches the topic in a very different manner. Greenblatt is primarily concerned with how Galenic understandings of anatomical differences between biological sexes impacted upon the development of early modern sexual identity, and finds twinship a convenient metaphor through which to explain his findings. This thesis instead takes the presence of twins as its primary concern, and considers how their representation in medical and dramatic texts illuminate other aspects of early modern life in the form of the identity politics behind masculinity. Its attitude towards the idea of twinship also differs from Greenblatt’s, for he implies that an early modern individual would have to forfeit their status as a twin before they could assume their desired identity as a sexually-mature man or woman. I do not share this somewhat pessimistic viewpoint, as I suggest that it was not the twin relationship which had to be lost if a more desirable form of masculinity were to be achieved, but rather particular mindsets and forms of behaviour which concerned early modern men.

⁹ Greenblatt, p. 91; p. 89.

¹⁰ Greenblatt, p. 89.

While Greenblatt's criticism and my own research draw upon similar genres of early modern writing, then, there are clear differences in the uses to which they put twins, and the attitudes which they detect around them.

Another notable exemplar of prior critical interest in the topic of early modern twins is Coppélia Kahn's psychoanalytic reading of two characters who share the same birth in Shakespeare's comedies. Kahn argues that 'the twin, as narcissistic mirror, represents the mother as the earliest, most rudimentary confirmation of the self', and suggests that if the characters who shared the same birth are to assume mature sexual identities, they must first thoroughly distinguish themselves from their jointly-born sibling.¹¹ This idea that twins can both impair and facilitate the development of sexual identity is convincingly shown to be present in the comedies which Kahn discusses, but I have chosen to focus upon how these figures comment upon masculine identity more broadly. This decision allows my thesis to reflect the diverse forms of masculinity which two people who shared the same birth were used to problematise, and demonstrates that twins could also reference the development of mature masculine identity in areas other than the sexual.

In addition to the focussed historicist and psychoanalytic approaches of Greenblatt and Kahn, other critics have made broader connections between the presence of twin characters and dramatic structure. John M. Mercer has argued that the likeness between the twin characters of *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night* generates a 'quest-like' framework which proves extremely useful for the plots of

¹¹ Coppélia Kahn, 'The Providential Tempest and the Shakespearean Family', in *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytical Essays*, ed. by M. Schwartz (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 217-43 (p. 222).

their plays.¹² Mercer then goes on to assert that the twins of *The Comedy of Errors* are ‘devices’, a term which is also applied to the characters Viola and Sebastian by Walter N. King and Porter Williams Jr.¹³ King argues that the twins of *Twelfth Night* are ‘hackneyed devices’, while Williams Jr. is only slightly less derogatory when he terms them ‘artificial devices’.¹⁴ In the same edited collection, Joseph H. Summers is also somewhat unenthusiastic about Viola and Sebastian, calling them ‘the usual material of the romances – twins’.¹⁵ I do not share these rather dismissive attitudes towards two characters who shared the same birth, but instead argue that these figures had a much more significant function than Mercer, King, Williams Jr., and Summers attest. Through its discussion of eight plays which feature twin characters, my thesis will demonstrate that playwrights saw these figures as more than just ‘devices’, as they could use them in order to articulate their concerns as to how early modern masculinity was constructed.

While a considerable amount of criticism has already been published regarding the representation of twins in early modern medicine and drama, then, this thesis differs significantly from existing scholarship in a number of ways. Its combination of the historical sources of midwifery manuals and dramatic texts with cultural theory from the area of masculinity studies constitutes a new approach to the topic that has tended previously to attract more firmly historicist or psychoanalytical readings. What is more, its detailed analysis of foetal images and advice regarding

¹² John M. Mercer, ‘Twin Relationships in Shakespeare’, *The Upstart Crow*, 9 (1989), 24-39 (p. 25).

¹³ Mercer, ‘Twin Relationships in Shakespeare’, p. 25.

¹⁴ Walter N. King, ed., ‘Introduction’, in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Twelfth Night: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 1-14 (p. 2); Porter Williams, Jr., ‘Mistakes in *Twelfth Night* and Their Resolution: A Study in Some Relationships of Plot and Theme’, in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Twelfth Night: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Walter N. King (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 31-44 (p. 31).

¹⁵ Joseph H. Summers, ‘The Masks of *Twelfth Night*’, in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Twelfth Night: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Walter N. King (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 15-23 (p. 15).

twin deliveries means that it draws upon previously undiscussed material. I also offer close readings of four plays which feature twin relationships that have been otherwise overlooked by critics. The methodology, sources, plays, and arguments which my thesis presents all combine to ensure that it advances the critical dialogue surrounding early modern twins in several new directions.

ii. Riding the Crest of the 'Second Wave': Medical Humanities Research

With an argument that is fundamentally grounded in an analysis of seventeenth-century gynaecological works in the form of midwifery manuals and the foetal illustrations that they contained, this thesis is closely aligned with the medical humanities, and contributes to this rapidly growing area of study.¹⁶ With its synthesis of medical education and humanities subjects, the medical humanities was originally designed to produce a more empathetic cohort of doctors, an aim which has since been described by Anne Whitehead and Angela Woods as the 'first wave' or 'primal scene' of the field.¹⁷ The nobility of this initial intention did not, however, render the medical humanities immune to criticism from scholars who had multiple concerns about the field, particularly the way in which it positioned patients and non-Western

¹⁶ There has been much critical debate over what the medical humanities actually are, but they are generally held to revolve around the role which humanities subjects can play in the education of doctors, particularly in the interaction between doctors and patients. While I am aware that some scholars of the medical humanities dislike such terms as 'area of study' or 'field' because they feel that these labels set limits on its interdisciplinary nature, I have chosen to use them for clarity. For an example of an argument against referring to the medical humanities as an 'area of study' or a 'field', see William Viney, Felicity Callard, and Angela Woods, 'Critical Medical Humanities: Embracing Entanglement, Taking Risks', *Medical Humanities*, 41.1 (2015), 2-7.

¹⁷ Anne Whitehead and Angela Woods, eds, 'Introduction', in *The Edinburgh Companion to the Critical Medical Humanities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 1-31 (p. 2; p. 3). Many scholars have argued that medical humanities research has had a positive impact upon practitioners' and patients' experiences of healthcare. See H. M. Evans, and D. A. Greaves, "'Medical Humanities'—What's in a Name?", *Medical Humanities*, 28.1 (2002), 1-2; Gillie Bolton, 'Boundaries of Humanities: Writing Medical Humanities', *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, 7.2 (2008), 131-48 (pp. 132-46).

medical students.¹⁸ Alongside an awareness that the medical humanities is attracting an increasing number of scholars from different disciplines, these concerns have recently helped to lead to the development of a second ‘wave’ of medical humanities research. As Whitehead and Woods make clear, this new ‘wave’ of inquiry applies critical theory from the humanities in order to examine the relationship between doctor and patient from a variety of angles: ‘How might the bodies of doctors and patients be marked in terms of race, class, gender, ability and disability, and with what effects?’.¹⁹ One key distinction between the first and second ‘waves’ of medical humanities research therefore lies in the attention which the later, latter body of work pays to identity politics.

With its interest in the doctor-patient relationship, and its potential to help medical practitioners become more empathetic, the medical humanities may seem to be suited only to studies which can engage with critical theory in relation to contemporary culture. This idea is not only problematic for a thesis which focuses

¹⁸ Jeffrey P. Bishop, for example, argues that the medical humanities merely offer doctors another way of controlling patients, while Claire Hooker and Estelle Noonan convincingly explain how a heavy focus upon Western understandings of the doctor-patient relationship, and Western cultural texts, alienates non-Western medical students, as well as those who do not speak English. Further criticism of the medical humanities has been levelled at the name of the field itself, and the uncertainty it creates in institutions, which are unsure as to how it should be classified and taught. Such uncertainty is argued to create problems for academics as well as students. See Jeffrey Bishop, ‘Rejecting Medical Humanism: Medical Humanities and the Metaphysics of Medicine’, *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 29.1 (2008), 15-25; Claire Hooker and Estelle Noonan, ‘Medical Humanities as Expressive of Western Culture’, *Medical Humanities*, 37.2 (2011), 79-84. For problematisations of the term ‘medical humanities’, see Desmond O’Neill, Elinor Jenkins, Rebecca Mawhinney, Ellen Cosgrave, Sarah O’Mahony, Claire Guest, and Hilary Moss, ‘Rethinking the Medical in the Medical Humanities’, *Medical Humanities*, 42.2 (2016), 109-14; Howard Brody, ‘Defining the Medical Humanities: Three Conceptions and Three Narratives’, *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 32.1 (2011), 1-7. For a discussion of institutional and pedagogical uncertainty regarding the medical humanities, see H. M. Evans and D. A. Greaves, ‘Ten Years of Medical Humanities: A Decade in the Life of a Journal and a Discipline’, *Medical Humanities*, 36.2 (2010), 66-68 (p. 66); Delese Wear, ‘The Medical Humanities: Toward a Renewed Praxis’, *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 30.4 (2009), 209-20; H. M. Evans and R. J. MacNaughton, ‘A “core curriculum” for the Medical Humanities?’, *Medical Humanities*, 32.2 (2006), 65-66 (p. 66); Neville Chiavaroli and Constance Ellwood, ‘The Medical Humanities and the Perils of Curricular Integration’, *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 33.4 (2012), 245-54.

¹⁹ Whitehead and Woods, p. 2.

upon the seventeenth century, but also for scholars of historical periods more generally, who may feel that their study of earlier eras excludes them from producing work which fulfils the aims of the medical humanities. Yet academics working within the medical humanities have nevertheless argued that historical scholarship can lead to more empathetic practitioners and improved doctor-patient relationships. Whitehead and Woods assert that ‘Thinking and reading historically is [...] vital to the critical medical humanities’, because such an approach allows comparisons between current and contemporaneous medical practice and thinking.²⁰ The value of historical studies to the medical humanities therefore lies in their ability to provoke critical reflection in their readers. As this practice is very important to the personal and professional development of doctors, historical studies perform a vital pedagogical function for medical students.

Indeed, there has been a great deal of work which focuses upon the early modern period and falls under the remit of the medical humanities so successfully that it has been published in journals which refer to that area of study in their titles.²¹ Some research, such as that undertaken by Ellen Tullo and Eric Langley, chooses to focus on early modern medical ideas alone: Tullo links John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* with seventeenth-century medical explanations of lycanthropy, and Langley highlights how concern over the transmission of such diseases as the plague is evident in Shakespeare’s *Othello*.²² Other examples of scholarship published within

²⁰ Whitehead and Woods, p. 20; see also p. 7.

²¹ *Medical Humanities* and *Journal of Medical Humanities* are two internationally respected peer-reviewed journals, and as their names suggest, they are both at the forefront of medical humanities research. *Journal of Medical Humanities* is the older of the pair; while it has undergone various name changes, it dates back to 1980. *Medical Humanities*, meanwhile, was first published in 2000, and is co-owned by the Institute of Medical Ethics and the British Medical Journals (BMJ). The fact that these two leading journals are willing to publish research which focuses upon the early modern period is a further, important endorsement of the relevance of this type of scholarship to the field.

²² See Ellen Tullo, ‘Duke Ferdinand: Patient or Possessed? The Reflection of Contemporary Medical Discourse in John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi*’, *Medical Humanities*, 36.1 (2010), 19-22; Eric

these journals, meanwhile, draw parallels between early modern and contemporary medical practice. L. Hill Curth, for example, highlights similarities between how preventative medicine was understood during the early modern period, and how it is conceptualised now.²³ Catherine Belling's analysis of Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* is a similar type of study, as it demonstrates that the notion of secrecy is important to early modern and contemporary practices of donor insemination.²⁴

With its examination of how medical figures and dramatists represented twins in their work, this thesis sits alongside other works of scholarship on the early modern period which can be classified as part of the medical humanities. Its engagement with criticism from the field of masculinity studies means that it aligns neatly with the focus on identity politics within the 'second wave' of medical humanities scholarship which is beginning to emerge. Such a focus upon masculinity also helps to begin to redress the imbalance of criticism which was made particularly evident by Anne Whitehead's and Angela Woods' vast edited collection, *The Edinburgh Companion to the Critical Medical Humanities* (2017), which is the most substantial work of medical humanities scholarship to date. While the edited collection features entire sections which relate to feminism, not one chapter clearly indicates that it has links with masculinity studies. This thesis therefore does not only contribute to medical humanities scholarship on account of its choice of

Langley, 'Plagued by Kindness: Contagious Sympathy in Shakespearean Drama', *Medical Humanities*, 37.2 (2011), 103-09. The seventeenth-century medical understanding of lycanthropy has been of interest to many critics working on *The Duchess of Malfi*, including Brett D. Hirsch and Albert H. Tricomi, but they will be referred to in Chapter Three as the focus here is upon work published in the two leading medical humanities journals.

²³ See L. Hill Curth, 'Lessons From the Past: Preventative Medicine in Early Modern England', *Medical Humanities*, 29.1 (2003), 16-20.

²⁴ See Catherine Belling, 'The Purchase of Fruitfulness: Assisted Conception and Reproductive Disability in a Seventeenth-Century Comedy', *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 26.2/3 (2005), 79-96.

subject-matter, but also its decision to engage with an under-explored area of identity politics in masculinity studies.

iii. The Crisis of Masculinity: An Overview

The lack of dialogue between the medical humanities and masculinity studies criticism is surprising given the breadth of scholarship which exists within the latter field. While masculinity studies has its roots in the broader area of Gender Studies and began as a sociologically-based argument against such ideas as ‘sex-role theory’, it has since become an important line of enquiry for multiple areas of scholarship, including literary studies and film studies.²⁵ Within literary studies in particular, the emphasis has been placed upon how texts either reinforce or problematise constructions of masculine identity across a range of historical eras. With its exploration of how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century representations of twins reveal some of the pressures which could devalue masculinity, this thesis both complements and further develops existing research into early modern masculine identity.

Literary scholars have taken various approaches to their investigations into how early modern masculinity was constructed. Robin Headlam Wells, for example, has examined how a heroic form of masculinity was constructed during the late sixteenth century. Wells declares that early modern heroic masculinity was

²⁵ ‘Sex-role’ theory, which was particularly popular in the 1950s, suggested that those who were born biologically male exhibited certain types of behaviour and emotion which were seen as ‘appropriate’ for men. For arguments against sex-role theory, see Nigel Edley and Margaret Wetherell, ‘Masculinity, Power and Identity’, in *Understanding Masculinities*, ed. by Máirtín Mac an Ghaill (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996, repr. 1997), 97-113 (p. 104); Tim Carrigan, R. W. Connell, and John Lee, ‘Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity’, in *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, ed. by Rachel Adams and David Savran (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 99-118 (pp. 106-07).

constituted of ‘Machiavellian *virtú* and the chivalric honour of the neo-medievalist [which] amount in practice to the same thing [...] that “courage-masculine” which militarists believed to be the hallmark of a glorious nation’, then goes onto explain that Shakespeare’s plays highlight ‘the dangers of heroic masculinity’.²⁶ Lorna Hutson has meanwhile explored the impact which changing understandings of friendship had upon early modern men. Hutson detects ‘profound anxiety over the power of vows and pledges to assure the continuity of love or friendship’.²⁷ She locates such ‘anxiety’ as a consequence of a movement away from ‘the notion of “friendship” between men [...] from [...] a code of “faithfulness” assured by acts of hospitality and the circulation of gifts through the family and its allies’, and towards ‘that of an instrumental and affective relationship which might be generated, even between strangers, through emotionally persuasive communication, or the exchange of persuasive texts’.²⁸ Bruce R. Smith takes yet another different approach to early modern understandings of masculinity by focusing exclusively upon Shakespeare’s treatment of this form of identity, and arguing that there are ‘At least five ideal types [of masculinity which] offer themselves for emulation in Shakespeare’s scripts: the chivalrous knight, the Herculean hero, the humanist man of moderation, the merchant prince, and the saucy jack’.²⁹ Taken together, the work of Wells, Hutson, and Smith signals that while early modern hegemonic masculinity was still very much the preserve of white, heterosexual, aristocratic and able-bodied men, the

²⁶ Robin Headlam Wells, *Shakespeare On Masculinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 22; p. 30.

²⁷ Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer’s Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁹ Bruce R. Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, repr. 2008), p. 44.

notion of what constituted normative masculine behaviour was becoming increasingly fluid.

Another approach to the question of how early modern masculinity was constructed is concerned with the influence that medical thought had upon the way in which men understood themselves. The best-known example of this type of scholarship is arguably Mark Breitenberg's monograph *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (1996), which argues that Galenic understandings of the anatomical differences between biological sexes threatened to discredit the idea that men were essentially superior to women. Breitenberg asserts that for early modern people, 'the differentiation between men and women is a matter of degree (more or less heat, the descent of the genitals), [so] anatomical science presents an intrinsic contradiction to the belief in essential, God-given sexual difference'.³⁰ Such closeness between male and female biological sexes then led to the development of 'anxiety' regarding the notion of inherent male superiority and the security of the patriarchy, which meant that 'a variety of constructions of woman as Other' had to be produced and maintained in order to reinforce the idea that men were authoritative.³¹ Breitenberg thus suggests that medical thought possessed such a destabilising potential that 'masculine identity and authority depend[ed] upon articulating a discourse that mark[ed] itself, and [could] only know itself, through its differentiation from what it constructs as "woman" and female desire'.³²

While Breitenberg asserts that the belief in the Galenic model of anatomical difference posed a threat to early modern masculinity, however, Christian M. Billing

³⁰ Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, repr. 2003), p. 14.

³¹ Breitenberg, p. 11.

³² Breitenberg, p. 154, italics in original.

argues that this form of identity was actually being destabilised by an emerging recognition of clear differences between biological sexes. Billing declares that ‘anatomists recognised that there was not one, but two sexes, and that changing from one to the other was impossible’, so their works affected the way in which men perceived their position as the superior sex.³³ He maintains that ‘it was the realisation that men and women were not the same that constituted a greater threat to patriarchal authority than fears of homology and anatomical instability’, because it raised the question of where the notion of masculine superiority actually came from.³⁴ The idea that the bodies of men did not provide them with the essential right to dominate over women therefore threatened to demonstrate the unfairness of the power which they exercised over them.

Despite the differences in approach and argument between Wells, Hutson, Smith, Breitenberg, and Billing, the work of these critics nevertheless gestures towards the same idea: early modern understandings of masculinity were undergoing significant change. Since notions of male heroism, friendship, social roles, biology, and power were altering rapidly, it was unclear exactly what constituted a valuable form of masculine identity. This thesis is therefore much less interested in reading for or against the works of the aforementioned scholars than it is in using them as a foundation upon which to build its argument that early modern masculinity was never far away from crisis. As the older forms of behaviour and ideas about male bodies began to be replaced by newer ones, men had to alter the way that they acted

³³ Christian M. Billing, *Masculinity, Corporeality and the English Stage, 1580-1635* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), p. 36.

³⁴ Billing, p. 106.

or thought about themselves, and to acknowledge that society's previous notions of what made a man valuable had changed.

The idea of a 'crisis of masculinity' is such a well-known one that Ross Haenfler has called it 'a common theme' of work which focuses upon contemporary constructions of masculine identity.³⁵ Haenfler neatly summarises the notion of masculinity being in crisis when he explains that 'Living under a constant "burden of proof", men feel overburdened and undervalued, despite their continued advantages in a patriarchal society'.³⁶ This sense that men are being placed under too much pressure to act in a certain way, and are subjected to harsh judgement when they do not, informs the focus of scholarship which examines late twentieth and early twenty-first century masculinities, but it is just as applicable to the way in which this form of identity was constructed during the early modern period. Such critics as Fintan Walsh and Ariane Blayac, Claire Conilleau, Claire Delahaye, *et al* have rightly acknowledged that the idea of a crisis of masculinity is not exclusive to the contemporary moment: the former acknowledges that this notion 'extends well beyond the turn of the twenty-first century', and the latter group asserts that 'the crisis of masculinity has been a recurrent feature [...] of political and scholarly discourses for decades, even centuries'.³⁷ For all of the awareness which these cultural theorists exhibit with regards to the historical presence of the crisis of masculinity, however, no early modern scholar has yet explicitly identified the existence of such a connection.

³⁵ Ross Haenfler, 'Manhood in Contradiction: The Two Faces of Straight Edge', *Men and Masculinities*, 7.1 (2004), 77-99 (p. 77).

³⁶ Haenfler, p. 77.

³⁷ Fintan Walsh, *Male Trouble: Masculinity and the Performance of Crisis* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 4; Ariane Blayac, Claire Conilleau, Claire Delahaye, and Hélène Quanquin, 'Critical Masculinities', *Culture, Society and Masculinities*, 3.1 (2011), 3-12 (p. 7).

My thesis will assert that early modern males were subject to a crisis of masculinity in that they were made to feel that they were unimportant or undervalued for specifically gendered reasons. I will highlight a number of situations in which early modern men suffered from the perception that their occupations, circumstances, or behaviour fell short of the standard expected of males. I therefore use the term ‘crisis of masculinity’ in order to refer to male consciousness of a devaluation in masculine identity, which is concomitant with how Haenfler, Walsh, and Conilleau, Blayac, Delahaye *et al* perceive this occurrence. In so doing, I am demonstrating that early modern men found their identities were plunged into crisis precisely *because* they were male.

By arguing that the identity of masculinity experienced a crisis during the early modern period, this thesis therefore forges new links between the field of masculinity studies and this historical era. It develops current scholarship on early modern masculinity by demonstrating that more specific crises of masculinity occurred alongside the broader tensions which have already been outlined. While the changing notions of male heroism, friendship, social roles, biology and power all attest to the broader idea that early modern masculine identity was in crisis, some men could also experience crises of masculinity on account of their occupations. As the next section of this introduction will make clear, surgeons and dramatists alike knew that they could be understood as deficient, unworthy men because of the nature of the work that they performed. In their attempts to assert the value of their occupations and their masculine identities, both sets of men turned to the medium of print – and the idea of twins.

II. The Crisis of Masculinity and the Allure of Twins

i. *Medical Crises of Early Modern Masculinity*

The question of exactly who should help a woman to deliver her child safely became a contested one during the early modern period, for what began as an exclusively female sphere of medicine in gynaecology increasingly came to be practised by men. Thomas G. Benedek explains that as the seventeenth century progressed, the sphere of childbirth shifted from female midwives alone, to midwives and male surgeons, then finally to be dominated by surgeons.³⁸ Bridgette Sheridan notes that while French midwives and surgeons both undertook practical training through attendance at deliveries or dissections, male gynaecological practitioners were given greater authority than their female counterparts, with ‘midwives [...] placed under the surgeons’ supervision, allowing surgeons to gain access to midwives’ knowledge of birthing’.³⁹ Although Sheridan’s work focuses upon France, there is evidence to suggest that surgeons became increasingly popular gynaecological practitioners for aristocratic families in early modern England, too. As Carolyn Harris explains, Henrietta Maria’s discomfort with being attended by Charles I’s male physician, Theodore Mayerne, led to her decision to send for Madame Peronne, a midwife from the French court, but it ‘was not understood by her husband’s subjects at that time because of the increased prestige of male doctors during this period’.⁴⁰ Although Peronne eventually gained an excellent reputation

³⁸ See Thomas G. Benedek, ‘The Changing Relationship Between Midwives and Physicians During the Renaissance’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 51.4 (1977), 550-64.

³⁹ Bridgette Sheridan, ‘Whither Childbearing: Gender, Status, and the Professionalization of Medicine in Early Modern France’, in *Gender and Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Kathleen P. Long (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 239-58 (p. 243).

⁴⁰ Carolyn Harris, *Queenship and Revolution in Early Modern Europe: Henrietta Maria and Marie Antoinette* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 128. Bonnie Lander Johnson also comments on Madame Peronne’s attendance on Henrietta Maria, stating ‘That Marie de Medici would have sent over one of the French court’s most competent midwives is in no way surprising: France had at the time an excellent reputation for professional midwifery’. Both Harris and Johnson put a positive spin

through her care of Henrietta Maria, Harris declares that her ‘fame as a midwife does not appear to have increased professional opportunities for English female birth attendants, or reversed the trend toward the presence of male doctors in elite birthing chambers’.⁴¹ If aristocratic attitudes towards female practitioners of childbirth could not even be altered by the midwife who helped the Queen through multiple successful births, surgeons must have established themselves very firmly within this sphere of medicine by the 1630s.⁴²

Despite their success in displacing midwives, however, surgeons suffered greatly in comparison with other significant male early modern practitioners of medicine in the form of university-educated physicians. As Eve Keller’s comments demonstrate, physicians were granted a far higher social status than gynaecological surgeons:

Midwifery’s associations with manual labour are in part what kept physicians out of the field for so many years; surgeons, who already worked with their hands, might be called in to take care of obstructed births with their instruments, but physicians, being thinkers and not touchers, did not belong here.⁴³

on French midwifery, for they choose to focus on the reputation of French midwives without acknowledging that those midwives had to appear before a board of male surgeons and answer a number of questions before they could be granted the licence which would allow them to becoming practising midwives. That is not to discount Harris’ and Johnson’s points regarding the reputation of French midwives, but rather to highlight how the changing gender configuration of seventeenth-century gynaecological care can be overlooked by scholars. Bonnie Lander Johnson, *Chastity in Early Stuart Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 133-34.

⁴¹ Harris, pp. 128-29.

⁴² The dominance of gynaecological surgeons is further underscored by the fact that Theodore Mayerne came to be viewed as something of an authority on midwifery, to the point where the title page of Thomas Chamberlayne’s 1663 edition of *The Compleat Midwife’s Practice* boasts of ‘the Addition of Sir *Theodore Mayerne’s* Rare Secrets in *Midwifry*’. The fact that Henrietta Maria was not comfortable with having only Mayerne attend her is completely ignored, as is the idea that Mayerne would have learnt some of these ‘Secrets’ from Peronne. See Thomas Chamberlayne, *The Compleat Midwife’s Practice*, 3rd edn (London: Nathaniel Brooke, 1663), sig. A1^v, italics in original.

⁴³ Eve Keller, *Generating Bodies and Gendered Selves: The Rhetoric of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), p. 168.

With their classical education, physicians were the cerebral men of early modern medicine, while practically-trained surgeons were viewed as mere medical labourers. The former of these masculine identities elicited respect, for it stood as the product of the finest humanist learning and teaching, but the latter identity could never evoke such a positive response as it was the result of a programme of often-physical training. With an occupation that was rooted firmly in classical texts, physicians were connected to the greatest of male thought in a way that surgeons, who had appropriated their jobs from women, could never be.

As a consequence of these differences in reputation, the masculinities of surgeons who practised gynaecology were held in far lower regard than those of physicians. Surgeons who worked within this sphere of medicine were highly conscious that they were considered to be inferior specimens of medical men, and attempted to combat this idea through the midwifery manuals which they wrote or edited. Jacques Gélis rightly calls these gynaecological texts ‘our most valuable sources for the history of childbirth’, but they also reveal valuable insights into how the surgeons who wrote them understood their masculine identities.⁴⁴ Eve Keller argues that ‘whatever medical information [midwifery manuals] conveyed, they functioned historically to construct and commodify a public image of the practitioner of childbirth’, and this function is made most apparent by the dedicatory epistles to these works.⁴⁵ Jacques Guillemeau’s *Childbirth or, the Happie Deliverie of Women* (1612) and Jakob Rüff’s *The Expert Midwife* (1637) are both prefaced by letters which seek to elevate the masculinities of surgeons so that they reach an equal, or sometimes higher, standing in relation to physicians. These letters continually

⁴⁴ Jacques Gélis, *The History of Childbirth*, trans. by Rosemary Morris (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 227.

⁴⁵ Keller, p. 165.

emphasise that the occupation of surgeon required mental as opposed to physical labour, and therefore demanded a great deal of respect.

Guillemeau refutes the idea that gynaecological surgeons are uneducated physical labourers when he argues that ‘this work excelleth all other, which are practised upon the body of man: whether ye respect the Antiquity, Necessity, or dexterity thereof’.⁴⁶ By gesturing towards ‘Antiquity’, he demonstrates the type of classical learning that would not usually have been associated with a man who experienced practical, rather than theoretical, training. His arguments for the ‘Necessity’ and ‘dexterity’ of gynaecological medicine are then developed throughout the course of his epistle. Guillemeau asserts the importance of surgeons when he explains that ‘either the Chirurgion’s helpe must be used, or else the mother and the child would die miserably’.⁴⁷ The surgeon alone prevents beloved wives or daughters from experiencing a premature death, and also saves their babies from the same cruel fate. This argument for the value of the occupation is then supplemented by a somewhat hyperbolic comment which emphasises the skill of gynaecological practitioners: ‘as often as a woman is well delivered by the help and hand of the Chirurgion, there life is *given* to two, to wit: the Mother and the childe’.⁴⁸ This almost blasphemous alignment of surgeons with divinity casts them as such skilful medical men that they become creators, rather than preservers, of life. Guillemeau’s dedicatory epistle therefore bolsters the masculinities of surgeons by moving them closer to intellectual labour, and further away from its physical counterpart, through an emphasis upon their intellectual capabilities.

⁴⁶ Jacques Guillemeau, *Childbirth or, the Happie Deliverie of Women* (London: A. Hatfield, 1612), sig. A4^v.

⁴⁷ Guillemeau, sig. B1^v.

⁴⁸ Guillemeau, sig. B1^r, italics own.

The dedicatory epistle to Jakob Rüff's midwifery manual employs similar tactics. Rüff implies that surgeons have staged a much-needed intervention in the field of gynaecology, as 'the unskilfulnesse and want of knowledge in the midwife [...] doth questionlesse oftentimes endanger the lives, both of the [mother] and the [child]'.⁴⁹ *The Expert Midwife* is primarily designed to remedy the 'unskilfulnesse and want of knowledge' in what Rüff implies are uneducated female gynaecological practitioners. At the same time that he indicates that midwives have much to learn from the perusal of his manual, however, he also suggests that it will prove informative to male physicians. He declares that 'I bequeath [my work] to all grave, modest, and discreet women, *as also* to such as by profession, practice either Physicke or Chirurgery'.⁵⁰ The different types of male practitioners are presented as equally educated through the use of 'or' in 'Physicke or Chirurgery', and they are also distanced from midwives: the men are members of a 'profession', but midwives are stripped of their medical status to become mere 'women'. This alignment of surgeons with classically-educated physicians, rather than the midwives with whom they had more in common, further strengthens the association of male gynaecological practitioners with intellectual labour and weakens their link to physical labour.

In addition to questions regarding their education, surgeons also had to combat concerns which were specifically rooted in their gender. As medical men who had knowledge of and contact with the female genitals, surgeons were vulnerable to attacks on the decorum of their practice. The famous French midwife Louise Boursier made her concerns about the propriety of male gynaecological

⁴⁹ Jakob Rüff, *The Expert Midwife* (London: E.G., 1637), sig. A4^v.

⁵⁰ Rüff, sig. A5^v, italics own.

practitioners very evident in her midwifery manual *Observations diverses* (1609), which was translated into English by Thomas Chamberlayne in 1656.⁵¹ Boursier, who attended Marie de Medici, admits embarrassment at the idea of men attending women during childbirth:

There is a great deal of artifice to be used in the pleasing of our women, especially the young ones, who many times do make election of men to bring them to bed. *I blush to speak of them, for I take it to be a very great piece of impudence to have any recourse to them, unless it be in a case of very great danger.*⁵²

Boursier uses the verb ‘blush’ in order to suggest that male birth attendants place women into a disreputable, potentially unchaste position. She argues that they should only be called upon ‘at a time of very great danger’, when it would be worse to sacrifice a woman’s life than her modesty. She then goes on to imply that the maleness of surgeons also poses a threat to the marital relationship when she comments that ‘it is very inconvenient to Husbands, that (unless in cases of very great danger) such th[i]ngs concerning their own Wives should be communicated to any other men but themselves’.⁵³ The idea that ‘other men’ should know ‘such th[i]ngs’, or have intimate knowledge ‘concerning their own Wives’, casts surgeons in the position of a violator. It implies that unless surgeons are attending a woman

⁵¹ Although the English translation of Boursier’s work was not published until 1656 and this thesis focuses upon the period 1594-1655, I have chosen to include it in my discussion as it would not be unreasonable to assume that there was some awareness of her work prior to the publication of the English translation.

⁵² Boursier’s words appear in an edition of her work which is attributed to Thomas Chamberlayne. Thomas Chamberlayne, *The compleat midwives practice* (London: Nathaniel Brooke, 1656), sig. T8^r, italics in original.

⁵³ Chamberlayne, sig. T8^r, italics in original.

who is in ‘very great danger’, they are using their medical knowledge to intrude upon the most private areas of a woman’s body and a marital relationship.

The masculinities of surgeons were therefore considered to be less valuable than those of physicians for reasons of gender as well as class. As medical men who received manual training and had to engage closely with the female genitals, surgeons always risked being associated with an uneducated and deviant form of masculine identity. While Guillemeau and Rüff used the dedicatory epistles of their midwifery manuals to stress the intellectual capabilities of male practitioners of gynaecology, then, they knew that it was the very physical nature of the encounter between these men and their patients exerted a huge influence over how their identities were perceived.⁵⁴ Boasting about the importance, education, and skill of the surgeon in writing was all very well, but these men had to demonstrate that they possessed such attributes in the highly pressurised, physically-demanding

⁵⁴ The medical encounter between doctor and patient is one of the foremost areas of interest within medical humanities scholarship, for close attention has been paid to how the encounter shapes the identity of the practitioner or the patient. Those scholars who focus upon how the identity of doctors is constructed during a medical encounter are usually practising or junior doctors who reflect upon how their pressurised environments and grave responsibilities prevent them from acting in an empathetic manner. Atara Messinger and Benjamin Chin, for example, suggest that the working conditions of doctors (especially junior ones) mean that it is impossible to empathise with all patients: ‘the demands of clinical medicine often require that physicians adopt a detached disposition in order to function effectively’. Christine Phillips echoes this argument when she acknowledges ‘the everyday clinical tension, of stepping into or out of the consciousness of patients’. When medical humanities scholars examine the impact which the medical encounter has upon the patient, they usually consider how being diagnosed with a serious illness affects the patient’s sense of self. Jane Peek, for example, terms the meeting of doctor and patient a ‘turning-point’ for a patient’s sense of their own identity, while Kimberly Myers stresses the personal and professional effects which a medical encounter can have upon a patient many years after it took place. Since many of the scholars who examine the doctor-patient relationship have a claim to one of those identities, it is unsurprising that research within this area focuses upon contemporary medical encounters. As this thesis’ discussion of the impact which medical encounters could have upon early modern surgeons demonstrates, however, historical examinations of the meeting of doctor and patient is both possible and valuable. Atara Messinger and Benjamin Chin, ‘I and Thou: Learning the “Human” Side of Medicine’, *Medical Humanities*, 42.3 (2016), 184-85 (p. 184); Christine Phillips, ‘Speaking to the Yet Unknowing World: Hamlet, Horatio, and the Problem of Imperfect Witness’, *Medical Humanities*, 36.2 (2010), 97-100 (p. 99); Jane Peek, “‘There Was No Great Ceremony’: Patient Narratives and the Diagnostic Encounter in the Context of Parkinson’s”, *Medical Humanities*, 43.1 (2017), 35-40 (p.35); see Kimberly Myers, ‘Coming Out: Considering the Closet of Illness’, *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 25.4 (2004), 255-70.

environment of the birthing chamber. If a surgeon's patients of mother and child(ren) lived, there would have been concordance between the public perception of his masculine identity, and the way that it was portrayed by Guilleméau and Rüff. If the mother and/or child(ren) died, however, the surgeon who attended them would not have seemed to possess the skill or knowledge that was needed to save their lives. The masculinities of surgeons were inextricably linked to the outcome of the previous delivery that they attended; in an age of extremely high maternal and infant mortality, male gynaecological practitioners could never rest assured that they would be thought of as medical men of distinction. While the dedicatory epistles of Guilleméau and Rüff may have worked hard to secure a valuable, knowledgeable, and skilful form of masculine identity for surgeons by stressing their intellectual capabilities, then, each birth that they attended threatened to replace this favourable construction of masculinity with a negative one of an ignorant, incapable physical labourer. Since medical encounters were a fundamental duty for surgeons, the masculine identities of each man therefore teetered continually upon the brink of crisis.

ii. Dramatic Crises of Early Modern Masculinity

Surgeons were not the only early modern men who found that their masculinities always threatened to descend into crisis, for those who were associated with drama also occupied a similarly precarious position. The idea that early modern men who worked for the stage might be viewed less favourably than other males has been highlighted by Tom Rutter, who argues that 'the status of acting as a form of work was decidedly uncertain in the early modern period', which meant that actors were in

danger of being viewed as idle beings who failed to use their time productively.⁵⁵

Rutter suggests that dramatists sought to bolster the reputations of the men who performed onstage by stressing that ‘the actor is not an idle rogue or vagabond, [...] but rather a trained professional earning money through legitimate work’.⁵⁶ At the same time that playwrights were seeking to improve the audience’s perception of the actors who performed in their plays, however, they would have also been extremely conscious that they themselves were viewed far less favourably than those men who were occupied in such other occupations as courtiers or lawyers. Richard Dutton notes that there was a “‘brand” attached to writing for the public stage’ which meant that dramatists were, for the most part, associated with a relatively low social status.⁵⁷ The personal difficulties created by occupying a lesser social standing were then compounded by the harsh economic realities of trying to earn a living from writing works of drama, when theatres could be closed for months at a time due to outbreaks of plague.

What is more, the harsh and repeated criticisms of antitheatricalists such as William Prynne also threatened to devalue the masculinities of playwrights. Prynne’s *Histrion-Mastix* (1633), which employs multiple works of scripture in order to offer a substantial critique of theatre, casts playwrights as sinful, corrupting agents for their production of ‘evill’ texts which require ‘the personating of the Bawdes, Adulteresses, Whores, or Sorceresses part[s], which favour of nought else but lewdnesse and effeminacy’.⁵⁸ Prynne goes on to suggest that men who write for the stage forget their duties towards God when he exclaims ‘If men in womens apparel

⁵⁵ Tom Rutter, *Work and Play on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 27.

⁵⁶ Rutter, p. 49.

⁵⁷ Richard Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 110.

⁵⁸ William Prynne, *Histrion-Mastix* (London: Michael Sparke, 1633), sig. Aa4^r.

be [...] execrable unto Pagans, how much more detestable should they bee to Christians?'.⁵⁹ Prynne situates playwrights as deviant figures who do not only threaten to throw their own masculinities into crisis, but also those of actors and the watching audience by producing texts which undermine the notion of masculine authority.

Despite the fact that writing for the stage had the potential to mark dramatists as inferior men, however, there is some evidence to indicate that playwrights were beginning to arrogate more status between 1594 and 1655. Shakespeare may not have been born a gentleman, but he did of course earn enough money to purchase a coat of arms and that social position. Ben Jonson also enhanced the reputation of dramatist by publishing his Folio of works in 1616, an honour which was also posthumously granted to Shakespeare in 1623, then Beaumont and Fletcher in 1647. Shakespeare's movement from being the son of a glove-maker to a gentleman, and Jonson's publication of his writing in such an expensive, impressive format suggested that it was possible for dramatists to achieve status and recognition for their creativity. While they may have started off as men with lowly masculinities, Shakespeare's and Jonson's abilities to skilfully handle their intellectual craft meant that they could elevate themselves to higher, more valued positions.

Despite the pressures and the problems which they faced, then, playwrights were aware that it was possible to bolster their masculinities as creative men, and made attempts to do so. One particularly popular strategy was to add a dedicatory epistle to a printed playtext, and address them to an aristocratic figure in the hope of gaining patronage. While their motivations for such appeals were very obviously

⁵⁹ Prynne, sig. Dd1^v.

economic ones, David M. Bergeron argues that dedicatory epistles ‘bind this writer to a socially superior world, allowing him to arrogate status to himself’, and there is also evidence to indicate that the playwrights who wrote them wished to elevate their masculinities by suggesting that their creativity allowed them to close the divide between themselves and the aristocracy.⁶⁰ The dedicatory epistles to John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614) and John Ford’s *The Broken Heart* (1628/29), two works which are of interest to this thesis, reveal that their authors did not only aim to confer economic benefits upon themselves, but also to suggest that their aristocratic dedicatees should appreciate them for ensuring that they lived on after death. While it is important to remember Kathleen E. McLuskie’s and Felicity Dunsworth’s caveat that ‘the patron/client relationship was often idealised’ when analysing this genre of text, the idealisation which is evident in Webster’s and Ford’s dedicatory epistles only serves to reinforce the idea that they were trying to improve the public perception of their masculine identities as dramatists by stressing their intellectual capabilities.⁶¹

Webster’s dedicatory epistle to *The Duchess of Malfi* is dedicated to George Harding. Although Webster claims disinterest in Harding’s significant social status when he writes that ‘*I do not altogether looke up at your Title*’, he also subserviently refers to Harding as ‘*Noble*’, calls him ‘*your Lordshippe*’, and explains that ‘*I offer this Poem to your Patronage*’.⁶² Once he has made the social and economic distance between his masculine identity and the one possessed by Harding very clear,

⁶⁰ David M. Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama, 1570-1640* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 15.

⁶¹ Kathleen E. McLuskie and Felicity Dunsworth, ‘Patronage and the Economics of Theater’, in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 423-40 (p. 428).

⁶² John Webster, ‘To the Right Honorable, *George Harding, Baron Barkeley of Barkeley Castle and Knight of the Order of the Batle*’, in *The Tragedy of the Dutchesse of Malfy* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), sig A3^r-A4^v (sig. A3^r, italics in original).

Webster hints at the social advantages which he may gain from the aristocrat's patronage. He comments that '*by such Poems as this, Poets have kist the hands of Great Princes*', or have been able to enjoy the exalted company of nobility from which they would usually be excluded.⁶³ After he has hinted that his skill as a dramatist will allow him to close the gulf between their contrasting forms of masculine identity, Webster then goes on to suggest that his occupation should be valued above all others, because it allows for resistance against the finality of death. Webster explains that his tragedy will allow Harding to '*live in [his] grave and laurell spring out of it when the ignorant scornors of the Muses [...] shall wither, neglected, and forgotten*'.⁶⁴ As Bergeron rightly indicates, Webster 'promises immortality' to Harding, but he also endows the occupation of playwright with the unique ability to enable other admirable men to live on after death.⁶⁵ While Webster and other dramatists may have relied upon the aristocracy for the service of patronage at the time of writing, his dedicatory epistle implies that the aristocracy will ultimately come to rely upon the intellectual labour of dramatists if they are to be known throughout the ages. Webster's masculine identity as a playwright is in an inferior position at the beginning of the epistle, but by its end he has suggested that they are more like equals. Harding's noble birth may have given him a comfortable existence in this life, but without the fruits of Webster's intellectual labour, the memory of his existence would soon fade once that life had ended.

A similar drive to elevate the masculine identity associated with being a dramatist is also evident in John Ford's dedicatory epistle to *The Broken Heart*, which was addressed to William, Lord Craven. Ford begins by commenting upon

⁶³ Webster, 'To the Right Honorable', sig. A4^v, italics in original.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Bergeron, p. 108.

how ‘The glory of a *greatname*, acquired by a greater glory of *Action*, hath in all ages liv’d the truest chronicle to his owne Memory’.⁶⁶ While he clearly suggests that Lord Craven has claims to such a shining reputation through his reference to ‘*your growth to perfection*’, he also subtly stakes a claim to ‘glory’ himself.⁶⁷ Rather amusingly given his considerable publication record at the time of writing, Ford suggests that he is a timid, earnest figure who has ‘ever beene slow in courtship of greatnesse’ because he wishes to place his work in front of someone who will appreciate it, and by extension him.⁶⁸ As the dedicatory epistle progresses, however, Ford constructs a sense of equality between himself and his potential patron on the grounds of his intellectual labour, for he admits that he ‘relish[es] an experience of *your Mercy*, as many brave Dangers have tasted of *your Courage*’.⁶⁹ The writing and publishing of a play becomes akin to embarking upon a successful military mission, which casts the playwright and the soldier as two equally courageous, admirable men. After reinforcing the similarity between himself and Lord Craven through his remark that ‘Your Lordship strove to be known to the worlde [...] Like Allowance I plead of being knowne to your Lordship’, Ford returns once again to the idea of his ‘low presumption’ in addressing Lord Craven.⁷⁰ This apparently self-deprecating comment is then tempered somewhat by Ford’s acknowledgement that he has supplied his would-be patron with ‘a favourable entertainment, a devotion’ in the form of his tragedy.⁷¹ If Ford were truly convinced that he were unworthy of addressing Lord Craven, he would not have suggested that he would find the play ‘a

⁶⁶ John Ford, ‘To the Most Worthy Deserver of the noblest Titles in Honour, William, Lord *Craven*, Baron of *Hamstead-Marshall*, in *The Broken Heart: A Tragedy* (London: I. B., 1633), sig. A2^v-A3^r (sig. A2^r, italics in original).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ford, ‘To the Most Worthy Deserver’, sig. A3^v.

⁶⁹ Ford, ‘To the Most Worthy Deserver’, sig. A3^v, italics in original.

⁷⁰ Ford, ‘To the Most Worthy Deserver’, sig. A3^v.

⁷¹ Ibid.

favourable entertainment'. While Ford is ostensibly stressing his inferiority to Lord Craven throughout his dedicatory epistle to *The Broken Heart*, then, he is actually implying that his ability to craft exquisite, enjoyable works of drama makes him equal to the nobly-born Craven.

Webster's and Ford's dedicatory epistles therefore demonstrate that these texts created an opportunity to situate playwrights as intellectual labourers who could craft their way to equality with the nobility. As confidently as these two dramatists hint that their aristocratic patron will recognise their worth, reward them for their work, and so make their value as creative men known to all, Webster and Ford would have been well aware that such positivity could be misplaced. Patrons could respond warmly to the efforts made by dramatists, but they could also meet their appeals with the disdain or indifference which would keep the masculine identities of playwrights in an unchanged, inferior position. While dramatists may have employed their dedicatory epistles in an attempt to improve the public perception of their works and their masculinities, then, the uncertainty as to whether a patron would actually respond, and what that response would be, meant that this genre of writing was not guaranteed to satisfy the ambitions of its writer. It was all very well to stress the intellectual abilities of dramatists in the dedicatory epistles, but without economic recognition of those abilities, their claims to elevated forms of masculine identity would have sounded very hollow.

Since patrons could not be relied upon to argue for the value of a dramatic work or reward the man who wrote it, groups of playwrights banded together to attempt to elevate their masculine identities of their collective accord through commendatory verses that could also feature in printed playtexts. In addition to Webster's dedicatory epistle to George Harding, the 1623 quarto of *The Duchess of*

Malfi is also prefaced by three commendatory verses written by Thomas Middleton, William Rowley, and John Ford. While all of these verses praise the tragedy itself, Middleton's and Ford's pieces place an additional emphasis upon the intellectual craft of its author. Middleton tells Webster that by writing *The Duchess of Malfi*, 'Thou imitat'st one Rich, and Wise'; he has acted like a member of the aristocracy by 'see[ing] His Good Deedes done before he dies'.⁷² Webster's tragedy is such a brilliant work of art, Middleton argues, that he will be instantly recognisable to scores of successive audiences and readers: 'Thy epitaph onely the Title bee, / Write, Dutchesse, that will fetch a teare for thee'.⁷³ If Webster will be so admired by future generations, Middleton's implication is that the present one should also recognise and respect him for his abilities as a dramatist. This idea is further reinforced by Ford's commendatory verse, which argues that Webster has written a play which surpasses even those that were penned by the greats: 'Crowne Him a poet, whom nor Rome, nor Greece, / Transcend in all their's, for a Master peece'.⁷⁴ There may be a degree of hyperbole in this statement, just as there may be in Middleton's verse, but Ford's commendation is nevertheless designed to elevate Webster to the apex of creative masculinity.

Yet for all of the positivity which the commendatory verses generated around Webster, there was a strong possibility that it would end up going completely unnoticed. Along with dedicatory epistles, commendatory verses formed part of the paratexts to printed editions of dramatic works, and so they could be completely

⁷² Thomas Middleton, 'In the just Worth, of that well Deserver, Mr. John Webster, and Upon this Maister-peece of Tragœdy, in *The Tragedy of the Dutchesse of Malfy* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), sig. A4^r (sig. A4^r, italics in original).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ John Ford, 'To the Reader of the Authour, and his Dutchesse of *Malfy*', in *The Tragedy of the Dutchesse of Malfy* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), sig. B1^v (sig. B1^v, italics in original).

ignored by readers who were only interested in the play itself.⁷⁵ As much as dramatists may have tried to use the publication of their plays as a means through which to elevate their masculinities by emphasising that playwriting was an act of intellectual labour, then, they still could not escape the fact that it was the playtext itself which made or broke their identities as creative men, in performance as well as in print. Dramatists were writing for live performance rather than readers, and it was on the stage where they could announce themselves as men who were making a profound intellectual contribution to society, or firmly distance themselves from this claim. As the playing companies performed before an audience, the masculinities of the dramatists who wrote them were never far from crisis.

iii. *Double Trouble: The Appeal of Twins in a Time of Crisis*

As different as the occupations of surgeon and dramatist may have appeared, then, there were actually significant similarities between them. These medical and creative

⁷⁵ It is certainly not beyond the realms of possibility to suggest that the readers of the very first quarto edition of *The Duchess of Malfi* found these paratexts superfluous. Webster's dedicatory epistle and Middleton's, Ford's, and Rowley's commendatory verses to the play were all omitted from the 1640, 1657, and 1678 editions of the playtext, which prefer to skip straight to the cast list or the play itself. The omission of these paratexts is not limited only to early modern editions of *The Duchess of Malfi*, as even contemporary editors sometimes choose to ignore them or print only a small part of them. Monica Kendall's edition of *The Duchess of Malfi*, for example, omits the dedicatory epistle and the commendatory verses. In contrast, Arthur F. Kinney's edition reprints the dedicatory epistle and commendatory verses in full, and Leah S. Marcus' edition makes them very evident by incorporating them into their own section, entitled 'Quarto Paratexts'. While considerations of space and audience will obviously have influenced these editorial decisions regarding the paratexts, their partial or complete omission nevertheless indicates that the playtext still takes priority. See John Webster, *The Dutchesse of Malfy* (London: I. Raworth, 1640), sig. A2^v-A2^r; John Webster, *The Dutchesse of Malfy* (London: Robert Crofts, 1657), sig. A2^r; John Webster, *The Dutchesse of Malfey* (London: D. N and T. C., 1678), sig. A2^r-A3^r. For contemporary editorial approaches to the dedicatory epistle and commendatory verses, see John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. by Monica Kendall (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2004); John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, in *Renaissance Drama: An Anthology of Plays and Entertainments*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 637-98 (pp. 646-47); John Webster, Thomas Middleton, William Rowley, and John Ford, 'Quarto Paratext', in *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. by Leah S. Marcus (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2009), 114-26.

men were viewed unfavourably by the early modern public, but found that they were presented with opportunities through which they could demonstrate their worth. Surgeons and dramatists alike utilised the medium of print in order to emphasise the intellectual demands which their occupations placed upon them. Through the use of such paratextual material as dedicatory epistles and commendatory verses, they argued that their great knowledge and creativity placed them in the admirable position of ensuring that life was able to begin at birth or continue after death. They therefore sought to impress their readers with the idea that they were intellectual men with (re)generative abilities, and encouraged them to view their masculinities with respect as opposed to scorn.

However eagerly surgeons and dramatists tried to elevate their masculine identities through their paratextual material, however, these men knew that it was the medical and theatrical encounters with patients and audiences that had the real potential to save them from a crisis of masculinity, or pitch them straight into one. While all of these meetings between patient and practitioner, or play and audience, posed a threat to the masculine identities of surgeon and dramatist, medical and dramatic encounters which featured twins nevertheless magnified the gulf between gains and losses. As will now become clear, surgeons knew that delivering twins was an extremely dangerous process, and dramatists were aware that it was difficult to recreate physical likeness between twin characters onstage. An unsuccessful twin delivery or badly-received play which featured jointly-born characters had the potential to suggest that the surgeon or dramatist who was responsible for it were lacking in intellectual ability, and therefore unworthy of esteem. At the same time, however, these medical and creative men knew that successful deliveries or representations of twins could impress a family or an audience with admiration at

their knowledge as well as their ability to handle their craft, and thereby elevate their masculinities to a higher level.

Surgeons were all too aware of the perils which twin births could pose to the mother and children, as well as the practitioner who was delivering them. Jakob Rüff simply, but eloquently, remarks that ‘such a birth is very dangerous’ when he discusses the delivery of two children at once.⁷⁶ Jacques Guillemeau offers a more extensive and sobering acknowledgement of the risks which attended a twin pregnancy and birth when he states that ‘one of the twins may be dead, and the other living’ when the surgeon arrives to deliver them, and advises that ‘the Chirurgion must be very certaine which of them is dead or alive’ before proceeding.⁷⁷ This comment does not only underline the dangers which surrounded two children who shared the same womb, but also the highly defensive attitude which surgeons had to adopt in such situations. Guillemeau makes it clear that one of the twins may already be dead before the surgeon arrives, and by ordering his male readers to be ‘very certaine’ about their bodily status before they do anything else, he implies that they need to protect themselves from any suggestion that they were responsible for the unfortunate twin’s death. While Guillemeau does not indicate exactly how the surgeon should make their grim discovery evident, it is not illogical to suggest that the practitioner may have verbally informed someone else of the loss of one twin before the delivery began. The very fact that surgeons had to adopt such a defensive response to a distressing event demonstrates their awareness of how quickly they could be associated with an unskilled, worthless form of masculine identity.

⁷⁶ Rüff, sig. K3^v.

⁷⁷ Guillemeau, sig. Y4^r.

At the same time that the delivery of twins could plunge the masculinities of surgeons into crisis, however, it also had the potential to elevate them to a level where their skill and value was clear to all. Guillemeau suggests that the prowess of a surgeon who guides twins through a dangerous delivery is so self-evident that it hardly has to be stated: ‘if there be found, two, three, or foure Children [...] I leave you to judge what skill and dexterity the Chirurgion ought to use in seeking them one after another if they come amisse’.⁷⁸ His chapters on how to deliver two children who share the same womb are also crammed full of visceral descriptions of the unpleasant fate that the pair can meet if they do not have a skilled practitioner to guide them to safety, such as the warning not to ‘bee mistaken [...] For if he should do so, then without doubt in the drawing of them foorth, he would teare them both asunder’.⁷⁹ As befits the more measured style of Rüff’s work, this writer gently suggests to his audience of midwives that the skill of surgeons means that their ‘helpe [...] uppon occasion of extreme necessity [it] may be usefull and good, both for mother, child, and mid-wife’.⁸⁰ Rüff encourages midwives to cast aside any negative emotions which they may have regarding the encroachment of surgeons upon their field, and to instead acknowledge and appreciate their intellectual superiority.

The idea that twins could either elevate or damage masculine identity was not limited to men who were occupied as surgeons, for it also applied to those who worked as dramatists. The best-known twin play of the 1590s is undoubtedly William Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors* (1594), but it might well have faced competition for this accolade from a work by Ben Jonson if the playwright had felt

⁷⁸ Guillemeau, sig. B1^r.

⁷⁹ Guillemeau, sig. Y4^v.

⁸⁰ Rüff, sig. A5^v-A5^r.

able to complete it.⁸¹ Jonson attempted to embark upon his own adaptation of a Plautine work which featured twins in *Amphitryo*.⁸² As William Drummond recounts, however, Jonson found that his creative intentions were thwarted by the physical appearance of actors: 'He had an intention to have made a play like Plautus Amphitrio, but left it of, for that he could never find two so like others that he could persuade the spectators they were one'.⁸³ For Jonson, the need to have identical twin characters played by identical – or almost identical – men was crucial to the success of the play and the satisfaction of his creative vision.⁸⁴ Without two actors who exactly resembled one another, Jonson clearly felt that his abilities as a dramatist were being undermined, and feared that the audience's reaction would not be as warm as it could be. If the people who saw the play reacted with confusion or disappointment, they would not have blamed the casting, but the playwright, and so Jonson's creative masculinity would have been plunged into crisis. Rather than run the risk of meeting with such an unfairly negative judgement and damaging his reputation as a dramatist, Jonson therefore preferred to abandon the work completely.

