

EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES



The Infectious, Alimentary, and Organistic Ecologies of *The Broken Heart*

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Throughout John Ford's *The Broken Heart*, Penthea grieves her severed engagement and forced marriage. While Calantha, Sparta's princess, tells Penthea that she 'feed[s] too much [her] melancholy', Penthea explains that 'troubled passion makes assault / On the unguarded castle of the mind' (3.5.13, 22-3).¹ A large portion of Ford's play focuses on the excessive melancholy of its protagonists; however, this exchange between the bereaved lover and the Spartan princess draws our attention to the play's concern with invasion. Relying on the language of ingestion, Calantha proposes that Penthea voluntarily 'feeds' or nurtures her melancholy. Penthea revises this diagnosis as she rejects Calantha's food metaphor and instead imagines her mind as an unprotected fortress, vulnerable to invasion. As Penthea suggests that melancholy is a disease of the mind, a common association during the period, she emphasizes that she cannot control the assault of troubled passions.² In this moment, Penthea and Calantha introduce us to

¹ All in-text references to the play are from John Ford, *The Broken Heart*, in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and Other Plays*, ed. by Marion Lomax (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, repr. 2008), pp. 81-163.

² As Calantha scolds Penthea for over nurturing her melancholy 'too much', she implicitly raises the possibility that melancholy should not be wholly avoided. In doing so, she alludes to the early modern distinction between Aristotelian or genial melancholy – that is, the desired disposition of scholars and poets – and Galenic melancholy, a pathological humoral imbalance. In his study of early modern melancholy, Drew Daniel argues that these two conceptions of the disease did not exist in easy harmony as Lawrence Babb suggests in *The Elizabethan Malady*. Daniel explains the tension surrounding Aristotelian and Galenic melancholy 'disorganizes the concept [of melancholy] but also paradoxically introduces a secondary kind of consistent incoherence, or generative indeterminacy, into the expression of melancholy itself' (p. 17). As Daniel shows and Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* demonstrates, early modern melancholy included a multiplicity of symptoms and expressions. Taking my cue from Daniel, I recognize throughout this article that melancholy resists definition. While characters describe one another as melancholic or admit to feeling melancholic, Ford does not offer a discrete conception of the disease. Drew Daniel, *The Melancholic Assemblage: Affect and Epistemology in the English Renaissance* (New

two distinct views of the humoral body. The princess, perhaps in keeping with Spartan values of self-discipline, ascribes to the physical and emotional self a sense of agency; that is, she seems to believe that, through careful attention to the body's health, Penthea can better regulate the excess of melancholic humors that appear to torment her mind. Penthea, however, characterizes the body as porous and vulnerable to external vicissitudes as she contends that her melancholy is not in fact within the realm of her control; instead, for Penthea, melancholy is an invasive force that penetrates the mind.

Much of the scholarship on the play is concerned with the consequences of self-discipline, asceticism, and emotional repression, and for many critics, Penthea's self-starvation and Calantha's composure reflect extreme visions of Spartan stoicism. In his 1970 article on the play, R.J. Kaufmann writes, 'The basic assumptions of the historical Sparta are vitally relevant to Ford's Sparta. In both communities, sanctioned human emotion has been radically circumscribed and individual desires subordinated to communal ends'.³ According to Kaufmann, the deaths of both women demonstrate that within this society 'death is a public *action*, deliberately organized to provide an opportunity for demonstrating one's heroic stature'.⁴ Following Kaufmann's reading of *The Broken Heart* as a 'tragedy of manners',⁵ Michael Neill claims, 'the tragedy of the play springs precisely from [the characters'] attempt to impose a formal mask of manners upon the broken and refractory inner self'.⁶ For Neill, the 'hopeless division of [Penthea's] emotional from her social self' leads her to feel as if she has 'suffered a species of inner death, of which her starvation is only a symbolic confirmation'.⁷ Nancy Gutierrez too associates Penthea's food refusal with the play's Spartan and emotionally sterile climate; however, she argues that Penthea's 'self-starvation becomes a kind of rebellion, not *against* authority, but *within* it'.⁸

While these readings underscore the significance of the play's setting, viewing Penthea's willful abstinence from food as either a consequence or defiance of the

York: Fordham University Press, 2013); and Lawrence Babb, *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951).

