# Christopher Marlowe's Wound Knowledge

MATTHEW GREENFIELD

FEW WRITERS HAVE TRIED HARDER THAN CHRISTOPHER Marlowe to find language for the representation of physical pain.[1] Wounded characters in Marlovian drama often speak vividly and compellingly about what they feel. What they feel, though, includes not just agony but also a stranger response to severe physical trauma: they develop an uncanny knowledge of what is happening inside their bodies, including the precise anatomy of their injuries and the physiology of the onset of death.[2] In their death speeches, these characters conduct their own autopsies. Their wound descriptions provide a useful challenge to our general assumptions about embodiment, pain, and interiority.[3]

A crucial context for Marlowe's use of anatomical knowledge is the new commitment in the early modern period to the dissection of human bodies, which for centuries had been performed only furtively and sporadically. In the late 1980s and the 1990s, a group of literary critics and historians of medicine demonstrated the pervasive influence of the new anatomical knowledge on early modern writing.[4] In the stories told by these scholars, the crucial event is the publication of Andreas Vesalius's *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (*On the Fabric of the Human Body*) in 1543, which is also the year of the publication of Copernicus's *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*). Over the following century, these books helped reconfigure much of human knowledge, displacing authority away from ancient books and toward empirical evidence. Vesalius began dissecting human bodies and quickly realized that much of the anatomy in Galen's authoritative texts came from the examination of animals, including apes, pigs, and cows (Siraisi, "Vesalius" 5–7). Vesalius and other investigators continued to blend religious and magical thinking with what we now recognize as science; during the

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sixteenth century, their work propagated a troubling epistemological uncertainty rather than a firm commitment to scientific methods.

As with so many phenomena that seem characteristic of an emerging modernity, the interest of Renaissance writers in anatomy also derives at least in part from a recuperation of classical texts. Homer, for example, described wounds in great anatomical detail. Marlowe's friend George Chapman conveys this curious precision in his translation. The warrior Philides "smote / His [Amphiclus's] thighe's extremest part where (of man) his fattest muscle lies, / The nerves torn with his lance's pile, and darkness closde his eyes" (16.298–300). And Patroclus, triumphing over Zeus's mortal son Sarpedon, "pluckt his javelin out, / And with it drew the filme and strings of his [Sarpedon's] yet-panting heart" (16.466–67). Like Homer's genealogies and his extended similes, these wound descriptions slow down or even interrupt the narrative: they contain explanations, descriptions, and other nondiegetic material.

Lucan's epic of the fall of the Roman republic also descends into anatomical minutiae in its descriptions of wounds. When an archer sends a shaft into the orb of Scaeva's left eye, "[t]ogether with the steel that hampers him, Scaeva breaks off the ligaments of the muscles [*nervorum . . . vincula*]; boldly, he pulls out the clinging arrow with the eye hanging to it, and treads upon eye and arrow together" (6.216–19). After presenting a broad panorama of military chaos, Lucan zooms in on a nearly microscopic event, the tearing of the ligaments of a single eye, which occurs deep in the eye socket and cannot be seen by any of the participants in the battle. After this moment of vivid corporeality, Scaeva again becomes a cartoon figure, an exaggerated and even parodic collection of heroic commonplaces: the poem lurches from horror back to farce. Marlowe, who translated the first book of Lucan's epic, creates similar disjunctive effects in his representations of violence. Like Lucan, Marlowe asks his readers to reflect on the way that their sympathies are tinged with curiosity and cruelty.[5] When Tamburlaine's wife, Zenocrate, says that her eyes are "glutted" with the sight of two corpses (pt. 1, 5.1.340), she means she has been overwhelmed by pity, but "glutted" evokes the shadow of a different kind of onlooker, a hungry predator who feeds on spectacles of pain.[6]

Marlowe's plays continually redistribute sympathy, refusing to allow their audiences a sustained identification with any of their characters (Smith 209, 218). Characters in Marlovian drama compete for influence over the emotions of the audience: Faustus, for example, displays histrionic anguish or joy while Mephistophiles remains cool, implacable, and ironic. Similarly, in a moment of dark and outrageous comedy, Tamburlaine delivers a lovely Petrarchan encomium to Zenocrate just after ordering his men to impale the pleading virgins of Damascus.[7] Hamlet describes a similar contest over the genre and tone of a play when he imagines a clown improvising and trying to steal a scene "though in the mean time some necessary business of the play be then to be considered" (*Ham.* 3.2.36–38). In the struggle for the attention of the audience, describing one's wounds can be a powerful strategy. Marlowe uses self-anatomization as one of his central tropes for the theatrical transaction between spectator and performer. When Marlowe's characters turn their vision inward, in a peculiarly literal form of interiority, and map the damage to their veins and arteries, they temporarily take possession of the stage.

## *Hero and Leander*: Delicious Meat

*Hero and Leander* offers a useful key to Marlowe's thinking about the theatrical function of wounded bodies: Marlowe's narrator provides a theory of spectatorship that is important in the plays but less explicit. Spectatorship in Marlowe's work has a predatory quality, and the blazons in *Hero and Leander* reflect an intense self-consciousness about the violence inherent in the gaze of the *blasonneur*.[8] The blazon of Lean-

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der offers a striking example: "Even as delicious meat is to the taste, / So was his neck in touching, and surpast / The white of Pelops' shoulder . . ." (1.63–65). Pelops was dismembered by his father, Tantalus, who served his flesh to an assembly of the gods. Of all the gods, only Demeter failed to detect this blasphemous insult, and she ate Pelops's shoulder before the others could stop her. The gods performed a forensic reconstruction of the corpse and, in an act of magical surgery, resurrected Pelops and gave him a prosthetic shoulder made of ivory (Ovid 6.514–25). The nominal basis for the comparison between Leander's neck and Pelops's artificial shoulder is their whiteness, but Marlowe clearly wants the reader to understand that Leander arouses a desire cannibalistic in its intensity. The comparison of Leander's neck to "delicious meat" underlines this hint of cannibalism.[9] A few lines later, the blazon continues with the assertion that Leander has "[a] brow for love to banquet royally" (line 86). To take full erotic possession of Leander, the poem suggests, one would have to disassemble him into his components and devour him; the blazon invites the reader to participate in imagining this dismemberment. The desirability of Leander's body derives at least in part from its vulnerability to dismemberment.