⁸¹ Other twin plays of the 1590s included *Valentine and Orson* (1595, 1598) and Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599). It is uncertain as to whether there were two plays entitled *Valentine and Orson* that were performed between 1595 and 1600, or just one. The Stationers' Register lists *Valentine and Orson* under two different acting companies: the Queen's Men in 1595 and again at Court in 1600, and the Admiral's Men at the Rose Theatre in 1598. This latter version of the play is attributed to Richard Hathaway and Anthony Munday. See 'Valentine and Orson (Queen's)', *Lost Plays Database* <[https://lostplays.folger.edu/Valentine_and_Orson_\(Queen%27s\)>](https://lostplays.folger.edu/Valentine_and_Orson_(Queen%27s)>) [last accessed 25 September 2018]; 'Valentine and Orson (Admiral's)', *Lost Plays Database* <[https://lostplays.folger.edu/Valentine_and_Orson_\(Admiral%27s\)>](https://lostplays.folger.edu/Valentine_and_Orson_(Admiral%27s)>) [last accessed 25 September 2018].

⁸² While the only actual twin characters in *Amphitryo* are the twin babies who will be born, Mercury and Sosia are effectively transformed into them.

⁸³ William Drummond, *Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. by R. F. Patterson (London: Blackie and Son Limited, 1923), p. 73.

⁸⁴ Anne Barton also discusses the void between Jonson's vision and the realities of early modern theatrical performance: 'Unlike Shakespeare, Ben Jonson refused to have anything to do with the *Amphitryo* or the *Menaechmi* in a theatre which could neither provide him with identical twins to play the parts, nor bypass the problem of verisimilitude by way of the mask'. Anne Barton, *Ben Jonson: Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 31.

If Jonson felt that twin characters had the potential to send his masculine identity as a dramatist into a state of crisis, however, there is evidence that other men who wrote for the early modern stage thought that two people who shared the same birth could actually help to elevate their masculinities. Between 1610 and 1617, the King's Men performed four plays which featured twins: John Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* (c. 1610), Richard Niccols' now-lost play *The Twins' Tragedy* (1612), John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614), and Fletcher's *The Bloody Brother* (c. 1617).⁸⁵ As the first and third of these plays featured mixed-sex twins and the second and fourth showcase all-male ones, there is little evidence to suggest that the King's Men featured actors who either were twins or very closely resembled one another. What this cluster of plays which feature two characters who shared the same birth does suggest, however, is that these figures attracted audiences irrespective of whether they were present in comedies or tragedies. While the likeness of twin characters could create confusion and therefore appeal to audiences in comic terms, the closeness of birth between such figures made their tragic manifestations attractive, as it raised the question as to whether two people who were born almost immediately after one another could die in this way, too. Since one playing company performed four pieces of drama which featured significant twin characters across a relatively short time period of seven years, these figures must have been commercially appealing. If audiences enjoyed plays which featured twins, then they and the King's Men would have valued the men who wrote them in the first place.

⁸⁵ Niccols' *The Twins' Tragedy* was performed before James I on 1 January 1612, and again before other members of the royal family in either late 1612 or early 1613. See 'Twins' Tragedy', *Lost Plays Database* <https://lostplays.folger.edu/Twins%27_Tragedy> [last accessed 25 September 2018]. The *Lost Plays Database* entry for *The Twins' Tragedy* also notes that the King's Men soon performed *The Duchess of Malfi* after Niccols' play, and dismisses the idea that there was a close physical resemblance between two of the company's actors.

For surgeons and dramatists alike, twins therefore had the potential to catalyse or avoid a crisis in their masculine identities, and this state of affairs constitutes the primary reason as to why I have chosen to combine my analysis of representations of two people who shared the same birth with an exploration of early modern constructions of masculinity. The difficulties which attended the birth or onstage representation of two children could cause these medical and creative men to be seen as unskilled physical labourers or failed and lowly entertainers. At the same time, the surgeon who guided a woman and her two children safely through labour, or the dramatist who wrote a play about two characters who shared the same birth which deeply amused or saddened audiences, were making their intellectual capabilities as practitioners and playwrights evident to the vigilant public. In the very environments of the birthing chamber and live theatre where the masculinities of surgeons and dramatists were at their most vulnerable, twins could therefore help to sway the public perception of their masculine identities towards the negative, crisis-stricken end of the spectrum, or a more positive, elevated one.

Since the masculinities of surgeons and dramatists could either be plunged into crisis or bolstered by the presence of twins, their representations of such figures in gynaecological texts and plays should never be taken at face value. As this thesis will now demonstrate, the twins of midwifery manuals and dramatic works gesture, with varying degrees of subtlety, towards situations in which masculinity can fall into crisis. Across three gynaecological texts and eight plays, two people who share the same birth reveal that masculine identity is rendered extremely vulnerable by several situations. When people fixate only upon the exterior of men's bodies and disregard their interiors; when the practice of primogeniture confers power upon the eldest but unworthiest son; when men who share power are scorned as effeminate;

when men feel that they can only be respected if they act violently, a crisis of masculinity can take place. The next three chapters explain that medical and dramatic representations of twins problematise a singular understanding of masculinity, the notion of hegemonic masculinity, the attitude towards male power-sharing, and the connection between violence and masculinity. The twins of the fourth chapter then initially seem to offer a more positive mode of thought when they suggest that it is possible for men to overcome the obstacles which threaten to plunge their masculinities into crisis, but this optimistic viewpoint is somewhat tempered by the fact that the conditions in the medical works and plays which allow for the threats to masculine identity to become benefits could not be fully replicated in real life. Taken together, then, the medical and dramatic representations of twins which I will examine through the course of this thesis confirm the existence of an early modern link between two people who shared the same birth and the concept of a crisis of masculinity. The twins of these texts highlight the factors which can cause masculine identity to be struck by crisis, but also suggest that early modern men would be able to avoid such a disastrous situation if the conditions were right.

III. Chapter Outline

The remainder of this thesis will be constituted of four chapters and a concluding discussion. The first two of the four chapters will focus mainly upon plays which feature twins of the same sex, and the last two will analyse dramatic works which contain mixed-sex twins. Chapter One, “‘You Are Most Like Me Yet Are Not the Same’: Twins and the Problem with Masculinity in *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Twins*”, argues that the identical twins of foetal illustrations as well

as Shakespeare's and Ryder's plays problematise the notion that masculinity is a singular form of identity. Time and again in these plays, characters assume that because the twins look the same, their masculine identities are also identical, and this assumption causes the characters who shared the same birth to either experience a crisis of masculinity, or teeter upon the brink of one. Chapter Two, "Now You Are a Man Sir": Twins and the Issue of Masculinity in *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow*', demonstrates that medical discussions surrounding the birth order of twins reveal that the eldest child is not the innately superior one. The jointly-born pairs of Fletcher's and Quarles' plays then function to problematise the practice of primogeniture and the way in which men who share power are viewed. The closeness of birth between the male twins of these plays allows Fletcher and Quarles to acknowledge that the eldest son is not always the worthiest one, and to imply that a more successful system would be one which would allow power to be shared between men. As Fletcher's *Rollo* and Quarles' *Palladius* make clear, however, men who share power are viewed with such effeminacy and suspicion as to send their masculinities into crisis, so attitudes would have to change before a fair alternative to primogeniture could be implemented. Chapter Three, "Should I Die This Instant, I Had Liv'd / Her Time to a Minute": Twins and the Violence of Masculinity in *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*', examines the link between masculine identity and violence. It reveals that discussions surrounding twin deliveries were often afraid to acknowledge the violence which such an event required if the children were to be born safely, because it threatened to have a negative impact upon the practitioner who delivered them. Webster's *Ferdinand* and Ford's *Ithocles* subject their twin sisters to horrendous acts of violence because they desire to elevate their masculinities, but their distressing behaviour actually causes their identities to be

plunged into crisis. What is more, Ferdinand's and Ithocles's violent acts also encourage other men to behave in a threatening manner, so the connection between masculine identity and violence grows ever stronger and more problematic as the two tragedies progress. While these first three chapters focus upon how a crisis of masculinity can be a disastrous prospect for men, Chapter Four suggests that it can actually have positive implications for them. This chapter is entitled "I Am Not What I Am": Twins and the Transformation of Masculinity in *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas*, and is informed by criticism from masculinity studies which questions whether a crisis of masculinity actually exists, and the extent to which it leads to a loss of male power. By always gendering twins as male, the writers and illustrators of midwifery manuals manage to overcome the threats which these figures posed to their masculinities. A similar pattern is also evident in the two comedies which are of interest to this chapter, for while Sebastian's and Thomas' masculinities teeter upon the verge of crisis due to a number of factors, they manage to appropriate them in order to elevate their masculinities, rather than devalue them. As positive as these responses to the idea of masculinity being in crisis may seem, however, they are nevertheless tempered somewhat by the fact that the conditions which allow surgeons, Sebastian, and Thomas to overcome the threat to their identities did not exist in real life.

This thesis therefore examines a combination of canonical and non-canonical texts in its analysis of what the twins of midwifery manuals and dramatic works which were published between 1594 and 1655 reveal about masculinity at the time. With varying degrees of subtlety, medical and dramatic texts alike highlight factors which could instigate a crisis of masculinity: a singular understanding of this form of identity; the practice of primogeniture; the idea that men who shared power were

effeminate, and the connection between violence and masculinity. At the same time that they acknowledge the destructive potential which a crisis of masculinity possessed, however, they also suggest that such an event could strengthen masculine identity if conditions would allow it to. The three midwifery manuals and eight plays which I analyse throughout the course of this thesis therefore employ their representations of twins in order to acknowledge how masculinity was constructed at the time that the texts were published, but also to gesture towards how it could be constructed if certain things were to change. If the plurality of masculinity were acknowledged, the practice of primogeniture altered, men who shared power were celebrated and those who practised violence castigated, the twins of medical and dramatic texts suggest that masculinity might never have to be confronted by the prospect of crisis at all.

‘You Are Most Like Me Yet Are Not the Same’: Twins and the Problem with Masculinity in *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Twins*.

As plays which both feature identical male twins, William Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors* (1594) and William Ryder’s *The Twins* (1635) are logical starting-points for a thesis which highlights the existence of a link between early modern masculinities and two people who shared the same birth. For all of the forty years of distance between the two works, they have notable similarities in terms of plot and the uses to which they put their twin characters. Both works feature two men who are so identical that even their closest associates struggle to distinguish between them, to the point where the wife or beloved of one twin comes to desire the other. The striking resemblance between the twins allows for a neat visual representation of the problems which a singular view of masculinity could create, and underscores the need for a plural understanding of this type of identity.

Such a visible connection between twins and singular or plural views of masculinity also resonates strongly with the representations of the Biblical twins Esau and Jacob in religious texts, and foetal illustrations from midwifery manuals. The religious works use the idea of Esau and Jacob wrestling in the womb as an allegory for the battle between the sinful flesh and the Holy Spirit which they believe that all men experience, while the twin subjects of the foetal illustrations initially seem content to exist as one being, but are actually desperate to be seen as two distinct individuals. These religious and medical works maintain that it is both simplistic and dangerous to have a singular view of masculinity, and assert that it must be understood as a fundamentally plural form of identity. Such an argument is

also made evident by Shakespeare's and Ryder's plays, as the spouses or beloveds of one twin conflate his masculinity with that of his brother, and almost lead them into committing the sins of incest and adultery. In medical, religious, and dramatic works alike, then, representations of two people who share the same birth suggest that it is dangerous to understand early modern men as one homogenous group, and stress the importance of acknowledging their plurality.

With such a focus upon concepts of 'singular' and 'plural' forms of masculine identity, *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Twins* have very obvious resonances with more recent theoretical writing in the area of masculinity studies, which has come to assert the importance of multiple 'masculinities'. After a discussion of current criticism on the jointly-born figures of the plays of interest, this chapter will therefore examine the work of scholars within masculinity studies. It will then explain how religious texts and foetal images from midwifery manuals problematised the idea that there was one uniform type of masculinity. The discussions of *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Twins* which follow will finally argue that Shakespeare's and Ryder's identical twins all experience a crisis of masculinity because their identities are viewed in a singular fashion. While all three sets of twins are able to convince those around them of the plurality of their masculinities, however, only Ryder's pair are able to fully overcome their crises of masculinity, for while they are fully able to recognise that they are different from each other, Shakespeare's twins struggle to acknowledge their plurality. Taken together, then, *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Twins* ultimately argue that individual men can struggle just as much as other people to realise that their masculinity is a plural form of identity, as opposed to a singular one.

I. Identical Twins and Identical Men: Critical and Theoretical Viewpoints.

i. *Shakespeare's and Ryder's Twins*

Despite the similarities between Shakespeare's and Ryder's plays, the reputations of the two men who wrote them could not be more different. While there are countless biographies, critical studies, and tourist attractions relating to Shakespeare, little is known about William Ryder. Although there was a Lord Mayor of London named 'Sir William Ryder', this man died in 1611, so it seems unlikely that he wrote a play which was first performed in 1635. The only surviving information regarding the dramatist Ryder comes from the title page of *The Twins*, which announces that he is a 'Master of Arts', and so indicates that he was educated at either Oxford or Cambridge University.

¹ The extent of Ryder's dramatic output is highly uncertain, as *The Twins* is the only play of his to have survived, but there are a striking number of Shakespearean echoes within the tragicomedy, with characters or situations which recall, among others, *As You Like It*, *Othello*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and, of course, *The Comedy of Errors*. These echoes suggest that Ryder had substantial knowledge of Shakespeare's plays, but whether this information was gained from witnessing performances or from reading Shakespeare's 1623 Folio *Comedies and Tragedies* (or from a mixture of both) is uncertain.

There is also a notable variation in the performance history of Shakespeare's and Ryder's works. The first performance of *The Comedy of Errors* occurred in December 1594, when the Lord Chamberlain's Men presented the play as part of a

¹ See William Ryder, *The Twins* (London: Robert Pollard and John Sweeting, 1655), sig. A1^r.

programme of festive entertainments at Gray's Inn. Over forty years later, in 1635, *The Twins* was performed for the first time by Queen Henrietta's Men at Salisbury Court Theatre.² Gray's Inn and Salisbury Court Theatre were both indoor venues which were aimed at elite audiences, but it is likely that the former was more successful than the latter in attracting aristocratic figures, for Salisbury Court was considered to be a less exclusive theatre than its competitors the Blackfriars and the Cockpit.³ *The Comedy of Errors* therefore attracted an initial audience with a greater number of men who wielded hegemonic masculinity than *The Twins* did, and this sense of imbalance between the two plays has persisted to this day. While *The Comedy of Errors* is a popular play for theatres to stage, as Amir Nizar Zubai's 2012, Blanche McIntyre's 2014, and Alex Thorpe's 2018 productions attest, there is no evidence to suggest that any performance of *The Twins* has occurred since the seventeenth century.⁴

With such contrasting authorial reputations and performance history, it is unsurprising that the twins of *The Comedy of Errors* have attracted much more attention than their counterparts in Ryder's play, but recent scholarship has begun to assert the significance of these characters in both works. Daisy Murray's monograph *Twins in Early Modern English Drama and Shakespeare* (2017) contains an analysis of the jointly-born figures from *The Comedy of Errors*, but also features a discussion of the titular characters from *The Twins* which constitutes the most substantial treatment of the play to date. In accordance with an overall structure which is driven

² David Stevens, 'The Staging of Plays at Salisbury Court Theatre, 1630-1642', *Theatre History*, 31.4 (1979), 511-25, (p. 524).

³ 'Salisbury Court, 1629-42', *SHALT: Shakespearean London Theatres* <<http://shalt.dmu.ac.uk/locations/salisbury-court-1629-42/indepth.html>> [last accessed 10 November 2018].

⁴ Nizar Zubai's and McIntyre's productions were full-length performances, while Thorpe's production is a ninety-minute edition of the play which is aimed to give schoolchildren aged between seven and thirteen their first experiences of Shakespeare.

by genre, Murray examines *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Twins* independently from each other, but this chapter will demonstrate that their similarities of character and plot mean that they can also be grouped more closely.⁵

Murray asserts that the likeness of the twins within *The Comedy of Errors* generates negative associations of incest and monstrosity. She argues that Adriana's and Nell's respective attractions to Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse offer 'incestuous possibilities' which are thwarted by 'an unconscious recognition of the twin relationship', while the connection between the Dromios which is formed at the end of the play is only saved from the monstrous overtones which attended conjoined twins because of their separate bodies.⁶ While Murray understands the identical nature of the twins of *The Comedy of Errors* to cause serious threats, then, she asserts that the comedy rejects these dangers to instead offer one of the most positive early modern representations of two people who shared the same birth. This chapter agrees with the notion that the resemblance between Shakespeare's twins raises the spectre of incest, but understands its function to extend beyond the ideas which circulated only around early modern twins, and to encompass the identity of masculinity. It will demonstrate that the threat of incest allows Shakespeare to make the disadvantages of a singular understanding of masculinity very evident to the audience, and to highlight the necessity of adopting a more pluralistic viewpoint.

Murray's analysis of *The Twins* also focuses upon the likeness of the eponymous, jointly-born characters. She attests that Charmia feels genuine desire for her husband's twin because they 'bodily represent excessiveness', which means that

⁵ Murray discusses *The Comedy of Errors* in relation to *Twelfth Night*, and *The Twins* in comparison with *The Devil's Law Case* and *The Lovesick Court*.

⁶ Murray, p. 153; p. 157.

she becomes like the early modern viewer of a conjoined birth and ‘want[s] to bodily experience that excessiveness’ as well.⁷ This idea that the sameness of the twins causes Charmia’s attraction, Murray argues, is compounded by Fulvio’s belief that he and Gratiano are ‘one, rather than two’, but it is ultimately said to be solved by Gratiano’s emphasis upon his difference between himself and his brother: ‘The likeness Gratiano references is only a physical resemblance [...] He is not the same person’.⁸ While Murray’s analysis understands the sameness of the twins to be the root cause of the problems which emerge during the play, this chapter will demonstrate that the issues are actually located in an aspect of plot which she overlooks: the fact that Charmia only desires Fulvio because Lurco has ‘bewitcht’ (*TT* V. 1. sig. G4^v) her to conflate the masculinities of both twins into one form of identity. What may appear to be a play about the incestuous, adulterous potential of identical twins therefore becomes an exploration of the dangers which can attend a singular understanding of masculinity. Charmia’s unfavourable comparisons between her loving husband and her brother-in-law do not occur because the twins are inherently identical in every single way, but because Lurco has forced her to forget the key factors which distinguish Gratiano from Fulvio. When Charmia’s enchantment is taken into account, then, *The Twins* can be understood as a play with titular characters who reveal the need to consistently maintain a plural understanding of early modern masculinity.

While Murray’s work is the most substantial piece of scholarship to date upon *The Twins*, many other critics have also analysed the identical nature of the jointly-born figures within *The Comedy of Errors*. Some scholars, such as Coppélia

⁷ Murray, p. 74.

⁸ Murray, p. 80; p. 81.

Kahn and Barbara Freedman, have elected to take a psychoanalytical approach. Kahn implies that the likeness and closeness of birth between the Antipholi are factors which cause the Syracusan twin to identify very strongly with his brother when she argues that the play sees ‘an affective bridge from filial to individual identity; seeking the twin, the hero finds his mate, but only when he is able to distinguish himself firmly from his twin’.⁹ For Kahn, Antipholus of Syracuse is only able to mature when he understands that the similarity between himself and his twin does not make them one person. Barbara Freedman, meanwhile, asserts that ‘*The Comedy of Errors* dramatizes a nightmare vision in comic form – a truly terrifying fantasy of a sudden, inexplicable disjunction between personal and communal accounts of one’s identity’ which is enabled by the presence of identical twin characters who are mistaken for each other.¹⁰ She goes on to maintain that the twins reveal that ‘subjectivity is implicated in, and predicated upon otherness, [so] identity is itself a product of projection, transference, repression, and internalization. Neither self nor text is ever stable, continuous, or self-present’.¹¹ Kahn and Freedman therefore attest that the likeness between the Antipholi and the Dromio twins acts as a barrier to individual identity, for it either prevents them from thinking of themselves as separate entities in the first place, or it renders their distinct identities vulnerable. While this chapter is informed by masculinity studies as opposed to psychoanalysis, it extends the scope of Kahn’s and Freedman’s discussions by highlighting how a singular understanding of the twins’ masculinity causes those who are emotionally closest to them to view them as practically indistinguishable

⁹ Kahn, p. 225.

¹⁰ Barbara Freedman, ‘Reading Errantly: Misrecognition and the Uncanny in *The Comedy of Errors*’, in *The Comedy of Errors: Critical Essays*, ed. by Robert S. Miola (London: Routledge, 2001, repr. 2012), 261-97 (p. 262).

¹¹ Freedman, p. 292.

from each other. It therefore highlights the existence of a further barrier to their individual identities.

Other critics have considered Shakespeare's identical Antipholi and Dromios in terms of selfhood. Laurie Maguire declares that 'Identical twins, separate but the same, provide an ideal metaphor for the theme of division and reconciliation', while John M. Mercer focuses upon the likeness between one set of twins in particular: 'Shakespeare's blurring of distinctions between the Antipholus twins adds to our seeing them as two parts of one self'.¹² Christopher Crosbie also takes a similar approach when he writes of 'the identical twins who, even when displayed together in the same place, [...] frustrate the capacity of the onlookers to account for the individuated sameness before them'.¹³ All three critics understand the likeness between the Antipholi and the Dromios to contain the potential for sameness and difference, and rightly relate this quality to individual or collective selfhood.¹⁴ With its focus upon how the resemblance between the aforementioned twins causes them to become exemplars of a singular understanding of masculinity and reveals the need for a more plural approach to this type of identity, this chapter further demonstrates

¹² Laurie Maguire, 'The Girls from Ephesus', in *The Comedy of Errors: Critical Essays*, ed. by Robert S. Miola (London: Routledge, 2001, repr. 2012), 355-92 (p. 366); Mercer, 'Twin Relationships in Shakespeare', p. 29.

¹³ Christopher Crosbie, 'The Comedy of Errors, Haecceity, and the Metaphysics of Individuation', *Renaissance Papers*, 1 (2013), 101-13 (p. 111).

¹⁴ Christopher Tilmouth also suggests that the twins of *The Comedy of Errors* reveal tensions between individually- and communally-defined identity. He argues that 'The comedy [...] arises from the fact that the characters require recognition from those around them in order to maintain their identities, but [...] they also have a strong sense of unique, inalienable self-possession. As long as these two forces cohere, all is well; when they diverge, it is the inner conviction of identity which [...] hold[s]'. Brian Gibbons makes a more general comment about how the selfhoods of spouses and twins are made to appear at odds with one another: 'The metaphysical paradox that man and wife are one flesh is [...] confronted by the physical paradox that men and brother are identically the same'. Christopher Tilmouth, 'Passion and Intersubjectivity in Early Modern Literature', in *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 13-32 (p. 15); Brian Gibbons, 'Doubles and Likenesses-with-Difference: *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Winter's Tale*', *Connotations*, 6.1 (1996/97), 19-40 (pp. 19-20).

the existence of tension between the individual and the collective in *The Comedy of Errors*.

The third and final notable approach to the identical nature of the twins of *The Comedy of Errors* is a dramaturgical one. A number of critics have reacted unfavourably to the notion that the Antipholi and Dromio twins look exactly alike, for they argue that this trait does not work effectively in performance. Over two articles, John M. Mercer firstly maintains that ‘Some of the comedy [...] depends on our recognizing the preposterousness of the convention that adult twins look and speak exactly alike’, before going on to highlight the drawbacks of performances with actors who exactly resemble each other: ‘the audience have been unable to tell the actors apart and thus have missed the dramatic irony, an important source of laughter in these plays’.¹⁵ Alan Armstrong has likewise termed it a ‘mistake’ to cast physically-similar actors in the roles of the Antipholi or Dromio twins. He argues that the spectator has ‘a far richer theatrical experience’ when there are obvious distinctions between each twin, as the actors’ ‘skill involve[s] us in the wonder and joy of their reunion’.¹⁶ Mercer’s and Armstrong’s arguments are both valid and presumably informed by theatrical experiences of multiple performances of *The Comedy of Errors*, but this chapter maintains that the likeness between the twins of this play can actually have a significant function. Indeed, the audience confusion reported by Mercer supports one of the arguments made by this chapter, which is that the resemblance between twin characters highlights the need for a consistently plural understanding of masculinity. If the audience of the play are unsure which

¹⁵ Mercer, ‘Twin Relationships in Shakespeare’, p. 36; John M. Mercer, ‘Making the Twins Realistic in *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*’, *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 19 (1993), 97-113 (p. 103).

¹⁶ Alan Armstrong, ‘Doubling in *The Comedy of Errors*’, in *Shaping Shakespeare for Performance: The Bear Stage*, ed. by Catherine Lewis and Sid Ray (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 189-202 (p. 199; p. 200).

twin is which, then they have been made to view these separate men as exactly the same as each other in the same way that Adriana, Luciana, and Nell do. It is therefore not only the characters who have to alter the way that they understand the masculinities of the twins, but the audience too. When casting directors decide upon whether or not to cast actors who are exactly alike, then, they are also inadvertently influencing the extent to which the audience share Adriana's, Luciana's, and Nell's singular understandings of the twins' masculinities.

This chapter therefore builds upon the critical interest in identical twins which is evident in the scholarly discussions that take varying approaches to *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Twins*. While the contrasting reputations of Shakespeare and Ryder mean that academic attention on these works is firmly weighted in the former's favour, this chapter seeks to begin to redress that imbalance. The decision to analyse *The Comedy of Errors* in relation to Ryder's work as opposed to Shakespeare's other twin play in *Twelfth Night* is made on the basis of striking similarities in the types of twins which they feature, as well as the comments that they make about singular and plural views of early modern masculinity. Since this topic has been a key point of discussion for a great deal of theoretical writing within masculinity studies, this chapter must first acknowledge these debates before it can highlight how Shakespeare's and Ryder's works participate in them.

ii. From 'Masculinity' to 'Masculinities'

One of the many notable developments within masculinity studies has been to move away from establishing the existence of a single type of masculinity that is evinced by all men, to acknowledging that there are actually plural masculinities which are

experienced by different men for different reasons. Máirtín Mac an Ghaill has argued that the notion of a singular form of masculinity was originally a consequence of the field's emergence from gender studies, particularly feminism, where 'masculinity was assumed to be a monolithic unproblematic entity'.¹⁷ The work of Andrew Tolson, however, also suggests that early critics of Men's Studies (as the field was then known) were acutely aware of the existence of more than one type of masculinity, but were unsure how to articulate it. When he observes that 'There is no "universal" masculinity, but rather a varying masculine experience of each succeeding social epoch', his use of the singular 'experience' rather than plural 'experiences' does not quite suit his comment about the variability of masculine identity between historical periods, thereby suggesting a lack of terminology regarding such ideas.¹⁸

As the field of masculinity studies increased in size as well as momentum, the idea of a singular form of this type of identity began to seem unsatisfactory, leading to the adoption of the plural term 'masculinities' or, at the very least, an acknowledgement that masculinity was not homogenous. Jeff Hearn links the emergence of the pluralistic thinking directly to the fact that more cultural theorists began to engage with masculinity studies when he attests that 'The concept of masculinity, or now masculinities, has served as a symbolic icon for the more general increase in interest in the study of man'.¹⁹ However logical Hearn's argument is, it nevertheless fails to fully acknowledge the frustration which drove

¹⁷ Máirtín Mac an Ghaill, ed., 'Introduction', in *Understanding Masculinities* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996, repr. 1997), 1-13 (p. 1).

¹⁸ Andrew Tolson, *The Limits of Masculinity* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977, repr. 1982), p. 13.

¹⁹ Jeff Hearn, 'Is Masculinity Dead? A Critique of the Concept of Masculinity/Masculinities', in *Understanding Masculinities*, ed. by Máirtín Mac an Ghaill (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996, repr. 1997), 202-17 (p. 202).

many of those working within masculinity studies to reject a singular understanding of it. Andrew P. Williams articulates this irritation well when he explains how ‘Though convenient, the term “masculinity” is inapplicable as a blanket descriptor of the many, and often contesting, versions of the masculine-self where, simply put, there is no one way to be a man’.²⁰ Williams understands the singular term to be indicative of a disregard for the fact that other aspects of identity, such as race and class, create different masculine experiences. Rachel Adams and David Savran echo the need for a more pluralistic attitude towards masculinity when they comment that it ‘is the product of so many complex and shifting variables that to describe them in terms of any one additive identity would inevitably be reductive’.²¹ Whereas a singular view of masculinity does not permit diversity between men, a plural understanding places value upon their differences.

Indeed, scholars of contemporary masculinity have argued so compellingly for the need to develop a plural understanding of masculine identity that those who focus upon early modern constructions of this form of identity echo their arguments. Jennifer C. Vaught, for example, observes there ‘there are multiple kinds of masculinities’, while Bruce R. Smith maintains that ‘For different social groups in early modern England there were different masculinities, and Shakespeare portrays them in all their variety’.²² As the introduction to this thesis acknowledged, Smith goes on to suggest that there are ‘At least five ideal types’ of masculine identity which ‘offer themselves for emulation in Shakespeare’s scripts’ in the form of ‘the chivalrous knight, the Herculean hero, the humanist man of moderation, the

²⁰ Andrew P. Williams, ed., ‘Introduction’, in *The Image of Manhood in Early Modern Literature: Viewing the Male* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), xi-xv (pp. xi-xii).

²¹ Rachel Adams and David Savran, eds, ‘Introduction’, in *The Masculinity Studies Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 1-8 (p. 2).

²² Jennifer C. Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 7; Smith, p. 57.

merchant prince, and the saucy jack’.²³ At least two of these ‘types’ are clearly evident in *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Twins*, for the quick-witted, jointly-born Dromios of the former work fit his description of the ‘saucy jack’, while Ryder’s Fulvio styles himself as a ‘chivalrous knight’ when he decides that he would rather be murdered by his twin brother than cuckold him and damn the soul of his infatuated sister-in-law. The presence of two of Smith’s ‘types’ of masculinity within these two plays signals that Shakespeare and Ryder were aware of the existence of plural masculinities.

If scholars of early modern masculinity suggest that there was more than one way to be a man during this period, then there is evidence to indicate that multiple forms of masculine identity were open to all men. A number of religious tracts from this time argue that this multiplicity is not based exclusively on exterior markers of identity such as race or class, for it also has origins in the interior. Through their discussions of the Biblical twins Esau and Jacob, religious writers maintain that all men are a combination of the sinful flesh and the Holy Spirit. As Esau forfeited his birthright to Jacob for the sake of food to appease his extreme hunger, which caused the younger twin Jacob to receive the paternal blessing that was meant for his older brother, Esau is associated with the flesh, while Jacob is aligned with the Holy Spirit. John White, for example, declares that ‘in the revewe of *Jacob* and *Esau* here is *Ecce* againe, Behold, white and blacke, good and evill, light and darkness’, but does not quite explain why Jacob should be linked with the best qualities while Esau is connected to the worst.²⁴ William Struther supplies this deficiency when he explains that ‘*Jacob* and *Esau* do more represent these parties, the one in pietie waiting on

²³ Smith, p. 44.

²⁴ John White, *English Paradise Discovered in the Latin Prospect of Jacob’s Blessing* (London: William Hall, 1612), sig. C1^v.

God, and injoying the blessing. The other profanely contemning the blessing, and following his fleshly delights'.²⁵

While White and Struther place Jacob and Esau into a binary of good versus evil and suggest that men can be either one or the other, George Meriton, Henry Burton, and John Weemes all argue that the reality of existence as a human being is far more complicated than that. In a sermon that was preached in front of Prince Henry, Meriton explains:

Plato was of the mind that in every man there were two soules, but *Paul* tells us, that in every man there are two men: so joined together, that the one cannot be without the other, so severed asunder, that the death of the one is the life of the other. [...] Ever since our fall hath there been a combat or deadly warfare betwixt this double *Man*. The inward *Man*, fighting with the outward, the *Spirit* with the *Flesh*. The two Twinnes *Esau* and *Jacob* wrestle together. And though *Esau* be first borne (*prius carnale*) the Carnall the former yet in Gods *Children*, *Jacob* gets the *blessing*, the *spirituall* is the better.²⁶

In the same way that Esau and Jacob 'wrestle[d] together' in the womb, Meriton argues, so too do the sinful, fleshly '*Man*' and the good, '*spirituall*' being who comes from God fight with each other in the contested, confined space of the body. All men therefore possess multiple identities, and have the potential to perform more earthly or more heavenly types of behaviour at any given moment. Henry Burton makes a similar, though more succinct argument when he declares that 'Doubting comes of the *Flesh*, and believing of the *Spirit*, and these two are contrarie to the

²⁵ William Struther, *True Happines, or King David's Choice* (Edinburgh: R. Young, 1633), sig. G3^v-G3^r.

²⁶ George Meriton, 'The Christian Mans Assuring House', in *The Christian Mans Assuring House and A Sinners Conversion* (London: Edward Griffin, 1614), sig. A3^r-E2^v (sig. D1^v, italics in original).

other, they fight one against the other in one soule, as *Jacob* and *Esau* in one wombe'.²⁷ Burton asserts that as men have the capacity for belief as well as unbelief, religious faith is not an unshakeable given, but rather a hard-fought suppression of sinful doubts in favour of trust in God. John Weemes suggests that the struggle between these two different identities can be so difficult that 'the child of God saieth sometimes with *Rebecka*, [...] It had been better for me, never to have [been] conceived; he feeleth the flesh striving against the spirit, as *Jacob* and *Esau* in their mothers belly'.²⁸ In Weemes' visceral description, the heavenly and the sinful identities contest against each other so violently as to cause physical pain.

Meriton's, Burton's, and Weemes' references to Esau and Jacob are notable for two reasons: their arguments that all men are automatically born with two forms of masculinity, and the way that they employ the twin relationship in order to stress what this inherent plurality feels like. In all three pieces of writing, the idea of the Biblical twins wrestling in the confined space of the womb is used as a simile or a metaphor for the painful and desperate struggle between the sinful flesh and the heavenly Holy Spirit. While Esau and Jacob were not identical twins, the foetal illustrations and dramatic works which feature such physically-similar figures do recall the idea of a struggle between singular and plural forms of masculine identity in a cramped space. The twins of embryo-images initially seem so similar as to suggest that they share one form of masculine identity, but closer inspection reveals that they are struggling to assert their plurality within the uterine environment. Shakespeare and Ryder are unable to visually represent the womb on stage, but there is a claustrophobic feeling to their Ephesian and Milanese settings, and their

²⁷ Henry Burton, *Conflicts and Comforts of Conscience* (London: Michael Sparke, 1628), sig. C8^r-C9^v.

²⁸ John Weemes, *An Exposition of the Lawes of Moses* (London: John Dawson, 1632), sig. hh4^r.

identical twins frequently experience conflicts between earthly desires and heavenly restraint within this space. One of each pair of twins is tempted, either inadvertently or deliberately, to sleep with the present or future wife of the other because their inherent plurality has not been recognised. By conflating the masculinities of the twins into one singular form, Adriana, Nell, and Charmia highlight how the failure to recognise the exterior and interior plurality of men can have grave consequences for everyone connected with them. Shakespeare's and Ryder's identical twins therefore form part of an early modern tradition of using twins as a means through which to assert that all men have plural masculinities. At the same time, they also function to make compelling arguments for the plurality of masculinity in a way which anticipates the work of masculinity studies scholars around four centuries later.

II. Twins and the Need for Plural Masculinities

i. Foetal Illustrations of Twins

Foetal illustrations, also known as embryo-images, are visual representations of the positions which a child – or children – could occupy within the womb which often featured in gynaecological texts. As Monica H. Green has demonstrated, their origins can be traced back to Muscio's *Gynaecology* (c. 500-600), but they became extremely popular features of medieval gynaecological texts before they featured in such influential sixteenth-century works as Eucharius Rösslin's *The Birth of Mankynde*.²⁹ They also continued to form an important part of such seventeenth-century midwifery manuals as Jacques Guillemeau's *Childbirth or, the Happie Deliverie of Women*, and Jakob Rüff's *The Expert Midwife*, where they do not appear

²⁹ See Monica H. Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, repr. 2009), pp. 150-51.

in the grid-like formation used by Rösslin, but as separate illustrations placed at the beginning of relevant chapters.

Scholars have focused upon the circulation of foetal images between the fourteenth and the eighteenth centuries, and are in agreement that they functioned as an important didactic tool for midwives and surgeons who had no other way to look inside the womb. There has been some debate as to the realism of these illustrations; Karen Harvey, for example, has argued that medical illustrators aimed to produce accurate representations of their subjects, while Lianne McTavish takes the opposite approach and maintains that embryo-images ‘did not offer reflections of the womb, showing what practitioners thought unborn figures looked like’ because they were tools for imagining different types of births, rather than direct portrayals of them.³⁰ Such discussions regarding the circulation of foetal illustrations and the intentions of those who created them clearly offer a very valuable means of understanding what embryo-images were and how they may have been used in a practical context, but they have nevertheless meant that they have come to be viewed as objects to be explained, rather than analysed. This approach has led to an oversight of the fact that foetal illustrations are visual representations in their own right, and hence are worthy of further examination for what they reveal about their subjects. As will now become clear, the embryo-images of twins are particularly significant for their subtle criticism of a singular understanding of masculinity which is based upon the similarity between their bodies.

³⁰ See Karen Harvey, ‘Visualizing Reproduction: A Cultural History of Early Modern and Modern Medical Illustrations’, *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 32.1 (2010), 37-51 (p. 44); Lianne McTavish, ‘Practices of Looking and the Medical Humanities: Imagining the Unborn in France, 1550-1800’, *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 31.1 (2010), 11-26 (p. 16).

(Fig1)

Illustrations of separate-bodied twins *in utero* (xiii, xv, and xvi). Eucharius Rösslin, *The Birth of Mankynde*, trans. by Thomas Raynalde (London: Richarde Watkins, 1598), sig. L5^v. This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

(Fig2)

(Left) Illustration of twins *in utero*, one positioned head-first, one positioned feet-first. Guillemeau, sig. Y1^r. This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

(Fig3)

(Right) Illustration of twins *in utero*, both positioned feet-first. Guillemeau, sig. Y3^r. This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

(Fig4)

(Left) Illustration of twins *in utero*, one positioned head-first, one positioned feet-first. Rüff, sig. K4^v. This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

(Fig5)

(Right) Illustration of twins *in utero*, both positioned feet-first. Rüff, sig. K3^v. This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

Stylistically, the foetal images from Rösslin (Fig. 1) are much more simplistic than those which feature in Guillemeau's (Figs. 2 and 3) and Rüff's (Figs. 4 and 5) works, but they all nevertheless evoke an initial impression of unity. All of the twins are gendered as male, and are depicted with similar hairstyles, facial features, and bodily poses. The head-first and feet-first twins seem to be particularly affectionate, for they embrace and press their bodies closely together. Such concordance of gender, physical features, and posture all combine to evoke a sense of wholeness between the twins, and suggest that they are so similar to each other that they could really be one person. What initially emerges from these illustrations of identical twins, then, is a singular understanding of their masculinities on account of the sameness between them.

Upon closer inspection, however, this idyllic state of singularity between the twins comes to look increasingly questionable. The similarities of posture become undercut by small differences which individuate each twin from their sibling. Each illustration of the head-first and feet-first twins, for example, sees their subjects hold their heads at different angles, so that one twin is directly staring at their brother, who determinedly avoids their gaze by looking towards the viewer instead. While Rösslin's head-first and feet-first twins reciprocate their embraces, those within Guillemeau's and Rüff's do not, as only one twin has their arm around their sibling's shoulder. Differences between the twins who occupy a mixture of head- and feet-first positions are also evident in all of the embryo-images, for the feet-first twin holds their brother at a commanding distance away from their body, while their sibling tries desperately to cling to them.

These small, but notable variations between each pair of twins do not only have implications for the way in which their relationships are portrayed, but also

how the viewer positions their masculinities. The apparently-warm embrace between the head-first and feet-first twins becomes much more sinister when the avoidance of eye contact, or refusal to return an arm around the shoulder, is observed. The longing for closeness which one twin expresses is also countered by the fact that the other one is trying to put as much distance as possible between them both. Once these differences have been observed, the singular state of masculinity which initially seemed so blissful actually comes to be highly constraining, for the twins may look identical, but they have internal differences which they long to assert. While they might have seemed like one person because of their similar bodies, their interior desires and emotions actually confirm them as two separate people. Since a singular understanding of the twins' masculinities does not reflect their varying personalities and attitudes, the foetal illustrations of twins hint at the need for a more plural view of this type of identity.

What the embryo-images of two children who share the womb indicate, then, is an awareness that identical twins could be a useful means through which to articulate opposing views of masculine identity. Although their visual nature and their presence in midwifery manuals means that the points which they make are extremely subtle, they are nevertheless evident when they are treated as representations in their own right rather than mere didactic aids. As will now become clear, Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* and Ryder's *The Twins* continue to acknowledge this connection between identical twins and notions of singular and plural forms of masculinity. Whereas the criticisms which foetal images of twins articulate regarding a singular understanding of masculinity are somewhat subtle, the dramatic works' argument for a pluralistic view are much more pronounced.

ii. *The Comedy of Errors*

The main driving force of the plot behind *The Comedy of Errors* lies in the idea that identical twins could be mistaken for each other, but it is not, of course, of Shakespeare's own creation. As has very frequently been acknowledged among scholars, *The Comedy of Errors* is heavily based upon Titus Maccius Plautus' *The Brothers Menaechmi* (c. 200 BC), an exemplar of the Roman New Comedy genre which often revolved around mistaken identities.³¹ There has been much critical comment upon the relationship between these two plays, and it has tended to focus upon Shakespeare's introduction of an additional pair of twins.³² Philip Freund, for example, argues that 'His chief addition [to *The Brothers Menaechmi*], which he takes from *Amphitryon*, is to have the twin heroes attended by twin slaves, which cleverly augments the confusion', while Robert S. Miola attests that this alteration is located in 'The eristic impulse, the urge to outdo, to surpass the classical model [which] is endemic to the age'.³³ The portrayal of two pairs of twins as opposed to one very definitely marks Shakespeare's play as more ambitious than Plautus' in terms of plot, as Freund and Miola rightly imply, but it also has an additional impact. As each pair occupies a different socioeconomic position, Shakespeare underscores how even those men who seem to share so many markers of identity can still suffer if a singular view of their masculinity is adopted.

³¹ Philip Freund argues that 'New Comedy plots [...] revolve mostly about situations arising from mistaken identity', while C. W. Marshall draws attention to the fact that Plautus wrote another, now-lost comedy featuring twins: *Leones Gemini*, or 'Twin Pimps'. A. S. Gratwick also raises the prospect that *Menaechmi* was not actually an original work itself, but instead based off a Greek play. Philip Freund, *Stage by Stage: The Birth of Theatre* (London and Chester Springs: Peter Owen, 2003), p. 688; C. W. Marshall, *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 105; see A. S. Gratwick, ed., 'Introduction', in *Menaechmi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1-63 (pp. 23-24; p. 31).

³² There has also been scholarly acknowledgement of the relationship between *The Comedy of Errors* and another of Plautus' comedies in *Amphitryon*. Daisy Murray, for example, makes a compelling case for their interrelations. See Murray, pp. 150-55.

³³ Freund, p. 730; Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Comedy: The Influence of Plautus and Terrence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 22.

The first indicator of this argument is evident in relation to the shared names of Shakespeare's twins. Although this feature is taken from Plautus and helps to make the confusions of identity seem more credible, further examination reveals that it is a significant feature in its own right because of the influence which it exerts upon the Syracusan twins' understanding of their masculine identities.³⁴ Egeon recalls that when his sons were both born, they were 'one so like the other / As could not be distinguished but by names' (*TCoE* I. 1. 51-52), and their infant servants were also exceptionally similar in appearance, being 'male twins, both alike' (*TCoE* I. 1. 55).³⁵ In the aftermath of the shipwreck, however, the only distinguishing factor between the twins was taken away from them, as the babies who were rescued by Egeon saw their own names replaced with those of their lost brothers. Egeon recalls:

Egeon: My youngest boy, and yet my eldest care,

At eighteen years became inquisitive

After his brother, and importuned me

That his attendant – for his case was like,

Reft of his brother, but retained his name –

Might bear him company in the quest of him

(*CoE* I. 1. 123-28).

As Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse were both too young to speak when the shipwreck struck, the alliterative verbs in the line 'Reft of his brother, but retained

³⁴ In *The Brothers Menaechmi*, it is explained that 'The grandpa took the other twin and changed his name. / He so adored the other twin, who had been snatched, / He gave the brother still at home a name that matched: / Menaechmus. That had been the other brother's name' (*TBM* 40-44). Titus Maccius Plautus, *The Brothers Menaechmi*, in *Four Comedies*, ed. and trans. by Erich Segal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, repr. 2008), 75-129.

³⁵ All quotations are taken from William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors*, ed. by Charles Whitworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, repr. 2008).

his name' offer some insight into Egeon's decision to rename them after their lost twins. They suggest that Egeon wanted the son and the servant under his care to preserve a fragment of the siblings with whom they had shared the womb. Yet this commemorative gesture also has other consequences for Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse, for it means that their own masculine identities were forcibly suppressed from an extremely young age. While their desire to embark upon a 'quest' to find their lost twins is in some respects a touching gesture, then, it also has more worrying implications. Since Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse felt that it was necessary to search for their respective twins 'At eighteen years' or as they started to mature into adult men, Egeon's words and actions also suggest that their search for their siblings was bound up with each character's sense of masculinity. If Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse had been denied the opportunity to develop their own masculine identities by Egeon's decision to rename them, then they could also be understood to be seeking a model for their respective masculinities as well as a relationship with their twins. The singularity of names between each pair of twins has therefore also created a desire for a singularity of masculinity amidst the sets of jointly-born siblings.

When Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse arrive in Ephesus, it becomes apparent that Egeon's act of renaming has caused both men to feel that their masculinities are not as valuable as they could be. The audience are not given the opportunity to hear Dromio of Syracuse discourse upon his emotions at such great length, for his status as a servant renders him more of a facilitator of the drama than the emotional focus of it, but Egeon's description of 'his case [being] like' (*CoE* I. 1. 126) to his master's suggests that his sentiments would be similar to those of Antipholus of Syracuse if he were given the space to articulate them. In what is

surely one of the most commented-upon passages from the play, Antipholus of Syracuse admits that he considers his own masculinity to be insignificant and incomplete because he is fixated upon his twin brother:

Antipholus of Syracuse: He that commends me to mine own content

Commends me to the thing I cannot get.

I to the world am like a drop of water

That in the ocean seeks another drop,

Who, failing there to find his fellow forth,

Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself.

So I, to find a mother and a brother,

In quest of them unhappy, lose myself.

(*CoE* I. 2. 33-41).

Critics have offered numerous readings of this passage. They vary from such pessimistic interpretations as Charles Whitworth's and Robert S. Miola's 'self-loss' and Lalita Pandit's 'appraisal of impossibility, hence, of hopelessness, not hope', to Christopher Crosbie's optimistic assessment that 'Antipholus lays claim to – activates as it were – a mode of self-definition that depends upon the reciprocation of his identical twin'.³⁶ Irrespective of whether these critics understand Antipholus of

³⁶ Donald Carlson falls in between these two extremes when he argues that 'The dialogue at various points emphasizes the incorporation of the individual in the larger community, especially with water imagery, as befitting the baptism motif'. Thomas Cosgrove, meanwhile, offers a completely different, Marxist perspective upon this passage when he argues that it 'corresponds exactly to the complete fungibility of commodities'. Charles Whitworth, ed., 'Introduction', in *The Comedy of Errors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, repr. 2008), 1-79 (pp. 51-52); Miola, p. 28; Lalita Pandit, 'Emotion, Perception and Anagnorisis in *The Comedy of Errors*: A Cognitive Perspective', *College Literature*, 33.1 (2006), 94-126 (p. 113); Crosbie, p. 118; Donald Carlson, "'For He Is Our Peace Which Hath Made of Both One': Echoes of Paul in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*", *The Ben Jonson Journal*, 20.1 (2013), 38-57 (p. 52); Thomas Cosgrove, 'The Commodity of Errors: Shakespeare and the Magic of the Value-Form', *Shakespeare*, 14.2 (2018), 149-56.

Syracuse's admission in positive or negative terms, they all suggest that he lacks any sense of identity when he utters it. Yet the use of the pronoun 'his' indicates that Antipholus of Syracuse does indeed possess a sense of masculine identity, albeit a devalued one. The imagery of a 'drop of water' renders his masculinity as a state which is literally fluid and insubstantial, because he is searching for 'another drop', his as-yet-unknown twin, whom he will try to emulate. Until his search proves successful, he must navigate the multitudinous 'ocean', which is full of other models of masculinity that he cannot bring himself to follow because they may be completely different to the type of masculinity which he values the most, the one practised by his twin brother. As moving as Egeon's commemorative renaming may have seemed, then, it is shown to prove highly problematic for Antipholus of Syracuse, as it has meant that his masculinity is reliant upon a man he might never be able to find. As well as playing important roles in establishing the plot of *The Comedy of Errors*, Egeon's tale and Antipholus of Syracuse's admission therefore also introduce the idea that a singular understanding of masculinity can lead to a crisis in this form of identity, for it can create the impression that there is only one valuable way to be a man.

If Antipholus of Syracuse's crisis of masculinity has occurred because his father failed to distinguish him from his twin, then it is accelerated by the 'errors' episodes which see such figures as Adriana almost push him into assuming the deviant, detestable masculine identity of an incestuous adulterer. This point is immediately made evident by Adriana's mistaking of Antipholus of Syracuse for her husband, which occasions a reprise of the extended metaphor of the water drop that her brother-in-law had also employed. Critical readings of the link range from Robert S. Miola's argument that it indicates 'the threat of self-loss in the ocean of the

world', to Joseph Candido's suggestion that it 'further implies [Adriana's] sense of identification with the man before her, particularly as he represents – in an almost literal sense – the younger and more innocent version of her husband'.³⁷ The reprise of the extended metaphor certainly acknowledges that contact and affection has already been lost between the spouses as well as the identical twins, as Miola and Candido attest, but it also highlights the broader implications of such loss. If Antipholus of Syracuse's 'drop of water' remarks revealed his opinion that he can only become a valued man by emulating his identical twin brother, then Adriana's employment of the metaphor reveals that this desire can never be truly recognised. She exclaims:

Adriana: Ah, do not tear away thyself from me;

For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall

A drop of water in the breaking gulf,

And take unmingled thence that drop again

Without addition or diminishing,

As take from me thyself, and not me too.

(*TCoE* II. 2. 127-32).

Adriana inadvertently reveals that Antipholus of Syracuse can never truly emulate his twin brother, for he cannot knit his soul to the same woman that his twin did. While Egeon's singular view of the masculinities of both twins has made the Syracusan one believe that it is possible and necessary for him to become exactly the

³⁷ Miola, p. 28; Joseph Candido, 'Dining Out in Ephesus: Food in *The Comedy of Errors*', in *The Comedy of Errors: Critical Essays*, ed. by Robert S. Miola (London: Routledge, 2001, repr. 2012), 199-225 (p. 209).

same kind of man as his brother, then, Adriana's use of the image of the water drop indicates that he cannot fulfil this desire. Antipholus of Syracuse is a bachelor, but Antipholus of Ephesus is a married man, and because the former cannot marry the latter's wife, the gulf between one twin and his brother, or one form of masculine identity and another, is insurmountable.

Yet while the repeated imagery of the water drop indicates that Antipholus of Syracuse cannot completely resolve his crisis of masculinity by emulating his twin, Adriana's mistaken belief that she is speaking to her husband accidentally opens up a way for him to superficially do so. She clings to Antipholus of Syracuse, declaring 'I will fasten on this sleeve of thine. / Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine' (*TCoE* II. 2. 176-77). This physical closeness between Adriana and Antipholus of Syracuse, coupled with her reference to him as 'my husband', suggests that he could follow his twin brother's example and become a man by sleeping with her. By equating the exterior of Antipholus of Syracuse's body with her husband's body, Adriana offers her brother-in-law the chance to simultaneously mimic and mock matrimonial masculinity. Antipholus of Syracuse has the opportunity to outwardly adhere to the notion of the union between husband and wife through his corporeal similarity to Antipholus of Ephesus, but he also has the chance to diverge from it through his interior difference to Adriana's husband. This conflation of the twins' masculinities into one singular form therefore threatens to devalue Antipholus of Ephesus' identity as a husband, and therefore places his masculine identity on the brink of crisis. Antipholus of Syracuse is both tempted by Adriana's offer and aware that it is immoral, so he prevaricates between allowing himself to be persuaded that he is her husband, and being strong enough to assert his identity as someone other than the man she is married to. He comments:

Antipholus of Syracuse: To me she speaks; she moves me for her theme.

What, was I married to her in my dream?

Or sleep I now, and think I hear all this?

What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?

Until I know this sure uncertainty,

I'll entertain the offered fallacy.

(*TCoE* II. 2. 184-89).

Antipholus of Syracuse is aware that there is no logical explanation for Adriana's behaviour, but he so enjoys the novelty of a woman who 'speaks' for him alone that he begins to frame excuses for himself. When he asks 'was I married to her in my dream? / Or sleep I now, and think I hear all this?', he shows his awareness of the impropriety of Adriana's behaviour, but hides behind the plea of a lack of personal agency because that will allow him to continue to experience it. There is also a false sense of prudence to his declaration that 'Until I know this sure uncertainty, / I'll entertain the offered fallacy', which is much less about ascertaining the source of Adriana's behaviour than it is about giving himself permission to test out the spousal role that has been offered to him by following her into the house. The closer that Antipholus of Syracuse gets to superficially emulating his twin, then, the more he has to suppress his logical and moralistic characteristics. He teeters on the brink of assuming an incestuous, adulterous form of masculinity as he suppresses his misgivings, and promises to passively 'say as they say, and persevere so, / And in this mist at all adventures go' (*TCoE* II. 2. 218-19).

Yet just at the very point that Antipholus of Syracuse's crisis of masculinity seems doomed to result in an act which would make a mockery of the idea that man

and wife become one through marriage, he finds the strength to resist it by refusing to sleep with Adriana. Although most contemporary productions imply that the pair did sleep together, this interpretation seems unlikely to have been offered in early modern performances, for Luciana's suggestion that Antipholus of Syracuse has 'quite forgot / A husband's office' (*TCoE* III. 1. 1-2), and her subsequent advice to make Adriana believe that he loves her even if he does not, implies that no physical intimacy occurred between the duo. Daisy Murray has argued that Antipholus of Syracuse does not have a liaison with Adriana because he instinctively recognises that she is his twin's wife, but a more prosaic reason is surely the more convincing one: he is simply not attracted to her.³⁸ The presence of Luciana alerts Antipholus of Syracuse to a new and more legitimate pathway to matrimonial masculinity, for he begs 'Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak' (*TCoE* III. 2. 33). Instead of acquiescing passively with a role outlined for him by Adriana and his twin brother which is only outwardly harmonious, Antipholus of Syracuse actively invites Luciana to make him into a man who is worthy to become one with her. He highlights the contrast between these two forms of masculinity when he realises that it would be 'Against my soul's pure truth [...] / To make it wander in an unknown field' (*TCoE* III. 2. 37-8) if he continued to pretend to be Adriana's husband. As quickly as Antipholus of Syracuse suppressed his qualms regarding propriety and morality in relation to Adriana, he revives them, stating bluntly 'Your weeping sister is no wife of mine, / Nor to her bed no homage do I owe' (*TCoE* III. 2. 42-3). By refusing to accept that Adriana is his wife, Antipholus of Syracuse takes the first step towards resolving his crisis-stricken masculinity of his own volition, and preventing

³⁸ Murray asserts that 'both Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse are inherently repulsed by the incestuous possibilities the play presents. Though unaware that these women are the wives of their brothers, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse seem intuitively to reject such unnatural behaviour [...] It is as if an unconscious recognition of the twin relationship prevents the matches'. Murray, p. 153.

the matrimonial masculinity of his twin from falling into crisis too. He is not only rejecting Adriana and her singular view of his masculine identity, but also the idea that he needs to emulate his twin in order to become a man. Now that he has begun to fall in love with Luciana, Antipholus of Syracuse feels confident enough to assert his true identity as a bachelor, and begin to fashion his masculinity into that of a married man by trying to woo her.

