

# 14 “Newes from the Dead”

## An Unnatural Moment in the History of Natural Philosophy

*Jane Taylor*

It was much later before religions managed to declare this after-life as the more valuable and perfect and to debase our mortal life to a mere preparation for the life to come.

Sigmund Freud, *Reflections on War and Death*, 1918

### I: After “After Cardenio”

After: “Succeeding, following on, not prior, not the first”; or, After: “in imitation of, mimicking, in the style of”; or, After: “in pursuit of [as a detective is ‘after a criminal’], hunting down.”

This chapter is about the problem of writing what has already been written.

Several years ago I was approached by Renaissance Scholar Stephen Greenblatt to write a so-called “missing” Shakespeare play, a work titled *Cardenio* that has come down through the tradition as a play by the Bard, though no copy of the original play-text has ever come to light. The strongest clue to the play’s possible plot arises from the fact that the title is the name given to a character, Cardenio, a melancholy hero from Cervantes’s celebrated novel, *Don Quixote*. In that novel, Cardenio has lost his mind and lives disguised in the mountains because he believes that his beloved has been seduced by the local overlord.

Greenblatt’s purpose was surely, at least in part, to consolidate the full extent of the Shakespeare oeuvre and identify any works that might make a claim to belong inside rather than outside the canon. He began to explore literary fragments, and ambiguous works, plays of doubtful attribution, or written as collaborations, and thus at the edge of the fixed authentic Shakespearean writings.

The question that had arisen was, What was the likelihood that Shakespeare would have written a *Cardenio*? If so, what might be the concerns, theatrical opportunities, opened up by such an endeavor? What freight did that title carry? There is some skepticism about the authenticity of claims for the existence of a putative Shakespeare play-text with such a title. The implications are beyond our imagining. If a play,

*Cardenio*, verifiably by Shakespeare, were to be located lost in a library or hidden in a hamlet, there would be a riot of celebration and an endless proliferation of interpretation on how the play alters the meaning of all other plays in the Shakespeare canon (to say the least). That such a text has not yet been discovered does not mean that it will not or cannot; and thus the horizon of possibility remains unbounded.

We have been taught by the master contriver, Jorge Luis Borges, to anticipate the hypothetical import of such a find, through his sparkingly cunning short story, *Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote*. Within that story, the reader is introduced to the literary invention of a fictional author, Pierre Menard. Rather marvelously, the instance that Borges discusses at length is Menard’s *Don Quixote*, a fact that suggests the stature of Cervantes’s work as the exemplary Ur-novel. Menard is characterized as a prodigious scholar who undertakes to re-write Cervantes’s masterpiece line by line with an unwavering fidelity to the original, in the seventeenth-century language. This “new” literary work far exceeds the original because it supplements the first novel with an infinite texture of ironic commentary and surplus meaning. Through Menard’s asserted mimesis, in an act of supreme imaginative identification (despite being written in the secularizing ethos of a Protestant twentieth century), his Cervantes replica provides a minute commentary on the original. Every line interprets its source.

I have invoked the great European rupture of the Reformation in order to bring to mind—for a consideration of Shakespeare and Cervantes—the entangled complex of idea and of matter implicit in the dialogue between the stage and the book, as the icon and the relic are shifting in relation to the status of the word. I recently had the opportunity to visit Stonyhurst Jesuit College, an independent (now co-educational) Catholic school in Lancashire, England. Part of what defines the distinction of the school is its collection of relics. It houses a thorn allegedly from Christ’s mocking crown, the prayer book that Mary Queen of Scots took to the executioner’s block, as well as the ropes said to have been used to torment the Catholic martyr, Edmund Campion.<sup>1</sup> Stephen Greenblatt’s discussion of the import of Campion’s legacy can be found in his biography of Shakespeare, *Will in the World*. He describes the Catholic martyr’s spiritual assurance and resilient idealism. Provocatively, Greenblatt’s account of Campion’s immense intellectual and spiritual authority characterizes him as “living [...] in a world [...] in which scholars mount their books and ride out to chivalric contests.” In such terms he is a Quixotic figure—at least in Greenblatt’s sketch—with a somewhat delusional attachment to spiritual idealism.<sup>2</sup> Greenblatt also asserts that Shakespeare had a wary skepticism of “ideological heroism” (110) or “the fierce, self-immolating embrace of an idea.” In Cervantes, this is deflated through high parody; in Shakespeare, it is the subject of tragedy or high comedy.

The Stonyhurst Library owns a First Folio of Shakespeare’s plays, bequeathed to the school by former pupil Lord Arundel. It is a familiar

adage that “we are the company we keep.” Although the association between the First Folio and the school’s prized relics is somewhat oblique, it provokes us to bear in mind that the history of value and material culture is a complex one. While Shakespeare’s plays are available in an infinite number of printed versions, as well as staged interpretations and films, the “folio” is *magical* because of its ostensible proximity to the playwright and his practice, even though it was only published several years after Shakespeare’s death. In the company of relics this folio seems to participate in the economy of the sacred object; of course, this is in many ways an exemplary instance because the value of the first folios in circulation attests to their status as magical things.