In Leander's encounter with Neptune, Marlowe unfolds his theory of spectatorship into a narrative, offering a richer, more complex meditation on the link between wounds and erotic desire. In their first encounter, Neptune twice comes close to killing Leander, the first time by accident and the second time deliberately. Mistaking Leander for Ganymede, Neptune drags him deep into the sea and nearly drowns him. When Neptune realizes that Leander is mortal and is drowning, he takes him back up to the surface. As Leander resumes swimming, Neptune performs an aggressive hands-on blazon, sliding his hands over Leander's cheeks, his hair, his breast, his thighs, and his arms. When Leander turns away and heads for shore again, the spurned sea god attacks the boy:

> He flung at him his mace, but as it went,
> He called it in, for love made him repent.
> The mace returning back his own hand hit,
> As meaning to be 'veng'd for darting it.
> When this fresh bleeding wound Leander viewed,
> His colour came and went, as if he rued
> The grief which Neptune felt. In gentle breasts
> Relenting thoughts, remorse, and pity rests
> . . . . . .
> The god seeing him with pity to be moved,
> Thereon concluded that he was beloved.
> (2.209–20)

Neptune makes an understandable mistake when he confuses Leander's pity with desire. When Hero blushes similarly ("her former colour chang'd" [1.359] ), she and Leander have been wounded by Cupid, and she has inadvertently invited Leander to visit her tower. Leander's change of color and the words "relenting thoughts" and "pity" suggest the desired response to a Petrarchan sonnet: the hard-hearted mistress relents, and her blushes acknowledge her hidden desire. *Pity*, or *pathos*, is a crucial word not only in Petrarchanism but also in the theory of tragedy from Aristotle onward. One might say that by generating pity, Neptune achieves at least a dramatic if not an erotic success. This episode lays bare one of the fundamental transactions of Marlovian drama: a physical wound can be converted into theatrical power.

## "My Brain-Pan Breaks": Self-Dissection in Marlovian Drama

*The Massacre at Paris* stages several scenarios resembling the story of Neptune's wound: with a story of bodily trauma, a character takes momentary control of theatrical space, forcing all present to listen. Mortally wounded characters in Renaissance drama often speak with special authority and intensity and at surprising length. As John of Gaunt hopefully suggests in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, "they say the tongues of dying men / Enforce attention, like deep harmony"

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(2.1.5–6). But unlike John of Gaunt, the dying men and women in *The Massacre at Paris* do not focus their energies on advising the living; instead, most of them narrate the process of their deaths, using a strangely specific anatomical language. Where one would expect to find a martyr's final profession of faith, instead one finds a verbal self-dissection.[10] Poisoned by a pair of gloves, the queen of Navarre speaks about physiological processes as well as sensations: "O, no, sweet Margaret! The fatal poison / Works within my head; my brain-pan breaks; / My heart doth faint; I die!" (1.3.19–21). And Charles IX, king of France, uses similar language in his step-by-step commentary on his own death: "O, hold me up! My sight begins to fail, / My sinews shrink, my brains turn upside down; / My heart doth break: I faint and die" (3.1.13–15). Paul Kocher discusses the reliance of these images of brain trauma on *The Three Partes of Commentaries, Containing the Whole and Perfect Discourse of the Civill Warres of Fraunce*. The author of this history wrote that after the queen died at forty-three of "a sodaine sicknesse," an autopsy failed to show definitive evidence of poison, but the examiners "did not open the head nor loked into the brayne."[11] In Marlowe's play the queen delivers her own brain autopsy report as she dies, supplementing the defective postmortem recorded in *The Three Partes of Commentaries*.[12] The missing ocular proof has been displaced into language.

The play presents several other scenes of self-anatomization. The murder of the influential Huguenot philosopher Ramus centers on a kind of linguistic dissection. Earlier in the drama, Ramus attacked scholastic philosophy's Aristotelian logic. In its place, he offered a new analytic method for breaking any problem into its constituent parts. Later the duc de Guise taunts Ramus that he "yet didst never sound anything to the depth" and criticizes the Ramist method: "He that will be a flat dichotomist, / And seen [experienced] in nothing but epitomes, / Is in your judgment thought a learned man" (1.7.26, 29–31).[13] The duc de Guise then orders his companions to kill Ramus; the one who stabs the scholar is the duc d'Anjou, the future Henri III. The words *dichotomy* and *epitome*, like *anatomy*, derive from the Greek verb *temnein*, meaning "to cut." A dichotomy is a thing that has been cut in two, and an epitome is a thing that has been cut short. Ramus's terminology, in other words, conceals a latent violence. In a final, irrefutable debating move, the murderer applies to Ramus's body a physical analogue of the philosopher's own method of dissecting problems. Later, after he is crowned Henri III, Ramus's murderer is himself stabbed. Mortally wounded by a poisoned knife, Henri says, "The wound, I warrant ye, is deep. . . . / Search, surgeon, and resolve me what thou see'st" (5.5.54–55). He has initiated his own autopsy and ordered his surgeon to continue it.