The sudden shift in Antipholus of Syracuse's attitude towards his masculine identity is not, however, appreciated by Luciana. She continues to believe that he is Antipholus of Ephesus, and therefore reacts with concern to his protestations of love, as to her they are invitations to adultery and incest. She combats his Petrarchan admiration of 'thy golden hairs' (*TCoE* III. 2. 48) and 'your beams, fair sun' (*TCoE* III. 2. 56) firstly with incredulity, asking 'are you mad, that you do reason so?' (*TCoE* III. 2. 53), and then with the reprimand 'Gaze where you should' (*TCoE* III. 2. 57). It is a sign of Antipholus of Syracuse's growing confidence in his ability to assume a mature, marital form of masculinity that he is able to call Luciana 'mine own self's better part' (*TCoE* III. 2. 61), but as she views him as an already-married man, she cannot share this confidence: 'All this my sister is, or else should be' (*TCoE* III. 2. 65). Antipholus of Syracuse's resistance to Adriana's and now Luciana's singular understandings of his masculinity as a bachelor may demonstrate that masculine identity differs from man to man, but his failure to convince Luciana that he has 'no wife' (*TCoE* III. 2. 68) underscores just how difficult it could be for these differences to be acknowledged.

As Antipholus of Syracuse looks and sounds like his twin brother but proves unable to convince Luciana that his intentions are entirely honourable, it is his exterior appearance which influences her judgement, rather than his interior lack of

attachment to any other woman. Underneath the intrigue and the humour of the misrecognition of Antipholus of Syracuse for Antipholus of Ephesus, Shakespeare therefore highlights how deeply masculine identity is predicated upon the outside of men's bodies, and argues for the need to recognise the individuality of their souls and experiences too. He stresses that however appropriate a singular understanding of masculinity may seem to be for men who outwardly resemble one another, it is actually a highly unsatisfactory, constraining viewpoint which threatens to make a mockery of one of the most important roles which an early modern man could assume – that of the husband and head of the household. Antipholus of Syracuse may strongly self-identify as a bachelor and try to fashion himself into a married man, but his efforts are doomed to failure because Luciana cannot see into his soul. While there may be signs that he is going to be able to navigate his way out of his crisis of masculinity by wooing Luciana instead of sleeping with Adriana, then, her stubbornly corporeal, singular view of his masculine identity suggests that it might not be possible for him to do so.

Dromio of Syracuse also experiences a similar problem during his unfortunate encounter with Nell, his twin's beloved. Although this episode is recounted rather than directly shown, Dromio of Syracuse similarly finds that he has to take a strong stance against the role of the soon-to-be-married man which Nell outlines for him. He explains that 'I am due to a woman: one that claims me, one that haunts me, one that will have me' (*TCoE* III. 2. 81-3), but rails vehemently against the idea that he will become the man she wants him to become by inadvertently emulating the behaviour of his twin. In contrast to the relatively lengthy amount of time that it took for Antipholus of Syracuse to realise his lack of attraction to Adriana, Dromio of Syracuse makes his instant repulsion to Nell very clear. After

the unappealing introduction 'she's the kitchen wench, and all grease' (*TCoE* III. 2. 96-7), he describes her as 'Swart like my shoe, but her face nothing like so clean kept' (*TCoE* III. 2. 103-4), and unfavourably describes her nose, among other features, as 'all o'er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires' (*TCoE* III. 2. 137-8). Dromio of Syracuse's anti-blazon is probably hyperbolic and definitely designed to elicit laughter from the audience, but it is nevertheless indicative that his visceral distaste for Nell drives him to reject the singular type of masculine identity which she offers him. Far more obviously than Antipholus of Syracuse does, Dromio of Syracuse demonstrates that it is his lack of sexual attraction to his twin's beloved which gives him the strength to assert his masculinity as a bachelor.

Yet just as Luciana refused to alter her perception of Antipholus of Syracuse's masculinity, so too does Nell fail to accept that Dromio of Syracuse is not her husband-to-be. He recalls how Nell 'called me Dromio, swore I was assured to her, told me what privy marks I had about me' (*TCoE* III. 2. 144-46); such a close association between name and body suggests that her stubbornness emerges because she takes a fundamentally corporeal view of her beloved's identity. This impression is strengthened by the fact that she appeals to 'the mark of my shoulder, the mole in my neck, the great wart on my left arm' (*TCoE* III. 2. 146-47) rather than any memories which she and her future husband may have shared. The shortcomings of such an understanding of her beloved's masculine identity are made very clear by the fact that Nell is addressing the wrong man, but Shakespeare also less obviously demonstrates that this viewpoint is exceptionally difficult to alter. Dromio of Syracuse cannot visually disprove Nell, as he does possess the 'privy marks' which she outlines, so the only option left for him is to flee. When he recounts how 'I, amazed, ran from her as a witch' (*TCoE* III. 2. 148-49), he is not only narrating his

escape from Nell, but from a singular view of masculinity which is focused firmly on the exterior of the male body, and refuses to acknowledge the value of its interior.

While Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse take steps to overcome their crises of masculinity and prevent themselves from devaluing the masculine identities of their twins, their Ephesian counterparts find themselves moving closer and closer to a position of crisis. When he finds himself locked out of his own house and threatens to force entrance with a crowbar, Antipholus of Ephesus is warned that his 'ungallèd estimation' (*TCoE* III. 1. 103) will suffer a rapid deterioration among the other men if he does break in, for 'A vulgar comment will be made of it' (*TCoE* III. 1. 101) and he will find himself in the ignominious position of a cuckold. By forcing his way into his own house, Antipholus of Ephesus would be demonstrating that he exerts none of the authority which was expected of husbands, and thereby raise questions as to the level of obedience which Adriana shows him in other areas of their relationship. Dromio of Ephesus, meanwhile, is dubbed 'a whoreson, senseless villain' (*TCoE* IV. 4. 25) by his master when he returns with the rope that Antipholus of Syracuse asked for, rather than the money that Antipholus of Ephesus wanted. He also receives the unpleasant punishment of a beating, though he admits that such treatment is nothing new to him: 'I have served him from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands for my service but blows' (*TCoE* IV. 1. 31-3). Both Ephesian twins therefore begin to be associated with less respected masculinities in the form of the cuckold and the useless servant, but it is not until Adriana, Luciana, the Courtesan, and Pinch all diagnose the pair with madness that their masculine identities really depreciate in value. The latter three of these characters fixate upon the appearances of Antipholus of Ephesus and his servant, with Luciana lamenting 'how fiery and how sharp he looks!' (*TCoE* IV. 4. 51), the

Courtesan noting ‘Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy’ (*TCoE* IV. 4. 52), and Pinch declaring ‘both man and master is possessed: / I know it by their pale and deadly looks’ (*TCoE* IV. 4. 93-4). This singular fixation on the outside of their bodies admits no acknowledgement of their interior plurality in the form of competing accounts of the day’s events, and leads to them being kept out of the sight and presence of Ephesian society: ‘They must be bound and laid in some dark room’ (*TCoE* IV. 4. 95). Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse therefore do not only lose their liberty, but also their reputations as men who can be trusted and respected by others.

While *The Comedy of Errors* opens with the acknowledgement that Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse are experiencing a crisis in their masculinities because they lack role models to emulate, then, the play quickly employs its twins in order to highlight how a singular understanding of masculinity can pose a threat to the mature masculine identity of a married man. When the Syracusan Antipholus and Dromio are mistaken for Adriana’s husband and Nell’s soon-to-be-spouse, these twins reveal that one of early modern manhood’s most important roles is built upon a very unstable foundation. As Adriana’s and Nell’s refusals to accept the Syracusan twins’ protestations of plurality demonstrate, the matrimonial masculine identity of husband is very much an exterior, corporeal form of identity, rather than the interior, spiritual one that it is supposed to be. Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus then find that their masculinities experience a severe devaluation because of this fixation upon the outside of their bodies. If Adriana, Luciana, and Nell had stopped to seriously examine the claims which Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse made regarding their positions as uncontracted bachelors, these women would have discovered that they were not actually speaking to married men. Similarly, if Adriana, Luciana, the

Courtesan, and Pinch had actually listened to the accounts which the Ephesian Antipholus and Dromio gave of the day's events, they would have realised that they were victims of something other than madness. The way in which multiple characters respond to Shakespeare's identical twins therefore demonstrates that masculinity is a vulnerable form of identity because it is predicated so strongly upon the male body.

While the 'errors' episodes highlight the issues which arise when other people fail to acknowledge the plurality of masculinity of a particular group of men who resemble one another, then, the resolution to them demonstrates that the men themselves can struggle to move past such a singular viewpoint themselves. There has been an overwhelmingly positive scholarly attitude to the reunion of the twins, with Robert S. Miola arguing that 'the twins [...] recover their identities', Lalita Pandit declaring that 'Antipholus's [*sic*] rage is purged', and Christopher Crosbie maintaining that 'there can be, amid such errors and confusions, felicity after all'.³⁹ Although these critics correctly suggest that the final scene is designed to be a happy one, it arguably fails to bring the total satisfaction which they profess that it does. As will now become clear, Shakespeare certainly resolves the issue of other characters taking a singular view of the twins' masculine identities, and the threat which this understanding poses to matrimonial masculinity, but leaves both sets of siblings unsure as to how to accept that their identities are plural when they look so alike. Far from allowing his twin characters to fully overcome their crises of masculinity, then, he simply suggests that they are now teetering on the brink of self-inflicted ones.

³⁹ Miola, p. 35; Pandit, p. 123; Crosbie, p. 113.

As well as being the first character to conflate the masculinities of the twins, Egeon is also the last one to do so. He believes that he is addressing his Syracusan son and his servant when he asks ‘Is not your name, sir, called Antipholus? / And is that not your bondman Dromio?’ (*TCoE* V. 1. 286-87), but he is actually talking to their respective Ephesian twins, who deny knowing him. With its heart-breaking implications for the condemned Egeon, this denial brings the problematic nature of a singular understanding of masculinity full circle, and creates an emotional need for distinction between the twins. Egeon’s plight offers the audience a stark reminder of the serious side of the ‘errors’ episodes, and is intended to cause them to desire, perhaps for the first time, for the presence of both pairs of twins to be understood by other characters.

Almost as soon as the audience begin to wish for the plural masculine identities of the twins to be recognised, both pairs of jointly-born brothers appear onstage. The movement from a singular understanding of their masculinities begins with Adriana’s comic admission of ‘I see two husbands, or my eyes deceive me’ (*TCoE* V. 1. 332), which indicates that she has realised that her husband is not the only man to look the way that he does. The Duke then begins to draw distinctions between the twins’ identities, albeit in the form of man and spirit as opposed to two men: ‘One of these men is *genius* to the other: / And so of these, which is the natural man, / And which the spirit?’ (*TCoE* V. 1. 333-35, italics in original). When the Abbess refers to ‘a wife once called Emilia, / That bore [...] two fair sons’ (*TCoE* V. 1. 343-44), however, the Duke finally realises that he and the other characters have been looking at ‘These two Antipholus’, these two so like, / And these two Dromios, one in semblance’ (*TCoE* V. 1. 348-49), but seeing the ‘two’ men as ‘one’ man. The

physical similarity between the twins has made all but the Abbess incorrectly conflate their plural masculinities into a singular form of identity.

Once the onstage characters understand what the audience have known all along, they make concerted efforts to treat the twins as men with distinct identities. The Duke instructs ‘Stay, stand apart. I know not which is which’ (*TCoE* V. 1. 365) after accidentally addressing the Syracusan Antipholus instead of the Ephesian one. Adriana then makes further enquiries with regards to their distinction:

Adriana: Which of you two did dine with me today?

Antipholus of Syracuse: I, gentle mistress.

Adriana: And you are not my husband?

Antipholus of Ephesus: No, I say nay to that.

Antipholus of Syracuse: And so do I. Yet she did call me so

(*TCoE* V. 1. 370-74).

By ordering the physical separation of the twins, then appealing to their memories, the Duke and Adriana work together to undo the singular understanding of the brothers’ masculinities which has occurred throughout the play, and to confirm that Antipholus of Ephesus’ identity as a husband was not compromised in any way. The twins’ identical bodies are no longer taken as a sign of similarity, but of difference, and for the first time, their protestations of difference are actually listened to. Angelo and the Courtesan are able to address the correct twin, and when the Abbess invites the assembled characters to ‘a gossip’s feast’ (*TCoE* V. 1. 407), there is the sense that both pairs of twins have been baptised anew as separate men who have distinct masculine identities.

While the other characters finally learn that the singularity of appearance between the twins does not betoken their singularity of masculinity, however, the Antipholi and the Dromios themselves start to struggle with this distinction. When both sets of twins are left onstage in the final moments of the play, there is one last ‘error’ of identity:

Dromio of Syracuse: Master, shall I fetch your stuff from shipboard?

Antipholus of Ephesus: Dromio, what stuff of mine hast thou embarked?

Dromio of Syracuse: Your goods that lay at host, sir, in the Centaur.

Antipholus of Syracuse: He speaks to me. — I am your master, Dromio.

(*TCoE* V. 1. 410-13).

As humorous and inconsequential as the ‘error’ may seem, it actually has important implications for status of the twins’ masculinities at the end of the play. Each remaining character conflates the masculinity of one twin with that of his brother on account of the close physical resemblance between them, and so follows the same, potentially dangerous train of thought as Egeon, Adriana, Luciana, the Courtesan, and Pinch. Despite their previous resistance to the singular, corporeal understandings of masculinity which were applied to them, the twins cannot help but adopt a similarly reductive viewpoint once they see just how closely they resemble one another. Antipholus of Syracuse may soon clear up this particular ‘error’ with its attendant singular understanding of masculinity, but the audience are given the sense that the mistakes, and the problematic viewpoints which they create, will continue to occur well beyond the end of the play.

If the comedy’s final ‘error’ introduces the idea that men who share a lot of markers of identity find it just as difficult to remember the plurality of their

masculinities as other people do, then the play's last lines firmly reinforce it. When the two Dromios are left onstage together, they both conflate their shared birth and similarity of appearance into a singular form of masculine identity. Dromio of Ephesus suggests that it is only the sight of his identical twin which has made him aware of his status as a handsome man when he marvels 'Methinks you are my glass and not my brother: / I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth' (*TCoE* V. 1. 419-20), and this sense of an emergent, singular form of masculinity is further evidenced by the pair's negotiations over their birth order. Dromio of Syracuse's more plural, hierarchical suggestion that 'We'll draw cuts for the senior' (*TCoE* V. 1. 424) is rejected in favour of an approach which emphasises their similarity: 'We came into the world like brother and brother, / And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another' (*TCoE* V. 1. 427-28). As well as suggesting that he and Dromio of Syracuse should no longer make distinctions between one another, Dromio of Ephesus also hints that they should build upon their shared birth and identical physical appearance in order to create a singular form of masculinity. This invitation to 'go hand in hand' is the comedy's final piece of dialogue, and the fact that it functions as a physical prompt for the actors who play the twins to leave the stage holding hands suggests that Dromio of Syracuse accepts the singular form of masculine identity which his twin offers him.⁴⁰

The identical twins of *The Comedy of Errors* might therefore demonstrate the need for a plural understanding of masculinity to develop more broadly, but they also reveal that men who share corporeal markers of identity can struggle to adopt such a viewpoint. When Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse were unaware of the existence of a man who looked and sounded exactly like them, they quickly

⁴⁰ That is, of course, to assume that two actors have been chosen to portray both twins.

showed resistance to the singular form of masculinity which such characters as Adriana and Nell attributed to them, and made attempts to assert their plurality. As soon as the Antipholi and the Dromios are reunited, however, they either accidentally or deliberately begin to ignore the plurality of their masculine identities. What begins as a play which problematises the way in which masculinity is constructed by other people therefore becomes one which problematises the way in which it is constructed by men themselves. While the twins may have been innocent of any wrongdoing when every character was confusing one brother for another, Shakespeare implies that they will only have themselves to blame if the ‘errors’ continue to occur, and their masculinities will fall into crisis as they will not have made the plurality of their identities clear enough for all to understand. Underneath the joy of the twins’ reunion, there lies a challenge and a threat: if they do not assert their value as distinct men, then any future ‘errors’ may be far more tragic than comic.

iii. The Twins

If *The Comedy of Errors* ends with the warning that men who know that they share multiple markers of identity need to be conscious of the plurality of their masculinities, then Ryder’s *The Twins* indicates why. The little-known tragicomedy focuses upon the plight of Charmia, who has been married to Gratiano for such a considerable amount of time that they have a daughter of marriageable age. Charmia, who is well known as ‘a bright star in the orb of honour’ (*TT* I. 1. sig. B4^v), is placed under an enchantment which causes her to develop an attraction to her husband’s

identical twin, the widower Fulvio.⁴¹ The existence of this enchantment has been curiously overlooked by the play's few critics, who suggest that Charmia's attraction develops of her own accord, but it has significant implications for her character and the tragicomedy's treatment of masculinity. Instead of being the woman who 'is the instigator of unnatural behaviour', as Daisy Murray attests, or the seductress who 'tempt[s] Fulvio to her bed' that Tara L. Lyons sees, Charmia is actually a victim of an enchantment which causes her to forget the plurality of masculinity between her husband and his twin.⁴² The malevolent Lurco joyously admits that 'By my means, Madam *Charmia* was bewicht with that unheard of passion of Lust' (*TT* V. 1. sig. G4^v), or made to focus on the physical appearance of Fulvio, which would seem as attractive as that of her husband, and to ignore the less visible reasons as to why she married Gratiano. It is therefore Charmia's enforced singular view of the twins' masculinity, rather than any organic physical attraction which she feels for Fulvio, that proves to be the catalyst of the tragicomedy, and one of its foremost issues.

In addition to the plot, Ryder also foregrounds a conflict between singular and plural forms of masculinity by contrasting the identical appearance of the twins with their names, which have very different meanings. The monikers 'Gratiano' and 'Fulvio' both share an '-o' ending, but the name of the former is much closer in definition to that of his wife, as opposed to his twin. 'Gratiano' means 'grace', which aligns more neatly with the meaning of 'charm' which emerges from Charmia's name than the 'red-headed' definition of 'Fulvio'. What is more, Gratiano's and Charmia's names both have Shakespearean resonances, while Fulvio's has distinctly

⁴¹ All quotations are taken from William Ryder, *The Twins* (London: Robert Pollard and William Sweeting, 1655).

⁴² Murray, p. 71; Tara L. Lyons, 'Prayer Books and Illicit Female Desires on the Early Modern English Stage', in *Gender Matters: Discourses of Violence in Early Modern Literature and the Arts*, ed. by Mara R. Wade (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014), 211-32 (p. 226).

Roman overtones.⁴³ The name ‘Fulvio’ tellingly recalls that of Servus Fulvius Flaccus, a Roman consul who was, as Cicero recalled, accused of incest.⁴⁴ While Ryder’s twins may closely resemble each other in appearance, then, the meanings of their names suggest that there is actually a greater affinity between the spouses than the jointly-born brothers, and overlooking this affinity could lead to trouble for Fulvio. What may visually present itself as a singular form of masculinity through the physical resemblance of the twin brothers is therefore actually more of a plural one once the meanings of their names are taken into account.

When Charmia is made to conflate the masculinities of her husband and twin into one singular form of identity, then, she is also being forced to deny the detailed knowledge which years of matrimony should have revealed to her about Gratiano. She declares that Gratiano and Fulvio are ‘so like / That none could ere distinguish one from tother / But by their clothes’ (*TT* I. 1. sig. B1^r), a statement which privileges their physical similarity but completely discounts the less visible factors, such as personality and memory, which would confirm the plurality of their masculine identities. This dismissive attitude continues when Charmia finds herself unable to disguise her attraction to Fulvio:

Charmia:	I know not
Ought else besides the neatness of your habit	
That makes me love you more then my own husband.	

⁴³ Shakespeare features two characters called ‘Gratiano’ in the form of Bassanio’s friend in *The Merchant of Venice*, and Brabantio’s brother in *Othello*. ‘Charmia’, meanwhile, recalls ‘Charmian’, one of the maids who attended Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

⁴⁴ This figure makes an appearance in Cicero’s *History of Famous Orators* under a discussion of Curio, ‘a celebrated Speaker, whose genius may be easily decided from his Orations. For, among several others, we have a noble Speech of his for Ser. Fulvius, in a prosecution for incest’. Cicero, *Cicero’s Brutus or History of Famous Orators*, trans. by E. Jones (London: R. White, 1776), p. 81.

Two firm impressions made upon the wax

By the same seal, are not more like each other

Than you two are.

(*TT* I. 1. sig. B4^v)

Since ‘the neatness of [Fulvio’s] habit’ is said to be the only distinguishing factor between her husband and her brother-in-law, Charmia ignores everything but the appearance of the pair, and thereby conflates their masculinities into one singular form. The vivid comparison of Gratiano and Fulvio to ‘Two firm impressions made upon the wax / By the same seal’ indicates that she does not only believe that they look alike, but also that they are identical inside. Lurco’s enchantment thus causes Charmia to discount all of the interior differences between her husband and her brother-in-law, and this singular, corporeal understanding of their masculine identities sees the twins’ masculinities teeter on the brink of crisis. Gratiano risks becoming the ridiculed, disrespected figure of the cuckold, while Fulvio could potentially become a deviant man in the form of a sinful, incestuous adulterer.

Charmia knows that the type of masculine identity which she would like Fulvio to assume would not be a valued one, but nevertheless places pressure upon him to wield it. She instructs ‘You my husbands brother / Must satisfie my will for one short moment / Must stain your brothers nuptial bed for ever’ (*TT* I. 1. sig. B3^r). Charmia’s repetition of the verb ‘Must’ situates the assumption of this deviant masculinity as an obligation, as opposed to a choice, but Fulvio tries to dissuade her from viewing the matter in such strict terms by making her aware that her desire will also have grave implications for the next life. He declares:

Fulvio: Nay, as if you were too too mean a sacrifice

For hell your self alone, you draw another,
Another must fall with you, and he such an one
Whose very person makes a great sin double.

(*TT* I. 1. sig. B4^r)

Perhaps because he knows that Charmia is not in a state to accept the plurality of masculinity between himself and Gratiano, Fulvio chooses not to assert his difference from his twin, but instead to attack the role which she has offered him. He explains that although her proffered form of masculinity may bring her brief pleasure, it will cause permanent suffering and pain: 'you draw another, / Another must fall with you'. He then casts a further, decidedly unromantic perspective on her offer when he refers to himself as someone 'Whose very person makes a great sin double', for as well as referring to the 'doubl[ing]' of adultery into adultery and incest, he also reminds Charmia of his appearance as Gratiano's bodily 'double'. If Charmia believes that clothes are the only means of distinguishing between the twins, then her liaison with Fulvio would visually be no different from coitus with her husband, and so further increase the bitterness of the 'sin' because it would have been performed for nothing. By highlighting the problems which a liaison would create in this world as well as the next, Fulvio demonstrates his awareness that if he does not manage to pacify Charmia in some other way, he will be plunged into a permanent crisis of masculinity.

Charmia's enchantment is so strong, however, that she cannot alter her superficially singular view of Gratiano's and Fulvio's masculine identities, even if she knows that it will result in damnation for both herself and the man she desires. She maintains that the only other option open to her is suicide, and is so distressed

that she calls this act ‘A virtuous death’ (*TT* I. 1. C1^v) because it she believes it will ‘prevent [...] a vicious life’ (*TT* I. 1. sig. C1^v). When this grim threat makes the full extent of Charmia’s despair apparent to Fulvio, he changes tack at remarkable speed:

Fulvio: Come, Ile kiss you,

Love, live, and lye with you; when next my brother

Goes out of town I will perform your will:

Better I do it then another man.

(*TT* I. 1. sig. C1^v)

Instead of reprimanding Charmia for her conflation of the masculine identities of himself and his twin, Fulvio becomes supportive of it, but there is evidence to suggest that his new stance is not a genuine one. He does not promise to ‘Love, live, and lye with’ Charmia immediately, but ‘when next my brother goes out of town’, and there is a hollow sound to his declaration that ‘Better I do it then another man’ after his previous warnings about ‘mak[ing] a great sin double’ (*TT* I. 1. sig B4^r). He then goes on to limit their physical interaction to ‘one kiss and part’ (*TT* I. 1. sig. C1^v), which sounds far more formal than lustful. If the audience are given the impression that Fulvio is trying to buy himself some much-needed thinking time, however, then Charmia is not, for she exchanges her talk of self-destruction for a merry but somewhat scathing promise to ‘look / Smooth as a Bride that marries where she loves’ (*TT* I. 1. sig. C1^v) at their next meeting. The prospect of fulfilling her desire for Fulvio therefore creates a further, retrospective devaluation in Gratiano’s masculinity, as he is recast from a loving spouse to a man that Charmia has never felt much affection for.

Fulvio is therefore placed into a terrible dilemma: he must either refuse to sleep with his twin's wife and thereby become effectively responsible for her suicide, or reluctantly agree to sleep with her in a sinful, incestuous act which will create crises in the masculinities of himself and Gratiano, and also permanently distance Charmia from a respected form of femininity. The stakes are so high that Fulvio has to simultaneously pretend that he is willing to accept the masculine identity that Charmia has created for him by sleeping with her, while also looking for a way to avoid the liaison, assert the plurality of masculinity between himself and Gratiano, and preserve all of their reputations as respectable practitioners of gendered behaviour. As the play progresses, Fulvio's conflict becomes an intense point of dramatic interest, not least when Charmia reminds him that her desire is 'upon life and death' (*TT* II. 1. D2') and she orders him to 'Swear to me' (*TT* II. 1. sig. D2') that he will fulfil his promise. While his resultant vow – 'By my honour, even with my loss of honour / Ile save your life' (*TT* II. 1. sig. D2') – satisfies Charmia, it is notable for its evasiveness. Fulvio may seem to be agreeing to accept the incestuous, adulterous form of masculinity which she has outlined for him, but he is actually promising to prevent her from committing suicide, even if it costs him his reputation. When he has analysed all of the terrible possibilities which await him, then, Fulvio decides that he is willing to subject himself to a 'loss of honour', or a crisis of masculinity, if it means that he can save his twin brother from such an experience and preserve the life of his sister-in-law.

Before Fulvio finds himself with an opportunity to save Gratiano and Charmia from disaster, however, he somewhat ironically decides to consult his twin brother about the matter. Given that Gratiano is the potential cuckold, Fulvio's decision to make him his confidant may seem to be a somewhat puzzling one, but it

actually suggests that he is looking to his closest male friend and relative to encourage him to continue to resist the incestuous, adulterous form of masculine identity that Charmia has offered him. The value which he ascribes to Gratiano's unbiased opinion is made evident when he explains that 'there's a doubt troubles me / That you must needs resolve' (*TT II. 1. sig. D2^r*), then proceeds to tell him of the demands which Charmia has placed upon him without referring to her by name. If Fulvio was searching for a response which acknowledged his difficult moral position, however, then his twin's interest in the carnal side of the potential liaison is something of a disappointment: 'does no secret lust in you / Urge you to satisfie her strong desire?' (*TT II. 1. sig. D3^v*). He goes on to protest:

Fulvio: Heaven bear me witnesse, my intents are honest

If *I* consent, it is for vertues sake,

To preserve that.

(*TT II. 1. sig. D3^v*, italics in original).

As well as being the first time that Fulvio frankly admits that he does not want to sleep with Charmia, this outburst also offers the audience the first indication of the existence of temperamental differences between the twins. While Charmia suggested that their masculinities were so singular that only the visual prompt of clothes could indicate that they were two different people, the twins' contrasting priorities indicate their plurality of masculine identity. Fulvio may be agonising over how to save the unnamed woman from suicide and his soul from damnation, and the masculinities of himself and his twin from crisis, but Gratiano views the matter as an opportunity to be capitalised upon:

Gratiano:

The sins but venial,

If it were lust in both, and that your Confessor

Can wipe away, and done to a good end.

T'will much extenuate the crime, methinks,

Go doe't, and let me know the issue on't

(TT II. 1. sig. D3^v, italics in original)

As well as instructing Fulvio to sleep with the woman, Gratiano also advises him to use the excuse of 'lust' in order to 'much extenuate the crime', and thereby avoid any deterioration in his masculinity. His injunction to 'Go doe't, and let me know the cause on't' therefore demonstrates the existence of plural masculinities between the twins, not only in terms of their response to the situation, but also their attitude towards the effect which sinful practices may have upon their identities. Presumably because Gratiano does not know that the woman in question is his wife, he suggests that any negative associations which Fulvio might experience can be easily excused in this life and will not trouble him in the next, so he can survive the situation with an intact reputation and an unchanged masculinity. As Fulvio knows that it is Charmia who is making so many demands upon him, however, he is all too aware that both his masculinity and the one wielded by his twin will be plunged into permanent states of crisis if he follows Gratiano's advice.

When Fulvio next appears onstage, it seems that he has decided to accept the adulterous, incestuous masculine identity which Charmia and Gratiano have steered him towards, along with the attendant crises which will follow for himself as well as his twin. His response to learning that Gratiano is imminently going to visit Lord Fidelio, whose name ironically means 'fidelity', is the joyful 'Blest opertunity! i'le entertain it' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F2^v*); what is more, he suddenly seems to stop worrying

about the consequences of his liaison. The more doubtful that Charmia becomes, the more dismissive Fulvio's responses sound: when she asks 'were I not better dye then wrong my husband?' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F2^v*), he replies 'to be bad once in the midst of so much good, the world can take no notice on't' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F2^v*). Her admission that 'I shall loath the act when it is done: I know I shall' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F2^v*) is similarly met with the reprimand 'Come, come, nor honour, husband, nor our cause of sorrow should hinder actions that concernes our life' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F2^v-F2^r*).

The alteration in Fulvio's attitude is startling almost to the point of incredulity, but his omission of the word 'brother' from the warning he issues to Charmia suggests that there is an explanation for this change. By pressing for a liaison while referring to Charmia's 'honour' and her 'husband', which are respectively the most important quality and person in her life, Fulvio is forcing her to acknowledge exactly what she stands to lose if she sleeps with him. She no longer has to expend energy to convince Fulvio to assume the problematic role which she has offered him, which leaves her with more time to reflect upon just how much damage her desire will cause. Fulvio therefore uses Charmia's singular understanding of his masculinity as a means of practising a kind of reverse psychology, and there are signs to suggest that it is having the desired effect. His anticipatory comment, 'Sister, till night farewell' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F2^r*), is met with Charmia's rather less enthusiastic reply 'Why then farewell' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F2^r*).

If Fulvio aims to prevent Charmia from sleeping with him and plunging the masculinities of her husband and brother-in-law into crisis by feigning willingness to assume an incestuous, adulterous masculine identity, then he also employs the same tactic with his twin. When Lurco prompts Gratiano to investigate the relationship between Charmia and Fulvio, the latter figure makes a startlingly bold confession:

Fulvio: Nay then, know, She is the woman that *I* must lye with, you he *I* must Cuckold, it ca'nt be otherwise; *I* know you'l yeild to it, to save her life: better that *I* should do it that am your brother, then any other man, *I* shall keep counsel: *I* thought good to tell you, for *I* was loath to do't without your leave: *I* know shee'l love you deerly for this kindnesse.

(*TT* IV. 1. sig. F2^r, italics in original).

The repetition of 'must' and 'know' creates a decisive tone, yet there is an artificiality to Fulvio's words which suggests that he is not seeking to domineer over his twin, but rather to goad him. He bluntly suggests that he intends to instigate a permanent crisis in Gratiano's masculinity through his declaration that 'you [are] he *I* must Cuckold', and thereby encourages Gratiano to direct his anger towards him, rather than Charmia. He further antagonises Gratiano by telling him 'better that I should do it that am your brother, then any other man', which again emphasises the magnitude of the betrayal. As if these barbs are not enough to irritate Gratiano, Fulvio then goes on to hint that Charmia needs to sleep with him because her husband is emotionally and sexually deficient: '*I* know shee'l love you deerly for this kindnesse'. In an attempt to save his twin from experiencing a crisis of masculinity, then, Fulvio seeks to aggravate Gratiano by suggesting that his masculine identity has already been devalued, and he is only hastening its downfall by cuckolding him.

Despite Fulvio's attempts to irritate Gratiano, the latter character initially responds with disbelief as opposed to anger at the idea that his twin could betray him and slight his masculinity so thoroughly. He asks '*Is it a brother speaks this? are you Fulvio?*' (*TT* IV. 1. sig. F2^r), then adds 'sure I'm mistaken' (*TT* IV. 1. sig. F2^r), as if the evidence of his eyes and ears does not correlate. When Fulvio then confirms his

identity with the simple comment ‘No *I* am your brother’ (*TT* IV. 1. sig. F2^r, italics in original), Gratiano begins to place distance between the pair, remarking ‘Then *I* must tell you you have forg’d a tale [...] she false? *I* rather shall suspect the truth to be so’ (*TT* IV. 1. sig. F2^r, italics in original). Gratiano’s ironic assertion of belief in Charmia tells Fulvio that his plan of aggravation is beginning to work, and he encourages its progress further by reminding him once more that he is being betrayed by the man who has always been closer to him than any other. He recalls how ‘the least division was never known betwixt us, but we liv’d rather as one, then two that was alike, nor were we admir’d more for the similitude of feature, then affection’ (*TT* IV. 1. sig. F2^r). Beginning with their former emotional likeness and ending with their still-present physical one, Fulvio seeks to save Gratiano from becoming a cuckold by collapsing the masculinities of himself and his twin into one singular form. Although he acknowledges that the ‘affection’ between them has become a thing of the past, he also implies that Gratiano cannot successfully assert the plurality of his own masculine identity, and combat the threat to it, unless he destroys the body which looks so like his. With its sole focus upon the physical appearance of the twins, Fulvio’s reference to their singularity of masculinity echoes Charmia’s earlier attitude; while she hoped to avoid the anguish of her mortal body at the cost of her soul, however, he aims to save his soul at the cost of his mortal body and his reputation by goading Gratiano into violence.

The first indication that Fulvio’s strategy is really working appears when Gratiano responds to his conflation of their masculinities. He remarks ‘*I* do yeild you are my picture, but my wife’s my selfe: and *I* must trust the substance, not the shadow: you are most like me yet are not the same’ (*TT* IV. 1. sig. F2^r-F3^v, italics in original). Gratiano attests that the physical similarity between himself and Fulvio

does not betoken their temperamental similarity, and so begins to resist the singular view of their masculinities which ironically began with Lurco's enchantment upon Charmia, but was presented to him by his twin. Gratiano quickly realises, however, that he must do as Fulvio suggested and kill him if he is ever to be free from the now-repulsive idea of their likeness and the threat of becoming a cuckold. With the warning 'prepare, Kingdoms and marriage beds admits no peer' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F3^v*), he elects to 'let blood and purge' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F3^r*) the 'secret malice [...] in [Fulvio's] brest' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F3^r*) through murder.

Fulvio's willing acceptance of such a fate demonstrates that Gratiano's violent response is the one which he has been hoping to evoke. He declares 'I will not fight with you, come kill me' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F3^r*), and argues that his murder will actually cleanse his masculine identity from the taint of betrayal, because it will prove that he has been telling the truth: 'then you may say you had a loyal brother, when you shall see your heavy *Charmia* languish and melt into her grave with tears' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F3^r*). Gratiano finally realises that Fulvio has been goading him, remarking 'D'ee jeer me?' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F3^v*), and seeks to elicit a similarly angry response when he verbally disowns him by calling him 'coward, bastard to my blood' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F3^v*). As hurt as Fulvio clearly is by this statement, he views death at the hands of Gratiano as the only means he has left of asserting the plurality of his masculine identity, protecting their masculinities from crisis, and saving his soul. Instead of retaliating angrily, then, he further encourages this course of action by exclaiming 'kill me, do, and when that I am dead, you shall not find a spot of any poyson lurking within my brest' (*TT IV. 1. sig. F3^r*). Although Fulvio understands that his twin currently considers him to be a detestable figure, he believes that he will come to view him in a much more favourable light once he can see evidence of his

innocence. If he meets death at the hands of Gratiano, he will therefore not only save his twin from a crisis of masculinity, but repel such a crisis from striking his own sense of identity, for the interior of his body will save him from the taints of betrayal and adulterous desire which have caused him to fall in Gratiano's estimation.

Although Gratiano appears to be willing to murder his twin in order to assert the plurality of his masculinity and save it from crisis, and Fulvio seems eager to die for the same reason, neither man is actually able to see their plan through to completion. In his determination to 'make [Fulvio] draw' (*TT* IV. 1. sig. F3^v), Gratiano begins to pummel his twin, who finally loses his pacific resolve at such ignominious treatment: 'Kill me, and Ile endure it: but this basenesse provokes my rage' (*TT* IV. 1. sig. F3^v). The pair leave the stage locked in a duel which hints at a tragic resolution to the issue of their masculinities, but actually allows them to solve the problem more peacefully. Fulvio overpowers Gratiano and convinces him that he is telling the truth, and the twins decide to save Charmia's life by means of a bed-trick which will see Gratiano change into Fulvio's clothes, then sleep with his wife in his guise.⁴⁵ Once both twins become aware that they cannot assert the plurality of their masculinities or prevent them falling into crisis without driving Charmia to suicide, they utilise their similarity of appearance in order to underscore just how superficial her singular understanding of their masculine identities is.

⁴⁵ Although this course of action is not revealed until the very end of the play, it is likely that the audience would have either anticipated the bed-trick, or been able to work it out from the appearance of the actors. There is a fifty-line gap between the twins' Act IV exit and Gratiano's entrance as 'Fulvio' in Act V, which would have given the actor who played the former twin enough time to change into the clothes of the latter. If the watching audience saw that Gratiano's actor was wearing Fulvio's clothes, then they would not only come to realise the existence of the bed-trick, but also the idea that Charmia was under some form of enchantment that made her unable to recognise that her husband was attending her, rather than her brother-in-law. Wendy Doniger briefly highlights the bed-trick plot of *The Twins*, but does not expound upon its meaning. See Wendy Doniger, *The Bedtrick: Tales of Sex and Masquerade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 83.

Charmia's inability to recognise her own husband when he is dressed as his twin certainly attests to her earlier comment that 'the neatness of [Fulvio's] habit' (*TT* I. 1. sig. B4^v) is the only distinguishing factor that she can detect between the pair, but the disguised Gratiano encourages her to realise just how flawed this attitude is. In typical bawdy fashion, he asks 'how like you my blood within you; i't not sprightly blood, active and full of fire?' (*TT* V. 1. sig. F4^v), then hints at the idea that Fulvio is more of a man than his twin: '*I know my brother has dul'd the edg of his?*' (*TT* V. 1. sig. F4^v, italics in original). Gratiano's comments do not only cause Charmia to confirm her guilt by lamenting '*I have been loosely wicked, bad, very bad*' (*TT* V. 1. sig. F4^v, italics in original), but also to recognise that she was wrong to think her husband effeminate, as '*I finde no addition of pleasure in your blood, more then there is in Gratiano's*' (*TT* V. 1. sig. F4^v). As ironic as Charmia's answer is, its admission that the liaison brought her 'no addition of pleasure' highlights just how illogical her thinking has been. She realises that if the masculine identities of both twins were identical, then there was nothing to suggest that sleeping with Fulvio was going to be any better than sleeping with Gratiano. It is therefore not just the sins of adultery and incest which fill her with disgust, but also the thought process which caused her to apparently commit them. Once she is conscious of this disastrous mistake, she rebukes the disguised Gratiano's attempts to secure another liaison with increasing distress. When he promises 'i'le come again at night' (*TT* V. 1. sig. F4^r), she begs, 'No, see you don't' (*TT* V. 1. sig. F4^r). This relatively mild reply becomes the more desperate 'Pray don't come' (*TT* V. 1. sig. G1^v) when Gratiano makes his offer for the second time, and finally turns into a suicidal impulse when, upon the third time of asking, she pulls out a knife and declares that suicide is 'the least sinne o'th two' (*TT* V. 1. sig. G2^v).

Although Gratiano had admitted that ‘I ha’ been too rash, I fear’ (*TT V. 1. sig. G4^r*), he only reveals the deception of the bed-trick at this last, lethal gesture of Charmia’s. He instructs ‘Hold dearest *Charmia*: see I am *Gratiano*’ (*TT V. 1. sig. G2^v*), but meets with disbelief from his wife: ‘if you be he, Ile give you a good reason why you should never lye with me agen: I have abused thy bed with thy own brother: [...] I was the tempter, I solicited’ (*TT V. 1. sig. G2^v*). While Charmia understands just how problematically and illogically her singular view of both twins’ masculinities has made her act, then, Lurco’s enchantment is so strong that she still cannot recognise her own husband with any confidence. She veers from stating ‘O now me-thinks you are my much wrong’d Lord: you look and speak like him like on that had been wrong’d’ (*TT V. 1. sig. G2^v*), and suggesting that she has plunged her husband’s masculinity into crisis, to declaring ‘Ile not beleeeve a sillable’ (*TT V. 1. sig. G2^r*) of what she hears. With such a focus upon how Gratiano ‘look[s] and speak[s]’, Charmia reveals that she remains in thrall to a highly superficial, singular understanding of the twins’ masculinities that is predicated upon the exterior of their bodies.

Indeed, Charmia does not come to alter this viewpoint until Lurco exposes her apparent liaison with Fulvio and orders for the pair’s execution, a fate she accepts willingly until Fulvio himself appears onstage. Although she initially believes that he is ‘my much wrong’d Lord’ (*TT V. 1. sig. G4^v*), he addresses her as ‘sister’ (*TT V. 1. sig. G4^v*) and states that ‘you ne’r injur’d me, nor are you false unto your husbands bed’ (*TT V. 1. sig. G4^v*), which is echoed by Gratiano’s declaration that she has been ‘Sav’d by a faithful brother’ (*TT V. 1. sig. G4^v*). While Fulvio and Gratiano are most obviously exonerating Charmia from Lurco’s accusations of sinful behaviour, they are also demonstrating that their masculinities are still very distanced

from the valueless identities of cuckold and incestuous adulterer. If the identical exteriors of the twins threatened to create a crisis of masculinity for them both, then, their different interiors ultimately managed to save them from one.

Charmia's response, 'since you both say so, I with joy beleeve ye' (*TT* V. 1. sig. G4^v), expresses her relief at being cleared of the charges which would ruin three lives, gendered identities, and souls. It also subtly signals her movement towards a plural understanding of both twins' masculinities. If she is to 'beleeve' that she has not committed adultery and incest, then she must realise that appearances told her that she was sleeping with Fulvio when she was actually sleeping with Gratiano. Charmia is silent for most of the remainder of the play as she processes this fact, but her final words, which end the tragicomedy, confirm that she has accepted it: 'Come, then, let's in: now I shall ne'er start more, / She's honest that did think she was a Whore' (*TT* V. 1. sig. H1^r). With its joyful reassertion of Charmia's virtue, the couplet indicates that Charmia's dangerously singular understanding of the twins' masculine identities has vanished along with the idea of her infidelity, to be replaced by a plural understanding of their masculinities which is responsible for her innocence.

III. Conclusion

In early modern religious, medical, and dramatic works alike, then, there was a distinct connection between the presence of male twins and the notions of singular and plural masculinities. Theological discussions of the Biblical twins Esau and Jacob stress that all men have inherently plural identities. The foetal images from Rösslin, Guillemeau and Rüff, meanwhile, offer a subtle visual critique of the idea

that men who look the same as each other also share a singular form of masculine identity, for they introduce small, postural details which indicate the highly constraining nature of such an attitude. This theme is then examined to greater effect through the identical male twins of *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Twins*, who do not only encounter spiritual and moral dangers when their similarity of appearance is equated to singularity of masculinity, but also either experience crises in this form of identity or only avoid them by the narrowest of margins. In order to combat the grave threats of incest and adultery, the twins must assert their plurality of masculinity to themselves as well as to other people, yet both processes are fraught with difficulty. The jointly-born brothers of *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Twins* all eventually convince the other characters to develop a plural rather than a singular attitude towards their masculinities, but Shakespeare's twins ultimately struggle to see each other in this way. While the identical twins of the foetal images and Ryder's work suggest that the biggest obstacle which men with similar markers of identity face is the attitudes of other people, Shakespeare therefore also implies that a large part of the problem emerges because of the attitudes of the men themselves.

As troubling as the Dromios' drive for singularity may be in the midst of the warnings which religious texts, medical illustrations and drama give regarding such a viewpoint, it also gestures towards another key issue which attended early modern notions of masculinity. Dromio of Ephesus and Dromio of Syracuse elect to conflate their masculine identities into one singular form because this mindset allows them to ignore the question of who was born first, and by extension which of them should wield the most authority. As minor as this detail is, it nevertheless suggests that twins had the potential to trouble the notion of hegemonic masculinity. As the following chapter will now demonstrate, medical works and dramatic texts alike saw

the close birth of twins as an opportunity through which to question exactly why some forms of masculinity were endowed with far more power than others.

‘Now You Are a Man Sir’: Twins and the Issue of Masculinity in *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow*.

If the identical twins of the previous chapter highlight the dangers of failing to distinguish between men, then the non-identical, jointly-born brothers of this chapter reveal just how perilous these distinctions can be. John Fletcher’s tragedy *The Bloody Brother* (c. 1617) and Francis Quarles’ comedy *The Virgin Widow* (1639) feature twins who quarrel over the problem of who will inherit their father’s political power. While the necessity of the inheritance question varies between the two plays, each twin character’s desperate need to receive an answer to it underscores just how influential the early modern practice of primogeniture was upon the formation of masculine identity. The closeness of birth between Fletcher’s Rollo and Otto, and Quarles’ Bellarmo and Palladius, allows the playwrights to suggest that power could be shared more equally among early modern men. As this prospect threatens to plunge the masculinities of the twins into crisis through suggestions of effeminacy, however, these plays both question whether the eldest son should be the sole beneficiary of his father’s estate, and ask if a man who is willing to share power is actually a man at all.

By employing the figures of twins as a means through which to enquire whether a man’s birth should make him innately worthy of assuming a hegemonic form of masculine identity, Fletcher’s tragedy and Quarles’ comedy develop a thought process which is evident in early modern medical discussions of twin births. The instructions which midwifery manuals issue to their readers regarding this subject are concerned only with how to deliver the male twin which is most

conveniently located in relation to the birth canal. This strictly practical approach indicates that the elder twin was not held to be innately superior to the younger one. These medical discussions surrounding twin births demonstrate that as birth order was not an essentially significant component of masculine identity, it was constructed as such. As subtle as these sentiments are, they nevertheless reveal the same discomfort at the idea that identity could be inexorably fixed by birth which is then evident in Fletcher's and Quarles' plays.

With its focus upon how the twin characters of *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow* are used in order to question the suitability of a hegemonic form of masculinity that is predicated upon birth order, and the extent to which men can share power but remain respected, this chapter will be informed by cultural as well as literary criticism. It will begin by reviewing current scholarship upon the two plays of interest, as well as discussions of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. It will then proceed to examine how the representation of twins in midwifery manuals, Fletcher's tragedy, and Quarles' comedy argue for the unsuitability of the link between the order in which siblings are born and the eldest son's alignment with a hegemonic form of masculinity. *The Bloody Brother* makes this statement by repeatedly emphasising Rollo's unworthiness as the Duke of Normandy, and *The Virgin Widow* does so through the extreme arrogance of Bellarmo and Palladius. At the same time that the twins of these plays problematise primogeniture, they also acknowledge that an alternative to this practice would be difficult to establish on account of the belief that men who share power are effeminate. Other male characters convince Fletcher's Rollo and Quarles' Palladius that their masculinities will be plunged into crisis if they do not seek to rule alone, and the fear of such a crisis causes both of these men to long to kill their twin. *The Bloody Brother* and *The*

Virgin Widow therefore simultaneously highlight the flaws which attend the practice of primogeniture, and suggest that it will be difficult to alter the present system to allow for a fairer transfer of economic and social capital between men until there is a change in the attitude towards the masculinities of those males who share power.

I. Unknown Twins and Unequal Men: Critical and Theoretical Viewpoints.

i. *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow*

John Fletcher and Francis Quarles were extremely successful early modern writers, for the former succeeded Shakespeare as the chief dramatist of the King's Men, and the latter was very well known for his religious writing. Fletcher collaborated with such eminent dramatists as Shakespeare and Beaumont, while Quarles possibly knew Robert Herrick but was definitely known to Lady Anne Southwell, who wrote an acrostic which spelt out his name.¹ While these two men enjoyed considerable popularity during their lives, however, their posthumous critical reputations have suffered somewhat on account of a scholarly tendency to make unfavourable comparisons between Fletcher and Shakespeare, and the notion that Quarles' writing is old-fashioned.²

Neither *The Bloody Brother* nor *The Virgin Widow* are particularly popular plays with critics, as they tend to be overshadowed by other works. Fletcher's

¹ See Karl Josef Höltgen, 'Herrick, the Wheeler Family, and Quarles', *The Review of English Studies*, 16.64 (1965), 399-405; Linda L. Dove, 'Composing (to) a Man of Letters: Lady Anne Southwell's Acrostic to Francis Quarles', *ANQ*, 11.1 (1998), 12-17.

² I discuss the critical comparisons between Fletcher and Shakespeare at much greater length in Chapter Four. Arthur H. Nethercot offers an excellent discussion of Quarles' reputation from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century. See Arthur H. Nethercot, 'The Literary Legend of Francis Quarles', *Modern Philology*, 20.3 (1923), 225-40.

collaborations with William Shakespeare and Francis Beaumont attract the most scholarly attention, while Quarles is best known for *Emblemes* (1635), a work which featured images that were accompanied by moralistic verse and was reprinted multiple times during the seventeenth century.³ *The Bloody Brother* was first performed by the King's Men at the Globe Theatre in around 1617, but was perhaps not the sole work of Fletcher, as Philip Massinger, Ben Jonson, and George Chapman have also been suggested as collaborators.⁴ *The Virgin Widow*, meanwhile, was certainly written for the Barrington family, with whom Quarles had always had close links as the godson of Sir Francis Barrington. Although the family's accounts record the payment for his comedy in 1640, Theodora A. Jankowski raises doubts as to whether it was ever actually performed.⁵ Irrespective of whether *The Virgin Widow* was performed or not, Quarles' comedy was clearly written for the benefit of a noble family with strong connections to Parliament, while Fletcher's was aimed at a more diverse audience. The presence of primogeniture in these plays, and the vexed questions they raise about the sharing of power between men, suggest that these issues had an effect upon people who inhabited very different socioeconomic situations.

³ *Emblemes* was reprinted ten times during the seventeenth century: in 1639, 1643, 1658, 1660, 1663, 1669, 1676, 1683, 1684, and 1696. Given the high number of reprints, it is not entirely surprising that critical attention has been focused upon *Emblemes* rather than *The Virgin Widow*, but it is worth noting that *The Virgin Widow* was itself published in 1649 and reprinted in 1656, which is indicative of some level of popularity.

⁴ Donald W. Foster further complicates the authorship of *The Bloody Brother* by suggesting that the song 'Take, O take those lips away' is a collaboration between Shakespeare and Fletcher. See J. D. Jump, 'Introduction', *Rollo Duke of Normandy or The Bloody Brother*, ed. by J. D. Jump (London: University Press of Liverpool, 1948), pp. ix–xxxiv (pp. xxvi–xxvii); R. Garnett, 'Ben Jonson's Probable Authorship of Scene 2, Act IV, of Fletcher's *Bloody Brother*', *Modern Philology*, 2.4 (1905), 489–95; Donald W. Foster, "'Shall I Die' Post Mortem: Defining Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 38.1 (1987), 58–77 (pp. 58–59).

⁵ Jankowski writes that 'Quarles's very curious drama [...] seems to have been intended for private performance and may never have actually been acted'. Theodora A. Jankowski, *Pure Resistance: Queer Virginity in Early Modern English Drama* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 163.

In addition to the more general lack of critical interest concerning *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow*, the presence of twins in these two plays has almost always been overlooked. The jointly-born status of Fletcher's Rollo and Otto has only been acknowledged by one piece of scholarship, while the close connection between Bellarmio and Palladius has failed to elicit any critical analysis. In the lone article which has focused upon the twins of *The Bloody Brother*, I have argued that a number of comments which are made by Rollo's and Otto's mother Sophia correspond with contemporaneous medical thought surrounding the conception of twins, and so indicate that they shared the same birth.⁶ The closeness of Rollo's and Otto's birth, I have suggested, combines with their father's decision to leave the Dukedom to them both to 'raise the issues of primogeniture and succession', as well as imply 'that [Fletcher's] main focus is upon how succession anxiety affects the successors themselves'.⁷ While this chapter still agrees that Rollo and Otto are twins, it is more concerned with what the play's engagement with primogeniture reveals about early modern hegemonic masculinity than with succession anxiety. It therefore builds upon the ideas which were articulated by the article, but develops them in a new, more theoretically-informed direction.

The other significant critical analyses of *The Bloody Brother* to have been published have examined various aspects of the tragedy. The astrological references in Act IV, Scene 2 are of interest to both R. Garnett and J. C. Eade, with the former arguing for Ben Jonson's authorship of the scene, and the latter using it as an exemplar of editorial processes for making sense out of apparent nonsense.⁸ John E.

⁶ Powell, "'And Shall We Now Grow Strangers?'" , pp. 148-49.

⁷ Powell, 'And Shall We Now Grow Strangers?', p. 150; p. 148.

⁸ See Garnett, pp. 489-95; J. C. Eade, 'Astrological Analysis as an Editorial Tool: The Case of Fletcher's *The Bloody Brother*', *Studies in Bibliography*, 34 (1981), 198-204.

Curran Jr., meanwhile, contrastingly approaches the play from the angle of character, and argues that Fletcher sought to make Rollo more than just the stock figure of the tyrant by attributing him with additional characteristics and motivations. Curran also draws convincing parallels between Rollo and the Roman tyrant Caracalla, declaring that ‘tyranny lies not in stealth but in its lack; subject to no interior bridle, [their] inner tumult continually bursts forth in blatant villainy’.⁹ These varying points of critical interest successfully indicate the play’s relevance to scholarly understandings of early modern dramatic authorship, astrological thinking, and engagement with Roman history. By drawing links between the twin characters of *The Bloody Brother* and contemporary concerns regarding masculinity, this chapter demonstrates that the tragedy is also of relevance to an additional area of enquiry in the form of identity politics.

The few critics who have discussed *The Virgin Widow* have often noted that it reveals anxieties about Catholicism, and makes reference to such pressing contemporary issues as Charles I’s attempt to alter the way in which Scottish citizens worshipped. There may be a general scholarly consensus that Quarles’ characters have an allegorical function, but there is much less agreement as to exactly what particular characters represent.¹⁰ Robert Wilcher argues that Kettreena stands for ‘the pure [...] Calvinist Church of England’, and describes Queen Augusta and Artesio as representatives of ‘Catholic and Arminian influences at court and in the church’.¹¹ Gordon S. Haight, meanwhile, maintains that ‘Artesio represents the Church of

⁹ John E. Curran, Jr., ‘Fletcher, Massinger, and Roman Imperial Character’, *Comparative Drama*, 43.3 (2009), 317-54 (p. 338).

¹⁰ Critics of *The Virgin Widow* seem to agree that some of the characters serve an allegorical function, but that is not to suggest that they all maintain that such characters are the most important ones in the play. For one example of such an argument, see Elizabeth K. Hill, ‘Quarles as Dramatist’, *Comparative Drama*, 29.1 (1995), 168-82 (p. 170).

¹¹ Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism, 1628-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 46-47; p. 46.

England, and in the mountebank Quack [...] the Roman Catholics are satirized'.¹²

Although these allegorical readings may be highly illuminating in their own right, they risk reducing Quarles' comedy to a closed treatment of religious matters.¹³ Such an attitude would then lead to an oversight of the fact that *The Virgin Widow* also engages with other aspects of seventeenth-century culture. By highlighting how the twins Bellarmo and Palladius question the practice of primogeniture and its connection with masculine dominance, this chapter therefore asserts the relevance of *The Virgin Widow* to areas other than religion, and aims to open up the critical debate surrounding the comedy to more approaches than the solely allegorical.

Critical attitudes towards *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow* may have been somewhat muted, then, but this chapter aims to advance the debate surrounding both texts. Since the presence of twins allows for the examination of early modern hegemonic masculinity and male power in Fletcher's tragedy and Quarles' comedy, this chapter will demonstrate that the two works are of significance to critics who are interested in early modern identity politics. Through their twin characters who problematise the practice of primogeniture, *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow* offer a critique of how masculine identity is constructed within early modern society. At the same time, these texts also question the extent to which the sharing of power between men impacts upon the way that their masculinities are perceived. As will now become apparent, *The Bloody*

¹² Gordon S. Haight, 'Francis Quarles in the Civil War', *The Review of English Studies*, 12.46 (1936), 147-64 (pp. 148-49).