³ R.J. Kaufmann, 'Ford's "Waste Land": *The Broken Heart*', *Renaissance Drama*, 3 (1970), 167-87 (p. 178).

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 184-5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁶ Michael Neill, 'Ford's Unbroken Art: The Moral Design of *The Broken Heart*', *The Modern Language Review*, 75.2 (1980), 249-68 (p. 249).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁸ Nancy Gutierrez, *'Shall She Famish Then?': Female Food Refusal in Early Modern England* (New York: Ashgate, 2003), p. 61.

system of which she is a part, scholars have paid less attention to the medical culture in which Ford attempts to engage. Criticism on Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* has attended to the influence of, respectively, Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* and William Harvey's *De Motu Cordis*; however, scholarship on *The Broken Heart* has overlooked the play's sustained interest in bodily enclosure and permeability.⁹ Although I am in agreement with Gutierrez and read Penthea's decision to refuse food as a form of female agency, I argue that her self-starvation speaks to a larger concern regarding what can invade the human body. For some, Penthea and Calantha's conversation may echo the now familiar debate that has preoccupied scholars of early modern embodiment. Most notably, Michael Schoenfeldt has argued that Galenic theories of the body provide a means by which individuals may self-govern their physical and emotional health while Gail Kern Paster has proposed that such theories systemically depict female and non-white bodies as more vulnerable to humoral embarrassment than others.¹⁰ As the conversation between Penthea and the Spartan princess suggests, the play does not offer a conclusive portrait of the Galenic body, but instead dramatizes the tension between voluntary and involuntary models of the body's absorption of external elements.

Written during a period in which medical practitioners began to question long-held beliefs, *The Broken Heart* does not entirely depart from humoral theories of the body; however, through allusions to sympathetic bonds and emerging theories of infection, Ford gestures towards what Norbert Elias refers to as *homo clausus*, a more closed conception of the body. As David Hillman explains, 'By the late sixteenth century the inevitable permeability of the body had become a matter of high anxiety, a vulnerability to the invasions of "evil agents"'.¹¹ Hillman argues that scenes of physical violence in the period's tragedies – the staging of bodies that are "out of joint", dismembered,

⁹ For criticism on *'Tis Pity* and William Harvey's *De Motu Cordis*, see for example, Terri Clerico, 'The Politics of Blood: John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 22.3 (1992), 405-34; and Hillary M. Nunn, *Staging Anatomies: Dissection and Spectacle in Early Stuart Tragedy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005). Work on *The Lover's Melancholy* and Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* includes, G.F. Sensabaugh, 'Burton's Influence on Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy*', *Studies in Philology*, 33.4 (1936), 545-71; and R.F. Hill (ed.), 'Introduction to Ford', in *The Lover's Melancholy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 1-42.

¹⁰ Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); and Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹¹ David Hillman, 'Homo Clausus at the Theater' in *Rematerializing Shakespeare: Authority and Representation on the Early Modern English Stage*, ed. by Bryan Reynolds and William N. West (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 161-85 (p. 166).