The two parts of *Tamburlaine the Great* stage a number of death scenes resembling those in *The Massacre at Paris*: many of Tamburlaine's victims also perform a sort of verbal self-dissection as they die. One of Tamburlaine's earliest opponents, the Persian Cosroe, usurps his brother's throne and is promptly betrayed by Tamburlaine, beaten in battle, and mortally wounded. Imagining his body as a walled fortification, Cosroe complains that "An uncouth pain torments my grievèd soul, / And death arrests the organ of my voice, / Who, ent'ring at the breach thy sword hath made, / Sacks every vein and artier of my heart" (pt. 1, 2.7.7–10). This prediction proves premature: Cosroe's voice holds out for another fourteen lines, most of them devoted to a more detailed description of the physiology of his dying. He even finds time for a small tutorial on Galenic theory: "The heat and moisture, which did feed each other, / For want of nourishment to feed them both / Is dry and cold . . ." (2.7.46–48). Cosroe's body has a strange transparency to his consciousness: what should be hidden in clouds of simple pain has the strongly etched lines of a Vesalian illustration. When the captain of the city of Balsera is mortally

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wounded during a siege later in Tamburlaine's career, he also speaks like a surgeon presiding over a vivisection: "I feel my liver pierced, and all my veins / That there begin and nourish every part / Mangled and torn, and all my entrails bathed / In blood that straineth from their orifex" (pt. 2, 3.4.6–9). The captain not only describes his wound precisely, he also interrupts this description with a parenthetical remark explaining the physiological function of veins.

When Marlowe's characters anatomize their wounds, are they expressing their physical pain, or are they describing their bodies dispassionately, as if they were external observers? Performers could choose to resolve the question either way, but in the absence of a performance one might be tempted to argue that a person who speaks clearly, fluently, and objectively cannot be experiencing agony: if Elaine Scarry is right that pain destroys language, an eloquent person with a mortal wound must have gone numb or experienced a dissociation into two separate people, the one who suffers and the one who witnesses.[14] Self-anatomizing could be a strategy for containing or denying one's pain, for imagining that the part that hurts belongs to a stranger. But Cosroe unambiguously asserts that he is suffering: "An uncouth pain torments my grievèd soul. . . ." By presenting a severely injured character who claims to be in pain but exhibits behavior conventionally associated with the absence of pain, this scene deliberately puzzles and teases the play's audience, raising doubts about what Cosroe experiences and underlining how difficult it is to describe one's own pain and to believe in the pain of others.[15]

With the phrase "uncouth pain," Cosroe's death speech further challenges the normative understanding of pain. *Uncouth* means not only crude, as in modern usage, but also unknown, unaccustomed, foreign, or mysterious. Cosroe recognizes his sensations as pain, but it is pain of an unfamiliar type or intensity. This is close to paradox: how does one categorize a new feeling as belonging to the genus "pain"? In this scene, Marlowe conducts a philosophical thought experiment like those of Friedrich Nietzsche and Ludwig Wittgenstein.[16] Nietzsche, too, asks whether agony might generate clearer, more intense thinking.[17] And Wittgenstein, in his haunting, poetic, counterfactual examples, asks his readers to imagine new forms of pain: Can one be uncertain whether one is in pain (secs. 246, 407)? Can conjoined twins with separate minds but a partially shared body experience the same pain together (253)? Can we imagine a world in which people are continuously in agony but display "no outward signs of pain" (257, 391)? Is it possible to envision "a person whose memory could not retain what the word 'pain' meant—so that he constantly called different things by that name" (271)? Wittgenstein's counterfactuals are ostensibly intended to cure certain philosophical errors, to replace metaphysical speculation with a focus on language as it is actually spoken. But after traveling through the vertiginous alternative worlds of the *Philosophical Investigations*, readers are likely to find that ordinary experience looks somewhat alien. Marlowe's scenes of self-dissection seem designed to have a similar effect, to make his audiences aware of the strangeness of their own experience of embodiment. It would be difficult to hear Marlowe's characters anatomize themselves and not think about one's internal architecture, with its convoluted spaces and its incessant and secret sucking, filtering, mixing, and transubstantiating.

Like Marlowe's plays, the treatises of early modern anatomists contain self-dissecting figures, and these figures, too, pursue an unusual variety of self-knowledge. Engravings in Berengarius's *Commentaria* and Spigelius's *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* show flayed corpses obligingly peeling away flaps of their abdomens to reveal their viscera (Park 23–26; Sawday, *Body* 112–19, plates 14, 17). Other images in the texts of Spigelius, Pietro Berrettini, and Gaetano Petrioli show women displaying their wombs and ovaries, in one case with a fetus nestled in the cushiony folds of sliced flesh (Sawday, *Body*,

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plates 28, 30–32). Sawday suggests several motives for this curious representational convention. First, most communities remained intensely suspicious of anatomists. The anatomists, who obtained most of their material from public executioners, sometimes appeared to be inflicting a final, gratuitous insult on the deceased. Depicting the corpse as cooperative could ease this tension. Second, as Sawday points out, these figures often assume poses that link their self-examination to Christ's display of his sacred heart, making the dissection into a sort of sacrament (110–29). Michael Schoenfeldt makes a similar point: his book's cover reproduces Hendrick ter Brugghen's picture of Thomas palpating the wound in Christ's side, and his frontispiece shows an iconographically similar self-portrait by Albrecht Dürer in which the artist gestures toward his spleen, the organ that, by secreting black bile, produced a melancholy temperament (discussed in Schoenfeldt 1–2). Like the Dürer self-portrait, the self-dismantling corpses of the anatomy books emblematize the quest for self-knowledge, for a wisdom, possibly even a sacred wisdom, concealed deep in the interior of an embodied self. Tamburlaine's victims also discover a strange and compelling new knowledge in their wounds. When they share this fascinating knowledge, they momentarily arrest the forward progress of the plot and secure the attention of all the other characters present.