What I am suggesting with this allusive anecdote is that ideas and values articulate through matter and that matter provokes ideas and values. Moreover, these signify in particular ways within cultural practices. In *After Cardenio* I was interested in finding strategies for “staging” this in my interpretation of the dialogue between Shakespeare and Cervantes.

The play that I staged in Cape Town in 2011 takes this constellation of enquiries, about idea and matter, as integral to the dramatic question. The incident upon which my drama is based is situated within the seventeenth-century anatomy theatre. As the new sciences began to take their place in the history of representation of the human subject, the anatomy theatre took its place alongside the theatre. There the dissection took its place alongside the Shakespearean monologue, as an alternate stage for the testing of the limits and pathologies of the human.<sup>3</sup> It seems reasonable that “pathology” itself would shift in meaning, as the inner materiality of the individual subject became so manifestly the site of one order of signification.<sup>4</sup>

The notional *Cardenio* has an interesting status, hovering as it does between sacred relic and literary text. Perversely, though not surprisingly, the value of the missing play is amplified, rather than diminished, because of its fugitive celebrity. From historical precedent, the discovery of one such manuscript would also not preclude the claims of others (Pretenders?). There are, we know, several silver caskets (each with a murky rose-crystal window) which bear a legend etched somewhere that testifies that we are looking upon the foreskin of Christ or the index finger of John the Baptist. The existence of the series does not jeopardize the singularity. That is a matter for the archive, but it also reminds us that value in the early modern era is on the brink of a radical transformation, with print technologies transforming manuscripts from singularities into multiples. The history of the claims for *Cardenio*’s lineage is well documented and can be located. The entrepreneurial bookseller Humphrey Moseley in 1653 registered his edition of Shakespeare’s plays, from 1647, and he identified the work as a play by “Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Shakespeare,” though that may well have been a bit of promotional manipulation.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless it does seem clear that a play titled

*Cardenio* was performed by the King’s Men between 1611 and 1612, though without attribution.<sup>6</sup> The strongest clue to the play’s possible plot arises from the fact that the title refers to a character, Cardenio, the name given to a melancholy hero from Cervantes’s celebrated novel, *Don Quixote*. In the novel, Cardenio has lost his mind and lives disguised in the mountains because he believes that his beloved has been seduced by the local overlord.

When I had received the commission to write a *Cardenio* my instinctive response was that I couldn’t make a pastiche of a Shakespeare play, nor could I avoid wanting to engage with the force of his imagination. What began to interest me was the question of how or why Shakespeare might have written in response to Cervantes. What in the vast, various novel, *Don Quixote*, full of chivalric idealism, wild buffoonery, and irony could be reconciled with Shakespeare’s psychological portraiture, his wordplay, his scrutiny of statecraft and power? What would the history of the book and the stage tell us about one another? And how does seventeenth-century Spanish Catholicism inform us about emergent Protestantism? As I write this, I am wary, lest anyone suggest that Shakespeare and Cervantes exemplify English and Spanish sensibilities because they are so singular that they can represent only themselves, and even then, not very well. Shakespeare is always insecure in his place as Shakespeare, and what is more, Greenblatt’s biography makes a strong case that he cannot be invoked as a Protestant writer, because he was, from Greenblatt’s evidence, a member of a recusant family.

The two great writers seem linked by more than chance. Both are recorded as having died on the same date, though not on the same day. Spain and England were on different calendars in 1613; by popular account Cervantes died on 23 April, some ten days before Shakespeare died on the same date, ten days later. Though we would be well advised not to embrace these dates with credulity.

I began to undertake research, looking for ways into the project. Greenblatt and Charles Mee had written a first experiment—a lighthearted comedy based on the motif of the sexual wager: one man challenges his friend to test the virtue of his wife. My response on reading that play was that writing from South Africa in the twenty-first century, it was very difficult to imagine sexual infidelity as quite the same reckless riot they were imagining. The context of AIDS, sexual violence, and infant mortality cast a particular kind of pall over the sport as so imagined. I was interested in the tough questions inside the play around the *droit de seigneur*, power, sexual domination, and betrayal.

In Cervantes’s novel, Cardenio’s love, Luscinda, escapes the enforced marriage being urged upon her by fainting at the altar and so it occurred to me that there may well be a pregnancy inside the plot that I was devising. (The virgin birth too was in the back of my mind.) I began to undertake research into early modern sexuality and the law and

considered how these circumstances might provide a dramatic situation concordant with Shakespeare's perennial investigations in the late plays. My first imaginative journey was to consider the project inside social and literary history; this task is in a complex relation to the work of creative and performance interpretation, seeking to place the piece on a continuum of research integrity and creative play.