tortured, pierced, raped, flayed; in general: spectacularly destroyed’ – represent ‘the pressure (to be closed) under which the body was placed’.¹² Hillman reminds us that these flayed bodies are not unlike those found in the anatomy theater and proposes that such scenes of corporeal rupture find their culmination in ‘a new kind of corporeal isolation’.¹³ My focus here is not on bodies that are ‘spectacularly destroyed’, but those that are instead more subtly and silently invaded. I suggest that the play’s representations of sympathetic attractions and bodily openness – for example, Ithocles’s itinerant spleen and Calantha’s open ears – dramatize an anxiety regarding specifically the *affective* boundaries of the human body. By describing melancholy as an ‘infection’, the play engages with emerging theories of contagion developed by practitioners such as Paracelsus and Fracastoro. Melancholy infects and travels across bodies as Ithocles’s spleen penetrates Penthea’s chest and undesirable sounds invade Calantha’s ears. Ford implicates bodies within unavoidable and infectious ecosystems – interconnected human and environmental networks – in which melancholy destroys the bodies with which it makes contact. The play’s concern with threats to these systems suggests that bodies in Ford’s world are susceptible to the invasive agents of their environment. Penthea’s self-starvation and Orgilus’s phlebotomy, while different modes of suicide – that is, one involves the body’s enclosure while the other purgation – dramatize a desire to control its precariously porous borders. The play’s final act, in which Calantha dances across stage while invaded by the news of death, visually represents melancholic contagion and draws attention to the devastating assault upon Calantha’s unwilling though ultimately permeable ears. I argue that in its attention to digestion, bloodletting, and invasive organs, *The Broken Heart* focuses on anxieties about corporeal permeability and illustrates a desire for a more bounded or closed model of the human body.

Monstrous Organs

Having severed his sister’s engagement to Crotolon, Ithocles, Penetha’s twin brother, attributes this act of sibling cruelty and masculinist dominance to the actions of an unruly organ: ‘My rash spleen / Hath with a violent hand plucked from thy bosom / A lover-blessed heart, to grind it into dust’ (3.2.43-45). While he may propose that the stirrings of his spleen have caused his hand to reach into his sister’s chest, the line also brings to mind the image of a spleen with a monstrous appendage. As Ithocles implies, this hand, sprouted from his spleen, extends beyond his torso and, penetrating Penthea’s

¹² Ibid, p. 170.

¹³ Ibid.

chest, makes contact with her heart.¹⁴ In his discussion of the spleen, Helkiah Crooke refers to the organ as the ‘receptacle of melancholike humors’ and explains that the spleen assisted the body in purging such humors: ‘The stomack as a seruant ministreth meate vnto him, the bladder of Gaul purgeth away the Choller from that meate, the Spleene drayneth away the Melancholy juice’.¹⁵ A sickly spleen could, thus, cause excessive melancholy. Although Ithocles specifies that his spleen is rash rather than ill, the spleen’s association with melancholy suggests that his actions result from a state of humoral imbalance. He relieves himself of blame by implying that organs can act independently of the body in which they are housed.¹⁶ The play emphasizes the affective force of invasive organs as Ithocles proposes that his spleen has reduced Penthea’s heart to dust or earth, melancholy’s complementary element. As Noga Arikha explains, black bile ‘in its most pathogenic manifestations...gave birth to *adust*, or burnt, melancholy’.¹⁷ In the perverse ecosystem Ithocles describes, organs penetrate other bodies, spreading undesirable humors and causing physical devastation.

¹⁴ As Katherine Rowe explains, hands were the bodily part most often associated with human action. Rowe traces this topos to Aristotle’s *De partibus animalium*, in which Aristotle defines the hand as the ‘instrument of instruments’ (p. 5). During the early modern period, this definition of the hand appears in Galen’s widely available *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* (p. 5). Katherine Rowe, *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

¹⁵ Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (London, 1615), pp. 7, 43. According to Crooke, excessive melancholy darkens the spleen: ‘[the spleen] is more then russet toward blacke; for such is the naturall colour of the Melancholy humor. But in those that are diseased in their Spleenes, such as is the humor that offends, such is the colour of the Spleene, Liuid, Leaden, Ashy or Leeke greene’ (p. 125).