¹³ Theodora A. Jankowski has criticised the idea that Quarles' play is a strictly allegorical one, arguing that 'In choosing to follow the gender arrangements of the phrases "virgin widow" or *sponsa Christi* – that is, that the church is the female spouse (bride/wife) of the male Christ – Quarles has, I feel, destabilized his allegory and allowed the play to be read as a social commentary on marriage for financial gain versus marriage for affection'. I echo Jankowski's suggestion that *The Virgin Widow* cannot be seen as an exclusively allegorical text, albeit for its representation of twins and masculinity as opposed to more religious matters. Jankowski, p. 169.

Brother's and *The Virgin Widow's* understanding of, and discomfort with, the concept of hegemonic masculinity anticipates the more theoretical treatments of this topic which emerged at a much later date.

ii. *Early Modern Primogeniture and the Perpetuation of Hegemonic Masculinity*

Scholars of masculinity studies have often drawn attention to the fact that the existence of multiple masculine identities does not afford the same amount of value to all men. Tim Carrigan, R. W. Connell, and John Lee, for example, point out that there is a great disparity between the relevance of particular masculinities: 'the culturally exalted form of masculinity, the hegemonic so to speak, may only correspond to the actual characters of a small number of men'.¹⁴ They indicate that while few men may assume the hegemonic form of masculinity, this identity is privileged at the expense of all others, which creates a hierarchy of male social relations. Carrigan, Connell, and Lee are writing about hegemonic masculinity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but their comments are also relevant to the early modern period. Alexandra Shepard has identified 'concerns to maintain an ordered society that necessitated the disciplining and subordination of many men as well as women', which meant that some groups of males were afforded far more power than others.¹⁵ Shepard asserts that it is important to be 'far more aware of precisely *which* men stood to gain, *which* women afforded to lose, in *which* contexts' if an appreciation of the complexity of early modern gender relations is to be gained.¹⁶

¹⁴ Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, p. 112.

¹⁵ Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, repr. 2008), p. 87.

¹⁶ Shepard, p. 4, italics in original.

This thought process can also be applied to the way in which power was negotiated between different groups of men during this period. By considering who the ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of hegemonic masculinity were, it becomes possible to identify which factors of identity afforded power, and which withheld it.

The idea that hegemonic masculinity should be interrogated by scholars is also echoed by Andrew P. Williams, who implies that there is another benefit to such an approach. Williams has argued that if the methods which allow for the perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity are identified, it may be possible to resolve the inequality which it causes. He declares:

it is not enough to simply pluralize the word “masculinity” and expect that the acknowledgement of alternative “masculinities” will provide a sufficient impetus for deconstructing social and economic privileges that attend hegemonic forms of masculine identity. Criticism needs to be directed toward the social processes that define and inscribe hegemonic masculinities and their relationship to both men and women.¹⁷

Williams suggests that an important step towards combatting the damaging effects of hegemonic masculinity is to establish the ‘social processes’ which allow for the repeated privileging of a particular group of men.¹⁸ He implies that once these ‘processes’ have been identified, this knowledge could be utilised to disrupt the continual domination of certain types of men. Such an intervention would then allow for different types of masculinity to flourish alongside, rather than suppress, one another.

¹⁷ Williams, p. xi.

¹⁸ Williams’ argument is also echoed by Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, who attest that ‘To understand the different kind of masculinity demands, above all, an examination of the practices in which hegemony is constructed and contested – in short, the political techniques of the patriarchal social order’. Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, p. 114.

One of these ‘social processes’ which allowed certain men to occupy a position of hegemonic masculinity during the early modern period was the practice of primogeniture, which saw a father’s estate pass on to his eldest son. Wendy Griswold hints at the inequality which this practice created when she notes that it ‘penetrated down the social scale to the least of the gentry, and it did not customarily include any significant provision for the younger sons’.¹⁹ The socioeconomic benefits to the eldest son, Fred B. Tromly has argued, were counterbalanced by emotional privations, as the heir ‘was the recipient of the lion’s share of parental control and censoriousness as well as wealth and land’.²⁰ This close monitoring of the eldest son’s behaviour indicates that the socioeconomic power which primogeniture conferred was so great that it was necessary to distinguish between males from their very earliest years. If the process of distinction between men began in their youth, then it only became more pronounced as the years progressed, for the eldest son inherited a hegemonic form of masculinity alongside his father’s estate, while his younger brothers were deprived of those advantages.

In accordance with the arguments made by masculinity studies scholars, knowledge of the process behind primogeniture – the transfer of social and economic power from father to the eldest son – should allow for an intervention which lessens the inequality between men. While real-life interventions in early modern primogeniture could only really be made by death, the idea that the eldest son may not be the most suitable one had certainly been made evident by the Biblical twins Esau and Jacob, for the younger twin received the inheritance which would

¹⁹ Wendy Griswold, *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre, 1576-1980* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 40.

²⁰ Fred B. Tromly, *Fathers and Sons in Shakespeare: The Debt Never Promised* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), p. 16.

ordinarily have been given to the elder one. While the previous chapter clearly demonstrates that Esau and Jacob were often invoked during discussions of the battle between the desires of the body and the Holy Spirit, these twins also featured frequently in relation to the idea of predestination. Religious writers highlight how the younger of the twins was identified as the one who would assume power over the elder one before they were even born, and argue that because Jacob was chosen before he had even had the chance to show his worth, God marks out those who will be saved prior to their existence. John Dove, for example, acknowledges during a sermon that ‘God loved the one, and hated the other, before they were borne’, but maintains that this early distinction means ‘that the purpose or secret degree of god in choosing one & refusing the other, might remain according to election, not by works, but by him that calleth, which is God alone’.²¹ John Downhame meanwhile observes how ‘neither any good thing in *Jacob*, could be the cause of the choosing of him, nor any wickednesse in *Esau*, of his rejecting, but the onely will and pleasure of God’.²² Henry Burton offers a third example of this kind of argument when he suggests that the Biblical tale reveals ‘that the purpose of God, according to Election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth’.²³

While the main aims of Dove, Downhame, and Burton are clearly to invoke Jacob and Esau in order to argue for the existence of predestination, their engagement with these Biblical twins also points towards a mode of thought which relates to the idea of primogeniture. These three writers all attest that human beings make distinctions between the eldest and youngest brothers which may not be correct. The eldest son may be thought of as the most important one, and accordingly

²¹ John Dove, *A Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse* (London: T. C., 1597), sig. C8^v; sig. C8^r.

²² John Downhame, *The Summe of Sacred Divinitie* (London: William Stainsby, 1625), sig. T6^v.

²³ Henry Burton, *A Pleae to an Appeale* (London: W. I, 1626), sig. G4^v.

ascribed the most value, but one of his younger brothers may be the truly worthy man. Dove, Downhame, and Burton therefore all offer an indirect critique of primogeniture's conferral of the most valued, hegemonic form of masculinity upon the eldest son by suggesting that there is a possibility that God may actually favour one of his brothers. Birth order is shown to offer no guarantee of worth.

In a similar way to how these three religious writers invoke Jacob and Esau to imply that the earthly allocation of male power through birth order may not be the correct one, so too do midwifery manuals, Fletcher's tragedy, and Quarles's comedy critique primogeniture's transfer of masculine dominance through their representations of twins. As the discussions of twin deliveries in midwifery manuals will soon demonstrate, medical practitioners were very aware that birth order was not a reflector of innate greatness, but rather a consequence of a practitioner's judgement about which child it was safest to deliver first. Fletcher and Quarles then further complicate the practice of primogeniture and its alignment of the eldest son with a dominant form of masculinity by stressing the closeness of birth between Rollo and Otto, and Bellarmo and Palladius. Since only minutes separate the brothers, Fletcher and Quarles foreground the unfairness of distinctions which are made by age, and suggest that it is the worthiest, rather than the eldest, brother who should be rewarded with the dominant form of masculinity. In addition to highlighting one problem with the present transfer of power through primogeniture, Fletcher's and Quarles's twins also function in order to demonstrate that there is another factor which causes issues between men: the idea that a man who is willing to share power is less of a man than the one who keeps it to himself. When Fletcher's Rollo and Quarles' Palladius rethink their decisions to quarrel with their twins over a political position, they are accused of effeminacy by other men and are made to

believe that their masculinities will fall into crisis if they do not take immediate, violent steps to dominate over their jointly-born brother. Taken together, the twins of midwifery manuals, *The Bloody Brother*, and *The Virgin Widow* therefore highlight the societal processes and attitudes which can cause the wrong kind of men to exercise power over other males. In so doing, these works enable the kind of disruptive thought process which masculinity studies criticism advocates almost four hundred years later.

II. Equal Births and Unequal Opportunities: Twins and Hegemonic Masculinity

i. The Question of Birth Order in Midwifery Manuals

Early modern midwifery manuals were primarily didactic texts, for their express purpose was to supply the reader with information on pregnancy, labour, and infant care. Yet even while these works gave instructions regarding medical procedures, they were also playing a subtle role in identity politics. Much critical attention has been devoted to the argument that the writer, compilers, or translators of midwifery manuals used these texts in order to establish their identities as credible practitioners. Eve Keller, for example, has argued that surgeons used gynaecological texts in order to influence the way that they were perceived by the public, and Kirk D. Read suggests that these attempts were not entirely successful.²⁴ Keller's and Read's scholarship demonstrates that midwifery manuals were works which contributed to

²⁴ Keller, p. 165; see Kirk D. Read, 'Touching and Telling: Gendered Variations on a Gynaecological Theme', in *Gender and Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Kathleen P. Long (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 259-77.

the formation of medical identities, and this argument can be extended to incorporate more general understandings of early modern forms of identity. As will now become apparent, the discussions of twin births within these texts imparted more than instructions on how to deliver two children safely, for they also highlighted the idea that birth order was not an essential component of identity.

Eucharius Rösslin's *The Birth of Mankynde* (1540), Jacques Guillemeau's *Childbirth or, the Happie Deliverie of Women* (1612), and Jakob Rüff's *The Expert Midwife* (1637) are three early modern midwifery manuals which contain instructions on how to ensure a safe twin delivery.²⁵ While Rösslin's information appears in a long chapter which offers advice on the delivery of one child as well as two children, Guillemeau and Rüff both impart their instructions in shorter chapters which are specifically devoted to twin births. Despite the differences between how these instructions are structured, however, there are notable similarities in what they suggest about the (in)significance of birth order. Through the strategies which they advise with regards to a twin birth, Rösslin, Guillemeau, and Rüff all imply that birth order is a consequence of circumstance, rather than an indicator of innate greatness.

The idea that the elder twin is not necessarily the superior one is made evident through the emphasis which each writer places upon the medical practitioner during their discussions of a twin delivery. When he gives instructions regarding the birth of one head-first and one feet-first twin, Rösslin declares 'then must the Midwife helpe the birth that is most nearest the issue'.²⁶ As this order tells the midwife to make a judgement regarding which twin is most conveniently situated for

²⁵ Although Rösslin's work was published in 1540, it proved so popular that it went through multiple reprints well into the seventeenth century. As explained in the introduction, this thesis consults the 1598 edition.

²⁶ Rösslin, sig. D6^v.

the birth canal, it is ultimately the practitioner who is responsible for ascertaining which twin is born first. This attribution of agency to the practitioner, rather than the elder twin, with regards to birth order is also evident in Guillemeau's and Ruff's works. The former text explains 'First [the surgeon] shall consider, which of the two children the woman may be easiest delivered of', while the latter work orders that 'the Midwife shall have a care, that she doe orderly receive one of [the twins], which shall be perceived to lie most commodiously and fitly in those privy vaults'.²⁷ The implication is that the twin who may look like they should be born first might actually be lying in a position which endangers either themselves or their sibling. The skill of the practitioner therefore lies in recognising such a danger and establishing a different birth order which makes the delivery of both children as safe and as efficient as possible.

While Rösslin, Guillemeau, and Ruff all imply that midwives and surgeons intervene in the birth order of twins by using logic, the first two writers also indicate that the process requires some physical force. Rösslin only hints that practitioners may have to exercise their physical strength during the delivery of twins when he warns that the midwife must 'tak[e] ever heed that the one be not noysome to the other in receiving foorth either of them'.²⁸ In contrast to Rösslin's refusal to indicate just how the practitioner should ensure that 'the one be not noysome to the other', however, Guillemeau clearly argues that they should achieve this aim through physical intervention. He instructs:

²⁷ The variation between 'midwife' and 'surgeon' occurs because the early seventeenth century saw a great increase in the number of male gynaecological practitioners. This situation is addressed more thoroughly in Chapter Four. Guillemeau, sig. Y2^v; Ruff, sig. K2^v.

²⁸ Rösslin, sig. D6^v.

If the heads of both the children come together to the passage, then the Chirurgion must take great care [...] when the woman feels her throws come upon her, then shall he by all meanes bring forward, the former that he would receive, holding downe the other, with two or three fingers of his left hand (least he should offer to come foorth) and shall endeavour onely to bring the first into the world.²⁹

The delivery of two head-first twins is represented almost as a battle between practitioner and patient. The medical figure has a clear idea of which twin they ‘would receive’, but has to restrain ‘the other’ so as to ensure the fulfilment of the order of birth which their medical experience has suggested. By applying pressure to the unwanted twin’s head ‘with two or three fingers’, the practitioner who follows Guillemeau’s advice clearly signals that the twins themselves do not dictate their birth order.

The discussions of twin births in midwifery manuals therefore demonstrate that birth order was a consequence of external influences, rather than any essential superiority. Rösslin’s, Guillemeau’s, and Rüff’s instructions all suggest that the twin who was born first was simply in the right place at the right time, and so they subtly imply that identities which are predicated on birth order are misguided. Such a connection between twins and the problematic ascription of superiority to the eldest child is also evident in *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow*, but these plays actually increase the strength and the danger of the link by engaging with the practice of primogeniture. Fletcher’s tragedy and Quarles’ comedy both suggest that the eldest son should not inherit their father’s estate and assume a dominant form of masculinity simply because they were born first, as such a state of affairs can mean

²⁹ Guillemeau, sig. Y2^v-Y2^r.

that power is bequeathed to the wrong man. Instead, *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow* argue that estates and power should be either shared between sons or conferred upon the most morally admirable one, irrespective of when he was born. Even while they make these arguments, however, both plays are conscious that they would fail to convince many early modern men.

ii. *The Bloody Brother*

Before embarking upon an analysis of Fletcher's tragedy, it is worth dwelling briefly upon its Norman setting. While Fletcher may have chosen to locate a play which features a protagonist named 'Rollo' in Normandy on account of the fact that the first ever Duke of Normandy bore this name, he makes significant alterations to the historical figure.³⁰ The historical Rollo, Duke of Normandy was not the son of a French nobleman, as Fletcher's Rollo is, but was instead born to a prominent landowner in Denmark.³¹ What is more, the historical Rollo had a much younger brother, Gurim, who was killed alongside his father by the King of Denmark in an attack which caused Rollo to flee to the area of Normandy over which he would eventually rule.³² Fletcher's decision to retain Normandy as his setting when he was willing to tweak the family of his historical source indicates that he felt that the area was too significant to alter, and it seems likely that that the French location proved attractive to him because it allowed him to explore the issue of primogeniture. Since

³⁰ For a discussion of other potential sources for *The Bloody Brother*, see J. D. Jump, ed., 'Introduction', in *Rollo Duke of Normandy or, The Bloody Brother* (London: University Press of Liverpool, 1948), ix-xxxiv (pp. xviii-xxv).

³¹ See 'Rollo Rognvaldsson "The Dane" Duke of Normandy', *Deloriahurst* <<http://www.deloriahurst.com/deloriahurst%20page/3310.html>> [last accessed 31 October 2018]; 'The Historical Truth Behind Rollo', *The Dockyards*, 11 August 2015 <<http://thedockyards.com/the-historical-truth-behind-rollo/>> [last accessed 31 October 2018]; 'The Founding of Normandy', *Durham World Heritage Site* <<https://www.durhamworldheritagesite.com/history/normans/founding-normandy>> [last accessed 31 October 2018].

³² See 'Rollo Rognvaldsson'.

primogeniture was a solely English early modern practice, Fletcher was free to unapologetically explore other ways of transferring dominant masculinity and power between different generations of men by setting his play in Normandy. Furthermore, his addition of a twin brother for Rollo in the character of Otto allowed the playwright to exploit the Norman setting to its full potential, as the closeness of birth between the pair furnished him with immediate grounds for dispute. By locating his play in an area which is geographically very close to England, and featuring twins who shared the same birth, Fletcher therefore presents his audience with a highly credible conflict which forces them to seriously engage with his critique of the practice of primogeniture.

The Bloody Brother opens in the aftermath of the death of the former Duke of Normandy, who elected to bequeath his duchy to his sons Rollo and Otto. Such a departure from the usual early modern English practice of primogeniture, which privileged the eldest son at the expense of his younger brothers, is located in the fact that Rollo and Otto are twins. The counsellor Gisbert recalls how the Duke's 'equall care of both' (*TBB* I. 1. 5) motivated the former ruler of Normandy to split his duchy in a way which reflected his affection for both sons, and ensured that one was not elevated over the other.³³ With each twin made 'co-heires, our part of land and honours / Of equall weight' (*TBB* I. 1. 165-66), it is not only the material benefits of 'land' which their father wanted them to share, but also 'honours', or power. The closeness of birth between Rollo and Otto therefore disrupts the transfer of social and economic power from father to eldest son in favour of a more inclusive approach.

³³ All quotations are taken from John Fletcher, *Rollo Duke of Normandy, or The Bloody Brother*, ed. by J. D. Jump (London: University Press of Liverpool, 1948).

Yet while the twin relationship allows Fletcher to showcase an alternative to primogeniture and its alignment of the eldest son with a dominant form of masculinity at the beginning of the play, its function during the remainder of the tragedy is to indicate why the practice could not be altered any time soon. The idea that one set of men should have authority over scores of others is so deeply ingrained that the courtiers of Normandy split themselves into factions which either ‘serve Rollo’ (*TBB* I. 1. 42) because he is ‘The eldest brother’ (*TBB* I. 1. 43), or ‘stand for Otto’ (*TBB* I. 1. 87). As much as these simple declarations suggest that the rival factions are backing their chosen brother because they genuinely believe that he deserves to rule alone, it soon becomes clear that their support is actually motivated by a desire to suppress other men. Granpree, who backs Rollo, warns two of Otto’s supporters in Trevile and Duprete that ‘you shall have / The honour this day to be chronicled / The first men killed by Granpree’ (*TBB* I. 1. 89-91), and is met with the response that Trevile’s sword ‘shall be / Proud to be scowr’d in your sweet guts’ (*TBB* I. 1. 96-8). Both Granpree and Trevile imply that there is pleasure to be taken from overpowering other men, even if the means of dominance is morally reprehensible.

Just as the courtiers of Normandy exult in the idea that they may be able to suppress groups of their fellow men, so too does Rollo relish the thought of demonstrating his superiority over Otto. The first words which the former twin speaks to the latter one are ‘You shall know who I am’ (*TBB* I. 1. 148), and they threaten to impress Rollo’s sense of his dominance in actions as well as words. When Otto bluntly dismisses Rollo’s forceful promise with the admission that ‘I doe, my equall’ (*TBB* I. 1. 149), this reminder that both twins currently occupy a powerful form of masculinity is met with another sinister promise of suppression:

Rollo: Thy Prince, give way, were we alone ide force thee

In thy best bloud to write thy selfe my subject,

And glad I would receive it.

(*TBB* I. 1. 150-52)

Rollo equates the destruction of Otto's body with the loss of his twin's claim to share power with him. His delight at the ghoulish, somewhat homoerotic prospect that Otto might 'write thy selfe my subject' with his own 'best bloud' emerges from the idea that he could make his self-proclaimed superiority textually and corporeally visible to all.

Rollo's violent desire to make all of his subjects see evidence of his dominance is motivated by his frustration at their denial of the hegemonic masculinity that he believes to be his birthright. He declares that 'My birth gave me this Dukedome' (*TBB* I. 1. 155) because he is the elder twin. This sentiment, which would not have seemed unreasonable to an early modern English audience who were accustomed to the idea that the eldest son inherited his father's estate, is also echoed by Rollo's most prominent courtier Latorch. The latter character maintains that splitting the duchy will see 'The elder rob'd of what's his right' (*TBB* I. 1. 172), and therefore echoes Rollo's argument that his status as the elder twin affords him an essential entitlement to the position of political power. For Rollo and Latorch alike, birth order is a facet of identity which guarantees hegemonic masculinity.

While Rollo's involvement in the conflict may emerge from his desire to restore his apparently natural dominance over Otto, the younger twin wishes only to see his father's final wishes fulfilled. He pleads reluctance to inherit half of the Dukedom when he remarks that 'I need it not, and would scorne to receive / Though

offered what I want not' (*TBB* I. 1. 159-60), but invokes 'The oath' (*TBB* I. 1. 167) that their father made as his key motivation for maintaining his side of the conflict. Otto does not seek to dominate over other men by assuming the position bequeathed to him, but rather to obey the will of his father and former ruler. He issues his elder brother with a stark warning:

Otto: by the memory

Of him whose better part now suffers for thee,
Whose reverend ashes with an impious hand,
Thou throwst out to contempt, in thy repining
At his so just decree; thou art unworthy
Of what his last will, not thy merit gave thee,
Thou art so swolne within, with all those mischiefs
That ere made up a Tyrant, that thy brest
The prison of thy purposes, cannot hold them
But that they break forth, and in thy owne words
Discover, what a monster they must serve,
That shall acknowledge thee.

(*TBB* I. 1. 205-14).

Otto reminds Rollo it is his descent from ‘him whose better part now suffers for thee’, the man who was the previous Duke of Normandy, which gives him any sort of claim to the title and its attendant hegemonic form of masculinity. As the position is being awarded through an accident of birth rather than Rollo’s heroic efforts, Otto

argues that Rollo must accept the 'just decree' their father issued regarding the sharing of the duchy. By refusing to accept the wishes of the former ruler, Rollo is showing signs of becoming an arrogant, uncontrollable leader with the same qualities as a 'Tyrant', and the same potential to be despised by those who 'must serve' him. Otto's warning mainly serves as a reminder that the dominant form of masculinity is predicated upon the transfer of power between the eldest males, but it also suggests that the deceased Duke chose to bequeath his political identity to both sons because he feared that Rollo lacked the necessary restraint to wield it properly.

What is framed as an out-of-hand squabble for power between Rollo and Otto therefore also becomes a commentary upon different attitudes towards primogeniture and how power should be transferred between different generations of men. Rollo's vehement desire to become sole ruler of Normandy reflects the belief that fathers should ensure that only their eldest son becomes the recipient of their social and economic power, while Otto's sense of duty suggests that male parents ought to share these advantages between sons if they want them to be managed correctly. The very fact that the deceased Duke has been unable to share the duchy between his twin sons without causing a series of heated conflicts is indicative of the strength of the first attitude. It also reveals the need for the development of a new understanding of the connection between primogeniture and dominant masculinity if a more open mindset were to ever gain credence. Instead of viewing the conferral of economic and social power as an invitation for the eldest son to exert absolute power over other men, Fletcher argues that it needs to be understood as a commitment which all sons make to maintaining the interests and principles of the family in the same way that the father did.

When the twins' mother Sophia appears onstage to address her sons, it quickly becomes apparent that she is trying to push them both towards this latter, more progressive attitude. The fact that her name means 'wisdom' suggests that she functions to offer the best solution to the conflict that Fletcher can think of. She warns Rollo and Otto that 'your blood is mine, / Your danger's mine' (*TBB* I. 1. 254-58), and reminds them that she too 'must be branded with those impious marks / You stamp on your owne foreheads, and on mine / If you goe on thus' (*TBB* I. 1. 256-58). For the sake of the 'good name' (*TBB* I. 1. 258) which her conduct and their father's rulership has created, she orders the twins to end their quarrel, then appeals to each son's dominant emotion in order to reassure them that she understands why they started it in the first place. By asking Otto to become 'The first example of obedience to me' (*TBB* I. 1. 286) and promising that ending the argument will make him 'grow the elder in my love' (*TBB* I. 1. 287), Sophia tries to manipulate Otto's sense of duty. At the same time, she also hints that Otto's younger birth has made him less worthy of 'my love' in a manner which resonates with Rollo's sense of superiority. She then goes on to remark that her eldest son 'dares as much as any man, [and is] / So tender of his yet untainted valour, / So noble, that he dares doe nothing basely' (*TBB* I. 1. 307-09). The statement both flatters Rollo's belief in his own excellence, and acknowledges Otto's concern that the first-born child is verging on committing an act which will bring shame upon him and their family.

Once Sophia has simultaneously flattered and chastened each twin, she then emphasises what they stand to lose if they allow their quarrel to continue. She declares:

Sophia: What 'tis for which you strive, is it the Dukedome,

Or the command of these so ready subjects?

Desire of wealth, or whatsoever else
Fires your ambition? 'tis still desperate madnesse,
To kill the people which you would be Lords of,
With fire and sword to lay that countrey wast,
Whose rule you seek for, to consume the treasures
Which are the sinewes of your government,
In cherishing the factions that destroy it.

(*TBB* I. 1. 317-25).

The two rhetorical questions are designed to focus each son's mind upon what motivated him to quarrel with his brother in the first place. In Rollo's case, the reason is the desire for an entire 'Dukedome' and the attendant power which is signalled by 'the command of these so ready subjects', while Otto's desperation to fulfil his sense of duty comes under the category of 'whatsoever else'. Sophia then warns that the advantages which the dukedom can afford them will be lost if the quarrel continues. The 'people' upon whom Rollo wishes to impress his power will all be slain, while the 'countrey' and 'treasures' that Otto desires to protect will be destroyed. Far from becoming the dominant or protective figure which each twin envisages himself as, Sophia argues, Rollo and Otto will be responsible for the destruction of the people and area of Normandy.

Whereas the prospect of sharing a position of political power was previously enough to make Rollo threaten to kill Otto, the idea that there might not be a position for him to assume at all is enough to make him react in a much more measured fashion. When Otto explains that 'I desire / But to enjoy my owne which I will keep'

(*TBB* I. 1. 329), Rollo declares ‘And rather than posteritie shall have cause / To say I ruin’d all, divide the Dukedome, / I will accept the moietie’ (*TBB* I. 1. 330-32). This latter prospect evokes a positive response from his twin: ‘I embrace it’ (*TBB* I. 1. 332). Both men are attempting to redirect their different attitudes towards political power through new channels, but they still remain competitive ones. Rollo’s reference to ‘posteritie’ belies his desire to impress his superiority upon succeeding generations, as opposed to the current one. He imagines that he will become a historically admirable figure for his suppression of the resentment that he feels for being given a ‘moietie’ of people and land to rule over, as opposed to the full population and area that he feels he should be entitled to. Rollo’s somewhat derogatory term regarding his shrunken sphere of influence is then capitalised upon by Otto, who emphasises his more grateful attitude through the verb ‘embrace’. Although Sophia’s warning makes Rollo and Otto seriously consider dividing the dukedom without recourse to violence, these small details indicate that they have not truly decided to end their quarrel.

Sophia knows her twin sons well enough to understand that they are still too interested in emphasising their superiority or their sense of duty for Rollo’s proposal of division to have a successful outcome. She immediately comments that it would be ‘lesse sinne’ (*TBB* I. 1. 336) to ‘Divide me first or teare me limb by limb’ (*TBB* I. 1. 333), for she believes that the violation of her body would be nothing compared to the one which Normandy would suffer if the Dukedom were to be split. The current duchy, Sophia argues, is ‘a fayre diamond / Which being preserv’d intire exceeds all value’ (*TBB* I. 1. 350-51), thereby beautifying and enriching those who rule over it with social and economic power. Once it has been split into two or ‘Cut in peeces’ (*TBB* I. 1. 352), however, it ‘Parts with all estimation’ (*TBB* I. 1. 354) because it no

longer sparkles with those alluring privileges. Just in case her sons misinterpret this simile, Sophia supplements it with a clear explanation of the comparison which spells out why the duchy cannot be divided into two halves of land, power, and property:

Sophia: so this Dukedome,

As tis yet whole, the neighbouring Kings may covet

But cannot compasse, which divided will

Become the spoile of every barbarous foe,

That will invade it.

(*TBB* I. 1. 354-58).

Normandy's strength lies in the unity which intimidates 'neighbouring Kings' so greatly that at present they 'cannot compass' the duchy, but only 'covet' it. If the twins' quarrel leads to the loss of that unity, however, 'every barbarous foe' will feel able to 'invade it' and wreak devastation upon its land and people. Sophia's words subtly remind her twin sons of the existence of other men who exert a hegemonic form of masculinity over their kingdoms. The social and economic power that Rollo and Otto take for granted, she argues, will soon be irrevocably lost if they issue an open invitation to their enemies by dividing the duchy into two separate parts. If each son truly wishes to demonstrate his superiority or his sense of duty, Sophia maintains that he must be willing to share the dukedom and power with his twin.

It is only when the jointly-born brothers realise that the continuation of their quarrel could lead to the loss of the dukedom and its attendant benefits of social and economic power that they become reconciled. Baldwin narrates their dropping of

weapons and mutual embrace with the relieved comment ‘I, now they meet like brothers’ (*TBB* I. 1. 333). Otto and Rollo then vow to ensure that relations between them never become troublesome again:

Otto: If we contend, from this houre it shall be

How to overcome in brotherly affection.

Rollo: *Otto* is *Rollo* now, and *Rollo Otto*,

Or as they have one minde, rather one name,

From this attonement let our lives begin,

Be all the rest forgotten.

(*TBB* I. 1. 386-91).

Otto’s reference to ‘this houre’ and Rollo’s declaration ‘From this attonement let our lives begin’ figures their reconciliation as a rebirth of their twin relationship and masculine identity. Since they will only be interested in ‘How to overcome in brotherly affection’, they will no longer care about competing for social and economic power, only sharing it. Their individual pursuit of power has instead given way to a power-sharing agreement and a collective form of identity, for ‘*Otto* is *Rollo* now, and *Rollo Otto*, / Or as they have one minde, rather one name’.

While Rollo’s and Otto’s reconciliation has very obvious implications of stability for the duchy of Normandy, the reunion of the twins also has important consequences for the tragedy’s exploration of the way in which power is distributed among men. The twins’ disavowal of personal interest in the duchy demonstrates that the main barrier to a fairer distribution of power lies in the desire to dominate over other men. Without this sentiment, Fletcher suggests that it would be possible to

reimagine the present practice of primogeniture in favour of a more equal transfer of social and economic power between father and sons. Since Rollo's fury and arrogance would be counterbalanced by Otto's more equable temperament, Fletcher also implies that an alternative model to primogeniture would lead to prudent management of the father's estate. The more collective attitude towards primogeniture and power which Fletcher subtly advocates, then, promises to confer benefits on fathers and sons alike.

As positive as the twins' reconciliation and Fletcher's vision of a fairer movement of social and economic power between the males of different generations may seem, the audience of *The Bloody Brother* are nevertheless forced to acknowledge that a great barrier to these two prospects exists in the form of the intoxicating attraction of the possibility of dominating over other men. While members of the factions in Granpree and Verdon are willing to accept that the 'hop'd for businesse' (*TBB* I. 1. 398) of a violent conflict has been brought to an 'end' (*TBB* I. 1. 398), Latorch refuses to embrace the reconciliation which has thwarted the strife he so eagerly anticipated. Verdon fears the 'fatall' (*TBB* I. 1. 399) consequences of his involvement, and Granpree laments 'Fraile thoughts, all friends, no *Rollions* now, nor *Ottoes*' (*TBB* I. 1. 405, italics in original), but Latorch furiously seeks an audience with Rollo and demands 'Why does this not trouble you?' (*TBB* II. 1. 1). Instead of viewing Rollo's ability to reach a peaceable compromise as an admirable quality, Latorch suggests that it is evidence of a 'dull cold weaknesse' (*TBB* II. 1. 9) which has 'crept into [his] bosome' (*TBB* II. 1. 10) and caused him to forget that his status as the elder twin entitles him to become the sole ruler of Normandy. When Rollo's only response is 'Prethee be patient' (*TBB* II. 1. 12), it becomes apparent that

if the conflict which Latorch so longs for is to take place, he must reawaken Rollo's slumbering desire for dominance.

Latorch subsequently adopts a three-pronged strategy of verbal attack upon Rollo that plunges his masculinity into crisis by placing it into a feminised, weakened state. The first of Latorch's approaches sees him emphasise that the public perception of Rollo's masculinity is not the valued, hegemonic one that he believes it to be, but a much weaker, less admirable form of identity. Latorch chastises Rollo for being affected by 'prayer' (*TBB* II. 1. 14) which was 'drop'd through by a woman' (*TBB* II. 1. 14), then stresses the shameful consequences of his willingness to allow his mother to persuade him to end the conflict. He warns 'Take heed the Souldiers see it not' (*TBB* II. 1. 15), then adds 'take heed your friends / [...] finde it not' (*TBB* II. 1. 16-18). Latorch's words cast Rollo's decision to reconcile with Otto as a sign of weakness that must be publicly and privately concealed from other men if his crisis of masculinity is to remain unknown. As prudent as it may be to keep word of Rollo's emasculation a secret, however, Latorch reveals that it will be almost impossible to do so, as 'Your own repentance (like a passing bell) Will / [...] tell the world you are perish'd' (*TBB* II. 1. 19-20). Now that Rollo no longer acts like a man who occupies the dominant form of masculinity but is instead afflicted by a crisis-stricken form of this identity, Latorch argues, the Duke's eldest son will also prove unable to command respect from his subjects: 'What noble spirit eager of advancement, / [...] Will move againe, or make a wish for Rollo?' (*TBB* II. 1. 24-5). The factions which Rollo was able to muster with ease will not, in Latorch's opinion, be willing to support him again, which will leave Rollo in a position of great vulnerability.

When Rollo returns Latorch's dire warning with the question 'Are we not friends againe, by each oath ratified / Our tongues the Heralds of our hearts?' (*TBB* II. 1. 26-7), he counters his advisor's negative view of his masculinity with the more positive implication that he will have no need to find men who are willing to support only his cause, as he has permanently reconciled with Otto. This optimistic viewpoint then induces Latorch to begin his second attack upon Rollo in the form of an argument that the elder twin is foolish to trust the youngest one. Latorch calls Otto and the deceased Duke's advisors Gisbert, Baldwin, and Aubrey, who all desperately pushed for the reconciliation of the twins, 'No friends Sir to your honour, / Friends to your fall' (*TBB* II. 1. 28-9). He likens the 'Friendship' (*TBB* II. 1. 33) between the brothers to 'a smiling harlot, / That when she kisses, kills' (*TBB* II. 1. 33-34), then denounces Rollo's protestation that he and Otto are friends because 'he is my brother' (*TBB* II. 1. 36) as delusional. The twin relationship, Latorch argues, should be grounds for suspicion instead of trust, 'For hatred hatch'd at home is a tame Tiger, / May fawn and sport, but never leave his nature' (*TBB* II. 1. 37-8). While Rollo may believe that he is generously sharing out power by agreeing to a peaceable solution to their quarrel, his advisor protests that he runs the very real risk of being violently stripped of it altogether: 'There is no manly wisdom nor no safety / In leaning to this league, this peece patcht friendship' (*TBB* II. 1. 47-8), he declares, as loyalty to Otto will 'totter [...] down your fortune' (*TBB* II. 1. 50). By sharing power with his twin instead of suppressing his claims to it, Latorch argues that Rollo has forfeited any claim he once had to the dominant form of masculinity, and has instead sent that form of identity into crisis. Rollo is no longer exercising his 'manly wisdom', but his feminine folly, and Latorch suggests that he will pay for it with his life.

Once Latorch has done his best to make Rollo feel emasculated and gullible for reconciling with Otto, he then accuses the elder twin of neglecting the dukedom and the hegemonic form of masculinity which is his birthright. He argues ‘Ist not your own you reach at?’ (*TBB* II. 1. 51), then reinforces the idea that any assumption of social and economic power on the grounds of birth order would not be a misplaced one: ‘law and nature / Ushering the way before you, is not he / Borne and bequeath’d your subject?’ (*TBB* II. 1. 52-3). Latorch suggests that the ‘law’ of primogeniture supplants the will of the deceased Duke, and ‘nature’ has elected that Rollo should be born first, which means that Otto is doubly inferior to him. If ‘law’ and ‘nature’ are doing their best to produce a ruler but Rollo is content to merely share his political position and power with his ‘subject’, the implication is that he will be defying two of the strongest forces in existence.

When Rollo’s response of ‘Ha?’ (*TBB* II. 1. 53) makes it apparent that Latorch has hit a nerve, the advisor is quick to capitalise upon this indication that Rollo still believes himself to be Otto’s superior. He first likens the youngest twin to ‘an ominous Comet’ (*TBB* II. 1. 57) as ‘He darkens all your light’ (*TBB* II. 1. 58), then suggests that Rollo is allowing his own glory to become dimmed because he is afflicted with the emasculating condition of ‘conscience’ (*TBB* II. 1. 63) or ‘nature’s coward, / Pauling the blood and chilling the full spirits / With apprehension of mere cloudes and shadowes’ (*TBB* II. 1. 64-6). Rollo almost immediately denies this subtle slight upon his daring with the riposte ‘I knowe no conscience, nor I feare no shadowes’ (*TBB* II. 1. 67), but Latorch remains unconvinced. He asks:

Latorch: Must [conscience] like a rank vine run up rudely,

And twine about the top of all our happinesse

Honour and rule, and there sit shaking of us?

(*TBB* II. 1. 71-3).

While Latorch knows that he will not assume a position of dominant masculinity if Rollo becomes the sole Duke of Normandy, his reference to ‘*our happinesse / Honour and rule*’ reminds Rollo that the masculine identity of his closest advisor will also be struck by crisis if he continues to allow Otto to rule alongside him. Latorch thus presents Rollo with two scenarios: a continuation of the current one, which will emasculate the elder twin and his advisor and see them both become the prey of the dissembling younger brother, or the alternative, which will see Rollo avoid a crisis of masculinity, secure his claim to a hegemonic form of this identity, and bolster Latorch’s masculinity by proving his superiority to Otto.

As soon as Rollo realises that his masculinity is teetering on the brink of crisis because he has declared peace with Otto, he chooses the second option offered by Latorch. He responds to the latter’s question with a decisive rejection of any qualms put forward by his conscience with the announcement ‘It shall not nor it must not’ (*TBB* II. 1. 74). His previous willingness to reconcile is cast as an uncharacteristic mistake by his declaration that ‘I am satisfied, / And once more am my selfe againe’ (*TBB* II. 1. 74-5), and his movement away from the emasculating influence of Sophia: ‘My mothers teares and womanish cold prayers / Farewell, I have forgot yee’ (*TBB* II. 1. 76-7). Once he has begun to style himself as more ‘masculine’ by rejecting his mother, Rollo distances himself from a crisis in his masculinity, then strengthens his claim to a hegemonic form of this identity by turning his attention to his twin brother:

Rollo: *Otto*, our friendship thus I blowe to ayre

A bubble for a boy to play withall,

And all the vowes my weaknesse made like this,

Like this poore heartlesse rush, I rend a peeces.

(*TBB* II. 1. 80-83).

If their 'friendship' was merely 'A bubble for a boy to play withall', then Rollo's dismissal of it is designed to emphasise his status as a dominant man. He is no longer afflicted by the feminine emotions which led to 'the vowes my weaknesse made', but is instead an ambitious, clinically-minded figure who can end his twin relationship as easily as he can break 'this poore heartlesse rush'. To complete Rollo's argument that he has become the sort of man who is worthy of assuming a powerful form of masculinity, he then renounces his connection to the previous Duke: 'My father's last petition dead, as he is, / And all the promises I clos'd his eyes with / In the same grave I bury' (*TBB* II. 1. 85-7). Rollo maintains that he owes no duty to the man who gave him life and his claim to a dominant form of masculinity, and thereby reassumes his entitled attitude towards the dukedom.

Rollo's willingness to distance himself from every member of his family is immediately praised by Latorch, whose compliment 'Now you are a man Sir' (*TBB* II. 1. 87) flatters the elder twin with the suggestion that he has avoided the crisis which threatened his masculine identity to finally come of age. In his eagerness to confirm Latorch's impression of his newfound maturity, Rollo is keen to inform him that he will not be repeating the mistakes he has previously made. He swears that 'The same bloud with me, nor the reverence / Due to my Mothers blessed wombe, that bred us [will not] / Redeem thee from my doubts' (*TBB* II. 1. 94-6), and thereby casts off his emasculating willingness to listen to Sophia and obey his conscience.

He further emphasises his transition from a potentially crisis-stricken form of masculine identity to a stronger one when he calls Otto ‘a woolfe [...] / Fed with my feares’ (*TBB* II. 1. 96-7). and declares ‘I must cut thee from me’ (*TBB* II. 1. 97) if he is to wield the ‘sacred rule’ (*TBB* II. 1. 98) that he so desires. Rollo maintains that as it was his status as Otto’s twin which denied him a full claim to political power and the assumption of a dominant form of masculinity, he must rid himself of this close connection if he wants to be the only one of his father’s sons to exercise these privileges.

While the reconciliation of the twins may have suggested that a more collective attitude towards primogeniture and power could be adopted, then, the episode with Latorch and Rollo reveals that there is another key stumbling-block to the adoption of such a mindset. By successfully goading Rollo out of his longing for peace and into a desire for violent conflict, the character of Latorch reveals a concern that men who are willing to share power among themselves are effeminate. Latorch repeatedly suggests that Rollo’s willingness to reconcile with Otto marks him out as a weak, deficient man who is unworthy of assuming a dominant form of masculinity, and this strategy proves so successful that Rollo declares that he will focus upon the idea of ‘sacred rule’ (*TBB* II. 1. 98) as opposed to any loyalty he feels he may owe his twin or his mother. Indeed, Rollo proves so keen to murder Otto that Latorch has to warn him ‘be not too much stirr’d Sir, / Nor too high in your execution’ (*TBB* II. 1. 99-100). Now that he knows that Rollo is so afraid of experiencing a crisis in his masculinity that he will allow his twin to be murdered, Latorch promises that ‘This happy feast [...] / Shall be [Otto’s] last’ (*TBB* II. 1. 104-05). He then proceeds to explain that he will bribe the kitchen staff into poisoning the food which Otto is due to eat at the celebratory feast.

Ere I loose one foot of possible Empire,
Be sleights and colour us'd by slaves and wretches,
I am exempt by birth from both these curbes,
And sit above them in all justice, since
I sit above in power, where power is given,
Is all the right suppos'd of earth and heaven.
(*TBB* III. 1. 73-8).

Rollo again reprises the idea that his 'birth', or his position as the eldest son of the previous ruler, entitles him to become the sole Duke of Normandy. While Rollo's argument that the will of his father is worthless because he 'sit[s] above in power' over all of the usual rules and regulations of the law is a familiar one, it nevertheless takes on a new and startling dimension because it is being uttered while Rollo wields a sword against his defenceless twin. Rollo understands that the time has come for him to claim a dominant form of masculinity by murdering the man who would have shared power with him.

Indeed, Rollo is not the only character who understands that his position as a man with a powerful form of identity is at stake during the ambush, for Latorch issues two prompts which remind him of the fact. After Rollo first enters the chamber, Latorch orders 'Prove both, Sir, see the Traitour' (*TBB* III. 1. 79); the fact that Rollo later refers to his twin as a 'traitour' (*TBB* III. 1. 93) demonstrates that he is both receptive to Latorch's commands, and reliant upon the reminder of how he needs to behave if he wishes to save his masculinity from crisis by proving that he is not an effeminate figure. This latter point becomes particularly evident when Rollo's motivation to kill Otto falters, and he cries out '*Latorch, / Rescue, I am downe*' (*TBB*

III. 1. 99-100). His advisor immediately rallies him with his second order: 'Up then, your sword cooles Sir, / Ply it i'th flame and work your ends out' (*TBB* III. 1. 100-01). Rollo immediately acts upon this order to reignite his fury, for he remarks 'Ha, / Have at you there Sir' (*TBB* III. 1. 101-02) and gives Otto the wound which ends his life.

Despite the fact that Rollo has issued Latorch with evidence of his nerve, and the court with proof that he will be the sole Duke of Normandy, he nevertheless continues to act as though he needs to demonstrate that he is not an effeminate figure. As his mother, sister, and former tutors protest against the murder of Otto, Rollo elects to tarnish his reputation too. He first orders Latorch to 'give it out how he attempted us / In our bed naked' (*TBB* III. 1. 113-14), then tells Gisbert to 'fashion an Oration to acquit / And justifie this forced fact of mine, / Or for the proud refusall lose your head' (*TBB* III. 1. 214-16). Instead of allowing the terrible act of Otto's murder to make Latorch understand that he is not effeminate, Rollo feels that he must destroy everything about Otto in order to avoid an association with crisis and make his advisor see that he is capable of wielding a dominant form of masculinity. When Gisbert refuses to write the oration which damns Otto, Rollo exhibits further violence by ordering for his instant decapitation: 'Away with him, / Hence, haile him straight to execution' (*TBB* III. 1. 225-26). The defiance of Baldwin is also met with the same grim verdict, as Rollo commands 'Goe, take this dotard here, and take his head / Off with a sword' (*TBB* III. 1. 258-59).

In addition to revoking the charge of effeminacy, Rollo's murder of Otto and execution of Gisbert and Baldwin was also designed to secure his claim to the duchy of Normandy and the masculine dominance it affords him. While Rollo believes that he has strengthened his position as the dominant male in Normandy through his

tyranny, however, it quickly becomes apparent that he has become so reliant upon Latorch that it is difficult to tell which man is the Duke and which the advisor. Rollo repeatedly refers to himself and Latorch whenever he discusses potential courses of action, as when he comments ‘If *we* thought it should be worth his life’ (*TBB* III. 1. 152, italics own) and exults that ‘*We* now are Duke alone, *Latorch*, secur’d / [...] *We* look right forth, beside and around about *us*, / And see it *ours* with pleasure’ (*TBB* III. 1. 157-60, italics own). Rollo’s sense of unity with Latorch then gives way to his submission to the man, for he brushes aside his scepticism regarding horoscopes and allows Latorch to consult some men to cast one for him: ‘You are in your own sphere (*Latorch*) & rather / Than Ile contend with you for it, Ile beleeve you’ (*TBB* III. 1. 226-27). While Rollo may think that murdering Otto has allowed him to rule over the duchy of Normandy and avoid sharing power with another man, his interactions with Latorch demonstrate that the atrocities that he committed have created no real change in his situation. Rollo may profess to be the only Duke of Normandy, but it is very evident to the audience that Latorch is now the real ruler.

Long before Rollo literally loses his political position as well as his social and economic power in the final scene of the play, then, his exclusive claim to power has disappeared. In what looks like a powerful use of the doubling of actors’ parts, Rollo is murdered by Hamond, who could well have been played by the actor who also took on the role of Otto. Hamond seeks to avenge the execution of his brother Allan, who defied Rollo by giving Gisbert an honourable burial, but the act of revenge takes on even greater significance if the same actor also assumes the role of Otto. Hamond tells Rollo that he aims to make him feel ‘Such feare Sir as you gave your honour’d mother, / When your most virtuous brother sheild-like held her’ (*TBB* V. 2. 111-12) in the moment before Otto’s death. The memory of Otto throwing

himself bravely in front of Sophia contrasts markedly to Rollo's cowardly tactic of forcing Edith to act as a shield between himself and Hamond. The blocking used in Otto's death scene also becomes inverted in the scene where Rollo meets his end, for the elder twin is no longer the hypermasculine aggressor, but the effeminate victim. The doubling of parts between Otto and Hamond, meanwhile, sees the youngest twin transition from occupying the role of the unfairly slain to that of the just avenger. The very man that Rollo destroyed in order to assume a dominant form of masculinity returns to strip him permanently of it, and to enable political power to instead transfer through the female line to Rollo's and Otto's sister Matilda. In an interesting variation on Salic law, which discounts the female line, Matilda is made to marry the counsellor Aubrey, who will become Duke, in order to ensure that her father's descendants can still occupy a position of political power.

What the twins of Fletcher's *The Bloody Brother* do, then, is allow for an exploration of an alternative to the transfer of social and economic power through primogeniture, and an explanation as to why this different form of inheritance could not work. The deceased Duke's decision to bequeath his political position to both sons on account of their twin birth raises the idea that power could be shared among a number of brothers. The quarrels and violence which occur as a consequence of this decision, however, demonstrate that the idea of dominating over other men, and the sense that men who share power are effeminate figures with crisis-stricken masculinities, are key barriers to this more equal transfer of power. While the jointly-born brothers of Quarles' comedy do not dominate the plot to the extent that Fletcher's Rollo and Otto do, they nevertheless offer similar comments upon the relationship between primogeniture and the dominant form of masculine identity.

iii. *The Virgin Widow*

As *The Virgin Widow* has been so rarely explored, it is prudent to preface the discussion of Quarles' comedy with a summary of its plot. The play revolves around the court of King Evaldus, who is being badgered by his twin sons, Bellarmo and Palladius, to reveal which of them will become his heir. The relationship between the twins deteriorates to such an extent that they plan to duel one other. Their younger brother Museus, who hopes to inherit the crown by antagonising his twin brothers so successfully that they kill each other off, encourages Bellarmo and Palladius to fight. Evaldus discovers that the twins are planning to duel, and tells them to allow the Oracle to declare who the heir will be. When the Oracle announces that none of Evaldus' current sons will inherit the crown, the twins and their mother Queen Augusta accuse it of lying, and are smitten to death by Apollo as a result. The true heir to the kingdom is shown to be the as-yet unborn child of Evaldus and Kettreena, the 'virgin widow' of the title who had loved Evaldus before he became king. Kettreena is discovered to be the true Queen when a servant admits that she swapped her for the infant Augusta after receiving a bribe from Augusta's father, who confirms the truth of this account. The play ends with the now-Queen Kettreena instructing Evaldus to rule as her consort, and the pair joyfully looking forward to the birth of the new heir.

While the twin characters of *The Virgin Widow* are not afforded as much dramatic attention as the struggles of Kettreena or the jealousy of Augusta, they nevertheless problematise the practice of primogeniture and its attendant conferral of a dominant form of masculinity. The closeness of birth between Bellarmo and Palladius has made it unclear as to exactly which son is the eldest, and therefore entitled to become King of Athens upon their father's death. While Evaldus is

neither an elderly nor an ill King, the twins' first appearance demonstrates that the succession question is a matter of extreme importance to them. They emerge onstage with their weapons drawn and exhibit such threatening body language that Evaldus has to order them to 'sheath up your swords' (TVW I. 1. sig. C2^r).³⁵ He then goes on to reveal that the issue of succession has been causing trouble both within the family and in Athens itself. His repetition of the command 'Let's hear no more on't' (TVW I. 1. sig. C2^r) twice in the space of four lines is indicative of Evaldus's weariness regarding the subject, while his acknowledgement that the twins have begun 'To raise such Tumults, and to sow these seeds / Of factious discords in our settled State' (TVW I. 1. sig. C3^v) demonstrates that the quarrel between Bellarmo and Palladius has the potential to escalate from a private disagreement into a very public one.

Evaldus's main concern may be to maintain the peace of his kingdom, but he does show his awareness of the tremendous social and economic power that is at stake for his twin sons. He declares 'For you / *Bellarmino* and *Palladius*, we shall find / A speedy way to let you understand / Whose is the Birth-right' (TVW I. 1. sig. C3^v). He knows that the relationship between the pair will undergo an irreversible transformation when the successor is revealed, for one twin will be permanently elevated over the other by the promise of his future assumption of a position of masculine dominance. Since the time is fast approaching when Bellarmo and Palladius will no longer be equals, Evaldus advises his sons to enjoy their similar status while it lasts:

Evaldus:	since the pleased Fates
Have made so little difference betwixt you	

³⁵ All quotations are taken from Francis Quarles, *The Virgin Widow* (London: R. Royston, 1649).

By your twin-birth, in your Aspects and marks

Doe you the like in your united hearts

Till time and our best care shall bring to light

Our true Successour in our doubtfull throne

Stand both contented, And let your contentions

Find out no object, but obedience.

(TVW I. 1. sig. C3^v)

Evaldus argues that Bellarmo's and Palladius's current ignorance regarding his 'true Successour' should be appreciated by the twins, as the closeness created by their birth and strong physical resemblance will soon be shattered by 'time and our best care' when one of them is elevated over the other. His emphasis upon the 'obedience' that his sons owe him also functions as a subtle reminder that the twin who is selected will only receive the promise, rather than the position, of political power and masculine dominance while their father is alive. Taken together, these two strands of the King's argument signal that Bellarmo's and Palladius's desperation to find out which of them will succeed him is misplaced, as the knowledge will bring no immediate benefits, only pain.

When Bellarmo and Palladius promise 't'obey' (TVW I. 1. sig. C3^v) their father and monarch by waiting patiently to discover which of them will succeed him, they initially suggest that they have accepted his warnings about the impact which the revelation will have upon their relationship. It almost immediately becomes apparent, however, that their obedience is motivated by desire for the position which each young man hopes to assume, rather than affection for their twin or respect for their father. Bellarmo's remark that 'Crownes are too great' (TVW I. 1. sig. C3^v) is

completed by Palladius' statement 'For breath to blow away' (TVW I. 1. sig. C3^v) in a structure which hints at a twin-like closeness between the pair, but a meaning that suggests otherwise. Both brothers are more concerned with the subject-matter of 'Crownes', or royal rulership, than their own bond; although a monarch is 'too great' or powerful 'For breath to blow away' his position, their relationship as twins exhibits no such stability. The words which Bellarmo and Palladius speak during their first appearance in *The Virgin Widow* may be few in quantity, but they nevertheless demonstrate that both young men are extremely conscious of the social and economic power that their father's chosen successor will be afforded. Despite the fact that the heir to Evaldus will only receive the mere promise of masculine dominance, each character is keen to sacrifice his twin relationship for it.

Bellarmo's and Palladius's lack of care for each other does not only reveal just how alluring the prospect of eventually occupying a position of a dominant form of masculinity can be, but also what a dangerous situation such desire can create. Museus, the twins' younger brother, sees the discord between his elder siblings as an opportunity which he can capitalise upon: 'Let their ambitions clime and shake the tree / When the fruit falls 't may chance to fall to me' (TVW I. 1. sig. D3^r). As the third son, Museus knows that his chance of becoming King is miniscule, so he decides to encourage Bellarmo and Palladius to continue to quarrel in the hope that they will kill each other off and leave him to become Evaldus' successor. He proclaims:

Museus: *Bellarmo* will be Prince: *Palladius*, he

Assumes the self-same Title: Both will be

Evaldus Heires, both Kings, both joyntly scorn

The stile of Subject: Both will be first-borne:

I, let them jarre; And let the golden Apple

Remain still doubtfull; Let them grasp and grapple:

Museus, stand thou Neuter: Oft 'tis known,

When two Dogs fight, the third does catch the bone.

(*TVW* I. 1. sig. D4^v).

Museus' fourfold repetition of 'both' demonstrates his awareness that the quarrel between Bellarmo and Palladius is situated in a desire for dominance that has escalated to a ridiculous degree. Their refusal to accept 'The stile of Subject' has led to such impossible claims as 'Both will be first-borne' that turns them into figures who can be mocked, rather than respected. Museus is content to 'let them jarre' or 'Let them grasp and grapple' because while Bellarmo and Palladius focus upon each other, they remain ignorant of the threat that their younger brother poses. The twins may think that quarrelling will help them to gain the promise of a dominant form of masculinity, but Museus' words demonstrate that this course of action could actually see them lose it.

Indeed, when Bellarmo and Palladius next appear onstage alongside their younger brother, they are too busy trying to inflict damage upon each other's masculinities to notice that they are giving Museus the opportunity to strengthen his own form of masculine identity. In response to an unheard jibe which Bellarmo issues regarding his mettle, Palladius declares 'My spirit flies / As high a pitch as yours, [I] have every whit / As good bloud in my veines' (*TVW* II. 1. sig. F1^r). An undaunted Bellarmo greets Palladius' suggestion that he is not an exceptionally brave or ambitious man by arguing that the latter character is an effeminate figure

who is only strong enough to intervene in quarrels with women of questionable character: 'I, to keep for wanton Ladies' (*TVW II. 1. sig. F1^r*). Bellarmo tells Palladius that 'ye dare not' (*TVW II. 1. sig. F1^r*) issue a challenge because he lacks the masculine quality of courage; when he is warned 'Provoke me not' (*TVW II. 1. sig. F1^r*), Bellarmo goads Palladius by exhibiting his own superior nerve through the taunt 'I dare thee to thy face' (*TVW II. 1. sig. F1^r*). Palladius proves so consumed by the desire to prove that he is not effeminate, and that Bellarmo is not unusually daring, that he issues the challenge 'Meet me with your Horse and Sword' (*TVW II. 1. sig. F1^r*). This violent prospect receives a positive, somewhat domineering response from Bellarmo, who answers 'I will: To morrow expect to heare from me the time and place' (*TVW II. 1. sig. F1^r*). Each twin is so fixated upon winning the game of masculine one-upmanship that they completely fail to register that a major threat to the dominant masculine identity which they so desire is standing alongside them.