So as a beginning I turned to *EEBO* (*Early English Books Online*). Luck has something to do with it; and so does art history, because the text that attracted me was illustrated. As anyone dealing with manuscripts knows, the visual image is a rarity in the published texts of the early modern period and so has a kind of exorbitant glamour that catches one's attention. The text that caught my eye had a thrilling yet macabre woodcut. That was how I came upon the broadsheet recounting the story of Anne Greene.

## II: Anatomy

Anne was not just a melancholy fact of history. Rather, she became a cause célèbre because when her body was handed over to the University for an anatomy, she regained consciousness on the anatomy table. As she gathered herself to speak, her first words were allegedly "Behold God's Providence!" Her survival was testimony to her innocence.

What the broadsheet hints at is a bitter saga involving a young working girl, Anne Greene, who was impregnated by the youthful Jeffrey Read while she was in service of his grandfather, Sir Thomas. Her unhappy situation was disclosed when a fellow servant heard moans coming from the privy and went to investigate. On discovering Anne with a little corpse, the sometime friend immediately ran shrieking to the master and mistress of the house, disclosing Anne's misery and her alleged crime.

Presumably in defense of family and property, the old man was a vociferous advocate that Anne be hanged again after her failed reckoning with the rope. It is the recorded irony that Sir Thomas Read died three days after Anne was acquitted. Richard Watkins, one of the observers who documented these events when Anne's guilt and innocence were being assayed after her "resurrection," indicates that Sir Thomas's sudden death was among the several mitigating factors for Anne. It was held by "some" as evidence of her innocence.

The anatomy demonstrations of the seventeenth century were opportunities of considerable intellectual (and spiritual) interest. In contexts proximate to the great universities, there was a constant demand for corpses, and so it was that in particular kinds of death—that of the executed criminal, for example—the corpse could be legally dissected and examined internally. The rights of the deceased were weighed against the benefits derived from the accumulation of knowledge, and the metaphysics and psychology of personhood became increasingly captive to a vast, diffuse exploration into the biological workings of the

human being. The anatomy lesson was one of the most highly regarded contexts affording the speculative conjunction of physical and metaphysical substance. Some 15 years earlier, in 1636, The Great Charter of Charles I granted the Oxford anatomy reader the right to demand, for the purposes of anatomical dissection, the body of any person executed within 21 miles of Oxford.<sup>7</sup> Previously the cadavers were required to be from the city itself.

This new injunction of a range of 21 miles demonstrates a logic that is strikingly different from that which seemed to pertain in Bologna some 200 years earlier, where the statute on dissections stipulated that the body must come from at least 30 miles outside the city.<sup>8</sup> There are certainly too many variables—medical, cosmological, theological, and legal—at play in a 200-year difference, between a European and an English University context, for one to speculate on the meaning of such distinctions. However, the rulings do assert one absolute truth: that neither legislation, about proximity or distance, was natural or given. Both practices—the exogamous garnering of corpses, or the endogamous—are surely culturally specific and historically defined.

Remarkably, the woman revived on the anatomy table just as the doctors were due to begin dissecting the body. Recent research has produced a complex picture of the legal entanglements arising from the death of an infant. There was an increasingly official will to curb the murdering of newborns. Nonetheless, the law is hard-pressed to prove intention in these cases. In some instances, where a mother was able to show several elements of an infant’s provision such as small garments or a cot blanket, this was deemed evidence of an aspiration that the babe be nurtured. The status and meaning of “the infant” were shifting in the seventeenth century, and new constraints and controls were instituted. In 1624, Parliament passed an act to “prevent the murdering of bastard children.”<sup>9</sup> William Walsh, by the end of the century, asserts, in *A Dialogue Concerning Women* (1699), “Go but one Circuit with the Judges here in England; observe how many women are condemned for killing their Bastard children.” The law intervened awkwardly and unevenly in such matters, and so it signaled its purposes through a decree that any birth kept secret could be inferred to signal danger, and the failure to disclose was itself criminal. The stories are grim and the circumstances hard to imagine. Laura Gowing relates several of them:

Jane Lockwood confessed that she bore a stillborn child alone and that she left it on her bed, intending to bury it, but that her father’s dogs pulled it off: ‘She was much to blame,’ she admitted, ‘she did not acquaint her mother and neighbours therewith,’ and she put it in back in the bed intending to bury it. [...] Jane Hardy, a widow, confessed that she had given birth to twins, both dead, and ‘kept them by her, about a week’s space’ before she had laid them in the earth of her floor.<sup>10</sup>

These were just some of the ideas percolating in the back of my mind as I began to imagine a viable play. But what was foremost was a visual event: that opening scene with a girl on an anatomy table, about to be dissected, who comes back to life. On the disclosure of the situation, Anne was incarcerated, tried, and found guilty of murdering her infant. This story is ordinary enough and would have had small interest. Her case becomes extraordinary to history when she revives on the anatomy table. Her notoriety is such that there are over 20 pieces of doggerel verse about her by Oxford fellows (one of which is by the young Christopher Wren, who would become the architect of London's own resurrection).