¹⁶ In act three, scene five, Orgilus in part blames Ithocles’s spleen for Penthea’s unhappiness and loss of chastity. He privately tells Crotolon that Ithocles ‘Too humbly hath descended from that height / Of arrogance and spleen which wrought the rape / On grieved Penthea’s purity’ (3.4.25-7). In reference to this moment, Lisa Hopkins writes, ‘Here the spleen seems credited almost with independent agency of its own, controlling functions of the mind which one would hope would be guided by more rational forces, and thus effectively governing human behaviour’. While I agree with Hopkins, I point out that the play again emphasizes the independent agency of Ithocles’s spleen as he describes the organ’s outstretched and penetrative hand. See Lisa Hopkins, *The Female Hero in English Renaissance Tragedy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 173.

¹⁷ Noga Arikha, *Passions and Tempers: A History of the Humors* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), p. 115. The *OED*’s first definitions of *adust* relate specifically to the body’s humors and, in particular, melancholy: ‘Designating any of the humours of the body when considered to be abnormally concentrated and dark in color, and associated with a pathological state of hotness and dryness of the body’ and ‘affected with, or having a temperament determined by, adust humours. In later use: having a melancholy character or appearance; gloomy; sallow’. ‘Adust’, in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online], <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/2874>> [accessed 10 June 2018].

As Ithocles reminds Penthea that they ‘had one father, in one womb took life, / Were brought up twins together’, he draws attention to both the shared space of their mother’s womb as well as their entangled lives post-gestation (3.2.34-5). Most early modern medical theories of conception attributed multiple births, conjoined children, and additional body parts to superfluous bodily matter.¹⁸ Physicians believed that the womb’s movement divides excessive prenatal matter, thus creating same or opposite sex twins. In his section on multiple births, Ambroise Paré does not mention an instance of a twin with an additional or extraordinary part; however, in his discussion of single child births, he explains that an ‘abundance of matter’ can also result in a ‘monstrous child having superfluous and useless parts, such as two heads, four arms, four legs, six digits on the hands and feet, or other things’.¹⁹ Following such theories, early moderns would have regarded excessive flesh and unusual movement in the womb as the cause of not only Penthea’s and Ithocles’s twinship, but also, perhaps, Ithocles’s monstrously shaped spleen. In an earlier moment, Ithocles more explicitly describes the perilous potential of the womb, noting specifically its susceptibility to invasion: ‘Ambition? ’Tis of viper’s breed, it gnaws / A passage through the womb that gave it motion’ (2.2.1-2). Just as his spleen penetrates Penthea’s body, causing melancholy to spread, this toxic serpent induces dangerous feelings of ambition.

Although their mother’s womb is threatened by foreign species and the unpredictable movement of excessive matter, it is this internal landscape that Ithocles refers to as he insists upon the significance of his relationship with his sister. He raises the possibility that, despite the sense of danger associated with the womb, the two share a sympathetic affinity that persists beyond birth. Unlike our contemporary understanding of sympathy – and its corresponding associations with compassion and moral philosophy – sixteenth and early seventeenth century definitions of the word referred to inexplicable bonds between human and nonhuman bodies. While early moderns drew heavily on humoral theory to understand the body’s affective and physical health, they attributed specific

¹⁸ Mary Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 79. Physicians, following Aristotelian notions of reproduction, believed that in the process of procreation women provide bodily matter while men provide the soul and form. In contrast, the Hippocratic two-seed theory posits that both men and women could contribute seed; however, the more dominant seed determines the child’s traits.

¹⁹ Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. by Janis L. Pallister (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), p. 8. In addition, Paré writes, ‘if the seed is lacking in quantity, some limb will be lacking [such] as [a person] having only one hand, no arms or feet or head, or [having] some other part missing’ (p. 8). While Penthea is not born bereft of a heart, the play suggests that Ithocles’s abundance of bodily matter causes the destruction of this vital organ. Paré does not comment on twins with excessive parts, only addressing the risks of a ‘superabundance of matter’ in his discussion of ‘hermaphrodites or androgynes’ (p. 26).