While his two older brothers hurl insults towards each other's masculinities, Museus issues weak, ineffectual remarks such as 'Nay good *Bellarrio* [sic]' (*TVW II. 1. sig. F1^r*) and 'Nay good *Palladius*' (*TVW II. 1. sig. F1^r*) which are not designed to stop the quarrel from escalating further. Instead of responding to Bellarmo's goading of Palladius by reminding both twins of the fact that their father has forbidden any conflict between the pair, Museus feigns ignorance of the idea that one might challenge the other to a duel, asking 'Nay, what d'ye mean?' (*TVW II. 1. sig. F1^r*). As soon as the feuding pair leave the stage, however, Museus shows a very clear understanding of the situation between Bellarmo and Palladius: 'So, now it works like wax: Whilst they prepare / To beat the bush, my hound may catch the Hare' (*TVW II. 1. sig. F1^r*). The simile which compares the twin brothers to the 'wax' that

becomes easily mouldable once it has been heated reveals that by arranging the duel, Bellarmo and Palladius have acted in the furious way that their younger brother wanted them to. Their preoccupation with each other moves Museus closer to 'catch[ing] the Hare' that does not only symbolise the promise of kingship and a dominant form of masculinity, but also functions as a homonym for the position of 'heir' which he so covets.

Indeed, the more well-known the enmity between the twins becomes, the more Museus begins to believe that he will be afforded the social and economic power which he so desires. He hears his father exclaim "'Tis certain, there's a challenge passed 'twixt *Bellarmo* and *Palladius*: I feare the unhappy difference concerning the Birthright, will never be compos'd but by the Oracle' (*TVW* III. 1. sig. F4^r). When Evaldus then decides that 'on Wednesday' (*TVW* III. 1. sig. F4^r) or the twins' birthday, he and the rest of the court will 'await the Oracle' (*TVW* III. 1. sig. F4^r), Museus imagines that he will be confirmed as the true successor to Evaldus. He tells himself that 'So now *Museus*, If the plot hit right / There's but a haire 'twixt monarchy and thee' (*TVW* III. 1. sig. G1^v), as his elder brothers will destroy each other at some point in the near future and leave him to become his father's heir. Although Museus knows that he will not immediately become King, he allows himself a brief moment to imagine what it would feel like to occupy the throne. He tells himself that 'Thy sole-commanding hand, shall grasp and sway / The glorious Scepter' (*TVW* III. 1. sig. G1^v) which symbolises his masculine dominance, while 'thy gracious Browes / Shall be encompass'd with th' Imperiall Crowne' (*TVW* III. 1. sig. G1^v). In contrast to his twin brothers, who seek only to dominate over each other, Museus is driven by the desire to exert his social and economic power over all. He decides that the first step towards achieving his fantasy of

kingship is to 'Seem friend to both' (TVW III. 1. sig. G1^v) Bellarmo and Palladius, but encourage them 'to most extreame' (TVW III. 1. sig. G1^v) of action.

While the audience do not see Museus trying to convince Bellarmo that his best course of action is duelling with his twin brother, they do watch him manipulate Palladius by implying that his masculine identity teeters on the brink of either elevation or crisis. When the latter character admits that 'I stand betwixt two minds !' (TVW III. 1. sig. G1^r) as to whether he should fight with his twin, Museus immediately suggests that there is a way for him to assume a dominant form of masculinity. He argues that 'thy growing Name / Shall stand recorded in the Rolls of Fame' (TVW III. 1. sig. G3^r) if Palladius defeats Bellarmo, and so implies that if the situation remains peaceful, Palladius will be an unvalued figure who will find that his masculinity is plunged into crisis. Museus hints that Palladius is currently much more likely to assume the worthless, crisis-stricken form of masculinity than the dominant, hegemonic one when he reminds him that '*Bellarmo*'s tongue proclaimes / *Palladius* dares not fight, but with his dames' (TVW III. 1. sig. G2^r), which once more casts the brother he addresses as an effeminate figure. Perhaps because Museus himself has imagined what it would be like to immediately become King, he suggests that the only obstacle between Palladius and a valued, hegemonic form of masculinity is his own nerve. His calculated refusal to remind Palladius of the fact that the current possessor of a dominant form of masculinity, their father King Evaldus, shows no signs of relinquishing his position or his power any time soon, combines with Palladius's desire to avoid a crisis in his masculinity to induce him to duel with his twin. With his declaration 'The scales are turn'd / [...] *Bellarmo*, if *Palladius* lives, shall die' (TVW III. 1. sig. G2^r), Palladius elects to cement his claim to masculine dominance, but sets himself on the path to losing it. Once his elder

brother has left the stage, Museus reveals that he will be ‘the sole-second to both parties [...] / With my breath’d sword doe justice on the other’ (*TBB* III. 1. sig. G2^r), and so ensure that he becomes the successor to Evaldus’s throne.

Before Museus can find an opportunity to carry out his duplicitous plan, however, the day appointed for the consultation of the Oracle arrives. In front of the audience which comprises the entire royal court, the Priest asks ‘When *Evaldus* shall lay downe, / Shall *Bellarmino* wear the Crowne?’ (*TVW* V. 1. sig. L4^r), to which the Oracle replies ‘No’ (*TVW* V. 1. sig. L4^r), then receives the same negative reply to the question concerning Palladius. Both twins blaspheme upon hearing that they are not fated to assume a form of dominant masculinity, with Bellarmino declaring that ‘*Apollo* lyes’ (*TVW* V. 1. sig. L4^r), and Palladius claiming ‘Nay now *Apollo*’s ignorant or unjust’ (*TVW* V. 1. sig. L4^r). While the Oracle’s verdict comes as a surprise to Bellarmino and Palladius, it is less of a shock to the audience, who have repeatedly heard Museus plan to allow both twins to kill each other, and so expect a positive answer to the question ‘When Evaldus shall lay downe, / Shall *Museus* weare the Crowne?’ (*TVW* V. 1. sig. L4^r). The Oracle’s answer of ‘No’ (*TVW* V. 1. sig. L4^r), however, also excludes Evaldus’ third son from the assumption of power in favour of ‘The *babe* unborn [who] shall end the strife / Whose Mother is both Widow, Maid, and Wife’ (*TVW* V. 1. sig. K1^v, italics own).

The Oracle’s declaration that Evaldus’ heir will have the innocent, virtuous Kettreena for a mother implies that the man who will possess a dominant form of masculinity in the future shall be a morally exemplary one. As Kettreena never consummated her marriage to her previous husband because she was still in love with Evaldus, the child who will be born to her becomes associated with moderation, patience, loyalty, and a sense of duty – qualities which Bellarmino, Palladius, and

Museum all lack. As if to further underscore the contrast in behaviour and worthiness between the men who were thought to be Evaldus' heirs and the man who will succeed him, Augusta adds to the blasphemies of her twin sons by declaring 'The Oracle speaks Treason, and *Apollo's* Priests / Are all Impostors –' (TVW V. 1. sig. K1^v). Augusta, Bellarmo, and Palladius are then instantly smitten by Apollo for their lack of respect, and the crown which she wore is magically transferred to Kettreena's head.³⁶

The smiting of the twins and their mother is followed by the revelation that when Augusta was an infant, she was substituted in her cradle for the true Queen, Kettreena. While this course of events allows Quarles to neatly fulfil the audience's desire to see Evaldus and Kettreena embark on a relationship together, it nevertheless means that the author sidesteps the thorny issue of primogeniture and masculine dominance. The audience have been made aware of the fact that Bellarmo, Palladius, and Museum are temperamentally unsuitable to succeed Evaldus as King, but they are left with no suggestion as to how such a situation could be resolved in real life. Quarles' quasi-magical solution to the problem of the three sons' unsuitability within *The Virgin Widow* somewhat frustratingly implies that there was no practical way for early modern fathers to ensure that the worthiest son becomes the one who benefits from primogeniture or inhabits a dominant form of masculinity. Bellarmo and Palladius may be dead, and Museum may be punished for his schemes by being placed under permanent house arrest, but these outcomes offer no

³⁶ There is something of poetic justice in the fact that the quarrelling twins Bellarmo and Palladius are smitten by Apollo, who is a twin to Artemis and is generally shown to have a very good relationship with her.

reassurance for audience members with concerns that their own family estates may pass into unsuitable hands.

III. Conclusion

The male twins of *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow* therefore highlight the problems which surround the early modern practice of primogeniture and the dominant form of masculinity which it conferred upon the eldest son. The unsuitability of Fletcher's Rollo as a political leader suggests that social and economic power should be shared among sons, while the fates of Quarles' quarrelling Bellarmo and Palladius reveal a desire for a form of inheritance which grants masculine dominance to the most worthy son. Yet even while they use their twin characters to advocate such arguments, Fletcher and Quarles also employ them in order to indicate why they could not be resolved. Rollo and Palladius are both confronted by the idea that a peaceable solution to their quarrels will instigate a crisis in their masculinities. These two men are so desperate to avoid being devalued by taints of effeminacy that they are willing to kill their twins rather than suffer the scorn of their fellow males. Fletcher and Quarles therefore demonstrate that one of the biggest barriers to making the practice of primogeniture fairer lies in the suggestion that a man who shares power is not really a man at all. Taken together, the twin characters of *The Virgin Widow* and *The Bloody Brother* suggest that the early modern system of primogeniture and its attendant transfer of masculine dominance had a negative impact upon the management of a father's estate and the relationship between his sons, but suggest that the situation could not be improved until attitudes towards men who share power change considerably.

In addition to their criticism of the link between primogeniture and the assumption of a dominant form of masculinity, *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow* also hint at a connection between early modern masculine identity and violent conduct. Fletcher's Rollo and Quarles' Bellarmo are both goaded into believing that they can only prove that they are truly 'masculine' by committing acts of violence against their twin brothers. This idea that an act of destruction is required to construct a respected form of masculinity is subtly acknowledged by Fletcher's and Quarles' plays, but it is made much more overt by two other early modern works which feature mixed-sex, rather than same-sex, twins. As the next chapter will now demonstrate, John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and John Ford's *The Broken Heart* are two tragedies which gravely acknowledge that the link between masculinity and violence was a highly potent one.

“Should I Die This Instant, I had Liv’d / Her Time to a Minute”: Twins and the Violence of Masculinity in *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*.’

The cultural conversation which surrounded Maria Aberg’s 2018 RSC production of John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614) circulated around two key points: violence and masculinity. Before the play was performed, the RSC announced the stomach-churning fact that they had purchased 3,000 litres of stage blood in order to see the tragedy through its six-month run.¹ As press reviews began to roll in, theatre critics discussed the fact that they had been issued with protective blankets to stop the gore from seeping into their clothing, and the RSC released lurid production photos of actors who were covered in the grisly, rust-coloured mixture.² As if to anticipate any concerns that the excess of stage blood was used for sensationalist or gratuitous purposes, the RSC webpage for the production explains that Webster’s play ‘asks how anyone can survive in a world where masculinity has become toxic’.³ Aberg, the webpage implies, is not to blame for the visual and visceral nature of the violence of *The Duchess of Malfi*: men are.

¹ See Tabard, ‘Diary: Royal Shakespeare Company Sope-ing up a pool of blood’, *The Stage*, 28 February 2018 <<https://www.thestage.co.uk/opinion/tabard/2018/royal-shakespeare-company-sope-ing-up-a-pool-of-blood/>> [last accessed 2 October 2018].

² Dominic Cavendish, ‘Apparently 3,000 litres of stage blood will flow during the six-month run’ – *The Duchess of Malfi*, review’, *The Telegraph*, 11 March 2018 <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/apparently-3000-litres-stage-blood-will-flow-six-month-run/>> [last accessed 2 October 2018]; ‘*The Duchess of Malfi*: Production Photos’, RSC <<https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-duchess-of-malfi/production-photos>> [last accessed 2 October 2018].

³ ‘*The Duchess of Malfi*: John Webster’, RSC, <<https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-duchess-of-malfi/>> [last accessed 2 October 2018]. Aberg certainly seems to have stressed the relevance of masculinity to the play’s action, for Michael Billington’s review states that ‘Aberg’s production is clearly based on the idea that there is something toxic about unchecked masculinity’. Michael Billington, ‘*The Duchess of Malfi* Review – so bloody you need a blanket’, *The Guardian*, 9 March 2018 <<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/mar/09/the-duchess-of-malfi-review-rsc-swain-stratford>> [last accessed 2 October 2018].

If the connection between violence and masculinity was made evident by the reviews and marketing of Aberg's production, then it became even more overt in performance. Before the play began, the Duchess would usually drag a colossal bull, which symbolised the patriarchy, onto the stage. It remained in the background during the first half of the performance, but just before its second half got underway, Ferdinand would stride onstage and slit the bull down the middle, thereby releasing a stream of blood which flowed freely for the remainder of the play, and implying that the patriarchy was slowly being drained of its power. As first the Duchess, then her main tormentors the Cardinal and Ferdinand met their respective ends, the blood of the bull and the power of the patriarchy seeped into the costumes, trickled across the stage, and headed towards the viewers, until it threatened to engulf actors and audience alike. By the time that the play had ended, the sheer volume of the bull's blood reflected one of the key messages behind Webster's tragedy: when the patriarchy is placed under threat, nobody is safe from the chaos which ensues.

As simplistic as the equation between masculinity and violence may seem in Webster's tragedy, it is also very evident in another work of early modern drama that was written by one of his contemporaries in John Ford. Although no performance of *The Broken Heart* (1628/29) has yet required obscene amounts of stage blood, or seen any of its audience members issued with a protective blanket, it nevertheless equals *The Duchess of Malfi* for distressing, gory incidents. Ford's Ithocles is trapped in a trick chair and stabbed by Orgilus, who not only accepts that he will have to die for his crime, but instructs his executioner to kill him in a twisted and nauseating re-enactment of blood-letting. In both plays, the male twin performs acts of violence because he is insecure about his identity. He sets in motion a chain of events which leads to the death of the sister who shared the same womb as him, and

his descent into a crisis of masculinity that only ends with his murder at the hands of an avenger. Webster's Ferdinand and Ford's Ithocles are men of different ages who occupy different social positions and carry out their actions with different levels of intention, but the suffering which they inflict upon the Duchess and Penthea occurs for the same reason: they know that their masculine identities have to be constructed through violence in order for them to be taken seriously.

Just as the twin characters of Webster's and Ford's tragedies lay bare the pressurised connection between violence and early modern masculine identity, so too do the jointly-born babies of midwifery manuals. The gynaecological works of Rösslin, Guillemeau, and Rüff all feature information regarding how to successfully achieve a twin delivery, but there is great variation in their willingness to acknowledge that such an event had to involve a degree of physical and sexual violence. Only Guillemeau's work, which was aimed at surgeons who specialised in gynaecology, is willing to acknowledge the true extent of such violence. In doing so, it admits that the masculine identities of early modern surgeons were formed through the infliction of pain and distress upon the patients that they attended. The only mitigating factor for the surgeons lies in the fact that they committed such acts of violence because they had to, not because they wanted to.

Through its argument that twins reveal a link between masculine identity and violence in early modern medical and dramatic texts, this chapter develops the work of literary scholars who discuss the jointly-born pairs of Webster's and Ford's plays, and research within masculinity studies which asks why men become violent. It will begin by reviewing such scholarship before moving on to analyse how the twins of early modern gynaecological texts gesture towards the significant amounts of violence which underpinned the occupation of surgeon. The vast majority of this

chapter will, however, be devoted to the twins of *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*. It will demonstrate that the jointly-born characters of both tragedies stress that the exhibition of violence fundamentally underpins masculine identity. At the same time that the twins suggest that violence endows masculinity with value, however, they also demonstrate that it can severely devalue this form of identity, and lead to a crisis of masculinity which can only be resolved through yet more violence. Webster's and Ford's twins therefore function to simultaneously perpetuate the connection between violence and early modern masculinity, and problematise it.

I. Justifying the Unjustifiable? Current Scholarship.

i. Their Twin Birth Explains it All: 'The Duchess of Malfi' and 'The Broken Heart'.

John Webster and John Ford were contemporaries and collaborators, and have come to be recognised as two of the early modern period's most eminent dramatists. *The Duchess of Malfi* is easily Webster's best-known work, for it frequently appears as a set text upon A-Level syllabi and University modules. While Ford is better known for another, even more highly-charged tragedy in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *The Broken Heart* still remains one of his more popular works. Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* was performed in 1614, some fourteen or fifteen years before the first performance of *The Broken Heart*, but both tragedies were performed by the King's Men at the Blackfriars Theatre as well as the Globe. Since the cheapest price of admission was sixpence at the indoor Blackfriars and a penny at the outdoor Globe, the former theatre attracted the audience of a higher socioeconomic position than the latter one. Webster's and Ford's tragedies therefore had to simultaneously attract and hold the attention of two diverse audiences who were likely to have contrasting

understandings of the way in which masculinity was constituted, with the more educated Blackfriars audience probably perceiving it as a primarily intellectual form of identity, and the less-educated audience of the Globe believing it to be a more physical one. Given the diversity of education and worldview between the two audiences, Webster's and Ford's decisions to examine the link between masculinity and violence seem designed to appeal to all those who attended performances of *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*, and suggest that the connection was recognised by early modern people irrespective of their socioeconomic class.

Webster's and Ford's tragedies have both attracted a great deal of scholarly discussion, but there is a notable imbalance in the attention which has been paid to the twin characters within each play, with the jointly-born siblings of *The Duchess of Malfi* provoking far more analysis than those of *The Broken Heart*.⁴ The relationship between the Duchess and Ferdinand has been the subject of multiple critical analyses, with much of the attention focused upon how the male twin feels about the female one. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the subject matter, a psychoanalytic approach to this question has proved attractive to critics who have interrogated this idea, such as Maurizio Calbi and Lynn Enterline. Calbi builds upon the physical resemblance between Webster's twins in order to argue that the Duchess comes to represent the Freudian 'uncanny' for Ferdinand: 'the "salutary" interchangeability between his body and "that body of hers", which (retrospectively) appears so

⁴ Literary critics are not the only people to overlook the fact that Penthea and Ithocles are twins: theatre critics also often fail to remark upon the close connection which they share when they review new productions of the play. See, for example, John Nathan, 'The Broken Heart, Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, Review: Ghoulish Tragedy but with a Sardonic Touch', *The Independent*, 19 March 2015 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/the-broken-heart-sam-wanamaker-playhouse-review-ghoulish-tragedy-but-with-a-sardonic-touch-10119807.html>> [last accessed 10 October 2018]; Dominic Cavendish, 'The Broken Heart, Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, Review: Valiant but Doomed', *The Telegraph*, 22 March 2015 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/11482839/The-Broken-Heart-Sam-Wanamaker-Playhouse-review-valiant-but-doomed.html>> [last accessed 10 October 2018].

familiar, re-presents itself as a hostile, *un-heimlich* image, an image whose effect is one of fragmentation'.⁵ Lynn Enterline, meanwhile, draws upon Lacan to suggest that the Duchess functions as a 'mirror' for Ferdinand: 'the reflecting image of his twin sister exerts great pressure on the Duke's language and body; in the mirror of the Duchess's desire, and of her maternal body, the melancholic Ferdinand finds himself reflected and estranged at once'.⁶ Taken together, Calbi and Enterline suggest that problems arise for Ferdinand when he moves from feeling similar to his twin, to feeling different.

Although Daisy Murray does not examine Webster's twins through the lens of psychoanalysis, she also suggests that Ferdinand's sense of self is completely dependent upon the Duchess. Murray argues that Ferdinand is 'obsessed not with himself, but with his twin sibling' in a manner which echoes Pausanias's retelling of the Narcissus myth, in which the young man lost his beloved twin sister and was subsequently transfixed by his reflection because he could imagine that he was looking at her.⁷ It is the Duchess' refusal to reciprocate Ferdinand's incestuous interest, Murray explains, which motivates him to kill her and causes his descent into lycanthropy which recalls the folkloric Sooterkin, a human being who resembled an animal and caused the death of his younger brother.⁸ In so doing, she attests that 'Ferdinand becomes the evil twin, the animalistic Sooterkin, and his story reflects not just the negative assumptions surrounding twinship, but specifically this birth and its destructive powers'.⁹ Murray's reading of *The Duchess of Malfi* may be

⁵ Maurizio Calbi, *Approximate Bodies: Aspects of the Figuration of Masculinity, Power and the Uncanny in Early Modern Drama and Anatomy* (Salerno: Oedipus, 2001), p. 95, italics in original.

⁶ Lynn Enterline, "'Hairy on the In-Side": *The Duchess of Malfi* and the Body of Lycanthropy', *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 7.2 (1994), 85-129 (p. 95).

⁷ Murray, p. 39. For Murray's fascinating discussion of Pausanias's version of the Narcissus myth, see Murray, pp. 38-9.

⁸ For Murray's discussion of the Sooterkin, see Murray, pp. 33-4.

⁹ Murray, p. 45.

therefore informed by a historicist approach rather than a psychoanalytic one, but it still echoes the work of Calbi and Enterline through its declaration that Ferdinand's behaviour deteriorates because the Duchess wants to assert her difference from him.

In the lone article which has analysed the twin characters of *The Duchess of Malfi* alongside those of *The Broken Heart*, I have also discussed how the closeness of birth between Ferdinand and the Duchess influences his behaviour towards her. By drawing upon early modern medical texts which suggested that a second-born twin like Ferdinand would be considered to be the 'weak' one', I have argued that Ferdinand arranges the Duchess' murder because he wants to fantasise that she died at birth and left him to become the 'strong' twin.¹⁰ Even though Ferdinand understands that he is responsible for his twin's death, I have asserted, he 'ultimately tries to explain it as a consequence of being a twin, and so being subject to an "unnatural" level of attachment and emotion towards the woman who shared his birth'.¹¹ Ferdinand's understanding of his twin relationship therefore serves as both a motivation and an excuse for the Duchess' murder.

In the same article, which is the only piece of scholarship to date that focuses upon the fact that Ford's Penthea and Ithocles are twins, I have demonstrated that the Spartan society of *The Broken Heart* has strict expectations as to how two people who shared the same womb should behave. As the way that characters use the word 'twins' or behave towards Ford's jointly-born brother and sister indicates, the exterior likeness between Penthea and Ithocles is expected to be echoed through their

¹⁰ Louise Powell, "'It Seems She Was Born First': The Persistence of Twinship in *The Broken Heart* and *The Duchess of Malfi*", *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 26 (2017), 1-15
<<https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/journal/index.php/emls/article/view/210/255>> [accessed 2 October 2018], p. 11.

¹¹ Powell, "'It Seems She Was Born First'", p. 14.

emotions and actions.¹² While Ithocles tries to emphasise his interior sameness to Penthea, she is too traumatised by being forced to marry Bassanes to accept that her twin is emotionally similar to her, and sets about destroying their resemblance through a protracted act of self-starvation.¹³ Despite clear evidence of the discord between Ford's twins, the expectation of total likeness is such a strong one that Orgilus has to manipulate Penthea's and Ithocles' dead bodies so that they imply their 'physical and emotional connectedness'.¹⁴

Irrespective of whether these works of criticism focus upon *The Duchess of Malfi* or *The Broken Heart*, or whether they take a psychoanalytic or historicist approach to this topic, they all suggest that the twin relationship functions as a key motivating factor for the behaviour of the characters who shared the same birth. They suggest that Webster's Ferdinand and Ford's Spartan society have a very fixed idea of what a twin relationship signifies, which places extreme pressure upon the two people who participate in it. All of these works of scholarship have convincingly argued for such a reading, but it is important to acknowledge that there are also other factors which place pressure upon the twin characters. Much of the strain that is placed upon the relationship between Webster's and Ford's mixed-sex twins originates from gendered expectations of behaviour. The pressures which are placed upon the Duchess and Penthea in relation to appropriate female behaviour have been well-documented by feminist critics, but those which attend Ferdinand's and Ithocles's masculinities have been afforded far less attention.¹⁵ As this chapter will

¹² Powell, "'It Seems She Was Born First'", p. 5.

¹³ Powell, "'It Seems She Was Born First'", pp. 7-9.

¹⁴ Powell, "'It Seems She Was Born First'", p. 10.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Oakes, for example, considers early modern discussions of widowhood and asserts that 'the Duchess is so easily within the bounds of her society in remarrying that her widowhood is not the cause but the context for her martyrdom'. Marliiss C. Desens maintains that the Duchess decides to marry Antonio because the equality which she desires in marriage could only ever emerge from union with a man who occupies a lower rank than her. Feminist critics of *The Broken Heart*, meanwhile,

demonstrate, both of these characters feel that they have to attribute value to their masculinities by committing acts of violence against their twin sisters. Ferdinand instigates a programme of violence against the Duchess because he is thwarted in his attempts to carry out violence upon other men, while Ithocles is cured of his violent behaviour towards Penthea because he has been allowed to wreak violence towards his fellow men. Ferdinand may turn towards violence and Ithocles move away from it, but neither man is able to escape the taint which their dreadful treatment of the twin sister casts upon their masculinities. Ferdinand and Ithocles find that their masculine identities are plunged into crisis on account of their violent behaviour, which causes other men to perform acts of violence against them and ultimately results in their deaths.

Whereas current criticism on the twins of Webster's and Ford's tragedies argues that it is the closeness of birth between each pair which is fundamentally responsible for the horrific events of both plays, then, this chapter takes a different approach. It reveals that it is the pressure surrounding the masculinities of Ferdinand and Ithocles which causes them to damage their twin relationship. These aforementioned characters understand that a violent form of masculinity is a valued one, and so assume this type of identity against the Duchess and Penthea. By making such an argument, this chapter is not contradicting current scholarship on the twins of *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*, but expanding upon it by

have been particularly keen to argue that Penthea's act of self-starvation is a protest against dictates about women's bodies. Lois E. Bueler, for example, argues that patriarchal pressure makes Penthea judge herself so harshly that she resorts to self-starvation, and Sasha Garwood suggests that she enacts its suppression of her emotions upon her body. Elizabeth Oakes, '*The Duchess of Malfi* as a Tragedy of Identity', *Studies in Philology*, 96.1 (1999), 51-67; see Marliss C. Desens, 'Marrying Down: Negotiating a More Equal Marriage on the English Renaissance Stage', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 14 (2001), 227-55 (pp. 240-42); Lois E. Bueler, 'Role-Splitting and Reintegration: The Tested Woman Plot in Ford', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 20.2 (1980), 325-44 (p. 337); Sasha Garwood, '"The Skull Beneath the Skin": Women and Self-Starvation on the Renaissance Stage', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 145 (1995), 106-23 (p. 115).

demonstrating that the jointly-born characters within these plays are highlighting broader problems with early modern constructions of masculinity. Webster's and Ford's twins do not only acknowledge the link between violence and masculine identity, but also demonstrate how this connection becomes something of a self-fulfilling prophecy, as other men feel that they have to commit violence against Ferdinand and Ithocles in order to atone for their treatment of their twin sisters. While men may feel like they are dodging a crisis of masculinity by gaining respect through the performance of violence, then, *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart* suggest that they are only creating a larger crisis in their masculinities later on in life.

ii. *Their Maleness Explains It All: Violence and Masculinity*

The existence of a connection between masculine identity and violence is so pervasive that such scholars as R. W. Connell have detected 'a widespread belief that it is natural for men to be violent'.¹⁶ For critics who are working within the area of masculinity studies, or look to that field of scholarship in order to aid their criminological analyses, this link exists because of the way that men interact between themselves, and with women. Elizabeth A. Stanko remarks that 'explanations of when and how men are violent include commentaries about men's structural power and the negotiation of this power with others', while Anthony Ellis suggests that 'cultural values surround [violence], which are bound up with notions of shame, humiliation, personal reputation and status'.¹⁷ Taken together, the

¹⁶ R. W. Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p. 215.

¹⁷ Elizabeth A. Stanko, 'Challenging the Problem of Men's Individual Violence', in *Just Boys Doing Business? Men, Masculinities and Crime*, ed. by Tim Newburn and Elizabeth A. Stanko (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 32-45 (p. 40); Anthony Ellis, *Men, Masculinities and Violence: An Ethnographic Study* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994), p. 9.

observations of Stanko and Ellis suggest that men employ violence as a means through which to make women believe that they are more powerful than them, and to improve their social standing amongst their fellow males. The motivation and aim behind a man's violent conduct is therefore located in his desire to elevate his masculine identity to the point where it is feared, but grudgingly respected.

Stanko and Ellis may be concerned with the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but their remarks still remain relevant to the early modern period, for the same link between violence and masculine identity also existed then. In Barnaby Rich's popular *Rich his Farewell to Military Profession* (1581), for example, the author recalls how he 'spent [his] yoonger days in the warres amongst men, and vowed [him]selfe only unto Mars', but found that 'to be of Mars his crew, there is nothing but paine, turmoile, travaile'.¹⁸ Rich implies that he participated in military conflict because he believed that his alignment with the mythological god of war would bring him glory, but found that he was expected to engage in violence and feats of physical endurance so frequently that he did 'nothing' else. Such a pervasive connection between violence and masculinity has also been noted by early modern scholars. Jennifer Feather and Catherine E. Thomas argue that although the chivalric medieval knights who exhibited a violent form of masculinity came to be replaced by courtiers who had to trade upon their social skills, and the development of humanism placed an emphasis upon educational, rather than physical, development, 'violence remained a significant foundation for masculinity'.¹⁹ Feather and Thomas

¹⁸ Barnaby Rich, *Rich his Farewell to Military Profession* (London: Thomas Adams, 1594), sig. A2^r. I have consulted Rich's work in a thesis dated between 1594-1655 as the work was reprinted during the period of interest, and its significance is made evident by the fact that it influenced Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

¹⁹ Jennifer Feather and Catherine E. Thomas, eds, 'Introduction: Reclaiming Violent Masculinities', in *Violent Masculinities: Male Aggression in Early Modern Texts and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1-21 (p. 8).

assert that violent actions were ‘used to articulate, negotiate, and maintain masculine ideals, even for those men who [did] not practise it’, and so it functioned to establish or reinforce a hierarchy which placed all men over women, and particular men over their fellow males.²⁰ The work of Feather and Thomas suggests that the exhibition of violence had mostly positive effects for men, but Jim Casey contends that it also placed pressure on them. Casey maintains that ‘Early modern male bodies represent appropriate sites for violent engagement and as such bear the cultural expectation that they will act honorably and submit to a world of violence’.²¹ As a consequence of this anticipation, Casey declares, early modern men who had previously consolidated their masculine identities through violence could not rest assured that their masculinities were secure, for they faced ‘the repeated challenge of “proving” [their] masculinity’.²² By failing to engage repeatedly in violent conduct, early modern men could therefore lose whatever position they had occupied in the social hierarchy, and suffer a subsequent deterioration in the quality of their relationships with men as well as women.²³

Irrespective of whether they are writing about the present moment or the early modern period, the aforementioned scholars all suggest that violence constitutes a fundamental part of masculine identity. While it is therefore unsurprising that this chapter will echo that viewpoint, its decision to do so through analyses of how gynaecological texts and dramatic works represent twins may be more surprising. Yet as other early modern pieces of writing demonstrate, twins

²⁰ Feather and Thomas, p. 3.

²¹ Jim Casey, ‘Manhood Fresh Bleeding: Shakespeare’s Men and the Construction of Masculine Identity’, *Gender Forum*, 49 (2014), 3-17 (p. 11).

²² Casey, p. 4.

²³ Feather and Thomas gesture towards this negative outcome when they state that ‘The practice of aggression benefits some men and marginalizes others, unsettling easy associations between prowess and dominance’. Feather and Thomas, p. 6.

could be used in order to acknowledge the strength of the connection between masculinity and violence. Arthur Warren's retelling of the murder of Remus at the hands of his twin brother Romulus in the poem 'Poverties Patience' (1605), for example, portrays the urge to act violently as one which is strong enough to overcome all others. Warren recounts how 'Romulus no fallacies could find, / But brothers death, poore Rhemus must be slaine, / To satisfie his all-affecting minde'.²⁴ Despite the fact that Romulus cannot find fault with the conduct of Remus, he has an unquenchable longing to murder his twin brother and elevate his own masculine identity by claiming Rome for his own. Warren goes on to lament that if even the bond between two brothers who inhabited the womb together is not strong enough to prevent violent behaviour, no man can rest assured of his safety: 'Oh if that brother spare not Brothers blood, / At Aliants hands who expects any good?'.²⁵

Thomas Heywood's *Troia Britanica* (1609) also uses twins in order to demonstrate just how strong the link between masculine identity and violence is. Heywood recounts how the mythological Saturne usurped the kingdom from his brother Tytan, and vows to murder any sons who are born to him in order to prevent the throne from passing back to Tytan.²⁶ Saturne falls in love with his sister Sibill, and in time she gives birth to mixed-sex twins. He is secretly unwilling to carry out the act of violence upon his male child, but fears that by refusing to do so, he will plunge his masculine identity into crisis. Heywood recounts how Saturne 'thought it base if he should breake his word', and decides that 'Rather than lose his Scepter, 'tis decreed, / Had he ten thousand brats, they all should bleed'.²⁷ Instead of carrying

²⁴ Arthur Warren, 'Poverties Patience', in *The Poore Mans Passions and Poverties Patience* (London: I. R., 1605), sig. E4^r-K1^v (sig. H4^v).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ I have used Heywood's spellings of 'Tytan' and 'Saturne'.

²⁷ Thomas Heywood, *Troia Britanica or Great Britaines Troy* (London: W. Iaggard, 1609), sig. C1^v; sig. C2^r.

out the horrendous act himself, however, Saturne lets Sibill and the twins' grandmother Vesta know that if they wish to preserve their own lives, they must murder the male child: 'if the brat survive, *Sibill* and she / As Traytors to our person, both shall die'.²⁸

Although the issue is ultimately resolved by Vesta, who is able to smuggle the boy who will become Jupiter away to safety, Heywood's male twin does more than merely provide the dramatic interest in the poem, for he is also used to reveal the pressures which attend Saturne's masculinity. As the King, Saturne enjoys a highly valued, hegemonic form of masculine identity, but he knows that he has to practise horrific violence if he is to maintain this elevated position. While he tells himself that he is willing to carry out such a crime, he actually forces responsibility for the act onto his wife and the child's grandmother through the threat of more violence. Heywood therefore demonstrates that Saturne's masculine identity is fundamentally linked to his ability to carry out a violent act, and his inability to perform it causes him to threaten violence against women.

Warren's and Heywood's works therefore demonstrate that the representation of twins could be used in order to acknowledge what scholars of early modern and contemporary masculinity have realised, the fact that violence constitutes a fundamental and problematic aspect of masculinity. Warren's jointly-born characters hint at just how powerful the urge to carry out violence could be for men, while Heywood's pair reveal that vulnerable people could suffer greatly at the hands of a man who feels that he must behave in a distressing way. These authors' relatively brief considerations of how twins could help to explain why men behave violently is

²⁸ Heywood, sig. C3^v.

then echoed more substantially by the writers of gynaecological texts, *The Duchess of Malfi*, and *The Broken Heart*. Through its examination of how the jointly-born figures of these works acknowledge that early modern men experienced significant pressure to make their masculinities gain value through violence, and admit that women often had to suffer because of such pressure, this chapter simultaneously reinforces and extends current scholarship which concerns this form of identity. As well as confirming the existence of a link between violence and masculinity, it also illustrates that early modern men were all too aware of this connection and the damage which it could cause for themselves as well as for other people.

II. Twins and Violent Masculinity

i. Midwifery Manuals and the Necessary Violence of Twin Deliveries

As the sixteenth century rolled into the seventeenth, the medical dialogue which surrounded twin deliveries became more detailed. The brief paragraphs which offered advice on how to achieve a successful twin birth in Rösslin's midwifery manual were extended into chapters by the works of Guillemeau and Rüff. The marginalia which signalled where discussions about twin deliveries could be found came to be replaced by chapter headings, and embryo-images of two children who shared the womb no longer had to appear alongside those which depicted single-borns. Instead, they appeared under the new chapter headings, and offered a clear visual indication as to where this more extensive information about twin deliveries could be found.

Although it is impossible to ascertain exactly why this increase in detail regarding twin births came to be implemented, the growing involvement of surgeons

in gynaecological medicine appears to be one influential factor. As the introduction to this thesis explained, the successful delivery of twins was considered to be extremely difficult, and so it was an event which offered surgeons the opportunity to elevate their masculine identities to a point where their value was evident to all. By deciding to increase the amount of information which he imparted in relation to twins, Guillemeau was seeking to improve the chances of such a positive outcome for the practitioner. His clear but comprehensive, step-by-step instructions gave surgeons a procedure to follow that was not only designed to ensure a safe outcome to a difficult twin delivery, but also impress any curious readers or witnesses of a woman's labour with a sense of the male practitioner's intellectual capabilities. The fact that Rüff then chose to mimic this level of detail in his midwifery manual, which stressed the superiority of surgeons over midwives by placing them in the position of educators, suggests that he was aware of the benefits which such an approach brought to patient as well as practitioner.

At the same time that discussions of twin deliveries were becoming more detailed, however, they were also turning more violent. Eucharius Rösslin's advice on how practitioners should assist a woman who was in labour with twins is both simplistic and somewhat sanitised, with such instructions as 'then must the Midwife receive the one after the other, but so, that she let not slip the one, whylest she taketh the first'.²⁹ Rösslin tells the midwife what to do, but does not tell her how to do it; indeed, his instruction to 'let not slip the one, whylest she taketh the first' suggests that twins merely fall straight out of the birth canal. There is a similar lack of detail in his command for 'the Midwife [to] helpe the birth that is most nearest the issue,

²⁹ Rösslin, sig. D6^v.

and it that commeth footelong (if she can) to returne it upon the head'.³⁰ If the midwife needs to respond to the feet-first twin by 'return[ing] it upon the head', then she must have to perform some sort of physical intervention in order to do so. Yet Rösslin refuses to reveal exactly how this intervention should be constituted, and so he implies that the level of physical interaction between practitioner and patient(s) during labour was negligible.

In contrast to Rösslin's polite but somewhat basic discussion of twin deliveries, Guillemeau outlines a highly visceral set of instructions for the surgeon who attends a woman who is in labour with two children. He commands:

especially hee must observe whether the two children be monsters, and unnatural, or no [...] which he may easily perceive, by sliding his right hand open, betweene the two heads, to feele the division; and then drawing his hand down againe gently betweene the two heads, he shall thrust aside the one to give place to the other.³¹

Guillemeau may be instructing the surgeon to ascertain whether the twins he is attending are conjoined or occupy separate bodies, but he is also telling the practitioner to act violently towards his patients. By inserting his entire hand into the mother's birth canal and womb, then running that hand over the body or bodies of the unborn twins, the surgeon is performing acts of sexual violence. When he has to 'thrust aside' the twin that he believes should be born last, he also commits physical violence, for the verb 'thrust' is suggestive of considerable force. As conjoined twins require a separate course of action to twins of separate bodies, Guillemeau reveals that violence constitutes a fundamental medical necessity for a surgeon, as he would

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Guillemeau, sig. Y2^r.

have no other way of being able to establish the bodily status of the twins he is trying to deliver.

While Rüff also acknowledges that a twin birth requires a great deal of physical interaction, he stops short of suggesting that it is violent in nature. He orders:

let the Midwife annoynt the womb of the labouring-woman, that by that, the way may bee more easie for the birth: which being done, she shall have a care that she take hold of the armes of one of the children, and hold them hard brought downeward to the sides, and gently procure the head to proceed forth.³²

In a manner which sits somewhere between Rösslin's sanitised instructions and Guillemeau's visceral commands, Rüff implies that the practitioner who attends a twin delivery will have to have some intimate contact with mother and child, but withholds the unsavoury details. Rüff's midwife is told to 'annoynt the womb' and 'take hold of the armes of one of the children, and hold them hard', or to commit the same sort of sexually and physically violent acts which Guillemeau's surgeon did. As there is no discussion of exactly how the midwife would manage to 'annoynt the womb' or take hold of one of the twins when they have not yet been born, however, Rüff's practitioner manages to escape being associated with violence.

Taken together, the discussions of twin births in the midwifery manuals of Rösslin, Guillemeau, and Rüff reveal the strength of the connection between men and violent conduct. While the female midwives who form the audience of Rösslin's and Rüff's texts will act just as violently as the male surgeons of Guillemeau's work

³² Rüff, sig. K3^r.

will when they are confronted with a twin delivery, the unpleasant sexual and physical contact between practitioner and patients is only acknowledged by an author who is writing for his fellow men. It is possible, of course, that Rösslin and Rüff felt that it was not decorous to tell midwives exactly how they should interact with the bodies of a woman and her twin children during labour, but if decorum was an inhibiting factor in works which were aimed at women, then it would surely have prevented Guillemeau from imparting such knowledge in a manual that had a predominantly male audience in mind. The different levels of willingness to acknowledge the true nature of the interaction between practitioners and patients therefore implies that it was much easier to indicate that men could be violent than it was to suggest that women were also capable of such behaviour.

At the same time that Guillemeau's treatment of twin deliveries demonstrates the strength of the link between men and violence, it also reveals his consciousness that violent action formed a fundamental part of the masculine identities of surgeons. Guillemeau's detailed instructions regarding twin births reveal that surgeons had no other alternative but to carry out acts of violence against a woman and her children if they wanted to ensure that their patients survived, and they made their value as medical men evident to all. In the same way that the twins of gynaecological texts suggest that early modern men felt forced to act violently if they were to be valued, so too do the jointly-born characters of *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*. Webster's Ferdinand and Ford's Ithocles both arrange for their twin sisters to endure horrendous violence, but there are indications that the Duchess and Penthea need not have suffered so if their brothers had been able to pursue different experiences. Ferdinand's malicious emotions towards the Duchess are shown to emerge as a consequence of being frustrated in his attempts to participate in military combat,

while Ithocles' callous attitude towards Penthea is transformed into a more caring one after he participates in a successful military campaign. The Duchess' and Penthea's unnecessary suffering instigates crises in Ferdinand's and Ithocles's masculinities which causes other men, Bosola and Orgilus, to avenge their suffering through another act of violence. The twins of *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart* therefore attest to the strength of the connection between masculinity and violence, and indicate the terrible price that women, as well as men, had to pay for it.

ii. 'Why Should He Not as Well Sleep, or Eat by a Deputy?': Ferdinand's Frustrated Turn Towards Violence

Scholars have long sought to identify the motivations which underpin Ferdinand's decision to torture and arrange for the murder of the Duchess, which has resulted in a rich and varied critical dialogue. While Ariane M. Balizet has argued that Ferdinand resorts to desperate measures in order to maintain 'the purity of the noble bloodline', Richard A. McCabe, Michael Neill, and René Weis have suggested that he carries out his heinous acts because his twin sister clearly demonstrates that she does not reciprocate his incestuous desire.³³ Ellen Tullo has invoked early modern medical ideas in order to assert that Ferdinand suffers from 'an excess of melancholy', and Sid Ray has looked to contemporaneous religious ideals so as to argue that Ferdinand wishes to dismember the Duchess so that she becomes 'a caricature of the

³³ Ariane M. Balizet, "'Drowned in Blood': Honor, Bloodline, and Domestic Ideology in *The Duchess of Malfi* and *El medico de su honra*", *Comparative Literature Studies*, 49.1 (2012), 23-49 (p. 40); Richard A. McCabe, *Incest, Drama and Nature's Law, 1550-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 250; Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 345; René Weis, ed., 'Introduction', in *The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, repr. 2009), ix-xxviii (p. xix).

ideal Protestant wife – sexually dominated, helpless, and silent’.³⁴ Each of the aforementioned critics argues convincingly for their interpretation of what motivates Ferdinand to behave in the shocking way that he does, which is a testament to the strength of Webster’s characterisation. Rather than seeking to disprove these readings, then, the following discussion will further demonstrate the complexity of Ferdinand’s character by suggesting an additional motivation behind his violent behaviour.

One key aspect of Ferdinand’s character which has received barely any scholarly attention is his position as a frustrated military man. Since his noble birth has furnished him with a ready-made, respected form of masculine identity, Ferdinand feels stifled by the world of the court, and shows eagerness to begin to shape his own masculinity by participating in warfare. In the very first scene of *The Duchess of Malfi*, he rewards Antonio for his superior jousting ability, then immediately asks Castruccio ‘When shall we leave this sportive action and fall to action indeed?’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 87-8).³⁵ Ferdinand makes a marked contrast between the ‘sportive action’ which creates masculine identity through such prescribed activities as jousting, and ‘action indeed’, which offers a much more violent and unpredictable path of male identity formation. His abrupt dismissal of the ‘sportive action’, and desire to undertake ‘action indeed’, indicates that Ferdinand ascribes far more value to masculinity that has been built upon the battlefield than to the one that has been constructed at court. By expressing the wish to elevate his masculine identity by participating in war, the Duke is showing the same sort of desire to strengthen his

³⁴ Tullo, p. 20; Sid Ray, *Holy Estates: Marriage and the Monarchy in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2004), p. 135.

³⁵ All quotations are taken from John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays*, ed. by René Weis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, repr. 2009), 103-200.

position as a real-life ruler who shared his name, Ferdinand of Aragon, and was celebrated in Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532). In a chapter entitled 'Of What a Prince Should Do to Acquire Prestige', Machiavelli states that Ferdinand of Aragon 'could almost be called a new prince because he started out as a weak monarch, but through fame and glory has become the foremost King of Christendom', then goes on to laud the ruler's military exploits in Granada.³⁶ Although there are obvious differences in rank between the real Ferdinand of Aragon, who was a King, and the fictional Duke Ferdinand, the echo of the name and the sentiment of *The Prince* nevertheless suggests that Webster's character is not expressing his desire for elevation through warfare on a mere whim.

Yet while Ferdinand longs to serve in a military campaign because of his noble birth, Castruccio denies him this opportunity for precisely this reason. He responds 'Methinks, my lord, you should not desire to go to war in person' (*TDoM* I. 1. 89-90) as it will demean Ferdinand: 'It is fitting a soldier arise to be a prince, but not necessary a prince descend to be a captain' (*TDoM* I. 1. 92-3). Castruccio argues that because Ferdinand is a 'prince', he is already at the apex of masculinity, so engaging in battle will only result in the degradation of his masculine identity. He recommends that if Ferdinand desperately feels the need to participate in military combat, 'he were far better do it by a deputy' (*TDoM* I. 1. 95). By acting through another man, Castruccio suggests that Ferdinand can vicariously enjoy the intrigues of battle without suffering any downfall in the public perception of his masculinity.

Ferdinand's response to Castruccio's advice demonstrates his refusal to accept that his masculine identity would suffer if he were to participate in military

³⁶ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. by Peter Constantine (London: Vintage Books, 2009), p. 80.

action. He protests ‘Why should he not as well sleep, or eat by a deputy? This might take idle, offensive, and base office from him, whereas the other deprives him of honour’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 95-7). Ferdinand views violent military action as a source of ‘honour’, and so implies that he would be elevating another man’s masculinity at the cost of his own if he were to act as Castruccio suggested. Instead of limiting himself to only ‘base’ activities which will protect his body, Ferdinand longs to risk that body in dangerous battles. Castruccio, however, warns the Duke that he will be staking more than his body if he decides to participate in conflict: ‘Believe my experience, that realm is never long in quiet, where the ruler is a soldier’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 99-100). By keeping his body out of harm’s way, Ferdinand is also protecting his duchy, and Castruccio implies that if he has any respect for his military expertise, he ought to ‘Believe my experience’ and prioritise the safety of his area over any violent impulses.

Although Ferdinand’s rapid change of subject – ‘Thou toldst me thy wife could not endure fighting’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 101) – indicates that he accepts Castruccio’s advice, it soon becomes apparent that if he is to be deprived of violence in war, he will search for it at the court. When Roderigo and Grisolan laugh at Silvio’s bawdy joke, Ferdinand irritably asks ‘Why do you laugh?’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 118), then suggests that those who serve at the court should allow their opinions to be completely controlled by the nobility. He remarks ‘Methinks you that are courtiers should be my touchwood, take fire, when I give fire; that is, laugh when I laugh, were the subject never so witty’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 118-20). By arguing that courtiers ought to mimic the emotions of the people whom they serve, even if that means setting aside their personal amusement or lack of it, Ferdinand is trying to inflict a form of emotional violence upon his fellow men. If he is the man that they all look to before they

permit themselves to laugh, then he is the one with the elevated form of masculinity, the male who is valued the most.

Ferdinand's frustration at being denied the opportunity to engage in military conflict does not only affect the way in which he treats his fellow men, for it also impacts upon his perception of the twin relationship which he shares with the Duchess. Ferdinand's interactions with the Duchess are underpinned by threats of emotional and sexual violence which suggest that he starts to view their twin relationship as a vehicle through which he can try to compensate for his thwarted attempts to bolster his masculine identity. While this viewpoint becomes increasingly evident as the play progresses, it first appears when he warns his twin sister against remarrying in secret, and remarks that 'Such weddings may more properly be said / To be executed than celebrated' (*TDoM* I. 1. 313). He then continues this morbid theme when he comments that the consummation of a secret marriage brings 'those joys, / Those lustful pleasures, [which] are more like heavy sleeps / Which do fore-run man's mischief' (*TDoM* I. 1. 315-7). Ferdinand's references to the idea of being 'executed', and his mention of 'heavy sleeps', subtly hint at the deadly fate which will await the Duchess if she ignores his advice. It is when the Cardinal leaves him alone with her, however, that Ferdinand turns his hints into a clear threat that he will be the one to punish her if she slights him. He pulls out a dagger and states 'This was my father's poniard. Do you see? / I'd be loth to see't look rusty, 'cause 'twas his' (*TDoM* I. 1. 322-23). The sight of the drawn dagger alone is enough to indicate that Ferdinand is prepared to commit an act of physical violence against the Duchess, but the idea that it might 'look rusty', which creates an image of the weapon stained with blood, further reinforces the strength of his violent intentions.

At the same time that Ferdinand's production of the poniard indicates that he is prepared to cause his twin sister physical harm, it also signals why he is willing to do so. The poniard very obviously functions as a phallic symbol, but the combination of male power and violent potential which is contained within the weapon suggests that it also serves another purpose. Before Ferdinand produces the poniard, he tells the Duchess that 'You are my sister' (*TDoM* I. 1. 321), which would be an extremely odd choice of words unless he is drawing the dagger out of its sheath precisely *because* she is his sister. By threatening the Duchess, the person who shared the womb with him, with a symbol of male power and violence, Ferdinand is expressing his frustration at the birth which offered him a ready-made form of masculine identity. He is torn between the desire to destroy the symbol of that constraining birth in the Duchess, and the wish to make her feel just as limited as he does. By threatening to use the poniard upon her if she fails to heed his warning about remarrying, Ferdinand therefore reaches a state of compromise. The only way that he can bear being thwarted in his attempts to make other people value his masculinity through martial pursuits is if the Duchess is prevented from making other people value her femininity in marital ones. If Ferdinand cannot enjoy the heat of battle, then he will not permit the twin who shared his birth – and so was also automatically assigned a respected form of identity – to enjoy the heat of sexual intercourse.

Indeed, Ferdinand is so dependent upon the idea that his twin is experiencing the same frustrations as he is that when he discovers that she has given birth, he becomes far more agitated by the news than the Cardinal does. He immediately subjects the Duchess' body to a verbal dissection in which he removes her 'bleeding heart' (*TDoM* II. 5. 15), purges her 'infected blood' (*TDoM* II. 5. 26), and 'hew[s] her to pieces' (*TDoM* II. 5. 31) to remedy the pain that she has inflicted upon him.

Now that he has been doubly thwarted in his intentions to participate in battle and subject his twin to a similarly constraining life, Ferdinand turns his desire for conflict against the sibling who has disappointed him to produce a strong determination to subject the Duchess to extreme violence. His admission that 'I do think / It is some fault in us [himself and the Cardinal] heaven doth revenge / By her' (*TDoM* II. 5. 65) implies that Ferdinand is aware that he expected too much of his twin, but instead of focusing upon how unfair it was for him to treat the Duchess in this way, he fixates upon the violence that he will inflict upon her as she lies with her lover. He imagines 'hav[ing] their bodies / Burnt in a coal-pit, with the vantage stopped' (*TDoM* II. 5. 69), and 'dip[ping] the sheets they lie in, in pitch or sulphur, / Wrap[ping] them in't, and then light[ing] them like a match' (*TDoM* II. 5. 71-2). Both of these horrifically violent fantasies echo Ferdinand's constrained form of masculinity, for the suffocating, enclosed space of the 'coal-pit' and the 'sheets' reflect his sense of entrapment.

Having been denied the opportunity to elevate his masculine identity through military conflict, and thwarted in his attempts to make his twin experience the same level of constraint as he does, Ferdinand then decides that he will wage war upon the Duchess. When he confronts her with the poniard that was used so threateningly to warn her against remarrying, it seems that this 'war' will be a physically violent one, but at the last moment he forces the weapon into her hand with the instruction 'Die, then, quickly!' (*TDoM* III. 2. 71). Since the poniard symbolises male power and violence, and is clearly bound up with Ferdinand's feelings of frustration at his masculine identity, his decision not to wound her with it, but request that she use it upon herself, suggests that he wishes to impress his dominance so thoroughly upon her that she longs to be dead. He makes it very clear that the Duchess is his target

when he tells her unknown (to him) lover that he does not wish to ‘know’ (*TDoM* III. 2. 92) or ‘behold’ (*TDoM* III. 2. 96) him, or ‘have knowledge of thy name’ (*TDoM* III. 2. 97), as it would prove an unnecessary distraction from his aim of persecuting the Duchess. As demonstrated by his order for her to ‘cut out thine own tongue’ (*TDoM* III. 2. 108), which is Ferdinand’s only other violent remark aside from his instruction for her to commit suicide, the Duke is now interested only in bringing her to such a low emotional ebb that she longs to destroy herself.

Indeed, the shift in Ferdinand’s priorities is made extremely clear by the scene which follows the confrontation between the twins, for the prospect of being involved in warfare which was once so important to Ferdinand’s understanding of his own masculinity is shown to mean nothing to him. It is the Cardinal who asks the question that would have been posed by his brother in ‘Must we turn soldier then?’ (*TDoM* III. 3. 1), and when Malatesta explains ‘a plot drawn for a new fortification / At Naples’ (*TDoM* III. 3. 7-8), the Duke displays no interest in the plans at all. He instead focuses upon Malatesta himself, asking whether ‘This great Count Malatesta, I perceive, / Hath got employment?’ (*TDoM* III. 3. 9-10), and then enquiring ‘He’s no soldier?’ (*TDoM* III. 3. 12). Ferdinand’s two queries could be understood on one level as part of an explanatory section of dialogue for the audience as they meet this new character for the first time, but on another one they signal his preoccupation with the Duchess. Just before he confronted his twin sister in her chamber, he proposed marrying her to ‘The great Count Malatesta’ (*TDoM* III. 1. 41) as a means of unsettling her; the fact that he uses the same epithet when he refers to the man in this scene suggests that he has been dwelling upon how to cause her considerable distress in his own private battle against her.

While Ferdinand's longing for violent conflict against other men is definitely lacking in the summit with Malateste, Bosola's arrival and identification of Antonio as the Duchess's lover catalyses him into forming a plan of attack against his twin sister. Pescara and Delio both note that Ferdinand shows far more animation than he has done previously: the former states that 'A very salamander lives in's eye / To mock the eager violence of fire' (*TDoM* III. 3. 48-9), while the latter compares his laugh to 'a deadly cannon / That lightens ere it smokes' (*TDoM* III. 3. 53-4). After these ominous signs have been observed, Ferdinand tells the Cardinal that 'I will not be at your ceremony' (*TDoM* III. 3. 68) to see him banish the Duchess and Antonio, but instead arranges to ambush her by using a strategy and language which is better suited to battle. Ferdinand instructs Bosola 'Go, go presently, / Draw me out an hundred and fifty of our horse, / And meet me at the fort-bridge' (*TDoM* III. 3. 74-6). In calling for a disproportionate amount of troops to prevent the Duchess from escaping, Ferdinand completely rejects the potential for violent conflict with anyone but his twin sister, and becomes the self-styled captain of a small army that is fighting against her.