This story was reminiscent for me of the late Shakespeare plays, with his haunting explorations of the possibility of renewal, resurrection, and rebirth. Of course, the puzzle of a return from death is there even in the early plays: Juliet's feigned death is followed by her regaining consciousness, though tragically too late for Romeo, who kills himself in grief. Cleopatra's feigned death results in the death of Antony. There is a quality of self-delusional hope in the face of despair that characterizes several of the mature plays. Here I have in mind the enigmatic structure of *The Winter's Tale*, in which Leontes accuses his wife, Hermione, of infidelity and banishes her only to learn of Hermione's blamelessness after her death. Years pass, and the melancholy king has a statue made in commemoration of his wronged wife. The play concludes, implausibly, with Hermione's statue coming to life, and hope is restored. A comparable logic is implicit in the ending of *King Lear*. The old king, distraught and deluded, at the end of the play has his loving daughter, Cordelia, cut down from where she has been hanged. She is laid at the feet of Lear, who deceives himself that she still lives and breathes. At this point of wretchedness, he dies from shock and heartbreak, and so never has to come to terms with the fact that his daughter is irrecoverably dead, and that he was cause of her death.

Anne Greene's story is substantially different, but it does allow for the apparently miraculous transformation from death to life of a hanged girl. Seventeenth-century theological discourses intersect explicitly with the emerging sciences on the question of resurrection. In 1675 Robert Boyle, an experimental scientist of immense talent, would publish *Some Physico-Theological Considerations about the Possibility of Resurrection*. Boyle's grasp of bio-medical facts drives him to reconcile his faith with his science through an insistent belief in the "miracle," though he does also conduct a chemical experiment with camphor and sulfuric acid, through which contrivance he dissolves the camphor until it loses its properties; then restores these through the addition of water, and the camphor reappears.<sup>11</sup> This provides him with the evidence that he seeks to demonstrate that a resurrection has taken place. Boyle had been a member of the Royal Society and had worked alongside Willis and Petty, the two men who had "resurrected" Anne Greene.

What does a scholar of Shakespeare, sensible of Hermione's transformation from statue to live woman at the end of *The Winter's Tale*, make of Boyle's rather marvelous comments about the human body? As Boyle writes:

a Human Body is not a Statue of Brass or Marble, that may continue; as to sense, the whole ages in a permanent state; but it is in a perpetual flux or changing condition, since it grows in all its Parts, and all its Dimensions, from a Corpusculum, no bigger than an Insect, to the full stature of Man.<sup>12</sup>

Are such texts evidence of a profound epistemic shift in the regimes of material culture, as the matter of fact and the fact of matter collide? Is *The Winter's Tale* evidence of the contradictions precipitated by that shift?

John Donne's somewhat eccentric but fascinating *Metempsychosis: The Progress of the Soul* provides a substantial record of the ongoing discussions about the temporal and physical finitude of being and beings. The poetic essay raises several questions about transmogrification, identity, and the flesh. Shakespeare's philosopher, Hamlet, several years later famously reminded us, "A man may fish with the worm that hath eat/of a king and eat of the fish that hath fed of that/worm" (4.3.30–32). There is a less easily recalled observation in *Twelfth Night* that makes a similar case with more levity:

CLOWN: What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?

MALVOLIO: That the soul of our grandma might haply inhabit a bird.  
(4.2.52–55)

The matter of the flesh, inside the regime of the new anatomical sciences, disrupts matters of the mind. John Calvin oversaw the burning at the stake (in Geneva) of Michael Servetus, a brilliant Spanish *converso* accused of Arianism, in part because Servetus asserted that there was no scriptural evidence for the Trinity but also because his experience as an anatomist had given him no indication that anything like a Trinitarian being were possible in the flesh.

This emerging cluster of debates about identity and materiality constitutes a node within the intellectual and theological archive, suggesting that the history of ideas is also a history of materiality. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that when I came across the broadsheet giving an account of the Anne Green "Wonder of Wonders," I was attracted by what seemed to me an irresistibly theatrical event—a woman coming to life on an anatomy table. As I began to consider the theoretical and philosophical potential of this profoundly visual episode, it struck me that the incident could figure (in the sense of "embody") many of the major enquiries of the seventeenth century. Where did identity locate itself? In the body,



or in some indefinable non-material essence? 1650, the year of Anne Greene's death, was coincidentally the year in which René Descartes died. His philosophy of the dual character of human identity, as both matter and soul, has defined subsequent western metaphysics. This thus becomes a question of practical staging: how to embody these ideas. At the same time the episode provides an emblem of that seventeenth-century intersection of story and science.