behaviors and emotional contagion to sympathetic affinities.²⁰ Mary Floyd-Wilson explains that ‘twins were understood to have a particularly strong sympathetic connection, much like the lodestone and iron [...] for many early modern writers, twins epitomize the wondrous effects of nature’s secret sympathies’.²¹ In her discussion of twinship in *The Broken Heart* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, Louise Powell points out that the period’s medical texts and midwifery manuals focus primarily on the prenatal relationship of twins and the threat of infant and maternal mortality.²² In their nearly exclusive attention to the conception and delivery of twins, such texts implicitly diminish the importance of the relationship after birth. Powell, however, argues that Ford’s and Webster’s plays stress the significance of twinship and suggest that the importance of this bond continues into adulthood. In regards to this scene, she observes, ‘Ithocles gradually increases the closeness of his relation to Penthea by emphasizing the similarity of their father’s body, their mother’s, and finally their own’.²³ Underscoring not just their shared physicality, but also, I would add, the affective consequences of his invasive spleen, Ithocles suggests that the siblings’ sympathetic bond ultimately results in melancholy and the disintegration of Penthea’s heart. The play conveys the dangers of sympathetic relationships and proposes that such bonds can leave the body vulnerable to both emotional contagion and the interpenetration of foreign organs.

As Ithocles bemoans the risks of perverse ecosystems, Penthea imagines an alternative, in which she is subject only to the fluctuations of her own body:

The handmaid to the wages
Of country toil drinks the untroubled streams
With leaping kids and with bleating lambs,
And so allays her thirst secure, whiles I
Quench my hot sighs with fleetings of my tears. (3.2.54-58)

In direct contrast to the harmful internal environment Ithocles depicts just moments earlier, Penthea lauds the bucolic harmony of country life, envying a handmaid who, accompanied by livestock, trusts the cool waters to which she opens her mouth and throat. Unlike the woman, who discovers nourishment in her surroundings, Penthea does not engage with a larger ecosystem – that is, she does not drink water to quench her thirst – but she instead depends on the release and flow of her tears. Though she

²⁰ For a fuller discussion of sympathetic affinities, see Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge*.

²¹ Floyd-Wilson, pp. 79, 80.

²² Louise Powell, “‘It Seems She Was Born First’: The Persistence of Twinship in *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*”, *Early Modern Literary Studies*, Special Issue 26: ‘John Ford’ (2017), 1-15.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

does not yet articulate her desire to refuse food, Penthea implies that even the natural world can no longer sustain her. More than merely a lamentation on lost love, these lines gesture to concerns regarding what enters and leaves the human body.

Unlike Penthea, Ithocles does not attempt to isolate himself from other bodies and foodstuffs:

The labourer doth eat his coarsest bread,
Earned with his sweat, and lies him down to sleep,
While every bit I touch turns in digestion
To gall, as bitter as Penthea's curse. (3.2.59-62)

Ithocles praises the simple pleasures of the lower classes – the laborer who, despite eating coarse bread, drifts off to sleep contented – recognizing that everything he consumes turns to gall or bile.²⁴ While he describes alimentary digestion, his use of the word ‘touch’ (as opposed to taste) suggests that he is not solely referring to the digestive processes, but instead to broader forms of contact. Bread turns to bile just as organs turn to dust. As Schoenfeldt might suggest, for Ithocles, the digestive tract entangles him within a larger ecosystem because ‘the exigencies of the stomach require the individual to confront on a daily basis the thin yet necessarily permeable line separating self and other’.²⁵ The language of food consumption gives expression to what Ithocles perceives to be his necessary, yet ultimately pernicious reliance on external networks. As he admits, he devastates what is both within and beyond his frame.

Sympathetic Infection

In spite of her brother's cruelty, Penthea agrees to court Calantha on Ithocles's behalf, but warns that her grief may prevent her from fulfilling this promise. She tells Ithocles,

²⁴ The *Oxford English Dictionary*, in its first entry for gall, defines the word as ‘the secretion of the liver, bile’. ‘Gall’, in The Oxford English Dictionary [online], <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/76229> [accessed 10 June 2016].