Although it was Ferdinand's inability to elevate his masculine identity through violent conflict which caused him to find fault with the Duchess in the first place, he is aware that he will not bolster his masculinity by embarking on a battle against her. In what seems like a perverse interpretation of Castruccio's earlier advice that he 'should not desire to go to war in person' (*TDoM* I. 1. 90), but would be 'better [to] do it by a deputy' (*TDoM* I. 1. 95), Ferdinand appoints Bosola as such a 'deputy', and torments the Duchess primarily through him. Ferdinand's decision to employ Bosola in such a role is a highly calculated one, for the malcontent has demonstrated his desperation to elevate his masculine identity through whatever

means possible before the play even began. Delio recalls how Bosola undertook the hard physical labour which is associated with working-class masculinity when he recalls how he performed ‘for seven years in the galleys / For a notorious murder’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 65-6) which he carried out on the Cardinal’s orders. When Bosola finds himself ‘slighted’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 30) by the Cardinal for such violent ‘service’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 30), however, he bitterly remarks that ‘He and his brother are like plum-trees that grow crooked over standing pools’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 37), and longs to become ‘one of their flattering panders, so I [c]ould land on their ears like a horse-leech till I were full, and then drop off’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 48-50). Ferdinand already has first-hand knowledge of Bosola’s willingness to perform horrendous acts of violence in exchange for an elevation in his masculinity, because when he consulted him about spying on the Duchess, he was met with the question ‘Whose throat must I cut?’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 240). By promoting Bosola to the role of deputy during his war against the Duchess, Ferdinand therefore makes a clever but manipulative and ironic appointment, for Bosola may believe that his acts of violence against the Duchess will elevate his masculine identity, but Ferdinand knows perfectly well that they will actually have the opposite effect.

Under Ferdinand’s direction, Bosola willingly begins to perform acts of emotional violence against the Duchess which are designed to bring her to a state of suicidal despair. He announces that she and Antonio are ‘happily o’erta’en’ (*TDoM* III. 5. 22), then delivers the devious letters from Ferdinand which the Duchess recognises as threats against Antonio’s life. Bosola leads the ‘troop of armèd men’ (*TDoM* III. 5. 94) who have been recruited to capture the Duchess, and informs her that she will be conveyed back to her palace. While Ferdinand’s plan of ambush proves successful, however, Bosola soon informs the Duke that his strategy of

performing emotional violence by separating the Duchess from Antonio, and confining her to her palace, are not having the distressing effect which he desires. Bosola tells Ferdinand that the Duchess is showing no signs of emotional collapse, for she exhibits 'a behaviour so noble / As gives a majesty to adversity' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 6-7). When Ferdinand seeks to clarify the situation by suggesting that 'Her melancholy seems to be fortified / With a strange disdain' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 11-2), Bosola confirms 'Tis so' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 12), and suggests that all Ferdinand's strategy has done so far is 'Make [...] her too passionately apprehend / Those pleasures she's kept from' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 13-14) in the form of Antonio and her children. The Duke responds to Bosola's words with the bad grace of a military leader who has been thwarted in some key part of the battle: 'Curse upon her!' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 15). Despite his disappointment, however, Ferdinand quickly tells Bosola to instigate his contingency plan: 'I will no longer study in the book / Of another's heart. Inform her what I told you' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 16-17).

Having been thwarted in his initial strategy of separation and containment by the Duchess' thoughts of her husband and her children, Ferdinand then responds by performing an even stronger act of emotional violence against her. In a marked departure from his previous method of acting through Bosola, Ferdinand personally subjects the Duchess to emotional torture in the pitch darkness. Although this decision is explained as the consequence of 'a solemn vow / Never to see you more' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 23-24), there are also two other explanations for Ferdinand's removal of the lights during his visit. By persecuting the Duchess in the darkness, Ferdinand once more reveals his awareness that his behaviour will not elevate his masculine identity, for he is taking steps to avoid being visually associated with her punishment. Secondly, the idea of the darkness, and the Duchess touching a hand

which she cannot see, also recalls the womb which she and Ferdinand once inhabited together, and gestures towards the reason as to why the Duke has chosen to wage war against his twin sister. There is some critical confusion as to whether the hand is supposed to be Ferdinand's or Antonio's, with Sid Ray and Albert H. Tricomi asserting the former, and Brett D. Hirsch arguing for the latter, but both sets of readings are correct to an extent, as a transition between owners takes place.³⁷ Viewed logically, the Duchess would expect the hand 'To which you have vowed much love' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 44) to be Ferdinand's, as he is the person visiting her, and she has received no suggestion that Antonio has been captured or killed. Once Ferdinand has started referring to 'a love-token' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 47), and the possibility that she will be given 'the heart too' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 49), however, the hand seems more likely to be Antonio's. This shift is important, because each potential owner brings different connotations: if the hand is Ferdinand's, it is a reminder of their twinship; if it is Antonio's, it represents their marriage. The movement between owners thus reveals that Ferdinand is punishing the Duchess because she chose to escape from the cold, constraining existence which he wanted her to endure, in favour of a life of pleasure with Antonio.

After Ferdinand has indicated why he is subjecting his twin to the separation and confinement which she has so far endured, he then goes on to increase the level of emotional pressure he places upon her by suggesting that Antonio and her children have become the victims of extreme physical violence. The dead man's hand and the waxworks are designed to rid the Duchess of her coping mechanisms,

³⁷ Ray, p. 134; Albert H. Tricomi, 'The Severed Hand in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 44.2 (2004), 347-58 (p. 355); Brett D. Hirsch, 'Werewolves and Severed Hands: Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and Brome's *The Witches of Lancashire*', *Notes and Queries*, 53.1 (2006), 92-94 (p. 92).

and force her back into an identity of extreme constraint, as the idea that she ‘may wisely cease to grieve / For that which cannot be recovered’ (*TDoM* IV. 1. 59-60) suggests that she should withhold her emotions from this point onwards. As if the Duchess’ declaration that ‘There is not between heaven and earth one wish / I stay for after this’ (*TDoM* IV. 1. 61-2) does not offer indication enough that Ferdinand’s new strategy has helped him to fulfil his aim of causing her to feel a suicidal level of despair, she also begins to express herself through images of constraint and coldness. She tells Bosola that she longs for her brothers to ‘bind me to that lifeless trunk, / And let me freeze to death’ (*TDoM* IV. 1. 68-9), declares that ‘I’ll starve to death’ (*TDoM* IV. 1. 76), and also promises to ‘curse the stars / [...] And those three smiling seasons of the year / Into a Russian chaos’ (*TDoM* IV. 1. 97-99). While the Duchess may have refused to become ‘the figure cut in alabaster’ (*TDoM* I. 1. 444) when Antonio was alive, then, Ferdinand’s emotional violence makes her yearn for such a lifeless, constrained form of identity now that she believes her husband to be dead.

Just as Ferdinand comes to realise that he is winning his war against the Duchess, however, Bosola begins to feel discomfort at the strategy which he is being made to employ. The Duke exults in the suffering of his twin sister, remarking, ‘Excellent; as I would wish; she’s plagued in art’ (*TDoM* IV. 1. 111), but Bosola asks ‘Why do you do this?’ (*TDoM* IV. 1. 116). When he finds Ferdinand’s answer of ‘To bring her to despair’ (*TDoM* IV. 1. 116) unsatisfactory, Bosola begs ‘Faith, end here, / And go no farther in your cruelty’ (*TDoM* IV. 1. 117-18). By referring to Ferdinand’s separating, containing, and deceptive acts of violence as ‘cruelty’, Bosola warns the Duke that he has moved past the stage of reprehending the Duchess, to gratuitously punishing her. He suggests that Ferdinand should now adopt

a more conventional strategy: 'Send her a penitential garment to put on / Next to her delicate skin, and furnish her / With beads and prayer-books' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 119-21). The roughness of the 'penitential garment' against the Duchess' 'delicate skin' would cause her discomfort, while the 'beads and prayer-books' would assault her conscience. Religion, Bosola implies, furnishes Ferdinand with the opportunity to perform further acts of physical and emotional violence against the Duchess without being tainted by the accusation that he is subjecting her to an unnecessary level of suffering.

At the same time that Bosola argues for restraint, however, Ferdinand is desperate to ensure that the Duchess experiences the violent punishment that he feels she deserves for failing to live the constrained, frustrated life that he expected her to. He exclaims 'Damn her! That body of hers, / While that my blood ran pure in't, was more worth / Than that which thou wouldst comfort, called a soul' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 121-23). Ferdinand's privileging of the Duchess' 'body' over her 'soul' is informed by his twin relationship with her, for it prioritises their exteriors over their interiors. When the Duchess behaved as Ferdinand wanted her to and lived a passionless, thwarted existence, he felt that 'my blood ran pure' in her body, or it was full of respect for him; when she chose to embrace a passionate, fulfilled life with Antonio, however, she tainted his blood by disrespecting his orders. Ferdinand has therefore found both of his attempts to elevate his masculine identity defeated, for he could neither participate in warfare when he wanted to, nor control the behaviour of his twin. The Duchess' tainted, weak or imperfect female body thus presents itself as a constant visual reminder of Ferdinand's failure as a man, and he is interested only in destroying it. He rejects Bosola's argument for a religious form of punishment, instead ominously informing him that he 'must' (*TDoM* IV. 1. 135) visit the Duchess

once more in order to carry out the ultimate act of violence which will confirm Ferdinand's victory in his battle with his twin sister.

When the Duchess has been executed, however, Ferdinand does not experience the sense of triumph or the satisfaction which he anticipated he would. He demands that the sight of the Duchess' corpse be hidden from him, ordering 'Cover her face' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 256), and then admits, for the first time in the play, that he once shared the womb with her: 'She and I were twins; / And should I die this instant, I had lived / Her time to a minute' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 259-61). Critics such as Richard McCabe, Susan Wells, and Judith Haber have suggested that Ferdinand is seeking to renegotiate his twin relationship with the Duchess by revealing their closeness of birth, while Daisy Murray has argued that Ferdinand's revelation stresses that *The Duchess of Malfi* is a play about both twins, not just the titular figure.³⁸ While there is undoubtedly some kind of shift in Ferdinand's perception of the Duchess and his position in the play, his revelation actually seems to imply that his twin relationship has ended at this point. Ferdinand states that he and the Duchess 'were twins', not 'are twins'; this use of the past tense combines with his refusal to 'die this instant' in order to indicate that, to him, the twin relationship ceased with the death of the sister who shared his birth. Ferdinand may have thought that he was destroying the reminders of his failed attempts to elevate his masculine identity when

³⁸ Richard McCabe, for example, argues that 'Ferdinand's claim [...] establishes an especially close bond [between Ferdinand and the Duchess] which tends to exclude the Cardinal', while Judith Haber and Susan Wells maintain that the revelation makes Ferdinand seem more isolated because his twin is either now unable to participate in the 'orgasmic union in death' that he desired with her, or is faced with 'an alienated image of himself'. Murray, meanwhile, argues that the shift from Ferdinand to the Duchess helps to explain the curious structure of the play. McCabe, p. 250; Judith Haber, 'The Duchess of Malfi: tragedy and gender', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy*, ed. by Emma Smith and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 236-48 (p. 237); Susan Wells, 'Dominance of the Typical and *The Duchess of Malfi*', in *The Duchess of Malfi: Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. by Dymphna Callaghan (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000) 144-66 (p. 158); Murray, p. 45.

he ordered for the execution of the Duchess, but his words indicate that he also permanently disregarded another key aspect of his identity in the form of being a twin. When he hovers between not wanting to look at the Duchess' corpse, and asking Bosola to 'Let me see her face again' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 264), then, Ferdinand is not only trying to come to terms with the fact of his twin's death, but also to accept that fundamental parts of his identity have been lost forever.

Now that the woman who embodied Ferdinand's thwarted masculine identity and his status as a twin is dead, the Duke finds himself experiencing a crisis of masculinity. He fully understands that his order for Bosola to execute the Duchess was not an admirable one, but tries to suggest that he was 'distracted of my wits' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 271) when he issued it, because she was not an adversary, but 'my dearest friend' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 272). Ferdinand's unconvincing suggestion that he and the Duchess were united by affection, as opposed to blood, reinforces the idea that he is no longer her twin, and this sense of loss is further compounded by Ferdinand's second, equally unconvincing explanation as to why he subjected the Duchess to such horrific violence. His remark 'I had a hope, / Had she continued widow, to have gained / An infinite mass of treasure by her death' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 275-77) completely overlooks the existence of a son and heir from the Duchess' first marriage, and signals that Ferdinand is rapidly losing all sense of who he is. He no longer has the reference point of his twin to remind him of the admired man that he wanted to become, the thwarted man he became, or even the people who are related to him. As Ferdinand loses his human connections, he begins to look to the animal world for inspiration, suggesting that 'The wolf shall find [the Duchess'] grave' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 301), before deciding that 'I'll go hunt the badger by owl-light' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 325). In both of these remarks, Ferdinand aligns himself with the predator rather than the

prey, because he knows that his behaviour has been so horrendous that he will struggle to find another example of its kind among his fellow human beings.

Just as the death of the Duchess instigates a crisis of masculinity for Ferdinand, so too does it perform the same role for Bosola. Ferdinand may have lost his actual twin in the Duchess, but he gains a metaphorical one in the form of Bosola, another man who has carried out unnecessary acts of violence and found his masculine identity plunged into crisis. When the 'reward' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 286) of wealth and status which Bosola expects as recompense for his violent service turns out to be nothing more than 'a pardon' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 287), he comes to realise that he has been labouring under a delusion: 'I stand like one / That long hath ta'en a sweet and golden dream: / I am angry with myself, now that I wake' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 315-17). Bosola goes on to explain that this anger does not only come from his sense of being undervalued by Ferdinand, but also the fall he has taken in his own estimation, for he asks 'What would I do, were this to do again?' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 331), then admits that 'I would not change my peace of conscience / For all the wealth in Europe' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 332-33). In stark contrast to Ferdinand, who responds to his crisis of masculinity by denying all responsibility for the act which occasioned it, Bosola freely acknowledges his errant behaviour, and wishes that he had acted more admirably.

The distinctions between Bosola's and Ferdinand's responses to their self-inflicted crises of masculinity prove instrumental in shaping their behaviour for the rest of the play, for Bosola's remorse encourages him to follow the dictates of his conscience instead of powerful men, while Ferdinand's refusal to take responsibility for his actions sees him retreat into an animalistic form of behaviour. The former character's eagerness for reform is first made evident during the Duchess' brief

revival, when he begs her 'Fair soul' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 334) to 'Return' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 334) from the 'darkness' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 334) that he deliberately consigned it to, 'and lead mine / Out of this sensible hell' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 334), or show him a way to atone for the suffering that he caused her. As soon as she is conscious, he tries to replace his cruel delusions regarding the 'feigned statues' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 342) of the waxwork bodies with a kinder one, in which Antonio is 'reconciled to your brothers' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 343) because 'the Pope hath wrought / The atonement' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 343-44). When the Duchess dies along with any hope that Bosola has of compensating for his terrible behaviour towards her, however, he finds himself afflicted by what he calls a 'manly sorrow' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 353), or tears of sincere regret for what he has done. He states that her body is 'a sight / As direful to my soul as is the sword / Unto a wretch hath slain his father' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 358). In the same way that patricide stands as an abhorrent, aberrant contradiction to the respect which close male relations are expected to display for one another, so too does Bosola's willingness to murder an innocent woman for the sake of money and status go against what it means to be a man. Bosola has finally learnt that a clear conscience endows a man with more honour than an unnecessary act of violence does, whatever the rewards, and searches for a way to assuage some of the guilt which he feels. He tells the Duchess that 'I'll bear thee hence, / And execute thy last will' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 361-62) regarding her body, irrespective of what 'the cruel tyrant' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 364) Ferdinand thinks of such an action. Bosola then elects to 'post to Milan / Where somewhat I will speedily enact / Worth my dejection' (*TDoM* IV. 2. 366-67). By disregarding any wishes which Ferdinand may have had regarding the treatment of the Duchess' body, and deciding of his own accord to head to Milan, where Antonio

is, Bosola takes steps towards rebuilding his shattered masculinity into a more admirable form.

In contrast to Bosola's attempt to address his crisis of masculinity by trying to act in a more considerate, humane fashion, Ferdinand reacts by assuming the animalistic behaviour of the lycanthrope. Brett D. Hirsch and Albert H. Tricomi have discussed Ferdinand's descent into lycanthropy in detail, and have agreed that it has its basis in his relationship with the Duchess. Hirsch argues that the werewolf 'engages in a number of anxieties about identity', but believes that Ferdinand's case is rooted in a combination of his melancholy and discomfort at the Duchess' sexuality, while Tricomi suggests that the Duke's lycanthropy demonstrates his 'alienation' from his sister.³⁹ Hirsch's comment regarding identity and Tricomi's discussion of Ferdinand's alienation are both compelling, but they can be extended further in relation to my argument that Ferdinand has, by this point, alienated himself from his identities as a man and a twin. By engaging in lycanthropy, the Duke acknowledges that he has transgressed the boundaries of human behaviour through an animal which has a rich connection to twins. Romulus and Remus were, of course, suckled by a she-wolf, but some versions of the Apollo and Artemis myth also suggest that their mother Leto was accompanied by wolves as she prepared to give birth to them, and there were several ancient Greek cults of Apollo as a wolf-god.⁴⁰ In addition to these classical links between twins and wolves, Ferdinand also makes a reference to the Biblical twins Jacob and Esau when he self-identifies as this animal. The Doctor recalls how Ferdinand 'Said he was a wolf, only the difference /

³⁹ Brett D. Hirsch, 'An Italian Werewolf in London: Lycanthropy and *The Duchess of Malfi*', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 11.2 (2005) <<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/11-2/hirswere.htm>> [accessed 2 September 2014] (para 28 of 43); Tricomi, p. 355.

⁴⁰ See Daniel E. Gershenson, *Apollo the Wolf-god* (Michigan: Institute for the Study of Man, 1992), pp. 113-14.

Was a wolf's skin was hairy on the outside, / His on the inside' (*TDoM* V. 2. 16-18). Esau was a notoriously hirsute man, and when Jacob wanted to claim the birthright which had been transferred to him, he dressed in some hairy animal skins before presenting himself to his ailing father Isaac. Isaac's sight was deteriorating, so when he ran his hands over Jacob's disguised, hairy body, he believed that he was giving his blessing to the eldest twin when in fact he was blessing the younger one. It was therefore not only a wolf's skin which could be 'hairy on the outside', but also a twin's; Ferdinand's reference to his *inner* hairiness, then, suggests that he has destroyed all of the outer evidence of his identity as a twin by murdering the Duchess, and is left with only the inner torment of the knowledge that he once shared the womb with her. Ferdinand desperately instructed those who found him in the graveyard to 'take their swords, / Rip up his flesh and try' (*TDoM* V. 2. 18-19) to see his hairy interiors in an acknowledgement of the violence which destroyed his identity as a twin, and is his only hope of relief from the agonising guilt which he is experiencing.

If Ferdinand hopes to resolve his crisis of masculinity by becoming the victim of someone else's violence, then Bosola aims for the very opposite. When the Cardinal tells Bosola that 'Antonio lurks here in Milan' (*TDoM* V. 2. 120) and orders him to 'Inquire him out, and kill him' (*TDoM* V. 2. 121), he receives an equivocal reply in 'I would see that wretched thing, Antonio, / Above all sights i'th'world' (*TDoM* V. 2. 140-41). Bosola pretends that he is willing to murder Antonio, but when he is alone, he admits that his real aim is to 'see thee out, and all my care shall be / To put thee into safety' (*TDoM* V. 2. 334-35). He goes on to hint that he is formulating a new plan of action in response to his damaged masculine identity when he states that 'It may be / I'll join with [Antonio] in a most just

revenge' (*TDoM* V. 2. 337-38), and imagines himself wielding 'the sword of justice' (*TDoM* V. 2. 340) against Ferdinand and the Cardinal. Bosola knows that he sent his masculinity spiralling into crisis by mindlessly committing needless acts of violence against the Duchess, but suggests that he can rebuild it by becoming her avenger. He exclaims, 'O penitence, let me truly taste thy cup, / That throws men down, only to raise them up' (*TDoM* V. 2. 343-44) in a rhyming couplet which hints at the sense of wholeness that he will feel if he is able to kill the Cardinal and Ferdinand.

Bosola's efforts to atone for the behaviour which led to his crisis of masculinity, and Ferdinand's attempts to retreat from it, reach their climax in the final scene of the tragedy. Having vowed to 'be mine own example' (*TDoM* V. 4. 81) and continue to follow his conscience after his accidental murder of Antonio, Bosola first targets the Cardinal. He recalls how 'when thou killed'st thy sister, / Thou took'st from Justice her most equal balance, / And left her naught but her sword' (*TDoM* V. 5. 39-41), which is the very weapon that he is now brandishing. Bosola appropriates this destructive weapon, turns it into a force for good, and fashions himself into the tragic lovers' moral avenger. He also rejects his earlier blind admiration of rank when he tells the Cardinal that 'Now it seems thy greatness was only outward' (*TDoM* V. 5. 42). At the same time that Bosola uses violence to shape himself into the sort of man that he wants to become, however, Ferdinand employs it in a delusional parody of the military man that he was never allowed to be. He enters the stage with the cry 'Th'alarum! Give me a fresh horse: / Rally the vanguard, or the day is lost' (*TDoM* V. 5. 47-8), which would not be dissimilar to the sort of order that a captain would give during battle. Ferdinand then moves his attention to single combat, first threatening the Cardinal to 'Yield, yield!' (*TDoM* V. 5. 49), then stabbing his elder sibling and Bosola because 'My brother fight[s] upon

the adverse party' (*TDoM* V. 5. 52). Bosola does not lament his fatal injuries, but rather welcomes them as evidence that his transformation from mindless mercenary to noble avenger is complete: 'Now my revenge is perfect / [...] The last part of my life hath done me best service' (*TDoM* V. 5. 62-4).

It is not only the use of violence which indicates the existence of clear distinctions between the masculinities of Ferdinand and Bosola, but also the final words which they utter. In a manner that is consistent with his retreat from reality, Ferdinand exclaims that it is 'My sister! O my sister!' (*TDoM* V. 5. 70) who is the 'cause' (*TDoM* V. 5. 70) of the destruction, for 'Whether we fall by ambition, blood, or lust, / Like diamonds, we are cut with our own dust' (*TDoM* V. 5. 71-2). He and the Duchess were 'Like diamonds' in both a metaphorical and a visual sense on account of their twin relationship, so when she 'cut' him by refusing to live the cold, frustrated life that he wanted her to, he had to 'cut' back in retaliation. Ferdinand refuses to accept that it was his own sense of thwarted masculine identity which motivated him to behave badly, so he meets his death without overcoming his crisis of masculinity in a manner which starkly contrasts to Bosola's triumphant end. When Pescara, Malatesta, Roderigo, and Grisolan enter the stage, Bosola announces that he has carried out 'Revenge' (*TDoM* V. 5. 80) for four victims: the Duchess, Antonio, Julia, 'and lastly, for myself' (*TDoM* V. 5. 83). He acknowledges his earlier contemptible behaviour, but argues that it was not a true reflection of his real 'good nature' (*TDoM* V. 5. 85), which he believes that he has demonstrated by murdering Ferdinand and the Cardinal. Bosola declares that it is 'no harm in me to die / In so good a quarrel' (*TDoM* V. 5. 98-9) because he has appeased his conscience, and departs with advice to value fairness and goodness above anything else: 'Let worthy minds ne'er stagger in distrust / To suffer death, or shame for what is just' (*TDoM* V.

5. 102-03). Bosola's final rejection of his mercenary outlook, and embracement of a much more moral one, sees him assume a new, more valuable form of masculine identity in the instant before he dies.

The twin characters of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* therefore do not only illuminate the connection between violence and masculinity, but also highlight the issues which this link causes. Ferdinand's frustration at his inability to perform violence against other men in the form of military conflict causes him to subject his twin sister to horrendous acts of emotional and physical violence when she refuses to live her life in the highly constrained manner that he orders her to. Bosola's desire to elevate his masculinity, meanwhile, leads him to perform the violent acts which he knows will lead to the Duchess' death, but does not realise will also plunge his masculine identity, along with Ferdinand's, into crisis. Once Ferdinand's real twin has died, these two men become metaphorical twins through their violent past and subsequent crises of masculinity, but they respond to the situation very differently. While Ferdinand retreats into an animalistic, lycanthropic form of behaviour as a means of denying the significant role he played in his twin sister's murder, Bosola sees the error of his ways and fashions himself into the Duchess' moral avenger. Bosola dies with his masculinity restored – in his eyes, at least – through the violence he has committed against the Cardinal and Ferdinand, who passes away with his masculine identity still in crisis. Just as Webster's tragedy makes the grim acknowledgement that the link between violence and masculinity is a volatile, uncontrollable one, with one violent act leading to many others, so too does Ford's *The Broken Heart* make the same, sobering argument.

iii. 'What Nothings I Have Done': Ithocles's Turn Away from Violence

Whereas the violence which Ferdinand commits against the sister who shared his birth builds to a crescendo during the third and fourth acts of *The Duchess of Malfi*, Ithocles's violent treatment of his twin sister Penthea occurs before *The Broken Heart* even begins. By forcing Penthea to marry the jealous and domineering Bassanes instead of the man she was contracted to in Orgilus, Ithocles did not only contradict the wishes of his father and twin sister, but also the expectations which his Spartan society has regarding how two people who shared the same birth ought to behave. Critics have identified the presence of a strict code of behaviour in Ford's tragedy; Michael Neill, for example, declares that there is a 'pervasive split between inward desire and outward demeanour', with the former subordinated to the latter.⁴¹ Rowland Wymer writes in a similar vein when he argues that 'Ford's play revolves around [...] extreme tragic passions and the conscious attempt to suppress them'.⁴² Neill and Wymer rightly both locate this code of behaviour in the Spartan setting of the play, but I would like to suggest that the subordination of emotions to appearance also occurs in order to maintain the idea that twins should always act in a particular way because they were born at the same time. As will now become clear, Ford's characters maintain that those who shared the same birth should always exist in a state of unity.

As King of Sparta for most of the play, and the figure who occupies that position at its end, Amyclas and Nearchus are both wielders of hegemonic masculinity. It is notable, then, that each of these characters employs the word

⁴¹ Neill, p. 364.

⁴² Rowland Wymer, *Webster and Ford* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1995) p. 103; see also Garwood, p. 115; Marion Lomax, ed., 'Introduction', in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and Other Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), vii-xxiv (p. xiii).

‘twins’ in order to achieve the same meaning. Amyclas calls Calantha and Ithocles ‘sweet twins of my life’s solace’ (*TBH* IV. 3. 50), whilst Nearchus assures the princess that ‘my tongue and heart are twins’ (*TBH* III. 3. 365). In both of these instances, the word which describes two people who were born at the same time is used in order to suggest that two things are exactly the same. Amyclas and Nearchus both seek to stress the purity of their affections through the connotations of unity and togetherness that their uses of the word ‘twin’ create, and the characters whom they address also accept the meanings which they employ, which suggests a broader acceptance of the idea that twins should be the same. As Amyclas and Nearchus offered no acknowledgement that twins can be anything other than united, any behaviour which does not suggest that sentiment of togetherness falls outside the remit of twinship. By defining the word ‘twin’ so rigidly, Amyclas and Nearchus elevate those who identify as such to a point of absolute unity between interior thoughts and exterior similarity, and expect Penthea and Ithocles to behave in a way which upholds this idea.

If Ithocles had been mindful of the societal expectation that twins would act in a unified manner, then he should have respected Penthea’s love for Orgilus and allowed her to marry her contracted partner. As Orgilus bitterly recalls, however, Ithocles had other priorities:

Orgilus: For Ithocles her brother, proud of youth,
And prouder in his power, nourished closely
The memory of former discontents.
To glory in revenge, by cunning partly,
Partly by threats, ’a woos at once, and forces

His virtuous sister to admit a marriage

With Bassanes, a nobleman, in honour

And riches, I confess, beyond my fortunes.

(*TBH* I. 1. 39-46).⁴³

When Ithocles found himself in charge of his father's estate, and able to exert control over his twin sister, he was more interested in elevating his masculine identity through the use of violence than ensuring that he conformed to societal expectations surrounding the behaviour of twins. Ithocles was so keen to impress his authority upon Orgilus as recompense for 'former discontents' that he employed 'threats' of physical violence to make Penthea marry Bassanes, and thereby subjected her to horrendous emotional and sexual violence. Since Bassanes is 'a nobleman, in honour / And riches [...] far beyond [Orgilus's] fortunes', Ithocles also committed these violent acts in order to elevate the social standing of his masculinity, for becoming related by marriage to such a respected man as Bassanes would also reflect very favourably upon him. In exchange for a more authoritative, impressive, and respected form of masculinity, then, Ithocles happily committed several types of violence against Penthea without any regard for her wellbeing, and refused to exhibit the sort of behaviour that was expected of a twin.

After such a deeply distressing account of Ithocles's earlier behaviour and his worldly outlook, however, the audience are issued with a second, much more positive and recent account of his behaviour, albeit one which neglects to acknowledge his close relation to Penthea. Amyclas, the King of Sparta, announces

⁴³ All quotations are taken from John Ford, *The Broken Heart*, in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and Other Plays*, ed. by Marion Lomax (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, repr. 2008), 81-163.

that ‘Death-braving Ithocles, brings to our gates / Triumphs and peace upon his conquering sword’ (*TBH* I. 2. 11-12). Prophilus, meanwhile, marvels at the humility which Ithocles is showing in response to the praise which is being heaped upon him from all quarters:

Prophilus: with what moderation,

Calmness of nature, measure, bounds and limits

Of thankfulness and joy, 'a doth digest

Such amplitude of his success as would

In others, moulded of a spirit less clear,

Advance 'em to comparison with heaven.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \vdots \\ \vdots \\ \vdots \end{bmatrix}$$

He in this firmament of honour stands

Like a star fixed, not moved with any thunder

Of popular applause, or sudden lightning

Of self-opinion. He hath served his country,

And thinks 'twas but his duty.

(*TBH* I. 2. 35-47).

In contrast to the petty, ambitious young man who was content to ignore societal dictates regarding the behaviour of twins by violently condemning Penthea to a lifetime of misery and abuse, the Ithocles of Prophilus's description has brought glory to Sparta through his physical prowess. This shift in the direction of Ithocles's violence, which has moved from his twin sister to groups of other men, is shown to

have had a positive impact upon the young man's personality, for he has become noble in character and unassuming. He meets the 'amplitude of his success' with 'thankfulness and joy' rather than smugness, and has not become arrogant in response to 'any thunder / Of popular applause'. Prophilus's Ithocles is not interested in using violence in order to stress his superiority over other men, but rather to fulfil his patriotic 'duty' to the land of his birth.

The contrasting descriptions of Ithocles which appear in the first two scenes of *The Broken Heart* help to set up a conflict between two different sides of the character which runs throughout Ford's tragedy. The abusive, arrogant young man who prioritises his own masculine identity over the expectations of Spartan society is a far cry from the dutiful, modest figure who is more interested in protecting his country than in bolstering his own masculinity. Critics have sought to establish exactly why this character is first presented as a thoughtless, worldly figure who inflicts great suffering upon his twin sister, but then becomes the thoughtful, humble man who regrets how he has behaved. The overwhelming tendency is to suggest that when Ithocles falls in love with Calantha, he realises how badly he has behaved. Ronard Huebert, for example, argues that Ithocles possesses 'overpowering social and political ambition', which makes him become 'the kind of man who can sacrifice all personal connections to his professional interests'.⁴⁴ When he becomes attracted to Calantha, however, Huebert declares that Ithocles 'realises at last how deadening such honour can be'.⁴⁵ George F. Sensabaugh also attributes Ithocles' earlier behaviour to 'ambition', and maintains that 'had he been wiser [about the nature of

⁴⁴ Ronald Huebert, "'An Artificial Way to Grieve": The Forsaken Woman in Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and Ford', *ELH*, 44.4 (1977), 601-21 (p. 614; p. 617).

⁴⁵ Huebert, p. 617.

love] he would not have bestowed Penthea on the jealous Bassanes'.⁴⁶ Arthur L. and M. K. Kistner echo the views of Huebert and Sensabaugh when they comment that 'Having finally experienced love himself, [Ithocles] realises how he has hurt [Penthea and Orgilus] by refusing to recognise their betrothal'.⁴⁷ These critics therefore state that Calantha is solely responsible for the transformation of Ithocles, but such arguments are somewhat simplistic. While Calantha does exert a significant impact upon Ithocles's emotional development and help him to realise the error of his ways, much of his movement from ruthlessness and disregard for his twin relationship to thoughtfulness and concern for Penthea occurs earlier than that, between the descriptions of the first two scenes. The Ithocles of the first scene was younger and had a somewhat cloistered existence, but the Ithocles of the second scene is older and had gained a great deal of life experience by serving in a military campaign. It is therefore not only Calantha who reforms Ithocles, but also his participation in battle with, and against, other men.

When Ithocles first appears onstage, the scale of his transformation and the violence which has enabled it both become apparent. He refuses to exult in, or even accept, the adulation which is being bestowed upon him when he tells his Spartan admirers 'Let me blush, / Acknowledging how poorly I have served, / What nothings I have done' (*TBH* I. 2. 69-71), and explains that he has merely performed 'A debt of service' (*TBH* I. 2. 77) to Sparta 'out of gratitude for [my] life' (*TBH* I. 2. 84). He also instructs his noble audience to remember that he was not the only man to contribute to the success of the campaign:

⁴⁶ George F. Sensabaugh, 'John Ford Revisited', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 4.2 (1964), 195-216 (p. 197; p. 199).

⁴⁷ Arthur L. Kistner and M. K. Kistner, 'The Dramatic Functions of Love in the Tragedies of John Ford', *Studies in Philology*, 70.1 (1973), 62-76 (p. 74).

Ithocles: each common soldier's blood

Drops down as current coin in that hard purchase

As his whose much more delicate condition

Hath sucked the milk of ease.

(*TBH* I. 2. 84-87).

Ithocles is very obviously making a strong argument for the need to value the contributions of all men equally, but he is also issuing an acknowledgement that his participation in battle has given him a sense of perspective about his masculine identity. By coming into contact with the 'common' men, he has been made to realise that all which separates one class of males from another is an accident of birth, for the less privileged men are just as willing to shed their blood and risk their lives for their land as as their more privileged counterparts are. While Ithocles has been so desperate to assert his superiority over the men of Sparta that he committed atrocious acts of violence against the twin with whom he was supposed to unite, his participation in military conflict has taught him that he already wielded an elevated form of masculine identity on account of his birth. Having been forced to re-evaluate the way that he understood his own masculinity, Ithocles now prefers to ensure that other men receive the respect that they deserve, irrespective of whatever class they inhabit. After praising the sacrifices made by the men of the less privileged classes, he highlights the achievements of the noble Prophilus, calling him 'A gentleman [...] / Of much desert' (*TBH* I. 2. 93-4), and notes that the courtiers 'Lemophil and Groneas were not missing / To wish their country's peace' (*TBH* I. 2. 96-7).

Yet almost as soon as Ford suggests that Ithocles has been reformed through his experience in battle, the playwright demonstrates that Ithocles's earlier violent

behaviour towards Penthea has placed her into a situation which cannot be similarly changed for the good. Her forced marriage to Bassanes is immediately shown to be a constraining one through his order 'I'll have that window near the street dammed up' (*TBH* II. 1. 1), and the emotional impact of Penthea's matrimonial entrapment is made evident when Grausis notes that 'She is so oversad' (*TBH* II. 1. 74). For all of Penthea's distress at the reality of living with a husband whom she does not love, she nevertheless indicates that her low spirits have been caused by her twin. When Bassanes tells her that 'Thy brother is returned, sweet, safe, and honoured / With a triumphal victory. Thou shalt visit him' (*TBH* II. 1. 75-76), Penthea responds with utter indifference: 'Alas, my lord, this language to your handmaid / Sounds as would music to the deaf' (*TBH* II. 1. 91-2). Penthea's lack of reaction to the news of Ithocles's celebrated return signals that the acts of violence which he committed against her have had a profound impact upon the way that she feels about her twin. In accordance with Spartan expectations surrounding the way that two people who shared the same birth should behave, Penthea ought to be exulting in Ithocles's success; her inability to do so demonstrates that his violence has affected her to such an extent that she no longer feels that he deserves to be treated as though he is her twin. Penthea clearly implies that she will visit her brother out of duty to her husband rather than affection for her sibling when she tells Bassanes that 'Whither you please, I must attend' (*TBH* II. 1. 108). Her sadness, her refusal to rejoice at Ithocles's achievements, and her personal reluctance to visit him all combine to introduce a mode of thought which becomes increasingly pronounced as Ford's tragedy progresses: Ithocles may have brought honour on himself by participating in violence against other men, but he still remains tainted with the dishonour of the violence that he performed upon his twin sister.

This notion that Ithocles's transformation is not an entirely satisfactory one is also raised by Orgilus's father Crotolon. Ithocles tells Crotolon that allowing Prophilus to marry his daughter Euphrania will 'knit an union so devout, so hearty, / Between your loves to me, and mine to yours' (*TBH* II. 2. 31-2) because he is so attached to Prophilus that he feels 'As if mine own blood had an interest in it' (*TBH* II. 2. 33). In response, Crotolon rebukes the young man for not always being so eager to ensure the happiness of someone close to him. He remarks:

Crotolon: Had this sincerity been real once,

My Orgilus had not been now unwived,

Nor your lost sister buried in a bride-bed.

(*TBH* II. 2. 36-8).

Crotolon reminds Ithocles of the violence that he inflicted upon Orgilus and Penthea by refusing to allow them to marry, and stresses the negative impact that it has had upon them. Ithocles may have elevated his own masculinity by forcing Penthea to marry Bassanes, but Crotolon informs him that it came at the cost of Orgilus's masculine identity and Penthea's happiness. As an 'unwived' man who is neither a bachelor, a husband, nor a widower, Orgilus has been forced into an unprecedented form of masculinity; Penthea, meanwhile, has been 'buried in a bride-bed' or sentenced to a living death of marriage to Bassanes. Ithocles has placed the thwarted lovers into liminal states which lie between the stages of happy singledom and contented matrimony, life and death, and as if these consequences were not grim enough, Crotolon also suggests that Ithocles has destroyed his twin relationship too. Crotolon refers to Penthea as Ithocles's 'lost sister', which distances her from him at two removes, for as well as being 'lost' to him, she is now a sibling instead of a twin.

Since Ithocles did not behave in the unified manner that the Spartan society expects of twins, Crotolon implies that he forfeited his claim to such a close relationship with Penthea and so placed an indelible stain upon his masculine identity.

While Armestes responds defensively to Crotolon's words, proclaiming him 'bold and bitter' (*TBH* II. 2. 41) for daring to speak to the returning war hero in such a manner, Ithocles tries very hard to emphasise that he is now a different man entirely. He dismisses the idea that Crotolon has spoken out of turn by telling Armestes 'No reprehensions, uncle; I deserve 'em' (*TBH* II. 2. 43), and then proceeds to argue that his behaviour towards Orgilus and Penthea was the error of a mere 'boy-in-years' (*TBH* II. 2. 49). He suggests that he was subject to 'unsteady youth, a giddy brain, [and] / Green indiscretion' (*TBH* II. 2. 45-6) which all distorted his judgement and made him unable to appreciate that marriage was not solely a vehicle for the acquisition of status or money. Since he committed this 'capital fault' (*TBH* II. 2. 50), however, Ithocles has grown to understand the 'secrets of commanding love' (*TBH* II. 2. 51), or the emotional sway which it exerts over lovers. Ithocles states that he has observed 'the extremities (in others)' (*TBH* II. 2. 52), or the emotional distress of lovers, and so gained a more mature understanding of love and marriage, though later events suggest that he has actually acquired such knowledge first-hand by falling in love with Calantha. Irrespective of the real reason behind this sudden change, Ithocles argues that he left Sparta as a deluded boy but has returned as a wise man who would never again repeat the sort of behaviour which he displayed towards Orgilus and Penthea. In a further sign of his repentant recognition of his past actions, Ithocles also promises to 'redeem those wrongs with any service / [Crotolon's] satisfaction can require for current' (*TBH* II. 2. 54-55). Perhaps because he wants to prevent Ithocles's earlier behaviour from resurfacing in

the minds of those who were impressed by his recent deeds, his uncle Armostes firmly decides that 'Thy acknowledgement is satisfaction' (*TBH* II. 2. 56), which leads Crotolon to meekly state that 'I'm conquered' (*TBH* II. 2. 57).

While Ithocles may have successfully deflected Crotolon's suggestion that his military exploits do not atone for his treatment of Orgilus and Penthea, the first meeting between the twins very firmly reinforces the idea that Ithocles's masculine identity has been permanently tainted by his earliest acts of violence. There is no trace of the togetherness that the Spartan society expects twins to display, for their address is formal and distanced, with Penthea calling Ithocles 'brother' (*TBH* II. 2. 75; 108), and Ithocles using the word 'Sister' (*TBH* II. 2. 65). When Ithocles asks the awkward-sounding question 'How does Penthea now?' (*TBH* II. 2. 74), she rebuffs him with the answer 'You best know, brother, / From whom my health and comforts are derived' (*TBH* II. 2. 75-76). Penthea's refusal to express any joy at seeing her twin brother, or to congratulate him upon his military endeavours, signals that Ithocles remains unchanged in her eyes. Although he might have been able to make other members of the Spartan society value his masculinity more by performing acts of violence against other men, Penthea cannot forget the violence which he first committed against her. Ithocles seems to understand that his recent exploits have not altered his twin's negative impression of him, for he has to ask Penthea to 'Let me' (*TBH* II. 2. 108) speak to her 'alone within the palace grove' (*TBH* II. 2. 109), instead of assuming that she would want him to do so. In a further gesture towards their disunited state, Ithocles asks Prophilus to 'Conduct [Penthea] thither' (*TBH* II. 2. 111), as if he is afraid that she will not go to the appointed place of her own accord. The twins who once shared the same womb for months now require another person in order to ensure that they occupy the same place for a short period of time.

When Penthea and Ithocles do meet alone, the deep fractures in their relationship become even more apparent. Lisa Hopkins and Michael Neill have both commented upon how the staging of this scene, and particularly the chair upon which the twins sit, reflects troubled aspects of their relationship.⁴⁸ Their arguments regarding staging are so compelling that there is little to add to them, but I would like to argue that the twins' difficulties are not only understood through props, but also by Penthea and Ithocles themselves. Perhaps because he is aware that his masculine identity is otherwise spotless, Ithocles is particularly discomfited by the fact that he and his sister do not correspond to the idealised concept of twinship which their society expects. He recalls how 'We had one father, in one womb took life, / Were brought up twins together, yet have lived / At distance like two strangers' (*TBH* III. 2. 34-36). Through the repetition of 'one father' and 'one womb', Ithocles suggests that he and Penthea once lived in youthful unity with each other. When they exhibited the togetherness expected of them, Ithocles felt that they were worthy of the term 'twins'; now that they are disconnected from each other, however, he feels that they are more suited to the title of 'strangers'. As with Amyclas and Nearchus, any behaviour that does not suggest unity is considered to be the hallmark of an identity 'other' than that of twins. Indeed, Ithocles is so unsettled by the fact that they do not befit the concept of twinship that he longs to have died at birth: 'I could wish / That the first pillow whereon I was cradled / Had proved to me a grave' (*TBH* III. 2. 36-38). Had he died as an infant, he could have died as

⁴⁸ Hopkins argues that the chair means that 'the conversation is not a naturalistic one between two people facing each other', whilst Neill sees it as a symbol of 'the situation which imprisons them [...] blood intimacy [...] and deep emotional alienation'. Lisa Hopkins, *John Ford's Political Theatre* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 166; Michael Neill, 'Ford's Unbroken Art: The Moral Design of *The Broken Heart*', *The Modern Language Review*, 75.2 (1980), 249-68 (p. 251).

Pentheia's twin, a fate which he finds preferable to living to become so disconnected from her that he can no longer identify himself as such.

Pentheia does not deny the distance between herself and Ithocles, but emphasises it and explains that it exists because of the violence which he committed against her. She calls Ithocles ‘an unnatural brother’ (*TBH* III. 2. 52) for his behaviour, then seems to reject any claim to closeness with him, for when he remarks ‘Thou dost belie thy friend’ (*TBH* III. 2. 72), she replies ‘I do not, Ithocles’ (*TBH* III. 2. 72). Penthea refuses to call Ithocles her ‘friend’ after the violent ordeals which he has forced her to endure, and instead speaks his name for the first time in the play. Since the name ‘Ithocles’ is glossed to mean ‘honour of loveliness’, Penthea’s first use of it pointedly emphasises the gap between the definition and the man himself. She goes on to argue that if Ithocles truly wants to reconcile with her, he must subject her to further, physical violence:

Penthea: Pray kill me;

Rid me from living with a jealous husband.

Then we will join in friendship, be again

Brother and sister.

(*TBH* III. 2. 64-67).

Having been subjected to his horrendous emotional and sexual violence, Penthea maintains that Ithocles would be performing an act of kindness by killing her. She goes on to inform her brother that as well as breaking her heart by forcing her to marry Bassanes, he has also shattered her sense of honour, for ‘she that’s wife to Orgilus, and lives / In known adultery with Bassanes / Is at the best a whore’ (*TBH*

III. 2. 73-75). Ithocles may have bolstered his masculinity through the marriage, then, but he also irrevocably sullied Penthea's femininity.

While Ithocles accepts that he has caused his twin sister horrendous suffering, he nevertheless attempts to repair their relationship and erase the taint upon his masculinity through other means than violence. He suggests that there still remains an affinity between Penthea's 'lover-blessed heart' (*TBH* III. 2. 44) and his own, 'For which mine's now a-breaking' (*TBH* III. 2. 45), and tries to reawaken any concern for him which she once had. Ithocles' correlation of his own remorse with Penthea's violation and despair is not wholly convincing, and as the scene progresses it becomes apparent that he actually empathises with Penthea because it seems unlikely that he will ever be able to marry the person that he loves. While Penthea has no way of knowing for certain that Ithocles is in love with Calantha at this point, she nevertheless rejects the idea that his heart has felt even a modicum of her distress:

Pentheia: Not yet, heaven,

I do beseech thee. First let some wild fires

Scorch, not consume it; may the heat be cherished

With desires infinite, but hopes impossible.

(*TBH* III. 2. 45-48)

Until Ithocles has experienced a hellish combination of desire and denial, Penthea suggests that she cannot begin to care for him, as he is nothing like her. If Ithocles will refuse to carry out the ultimate act of physical violence against her, then he must be willing to become a victim of almost unbearable emotional violence if they are to

be transformed back into the united twins that Spartan society expects them to be, and he is to purify his masculine identity.

As if she is trying to establish how serious Ithocles is about reuniting with her, Penthea does everything that she can to give him a taste of the sort of suffering which he would have to endure before he could truly understand, repent, and be cleansed of his actions. She tells him:

Penthea: Suppose you were contracted to her, would it not

Split even your very soul to see her father

Snatch her out of your arms against her will,

And force her on the Prince of Argos?

(*TBH* III. 2. 106-09).

Penthea challenges Ithocles to imagine the torturous prospect that she outlines, and to prove that his heart resembles hers by allowing himself to realise the anguish he would feel if such an event actually occurred. While Ithocles proves willing to accept the task which his twin sister has set for him by imagining being thwarted in his attempt to marry Calantha, he also expresses frustration at the idea that his earlier behaviour may never come to be excused: 'Trouble not / The fountains of my eyes with thine own story; / I sweat in blood for 't' (*TBH* III. 2. 109-11). The idea of sweating blood was a particularly significant one for Ford, who also published a long poetic work entitled *Christ's Bloodie Sweat* (1613) in which the speaker dwells upon Christ's sacrifice and yearns for forgiveness for his youthful sins. The reprisal of such an image in *The Broken Heart* introduces the idea which will become much more pronounced as *The Broken Heart* progresses: Ithocles's behaviour was so terrible that he plunged his masculinity into crisis in the eyes of his victims, and

must offer some kind of sacrifice before he can truly overcome it. In the Hellenistic world of Sparta, Ithocles's salvation cannot yet come through the wounds of Christ; instead, it must occur through horrific damage to his own body.

Although Penthea may suggest that Ithocles has been forgiven for his past transgressions when she declares that 'We are reconciled' (*TBH* III. 2. 111), then, there is evidence to suggest that he has not been completely exonerated. Ira Clark and Dorothy M. Farr have both suggested that the twins return to feelings of pure love and amiability at this point, but I would argue that there are more complex and uneasy emotions at play in their apparent reconciliation.⁴⁹ Penthea explains how 'Alas, sir, being children, but two branches / Of one stock, 'tis not fit we should divide' (*TBH* III. 2. 112-13). The wording here is particularly interesting, because Penthea refers to the fact that she and Ithocles are twins without actually using that phrase. The reference to 'two branches of one stock' sounds highly formal, and seems to link back to the way in which their shared birth and physical likeness suggest their characteristic similarity. Then there is the awareness of other people which emerges through 'Tis not fit we should divide'. Taken together, these phrases suggest that Penthea feels that they must present an impression of unity because other people expect it of them. Her telling failure to use the word 'twin' indicates her belief that Ithocles is still unworthy of such a close connection to her, but it may be possible to use their shared birth and similarity of appearance in order to meet societal expectations surrounding how they ought to behave. To the outside world, it

⁴⁹ Ira Clark, *Massinger, Ford, Shirley, and Brome: Professional Playwrights* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992), pp. 100-04; Dorothy M. Farr, *John Ford and the Caroline Theatre* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1979), p. 90.

may seem as though Ithocles's masculinity is now without blemish, but to Penthea, it still remains in a state of crisis.

Perhaps because Ithocles interprets Penthea's words as confirmation that their twin relationship has been restored and his masculine identity has been cleansed of the taint of his earlier violence, he is very keen to demonstrate his unity with his twin and defend himself from any slights against his masculinity. When Bassanes accuses the twins of incest, Ithocles reacts so furiously, calling his brother-in-law a 'devil' (*TBH* III. 2. 151) and 'Monster!' (*TBH* III. 2. 153), that Penthea warns him not to do anything rash which may suggest their guilt: 'By our bloods, / Will you quite both undo us, brother?' (*TBH* III. 2. 153-54). It is Penthea who calmly has to make Bassanes see the error in his judgement, for Ithocles is too incensed at being associated with a deviant form of masculinity to reply rationally. When he does recover, however, he issues Bassanes with a double punishment:

Ithocles: When you shall show good proof that manly wisdom,

Not overswayed by passion or opinion,

Knows how to lead your judgement, then this lady,

Your wife, my sister, shall return in safety

Home, to be guided by you. But till first

I can out of clear evidence approve it,

She shall be my care.

(*TBH* III. 2. 182-88).

As well as doling out the obvious penalty of depriving Bassanes of the company of his wife, Ithocles also chastises him by placing him outside the bounds of hegemonic

masculinity. Ithocles argues that Bassanes is lacking in ‘manly wisdom’, or the logical thought process which will allow him to make sensible decisions, and thereby suggests that it Bassanes who is in possession of a deviant form of masculine identity. In a deliberate reworking of the relationship which existed between the two men before Ithocles went to Sparta, Penthea’s twin brother no longer looks to Bassanes to endow his masculinity with value, but rather reveals that he will be the one who elevates or devalues the older man’s masculine identity. This alteration in the relationship between Ithocles and Bassanes is also complemented by Ithocles’s interest in Penthea’s emotional welfare. When he announces that ‘She shall be my care’, it is clear that he is not referring only to her material needs, but also her emotional ones, and so he is trying to make amends for his earlier violent disregard for her wellbeing. By punishing Bassanes and prioritising Penthea’s safety and comfort, Ithocles offers a taste of how his post-war masculinity is constituted, and indicates that it will feature a strong commitment to the unified behaviour which Spartan society expects of twins.

While Ithocles makes his desire to unite with his twin very evident, however, Penthea’s attitude is more nuanced. There are two main critical viewpoints regarding Penthea’s feelings towards Ithocles following their reconciliation: some scholars maintain that she has his best interests at heart, while others argue differently. Nancy A. Gutierrez, Rick Bowers, and Lisa Hopkins feature among the first group, with the first of these critics arguing that Penthea has ‘undiminished love for her brother’.⁵⁰ Bowers then suggests that ‘Penthea recommends her brother to Calantha as a final wearied act of generosity’, while Hopkins maintains that she wishes to ‘produce a

⁵⁰ Nancy A. Gutierrez, ‘Trafficking in John Ford’s *The Broken Heart*’, in *Privacy, Domesticity, and Women*, ed. by Corrine S. Abate (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 65-82 (p. 70).

marriage between Calantha and Ithocles'.⁵¹ Of the critics who view Penthea differently, Rowland Wymer declares that she is 'not altogether free from a suggestion of satisfaction that he [is] now equal with her in misery', and Michael Neill finds her 'ambiguously motivated [in her] intercession with Calantha'.⁵² Both sets of scholars offer compelling readings, but instead of siding with one group, I believe that it is more significant to consider why Penthea's attitude towards Ithocles can be interpreted in two different ways. As I now hope to demonstrate, Penthea seems to want to help and to harm Ithocles because she struggles to accept that his earlier violent behaviour can be overlooked simply because he was a distinguished combatant in a military campaign.

When Penthea decides to try and woo Calantha for Ithocles, as she had promised, it initially seems that she will also successfully demonstrate that she accepts his reformed masculine identity and seeks to unify with him. She announces that 'I do bequeath in holiest rites of love, / Mine only brother, Ithocles' (*TBH* III. 5. 77-78), and appears to be only concerned with presenting her twin as attractively as possible to Calantha. The superlative 'holiest' indicates the purity of Ithocles' love, and Penthea forestalls any suggestion that it is Calantha's high social position that is of real interest to him by telling her 'Impute not [...] to ambition / A faith [...] humbly perfect' (*TBH* III. 5. 79-80). She also tells the princess that 'Ithocles is ignorant of this pursuit' (*TBH* III. 5. 98-99); the audience saw Penthea promise him 'I'll cheer invention for an active strain' (*TBH* III. 3. 117), or find a novel way to woo Calantha, so they know that Penthea's words are untrue. As she is a character

⁵¹ Rick Bowers, 'John Ford and the Sleep of Death', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 28.4 (1986), 353-87 (p. 375); Lisa Hopkins, 'Ladies' Trials: Women and the Law in Three Plays of John Ford', *Cahiers Élisabéthains: A Biannual Journal of English Renaissance Studies*, 56 (1999), 49-64 (p. 58).

⁵² Wymer, p. 113; Neill, p. 366.

who places a strong emphasis upon her own honesty, it is this lie, more than anything else, which seems to suggest that she really does now feel united with Ithocles.

Yet as Michael Neill has correctly pointed out, there is a definite ‘ambiguity’ in Penthea’s attitude towards Ithocles in this scene.⁵³ Her attempts to present Ithocles as a desirable husband for Calantha are continually undercut by reminders of how violently he treated her. Just before she bequeaths Ithocles to the princess, Penthea remarks ‘’Tis long ago since first I lost my heart. / Long I have lived without it’ (*TBH* III. 5. 72-73). Penthea may be recounting how she figuratively gave her heart to Orgilus when they were betrothed, but her words also suggest that Ithocles has subjected her to a gruesome dissection. Her sufferings are made even more evident when she reminds Calantha that ‘I am a sister, though to me this brother / Hath been, you know, unkind, O most unkind!’ (*TBH* III. 5. 105-06). Neill pithily argues that ‘Penthea and Ithocles are unkind by his unkindness’, but I would suggest that Penthea’s words indicate a more complex relationship.⁵⁴ The references to Ithocles’ decision to force her to marry Bassanes bookend the discussion about him, and threaded throughout Penthea’s attempts to secure Calantha for him are suggestions that the Princess can make him suffer. She proposes ‘if you wish to kill him, / Lend him one angry look, or one harsh word’ (*TBH* III. 5. 99-100), and emphasises ‘how strong a power / Your absolute authority holds over / His life and end’ (*TBH* III. 5. 101-03). She is not referring to a metaphorical death for Ithocles, but a literal one, as she attended on him when he was mortally lovesick. Penthea thus simultaneously works towards overlooking Ithocles’s violence towards her, and avenging his

⁵³ Neill, p. 264.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

behaviour by manipulating another woman into performing an act of lethal violence against him. While she is trying to unite with Ithocles and portray him as an admirable man, recollections of his earlier behaviour once more threaten to obstruct their relationship and taint the way that she presents his masculinity. Penthea is torn between adhering to the expectation of pure unity between twins, and her awareness that Ithocles did not act how a twin was supposed to when he prevented her from marrying Orgilus.

