Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England

Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton

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1 Bodies of rule: embodiment and interiority in early modern England

> Sir Toby: Does not our lives consist of the four elements?
> Sir Andrew: Faith, so they say, but I think it rather consists of eating and drinking.
> Sir Toby: Th' art a scholar; let us therefore eat and drink.
>
> *Twelfth Night*, 2.3.10–12

Around 1512, Albrecht Dürer attempted to describe to a physician friend a pain he felt in his side. The result is the searching self-portrait that graces the frontispiece of this book. The finger points to the region of the spleen, the organ responsible for the production of melancholy, the humoral fluid whose effects so fascinated and apparently troubled Dürer (witness his famous engraving of *Melancholia*). At the top of the page is written in German: "There where the yellow spot is and the finger points, there it hurts me."[1] Like Dürer, the writers we will look at attempt to express inwardness materially. They will point to various regions of their bodies to articulate what we would call a psychological state. Yet they will not display the promiscuous inwardness of the anatomized corpse, splaying itself for all to see, a phenomenon which has been explored with such insight by Jonathan Sawday.[2] Rather they will aspire to the mysterious inwardness toward which living, intact flesh can only point. In this book I show that bodily condition, subjective state, and psychological character are in this earlier regime fully imbricated.

Like the famous self-portrait that Dürer made in 1500, the *Self-Portrait of the Sick Dürer* has Christic echoes. As Joseph Leo Koerner remarks, "Pointing to his side and gazing out of the picture, Dürer assumes the traditional pose of Christ as Man of Sorrows, displaying his wounds to the viewer" (p. 179). The slightly exaggerated crease, just inside the circle that pinpoints the agony, is shadowed like the wound in Christ's side. As in so many of the works that we will examine in this book, the sensations of pain and pleasure will demand a deep attention to the body, and a resultant scrutiny of the self. This attention will itself be the root of a kind of psychological inwardness that we value deeply, and that we often associate with the most valued works of the Renaissance. Classical ethics and

Judeo-Christian spirituality together emphasize this deeply physical sense of self, even while these disparate realms of value are frequently in conflict themselves over the particular meanings the body yields.

This book, then, will explore a form of materialist psychology, but not the kind dramatized by Ben Jonson. Jonson, remarks Katharine Maus,

> conceives a materialist psychology to entail a complete availability of self to observers. . . . The apparent "flatness" of the Jonsonian humours character . . . may be due to this impossibility of his possessing hidden depths, some implied level of experience from which the audience is excluded. A character like Asotus cannot have "that within which passeth show."[3]

I want to show how humoral psychology makes available not only the deliberately superficial characterizations that mark Jonsonian comedy but also the convoluted depths of Shakespeare's Sonnets. In the Dürer *Self-Portrait*, which marshals all the resources of his art for largely diagnostic purposes to show what is within, we glimpse both the effort to express the material self as a site of inwardness, and the elusiveness of that self, the way it seems always to be receding both from the matter in which it takes form, and the medium in which it is expressed. Despite Hamlet's eloquent and psychologically necessary articulation of his own inscrutability at the corrupt court of King Claudius, the real mystery is not to announce that one has "that within which passeth show," but rather to try to manifest what is within through whatever resources one's culture makes available. Each of the writers we will look at explores the mysteries of psychological inwardness that are folded into the stories of the body told by contemporaneous medicine.

The central element in these stories is humoral theory. First espoused by the Hippocratic writers, and later developed and systematized by Galen, this particular set of doctrines and beliefs held that physical health and mental disposition were determined by the balance within the body of the four humoral fluids produced by the various stages of digestion – blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile.[4] These fluids are then dispersed throughout the body by spirits, mediators between soul and body. Andrew Wear estimates that "between 1500 and 1600 there were published around 590 different editions of works of Galen."[5] Under this regime, illness is not the product of an infection from without but rather is the result of an internal imbalance of humoral fluid. Although this account of behavior appears at once deeply materialist and incorrigibly determinist, in actual practice it was possible to manipulate the humoral fluids and their concomitant behaviors through diet and evacuation. Indeed, much of the literature we will be looking at explores just the possibility of managing these fluids in order to live longer, to have healthy male children, to assuage

certain characterological flaws, and to exploit similar flaws in others. The choleric man, for example, is angry because he has too much choler. He needs to purge this excess, and/or assimilate substances that are cold and wet to counterbalance the hot and dry qualities of excess choler. The goal of medical intervention was thus to restore each individual's proper balance, either through ingestion of substances possessing opposite traits, or purgation of excess, or both. Although this regime imagined that bodies were perpetually in danger of poisoning themselves through their own nutritive material, it also made available a vast array of therapies for purging this harmful excess, and urged frequent and thorough deployment of them.