Knowledge is not the sole product of Marlowe's autodissections: Mark Thornton Burnett argues that Tamburlaine programmatically humiliates and feminizes his enemies by cutting open their bodies.[18] Burnett bases a reading of *Tamburlaine* on Mikhail Bakhtin's opposition between two ideas of embodiment, the closed, classical body, an inherently aristocratic ideal, and the populist, antihierarchical grotesque body, often understood as feminine, with multiple orifices subject to penetration and leakage.[19] The plays offer considerable support for this portion of Burnett's argument, although one must be cautious about the idea that puncturing the body feminizes it. If the wounds of Tamburlaine's victims have been sexualized, it is not clear how the injuries are gendered and which orifice they most closely resemble: they could be vaginas, mouths, anuses, or perhaps something more indeterminate.[20] Tamburlaine makes the bodies of his enemies grotesque, Burnett goes on to suggest, but attempts to preserve his own body and that of his wife, Zenocrate, as inviolate and classical. Burnett sees parenthood as a fatal disruption of bodily integrity from which Tamburlaine and his consort never recover: as first Zenocrate's body and then Tamburlaine's become diseased, Tamburlaine loses control of the plot. I will argue that, on the contrary, Tamburlaine retains control of the plot by injuring himself and disrupting his bodily integrity. In the second play, Tamburlaine discovers the compelling theatrical power of self-dissection and begins to covet this power for himself.

Tamburlaine initially understands autodissection as humiliating and urges it on those who he feels have insulted him. When Tamburlaine discovers the Median lord Agydas slandering him to Zenocrate, he sends Agydas a dagger. Agydas correctly interprets the dagger as an invitation to stab himself rather than wait to see what torments can be devised for him. Similarly, Tamburlaine tells his treacherous former servant Almeda to commit suicide: "Go, villain, cast thee headlong from a rock, / Or rip thy bowels and rend out thy heart, / T'appease my wrath"; otherwise, Tamburlaine threatens, "I'll torture thee, / Searing thy hateful flesh with burning irons / And drops of molten lead, while all thy joints / Be racked and beat asunder with the wheel" (pt. 2, 3.5.120–25). Tamburlaine also exhorts a captive, Bajazeth, to cut the meat off his arms and feed on his own flesh. And using a weirdly precise anatomical terminology, Tamburlaine incites his unwarlike son, Calyphas, to dissect one of his enemies: "snatch it [the crown] from his head, / And cleave his pericranion with thy sword" (1.3.100–01). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *pericranion*

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originally named a membrane. The dictionary cites *Brunswick's Surgery* (1525): "That panicle that is named of Galienus pericraneum dothe covere all the hole panne, and is somewhat like to senewes." The second, derivative meaning of the word is "loosely (especially in affected or humorous use): a. the skull, cranium; b. the brain, esp. as the seat of mind or thought." The *OED*'s first citation of this "affected or humorous" usage is Tamburlaine's injunction to Calyphas, and the second comes from John Fletcher. Tamburlaine seems, uncharacteristically, to be joking. The joke, though, accords well with Tamburlaine's programmatic humiliation of the bodies of his enemies.

Over the course of the two plays, Tamburlaine develops a new attitude toward wounds and a new theatrical objective: the strategic manipulation of pity. As his conquests become numbingly repetitious, Tamburlaine comes to envy the theatrical power conferred by mortal wounds and death speeches. He learns how to suffer, as he learns how to brag, by listening to others, including not only his victims but also Zenocrate.[21] Critics frequently neglect the crucial role of Zenocrate, who serves as a proxy for the theater audience and suggests to it possible responses to Tamburlaine's conquests.[22] Those responses include not only an infatuation with Tamburlaine and his rhetoric but also pity and terror. When her old suitor, the king of Arabia, dies at her feet, Zenocrate reacts in an ambiguous manner somewhere between pity and love, much as Leander does when he sees Neptune's wound. Arabia tells himself that he is "[l]eaving thy blood for witness of thy love." Zenocrate responds that she is "wounded in conceit for thee, / As much as thy fair body is for me." Zenocrate here uses the rhetoric of courtly love to describe her sympathy. Arabia insists that he dies "with full contented heart," since the sight of her "with joy would take away my life— / As now it bringeth sweetness to my wound— / If I had not been wounded as I am" (pt. 1, 5.1.410–20). Zenocrate's powerful emotions compensate Arabia for his wound: like Neptune, he achieves a momentary theatrical triumph, if not an amatory one. Tamburlaine enters just as Arabia dies, and it is not clear whether he hears this conversation, but one way or another he learns the same lesson Arabia does. During the second play Tamburlaine begins to suffer and to wound himself in a theatrically compelling manner.