It is not until Act IV, scene 2 that it becomes apparent just what Penthea's attempts to try and present herself as united with Ithocles and accept the transformation in his masculine identity have cost her. Penthea's mental breakdown and self-starvation have been given various critical explanations. Lisa Hopkins convincingly suggests that 'an inability to cope with her divided self has led to the wish to eradicate half of that self', while Sasha Garwood identifies Penthea's decision to starve herself as a response to a society which demands self-control, then argues that she 'impresses upon her physical self its action on her emotional self'.⁵⁵ Both of these readings can be extended to incorporate Penthea's attitude towards Ithocles and their twin relationship, for she is 'divided' between her interior distress at his violent treatment of her, and the exterior pressure to unify with him, and these conflicting sentiments underpin her decision to starve herself. One of the most revealing remarks which Penthea makes during Act IV, scene 2 is the apparently innocuous question 'Like whom do I look, prithee?' (*TBH* IV. 2. 114), because it suggests that she wants to deny her physical resemblance to Ithocles. As a twin, she is expected to know that she looks like Ithocles, so when she asks who she resembles, she seems to want someone to tell her that she looks like anybody but

⁵⁵ Hopkins, p. 157; Garwood, p. 115.

him. If Penthea looks like someone else, she will not be linked with Ithocles through their similar appearances, and so she will no longer be expected to wholly unite with him. By starving herself, then, Penthea seeks to lose her resemblance, and her responsibilities, towards Ithocles.

This reading is supported by the fact that Penthea is notably disunited from Ithocles in this scene. She does not wish to face him, as is made evident by his remark 'Dear, turn not from me' (*TBH* IV. 2. 59), and she continually accuses him of spoiling her planned happy life with Orgilus through the repetition of 'that is he' (*TBH* IV. 2. 110), and 'That's he, and still 'tis he' (*TBH* IV. 2. 122). What is more, she also reveals that Ithocles' 'heart / Is crept into the cabinet of the princess' (*TBH* IV. 2. 117-18), which is a direct refutation of the idea that she should continually prioritise the best interests of her twin. By revealing the feelings which Ithocles told her in confidence, Penthea raises the spectre of the ambitious and violent form of masculinity which he exhibited before his participation in military conflict. If Ithocles is to deny his connection to this type of masculine identity, then he also has to lie about his feelings towards Calantha, and he understands this state of affairs perfectly when he remarks 'Poor soul, how idly / Her fancies guide her tongue' (*TBH* IV. 2. 122-23). Having been the victim of so much violence, Penthea finds herself driven to perform the ultimate act of violence against herself. By starving herself to death, she disobeys Ithocles's order 'Be not, my sister, / A murd'ress to thyself' (*TBH* IV. 2. 158-59), rejects her society's expectations of unity between twins, and places the blame for her inability to conform squarely upon Ithocles.

If Penthea's death indirectly raises the idea that Ithocles's masculinity lies in a state of crisis despite his heroic military exploits, then the murder of her twin makes this argument much more overt. Orgilus has vowed to 'stand up like a man

resolved' (*TBH* II. 3. 125), but it is not until he knows that his beloved will die that he decides to avenge himself upon Ithocles for the violence which he committed against them. At first, he gives the impression of utter deference to Ithocles and the elevated form of masculine identity which he will soon wield through his marriage to Calantha, calling him 'my most good lord, my most great lord, / My gracious princely lord – I might add, royal' (*TBH* IV. 3. 103-4). Ithocles's movement from being 'good', to 'great', to 'princely', then finally to 'royal', combines with the repetition of 'lord' to indicate that Orgilus is actually mocking Ithocles instead of praising him, and this sentiment is also evident when he tells him that 'I dare pronounce you will be a just monarch' (*TBH* IV. 3. 126). Orgilus taunts Ithocles with the idea that he is worthy of exercising a hegemonic form of masculinity, only to trap him in the trick chair and make it clear just how unworthy he really is:

Orgilus: You dreamt of kingdoms, did 'ee? How to bosom

The delicacies of a youngling princess,

How with this nod to grace that subtle courtier,

How with that frown to make this noble tremble,

And so forth; whiles Penthea's groans and tortures,

Her agonies, her miseries, afflictions,

Ne'er touched upon your thought.

(*TBH* IV. 4. 29-35).

It is not only Ithocles's earlier violent behaviour towards Penthea which disgraces him, but his present neglect of her 'groans and tortures, / Her agonies, her miseries, [and] afflictions' in favour of sensual and political fantasies. Orgilus implies that

although Ithocles may have returned from combat, he is still the same ambitious, ruthless figure that he was before he left. Once his marriage to Calantha was assured, Orgilus argues, Ithocles became too preoccupied with his future royal duty to care about his present familial and societal ones, which were to show concern for Penthea's wellbeing, and unify with her in pain. Such neglect of his twin reveals to Orgilus that Ithocles is worthy of nothing but death: 'Behold thy fate, this steel' (*TBH* IV. 4. 39).

Orgilus clearly intends to distress Ithocles by suggesting that his masculinity has become so devalued by his behaviour towards Penthea that he cannot possibly be allowed to marry Calantha and become King, but Ithocles actually suggests that he agrees with his argument, and also thinks that his masculine identity is in crisis. When Orgilus suggests that he is going to murder, or 'sacrifice' (*TBH* IV. 3. 29) Ithocles in order to atone for the emotional and sexual violence which he committed against Penthea, Ithocles embraces the idea that the destruction of his body will allow him to emphasise his most valuable qualities, and distance him from his most worthless ones: 'Strike home; a courage / As keen as thy revenge shall give it welcome' (*TBH* IV. 4. 39-40). He actively encourages Orgilus to subject him to as much physical violence as possible, for he instructs 'if the wound close up / Tent it with double force' (*TBH* IV. 4. 41-42), and thwarts his intention that 'I should whine, and beg compassion' (*TBH* IV. 4. 43). Instead of being 'loth to leave the vainness of my glories' (*TBH* IV. 4. 44), Ithocles is possessed of 'A statelier resolution' (*TBH* IV. 4. 45), which is to meet death without fear and so 'cozen [Orgilus] of honour' (*TBH* IV. 4. 46). Ithocles turns Orgilus's murderous, violent punishment into an opportunity for the type of reform which even military combat could not effect, for he suggests that it allows him to overcome the crisis in his

masculine identity which originated from his violent treatment of Penthea. Ithocles presents his bleeding body as the ultimate apology for the act which ruined his united twin relationship and devalued his masculine identity, stating ‘Penthea, by thy side thy brother bleeds: / The earnest of his wrongs to thy forced faith’ (*TBH* IV. 4. 65-66). At the same time that he accepts the blame for his treatment of Penthea, Ithocles also rejects ‘Thoughts of ambition, or delicious banquet, / With beauty, youth and love’ (*TBH* IV. 4. 66-7). He therefore uses Orgilus’s murder as an opportunity to cast off the taints of violent behaviour and desire for political or sensual experiences, and to instead embrace a form of masculinity which is brave, unassuming, and wholly admirable.

Immediately after Ithocles dies, Orgilus confirms that his death has allowed him to overcome his crisis of masculinity by referring to him positively as a ‘fair spring of manhood’ (*TBH* IV. 4. 71). What is more, he goes on to suggest that Penthea and Ithocles are now completely reunited through his comment ‘Sweet twins, shine stars forever’ (*TBH* IV. 4. 73). Orgilus endows Penthea and Ithocles with transcendental qualities and aligns them with the twins Castor and Pollux, who were linked with Sparta, the very city in which the play is set. While Castor and Pollux both became stars, they were also thought to appear as ‘stars’ during horrific weather on sea voyages; if only one ‘star’ or twin appeared, it was a bad omen, but if both were present, it was a sign that the storm would abate.⁵⁶ Castor and Pollux thus had to be seen as united for something good to come out of a horrific situation, and the same thinking applies to Penthea and Ithocles. Orgilus suggests that when they were in their bodies, and their relationship was marred by violence, they could not be

⁵⁶ This was the classical understanding of the phenomenon known as ‘St. Elmo’s Fire’. See Eugene Stock, ‘Greek and Roman Weather Lore of the Sea’, *The Classical Weekly*, 27.2 (1933), 9-13 (pp. 10-13).

counted as twins. Now that Ithocles has offered his body as a sacrifice of atonement for his horrendous treatment of Penthea, however, they are free from the taint of violence which spoilt their relationship, and can be understood as twins once more.

Orgilus's reference to Penthea and Ithocles as 'sweet twins' constitutes the last reference to twinship in *The Broken Heart*, and just as the unity between the pair is meant to cancel out their earlier division, so too is the crisis in Ithocles's masculinity finally erased. In the closing scene of Ford's tragedy, the body of Ithocles is brought onstage dressed in a robe and crown, while his contracted wife Calantha, who has just become Queen of Sparta, is similarly attired. Ithocles's clothing reveals his posthumous elevation to a valuable position of hegemonic masculinity, and suggests that he is finally free of the taint of unworthiness which his treatment of Penthea and Orgilus created. As if the sight of the royal crown is not enough to emphasise his transformation, Calantha narrates how she 'put[s] [her] mother's wedding ring upon / His finger' (*TBH* V. 3. 64-5), and thereby 'new marr[ies] him whose wife I am' (*TBH* V. 3. 66). Shortly after this combination of coronation and marriage, Queen Calantha dies alongside King Ithocles; brief though their reign is, its very existence nevertheless confirms how far the latter figure has come. Before the play began, he was a ruthless, ambitious, and violent young man who sacrificed his twin relationship and Penthea's perception of his masculine identity for the prospect of power. He then participated in military conflict which cured him of the desire to elevate his masculine identity, but failed to cleanse him completely from the taint of his earlier behaviour. Although Ithocles tried hard to make his first victims of Penthea and Orgilus believe that he had seen the error of his ways and was a completely different man, he was aware that his masculine identity had become so devalued in their eyes as to seem worthless. Ithocles overcame this

crisis in his masculinity by becoming a victim of Orgilus's physical violence. While violence threatened to destroy the twin relationship and Ithocles's masculinity for the majority of the play, then, it ultimately makes these two forms of identity stronger than ever by the time that the play ends.

IV. Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated, the twins of *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart* illuminate and problematise the link between violence and masculine identity. Ferdinand and Ithocles both perform multiple acts of violence against their twin sisters because they desire to elevate their masculinities, though there are notable differences in their motivations for, and responses to, their behaviour. When Ferdinand finds himself thwarted in his attempt to participate in the military conflict which he believes will ascribe him a great deal of value, he expects the Duchess to live the frustrated, constrained life that he has been consigned to. Once he realises that his twin sister refuses to live in such a manner, however, he embarks upon a violent and devastating war against her. Ithocles, meanwhile, was so eager to elevate his position among the men of Sparta that he forced Penthea to marry Bassanes instead of her contracted partner Orgilus. It was only when he served in a military campaign for his homeland of Sparta, however, that he realised that he already occupied an elevated position among his fellow men, and grew to regret his earlier violence. Despite these differences in motivation, Ferdinand and Ithocles both find that their masculinities are devalued to the point of crisis by their violent treatment of their twin sisters. Ferdinand and Ithocles are both confronted by an avenger who exercises violence against them, but while Ferdinand's response to such violence

means that he dies with a crisis-stricken masculinity, Ithocles manages to overcome his crisis in this form of identity.

Like the two chapters which have gone before it, this chapter therefore argues that particular factors, in this case the connection between masculinity and violence, can lead to a crisis in masculine identity. Yet through its discussions of Bosola and Ithocles, this chapter also gestures towards an argument which will become more pronounced in Chapter Four. While Bosola and Ithocles both find their masculinities plunged into crisis by violence, they are ultimately able to appropriate this threat so that they overcome it. Bosola performs violence against the men who tormented the Duchess and thereby becomes a just avenger, while Ithocles responds to Orgilus's violence with such bravery that he completely alters the view his murderer has of him. The experiences of Bosola and Ithocles thus suggest that a crisis of masculinity may be a reparative experience rather than a destructive one. As will now become clear in the final chapter of this thesis, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* also imply that a crisis of masculinity can be turned to a man's advantage, rather than his disadvantage.

**‘I Am Not What I Am’: Twins and the Transformation of Masculinity in
Twelfth Night and *Monsieur Thomas*.**

Although their roles as collaborators and successive dramatists to the King’s Men have meant that the link between William Shakespeare and John Fletcher has become a well-known one, one important similarity between the pair has hitherto remained unacknowledged: their strong connections to twins. While Shakespeare was the father of Judith and Hamnet, Fletcher had an uncle and eventual stepfather who dedicated a sonnet to Lady Mollineux’s twins.¹ What is more, Fletcher was considered to be so like Francis Beaumont that three of the dedicatory epistles to the first folio edition of *Comedies and Tragedies* (1647) compare the pair to twins.² To further strengthen these associations, Shakespeare and Fletcher also wrote plays which contained mixed-sex twins in the form of *Twelfth Night* (1600/01) and *Monsieur Thomas* (c. 1610). In real life as well as fiction, then, the pair were linked by the idea of two people who shared the same birth.

In accordance with their contrasting critical reputations, scholars have long puzzled over the connection between Shakespeare’s real and imaginary twins, and ignored this topic completely in relation to Fletcher. As intriguing as the link

¹ The sonnet praises Lady Mollineux’s twins for their astonishing similarity and beauty. See Giles Fletcher, ‘A Sonnet Made Upon the Two Twinnes, Daughters of the Ladie Mollineux, Both Passing Like and Exceeding Faire’, in *Licia, or Poems of Love* (n.p: Publisher unknown, date unknown), sig. G2^v.

² Beaumont and Fletcher are described as ‘Renowned Twinnes of Poetry’ by Alexander Brome and men who went ‘still twins to the Presse’ by Jasper Maine. John Webster, meanwhile, states that they have ‘twin-like Braines’. Alexander Brome, ‘Upon the unparalleled Playes Written by those Renowned Twinnes of Poetry Beaumont and Fletcher’, in *Comedies and Tragedies* (London: Humphrey Robinson, 1647), sig. D2^v; Jasper Maine, ‘On the Workes of Beaumont and Fletcher, now at length printed’, in *Comedies and Tragedies* (London: Humphrey Robinson, 1647), sig. D1^r-D2^v (sig. D2^v); John Webster, ‘To the *Manes* of the celebrated Poets and Fellow-writers Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, upon the Printing of their excellent Dramatick Poems’, in *Comedies and Tragedies* (London: Humphrey Robinson, 1647), sig. C3^v. I have acknowledged this connection and teased out its implications in other work; see Powell, “‘And Shall We Now Grow Strangers?’”, p. 143.

between fact and fiction undoubtedly is, however, Shakespeare's and Fletcher's dramatic mixed-sex twins are a source of interest in their own right, for the plays in which they appear have much in common. Both comedies see one of the mixed-sex twins cross-dress as the other, and employ this incident as a means through which to use these figures to comment upon the identity of masculinity in a much more optimistic fashion than has been seen in the previous three chapters of this thesis. The twins of *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas* reveal that a crisis of masculinity need not lead to the permanent devaluation and disregard of the men who experience it, but rather allow for their masculine identities to become even stronger and more valuable. Such a positive association between twins and a crisis of masculinity can also be detected in gynaecological works. Like *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas*, midwifery manuals also employ their portrayals of twins in order to suggest that masculinity can be bolstered rather than destroyed by any threats which are posed to it if the right conditions exist.

These suggestions that a crisis of masculinity may have a reparative effect, as opposed to a destructive one, do not only appear in gynaecological works and the comedies which are analysed by this chapter. They also form a key component of arguments which masculinity studies scholars make against the idea that the devaluation of masculine identity is always a negative event. After a review of literary critics' discussions of the twins of *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas*, this chapter will outline some of the key objections which cultural theorists have made regarding the idea of a crisis of masculinity. It will then demonstrate how representations of twins in midwifery manuals help surgeons to turn a situation which could devalue their masculinities into one which will elevate them, before moving on to analyse Shakespeare's and Fletcher's plays. This chapter will assert

that the male twins of *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas* both teeter on the brink of being associated with a devalued form of masculine identity on account of an act of cross-dressing, but manage to overcome the threats which this practice poses to their masculinities and end their plays as emotionally and financially secure, valued men. While it may seem that the twins of midwifery manuals, *Twelfth Night*, and *Monsieur Thomas* suggest that all men can easily turn a crisis of masculinity to their advantage, then, these works actually indicate that it is only possible to do so if certain conditions exist. What initially presents itself as an exceptionally positive response to the prospect of a crisis of masculine identity is therefore not quite as optimistic as it first appears to be.

I. Celebratory Twins and Crisis-Strengthened Men: Literary and Masculinity Studies Criticism

i. *Twins and the Road to Maturity: 'Twelfth Night' and 'Monsieur Thomas'*

Almost any early modern author is guaranteed to receive a critical reception that is lukewarm in comparison to the adulation bestowed upon Shakespeare, but the scholarly attitude towards Fletcher has generally been so cold as to border on Arctic levels. While Shakespeare is extolled by academics as ‘the greatest poet of his age’, lauded as ‘a synecdoche for the nexus between the literary and cultural inheritance of the past and that of the present’, and held to play such an important role in the discipline of English Literature that ‘the study of Shakespeare is an archetypal activity’ for those within it, Fletcher is frequently met with scorn.³ Eugene M. Waith

³ William Bellamy, *Shakespeare's Verbal Art* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), p.1; Dymphna Callaghan and Suzanne Gossett, eds, ‘Introduction’, in *Shakespeare in Our Time: A*

argues that the latter playwright has ‘an unorthodox method of handling character’ which causes ‘striking peculiarities’ in his works, while Clifford Leech rather damningly declares that ‘it would be absurd to put [Fletcher], not merely with Shakespeare and Jonson and Marlowe, but with Chapman and Webster and Ford. He simply does not illuminate life enough, [...] he has written no masterpiece’.⁴ Leech’s hierarchy of aesthetic interlinks the work of Shakespeare and Fletcher so strongly that the former’s brilliance relies upon the latter’s ineptitude to be fully appreciated, suggesting that the admiration of one figure will result in the devaluation of the other.⁵

While there is a critical tradition of praising Shakespeare and damning Fletcher, then, this chapter does not fit in with that pattern. It is mindful of the great esteem which both authors were held in by their contemporaries, and is far less interested in the matter of aesthetic than in the ideas which *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas* present about seventeenth-century masculinity through their representations of twins. As well as widening the scope of current scholarly treatments of both Shakespeare and Fletcher, these priorities are more conversant with current critical approaches, which tend to favour issues of identity politics over

Shakespeare Association of America Collection (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016), 1-5 (p. 4); Gabriel Egan, *Shakespeare and Ecocritical Theory* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015), p. 1.

⁴ Eugene M. Waith, ‘Characterization in John Fletcher’s Tragicomedies’, *The Review of English Studies*, 19.74 (1943), 141-64 (p. 141); Clifford Leech, *The John Fletcher Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), p. 5. Indeed, the negative critical attitude towards Fletcher is so pronounced that it causes John E. Curran Jr. to marvel that ‘Given the capacity of scholars of English Renaissance drama to disagree over just about anything, the strength of their consensus with regard to one particular issue is virtually astonishing: the superficiality of character within the plays, especially the tragicomedies, of Fletcher and his collaborators and successors’. John E. Curran Jr., ‘Declamation and Character in the Fletcher-Massinger Plays’, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 23 (2010), 86-113.

⁵ Sandra Clark appears to be hinting towards this idea when she remarks that ‘the orthodoxy is that Beaumont’s and Fletcher’s texts are aesthetically worthless in comparison to Shakespeare’s’, as her use of the word ‘orthodoxy’ suggests the sense that the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher are denigrated because it is felt to be the ‘correct’ attitude for scholars to adopt. Sandra Clark, *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: Sexual Themes and Dramatic Representation* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), p. 6.

aesthetics.⁶ This chapter will therefore treat *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas* on equal terms, and examine them on the basis of what their representations of twins suggest about early modern masculinities rather than how ‘good’ or ‘bad’ they are.⁷

By affording the two comedies equal attention, this chapter will also begin to redress the considerable critical disparity which currently exists between them. The presence of twins in *Twelfth Night* has been so well-documented as to form a point of interest for a number of pieces of scholarship, whether that is in the form of an analysis of the play on its own or in conjunction with *The Comedy of Errors*. In contrast, the appearance of such figures in *Monsieur Thomas* has been the subject of one lone article. By bringing *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas* into dialogue with each other through their employment of twins, then, this chapter highlights important similarities of character and plot which exist between them, and demonstrates that the former play can benefit from being read in close conjunction with another twin play that was not also written by Shakespeare.

⁶ That is not, however, to discount the merits of a more formalist approach to early modern drama, which scholars working within this area have demonstrated through their arguments and illuminating close readings of texts. Alysia Kolentis rightly argues that ‘small stylistic details’ can provide ‘insights [...] without accompanying preconceptions of inconsequentiality’. Russ McDonald’s formalist analysis of Act II, Scene 5 of *Henry VI, Part 3* highlights the multitudinous techniques which Shakespeare employs in order to generate attention, while Stephen Guy-Bray’s excellent examination of similes and metaphors from *Venus and Adonis* demonstrates how Shakespeare’s florid style frustrates the reader. See Alysia Kolentis, ‘Shakespeare’s Lexical Style’, in *Shakespeare in Our Time: A Shakespeare Association of America Collection*, ed. by Dymphna Callaghan and Suzanne Gossett (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016), 306-10; Russ McDonald, ‘William Shakespeare, Elizabethan Stylist’, in *Shakespeare in Our Time: A Shakespeare Association of America Collection*, ed. by Dymphna Callaghan and Suzanne Gossett (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016), 295-303; Stephen Guy-Bray, ‘Nondramatic Style’, in *Shakespeare in Our Time: A Shakespeare Association of America Collection*, ed. by Dymphna Callaghan and Suzanne Gossett (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016), 303-06.

⁷ Another more equal approach to the relationship between Shakespeare’s and Fletcher’s plays can be seen in Stanley Wells’ monograph *Shakespeare and Co.*, which considers connections between their works without offering judgements on them. See Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare and Co.: Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Dekker, Ben Jonson, Thomas Middleton, John Fletcher, and the Other Players in His Story* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 194-223.

Twelfth Night is thought to have first been performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men at the Middle Temple Hall, which was one of the Inns of Court, at Candlemas in 1602.⁸ It was then staged at Court by the King's Men in 1618, and performed by the same company at the same venue in 1623, albeit under the title *Malvolio* as opposed to *Twelfth Night*.⁹ E. K. Chambers, meanwhile, has suggested that *Monsieur Thomas* was performed at the Blackfriars between 1610 and 1616 by the Lady Elizabeth's Men or the Children of the Queen's Revels, but the venue of the Blackfriars and the authorship of Fletcher would surely point towards a performance by the King's Men.¹⁰ In 1639, Fletcher's comedy was revived with a new name, *Father's Own Son*, at the Cockpit Theatre, most probably by the King and Queen's Young Company, which was otherwise known as Beeston's Boys. Shakespeare's and Fletcher's comedies were therefore originally written and staged for elite audiences.

The most recent – and substantial – critical discussion of twins in *Twelfth Night* is to be found in Daisy Murray's monograph *Twins in Early Modern English Drama and Shakespeare* (2016). Murray argues that the historical context surrounding the play's twins has been 'ignored' because critics have not found them

⁸ Although there has been some speculation as to whether *Twelfth Night* was actually first performed at court on 6 January 1601 in front of Virginio Orsino, Duke of Bracciano, recent scholars have tended to treat this theory with uncertainty. Alison Findlay and Liz-Oakley Brown tentatively acknowledge the possibility that *Twelfth Night* might have been performed on this earlier date, and include it on their timeline of significant performances of the play, stating that '*Twelfth Night* is possibly the play performed at court on 6 January 1601'. Paul Edmondson and the editors of a 1975 critical edition of *Twelfth Night* in J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik are much more sceptical of the idea that *Twelfth Night* was performed at such an early date. They assert that it would not have been possible for Shakespeare and the Lord Chamberlain's Men to be able to write and act a performance in an exceptionally short time-span of eleven days. See Alison Findlay and Liz Oakley-Brown, eds, 'Introduction', in *Twelfth Night: A Critical Reader* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014), 1-26; Alison Findlay and Liz-Oakley-Brown, eds, 'Timeline', in *Twelfth Night: A Critical Reader* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014), ix-x (p. ix); Paul Edmondson, *Twelfth Night: A Guide to the Text and its Theatrical Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 4; J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik, eds, 'Introduction', in *Twelfth Night* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1975, repr. 2000), xvii-lxxxii (p. xxviii).

⁹ Findlay and Oakley-Brown, 'Timeline', p. ix.

¹⁰ E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923) III, p. 228.

to be as ‘relatable and interesting’ as such topics as gender identity.¹¹ While the popularity of gender studies has undoubtedly meant that many discussions of *Twelfth Night* do focus upon this area, the lack of critical attention regarding how Viola and Sebastian relate to historical understandings of twins is arguably more a consequence of technological limitations rather than disinterest. It is only possible to detect early modern ideas surrounding twins in *Twelfth Night* because of the recent development of such databases as *EEBO*, which make thousands of primary sources instantly accessible. Instead of viewing an analysis of contemporary cultural discussions of twins in *Twelfth Night* as something of a niche subject as Murray does, this chapter perceives it to be an area of interest which will only grow as more scholars become aware of the range of early modern sources surrounding two people who shared the same birth.

Murray rightly considers *Twelfth Night* to be a play which is ‘in dialogue with the larger cultural perception of the twin situation’, but locates this dialogue within the references which early modern gynaecological texts, broadsides, and chapbooks make to conjoined twins.¹² Within these texts, Murray identifies overtones of monstrosity, as conjoined twins in particular become linked with incest and a loss of individual selfhood.¹³ She then argues that Shakespeare was aware of such dialogues within *Twelfth Night*, for he ‘hints at the monstrous implications of twinship only to reject such connotations’, and ultimately presents a much more positive view of the twin relationship than that provided by any other early modern playwright.¹⁴ Murray suggests that the twins of *Twelfth Night* become ‘conjoined

¹¹ Murray, p. 161.

¹² Murray, p. 144.

¹³ See Murray, pp. 143-75.

¹⁴ Murray, p. 164.

together within the figure of Cesario, [and so] begin to transition over the course of the play into the unnatural'.¹⁵ Although this state of affairs is argued to initially veer towards a negative event in Viola's loss of her own sense of identity, Murray ultimately asserts that this issue is resolved in the play's concluding scene, when it becomes apparent that the twins have distinct and recognisable identities.¹⁶

Other scholars such as Coppélia Kahn and Stephen Greenblatt have also published influential pieces of work which focus a great deal of attention on the fact that Viola and Sebastian are twins. Kahn takes a psychoanalytical approach to the shared birth of these two characters when she argues that they function as a way in which to dramatise the movement from an identity which is androgynous and situated within the family to one that is located outside of it in the form of a heterosexual lover:

The dramatic device of identical, opposite-sex twins allows Orsino and Olivia to navigate the crucial passage from identification to object choice, from adolescent sexual experimentation to adult intimacy, from filial ties to adult independence, without even changing the objects of their desires.¹⁷

This correlation between the presence of twins and identity formation is also echoed by Stephen Greenblatt, who reads *Twelfth Night* in relation to contemporaneous medical texts which discussed anatomical differences between biological sexes. Like Kahn, Greenblatt detects links between the shared birth of Sebastian and Viola and the development of female and male sexual identity, but his analysis of *Twelfth*

¹⁵ Murray, p. 170.

¹⁶ Murray, pp. 169-74.

¹⁷ The focus of Kahn's analysis is male sexual identity, but her discussion of *Twelfth Night* also incorporates female sexual identity. Kahn, p. 229.

Night is concerned more closely with the perception of the latter category. Greenblatt argues that Viola's act of cross-dressing as Cesario is

bound up with Renaissance conceptions of the emergence of male identity
[...] If a crucial step in male individuation is separation from the female,
this separation is enacted inversely in the rites of cross-dressing; characters
like [...] Viola pass through the state of being men in order to become
women.¹⁸

Since men and women were considered to be so anatomically similar, Greenblatt suggests that Viola can only become a woman by demonstrating that she is not a man. Both twins therefore have to overcome the similarity of their anatomy as well as their more obvious physical resemblance before they can become individuals with mature sexual identities.

For all of the aforementioned critics, then, the twin relationship between Viola and Sebastian functions as an enabling factor which allows characters within the play to progress along a trajectory of identity which stretches from youth to adulthood, and moves from a collective to an individual form of selfhood. Despite the differences in approach between Murray's, Kahn's, and Greenblatt's work, all three scholars detect a highly convincing link between *Twelfth Night*'s twins and the process of identity formation. This chapter aims to further strengthen the connection detected by Murray, Kahn, and Greenblatt through another different approach, which is to consider what the twin characters reveal about the way that masculine identity responds to being moved closer to a position of crisis. By arguing that Viola/Cesario's and Sebastian's experiences reveal that masculinity can be

¹⁸ Greenblatt, p. 92.

strengthened rather than destroyed by the threats which are posed to it, this chapter demonstrates that the twins of *Twelfth Night* do not only gesture towards the means of forming a new identity, as the aforementioned critics suggest, but also indicate ways through which to strengthen forms of identity which are already in existence.

Whereas there are several significant pieces of criticism which explore the presence of twins in *Twelfth Night*, scholarship which addresses this specific topic in *Monsieur Thomas* currently consists of only one discussion. In a previous article, I have argued that Dorothea and Thomas use their twin relationship as a means through which to reform each other's behaviour, a strategy which proves so successful for them both that the audience is able to accept Thomas' cross-dressing episode as a source of humour rather than discomfort.¹⁹ While I still agree with the notion that Dorothea and Thomas use their status as twins in order to manipulate the way their sibling acts, this chapter is much more interested in how the presence of twins makes a broader statement about identity politics. The section of the article which addresses Thomas' cross-dressing is somewhat brief and generalised, so this chapter will address both of these flaws by examining the incident at greater length and in a more focused fashion. It will thus develop my previous critical stance on the play considerably, by outlining a different function for the twin relationship and considering it in relation to early modern constructions of masculinities.

This chapter therefore perpetuates the critical tradition of linking Shakespeare's and Fletcher's dramatic works, but breaks with it through its consideration of their plays in terms of identity politics rather than aesthetics. Its establishment of a dialogue between *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas* extends

¹⁹ See Powell, "'And Shall We Now Grow Strangers?'," pp. 155-60.

the scope of current scholarship upon the two plays, which have never previously been read together despite their clear similarities of character and plot. What is more, its analysis of the two plays in relation to the idea of a crisis of masculine identity demonstrates their relevance to early modern identity politics, and indicates that these comedies actually anticipated some of the ideas which masculinity studies scholars would make many years later. *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas* both suggest that a crisis of masculine identity might not be as devastating an event as it seems to be because it can actually result in its elevation, rather than devaluation. As will now become clear from the following analysis of masculinity studies scholarship, academics who work within this field also made this very argument almost four hundred years later.

ii. Masculinity Studies and the Problem of Crisis

As the introduction to this thesis demonstrated, the concept of a ‘crisis of masculinity’, which sees masculine identity move from a position of value to one of worthlessness, is a pervasive idea within the field of masculinity studies. In spite of its popularity, however, not all scholars who work within this area agree with the idea of masculinity being in a crisis-stricken state. James Heartfield makes his opinion on the matter very evident through the title of his article, ‘There is No Masculinity Crisis’. Heartfield argues that ‘The effect of the masculinity concept on theory is to artificially isolate men’s experience from women’s’, and asserts that it serves as a distraction from attacks which were taking place on another form of early twenty-first-century identity: ‘The crisis is not only of masculinity, but one of the

working class’.²⁰ Mary Louise Roberts, meanwhile, criticises the idea of ‘gender crisis’ by arguing that it creates ‘overly binary and mechanistic terms’ which means that a person has ‘only two options: to allow or to reject their imposition’.²¹ In this situation, Roberts declares, ‘One option leads to normality [...] the other to crisis. S/he either is, or is not, a “man” or a “woman” according to some fixed normative ideal’.²² The idea of a ‘crisis’ in masculinity or femininity therefore reinforces heteronormativity.²³

If Heartfield and Roberts take issue with the notion of a ‘crisis of masculinity’ because they believe that it functions as a means through which to disguise more pressing issues or to reinforce very strict notions of what constitutes masculine or feminine gendered behaviour, then other scholars criticise it for a different reason. Ariane Blayac, Claire Conilleau, Claire Delahaye, *et al* observe that ‘the crisis of masculinity has been a recurring feature [...] of political and scholarly discourse for decades, even centuries’, then go on to ask ‘has the hegemony of masculinity, or a certain hegemonic construction of masculinity, ever been in danger?’.²⁴ Since masculinity has been plunged into crisis so many times and yet remains a privileged form of identity, Blayac, Conilleau, Delehay *et al* all raise the question as to how damaging a crisis of masculinity actually is. The work of Sally Robinson and Tania Modleski reinforces the importance of this question by arguing that a crisis of masculinity does not constitute a totally destructive event. Robinson opens her examination of contemporary American literature by clarifying that ‘In

²⁰ James Heartfield, ‘There is No Masculinity Crisis’, *Genders*, 35 (2002)
<https://cdn.atria.nl/eazines/IAV_606661/IAV_606661_2011_53/genders/g35_heartfield.html>
[accessed 9 November 2018] (para. 45 of 49; para. 2 of 49.)

²¹ Mary Louise Roberts, ‘Beyond “Crisis” in Understanding Gender Transformation’, *Gender & History*, 28.2 (2016), 358-66 (p. 361).

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Blayac *et al*, p. 6.

arguing that white masculinity is “in crisis”, I do not mean to suggest that the hegemony of a particular construction of masculinity, or the hegemony of masculinity per se, is in danger’.²⁵ Tania Modleski indicates why a crisis of masculinity does not constitute a lethal threat to this form of identity when she objects to the idea that ‘male subjectivity may currently be “in crisis”, as certain optimistic feminists are now declaring’ on the grounds that ‘we need to consider the extent to which male power is actually consolidated through cycles of crisis and resolution, whereby men ultimately deal with the threat of female power by incorporating it’.²⁶ Rather than being crippled by a crisis in their masculinities, then, men are actually able to appropriate the thing which threatens it and strengthen their claims to occupy the most valuable, powerful positions in society.

While scholars of the early modern period have not explicitly considered the implications of crisis upon sixteenth- and seventeenth-century masculinities, Mark Breitenberg has nevertheless highlighted the idea that threats to this form of identity do not always result in destruction. In his influential monograph *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (1996), Breitenberg identifies the titular anxiety as ‘the confrontation between the “natural” superiority of men and the profound costs of maintaining that superiority’.²⁷ He attests that this anxiety regarding men’s social position can prove just as helpful as problematic:

masculine anxiety is a necessary and inevitable condition that operates on at least two significant levels: it reveals the fissures and contradictions of patriarchal systems and, at the same time, it paradoxically enables and

²⁵ Sally Robinson, *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 9.

²⁶ Tania Modleski, *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a “Postfeminist” Age* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1991), p. 7.

²⁷ Breitenberg, p. 2.

drives patriarchy's reproduction and continuation of itself [...] anxiety is not only a constituent element of masculinity but [...] is also deployed in positive ways.²⁸

Breitenberg argues that anxiety is a much-needed component of masculine identity which might draw aspects of the patriarchy into question, but ultimately allows men to continue to occupy valuable positions of power. With its concern about the value which is afforded masculine identity, Breitenberg's notion of 'anxiety' is rooted in the same desire to be seen as important as the idea of a crisis of masculinity. When Breitenberg suggests that 'masculine identity' might temporarily destabilise, but ultimately strengthen the identities of men, then, he is also implying that a crisis in early modern masculinity could have a positive effect which outweighs the negative one.

What is more, the idea that masculinity could be strengthened by coming close to crisis is also present in several of the early modern texts which this thesis has drawn upon in other chapters. The religious discussions of the Biblical twins Esau and Jacob in the first two chapters, for example, indicate that Jacob was in a much less valuable position than Esau because he was younger than him. At the same time, however, they stress that the threat which being second-born seemed to pose to his masculinity actually turned into a factor which elevated it, for God announced that the younger twin would be favoured. The texts which referenced classical twins in Romulus and Remus, and Jupiter and Juno, also see a similar movement from threat to elevation. Romulus saw his twin brother as such an obstacle to his goal of achieving hegemonic masculinity that he murdered him. While Warren's poem laments Romulus' behaviour, it nevertheless goes on to

²⁸ Ibid.

indicate that he went on to become founder of Rome, and thereby immortalise himself as a dominant, valued man. Heywood's poem, meanwhile, initially suggests that the male twin Jupiter will be killed in response to the vow that his father Saturne once made, but then goes on to recount how the child's life was saved by Vesta, which allowed him to grow up and assume a position of hegemonic masculinity. While the twins of these texts all immediately indicate that a particular factor – a singular understanding of masculinity; the practice of primogeniture; the idea that men need to be violent to earn respect – can cause crises in masculinity, then, they all ultimately suggest that it is possible to overcome them if the conditions are right to do so. If God will favour the younger twin, if no one will object to the murder of Remus, or if a grandmother is able to secure a safe but hidden upbringing for her grandson, then the threats to masculinity can be transformed into benefits.

Scholars of masculinity studies have therefore argued that the idea of a crisis of masculine identity is a false one because it hides the true reality of gendered behaviour, or it actually leads to the strengthening of this form of identity instead of its destruction. As this section has shown, there was an early modern awareness of the idea that masculinity could be elevated by the very factors which threatened to devalue it. Just as the representations of religious and classical twins suggested that masculine identity can be elevated by the threats which are posed to it if the right conditions exist, so too do the jointly-born figures of gynaecological texts, *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas*. The hazards in the midwifery manuals and comedies all centre around the perception of the male body, and what it is capable of doing. As will first become apparent in the examination of gynaecological texts, and then become even more overt in this chapter's analysis of *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas*, other people threaten to position the masculinities of those who inhabit

those bodies close to crisis. Surgeons, Shakespeare's Sebastian, and Fletcher's Thomas nevertheless find themselves able to avoid a devaluation in their masculine identities through an effective, albeit impractical course of action.

II. Twins and a Reparative Crisis of Masculinity

i. It's Always a Boy: Midwifery Manuals and the Misrepresentation of Twins

Whenever the midwifery manuals which refer to twins have been invoked by this thesis so far, they have served to demonstrate that the idea of two people who shared the same birth was associated with threats to early modern masculinities. As the previous three chapters have shown, early modern medical texts saw twins as a means through which to articulate concerns about masculine individuation, inheritance, power-sharing, and violence. Even as these texts voice valid concerns regarding the fragile construction of early modern masculinities, however, they also use their twins to subtly put forward an alternative version of masculinity – one which is bolstered by threats rather than destroyed by them. As positive as these representations may seem, there is nevertheless an element of impracticality to them, for the conditions which strengthened the masculinity of surgeons could not be reproduced in early modern society.

As well as offering advice upon how to deliver twin children, the midwifery manuals which have been such an integral part of this thesis also portray a view of them which is much less realistic. As the pronouns and illustrations which are employed throughout the manuals' discussions of twin deliveries demonstrate, these figures were always gendered as male. Eucharius Rösslin refers to them in a gender-

neutral manner, but the illustrations of twins in his midwifery manual clearly depict males. Jacques Guillemeau and Jakob Rüff, meanwhile, employ a combination of pronouns and illustrations to indicate the maleness of their twins. Guillemeau offers instructions on what to do when ‘it so fall out that the twins do come, one with *his* head, the other with *his* heeles foremost’, while Rüff warns ‘do not let the other slip away, [...] least sliding backe againe into the wombe, *he* be turned into another forme and fashion’.²⁹ The foetal images (Figs. 1, 2, and 3) which supplement these texts also make the gender of their twins a wholly male one, irrespective of which position they occupy or how young or old they are made to look.

(Fig6)

Illustrations of separate-bodied twins *in utero* (xiii, xv, and xvi). Rösslin, sig. L5^v. This image has been removed by the author of this thesis due to copyright reasons.

²⁹ Guillemeau, sig. Y2^v, italics own; Rüff, sig. K2^v-K2^r, italics own.

(Fig7)

(Left) Illustration of twins *in utero*, one positioned head-first, one positioned feet-first. Guillemeau, sig. Y1^r. This image has been removed by the author of this thesis due to copyright reasons.

(Fig8)

(Right) Illustration of twins *in utero*, one positioned head-first, one positioned feet-first. Rüff, sig. K4^v. This image has been removed by the author of this thesis due to copyright reasons.

Given that surgeons would have been wholly aware of the fact that twins could be constituted of all females or a mixture of biological sexes, their decision to textually and visually gender all twins as male is a somewhat odd one. While Alexandra Shepard has argued that ‘the generic body idealized by medical writers was almost always assumed to be male’, and Eve Keller has supported this notion in her analysis of Helkiah Crooke’s influential medical text *Mikrokosmographia* (1615), midwifery manuals were fundamentally grounded in the processes and experiences which only biologically female bodies could have.³⁰ For all that the broader medical genre may traditionally have seen the male body as their default mode of representation, the female-centric midwifery manuals had to contrastingly foreground the female body, as no male ideal would have been possible in the area of

³⁰ Shepard, p. 47; Keller remarks that ‘what Crooke presents as the universal body is really gendered as male, from which the female exists as an inferior deviation’. Keller, p. 65.

childbirth. What is more, illustrations of the naked and partially-dissected pregnant female body were present in other areas of midwifery manuals, so there was not a total lack of visual representation of these kinds of bodies. This willingness to represent some female bodies and completely ignore those of twins raises questions regarding the motivations behind this omission: what did the authors of these works gain by textually and visually implying that twins were always both male? Or, to put it differently, what did they have to lose by representing all-female or mixed-sex twins?

When they gender twins as always both male, the writers and illustrators of midwifery manuals are seeking to avoid a devaluation in the masculinities of male gynaecological practitioners. As the introduction to this thesis demonstrated, the birth of twins had the potential to render the masculinities of surgeons worthless, as there was a great risk of complications. There was also significant discomfort with the idea of men attending women who were giving birth. Twin births could suggest that surgeons were nothing more than inept physical labourers, but they could also increase the level of suspicion surrounding a male gynaecological practitioner's motivations for becoming involved with this branch of medicine. The delivery of twins necessitated a great deal of painful, intrusive contact between a surgeon, a woman's genitals, and the defenceless, naked bodies of her babies, which meant that it threatened to align the surgeon with a perverse, deviant form of masculinity. Given the unpleasant and grave nature of this potential association, the gendering of twins as always male was therefore designed to protect the masculinities of surgeons against being unfairly plunged into crisis. The omission of female twins draws the reader's or viewer's attention away from the uncomfortable fact that surgeons would have to make contact with naked female infant bodies as well as maternal ones. This

tactic is then compounded by the illustrations' portrayal of only the mother's womb, ovaries, and birth canal, which is a significant reduction of the maternal body.³¹ Instead of being an interaction between male practitioners and female patients, twin deliveries are therefore recast as thoroughly male exchanges which pose no threat to vulnerable women or their daughters. The potential for prolonged, perverse contact between surgeon and mother/children is much less evident to the reader or viewer of the male twins of midwifery manuals, meaning that medical men are much less likely to be associated with a deviant, devalued form of masculinity. The delivery of consistently male twins thus moves from a site of violation to one of liberation, as surgeons free their fellow males from the confines of the womb, and so become figures of heroic masculinity.

The consistent representation of twins as always both male therefore functions to transform the threats which these figures posed to the masculinities of surgeons into benefits. Yet as real-life twins were not always male, this wholly positive perspective could only ever be achieved in the textual world of the midwifery manuals. The idea that the masculinities of surgeons would continually be strengthened by involvement with twins thus proves to be something of a fantastical one, because it is only ever possible in a world where the birth experience is an exclusively male one. Of course, this type of world could only ever exist textually in the early modern period, as pregnancy and childbirth were not possible without the biological female body. While the twins of midwifery manuals may have had a practical function, then, they also served as a vehicle through which their male

³¹ For a discussion of how the maternal body gradually came to be effaced from medical illustrations between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, see Harvey, pp. 37-51.

authors could distance themselves from the crisis that they threatened to plunge them into, and assume a stronger, albeit fantastical form of masculinity.

ii. 'Twelfth Night' and Sebastian's Reparative Crisis of Masculinity

Shakespeare's choice of nomenclature for the twins of *Twelfth Night* suggests his commitment to exploring how men may turn an apparently disastrous crisis of masculinity into a means through which to elevate this form of identity. Sebastian, who shares his name with his father, recalls St Sebastian, who was martyred for his Christian faith by being shot with scores of arrows. Such early modern artists as Caravaggio, Tytan, and Guido Reni depicted the scene of St Sebastian's martyrdom; indeed, Reni was so compelled by it that he painted it seven times. While St Sebastian's painful punishment was designed to throw his pious Christian form of masculine identity into crisis, it therefore actually served to elevate him to the exalted status of a saint, and created an image which artists would aspire to represent. St Sebastian also had a connection to twins, as he was known for his conversion of the Roman pair Marcus and Marcellianus.³² Although Catholicism had of course been outlawed by the time that Shakespeare and Fletcher were writing their plays, it is likely that they would have had some knowledge of St Sebastian's life and his connection to twins, for he was believed to offer protection from the plague.³³ The name which Sebastian's twin Viola chooses in 'Cesario' also offers a

³² For early modern discussions of St Sebastian's conversion of Marcus and Marcellianus, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea sanctorum*, trans. anon (London: William Caxton, 1487), sig. piv^v; John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (London: John Daye, 1583), sig. D4^r; George Keynes, *The Roman Martyrologe* (Saint Omer: English College Press, 1627), sig. O2^v.

³³ For scholarly treatments of St Sebastian's association with protection from the plague, see Louise Marshall, 'Manipulating the Sacred: Image and Plague in Renaissance Italy', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 47.3 (1994), 485-532 (pp. 488-95); Janet S. Byrne, 'Prints of Medical Interest', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 5.8 (1947), 210-14 (p. 210).

similar trajectory of overcoming a crisis of masculinity, for it very obviously references the caesarean birth which constituted the only way that men could avoid being ‘of woman born’ (*Macbeth* IV. 1. 80).³⁴ While the name ‘Viola’ merely refers to a type of flower, Shakespeare chooses more complex and meaningful monikers for the male twin and the figure who is inspired by him. By doing do, he subtly gestures towards the possibility of transforming potential threats to masculine identity into benefits, a prospect which he further examines through *Twelfth Night*.³⁵

A shipwreck takes place before the play begins, but it has an important influence upon the comedy. Scholars have offered varying responses to this pre-play disaster, with Ina Haberman asserting that it allows the aforementioned characters to ‘connect [...] with new spaces, at the same time creating a more tightly knit topology of social relations’, and Robert Vrtis taking a different approach.³⁶ Vrtis argues that shipwrecks were popular features of seventeenth-century emblem books as they were used to represent the need to conquer overwhelming emotions, and suggests that Viola’s involvement in this event occasions a change in her identity which allows

³⁴ William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. by Kenneth Muir (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2013). Not all critics believe that the connection between ‘Cesario’ and ‘caesarean’ is so assured. Maurice Hunt is confident of the link, for he explains that early modern children who experienced a caesarean birth were thought of as either unnatural or extremely enterprising, so ‘In the ‘Cesario’ of *Twelfth Night*, we can see a merger of both traditions. While not born by Caesarean section, Viola is subject to figurative Caesarean delivery. Her stars are lucky, and she is a ‘great enterpriser’ in the world of Illyria’. Norman Nathan, meanwhile, argues that the name ‘Cesario’ is designed to mimic the meaning of ‘Sebastian’, which was ‘venerable’ – a term which also links back to the Roman Caesars. Nathan argues that by becoming ‘Cesario’, Viola ‘not only looks like her brother but also takes his name, though in a different language’. Winfried Schleiner also supports the association of ‘Cesario’ with Julius Caesar. Maurice Hunt, ‘Viola/Cesario, Caesarean Birth, and Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*’, *The Upstart Crow*, 21 (2001), 7-14 (p. 13); Norman Nathan, ‘Cesario, Sebastian, Olivia, Viola, and Illyria in *Twelfth Night*’, *NAMES*, 37.3 (1989), 281-81 (p. 282); see Winfried Schleiner, ‘Orsino and Viola: Are the Names of Serious Characters in *Twelfth Night* Meaningful?’, *Shakespeare Studies*, 16 (1983), 135-41 (p. 139).

³⁵ Winfried Schleiner links the name ‘Viola’ with the flower, which was understood to offer a cure for melancholy. She argues that Viola’s name gestures to the curative effect which the character has upon Orsino’s melancholy. See Schleiner, pp. 135-41.

³⁶ Ina Haberman, “‘I Shall Have Share in This Most Happy Wreck’: Shakespeare’s Topology of Shipwrecking”, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 148 (2012), 55-72 (p. 60).

her to affect the emotional status of such characters as Orsino and Olivia.³⁷ While Haberman's and Vrtis' readings offer useful insights into the long-term effects of the shipwreck, they nevertheless overlook the immediate impact which this event has upon the play.³⁸ As will now become clear, the shipwreck is a disaster which quickly recasts the twin relationship between Viola and Sebastian in fantastical terms, eliciting a response which will initially threaten, but ultimately strengthen, Sebastian's masculinity.

The discussion of the shipwreck with which Viola and the Captain open Act I, scene 2 of *Twelfth Night* is replete with overtones of childbirth, with its reference to how 'our ship did split' (*TN* I. 2. 8) to cause a desperate struggle for life in the sea.³⁹ As a vessel which is designed to protect both twins from a hostile, liquid environment, the undamaged ship recalls the womb. When the ship splits, then, the logical progression would be for both twins to be 'delivered' (or rescued and taken to dry land) immediately by the same person. What actually occurs, however, is a parting of the twins, as Viola is rescued by the Captain and his 'driving boat' (*TN* I. 2. 10), while Sebastian is pulled from the sea by Antonio, who spotted him while he was sailing in a different vessel. From being contained by one ship or womb, as is to be expected of twins, Viola and Sebastian are forced into separate ships or wombs. The shipwreck therefore does more than merely separate the pair: it also recasts them into a situation which is more appropriate for single-borns than twins. On a symbolic

³⁷ See Robert J. Vrtis, 'The Tempest Toss'd Ship: *Twelfth Night* and Emotional Communities in Early Modern London', *DQR Studies in Literature*, 57 (2015), 135-50.

³⁸ The dramaturgical potential of the shipwreck has also been highlighted by J. P. C. Brown, who argues that the sea has a metaphorical function which helps to establish the difference between the worlds of the play and that occupied by the audience. While I agree with Brown's notion that the shipwreck has a metaphorical function, the focus of this chapter is on the twin relationship rather than dramaturgy. See J. P. C. Brown, 'Seeing Double: Dramaturgy and the Experience of *Twelfth Night*', *Shakespeare*, 10.3 (2014), 293-308 (p. 298).

³⁹ All quotations are taken from William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, ed. by Keir Elam (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2008).

level, then, Viola and Sebastian's evacuation from the same ship into different vessels forces them away from the association with the shared womb which is a fundamental marker of the twin relationship, and instead connects them with separate wombs.

While the symbolism may not be immediately obvious, the audience are nevertheless given a strong sense of how Viola and Sebastian both feel that the shipwreck has transformed their twin relationship. With timing which may reflect their sense of separation, the second pieces of dialogue that are spoken by each of the twins underscores their disinterest in being recast as a single-born. Viola's comment 'And what should I do in Illyria? / My brother he is in Elysium' (*TN* I. 2. 2-3) suggests that she does not want to be a participant in a world which she no longer shares with her twin, and this sentiment is echoed in Sebastian's remark that their father 'left behind him myself and a sister, both born in an hour. If the heavens had been pleased, would we so had ended' (*TN* II. 1. 17-9).⁴⁰ While Viola and Sebastian realise that they must participate in Illyrian society and take steps to do so, this course of action takes the form of a necessary evil rather than an embracement of life without their twin. Both characters cherish hopes of having their twin relationship restored, for Viola clings to the idea that 'perchance he is not drowned' (*TN* I. 2. 4), while Sebastian longs for Antonio to 'kill him whom you have recovered' (*TN* II. 1. 35), and continues to dwell upon death by proposing to 'see the relics of this town' (*TN* III. 3. 19) even when the possibility of being murdered fades.⁴¹ Irrespective of

⁴⁰ There is also a mirroring of the act and scene numbers of the twins' first appearances: Viola first speaks in Act I, scene 2, and Sebastian's initial dialogue occurs in Act II, scene 1. This feature may be accidental rather than intentional, but the presence of the numbers 'one' and 'two' neatly aligns with the twins' struggles to maintain their identity as twins even when they have been forced into a position that is more familiar to single-borns.

⁴¹ Murray understands 'Viola's insistence on a hopeful outlook, [and] Sebastian's more negative interpretation of the twin situation' in terms of positivity and negativity, but I would argue that there

whether Viola and Sebastian hope to be reacquainted with their twin in life or death, there is a definite rejection of the single-born position which the shipwreck associated them with.⁴²

Indeed, Viola's refusal to see herself as anything other than a twin influences her decision to assume the disguise of Cesario. Viola's reasons for cross-dressing as Cesario have been the subject of intense critical interest, and the scholarly tendency has been to locate it within matters of personal safety and grief. Jean E. Howard combines the two motivations when she argues that 'Viola adopts male dress as a practical means of survival in an alien environment and, perhaps, as a magical means of keeping alive a brother believed drowned [...] cross-dressing is not so much a political act as a psychological haven'.⁴³ The importance of Sebastian to Viola's act of cross-dressing is also echoed by Keir Elam, who detects 'the priority of bereavement as a motivating force for her decision to cross-dress', and suggests that 'one of the primary aims of her disguise must be to keep her "dead" brother alive, by way of a sort of talismanic magic'.⁴⁴ While I agree with the notion that Viola wishes to protect herself and articulate her emotions towards Sebastian by cross-dressing as Cesario, I do not read this act in the 'magical' manner that Howard and Elam do. Instead, I understand Viola's assumption of the disguise of the male Cesario to be an act that is rooted in the far more prosaic idea that twins share the same birth and the same womb.

is a hopeful aspect to both twins' responses. Sebastian sees death as something to be desired, not feared, because it will restore his twin relationship with Viola. Murray, p. 167.

⁴² When Daisy Murray engages with the idea of the twin delivery, she focuses solely on Viola's viewpoint: 'As twins, Viola and Sebastian would have been "delivered" together and, now divided from her brother, Viola must wait for a second delivery, the revelation of Sebastian's survival and their subsequent reunion, in order to be able to naturally integrate into society again'. Murray, p. 165.

⁴³ Jean E. Howard, 'Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39.4 (1988), 418-40 (p. 431).

⁴⁴ Keir Elam, ed., 'Introduction', in *Twelfth Night* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2008), 1-145 (p. 26; p. 67).

When Viola arrives on Illyria and begins to realise that she will have to interact with members of that society, she expresses the wish that she ‘might not be delivered to the world – / Till I had made mine own occasion mellow – / What my estate is’ (*TN* I. 2. 39-41). Viola’s use of the verb ‘delivered’ recalls the idea of childbirth, and suggests the sense that the shipwreck has caused her to be ‘born’ prematurely. She is placed in the oxymoronic position of a single-born twin child who is waiting for her full-term brother to appear, for the Captain’s recollection of Sebastian’s actions allow her to believe in his survival and continue to think of herself as a twin. The idea of immediately appearing in Illyrian society is therefore an uncomfortable one for Viola, as she would be appearing as one who has been born alone, rather than together with Sebastian.

When she cross-dresses as Cesario, then, Viola is rejecting the impression of being born alone which the shipwreck threatened to force upon her, and offering herself a form of visual reassurance that she is still a twin. Such critics as Keir Elam and Hsiang-Chan Chu have argued that when Viola cross-dresses as Cesario, she becomes ‘his *doppelgänger*’ or his Lacanian mirror image, but there is evidence to suggest that Viola did not intend to disguise herself in such a way that there would be no distinction between herself and Sebastian.⁴⁵ When Antonio mistakes her for Sebastian, she exclaims ‘Prove true, imagination, O prove true, / That I, dear brother, be now ta’en for you!’ (*TN* III. 4. 372-73). Her use of ‘imagination’ partly refers to the idea of Sebastian’s survival, but there is the additional sense that Viola did not assume that she could pass for Sebastian. If Antonio has mistaken her for Sebastian,

⁴⁵ Elam, p. 26, italics in original; Hsiang-chun Chu, “‘The Master-Mistress of My Passion’: Cross-dressing and Gender Performance in *Twelfth Night*”, *SEDERI*, 12 (2001), 181-91 (pp. 187-88).

there is also the joyful suggestion that her twin brother survived the shipwreck. She continues:

Viola: He named Sebastian. I my brother know

Yet living in my glass. Even such and so

In favour was my brother, and he went

Still in this fashion, colour, ornament,

For him I imitate. O, if it prove,

Tempests are kind, and salt waves fresh in love!