It is easy for us, benefiting daily from our own very different medical and psychological regimens, to underestimate both the seductive coherence of Galenic humoral theory and its experiential suppleness. This theory possesses a remarkable capacity to relate the body to its environment, and to explain the literal influences that flow into it from a universe composed of analogous elements. In Figure 1, from Thomas Walkington's *Optick Glasse of Humors*, we can see how the various humors were correlated with the elements, with a time of life, with a season, with one of the four winds, with a planet, and with the zodiac.[6] The four elements to which Sir Toby Belch would reduce human life in the epigraph to this chapter are themselves part of the network of humoral flow. The activities of "eating and drinking" that Sir Andrew Aguecheek proposes to supplant this elemental philosophy are in fact the media by which these elements enter human bodies and so influence human conduct. Even Paracelsus, who mounts the major attack against Galenism in the period, characterizing it as the product of a stale scholasticism which his "new" learning will replace, retains a significant amount of Galenic theory in his elaborate theories of correspondence and influence. The illustration from Robert Fludd's *Utrusque cosmi . . . historia* (Oppenheim, 1619; see Fig. 2) demonstrates how the Paracelsian physiological self is poised at the intersection of a variety of climatological forces. Because the body is a microcosm of the universe, its visceral inwardness supplies the center that is interpenetrated by the universal forces of choler, blood, phlegm, and feces (rather than Galen's melancholy). Humoral theory is not the dry recounting of Aristotle or Galen that it is often construed to be – particularly by Paracelsians, or partisans of a self-proclaimed scientific revolution – but rather a remarkable blend of textual authority and a near-poetic vocabulary of felt corporeal experience.

Indeed, when one gets over the initial unfamiliarity of a particular description of a bodily process, one is struck by the fact that this is indeed how bodies feel as if they are behaving. So different from our own counterintuitive but more effective therapies, these accounts describe not so much the actual workings of the body as the experience of the body. In his

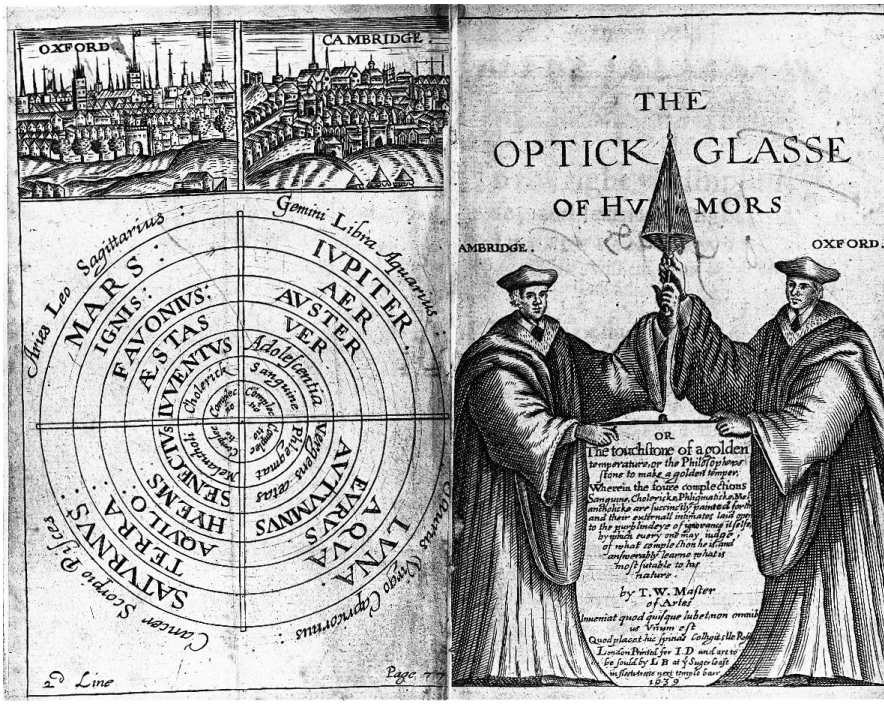

Figure 1 From Thomas Walkington, *The Optick Glasse of Humors* (London, 1607)

brilliant depiction of the ancient regime of the self, Peter Brown stresses the enormous difference between early and contemporary accounts of the body:

> The learned treatises of the age collaborated with ancient commonsense notions to endow the men and women of late antiquity with bodies totally unlike those of modern persons. Here were little fiery universes, through whose heart, brain, and veins there pulsed the same heat and vital spirit as glowed in the stars. To make love was to bring one's blood to the boil, as the fiery vital spirit swept through the veins, turning the blood into the whitened foam of semen. It was a process in which the body as a whole – the brain cavity, the marrow of the backbone, the kidneys, and the lower bowel region – was brought into play, "as in a mighty choir." The genital regions were mere points of passage. They were the outlets of a human Espresso machine. It was the body as a whole, and not merely the genitals, that made orgasm possible. "In a single impact of both parts," wrote the somber but well-read Christian, Tertullian, "the whole human frame is shaken and foams with semen, as the damp humor of the body is joined to the hot substance of the spirit."[7]

Brown has good reasons for heightening the sense of difference between present and past. It is an effective strategy for shaking readers out of the complacence that vague notions of the classics sometimes precipitate. But I question whether these ancient and outmoded doctrines produced "bodies totally unlike those of modern persons." I have found in my research for this book a focus on the body to bring these writers from the past as near to me as the skin and organs we share, even though discursive explanations for corporeal phenomena frequently vary as widely as Brown suggests.

Bodies have changed little through history, even though the theories of their operations vary enormously across time and culture. We all are born, we eat, we defecate, we desire, and we die. The explanations made available by this earlier regime, moreover, are frequently less estranging than our own clinical vocabularies. When reading these earlier descriptions, even those used by Brown to exemplify a gulf of difference between past and present, I have been struck by the fact that this language yields an account of what it feels like to experience certain corporeal phenomena. Indeed, the lexicon of Galenic medicine has survived the demise of its intellectual framework in part because of its cogent experiential basis and its profoundly sentient terminology. We still get choleric, feel phlegmatic or sanguine or melancholy. Anger still feels hot to us, and requires that we "cool down." Although it may have offered little actual help (and a significant amount of harm) to those who sought its physiological and psychological remedies, Galenic medicine provided a range of writers with a rich and malleable discourse able to articulate and explain the vagaries of human emotion in corporeal terms.