My play takes as a kind of implicit point of origin Rembrandt's very influential painting of the *Anatomy Theatre of Dr. Tulp*, a work that alludes to an anatomy in 1632. The rather wretched figure in the painting is Aris't Kint, christened Adriaen Adrienszoon: a luckless petty criminal who in the end bungled the theft of a coat, killing its owner. It has been suggested that Descartes was in all likelihood one of the spectators at Tulp's anatomy; he was living in Amsterdam at the time while working on his *Treatise on Man*. He describes his regular habit of visiting the local butcher to watch him slaughter animals.<sup>13</sup> There has been much fascinating material written about the painting. One of its enigmas is why the body here is still intact, though the arm has been anatomized. We know from written accounts that in the case of an anatomy, generally the viscera would be removed as one of the first processes in order to delay the corruption of the flesh. Had Tulp requested Rembrandt to manifest the intellectual lineage between himself and Vesalius, that master of anatomy, whose own portrait frontispiece for his 1543 edition of *Fabrica* shows him in a kind of "double portrait" with an anatomized arm?

If we return to scrutiny of the detail of Rembrandt's painting, we will see a deep Cartesian engagement here. Tulp's left hand is pinching his thumb and forefinger together, in a demonstration of what one might read as an exemplary demonstration of the fundamental principle of the opposable digits of the human hand. The finger of the corpse is flexed slightly, as if animated. One of the spectators, the figure at the back, somewhat higher than the rest, is flexing his index finger slightly, as if he too is caught in an explanation of the relation between intention and bodily reaction. His gaze is abstracted, as if he looks with an inner eye at an idea. The large folio, open in the dark, beyond the feet of the corpse, is surely Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* (*On the fabric of the human*); and the spectators variously compare demonstration and instruction, looking now into written authority, now at the body. It seems as if Vesalius is twitching a tendon with his hand in the woodcut, much as Tulp is doing with his forceps. But Tulp is, it seems, showing a relation between tendon and finger—as it were, between intention and action.

I wanted my play somehow to invoke Cartesian dualism and at the same time to embrace the relationship between the stage and the book in the seventeenth century. The theatre in some measure gave way to the new authority of private reading, particularly during the Reformation. This was not always piety, however, as we know from the great

popularity of sensational and salacious publications. However, following the Restoration, the two discursive forms of the printed text and of live theatre must have found a mode of reconciliation. Samuel Pepys is here the exemplary figure: he is an avid if not addicted theatregoer, yet he is also caught within an erotics of private reading and writing.<sup>14</sup>

In considering the question of form, I also pondered Quixotic idealism as a plot possibility. I was tantalized by the Don’s religious chivalric zealotry and what it means that now (in the twenty-first century), within the international arena, we are again in an unlikely moment of commitment to sublime self-immolation for politico-religious causes. Shakespeare, by contrast, is chock-a-block full of political cynicism, with characters who climb diverse ladders in the pursuit of self-aggrandizement, or for revenge, or out of rage, and Quixote’s outlandish idealism looks rather like folly from outside of the system of its own delusions. What would Shakespeare make of the enquiry? Would this idealism have been legible to him?

*After Cardenio* was performed in what was once the Anatomy Theatre at the University of Cape Town. Such a venue is particularly suited to puppet theatre because of its intimacy; it is constructed at a high angle, to permit observation from above, down into the body. This provides for great proximity to the event onstage. I have for some years been interested in exploring what the arts of puppetry tell us about our disquiet at the uneasy dialogue between body and soul, spirit and matter. The story of Anne Greene provided me with an opportunity to reconsider that mysterious art form for what it could say about substance and being.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 14.1 The opening moments of *After Cardenio* by Jane Taylor at the Anatomy Theatre at the University of Cape Town. Reproduced with permission from Jane Taylor and the photographer, Anthony Strack.

I had discovered three contemporary versions of Anne Greene's history in *EEBO*: one is anonymous; one is by Robert Watkins, an Oxford scholar; and one is by William Burdet. I invoke this multiple origin at the start of my play:

Anne Greene: My story was written and then was printed.

Anne Greene.

Three times written down. Being one, yet three stories.

Three in one. There was me who died.

(My self was hang'd, and given over as dead.) She was first.

And there was also me, the resurrection, just like our Lord.

That second was all eternity.

Then also the babe, so small, and still. "Is it breathing?"

The little mouth as blue as water.

Who can tell my guilt or my innocence?

If you care to find evidence

Watch my play, "Behold God's Providence!"

The doctor said those were my first three words.

"Behold God's Providence," the good doctor said I said.

My voice is an occupying army. It has no body

and so it sets up camp, inside me. But is always trying to

escape. Forcing its way out through the teeth.

As she says these words, the lights come up to reveal the group of doctors, one of whom, Dr. Petty, looks uncannily like the young Rembrandt, whose painting of Dr. Tulp, as I have suggested, informs all such scenes. Dr. Petty and Dr. Willis were the two Oxford anatomists attending the body who managed to save the young woman. They are clustered around a life-sized puppet of a naked female.