(*TN* III. 4. 376-81).

The idea of Sebastian ‘yet living in my glass’ suggests that Viola believed the private space of the mirror to be the only place in which she could find a reminder of their twin relationship. The likeness of their appearance and clothing helped her to ‘imitate’ Sebastian and give her some visual reassurance of her status as a twin rather than a single-born, but it was not designed to turn her into him.⁴⁶ The references to ‘Tempests’ and ‘salt-waves’ which close this passage also help to ground Viola’s motivations in the desire to remind herself that she was a twin, as they were the very elements which tried to draw her twin-born status into doubt.

Viola may have intended for her cross-dressing to serve as a private reminder that she is a twin rather than a single-born, but it generates some very public threats to the masculinity of the brother who shared the same birth as her. The first of these

⁴⁶ When Antonio mistakes Viola for Sebastian, then, she realises that the idea which she has entertained in her ‘glass’ has the potential to become reality in the form of a real face which confirms her status as a twin.

threats occurs in relation to Sebastian's corporeal masculinity. When Olivia asks for a description of Cesario, Malvolio replies:

Malvolio: Not yet old enough for a man, nor young

enough for a boy, as a squash before 'tis a peascod,

or codling when 'tis almost an apple. 'Tis with him in

standing water between boy and man. He is very well

favoured, and he speaks very shrewishly. One would

think his mother's milk were scarce out of him.

(*TN* I. 5. 152-57).

With its contrasting images of growing and fully-grown fruit, this description creates a very clear impression of Cesario's undeveloped male body.⁴⁷ What has not been acknowledged, however, is how Malvolio's physical assessment of Cesario also threatens Sebastian's masculinity in the eyes of the audience. At the point of this description, the audience have not yet seen Sebastian; all they know is that he is Viola's brother who may or may not have survived the shipwreck. When Malvolio describes Cesario as 'a squash before 'tis a peascod, or codling when 'tis almost an apple', then, the audience are not entirely sure as to whether the effeminate assessment applies only to Cesario, or to Sebastian as well. If Cesario is 'very well favoured' and Sebastian is related to 'him', then it is likely that he would be 'very well favoured' too, but similarly Cesario's habit of speaking 'very shrewishly' could

⁴⁷ Lisa Hopkins offers a fascinating exploration of the references to apples in *Twelfth Night*, and argues that the 'repeated use of apple imagery underline[s] the inferiority of [Viola's] status as a daughter of Eve' by associating her with 'the taint of the Fall'. Although Hopkins focuses upon Viola rather than Sebastian, the references to apples in Malvolio's description also bring to mind the idea of devalued masculinity through their connections to the Fall. Lisa Hopkins, "'An Apple Cleft in Twain': Shakespearean Heroines and the Penalty of Eve', *Journal of Drama Studies*, 7 (2013), 91-99 (p. 98).

also suggest that Sebastian's voice has not yet broken, and so truly confirm that he is 'in standing water between boy and man'. What appears at first to be an ironic acknowledgement of Viola's disguise therefore actually comes to threaten Sebastian's corporeal masculinity, for the audience cannot be certain that Sebastian's body is not in a similarly undeveloped, unworthy state as Cesario's.

Sebastian's appearance in Act II, scene 1 would possibly have put an end to this threat in its original early modern performance context, as Viola would have been played by a boy and Sebastian by a taller, broader adult male. With such dramatic tendencies in mind, Malvolio's description of Cesario and its subsequent, unfulfilled threat to the masculinity of Sebastian points towards a pattern. The cross-dressed body of Cesario threatens to plunge Sebastian's masculinity into crisis by associating it with unvalued or effeminate characteristics. As troublesome as these threats are, however, they only exist until Sebastian is able to appear and prove, by contrast, that these threats are unfounded through his exhibition of his valuable, typically 'masculine' characteristics. From Olivia's misplaced attraction to the duel with Sir Andrew, the rejection of Antonio and the recognition scene, this pattern occurs time and again throughout the course of *Twelfth Night*.

In the very scene after the audience has been made to realise that Sebastian embodies a physically developed and therefore valued form of masculinity, Viola's disguise of Cesario comes to pose another threat to her twin's identity. When she admits her suspicion that Olivia has fallen in love with 'Cesario', Viola remarks:

Viola: Fortune forbid my outside have not charmed her.

She made good view of me, indeed so much

That methought her eyes had lost her tongue,

For she did speak in starts, distractedly,

She loves me sure.

(*TN* II. 2. 18-22).

Olivia's attraction to 'Cesario' is grounded in physical terms through the phrases 'good view', 'so much', and 'eyes had lost her tongue', and this theme continues to develop when she notes 'O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful / In the contempt and anger of his lip' (*TN* III. 1. 143-44). As Sebastian's physical difference from 'Cesario' has been recognised by the audience at this point, Olivia's attraction to the latter figure threatens to associate the former one with a deviant form of masculinity. Much of the humour of Olivia's love for Cesario lies in the prospect of how she will react when she comes face-to-face with a 'real' man in the form of Sebastian: will she still be attracted to him, or will she prefer the cross-dressed Cesario instead? If Olivia prefers Cesario to Sebastian, then he possesses some quality which steers her towards a fundamentally homosexual relationship rather than a heterosexual one. With the potential to lead Olivia away from experiencing heteronormative desire and participating in such a heterosexual institution as marriage, the masculinity of Sebastian therefore hovers on the verge of deviance for as long as the twins are apart.

Just as the physicality of Cesario forms the basis of a threat to Sebastian's sexual masculinity, so too does it underpin uncertainty surrounding his temperament. When Sir Toby and Fabian propose to set up a duel between Cesario and Sir Andrew, they do so on the assumption that both men's bodies lack the qualities which would allow them to engage in conflict. Fabian remarks of Cesario that 'the youth bears in his visage no great presage of cruelty' (*TN* III. 2. 61-62), while Sir Toby comments that 'For Andrew, if he were opened and you find so much blood in

his liver as will clog the foot of a flea, I'll eat th'rest of th'anatomy' (*TN* III. 2. 58-60). The lack of aggression in Cesario's face is suggested to indicate a similar deficiency of blood as within Sir Andrew's liver; although Cesario has youth and good breeding as mitigating factors, the alignment of 'his' exterior with Sir Andrew's interior suggests that Sir Toby and Fabian perceive both of their bodies as representative of their effeminate lack of courage. This link is simultaneously strengthened and complicated by the cross-dressed Viola's admission that 'a little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man' (*TN* III. 4. 295-96), because she understands her lack of a 'thing' to cause her to lack courage, but at the same time she is being opposed by Sir Andrew, who does not lack a 'thing' but *does* lack courage. When Viola tells Sir Andrew that 'I do assure you 'tis much against my will' (*TN* III. 4. 305-6), then, there is a pun on temperament as well as physicality. Viola's lack of 'will' is not necessarily a consequence of biology, as is evidenced by Sir Andrew. This situation suggests that Sebastian's biology will not necessarily mean that he possesses the 'will' to be courageous if he finds himself challenged in such a way. His status as a man does not guarantee that he is in possession of a heroic form of masculinity, so he is once more placed within distance of a cowardly, much less valued variety of this type of identity.

Viola's decision to cross-dress as Cesario may have occurred because of a desire to remind herself that she was a twin, rather than the single-born that the shipwreck suggested, but it threatens to plunge the masculinity of her twin Sebastian into crisis on physical, sexual, and temperamental terms. Viola/Cesario inadvertently raises the question as to whether Sebastian will be as physically undeveloped and unwilling to fight as she is, while also querying whether he will have the ability to transform Olivia's homosexual attraction into a heterosexual one. In so doing, so

threatens to align him with a crisis-stricken form of masculinity that is weak, cowardly, and sexually deviant. While Viola/Cesario may raise the spectre of crisis in relation to Sebastian's masculine identity, however, the threat she poses is arguably never a dangerous one. *Twelfth Night* is a comedy, and its audience are encouraged to laugh at Viola's/Cesario's physical weakness, refusal to engage in combat, and ability to attract Olivia because they know that Cesario is not really a man. When other characters comment upon 'his' apparent underdevelopment and cowardliness, the audience are meant to associate these traits with femininity rather than masculinity. What is more, their familiarity with the comic genre and knowledge of Sebastian's survival would have encouraged the audience to anticipate that Viola's male twin will make his presence known, then solve the problems which Viola/Cesario created. The audience are therefore encouraged to respond to the potential devaluation of Sebastian's masculinity by labelling the threats of underdevelopment and cowardliness as hallmarks of feminine behaviour, and waiting for Olivia to transfer her attraction to Sebastian so that the heterosexual order of things is restored. In so doing, they are made to anticipate that a crisis of masculinity will be a reparative event that restores the proper order of things, rather than a destructive one.

The reparative approach to a crisis of masculinity begins when Sebastian starts to get mistaken for Cesario. When Sir Andrew lashes out at who he thinks is Cesario but the audience know to be Sebastian, it immediately becomes apparent that the latter figure is far more willing to engage in conflict than his assailant or his twin. Sebastian does not merely respond to Sir Andrew's blow, but multiplies them, exclaiming 'Why, there's for thee / And there, and there' (*TN* IV. 1. 25-6). His retaliatory stance is even more evident in the new threat which he utters when Sir

Toby restrains him: 'If thou dar'st tempt me further, draw thy sword' (*TN IV. 1. 41*).

The phallic implications of 'sword' combine with the intent of the challenge to further underscore Sebastian's difference not only from Cesario, but from also Sir Andrew too, for he is in possession of courage as well as a 'thing' (*TN III. 4. 295*). Sebastian combats the threat of being associated with a weak, effeminate, cowardly form of masculinity by moving himself closer to a stronger, braver and more valued form of that identity.

Given the vehemence of Sebastian's response to Sir Andrew and Sir Toby, his masculinity may seem to veer upon the hyper-aggressive, but such a possibility is very quickly dismissed by Olivia's willingness to accept his behaviour. She begs 'Be not offended, dear Cesario' (*TN IV. 1. 48*), but instead 'Go with me to my house' (*TN IV. 1. 53*), and so dismisses the previous threats to Sebastian's temperamental masculinity at the same time as she begins to distance him from associations with sexual deviance. As well as Olivia's repeated requests for Sebastian to go with her to her house, her plaintive wish that 'would thou'dst be ruled by me' (*TN IV. 1. 63*) offers a significant indication that the presence of Sebastian has not lessened her attraction to 'Cesario'. Indeed, Olivia's order to 'Plight me the full assurance of your faith' (*TN IV. 3. 26*) in the form of a pre-marriage contract which takes place under 'that consecrated roof' (*TN IV. 3. 25*) further confirms her acceptance of Sebastian, for she has not detected anything amiss in the physicality or manners of 'Cesario' to make her suspicious. While Sebastian may seem to be an exceptionally passive respondent to the situation in which he finds himself, his acquiescence has an important function. By following Olivia – 'Madam, I will' (*TN IV. 1. 64*) – and participating in the ceremony which she organises – 'I'll follow this good man, and go with you, / And, having sworn truth, will ever be true' (*TN IV. 3. 32-3*) –

Sebastian reorients Olivia's previously 'queer' desire for 'Cesario' into a fundamentally heterosexual one. What is more, he expresses willingness to uphold the vow which he utters as 'true', which suggests that Olivia's movement towards heteronormative desire will be a permanent one. In combination with Sebastian's ability to maintain Olivia's attraction, his promises to keep his pledges move him closer to a sexually-conventional form of masculinity rather than a deviant one, for he works towards perpetuating the early modern heterosexual institution of marriage rather than disrupting it.

While Sebastian may begin to counter the threats which his cross-dressed twin posed to his masculinity, however, the question of what Olivia will do when she realises that she has promised to marry the wrong 'man' prevents them from vanishing entirely. As becomes evident when Olivia calls Viola-as-Cesario 'husband' (*TN* V. 1. 139), she prefers to believe that 'Cesario's' denials take place because of 'too much fear' (*TN* V. 1. 167) rather than any alternative explanation. As well as heightening the dramatic tension, then, Olivia's persistence also helps to build towards the conundrum of Sebastian's masculinity. When he makes his entrance in Act V, scene 1, it is striking that his temperamental, sexual, and physical masculinities are all invoked:

Sebastian: I am sorry, madam, I have hurt your kinsman,

But had it been the brother of my blood

I must have done no less with wit and safety.

You throw a strange regard upon me, and by that

I do perceive it hath offended you.

Pardon me, sweet one, even for the vows

We made each other but so late ago.

(*TN* V. 1. 205-11).

While Sebastian assumes that Olivia is peering at him in a less-than-loving manner because she believes him to have been over-aggressive, there is much more at stake here than her displeasure. Sebastian's masculinity teeters on the brink of crisis for one final time, as Olivia remains silent for ten lines while she attempts to process the fact that she has not promised to marry Cesario at all, but only someone who looks like him. As Orsino observes 'One face, one voice, one habit and two persons' (*TN* V. 1. 212) and Antonio marvels 'An apple cleft in two is not more twin / Than these two creatures' (*TN* V. 1. 219-20), the audience's attention is surely centred upon the actor who plays Olivia. Her response of 'Most wonderful!' (*TN* V. 1. 221) invariably evokes laughter in performance through the implication that she is imagining sleeping with both twins at the same time.⁴⁸ While Olivia may not have completely made the transition from homosexual to heterosexual attraction, then, the implication that she is just as sexually attracted to Sebastian as to Cesario signals that she is on the path to doing so.

Scholars of *Twelfth Night* understand the final scene of *Twelfth Night* to emphasise the 'idea of seeing double', or the conjoined nature of Viola and Sebastian, but it actually confirms their difference as well as their similarity.⁴⁹ As well as proving that he is physically more developed and heroic than his cross-dressed twin, Sebastian also manages to place Olivia even nearer to the path of heteronormative desire. His worthiness is confirmed by Orsino's compliment 'right

⁴⁸ An alternative to this reading is offered by Murray, who attests that Olivia's exclamation shows that 'the wonder associated with the twin experience effectively transitions away from the unnatural associations that threatened earlier in the action'. Murray, p. 173.

⁴⁹ See Brown, pp. 304-05; Murray, pp. 173-74.

noble is his blood' (*TN V. 1. 260*), and is rewarded by Olivia's confirmation that two couples will participate in the heterosexual institution of marriage: 'One day shall crown th'alliance on't, [...] / Here at my house and at my proper cost' (*TN V. 1. 312-13*). With reliable assurances of his future emotional and financial security, Sebastian manages to permanently distance his masculinity from a crisis-stricken state by surmounting the threats which the cross-dressed Viola posed to it. Indeed, he even succeeds in combating the source of that threat itself by making it possible for his twin to drop the disguise of 'Cesario'. Sebastian ends the play with his physical, temperamental, and sexual masculinities having been strengthened and deemed valuable, rather than destroyed and devalued by the threats posed to them.

Yet even as Sebastian successfully establishes his physically-developed, courageous, and conventionally heterosexual masculinities, it is evident that this formulation is only possible because Viola's cross-dressing is understood to be a response to the shipwreck. The revelation that 'Cesario' was not a real person, but the disguise of a woman who had been parted from her twin brother, is sandwiched between the points at which Sebastian's masculinity is finally assured and when it is rewarded. The reunion of the twins sees repeated references to the shipwreck which parted them, and begins to point towards an explanation for Viola's behaviour. Sebastian initiates the nautical theme when he recalls 'I had a sister, / Whom the blind waves and surges have devoured' (*TN V. 1. 224-25*), a reference which is echoed when Viola admits 'Sebastian was my father / Such a Sebastian was my brother too, / So went he suited to his watery tomb' (*TN V. 1. 228-30*). Sebastian and Viola both use the past tense ('had', 'was') to refer to each other, which reflects their initial beliefs that the shipwreck deprived them of their identity as twins. Viola's acknowledgement that 'so went [Sebastian] suited to his watery tomb' begins to link

her choice of attire to this event, but Sebastian sees the costume as an unnecessary stumbling-block. He comments:

Sebastian:

A spirit I am indeed,
But am in that dimension grossly clad
Which from the womb I did participate.
Were you a woman, as the rest goes even,
I should my tears let fall upon your cheek
And say, ‘Thrice welcome, drownèd Viola’.

(*TN* V. 1. 232-37).

While the shipwreck tried to place them into the position of single-borns, Sebastian puts more emphasis upon the ‘womb’ of their mother, which he of course shared with Viola. The only thing which prevents him from resuming their twin relationship is the masculine dress, which causes him to doubt all of the other evidence that he is looking at ‘drownèd Viola’.

Once she has ascertained that the Sebastian of Messaline to whom they are both referring is the same man and so her twin really has survived the shipwreck, Viola also becomes conscious of the potentially problematic nature of her disguise. She orders:

Viola: If nothing lets to make us happy both

But this my masculine usurped attire,

Do not embrace me till each circumstance

Of place, time, fortune do cohere and jump

That I am Viola – which to confirm
I'll bring you to a captain in this town,
Where lie my maiden weeds, by whose gentle help
I was preserved to serve this noble count.
(*TN V. 1. 245-52*).

Viola's refusal to 'embrace' Sebastian immediately has been read as a form of paying homage to a dramatic tradition which first appeared in medieval Mystery plays, but it can also be understood in terms of character motivation.⁵⁰ If Viola is understood to have cross-dressed as Cesario because she wanted to remind herself that she was a twin, then her reticence can be explained as a wish to keep her own personal reminder of Sebastian completely distinct from Sebastian himself. Viola thus defers tactile confirmation of the twin relationship so that she can wait until it visually reflects its female-male configuration in a strategy which also helps to clear herself and Sebastian from any suspicion. The Captain is an independent witness who can display the 'maiden weeds' which prove her biological femaleness, but also vouch for her separation from Sebastian and her subsequent rescue from the sea. He can therefore provide evidence of the desperate motives which informed her decision to cross-dress, and Sebastian's lack of involvement in the plan.

Although the speed of Orsino's and Olivia's reactions vary, they are both overwhelmingly positive. Orsino finds himself attracted to the prospect of 'Cesario' turning out to be a woman, for he jokingly addresses Viola as 'Boy' (*TN V. 1. 263*)

⁵⁰ Yu Jin Ko argues that 'In the Viola-Sebastian recognition scene Shakespeare revises the *noli-me-tangere* moment in medieval drama to unearth the painful longing in deferred completion and mix it with the joy of reunion'. Yu Jin Ko, 'The Comic Close of *Twelfth Night* and Viola's *Noli me tangere*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48.4 (1997), 391-405 (p. 395).

and orders 'Let me see thee in thy woman's weeds' (*TN* V. 1. 269). Olivia's response occurs only after she has concerned herself with Malvolio's apparent madness, but her willingness to hold a double wedding and to call Viola 'A sister' (*TN* V. 1. 320) illustrates that she has accepted Viola's explanation even if it did surprise her. These positive responses are the crucial enabling factor for the strengthening of Sebastian's masculinities, for without them this form of identity would have succumbed to the threats which the cross-dressed Viola posed to them. If Orsino and Olivia had detected something unsavoury in Viola's behaviour, Sebastian would also have been implicated, for he is her twin. While the comedy ends happily for the pair who shared the same birth, then, its jubilation is somewhat tempered by the knowledge that the twins came uncomfortably close to a much less pleasant outcome. The fact that 'Cesario' remains until the very end of the play underscores the narrow escape which Sebastian in particular made: with 'his' similar appearance and threatening undertones, Cesario offers a visual reminder of how Sebastian's masculinity could have been judged in a completely different, crisis-stricken light.

iii. *Monsieur Thomas: Thomas' Reparative Crisis of Masculinity*

While *Twelfth Night* contains a female twin who cross-dresses out of necessity, *Monsieur Thomas* features a male twin who performs this act out of pique. With a beloved who is either offended by or mocking of his attempts to woo her, Thomas elects to cross-dress as his twin sister for much more primal reasons than Viola: he is frustrated that Mary has not yet allowed him to sleep with her. Despite these differences in motivation between the acts of cross-dressing within Shakespeare's and Fletcher's comedies, there is a notable similarity to the types of threats which this act poses to the masculinities of the male twin. In a trajectory that echoes

Sebastian's experience, Thomas' physical, temperamental, and sexual masculinities initially teeter on the brink of crisis, but are eventually strengthened by the practice of cross-dressing.

In the same way that Shakespeare used the names of his twins in order to gesture towards the possibility for masculinity to be threatened or elevated, Fletcher also employs the monikers of his jointly-born pair to achieve a similar effect.

Fletcher's eponymous protagonist shares his name with the Biblical apostle Thomas, who refused to believe that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead until he saw and felt Christ's wounds. As one of Christ's apostles, Thomas occupied a highly valued position, but his need to see Christ's wounds before he would believe in the Resurrection impacted negatively upon the way he was perceived. Sir William Pellham explains that Thomas was one 'of the most confident of all the Apostles, yet shewed the greatest weaknesse'.⁵¹ In what was a further nod to this dualistic potential, the name 'Thomas' meant 'twin' on account of the apostle.⁵² This sense of contrast is also evident in the two names given to Fletcher's female twin: 'Dorothea' means 'gift of God', but she is additionally referred to as the more unsavoury 'Doll', which was a term for a prostitute.⁵³ While a woman who acted like the heavenly

⁵¹ Sir William Pellham, *Meditations upon the Gospell by Saint John* (London: G. P., 1625), sig. I5^r-I6^v.

⁵² There are several examples of this connection in both religious and reference works. In part of a discussion of the fates of various apostles, W. B. refers to 'Thomas otherwise called *Didymus*', whilst Henoeh Clapham explains in a similar text that 'Thomas *Didymus* was wanting'. A Latin-English dictionary then indicates that '*Didymus*' denotes 'A *twinne*'. This connection persisted until at least the middle of the seventeenth century, for both editions of Thomas Blount's *Glossographia* contain the same definition: 'Didymus [...] the name of St. *Thomas*, one of the Apostles, and signifies a Twin. He was called *Didymus*, for being a twin, born with some other, or for some such cause.' W. B., *Saint Peters Path to the Joyes of Heaven* (London: Felix Kingston, 1598), sig. G1^r; Thomas Thomas, *Thomæ Thomasi Dictionarium* (Cambridge: Johannis Legatt, 1600), sig. B3^v, italics in original; Thomas Blount, *Glossographia: or a Dictionary* (London: Thomas Newcombe, 1656), sig. N2^v, italics in original; Thomas Blount, *Glossographia: or a Dictionary*, 2nd edn (London: Thomas Newcombe, 1661), sig. N6^v.

⁵³ Although Fletcher's Doll is not a prostitute, there was something of a dramatic tradition of using the name 'Doll' for a character who had such an occupation. Doll Tearsheet of Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV* is a prostitute, as are the Dolls of Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* and Thomas Dekker's *Northwood Ho*.

‘Dorothea’ had the potential to reflect well upon her male relatives or husband, the fleshly ‘Doll’ threatened to taint their masculinities. Fletcher’s names therefore bring to mind the sort of liminal space between an elevated form of masculinity, and a devalued one, which his titular character occupies multiple times throughout the comedy.

With so much of the critical dialogue surrounding Fletcher being written from a condemnatory viewpoint, it is hardly surprising that few substantial discussions of *Monsieur Thomas* exist. Michelle M. Dowd is currently responsible for the most sustained treatment of this comedy, and her focus upon early modern masculinity means that this chapter shares important points of similarity with it. Dowd relates *Monsieur Thomas* to contemporaneous attitudes towards the role which foreign travel could play in the formation of masculine identity, and argues that ‘Fletcher defines prodigality explicitly, if paradoxically, as a threat to patrilineality’ because it could cause the son to develop undesirable characteristics which discomfited fathers even as they pleased them by returning home.⁵⁴ She focuses upon how Thomas’ Act IV admission of promiscuity delights Sebastian and means that ‘Thomas’ renegade behavior is specifically rewarded as a sign of proper masculinity’, which ‘not only turns the tables on Jacobean social decorum, but in doing so makes visible an alternative definition of masculine subjectivity, one paradoxically founded on prodigality’.⁵⁵ This chapter shares Dowd’s view that Thomas’ unconventional behaviour ultimately strengthens his masculinity rather than weakening it, but extends the scope of this argument with its focus upon the cross-dressing incident. It also proposes that *Monsieur Thomas* concerned with

⁵⁴ Michelle M. Dowd, ‘A Gentleman May Wander: Inheritance, Travel, and the Prodigal Son on the Jacobean Stage’, *Renaissance Drama*, 42.1 (2014), 113-37 (p. 120).

⁵⁵ Dowd, p. 122.

highlighting the process through which a potential crisis of masculinity had a reparative function for this form of identity, and uses its twin characters as a means through which to fulfil this goal. By agreeing with the essence of Dowd's argument but employing a different part of the play to further examine the process through which masculine identity becomes elevated, rather than devalued, this chapter therefore extends the scope of the most developed critical discussion of the play to date, while reasserting the comedy's importance to early modern identity politics.

Rather than cross-dressing as his twin on his own, Thomas actually enlists her help. When he first orders Doll to make him resemble her, he issues instructions with a specificity which borders upon enjoyment. He tells Doll to 'paint me handsomly, / Take heed my nose be not in graine too' (*MT* IV. 6. sig. K2^r) and then comments 'Out with this hayre, *Doll*, handsomely' (*MT* IV. 6. sig. K2^r).⁵⁶ While Doll is working only on his face, Thomas' sole concern is that she performs her duties 'handsomly', but when attention turns to the issue of dress and conduct, the threats to his physical masculinity begin. Doll draws attention to the fact that Thomas is not fully adhering to the conventions of female dress when she asks incredulously 'You have your breeches?' (*MT* IV. 6. sig. K2^r), and is met by the defensive response 'do'st thou think I love to blast my Buttocks?' (*MT* IV. 6. sig. K2^r). When Doll orders 'Ye are a sweet Lady: come let's see you curtsie' (*MT* IV. 6. sig. K3^v), she develops the posterior theme further, commenting, 'What broke i'th'bum, hold up your head' (*MT* IV. 6. sig. K3^v) and eliciting a contemptuous riposte from Thomas: 'Plague on't, / I shall be pisse my Breeches if I cowre thus' (*MT* IV. 6. sig. K3^v). As well as amusing the audience, this exchange also reveals Thomas' fear that cross-dressing as Doll will have a devastating impact upon his

⁵⁶ All quotations are taken from John Fletcher, *Monsieur Thomas* (London: John Waterson, 1639).

masculinity. As breeches were a key symbol of gender differentiation from the age of seven onwards, Thomas' keenness to wear them and preserve them from contact with any bodily fluids suggests that the act of cross-dressing makes him feel vulnerable to becoming the very kind of leaky body that he is only trying to impersonate. The more that Thomas is made to resemble Doll, the greater the increase in the threats to his physical masculinity, until it seems that he is in danger of having his valuable biological male body replaced with a much less valuable biological female one.

As well as posing threats to his body, the act of cross-dressing places Thomas' temperamental masculinity in a dangerous position. When the cross-dressed Thomas meets his father Sebastian in the garden and is mistaken for Doll, he lashes out in response to the intense questioning he receives regarding being out late. As Thomas makes his exit, Sebastian marvels '*I* doe not bleed, 'twas a sound knock she gave me, / A plaguey mankinde girle, how my braines totters?' (*MT* IV. 6. sig. K3^r, italics in original). Instead of being infuriated by such violent treatment from his 'daughter', Sebastian expresses only admiration: 'thou hast got one thousand pound more / With this dog tricke / Mine owne true spirit in her too' (*MT* IV. 6. sig. K3^r). Thomas' violence sees Doll grow so significantly in her father's esteem that she will be rewarded with the considerable sum of 'one thousand pound'. Fatherly affection and generosity are thus both diverted away from Thomas, which threatens to render him emotionally as well as financially poorer for his act. If Doll has 'Mine own true spirit', then Sebastian could consider Thomas effeminate and less worthy by comparison, so his temperamental as well as his economic masculinity both sit on the brink of crisis.

While Thomas initially avoids this danger because his father's servant Launcelot catches sight of the fact that 'Doll' 'has Boots on like a Player, / Under his wenches cloaths' (*MT* V. 2. sig. K3^r) and speculates that 'she' is really Thomas in disguise, this threat becomes particularly dangerous later on. Thomas decides to take revenge on Doll for warning Mary of his plan to disguise his way into her bed. He achieves this aim by marrying Hylas, whose name recalls the youth who was beloved of Hercules and thereby brings homosexual love to mind, when he is still cross-dressed as her. When Sebastian sees 'Doll' and Hylas kissing, he exclaims to Launcelot 'Hang Boots Sir, / Why they'l weare breeches too' (*MT* V. 5. sig. L3^v). The item of clothing which Thomas viewed as a reassuring symbol of his biologically male identity becomes reworked into evidence of Doll's strength and, by contrast, his emasculation. Sebastian furiously demands 'Hast thou not spoil'd the boy?' (*MT* V. 5. sig. L3^v) of an astonished Launcelot, and so demonstrates his belief that Doll is more masculine, and therefore more valuable, than her twin brother.

With the threat of hanging literally hanging over his head, Launcelot argues that Doll's masculine characteristics pay a far greater compliment to Sebastian than any which Thomas might have exhibited in the past. He explains:

Launcelot: But you are so impatient; do's not this shew sir,

[...]

Far braver in your daughter? in a Son now

'Tis nothing, of no marke: every man do's it,

But, to beget a daughter, a man maiden

That reaches at these high exploits, is admirable:

Nay, she goes far beyond him: for when durst he,

But when he was drunke, do any thing to speake of?

This is *Sebastian* truly.

(*MT* V. 5. sig. L3^v-L3^r).

If Thomas acts wildly, Launcelot argues that it is ‘nothing, of no marke’, because he is only following the conventional behaviour displayed by ‘every man’. If Doll acts wildly, however, it is ‘admirable’, for she is breaking with gender conventions.

Launcelot praises Sebastian for managing to ‘beget [...] a man maiden’ who exhibits more masculine characteristics than his son, and encourages him to dwell upon the success of Doll rather than the failure of Thomas, because she is the child who ‘truly’ resembles her father.

While there is, of course, a huge irony to Launcelot’s words because Thomas *is* doing something that goes beyond the conventional behaviour of young men, his proclamation demonstrates that the act of cross-dressing poses a serious threat to Thomas’ temperamental masculinity. It renders him an unremarkable, unexceptional son who is much less valuable than his apparently far more masculine sister, and so in Sebastian’s eyes makes him an unworthy heir. As Sebastian watches Hylas and Doll canoodling, he vows ‘And he shall marry her, for it seems she likes him, / And their first Boy shall be my heire’ (*MT* V. 5. sig. L3^r). Thomas is therefore in severe danger of losing Sebastian’s approval, his estate, and his attendant social prestige; the only comfort is that Hylas and Doll have not yet had ‘their first boy’ to replace him as heir. The threat to Thomas’ temperamental masculinity thus intensifies until it endangers his future economic and social masculinities too, and places his masculine identity on the very edge of crisis.

All the while that the characters in the play are focusing on the aforementioned varieties of Thomas' masculinities, the audience are considering his sexual one. They are aware that Hylas is rankled at having been humiliated by Thomas, and his comment of having 'dog'd his Sister' (*MT* V. 4. sig. L1^r) is given sexual overtones by his friend Sam's vow that 'Off goes her maiden-head' (*MT* V. 4. sig. L1^r). When Hylas recognises the cross-dressed Thomas as 'Mistris *Doll*, *Sebastians* daughter' (*MT* V. 5. sig. L2^r) and he replies 'I am glad, I have met so good a Gentleman' (*MT* V. 5. sig. L2^r), then, the intrigue of their meeting lies in the question of how far Thomas is willing to go to avenge his twin. All of the play's emphasis upon Thomas' attraction to Mary and his associations with promiscuity have so far pointed towards a distinctly heterosexual orientation, but his cross-dressed meeting with Hylas raises the possibility of his homosexuality, or indeed bisexuality, too, and thereby threatens to associate him with what would have been understood as a deviant form of masculinity.

Thomas is as aware of this potential threat to his sexual masculinity as the audience are, for his meeting with Hylas is spent in trying to avoid as much physical contact as possible while trying to seem romantically interested in him. When Hylas asks 'What if a man should kisse ye?' (*MT* V. 5. sig. L2^r), Thomas responds 'That's no harm Sir, / Pray God he 'scapes my beard' (*MT* V. 5. sig. L2^r-L3^v), which is designed to be as repulsive a comment as it is ironic. Sebastian's observation of Doll 'Kissing that fellow there' (*MT* V. 5. sig. L3^v) clearly indicates that Hylas does not shy away from this physical feature, but Thomas is keen to be spoken to rather than kissed. He tries to maintain a conversation by such comments as 'Nay then ye love me not' (*MT* V. 5. sig. L3^v) and 'I must confesse, I have long desir'd your sight sir' (*MT* V. 5. sig. L3^v), but Hylas is far more interested in the physical aspect of their

relationship than the verbal one, for Sebastian soon observes ‘Why, now they kisse againe’ (*MT* V. 5. sig. L3^v). Thomas’ vain attempts to avoid kissing Hylas signal his discomfort at participating in what is fundamentally a homosexual act. As he knows that his disguise prevents Hylas from ascertaining the real gender of the person that he is kissing, however, such a threat to his sexual masculinity seems to come only from himself.

It is when Hylas shows signs of wanting to develop the physical aspect of his relationship with ‘Doll’ further that Thomas feels more threatened. With such a libido that he will accept ‘Any woman, / Of what degree or calling’ (*MT* IV. 4. sig. K1^r) who is ‘Of any age, from fourscore to fourteen’ (*MT* IV. 4. sig. K1^r), Hylas is not the sort of character to be contented with kissing alone, so Thomas has to go to considerable lengths to avoid being made to display his maleness and endure the questioning which would follow. He exclaims ‘Not without marriage’ (*MT* V. 5. sig. L3^r), and reproaches Hylas for his impatience: ‘Now I have promis’d ye this night to marry, / Would ye be so intemperate? are ye a Gentleman?’ (*MT* V. 5. sig. L3^r). When Hylas then asks ‘will ye marry presently?’ (*MT* V. 2. sig. L3^r), the cross-dressed Thomas responds with a comprehensive plan:

Thomas: Get you afore, and stay me at the Chappell,

Close by the Nunnery, there you shall finde a night Priest,

Little Sir *Hugh*, and he can say the Matrimony

Over without booke, for we must have no company,

Nor light, for feare my father know, which must not yet he;

And then to-morrow night.

(*MT* V. 5. sig. L3^r).

The lack of 'booke', 'company' and 'light' appeal to the clandestine nature of the proposed wedding, but they still do not disguise the fact that Thomas will be filling the position of 'wife', and so replacing the female body with a male one. While he may be appropriating the female role in the ceremony, however, he certainly does not intend to do so in the consummation, which he schedules for 'to-morrow night'. Thomas is so concerned to escape the threat of one form of deviant masculinity in the sodomite that he seems neither to realise, nor to care, that he is in danger of exhibiting a different type of sexually-deviant masculinity: one which disrupts the then-heterosexual institution of marriage.

Although the audience never see the wedding ceremony between Hylas and the cross-dressed Thomas, they learn enough from the events which precede and succeed it to understand that the latter character did continue to pose as his twin as it unfolded. Just before the ceremony, Hylas tells his friend Sam that 'I am all, all to be married' (*MT* V. 8. sig. L4^r), so he will 'see me, a most glorious Husband' (*MT* V. 5. sig. M1^v). When he catches sight of Doll the following morning, however, he is astonished to find that she has no recollection of the event: 'Are you not my Wife? did I not marry you last night / At St. *Michaels* Chapel?' (*MT* V. 10. sig. M3^v). Doll's denials allow the audience to hear a potted summary of the wedding through Hylas' incredulous questions. He asks 'did not the Priest / Sir *Hugh* that you appointed, about twelve a clocke / Tye our hands fast? did you not sweare you lov'd me?' (*MT* V. 7. sig. M3^r), and so reveals that Thomas did indeed appropriate the female role in the sacred ceremony. In so doing, he has not only placed himself in a sexually-deviant position, but also Hylas too. As a man who agrees to marry another woman who will actually turn out to be a man, Hylas has unwittingly been made to subvert the heterosexual institution of marriage, for he is one half of a pair who does

not conform to what was the usual female-male configuration of early modern spouses.

Thomas' decision to cross-dress as Doll thus begins by threatening his own masculinity with crisis, and comes to seriously endanger the masculinity of another man in Hylas too. These threats develop from the idea that Thomas may try to become a woman, but intensify exactly because he is *not* a woman, with the act of cross-dressing to blame for each of these situations. Whenever Thomas perceives a threat to his physical or sexual masculinities, he is able to counter them through clothing or audacious plans, but even as the audience are encouraged to laugh at his responses, they will know that he remains blissfully unaware of the threats he has inflicted upon his temperamental, economic, and social masculinities. As the final scene opens, the question remains as to whether Sebastian will indeed disinherit Thomas in favour of Doll's first son. Since the audience are fully aware of Sebastian's appreciation of hypersexual, aggressive, and disrespectful male behaviour, however, it is very likely that they will expect the threats to Thomas' masculinities to be transformed into benefits as soon as his father hears about his cross-dressed capers.

The instant that Thomas and Doll are seen alongside each other, Sebastian comes to realise that he was not watching his daughter kiss Hylas, but his son. Launcelot exclaims 'Do you now see plain? that's Mistris *Dorothy*, / And that's his Mistris' (*MT* V. 11. sig. M4^r). Rather than being alarmed by the sight of his son in female costume and the knowledge of what he has just seen him do, Sebastian is overjoyed: 'Peace, let my joy work easely / Ha, boy: art there my boy: mine own boy, *Tom*, boy' (*MT* V. 11. sig. M4^r). The very clothes which originally threatened to render him a less worthy child than Doll restore Thomas to the foremost position in

his father's affections. By calling Thomas' 'mine own boy', Sebastian is not only suggesting his worthiness as an heir, but also as a man, for a son who is high-spirited, unrestrained and unconventional has moved away from crisis and reached what Sebastian considers to be the apex of masculinity. The idea of material rewards for Thomas' behaviour is hinted at by Sebastian's order to go 'Home *Lance*, and strike a fresh peece, of wine, the townes ours' (*MT* V. 11. sig. M4^r), or to make it possible for the assembled characters to embark on an alcohol-fuelled celebration in honour of Thomas' true return from his travels.

Thomas has already experienced the transformation of the threats to his temperamental, economic, and social masculinities into benefits, but he then starts to take a more proactive approach to having a similarly positive impact upon his sexual masculinity. When Hylas appears, Thomas greets him with the tongue-in-cheek remark 'You are a trusty Husband, / And a hot lover too' (*MT* V. 11. sig. N1^r), which is designed to reassure Hylas that his motivations for kissing and marrying him while dressed as Doll were humorous, rather than sexual. When an understandably-irritated Hylas responds 'Nay then, good morrow, / Now I perceive the Knavery' (*MT* V. 1. sig. N1^r), Thomas then begins to restore him to a truly heterosexual position. In the same jocular tone, he continues 'Thou would'st faine have a wife?' (*MT* V. 11. sig. N1^r), before commenting 'Thou shalt have a wife, & a fruitful wife, for *I* find, *Hylas*, / That *I* shall never be able to bring thee Children' (*MT* V. 11. sig. N1^r). That 'wife' who can 'bring thee Children' is, of course, Doll, who referred to Hylas as 'A pretty handsome gentleman' (*MT* V. 10. sig. M3^v) the first time she met him. For all of Thomas' humour, he is nevertheless sincere about restoring the marriage to a more conventionally gendered configuration, for when Hylas shows signs of dissent, he threatens 'strike hands, or *I*le strike first' (*MT* V. 11. sig. N1^r, italics in original).

After an exchange of terms with Doll, the pair do consent to become spouses, and so Thomas moves away from the deviant masculinity of a disrupter of heterosexual marriage, to the societally-acceptable one of an enabler of this institution.

After distancing himself from a crisis of masculinity by countering all of the threats which the act of cross-dressing posed to his masculinities, Thomas is then given further rewards in the form of marriage to his beloved Mary, and all of his father's material wealth. In a reversal of their previous interactions, Mary is the one who raises the idea of them forming a relationship when she states 'Now, Sir, for you & I to make the feast full' (*MT V. 11. sig. N2^v*), but Thomas wishes to play one last trick on his beloved and his father. He raises the possibility of undertaking 'travell once more' (*MT V. 11. sig. N2^v*) to 'finde a father / That I never knew, and a wife that I never look'd for' (*MT V. 11. sig. N2^v*) in the hope of eliciting signs of affection from them both. The strategy is overwhelmingly successful, for just after Mary hints at a physical aspect to their relationship when she promises 'when we are married, we'l doe more' (*MT V. 11. sig. N2^v*), Sebastian hands over all of his possessions to him: 'Ther's all boy, / The keyes of all *I* have [...] / For now *I* see thou art right' (*MT V. 11. sig. N2^v*, italics in original). It is only when Thomas can see physical symbols of his emotionally- and economically-assured future masculinities in the form of Mary and the keys that he finally feels able to relent. He asks 'Shall we to Church straight?' (*MT V. 11. sig. N2^v*), and closes the play with the order 'Away then, faire afore' (*MT V. 11. sig. N2^v*), which points towards the marriage that will cement his position at the very highest level of masculinity that can be achieved within the world of the play.

While Thomas veers on the brink of a crisis in his masculine identity by inflicting a number of threats upon his physical, temperamental, economic, social,

and sexual masculinities through the act of cross-dressing as his twin Doll, he is ultimately able to transform them into significant benefits. Such a trajectory would not be possible, however, without the unusual attitude of his father Sebastian, who views his son's cross-dressing as a source of amusement as opposed to concern. Although Thomas is able to resolve some of the threats he poses to the masculinities of himself and Hylas, these resolutions can only occur because Sebastian has already interpreted his act of cross-dressing positively. Just like the shipwreck of *Twelfth Night* and indeed the all-male twin configuration of the midwifery manuals, Sebastian's lenient attitude is the fundamental, but fantastical, component which allows the threats to Thomas' masculinities to be transformed into benefits.

III. Conclusion

The twins of the texts which have been examined within this chapter appear to offer a more positive representation of early modern masculinity than the jointly-born characters analysed by the first three chapters of this thesis, for they suggest that a crisis in this form of identity can be a reparative process, rather than a destructive one. By gendering the twins of midwifery manuals as always male, the writers and illustrators of these texts are able to distance surgeons from highly problematic associations with a deviant, detestable, devalued form of masculine identity. In the comedies, the act of cross-dressing threatens to send Sebastian's and Thomas' masculinities into crisis by suggesting that their bodies, attitudes, and sexualities are of the unvalued kind. Despite the serious and multiple nature of these threats, both male twins manage to transform them into benefits by suggesting that they are physically, temperamentally, and sexually conventional – and therefore valuable – men. At the close of *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas*, Sebastian and Thomas

find that their masculine identities are in a far stronger position than they have ever been in before. They have not only managed to secure their emotional and economic futures, but also those of their twin sisters by making it possible for them to marry the man to whom they are most attracted.

As positive a response as the twins of gynaecological texts, *Twelfth Night*, and *Monsieur Thomas* seem to issue regarding the notion of a crisis of masculinity, however, it is somewhat tempered by the fact that this response occurs in rather fantastical conditions. As the writers and illustrators of midwifery manuals would know all too well, twins were not always born in an all-male gender configuration; as Shakespeare and Fletcher would also know from antitheatricalists' objections to the practice of using cross-dressed boys to represent women, assuming the clothes which were usually worn by a person of another gender was not always greeted with amusement. For masculinity to be strengthened by the threats which are posed to it in the way that the textual or dramatic identities of early modern surgeons, Sebastian, and Thomas are, early modern society would therefore have to undergo significant transformations in terms of biology and attitude. What the representations of twins which have been examined in this chapter indicate, then, is that there was a broader awareness that a crisis in early modern masculinity had the potential to become reparative rather than destructive – if the right conditions existed. Such a positive prospect was nevertheless muted by the knowledge that they were unlikely to do so for a very long time.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined the representation of twins in medical and dramatic works which were published between 1594 and 1655. I have explored how the portrayal of twins in the gynaecological works of Eucharius Rösslin, Jacques Guillemeau, and Jakob Rüff, and the drama of William Shakespeare, William Ryder, John Fletcher, Francis Quarles, John Webster, and John Ford, engaged with the notion of a crisis of masculinity. I have argued that the vast majority of these works demonstrate that certain factors can cause masculine identity to experience a severe devaluation, or a ‘crisis’, which will lead to its destruction. At the same time, however, I have indicated that a minority of the works which I analyse actually suggest that a crisis of masculinity need not be a destructive event, because it can actually become a reparative one. Early modern gynaecological writers, medical illustrators, and playwrights therefore did not only employ their representations of twins in order to reflect upon the way that masculinity was currently constructed, but also to identify how it could be constituted if certain practices or attitudes changed.

I. Twins and the Crisis of Masculinity: A Summary

The first three chapters of this thesis highlighted how the twins of midwifery manuals and drama were used in order to acknowledge a number of factors which could plunge masculine identity into crisis. Chapter One, “‘You Are Most Like Me Yet Are Not the Same’: Twins and the Problem with Masculinity in *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*”, explained that the identical twins of foetal illustrations, Shakespeare’s comedy, and Ryder’s tragicomedy problematised a singular

understanding of masculinity, and argued for a plural one. The foetal illustrations of two children who shared the womb initially evoke an impression of singularity between their twin subjects on account of their identical appearances and similar poses. Upon closer inspection, however, differences in the positioning of their limbs and faces become apparent, and reveal the plurality of masculinity between the pair. In *The Comedy of Errors*, the resemblance between the Antipholi and the Dromio twins causes multiple characters to conflate their identities into one singular form, which leads to crises in their masculinities. Although the characters outside of the twin relationship eventually realise the mistakes which they have made and come to respect the plurality of masculinity between them, the twins struggle to see themselves as distinct men once they realise just how much they resemble each other, and thereby end the play with their masculinities still in crisis. In *The Twins*, meanwhile, Charmia is placed under an enchantment which forces her to conflate the masculinities of her brother-in-law and her husband into one singular form. When she expresses her desperate desire to sleep with Fulvio, she threatens to send his masculinity spiralling into crisis by casting him as a detestable, incestuous adulterer, and to have a similarly disastrous effect upon Gratiano's masculinity by making him into a cuckold. Fulvio and Gratiano work together to force Charmia to realise the plurality of their identities through a bed-trick, for she can only accept her own innocence by understanding that she slept with her husband, not the brother-in-law that she thought she did. The foetal illustrations, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Twins* therefore all employ jointly-born, identical figures in order to emphasise that a singular, corporeal understanding of masculinity is a problematic one because it fails to acknowledge the existence of interior differences between men.

The exploration of factors which could cause a crisis of masculinity continued in Chapter Two, “‘Now You Are a Man Sir’: Twins and the Issue of Masculinity in *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow*’. Scholars of masculinity studies argue that it is necessary to identify the processes which allow for the continued dominance of hegemonic forms of masculinity if that dominance is to be challenged, and the texts examined by this chapter try to do just that. With their instructions for practitioners to choose to deliver the twin who is in the most convenient position first, the gynaecological texts of Rösslin, Guillemeau, and Rüff indicate that birth order was not a consequence of any innate greatness in the elder child. This sense that the son who is born first may not be the most worthy of his siblings is then linked to the practice of primogeniture by the plays which feature twins who quarrel over the question of who will assume a position of hegemonic masculinity. In Fletcher’s *The Bloody Brother*, Rollo argues that his status as the elder twin ought to allow him to become the sole Duke of Normandy, but when his mother Sophia instructs him to respect the wishes of his late father by sharing the dukedom with Otto, he agrees to share power with his twin instead of perpetuating their quarrel. When Rollo’s close friend and key advisor Latorch discovers Rollo’s peaceable intentions, however, he suggests that his willingness to share power makes him a highly effeminate, worthless man, and thereby implies that Rollo is teetering on the brink of a crisis of masculinity. Rollo is so desperate to avoid falling into such a crisis that he renounces his reconciliatory intentions and murders Otto. While Rollo believes that he has managed to secure his claim to hegemonic masculinity through this heinous act, it soon becomes apparent that he has set a chain of events in motion which will see him lose this form of identity, along with his life. The twins of Quarles’ *The Virgin Widow* may not dominate the play in the way that Fletcher’s do,

but they reveal a similar sense that the eldest male is not the worthiest one through the untimely squabbles over power which Bellarmo and Palladius have. Quarles' twins demonstrate that the idea of dominating over other men is a highly attractive one. The attempted interference of their younger brother Museus then further underscores the notion that a true man keeps power to himself, for he suggests that Palladius's masculinity will fall into crisis if he does not fight Bellarmo. Quarles solves the question of who will become Evaldus's heir through a quasi-magical solution which sees the unworthy twins smitten for their presumption, their younger brother placed under house arrest, and their father looking forward to producing an heir with the true Queen, Kettreena. The discussions surrounding the birth order of twins, and the jointly-born pairs of *The Bloody Brother* and *The Virgin Widow*, therefore highlight the problems which the practice of primogeniture and the idea that true men do not share power can create, but argue that they cannot begin to be resolved until a more positive response to male power-sharing comes into existence.

The third chapter, "'Should I Die This Instant, I had Liv'd / Her Time to a Minute': Twins and the Violence of Masculinity in *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*", examined the connection between masculine identity and violence. In the same way that scholars of masculinity studies stress that violence constitutes a fundamental and troubling component of masculine identity, so too do midwifery manuals and the two tragedies. Guillemeau's midwifery manual is the only gynaecological work to admit that the birth of twins requires the practitioner to perform acts of violence in order to ensure that both children are born safely, but Webster's and Ford's plays place violence very much in the foreground. Ferdinand of *The Duchess of Malfi* is tired of his courtly masculine identity, and wishes to elevate it by engaging in violent conflict with other men. When he is thwarted in his

efforts to do so, he tries to force his twin sister the Duchess into experiencing a life that is as constrained as his, but she defies him by marrying Antonio. Once he is aware of her behaviour, Ferdinand recruits Bosola; the pair embark upon a violent battle against the Duchess which ends in her death, but also instigates a crisis in their masculinities. While Bosola manages to overcome this crisis by taking revenge on the Cardinal and Ferdinand for the distress which they have caused, the latter figure dies with his masculinity in a crisis-stricken, devalued state. Ithocles of Ford's *The Broken Heart*, meanwhile, violently forced his twin sister to marry a man she hated in Bassanes before the play began in an attempt to arrogate status to himself within Spartan society. When Ithocles embarked upon military conflict that would bring him great distinction, however, he realised that his noble birth had already issued him with an elevated form of masculine identity, and came to regret his earlier behaviour. Despite the fact that Ithocles managed to elevate his masculinity through conflict, his earlier violence meant that it remained crisis-stricken in the eyes of Penthea and Orgilus, who found that their lives had been ruined by his thoughtless behaviour. Although Orgilus seeks to avenge Penthea's suffering by murdering Ithocles, the latter character uses his death as an opportunity through which to permanently distance himself from a crisis of masculinity, and his success in doing so is signalled by the fact that he is posthumously crowned King of Sparta. The discussions of the violence that twin births necessitated, and the tragic treatments of two people who shared the same births, combine to acknowledge that the connection between masculinity and violence was a strong and potentially uncontrollable one.

While the first three chapters of this thesis suggested that particular factors had the ability to instigate a crisis of masculinity which would prove disastrous, the fourth chapter asserted that such an event could elevate masculine identity, rather

than destroy it. This chapter, “‘I Am Not What I Am’: Twins and the Transformation of Masculinity in *Twelfth Night* and *Monsieur Thomas*”, drew upon the work of masculinity studies scholars who criticise the concept of a crisis in this form of identity by arguing that it has a reparative function, as opposed to a destructive one. It then demonstrated how the representation of twins in gynaecological texts and the two plays of interest gesture towards this idea. The gendering of twins as always both male in the midwifery manuals of Rösslin, Guillemeau, and Ruff allows male practitioners of gynaecology to distance themselves from the threat of being seen as a deviant, detestable, devalued man by pulling the reader’s attention away from the fact that he would have to have a lot of intrusive contact with the naked bodies of adult and infant females. In *Twelfth Night*, Sebastian’s masculinity is threatened in physical, temperamental, and sexual terms by the exploits of his twin sister Viola, who cross-dresses as Cesario when they are separated by a shipwreck. Although Sebastian’s masculinity teeters on the brink of crisis at several points during the play, he is able to transform the threats which Cesario posed to his identity into benefits, and ends the play with assurances of his status as a valued man. When the titular character of *Monsieur Thomas* cross-dresses as his twin Doll, meanwhile, he also threatens to plunge his masculinity into crisis in physical, temperamental, and sexual terms. Thomas is able to appropriate these threats so that they actually bolster his masculinity with the promise of becoming his father’s heir and Mary’s husband. The representations of twins which are examined in this chapter therefore suggest that masculinity can be strengthened, rather than destroyed, by the prospect of crisis, but this positive message can only emerge because of somewhat fantastical factors. As twin babies are not always all male, and cross-dressing is not consistently greeted

with leniency, the idea that a crisis of masculinity can elevate this form of identity instead of devaluing it is ultimately an unrealistic one.

The representations of twins in the three gynaecological texts and eight plays which this thesis has analysed have therefore demonstrated that two people who shared the same birth could be used in order to discuss the notion of crisis with regards to early modern masculinity. I have argued that medical works subtly acknowledge, and dramatic texts overtly reveal, that such factors as a singular understanding of masculinity, the practice of primogeniture, the notion that men who share power are effeminate, and the connection between violence and masculinity could all send this form of identity into crisis, but also suggested that it might be possible to benefit from being plunged into such a state too. By combining an analysis of these historical texts with contemporary masculinity studies scholarship, I have also shown that early modern writers and illustrators anticipated the sorts of discussions which academics would be having about the identity of masculinity around four centuries later. In so doing, I have implied that the relationship between early modern works and identity politics scholarship needs to be seen in much more equal terms, for the latter does not illuminate the former, but rather continues to discuss the points which were made.

The idea of two people who shared the same birth may have proved attractive to medical figures and dramatists who wanted to articulate aspects of early modern masculinity because they could exert a strengthening or a damaging influence upon their own identities, but there may also have been another reason for their appeal. A person who is a twin has shared the womb with somebody else, and no matter what they experience during the course of their life, this fact of their origin can never be forgotten. For the medical and dramatic men who used twins to discuss the potential

destruction of their masculinities, there would surely have seemed something comforting in the thought of people who could never forget that they were once born alongside another person. In the same way that a twin could take solace by remembering that they once shared the womb with someone else, so too could gynaecological writers, medical illustrators, and playwrights take heart from the idea that whatever happened to their masculinities, they were still biological men, and therefore highly-privileged human beings.

II. Future Studies

This thesis has examined the representation of twins in the medical and dramatic works which were published between 1594 and 1655, but texts did not stop featuring twins when 1655 rolled into 1656. As the seventeenth century began to move ever closer to its end and the Restoration began, even more gynaecological texts and plays began to feature two people who shared the same birth. One fascinating avenue for further work would therefore be to focus upon the medical and dramatic representation of twins during the Restoration, and to consider how similar or different they are to their earlier counterparts. As female-authored midwifery manuals began to appear and women were permitted to act on the public stage for the first time, the examination of twins in Restoration medicine and drama has the potential to offer a different perspective upon what constituted a crisis of masculinity, one which perhaps reflected the subtle advances which women were making in certain areas.

An exploration of Restoration representations of twins would also help to bridge a critical gap between early modern literary uses of twins, and the ones which

started to develop towards the end of the late eighteenth century. As the genre of Gothic fiction began to develop, so too did the notion of the 'evil twin' or the uncanny 'double'. Although the critical consciousness of this form of 'twin' has been hugely awoken by Freud and the field of psychoanalysis, there nevertheless remains something of a chasm between the early modern literary twins and those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By examining the representation of Restoration twins, future work could therefore look for points of confluence between the jointly-born figures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and those who featured in the two centuries which followed. Such a study would not only benefit scholars of early modern, Romantic, and Victorian literature, but also twenty-first century readers who once shared a womb with their sibling, and want to find out more about how people like them were understood in years gone by.

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