It could, for example, explain those fascinating conjunctions of physiology and psychology that are blushing and blanching. In Lodowick Bryskett's *Discourse of Civill Life* (1606), we learn that

> the minde finding that what is to be reprehended in us, commeth from abroade, it seeketh to hide the fault committed, and to avoide the reproach thereof, by setting that colour on our face as a maske to defend us withall. . . . But feare which proceedeth from imagination of some evill to come, and is at hand, maketh the mind which conceiveth it to startle, and looking about for meanes of defence, it calleth al the bloud into the innermost parts, specially to the heart, as the chiefe fort or castle; whereby the exterior parts being abandoned and deprived of heate, and of that colour which it had from the bloud and the spirits, there remaineth nothing but palenesse. And hereof it commeth to passe that we see such men as are surprised with feare, to be not only pale, but to tremble also, as if their members would shake off from their bodies: even as the leaves fall from the tree as soone as the cold wether causeth the sappe to be called from the branches to the roote, for the preservation of the vertue vegetative.[8]

Galenic medicine here yields a colorful, experiential, even lyrical vocabulary of the physiology of inner emotion.

Even though the ideological underpinnings of Galenic physiology seem to inhabit a universe completely alien to the explanations available in modern medicine, the various therapies frequently resemble the available treatments in what is now tellingly termed "alternative medicine." We now understand the random and relentless ways that diseases descend upon their victims, but we still long to have health and longevity be the product of a regimen of dietary choices and physical exercises. In its emphasis on temperance as a central strategy for the maintenance of physiological and psychological health, locating both at the mid-point of unhealthy extremes, Galenic physiology provides a compelling model of just how good health could emerge from good living. As temperance became a central ethical virtue for the Renaissance, health assumed the role of a moral imperative, just as it still is in many ways for us. Illness in turn was perceived as a symptom of immorality. One of the more troubling aspects of Galenic medicine is that while it makes the patient the agent rather than the victim of his or her health, it also provides a framework for blaming the patient for the illness that arbitrarily afflicts him or her.

Reading the descriptions of corporeal processes available in works of Renaissance medicine, one is frequently struck by an uncanny experience of familiarity and strangeness. This is in part because the vocabulary is one we still use today, but the meanings of the terms have shifted. "Complexion," for example, meant not skin tone but, in the definition of Sir Thomas Elyot, author of one of the most popular health manuals in the period, *The Castel of Helthe*,

> a combynation of two dyvers qualities of the four elementes in one body, as hotte and drye of the fyre: hotte and moyste of the Ayre, colde and moyst of the Water, colde and dry of the Erth. But although all these complexions be assembled in every body of man and woman, yet the body taketh his denomination of those qualyties, whiche abounde in hym, more thanne in the other.[9]

Because skin tone was one indicator of such internal qualities, the modern meaning of the word began to emerge from this mode of explanation. As these various traits were assumed to reflect a climatological influence, "complexion" assumed the racial meanings that underpin its modern applications. Familiar terms such as "temper," "humor," "passion," "heat," "blood," "spirit," and "temperature" all derive from this earlier lexicon of the self, but mean something very different in early modern usage. "The balance of humors," remarks Nancy Siraisi, "was held to be responsible for psychological as well as physical disposition, a belief enshrined in the survival of the English adjectives sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholy to de-

scribe traits of character."[10] This medical ideology made available a particular corporeal lexicon of inner emotion. As Katharine Maus points out:

> In vernacular sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century speech and writing, the whole interior of the body – heart, liver, womb, bowels, kidneys, gall, blood, lymph – quite often involves itself in the production of the mental interior, of the individual's privates. Humours psychology is perhaps the most systematic working out of this premise.[11]

We still locate our psychological inwardness in corporeal terms, giving those we love pictures of our body's hydraulic pump on Valentine's Day, although we realize the deeply metaphorical nature of this act, particularly in an age where heart transplants are increasingly common.[12] But in the writers we will be looking at, such embodiments of emotion will not be enactments of dead metaphors but rather explorations of the corporeal nature of self. As David Hillman has recently argued, selfhood and materiality

> were ineluctably linked in the pre-Cartesian belief systems of the period, which preceded, for the most part, any attempt to separate the vocabulary of medical and humoral physiology from that of individual psychology. When, therefore, characters on the early modern stage speak of "my heart's core, ay . . . my heart of heart" (*Hamlet* 3.2.73), or of "the heat of our livers" (*2 Henry IV* 1.2.175) – or, indeed, of being "inward search'd" (*Merchant of Venice* 3.2.86) or afflicted with "inward pinches" (*Tempest* 5.1.77) – we would do well to regard these as far from merely metaphorical referents, and to try to discover how they figure into an overall understanding of bodily – and therefore psychological – interiority in a given play.[13]

By urging a particularly organic account of inwardness and individuality, Galenic medical theory gave poets a language of inner emotion whose vehicles were also tenors, whose language of desire was composed of the very stuff of being. The texts we will be examining emerge from a historical moment when the "scientific" language of analysis had not yet been separated from the sensory language of experience. Whereas our post-Cartesian ontology imagines psychological inwardness and physiological materialism as necessarily separate realms of existence, and thus renders corporeal language for emotion highly metaphorical, the Galenic regime of the humoral self that supplies these writers with much of their vocabulary of inwardness demanded the invasion of social and psychological realms by biological and environmental processes.[14]