Bajazeth, the bombastic emperor of Turkey, provides crucial tutelage in suffering. First, though, Tamburlaine learns a great deal from Bajazeth about other kinds of theatrical power. As numerous critics have observed, Tamburlaine imitates Bajazeth's boasting, and he adopts Bajazeth's idea of having his chariot drawn by conquered enemies. Before they meet in battle, Tamburlaine mentions the underfed Christian slaves on Bajazeth's galleys (pt. 1, 3.3.44–54), who later seem to provide the cue for his starving Bajazeth in a cage. While imprisoned, Bajazeth gives Tamburlaine several other ideas. Cursing Tamburlaine, Bajazeth apostrophizes the "priests" of Mahomet who, "sacrificing, slice and cut your flesh, / Staining his altars with your purple blood" (4.2.3–4). Two scenes later, Tamburlaine threatens to "make thee slice the brawns of thy arms into carbonadoes and eat them" if Bajazeth does not take a bit of meat he has been offered: "Are you so daintily brought up you cannot eat your own flesh?" (4.4.43–45, 36–37). Ultimately, by starving himself, Bajazeth does commit a sort of autocannibalism: "My empty stomach, full of idle heat, / Draws bloody humours from my feeble parts, / Preserving life by hasting cruel death" (4.4.97–99). In the absence of other nutrition, Bajazeth gradually digests his own blood. When Tamburlaine later begins to attack himself, Bajazeth is his model.

Tamburlaine makes his most obvious assault on himself in the second play, in what seems a response to Zenocrate's death. His first memorial act is to burn an entire city to mark the site where she died. He mourns and rages extravagantly, but after his sons begin to express

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their grief, Tamburlaine changes the subject with an oddly comical haste: "But now, my boys, leave off, and list to me / That mean to teach you rudiments of war" (pt. 2, 3.2.53–54). He then spends almost forty lines anatomizing the art of war, with a special focus on the construction of forts. When Calyphas, the nonwarlike son, suggests that learning these skills might be risky, Tamburlaine becomes angry: "Villain, art thou the son of Tamburlaine / And fear'st to die, or with a curtle-axe / To hew thy flesh and make a gaping wound?" (3.2.95–97). How can Calyphas fear death, Tamburlaine asks, when he has seen men dismembered by cannons? And Calyphas has also seen the Scythian horsemen, wounded in the arms and hands, bleed on their own lances, "And yet at night carouse within my tent, / Filling their veins with airy wine / That, being concocted, turns to crimson blood . . ." (3.2.106–08). After this disquisition on the gloriousness of being wounded, Tamburlaine returns to the idea of cutting oneself with a curtal ax—surely an odd definition of heroism—and stabs himself in the arm:

> View me, thy father, that hath conquered kings
> And with his host marched round about the earth
> Quite void of scars and clear from any wound,
> That by the wars lost not a dram of blood,
> And see him lance his flesh to teach you all.
> *He cuts his arm.*
> A wound is nothing, be it ne'er so deep;
> Blood is the god of war's rich livery.
> Now look I like a soldier . . . .
> . . . . . .
> Come, boys, and with your fingers search my wound
> And in my blood wash all your hands at once,
> While I sit smiling to behold the sight.
> (3.2.110–28)

Together with his anger at Calyphas, Tamburlaine feels an odd new anxiety: he wonders how he can speak with authority about something he has never experienced and whether the blank perfection of his skin is actually a shameful defect (Cunningham 210; Shepard 752). The self-mutilation reflects not only a desire to instruct his sons but also curiosity and perhaps even envy. He recognizes an opportunity for a new glory and a new species of compelling theater. He begins by instructing Calyphas about military and theatrical power and ends by instructing himself as well. Like the dying Arabia, he finds that his wound speaks, providing an external witness of his interior state. Later, in *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe elaborates this idea by having the protagonist use the blood from his arm to sign his name on the fatal contract, transforming his blood into a written text.[23]

Tamburlaine's self-wounding, like Faustus's, echoes several aspects of the iconography of Christ. Stephen Greenblatt suggests that Tamburlaine's invitation to the boys to search the wound parodies Thomas's exploration of the wound in Christ's side (210). One might also adduce Catholic imagery of the Virgin touching the sacred heart. Additionally, having the boys wash their hands in the blood evokes Pilate's hand washing and the sharing of Christ's blood in the communion ceremony. Just before Tamburlaine stabs himself, he talks of the concoction of blood from wine in the veins of his wounded soldiers, another echo of the communion. The onstage characters for whom Tamburlaine performs are not Christians, but in a metatheatrical sense Tamburlaine has found a new way to thrill an Elizabethan audience. The Christian resonances are blasphemous but not frivolous; they underline Tamburlaine's conviction of the sacredness of his person. With a mixture of doubt and wonder, he sets out to discover more about his exceptional body.

The Christian iconography should not obscure another resonance of Tamburlaine's act: to "lance" the flesh was also a medical procedure. If his soldiers need to replenish their blood, perhaps Tamburlaine believes (incorrectly, as we later discover) that he needs to relieve himself of an excess of blood. In a guide for surgeons, Cornelius Schilander ascribes to some accidentally inflicted wounds a therapeutic usefulness:

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"The wound being offered to cure, the blood is not forthwith to be stopped, but suffered to issue foorth by little and little, till the boyling heat of the blood caused of anger, or some great trouble of mind, be quieted or calmed" (A4r). Other surgeons warn, though, that wounds to the arm are exceptionally dangerous, even when inflicted for medical purposes. William Clowes describes how a citizen of Reading "received a puncture or pricke into the sinewe or nerve of his right arm, by a most impudent and ignorant bloudletter, which did prick the sinewe in stead of the liver veyne" (P3r). The consequences of such wounds, Clowes warns, include "extreame paine, inflammation, a feaver shivering, raving, and oftentimes convulsions" (P4r). The surgical manuals of Jacques Guillemeau (A2v) and Thomas Vicary (134) also warn of the exceptional dangerousness of wounds to the arm muscles. If Tamburlaine's self-wounding is a form of treatment for his grief and rage over Zenocrate's death, it is a dangerous treatment and one that may be linked to his death.