²⁵ Michael Schoenfeldt, ‘Fables of the Belly in Early Modern England’, in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 244. Schoenfeldt explains that, for early moderns, digestion was ‘a continual process of liquefaction and rarefaction, with each stage producing a purer form of nutrition by expelling what is not useful and converting what is’ (p. 245). That Ithocles turns food to gall would imply that his body cannot discern nourishment from dross.

‘If sorrows / Have not too much dulled my infected brain, / I’ll cheer invention for an active strain’ (3.2.115-17). Although, as Jonathan Gil Harris points out, early moderns used ‘infection’ ‘to refer to the pollution of the body by ill or superfluous humors’, Penthea suggests that she suffers from an infection inflicted by sorrow.²⁶ She characterizes sorrow not as an internal state of despair, but a foreign entity that invades the body and specifically targets the mind, dulling cognition.²⁷ In doing so, she alludes to proto-microbiological understandings of disease advanced by physicians such as Paracelsus and Fracastoro.²⁸

The controversial Swiss physician, Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493-1541), known more famously as Paracelsus, departed from the widely accepted Galenic tradition by conceiving of disease as an exogenous force rather than a state of humoral imbalance. According to Paracelsus, disease invades the body and ‘act[s] upon and combine[s] with an equivalent substance’.²⁹ Five ‘entia’, what Paracelsus identifies as ‘the active principles or influences’, both ‘govern our bodies and do violence to them’: *ens astrorum*, the stars; *ens venei*, the influence of poison; *ens naturale*, the natural constitution; *ens spirituale*, the spiritual entity; and *ens Dei*, the

²⁶ Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare’s England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 96. Harris notes that ‘infect’ had ‘retained the connotations of its Latin etymological root, *inficere*, to dye, color, stain, or pollute’ (p. 96).

²⁷ The *Oxford English Dictionary* specifies that ‘infection’ was initially used to denote an ‘infectious or communicable disease’ or ‘an epidemic’ rather than a disease caused by the ‘invasion and growth of microorganisms or other parasitic organisms within the body’. The *OED* explains that ‘infection’ was also used to describe the ‘corruption or morbid condition of the blood, another humor, or a body part’ as well as the ‘contaminated condition or unhealthy quality (of air, water, etc.)’. ‘Infection,’ in The Oxford English Dictionary [online], <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/95273> [accessed 10 June 2018].

²⁸ The Italian physician, Girolamo Fracastoro, developed a theory of contagious disease, though he differed from Paracelsus in his approach, relying heavily on Lucretian atomism. A small handful of English physicians may have been influenced by Fracastoro’s *De Contagione et Contagiosis Morbis* (1546) and his epic poem, *Syphilis sive morbus gallicus* (1530); however, English playgoers would have been more familiar with Paracelsian medicine, largely in part because of the Swiss physician’s controversial reputation as well as the popularity of his chemical remedies. In his study of English plague tracts, Harris reports finding only one explicit reference to Fracastoro in Stephen Bradwell’s *Physick for the Sickness, Commonly Called the Plague, With All the Particular Signes and Symptoms, Whereof the Most Are Ignorant* (London, 1636). See also Park, Katherine and Lorraine Daston, eds., *The Cambridge History of Science*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Melvin Santer, *Confronting Contagion: Our Evolving Understanding of Disease* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

²⁹ Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus: An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance* (New York: Karger, 1982), p. 142.

influence of God.³⁰ As Walter Pagel explains, these entia or ‘seeds of disease’ enter the body and ‘act like a “man hidden in man”, affecting the organ to which they are related by a kind of predestined sympathy’.³¹ Disease, for Paracelsus, ‘was not endogenous or constitutional; to engender it, a foreign invader, a “seed”, is required’.³²