The philosophical question which such a notion of self entails, for us and for the Renaissance, is just how the physical body and non-physical spirit interact. The Renaissance inherits and elaborates an enormous dissonance and inconsistency in the available doctrines of the relationship between bodies and souls, and between reason and the passions. Plato in the *Timaeus* was among the first to locate what we would call emotions in bodily organs. He lists what he terms "pathemata" by name, ascribing the

rational part of the soul to the head, the soul's faculty of courage and anger to the part of the body near the heart "between the diaphragm and the neck," and desire to the lower part of the body.[15] In a work that became notorious for articulating an atheistic materialism, the *Quod Animi Mores*, Galen marshals the authority of both Plato and Aristotle to argue that the behavior of the soul depends on the temperature of the body:

> Those who do not agree that the soul derives benefit and harm from the mixture of the body have no explanation whatsoever to give of differences in children, or of the benefits derived from regimen, or of those differences in character which make people spirited or otherwise, or intelligent or otherwise.[16]

In the immensely popular *The Examination of Men's Wits* (1594), Juan Huarte boldly endorses Galen's materialist psychology while giving it a particular climatological, nationalist, and implicitly racist spin:

> Galen writ a booke, wherein he prooveth, That the maners of the soule, follow the temperature of the body [*Quod animi mores*], in which it keepes residence, and that by reason of the heat, the coldnesse, the moisture, and the drouth, of the territorie where men inhabit, of the meates which they feed on, of the waters which they drinke, and of the aire which they breath: some are blockish, and some wise: some of woorth, and some base: some cruel, and some merciful. . . . And to proove this, he cites many places of Hippocrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who affirme, that the difference of nations, as well in composition of the body, as in the conditions of the soule, springeth from the varietie of this temperature: and experience it selfe evidently sheweth this, how far are different Greeks from Tartarians: Frenchmen from Spaniards: Indians from Dutch: and Æthiopians from English. . . . Finally, all that which Galen writeth in this his booke, is the groundplot of this my Treatise.[17]

In *The Optick Glasse of Humors*, Walkington more typically qualifies Galen even while conceding Galen's central point. Walkington argues that the soul follows "the crafts and temperature of the body," but assures the reader that "Wee must not imagine the mind to be passible, being altogether immaterial, that it selfe is affected with any of these, corporall thinges, but onely in respect of the instruments which are hand-maids of the soule."[18] Recourse to an altogether immaterial core self allows Walkington to shun some of the more disturbing aspects of the psychology implied by Galenic physiology. For if morals really are a function of physiology, then a particularly severe form of predestination is manifested in the body. Similarly, Edward Reynolds argues in *A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soule of Man* (1640), that while

> the Reasonable part of Man . . . depends in all its ordinarie and naturall operations, upon the happie or disordered temperature of those vitall Qualities, out of whose apt and regular commixion the good estate of the Body is framed and composed. . . . But yet this dependance on the Body is not so necessarie and immutable, but that it may admit of variation, and Soule be in some cases vindicated from the impression of the Body . . . as Hard Bones being steeped in

vinegar and ashes . . . doe lose their Nature, and grow so soft, that they may be cut with a thred; So the toughest, and most unbended natures by early and prudent discipline may be much Rectified.[19]

The stunning image of hard bones being softened in vinegar represents the theoretical power of discipline in this regime to rectify the distortions of physiology. Locating and explaining human passion amid a taxonomy of internal organs, and manipulating their fluid economies for the desired physiological, psychological, and ethical outcome, Galenic physiology issues in a discourse in which, to use a phrase that Slavoj Zizek borrows from Hegel, "the spirit is a bone."[20] In this discourse, that is, the purportedly immaterial subject is constituted as a profoundly material substance.

It is a difficult framework for those of us who are the inheritors of the Cartesian philosophical tradition to grasp. "Despite some trends in recent philosophy and medicine," remarks Anthony Fletcher, "we are mostly still good Cartesians at heart. That is we experience ourselves as a self which has or is within a body."[21] As Descartes himself remarks in a letter to Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia: "It does not seem to me that the human mind is capable of conceiving at the same time the distinction and the union between body and soul, because for this it is necessary to conceive them as a single thing and at the same time to conceive them as two things; and this is absurd."[22] Descartes here brilliantly articulates a kind of uncertainty principle for a true philosophy of the subject. Yet it is just this complex mode of connection between body and mind towards which contemporary medicine, with all its mechanistic presuppositions, is being driven to endorse by its own researches into the body. As Antonio Damasio, a neurologist, remarks in *Descartes' Error*:

This is Descartes' error: the abyssal separation between body and mind, between the sizable, dimensioned, mechanically operated, infinitely divisible body stuff, on the one hand, and unsizable, undimensioned, un-pushpullable, nondivisible mind stuff; the suggestion that reasoning, and moral judgment, and the suffering that comes from physical pain or emotional upheaval might exist separately from the body. Specifically: the separation of the most refined operations of mind from the structure and operation of a biological organism . . .