The puppet was designed and made by Gavin Younge, a South African sculptor whose work I had curated before. Younge has in recent years been making animals and objects from molded vellum: they are simple but profound beings because of the luminous glow of the skin from which they are made. In an enigmatic way, their matter *is* their spirit. Of course, because the figure is vellum, she is both physical body and book, reminding us of the dialogue between Cervantes and Shakespeare. Younge sourced medical prosthetic eyes for her, and so her gaze had a particular kind of focused intensity. The actress, the primary puppeteer, and the puppet were at times bound to one another as they might be in a Bunraku-style Japanese puppetry performance, but at times they prowled around the stage, as if they were body and soul searching for one another.

The volatility of the interchange between them was highly charged, and the question we repeatedly asked is "Is the body the technology for the soul, or is the soul a technology for the body?" As the play



*Figure 14.2* Marty Kintu operating the puppet of Anne Greene designed by Gavin Younge. Reproduced with permission from Jane Taylor and Anthony Strack.

progressed, it was at times the puppet that consoled and comforted the actress; at times, the actress who defended the puppet. What was most astonishing was that the puppet and the girl could be at opposite sides of the stage and we still read the two as a single being. I was fortunate in having both a great young actress and a brilliant young puppeteer, so, at any time during the scene, the audience is gripped by both performances. Jemma Kahn is the actress and Marty Kintu is the puppeteer.

The interrogation of Anne by the Church turned on the question of the death of the child. Here is a fragment of the dialogue as the two wrestle with the resuscitated girl:

DOCTOR PETTY: (as if studying a case, he observes).

Her eyes are open.

Is this a scene that knows it is watched?

I have heard it said that one life is not sufficient;

And we enact through our dreams those things

That we do not perform in life.

ASSISTANT:

Some have written that our dreams are prophecies.



Figure 14.3 The puppet of Anne Greene consoles the actor playing Anne Greene, Jemma Kahn, in *After Cardenio*. Reproduced with permission from Jane Taylor and Anthony Strack.

DOCTOR PETTY:

Yet another thinking on these matters has suggested  
That when we sleep, the outward senses, as hearing,  
Seeing and smell, retreat from their ordinary activities,  
And the inward powers, as memory and phantasy are  
enhanced.  
Perhaps the Soul does at such times inspect its self?

ASSISTANT:

I did dream once that I was the devil  
And the devil I was, did dream of me.

The theological drama turns on whether Anne is guilty of infanticide or whether, as she keeps asserting, there had been a spontaneous abortion, with a fetus falling from her while at her place of employment. This is an all-important distinction, it seems. The doctor's assistant tries to extract the truth from her:

ASSISTANT:

A mother is advised to be not dark; not to conceal the birth  
of a babe.  
There's a taint of secrecy that is unlovely to the law's desire.  
For this we know, a child undisclosed is a child in danger.

It is surely damned, having died without Church.  
*Anne looks distressed, her gaze darts across the ceiling.*

ASSISTANT:

See the child? Look you.  
It stands outside the door. Its hand too small to make a fist,  
And cannot even knock at heaven to ask for entry.  
See, it helpless pats the door. Pat, pat.

DOROTEA:

I never did dispatch the child. I'd have loved the boy,  
For a memento of his father. And besides, had I stayed and  
feigned  
My husband would have learned to love the child -  
I think the boy would have looked enough a-like.  
My brief husband, for all that he himself were an ancient,  
Ever wooed me saying he wanted a lad.  
He'd 'ave been ready to see  
His own eyebrow on the growing child's forehead.

ASSISTANT: (*Aside to Doctor Petty.*)

Hoar frost sews seeds in whore springtime.

The play includes a meta-critical sequence in which the actress, the puppeteer, and the puppet all engage in a discussion about puppetry, the soul, and the body.

### III: Of Identity and Number

When I first started working on the piece, it occurred to me that John Locke, who was himself a student of philosophy and Anatomy in the decade after Anne Greene's death, must surely have known about this event; must have had her in his mind when he wrote in his famous chapter on identity and person, from the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, that consciousness is what makes identity in persons. At the time of writing the play, I asserted as an act of faith that surely, if over 20 fellows had written doggerel about Anne Greene, her case challenged assumptions about personhood and identity. Here is one couplet:

Strange metamorphosis this *dead-live* Woman,  
Now differs from her self; and are such *Common*?

Another fellow comments on the reprieve that Anne won, on the grounds of her pleas that the infant death was an accidental miscarriage:

Thou shalt not Swing againe: come cleare thy brow,  
Thou hast the benefit o'th'Clergie now.