Tamburlaine's death, another theatrical triumph, also centers on his blood. Like the starving Bajazeth, Tamburlaine digests his own humoral fluids, fatally drying out his veins. In the terms of Galenic medicine, Tamburlaine is hypermasculine: choler, or yellow bile, is the humor that gives the male physiology its characteristic dryness and heat; women, by contrast, are predominantly moist and cold.[24] Tamburlaine's unsustainable, feverish haste ends in autocannibalism, as his masculine energy burns away the more ambiguously gendered components of his constitution, including his blood and the spirits it carries.[25] While consuming enemies and their territories, he has also consumed himself.[26] Earlier, the king of Soria has prayed that Tamburlaine succumb to this malady:

> May never spirit, vein, or artier feed
> The cursed substance of that cruel heart,
> But wanting moisture and remorseful blood,
> Dry up with anger and consume with heat!
> (pt. 2, 4.1.177–80)

Unlike his victims, Tamburlaine remains blind to the inner workings of his body. He feels "distempered" and eventually finds that he cannot stand (pt. 2, 5.1.216), but these are mere symptoms, external signs of interior phenomena. Tamburlaine relies on his physician to explain the cause and nature of his condition. After examining the sediment in Tamburlaine's urine and calculating his astrological status, the physician tells him that "Your artiers, which alongst the veins convey / The lively spirits which the heart engenders, / Are parched and void of spirit . . ." (5.3.93–95). The physician echoes the death speeches of Cosroe, Bajazeth, the captain of Balsera, and numerous other conquered enemies. The doctor tells Tamburlaine that if he does not rest he will die, but Tamburlaine ignores the doctor's advice and has himself carried into battle one last time: his death is a sort of suicide. Unable to deliver an inward-looking physiological report, after the battle Tamburlaine returns to thinking globally. He calls for a map, retraces his conquests, and asks his boys to conquer the rest of the earth. One can read this turn to the geographic as a failure, a lack of self-knowledge, but it also highlights the vastness and mysteriousness of that inner territory Tamburlaine cannot master or even survey. He has flirted with self-dissection but found his interior blocked and occluded.

Marlowe afflicts Faustus with a similar failure of self-knowledge. Faustus keeps presenting scenarios of self-mutilation that anticipate his eventual dismemberment by demons (in the B text version): he stabs his arm, he allows a false head to be cut off, and he has his leg come off when the horsecorser tugs on it. Faustus seems to be both rehearsing his death and anatomizing himself, looking for a bodily knowledge to compensate for his spiritual blindness. *Doctor Faustus* and the second part of *Tamburlaine* move toward an ultimately unsuccessful self-dissection.

Tamburlaine and Faustus could be seen as groping toward the deepening psychological interiority often associated with Shakespeare, the

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Reformation, and modernity: Marlowe's characters have become mysterious to themselves.[27] But in the deaths of characters like Cosroe, the captain of Balsera, and Bajazeth in the first part of *Tamburlaine* and Charles IX and the queen of Navarre in *The Massacre at Paris*, Marlowe offers a strange alternative to the versions of self-narration emerging in his historical moment. In Marlowe's thought experiments, awareness of the interior spaces, structures, and processes of one's body displaces other forms of self-awareness. These moments of corporeal insight combine two ordinarily incompatible types of knowledge: first, the knowledge of what it is like to be embodied and, second, the knowledge of what it is like to dissect someone else's body. The first form of knowledge is a tumult of sensations, difficult to interpret or describe. The second form of knowledge is protoscientific: clear-edged, visual, rational, and detached from the objects of its inquiries. In the twenty-first century, we occasionally bring these two types of knowledge together when we undergo an ultrasound examination and see our own hearts pulsing, our own lungs filling and deflating, our own fetuses kicking; what we see teaches us to be more attentive to the vague and cryptic sensations emanating from inside us. Our physiological processes are on the boundaries of what we recognize and experience as part of the self.

On the whole, we accept those boundaries as natural and inevitable. But sometimes brain or nerve damage can shift them in uncanny directions. Oliver Sacks describes several occasions on which he and other patients failed to recognize parts of their own bodies. In one instance, a woman chastises the man sitting next to her for putting his hand on her thigh, when the hand is in fact her own. In another, a man finds a severed leg in bed with him. Deciding that the hospital staff has played a prank on him, he throws the leg out of bed and finds himself on the floor with it. In a third, a man declares that his brother, whom he has not seen in many years, is in bed with him and is attached to him; for proof, he uses his right hand to hold up his left arm (79–80). In these cases, the self diminishes, losing its dominion over parts of the body. Marlowe's characters' self-dissections suggest an antithetical possibility: Can we expand the perimeter of the self until it annexes the hidden, alien regions deep inside the body? Can we incorporate external representations of our anatomies into our subjective experience of self? Marlowe's counterfactuals may seem trivial or playful, but one can also take them as a serious philosophical challenge to our assumptions about the structure of the self—a challenge that comes to us from the dawn of modern anatomical investigation, before the body was transformed definitively and irrevocably into a mechanism.

## Notes

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[1] Elaine Scarry argues that the experience of intense pain is curiously absent from imaginative literature. Literature, Scarry says, frequently mentions or shows us people suffering but leaves their physical sensations undescribed: pain "unmakes the world," leaving its victims abject, mute, isolated, and powerless. Similarly, Arthur Frank says that in the grip of intense pain or distraction medical patients produce what he calls "chaos narratives," without temporal sequence and without any attribution of agency to themselves.

[2] There are memorable but brief discussions of these anatomically specific wound narratives in Cole 89–93 and Greenblatt 210–11. To generalize broadly, Marlowe criticism has relied heavily on psychoanalytic conceptions of self and has rarely addressed the way that Marlowe's characters think with and through their bodies (early studies of humoral physiology like Camden's crude article aside).