The idea of a disembodied mind also seems to have shaped the peculiar way in which Western medicine approaches the study and treatment of diseases. The Cartesian split pervades both research and practice. As a result, the psychological consequences of the diseases of the body proper, the so-called real diseases, are usually disregarded and only considered on second thought. Even more neglected are the reverse, the body-proper effects of psychological conflict. How intriguing to think that Descartes did contribute to modifying the course of medicine, did help it veer from the organismic, mind-in-the-body approach, which prevailed from Hippocrates to the Renaissance. How annoyed Aristotle would have been with Descartes, had he known.[23]

It is easy to be too hard on Descartes, since he is in many ways just the inheritor of a dualism central to western thought since Plato (although Plato's own account of morality is deeply materialist[24]). Descartes is, moreover, famous for having located the soul in a material organ, the pineal gland, in part because it was a single organ, and in part because it could be hard to locate in an anatomized corpse, suggesting that something in the body had departed at the moment of death.[25] But his emphasis on the central question of how rationality can be a property of material substance, and his definition of existence in terms of rational thought, as separate from the mechanisms of the body – the force of the famous "Je pense, donc je suis" – produced a pronounced dissociation of essential self from body, a dissociation from which we are still trying to recover. Although the therapeutic gains have been enormous, one cannot but feel that something was lost as well as gained when the body became primarily a machine. In John Purcell's *A Treatise on Vapours or, Hysterick Fits* (1702), we can hear the "new science" proudly mocking earlier doctors who did not know "the true mechanism of Man's Body. . . . Nothing is now acceptable but what is explain'd Mechanically by Figure and Motion."[26] It is typical of the ironies that repeatedly dog such hubristic statements, including those of our own moment, that much of the task of cutting-edge neurology is dedicated to undoing the intellectual complacence that frequently underpins professedly revolutionary claims.

The purpose of this book is to recover as much as possible this earlier understanding of self, not as an inert and alien body of knowledge, but rather as a vibrantly inconsistent but brilliantly supple discourse of selfhood and agency. I intend to show how in early modern England, the consuming subject was pressured by Galenic physiology, classical ethics, and Protestant theology to conceive all acts of ingestion and excretion as very literal acts of self-fashioning. At each meal, the individual was enmeshed in the process identified by Charles Taylor as "remak[ing] himself by methodical and disciplined action."[27] The argument of the book is in dialogue, and sometimes in explicit disagreement, with a presupposition that structures much current work on the Renaissance. Where New Historicism has tended to emphasize the individual as a victim of the power that circulates through culture, I stress the empowerment that Galenic physiology and ethics bestowed upon the individual. This is a book, then, about control, but not the authoritarian state that so frequently characterizes New Historicist descriptions of Renaissance England; I emphasize rather the self-control that authorizes individuality. It is about how to fortify a self, not police a state. Its focus is a regime of self-discipline which an earlier culture imagined as a necessary step towards any prospect of liberation. I hope to show how in this earlier regime, control could be

enabling as well as inhibiting. As Henry Peacham remarks in *The Complete Gentleman*, "And albeit true it is that Galen saith, we are commonly beholden for the disposition of our minds to the temperature of our bodies, yet much lieth in our power to keep that fount from empoisoning by taking heed to ourselves."[28] It is the disordered, undisciplined self, subject to a variety of internal and external forces, that is the site of subjugation, and the subject of horror. I want to analyze a particularly physiological mode of self-fashioning, one that turns inward as much as outward, and pays particular attention to those moments of eating and evacuation that demarcate the cusp between inner and outer. Emphasis on the physiological underpinnings of the early modern self, I argue, allows us to see that this self is far more than just an effect of discourses, or the product of sociocultural discourses, institutions, and practices. Looking closely at these past discourses allows us to see what these individuals made of the materials of their culture, and their bodies, as well as what their culture and bodies made of them. Indeed, much of the physiological work of the period arises as an explicit response to the famous injunction of the Delphic oracle, "Know thyself." In a commendatory note "To the Readers" prefacing Phineas Fletcher's *Purple Island* (itself an extended imitation of the trip through the alimentary tract that constitutes Spenser's Castle of Alma), the Conformist divine Daniel Featley remarks, "he that would learn *Theologie*, must first studie *Autologie*. The way to God is by our selves: It is a blinde and dirty way; it hath many windings, and is easie to be lost: This Poem will make thee understand that way."[29] Traversing this "blinde and dirty way," through the interior spaces of the consuming subject, is a voyage that a surprising number of early modern writers felt to be an essential part of the project of self-knowledge.

Behind the presuppositions of New Historicism, as well as the terms in which I dispute them, is the work of Michel Foucault. In the earlier work of Foucault – *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, *Discipline and Punish*, *The Order of Things* – it seemed as if subjectivity was inexorably produced and secured through society's power over the individual.[30] Likewise, even through the introductory volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault was locating the rupture that produced modern configurations of the sexual self in the seventeenth century. In the last two published volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, and in the various published and unpublished lectures he gave late in his life, Foucault signaled a major departure from this work, as he turned to classical Greece and Rome to discover a "care of the self" which anticipates modern subjectivity.[31] In his pursuit of the problematization of sexuality back to Stoic and early Christian discourse, Foucault discovered a message of individual liberation amid a regime of self-control. In *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault argues that the classical ideal of moderation (the same

virtue to which Spenser and Milton will give such ethical force) epitomizes the individual's liberation: "Sophrosyne [moderation] was a state that could be approached through the exercise of self-mastery and through restraint in the practice of pleasures; it was characterized as a freedom" (p. 78). For Foucault, then, control becomes a discourse of liberation, not of suppression. The unexpected and unfinished leap (Foucault was, of course, no classicist) from the breezy historical generalizations of the Introduction to the comparatively plodding work on Stoic and early Christian modes of self-control has been relatively ignored by literary critics and historians. The point of this last phase of Foucault's remarkable career, however, is the way that individual subjectivity, and individual liberty, is secured through the individual's exercise of self-discipline.