I have been doing research to strengthen my claim that Locke would have known about her, that she would have informed his thinking. I found a copy of a book that seems to resolve the matter for me: it is a translation of the lecture notes of the Oxford Anatomy lecturer Thomas Willis.<sup>16</sup>

These seventeenth-century lecture notes are a fascinating rarity and show us the thinking and the theoretical practice of a man deemed now to be the originator of neuroscience in its earliest form. Willis first coined the term “Neurology” and went on to have a substantial career as a medical practitioner. His detailed archive provides an extensive insight into the daily routine of a prescribing medical professional in the seventeenth century, and he is archived in the medical discourses because of the “circle of Willis.” (A “circulatory anastomosis” that supplies blood to the brain is named after him and his celebrated publication, *Cerebri Anatome*—with prints by Christopher Wren—remained for many decades the standard scholarly treatise on the brain.) Wren’s poem about Anne Greene is not much more than a piece of youthful sardonicism, but it does serve to remind us that the young Wren was closely engaged in the community of scholarship around Drs. Petty and Willis, the two men who oversaw the resuscitation of Anne.

Willis’s lectures are examples of their kind, almost unique within medical history, and remarkably they survive because of the notes kept by two students of Anatomy at Oxford: Richard Lower and Mr. John Locke. This was a striking find. They are evidence of an intellectual circuit of enquiry between the anatomist who resuscitated Anne Greene and the foremost empirical philosopher of Europe. In my play, Anne Greene herself suggests that Locke would have been interested in her, and she quotes his comments on resurrections:

And thus we may be able, without any difficulty, conceive  
the same Person at the Resurrection, though in a Body  
not exactly in make or parts the same which he had here,  
the same consciousness going along with the Soul that  
inhabits it.

One reason why this intrigues me is that it suggests that Locke’s influential thinking about being and number in all likelihood arises in some measure from the story of Anne Greene. Philosophy and the Natural Sciences were co-emerging.

Both of Anne’s anatomists would go on to be of huge significance for history. Petty would become a significant theorist of money and would also oversee the survey to facilitate the “Act for the Settlement of Ireland.”<sup>17</sup> So loathed did he become for his endeavors on behalf of Cromwell in Ireland that Jonathan Swift’s intense satire, *A Modest Proposal*, is apparently directed at Petty for his work of arithmetical

calculation in the distribution of Irish lands, a project outlined in his *The Political Anatomy of Ireland*. (It is worth noting that Karl Marx would come to characterize Petty as the founder of economics.)

While in Ireland Petty was visited by the young Robert Boyle, who records how he and Petty together engaged in dissections of live animals, through which Boyle was able to study the circulation of blood, a set of enquiries that must have been fundamental to his thinking about hydraulics. Boyle, however, was, as I have suggested, a deeply religious Christian, and he is one of the key spokespersons on the question of resurrection and identity. It is intriguing to imagine him thinking through some of these questions with Dr. Petty. The portrait of Petty by Isaac Fuller in the National Portrait Gallery shows the doctor as a seventeenth-century Hamlet, reflecting on mortality with a skull in his right hand. His left hand points our gaze from the skull to the pages of an anatomy book which bears the illustrations of the human skull.

While Petty went off to engage in finance and political adventures, Wren meanwhile developed close relations with Dr. Willis. Wren is responsible for the fine illustrations of the brain for Willis's *Cerebri Anatome* of 1664. These may indeed be the source of the images of the skull represented in the portrait of Petty. The bond between Wren and Willis is evidenced by a small colored drawing held at the Wellcome Institute, showing a section of a small intestine.

The play itself became a meditation on the archive. As Anne's puppeteer asks:

Do we think we understand what such a story must mean?

We are, after all, readers, and I found her through reading.

I am not a woman's archivist. But I do know that any woman who enters the archive finds there the archive of women.

These are the miserable words: "being got with child by a Gentleman." There is no choice, it seems, for Anne: "Being got with child." Perhaps young girls never beget. They are begotten upon.

The archive knows nothing about desire. It knows only this: that Anne says that she lost the child when it fell from her while busy with housework in her master's house. The archive seeks to hold what belongs to the law; only literature keeps what belongs to lovers.

This chapter has crossed several purposes, historically and methodologically various. On the one hand, it is an archive of a particular ephemeral moment, a theatre performance that exists in a complex sensorium deploying the media of sound, space, and time in making an argument



about Cartesian and post-Cartesian questions about subjects and objects. It considers in particular the enigmatic art of puppetry, a mode through which sensibility is observed as projected into matter, through an illusion that posits that consciousness and substance are somehow mutually bound in an experiential vitalism. Recent theory, prompted in some ways by the considerations of object-oriented ontology and thing theory, reinvigorates modes of enquiry into the subject-object dialectic, undermining the commodified world of goods that props up a perpetual accumulation of profit. The new ontologies are in some ways associated with a nostalgia for mysticism, and dismissed by materialism as metaphysics. Nonetheless they also are suggestive of Einstein's "spooky action at a distance," a hypothesized event in which substances at massive extension can be observed to act upon one another. I have also explored some of the philosophical significance of Locke's years as a medical student, in a consideration of how his practice working with and observing human bodies informs and is informed by his distinct metaphysics of the physical. In such terms, it seems not incoherent to treat the anatomy theatre as the legitimate inheritor, in the seventeenth century, of Shakespeare's stage.