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Conversely, studies of embodied thinking in early modern Europe have ignored Marlowe's powerful and idiosyncratic philosophizing about the self.

[3] Michel Foucault usefully although hyperbolically suggested that the interior self, the "modern soul," is "born . . . out of methods of punishment, supervision, and constraint." Foucault crystallized this argument in a playful contrarian aphorism: "The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body" (29, 30). But critics and historians interested in this assertion have had a hard time explaining what a person with no interiority might be like. Marlowe's self-anatomizing figures show us what it might mean to find a body where one expects to find a self, though Marlowe is conducting a thought experiment rather than accurately representing the people around him.

[4] Jonathan Sawday's article "The Fate of Marsyas" and his 1995 book, *The Body Emblazoned*, have had a powerful effect on literary studies. Michael Schoenfeldt's more recent book complements Sawday's by focusing on the experience of embodiment and the interiors of living bodies rather than of corpses; Schoenfeldt and the contributors to David Hillman and Carla Mazzio's collection have argued that early modern writers imagined people as thinking with their stomachs and their circulatory systems, among other body parts. Devon L. Hodges discusses the genre of the anatomy; Valerie Traub discusses gender questions in anatomical texts; and Luke Wilson describes the dissection procedure as a theatrical performance. Among the historians, Andrea Carlino treats, among other topics, the presentation of anatomical knowledge in print; Nancy Siraisi discusses Vesalius's retention of the Galenic idea that body parts were perfectly designed for their functions ("Vesalius"); and Katharine Park outlines the uses of the discourses of punishment and sainthood in the presentation of dissections. Much of this work focuses on poetry and prose. Critics have written extensively on the performative aspects of dissection and the resemblance of anatomy theaters to playhouses but have said much less about the representation of anatomical knowledge and procedures in the playhouses themselves (the essays collected in Hillman and Mazzio are a partial exception). Literary critics also tend to ignore the guides to surgery, which were more widely disseminated in England than were the infrequently reprinted and expensive folio editions of Vesalius. The surgeons operated on living bodies, and their texts tend to be organized by a taxonomy of wound types rather than of general anatomical structures. With their emphasis on damaged bodies and wound management, the surgical manuals have an obvious relevance for the study of Marlowe and of imaginative literature of the period.

[5] Leonard Tennenhouse and Dennis Kezar both make the fascinating suggestion that by representing the death of a character, an author commits a kind of crime. Literary critics who write about these textual murders are also complicit with this violence. Mobilizing representations of violence on behalf of a progressive political cause can be a delicate task: the reader's sympathy can easily modulate into cruelty.

[6] All subsequent quotations from Marlowe's plays other than *The Massacre at Paris* are from Doctor Faustus *and Other Plays*.

[7] Greenblatt offers a compelling account of metatheatricality in Marlowe's plays. Without "the renewal of existence through repetition of the self-constituting act," Marlowe's characters are threatened with a collapse into nonbeing: "The character repeats himself in order to continue to be that character on stage. Identity is a theatrical invention that must be reiterated if it is to endure" (201). Greenblatt here anticipates Judith Butler's more general assertion about the theatrical nature of identity: "It is important to distinguish performance from performativity: the former presumes a subject, but the latter contests the very notion of the subject" (9). Both accounts could profitably be extended with more discussion of the relation between performer and audience. We are only beginning to understand the complexities of sympathy and identification.

[8] On the latent murderousness of the blazon, see Sawday (*Body* 191–212) and Vickers.

[9] As Sawday reminds us, the body of Christ casts a shadow across any Renaissance discussion of the body, and for Marlowe, the Ovidian story of the eating of Pelops probably also registers, in retrospect, as a parody of the Last Supper. The mention of Pelops thus links the possibility of erotic violence against Leander to the consumption of Christ's sacred body. For Sawday on "sacred anatomy," see *Body* 85–140. In a ritual similar to the reconstitution of Pelops's body, medical anatomists in early modern Europe often reassembled the corpses they had taken apart. As Wilson points out, the dissected corpse was sometimes discarded, but "more usually, and in response to local customs and the disposition of the authorities, packed back up and given elaborate burial in atonement for the violence done to it" (63).

[10] In an interesting and sympathetic article on this much maligned play, Kristen Poole underlines the strangeness of Marlowe's failure to deliver Protestant martyrologies. The death speeches of Marlowe's characters resemble those of saints and martyrs: in medieval hagiographies severe bodily injury also confers authority and generates speech. But martyrs generally appear not to suffer pain: they endure torture in an "analgesic state" (Heffernan 196–97, discussed in Knott 723). Often even their bodies do not register the violence of the tortures inflicted on them (Bynum 231–35). John Foxe's Protestant martyrs feel pain but refuse to allow it to change their behavior (Knott). The thoughts of Marlowe's wounded characters travel into their bodies; the thoughts of martyrs travel away from their bodies. And in the "tame death" described by Philippe Ariès, people foresee their deaths but without any specific insight concerning their physiologies (25–28; Houlbrooke 183–219).

[11] Serres, book 10, C1r, discussed in Kocher 91 and Cole 146–47. While Serres is listed as the author of *The Three Partes* and while most of this history seems to be translated from a work of his, Kocher argues that book 10 was translated

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from a text by François Hotman. For a discussion of the difficulty of attributing these polemical histories by francophone Protestants to particular authors, see Jones, esp. 530–35 and 621–25.