It is this emphasis on the productive function of discipline that differentiates my work from recent work on the body in the Renaissance that has drawn its conceptual models from Mikhail Bakhtin's important work on Renaissance festivity.[32] Bakhtin's fascinating book on Rabelais, a stunningly original attempt to remind us of the social functions of a nearly forgotten repertoire of practices deliberately segregated from everyday life, has itself become a paradigm of early modern consumption that needs to be dislodged. Bakhtin's powerful formulations about eating and festive release have been in some ways too influential, generating an opposition between the classically immured body and the precivilized, unregulated body that is belied by the very regime that produced the discourses of health and sickness.[33] As the Dutch physician Levinus Lemnius observes, God "created so many wayes and passages to purge forth the humours, and to wash away the excrements, lest a man might be oppressed by the abundance of them." Indeed, the body is in this regime a dynamic and porous edifice continually producing "superfluous excrements" which must be removed:

> So the head purgeth it self by the Nostrills, Ears, the Palate, and unburdens it self by [s]neesing and spitting: The Breast and Lungs by the vocal artery send forth flegme by coughing: the Stomach and Ventricle cleanseth its sink by vomit and belching; The Intestines purge themselves by the belly, and with breaking wind backward, the guts are cleansed from their excrements: The Reins and Bladder send away the Urine by urinary passages, but the superficies of the body discusseth all fumes and sweat through the skin that is full of holes and pores.[34]

The stomach is at the center of an organic system demanding perpetual, anxious osmosis with the outside world. Obstruction rather than flow is cause and evidence of illness. As Lady Grace Mildmay, one of the many female health practitioners in the period, remarked in her medical papers, "If there be obstructions in the stomach and bowels and rhume in the head, then must the body be kept soluble."[35]

Indeed, the body's emunctory capacities are so important to the health of the organism that curing hemorrhoids can result in sickness and even death. As Sir Thomas Elyot remarks,

> Hemorroides be vaynes in the foundement, of whome do happen sundry passions, sometyme swellyng, without bledynge, sometyme superfluous bloud by the puissance of nature, is by them expelled, and than be they very convenient, for by them a man shall escape many greate sycknesses, which be ingendred of corrupted bloude, or of melancoly. Semblably, if they be hastylye stopped from the course, whiche they have bene used to therby do increase the said syknesses, whiche by them were expelled.[36]

This critical link between health and flow urges revision of the account of the ideal classical body we have inherited from Bakhtin's compelling work on Rabelais. Under the Galenic regime of the humors, which imagines all illness as an imbalance among the four nutritive fluids produced by digestion, soundness of mind and body is achieved not by immuring bodily fluids but rather by carefully manipulating them. As Thomas Venner remarks in *Via Recta ad Vitam Longam*, "they that have their belly naturally loose and open . . . are not easily affected with sicknesse: whereas of the contrary, they that have the same bound up, . . . have for the most part, often conflicts with sicknesse." This is because "the keeping of those ordinary and daily excrements, is very offensive to the body by reason of the noysome fumes that ascend from them, which of all other parts do chiefly annoy the head, causing dimnesse of the sight, dulnesse, heavinesse, head-ach, inflammation of the head; and not these only of the head; but the mind it selfe is oftentimes hereby disturbed, and malancholikly [*sic*] affected."[37] This physiology demands not the seamless corporeal enclosure that Bakhtin identifies with the classical body but rather the routine excretory processes that he displaces onto lower-class festivity.

Moreover, as Michel Jeanneret points out, regimens of humoral regulation are widespread in the literature of the sixteenth century, and "even crop up where they are least expected: in the middle of Rabelaisian frolics."[38] The story of Gargantua is in fact one of a deleterious carnivalesque excess giving way to salubrious dietary self-regulation; Gargantua, Jeanneret observes, "comes a long way from the feasts of his childhood to the scientifically measured out meals of his adolescence" (p. 87). By focusing only on the former, readers of Rabelais, and of Renaissance literature, have told a powerful but partial story. Relatedly, the very etymology of *carnival*, the concept from which so much work on early modern bodies departs, derives from the farewell to the flesh (the literal meaning of *carne-vale*) that is celebrated by a brief but intense indulgence in carnal desire. To view carnival in isolation from this calendrical process of self and communal regulation is seriously to misread its social function. In

this book I want to show that selves emerge not just in heightened moments of carnivalesque inversion and excess, but in the mundane activities of eating and defecating.

The relative analytical weight given to the carnivalesque body is a signal difference between my argument and that which emerges in the book that pioneered work on the humoral body in recent criticism, Gail Kern Paster's *The Body Embarrassed*.[39] Paster's work has had an appropriately wide influence because it reminded literary critics of the frequency and cogency of humoral terminology. But where Paster links "the humoral body's corporeal flux" to "Bakhtin's description of the grotesque body" (p. 14), I want to show how humoral theory encouraged not carnivalesque liquefaction but rather the careful maintenance of constitutional solubility. Paster tends to pathologize the leaky body, to see it as the site of something socially embarrassing, where I argue that Galenic medicine renders the obstructed body the source of mortal pathogens. Throughout the book I look at the ways that what Paster aptly terms a "caloric economy" could be manipulated by the subjects of it, rather than recording, as does Paster, the manipulations of gender and class that it so frequently sanctioned. Paster offers a fascinating theoretical mapping of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory onto both Bakhtinian carnival and Norbert Elias's powerful account of civilization as a series of advancing thresholds of shame.[40] By emphasizing the individual subject's willing and unembarrassed adoption of therapies of self-regulation, I want to show how self-discipline not only entailed the forced assimilation of corporeal urges to societal pressure but also produced the parameters of individual subjectivity.