## Notes

- 1 The school apparently emerged from St. Omers, which in 1593 was established in the Spanish Low Countries, one of several such institutions operating in Europe during the era, to provide a Catholic education to youths unable to be raised in their faith in Elizabethan England. It was effectively the lay equivalent of Douai, the school in Europe where Edmund Campion had studied for clerical orders.
- 2 Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), 107.
- 3 Inigo Jones, the celebrated theatre designer, was also commissioned to design anatomy theatres. He designed the anatomy theatre of the Barber-Surgeons Company in the City of London, and the first dissection there was conducted in 1638.
- 4 The *OED* describes two distinct strands of meaning for "pathology" from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; one of these is defined as 'to do with feelings' and the other "to do with disease or abnormality."
- 5 Fletcher has been associated with Beaumont as co-author of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* [*KBP*], although that is no longer the dominant interpretation. There is a striking echo in *KBP* of the Don's encounter at Master Peter's puppet show, although such doubling is by critical opinion as often attributed to the conventions of satire rather than any overt borrowing. One Walter Burr (publisher) wrote the epistle dedicatory for the 1635 edition of the play, which attributes the work to Beaumont and Fletcher, and there is—this early—enough anxiety of influence for Burr to note, "Perhaps it will be thought to be of the race of *Don Quixote*." David M. Bergeron, the author of "Paratexts in Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*," suggests that 'Burr expresses an uncommon literariness by placing the play alongside a work recently translated by Thomas Shelton into English' (p. 461). That work was *Don Quixote*, and it is tempting to imagine

- that the imputed association of Fletcher as collaborator on the *KBP* arises in part from the awareness of Fletcher’s collaboration with Shakespeare on *Cardenio*. See David M. Bergeron, “Paratexts in Francis Beaumont’s *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*,” *Studies in Philology*, 106/4 (Fall 2009): 456–467.
- 6 There is a warrant signed by the Treasurer of the Privy Chamber, dated May 20, 1613, that orders payment to John Heminges and the King’s Men for performing 19 plays, one of which is *Cardenno*. Roger Chartier characterizes it as “without any doubt the first English theatrical adaptation based on *Don Quixote*,” the translation of which into English had taken place in 1612 by Thomas Shelton. There is some evidence for a circulation of a partial version available in English from as early as 1607. James Fitz-Maurice indicates that Shelton wrote a partial translation in 40 days in 1607, which he then laid aside for several years. Ben Jonson’s *Epicene, or The Silent Woman* refers in Act 4 to “Amadis de Gaul, or Don Quixote.” Only in 1653 did the stationer Humphrey Moseley attribute it to “Mr Fletcher and Shakespeare.”
  - 7 See Piers D. Mitchell et al., “The Study of Anatomy in England from 1700 to the 20th Century,” *Journal of Anatomy* 219/2 (2011): 91–92.
  - 8 See “Public Anatomy Lessons and the Carnival: The Anatomy Theatre of Bologna” by Giovanni Ferrari in *Past & Present*, 117/1 (November 1987): 54.
  - 9 A. N. Williams, “Child Adoption in the Seventeenth Century,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 97/1 (January 2004): 37–38. For further research see also Angus McLaren, “Barrenness Against Nature”: Recourse to Abortion in Pre-Industrial England,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 17/3 (1981): 224–237; and Laura Gowing, “Secret Births and Infanticide in Seventeenth-Century England,” *Past & Present* 156 (August 1997): 87–115.
  - 10 Gowing, 110–111.
  - 11 Robert Boyle, *Some Physico-Theological Considerations about the Possibility of Resurrection* (London, 1675), 25–27. This experiment is recreated and available on YouTube in a video made in 2013/14 in the *Materialities, Texts and Images Program*, a collaboration between the California Institute of Technology and the Huntington Library. The account of this video is to be found in the blog of Alexander Wragge-Morley (January 3, 2015). [www.alexwraggemorley.wordpress.com](http://www.alexwraggemorley.wordpress.com).
  - 12 To be found in *The Works of Robert Boyle*, in Six Volumes. Volume 4, (London, 1772), 196.
  - 13 Annie Bitbol Hesperies, “Cartesian Physiology,” in *Descartes’ Natural Philosophy*, ed. Stephen Gaukroger, John Schuster, and John Sutton (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 355.
  - 14 Pepys is also, tellingly, caught up in the bio-medical sciences, not least of all with the saga of his own bladder stones and kidney stones. He was as keenly engaged with every scientific breakthrough of the Royal Society as he was with seeing the King’s mistresses onstage.
  - 15 Cervantes certainly was interested in the form. In Part Two, chapters XXV–XXVIII of *Don Quixote*, Quixote finds himself at the puppet show of Master Peter.
  - 16 *Willis’s Oxford Lectures*, by Kenneth Dewhurst (Oxford: Sandford Publications, 1980).
  - 17 The “Petty Down Survey” of 1655–56 (“Down Survey” alludes to the fact that this was the record that was “down”; in other words, it was written and recorded).