While the body’s five entities are at once ‘inherent’ and potentially harmful to the body, Paracelsus proposes that ‘each natural disease bears its own remedy within itself’.³³ His interest in developing chemical remedies reflects his ‘chemical cosmology’, his conception of the ‘systemic relations, reflections, and sympathies shared between the microcosm and macrocosm.’³⁴ Paracelsus explains, ‘The condition of urine must be read from the outer world, the pulse must be understood in relation to the firmament, physiognomy to the stars, chiromancy to the minerals [...] If the physician understands things exactly and sees and recognizes all illnesses in the macrocosm outside man, and if he has a clear idea of man and his whole nature, then only is he a physician’.³⁵ By carefully studying the sympathetic relationship between the body and the outer world, the skilled physician can ‘recognize what lies hidden in nature’ and offer the patient an appropriate treatment.³⁶ Although Paracelsus acknowledges that treating that which poisons the body with poison seems antithetical, he reassures his readers that, ‘There where diseases arise, there also can one find the roots of health. For health must grow from the same root as disease, and whither health goes, thither also disease must go’.³⁷

Apart from a few exceptions, English physicians were far more interested in Paracelsus’s practical remedies than his medical doctrine; however, the growing popularity of chemical medicine as well as the perceived threat of foreign illnesses suggest a gradual understanding of disease as the effect of invasive entities.³⁸ John Hester, an English apothecary, translated and published a selection of Paracelsus’s

³⁰ Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, ed. by Jolande Jacobi, trans. by Norbert Guterman (New York: Pantheon, 1958), pp. 75, 76.

³¹ Pagel, p. 140.

³² Ibid.

³³ Paracelsus, p. 76.

³⁴ Park and Daston, pp. 32, 31.

³⁵ Paracelsus, p. 63.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 61.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 78.

³⁸ R. Bostocke, whom Allen Debus identifies as the ‘first English Paracelsian’, defends the Christian underpinnings of Paracelsus’s medical theory in *The Difference betwene the Auncient Phisicke and the Latter Phisicke* (1585); however, as Paul Kocher points out, Bostocke’s work was largely ignored by his contemporaries (p. 465). Allen Debus, *The English Paracelsians* (London: Oldbourne, 1965); and Paul Kocher, ‘Paracelsan Medicine in England’, *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 2 (1947), 451-80.

practical remedies, including *An Excellent Treatise Teaching howe to Cure the French Pockes* (1590), in which Hester argued in the work's introductory preface that new diseases, unbeknownst to the ancients, demand new remedies.³⁹ As Harris notes, foreign illnesses, such as the 'French pockes' or what we would now refer to as syphilis, were of particular concern to early moderns because they demonstrated that the onset of disease was not endogenous, but could, in fact, cross national borders, traveling from person to person.⁴⁰ Rather than relying on Galenic methods of restoring health 'by treating an ailment with its opposite', Paracelsus advocated for 'treating like with like, or poisons with poisons'.⁴¹ By the early decades of the seventeenth century, English households, across classes, would have had at least some familiarity with Paracelsian chemical potions, which were brought to England by either continental physicians or English physicians who had studied abroad.⁴² Although the average person living in England was most likely unfamiliar with Paracelsus's theoretical writings, their reliance on chemical remedies – in treating like with like – suggests that they viewed disease, the affected body parts, and the prescribed remedies within a larger system of hidden sympathies. As Floyd-Wilson explains, 'contagion in the early modern period was commonly marked as a sympathetic response, which meant that the victim possessed a predestined affinity with the invasive element'.⁴³

Pentheia does not seek out chemical remedies to treat sorrow; however, by characterizing this affective state as both an infection and an invasive force, she suggests that sorrow, the invasive *entia* or seed, and her mind, the affected organ, share a sympathetic bond. Much like her brother, Penthea proposes that such affinities can ravage the body's organs.

As the play progresses, Ford more explicitly develops a theory of infection by emphasizing the dangers of physical proximity. Shortly after Penthea's conversation with Ithocles, Orgilus, Penthea's former lover, reappears at court after a feigned trip to Athens, claiming to have left the city for 'care...of [his] health' (3.4.40). He elucidates the reasons for his return by telling his father that in Athens 'a general infection /

³⁹ Kocher, p. 472. Hester's translation of *Howe to Cure the French Pockes* and even his later book, *The Pearle of Practise* (1594), demonstrate a sustained interest in the physician's practical remedies.