[12] In Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline drama, characters who have been poisoned are especially likely to describe their internal damage. In Thomas Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda*, Soliman says, when dying of a poisoned kiss, "The poison is disperst through everie vaine / And boyles, like *Etna*, in my frying gut" (5.4.145–46). In John Ford's *Love's Sacrifice*, Fernando drinks poison and says, "Now, now I feel it tear each several joint. / . . . split, split / Both heart and gall asunder, excellent bane!— / . . . Swift, nimble venom! Torture every vein!—" (105). When they do not show the audience a wound being inflicted, playwrights substitute the verbal representation of violence for physical acts. The ghost in *Hamlet* offers a strange postmortem description of the poison traveling through the "natural gates and alleys of the body," curdling his blood and forming a crust on his skin (1.5.67). The poison acted too swiftly for him to understand what was happening to him while he was alive, but after death he develops a kind of coroner's report. In another notable instance of self-anatomization, in John Webster's *The White Devil*, Flamineo announces, "My liver's parboiled like Scotch holy bread; / There's a plumber, laying pipes in my guts, it scalds" (5.6.143–44). But Flamineo is only pretending to have been wounded; the guns he handed to his sister and her maid were loaded with blanks. Later, when Flamineo has received an actual death wound, he speaks about his moral and not his physiological condition. Marlowe's self-anatomizing death speeches are not unique, but they are more numerous and sometimes longer than those of other playwrights and (with the possible exception of Shakespeare's) more interested in the philosophical complexities of anatomical self-knowledge.

[13] In this passage, in another species of verbal attack, Marlowe satirizes his own university training (Feola).

[14] Shakespeare's Othello similarly divides himself into two people: his avenging Venetian hand stabs his criminal Turkish heart (*Oth*. 5.2.347–65).

[15] One might reasonably wonder if Cosroe's self-anatomy can be understood as pure extravagant theatricality, a fictive performance not grounded in actual physical sensation and not meant to be plausible. But any pain behavior in daily life is subject to the same skepticism, the same fear of the theatrical and the performative. To paraphrase Butler, the actor's performance of pain is to quotidian pain behavior not as copy is to original but as copy is to copy. The fear of being deceived by a theatrical performance may itself be a ruse, a defense against an uncomfortable empathy and an inconvenient ethical obligation.

[16] Scarry's *The Body in Pain* is a magisterial and even exemplary work, but it can be reproached for failing to address the challenges posed by Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, each of whom Scarry cites only once and in ways that evade the full strangeness of his ideas. Scarry maintains a strict focus on the normative account of pain. David Morris examines a wider range of ideas about pain, but he too has little to say about these crucial philosophers: neither of his citations of Wittgenstein and only two of his six citations of Nietzsche concern pain.

[17] In an autobiographical parable about the writing of *The Dawn*, Nietzsche describes pain and eloquence as strangely symbiotic: "In the midst of the torments that go with an uninterrupted three-day migraine, accompanied by laborious vomiting of phlegm, I possessed a dialectician's clarity *par excellence* and thought through with very cold blood matters for which under healthier circumstances I am not mountain-climber, not subtle, not *cold* enough" (222–23).

[18] Unlike Burnett, most historians and literary critics see public executions in early modern Europe as sites for the contestation of authority rather than as unambiguous assertions of state power (Lake and Questier; Dolan; Cunningham; Lacqueur; Sharpe; and Foucault).

[19] Sawday makes a related point about the anatomist's feminization of the body being opened: "once the body has been entered and gazed into, then it is constructed as a feminized landscape, whatever its biological sex may be" (*Body* 162). Gail Kern Paster argues that multiple wounds and uncontrollable bleeding feminize the body of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar (93–112). Traub finds in early modern anatomical writing and illustration a persistent anxiety about the collapse of gender difference in the decaying corpse.

[20] In a discussion that centers on *Edward II*, Jonathan Goldberg warns that words like *feminize* can occlude a variety of male sexual possibilities (105–43).

[21] Greenblatt offers a compelling account of the way that Tamburlaine learns through imitation. A famous example is Tamburlaine's repetition of Cosroe's phrase "And ride in triumph through Persepolis" (pt. 1, 2.5.49–50, 54).

[22] An exception is Johannes Birringer, esp. 230.

[23] This act has a hagiographic resonance. As Catharine Randall Coats notes, writing of the French Calvinist Jean Crespin's *Histoire des martyrs*, "martyrs often choose to substitute their own blood for ink when the prisonkeeper refuses to provide a sufficient supply . . ." (67).

[24] In the play's Galenic account, the excessive heat emanates from the powerful furnace of Tamburlaine's heart (Camden). On the role of gender in humoral physiology, see Paster. Tamburlaine's hotness is particularly odd since Galen and subsequent anatomical theorists suggested that Scythians tended to be colder and moister than the human norm because of their northern habitation, just as Ethiopians were hotter and drier (Siraisi, *Renaissance Medicine* 102).

[25] The Jesuit physician Thomas Wright discusses this syndrome: "Young men's incontinency, boldness, and confidence proceedeth of heat which aboundeth in them. . . . [H]eat would easily be extinguished in youth if they did not moderately exercise it in time of growth, for that the moistness of their bodies and superfluous humours would other-

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wise hardly [i.e., harshly] be consumed; and I have seen divers youths too much bridled, and therefore broken; yet immoderate pastimes inflameth their blood, and causeth agues and death" (118). This idea of a self-consuming organism comes originally from Aristotle; see Siraisi, *Renaissance Medicine* 102–03.

[26] For a discussion of the trope of consumption in *Tamburlaine*, see Greenblatt.

[27] For a balanced treatment of the question of the early modern period's increasing interest in the inner self, see Katherine Maus.

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