I intend throughout the book to generate a dialogue between past and present models of the self. I explore the striking differences, and powerful but latent connections, between psychoanalytic and earlier models of self. For example, Freud's theory of repression argues that painful memories get shoved down into the unconscious, where they become the source of neurotic symptoms and physical expressions like hysteria. Psychoanalytic practice is based on the idea that purging these memories is the key to renewed mental health; as the patient releases denied feelings – especially negative ones, such as hatred for a parent – the neurotic symptoms dissipate and the patient is able to move on. It is, I would assert, fascinating just how different, even contrary, this notion of the beneficial release of emotions is from a Neostoic privileging of self-control, whereby physical and psychological health is imagined to derive from the capacity to control rather than to vent emotion. Even more fascinating, though, is just how much this structure depends on a therapeutic model derived from Galenic medicine, making the purgation of something inward and potentially

noxious the dominant curative mode. Where Galenic medicine imagines humoral excess as the source of illness, psychoanalysis locates dangerous excess on the plane of the verbal, the imaginary, and the mnemonic. Drives rather than humors constitute the hydraulic forces coursing through the individual. Where the one locates illness in repressed memory, the other in excess corporeal matter. The goal of both regimes, though, is to scour the subject of deleterious inwardness.

A central difference is the status of what we have come to call repression. The early modern regime seems to entail a fear of emotion that resembles our own fear of repression. As we will see, the status of emotion is one of the most contested areas of early modern psychology, a dispute with roots going back to Augustine's reading of Cicero. But emotion, or what is called in the early modern lexicon "passion" or "affection," was frequently linked with disease, even by those who were engaged in the project of validating its proper deployment. In *The Passions of the Minde*, a work dedicated to exploiting the rhetorical function of passions, Thomas Wright notes that "there is no Passion very vehement, but that it alters extreamly som of the foure humors of the body." Such alterations were invariably harmful: "Passions," concludes Wright, "cause many maladies, & welnigh all are increased by them." "Seeing that the affections and perturbations of the mind are of such force for the overthrowing of the health and welfare of the body," notes Thomas Venner, "I advise all such as are respective of their health, to bridle all irrational motions of the mind, by the reason and understanding and labour by all means to observe a mediocrity, in their passion, wherein consisteth the tranquillity both of mind and body." An anonymous physician, advising a gentleman on matters of health, warns that untoward emotion can threaten the health of even the most health-conscious individual: "For though we live in a sweet and pure aire, observe a strict diet, use sleepe and exercise according to the rules of Physicke, and keepe fit times and measure in expelling superfluities out of our bodies; yet if we have not quiet, calme and placable mindes, we shall subject our selves to those diseases that the minde, yeelding to these passions, commonly inflicteth upon the body: these are many in number, grievous to suffer, and dangerous to life."[41]

We do injustice to this constitutive discipline of emotion when we pathologize it as repression. Discussing the Roman moralists, and those Renaissance writers who follow their severe pronouncements on emotion, Katharine Maus advises:

> It is false to call their hostility to emotional indulgence merely repressive, because the whole concept of harmful repression involves the assumption, denied by Roman psychological theory, that an impulse unnaturally suppressed will pop out uncontrollably in some unexpected and usually grotesque fashion. Since they do not

accept the Platonic-Augustinian-Freudian notion of an economy of drives, the Roman moralists see no reason for this to be true.[42]

Where we imagine desire as the locus of self, the Roman moralists "imagine desire as an alien intruder upon the tranquil, rational soul."[43] When Stoics are criticized in the early modern period, it is more typically for their pride than for their suppression of emotion. In the *Institutes*, for example, Calvin denounces the philosophers who "have burst foorth into so great licentiousnesse, that they have boasted that it is indeed Gods gift that we live, but our owne that we live well and holily."[44] The marginal note to this passage reads "Seneca" – the author who formulated most fully the Stoic principles of absolute independence as a source of freedom. The autonomy and self-sufficiency of the Stoic threaten the Christian's absolute dependence on divine grace for the true happiness of salvation.

In the early modern regime, it is unfettered emotion that is most to be feared, while in the modern psychoanalytic regime it is the unhealthy effect of those fetters. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud suggests that civilization requires repression – a generalization with which each of the authors featured in this book would agree – and yet Freud also offers the brilliant but paradoxical formulation that the very repression necessary to civilization produces behavioral pathologies that are dangerous both to civilization and to individuals. I am not denying that repression can be a powerful analytical tool for understanding texts from the past. But I am maintaining that not all exercises in self-control are occasions of pathological repression. Where in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, the psyche looks like a sadomasochistic dungeon, with the superego imposing cruel but necessary torments on the hapless ego and the troublesome id, in Book 2 of *The Faerie Queene* (the subject of Chapter 2) the self is a hospitable but fortified castle of temperate pleasure.

In a powerful but much disputed essay, "Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture," Stephen Greenblatt argues that in both psychoanalysis and Renaissance thought "the self is at its most visible, most expressive . . . at moments in which the moral will has ceded place to the desires that constitute the deepest stratum of psychic experience."[45] I would maintain on the contrary that this is where they most fully diverge. The Renaissance seems to have imagined selves as differentiated not by their desires, which all more or less share, but by their capacity to control these desires. Psychoanalysis and early modern psychology are linked in that both require fastidious attention to the inner promptings of various appetites and urges. But where psychoanalysis tends to locate identity in terms of which objects are desired among the various available possibilities, how intensely they are desired, and how these desires have been fashioned by

the experiences of early infancy, the Renaissance locates identity in the more or less successful regulation of a series of desires shared by all. Greenblatt rightly questions "the universalist claims of psychoanalysis," which remain for the most part "unruffled by the indifference of the past to its categories" (p. 215). One of the purposes of this book is to allow the past to ruffle these claims. To do so is not to credit this earlier culture from which we derive with "an entirely different system of consciousness" (p. 217), but it is to respect and to learn from those differences that do emerge.

The early modern fetish of control, moreover, does not demand the unequivocal banishment of emotion. Indeed, the ethical status of emotion supplies an occasion when the blend of classical and Christian cultures that defines the Renaissance, for us and for the period, is revealed in all its explosive instability. The fact that in England the Renaissance was also experienced as a religious reformation only heightens the agitation between the comparative ethical value of classical Stoic apathy and Christian affect, between the rigorous self-control that temperance demands and the absolute dependence on God that Protestantism counsels, between finding happiness in a paradise within and locating the source of happiness in a divinity outside oneself. For writers such as Justus Lipsius, these tensions could be dismissed by emphasis on the common vocabulary and ethical goals of discipline and moderation shared by classical and Christian writers. Not only did they share a similar set of vices; as Anthony Levi remarks, "It was the ambiguity of the term 'reason' as much as any other single factor which enabled Justus Lipsius to seem to unite stoic ethical doctrine with orthodox Christianity . . . the terminology is Senecan, the interpretation Christian."[46] But as early as Augustine, Christian sentience had been in excruciating contrast with Stoic imperturbability. In *The City of God*, Augustine suggests that the status of emotion is what differentiates the Roman from the Christian regime: "In our discipline it is not asked whether the pious spirit will be angry, but why it is angry; nor whether it is sad, but for what cause it is sad; nor whether it fears, but why it fears."[47]

The Renaissance inherited a confused intellectual legacy, what William Bouwsma has aptly termed "The Two Faces of Humanism: Stoicism and Augustinianism." And Renaissance writers were notoriously inconsistent in their application of these contrary principles.[48] Neostoicism, moreover, developed in England in very different ways from what it had come to mean on the Continent. As J. H. Salmon notes,

> Tacitean Neostoicism became a vehicle for discontent in Jacobean court circles. The particularly English confluence of the streams of Senecan and Tacitean ideas, which occurred at about the time of the Essex coup, differed somewhat from Lipsius's intermixing of the two. With Lipsius the way lay open for rational statecraft and the prudential participation of the subject as the servant of the

absolutist state. It was not so with those English malcontents who devised their own blend of Senecan and Tacitean influence under the pressure of plots, rivalries and disappointments in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean times. For them Tacitus politicized Senecan philosophy and gave it a cynical bent, while Seneca strengthened the lessons, already suggested in Tacitus's history of Roman tyranny and civil war, that private prudence and withdrawal were the best policies.[49]

In England, that is, Neostoicism became a vehicle of political discontent, rather than the absolutist code it had become on the Continent. This difference was only heightened by the fact that in the seventeenth century, the English royal court came to define itself in terms of the kinds of sensual indulgence that Neostoicism castigated. In *Paradise Lost*, the Puritan revolutionary Milton will battle valiantly to reclaim an ethic of pleasure from this court, while in *Paradise Regained* he will use a Neostoic deployment of temperance to reject the entire inheritance of Greece and Rome, including Neostoic self-sufficiency. In both works, food will play a central role, as a site of sensuality, obedience, and transgression. Behavior towards food will determine the ethical success of the subject.

Tellingly, the works under consideration here emerge in the historical moment when the English meanings of "diet" are beginning to migrate from their original Greek meaning of "a daily mode of life," or "a regular way of living," to the more specific, food-related, contemporary connotations. Attention to dietary patterns will reveal much about the specific regimens of self that Galenic medicine makes available. My work will sometimes draw on the accounts of the social meanings of dietary structures of purity and impurity, of the raw and the cooked, available in the work of Claude Levi-Strauss and Mary Douglas.[50] But my emphasis will be less on the dietary patterns of a culture, and more on the decisions that individuals make on a daily basis as they attempt to put these structures into practice. Under the Galenic dispensation in particular, dietary regimes organize not just societies but also selves. This is especially true when the issue is not a series of blanket dietary taboos, such as those announced in Leviticus, but rather questions of excess and of purity, which are different for each individual, and at different times. In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva argues that Christianity entails a redefinition of the cultural role of food in terms of the ephemeral economies of inner purity:

> It is through abolishment of dietary taboos, partaking of food with pagans, verbal and gestural contact with lepers, as well as through its power over impure spirits that the message of Christ is characterized. . . . What is happening is that a new arrangement of difference is being set up, an arrangement whose economy will regulate a wholly different system of meaning, hence a wholly different speaking subject. An essential trait of those evangelical attitudes or narratives is that abjection is no longer exterior. It is permanent and comes from within.[51]