⁴⁰ Harris, p. 17.

⁴¹ Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 5.

⁴² While many English medics in the last decades of the sixteenth century disparaged or defended the notorious physician, Kocher contends that during the 1590s, through medical and non-medical literature and contact with physicians who had studied abroad, 'almost every well-informed person in England came to know at least something about Paracelsism' (p. 475).

⁴³ Floyd-Wilson, p. 47.

Threatens a desolation' (3.4.40-42). Unimpressed by his son's vigilance, Croton rebukes Orgilus's decision:

...And I fear
Thou hast brought back a worse infection with thee,
Infection of thy mind; which, as thou say'st,
Threatens the desolation of our family. (3.4.42-45)

By purportedly leaving Athens, Orgilus follows commonly accepted advice found in the period's plague tracts; in his 1603 treatise, David Lodge recommends that if faced with an outbreak of the plague, it 'behooueth euery man to haue speciall care that he frequent not any places or persons infected, neither that hée suffer such to breath vpon him'.⁴⁴ Although Orgilus flees from 'a general infection,' rather than the plague, he recognizes that his proximity to infected bodies may impact his health. Croton too raises the possibility that, through close contact, Orgilus may infect their family. Specifying that his son suffers from an infection of the mind, the troubled father worries that Orgilus's melancholy will spread and lead to the family's ruin.⁴⁵ By drawing on emerging theories of infection, the play positions bodies within intimate ecosystems; however, as we see in this conversation between the father and son, Ford again alludes to the potentially dangerous affective and physical consequences of both close proximity and sympathetic attractions.

Food Refusal and Phlebotomy

As the play progresses, Ford conceives of ingestion and starvation as a way in which characters may choose to participate in larger human and non-human networks. While *The Broken Heart* only gestures to the material practices involved in food production and consumption, eating by its very nature, as Schoenfeldt proposes, involves a sustained ecological engagement with the natural world. Often a collective activity, the

⁴⁴ David Lodge, *A Treatise of the Plague* (London, 1603), p. 11.

⁴⁵ Robert Burton cites Galen's definition of the disease: 'a privation or infection of the middle cell of the heart' (p. 169). He also explains, 'Most are of opinion that it is the brain: for being a kind of dotage, it cannot otherwise be but that the brain must be affected' (p. 169). Thomas Elyot, in *The Castel of Helth*, describes melancholy as 'heuynesse of mynde' (p.75). Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London, 1621); and Thomas Elyot, *The Castel of Helth* (London, 1534).

While S. Blaine Ewing does not develop this claim, he begins to suggest that Ford develops a theory of melancholic contagion. He argues that the play dramatizes a 'mysterious uncontrollable plague which blasts the lives of all those who come close to Bassanes and Ithocles' (p. 97). S. Blaine Ewing, *Burtonian Melancholy in the Plays of John Ford*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940).

consumption of foodstuffs also entails participation in human communities.⁴⁶ Unlike the sympathetic affinities I discuss – inexplicable forces that, in the play, lead to the penetration of the body’s interior – alimentary ecosystems involve the willful decision to allow or exclude foreign materials from entering the body.

The sympathetic bond the twins share results in corporeal invasion; however, food refusal provides a means by which Penthea may control what enters her body. As her family, husband, and former lover grieve her imminent death, Penthea refers to herself in the third-person and explains:

But since her blood was seasoned by the forfeit
Of noble shame, with mixtures of pollution,
Her blood – ’tis just – be henceforth never heightened
With taste of sustenance. Starve; let that fullness
Whose pleurisy hath fevered faith and modesty –
Forgive me. (4.2.149-154)

Penthea defends her decision to abstain from food as she describes her feelings of moral corruption and the pollution of her body’s interior. According to the *OED*, ‘pollution’, for early moderns, would have referred to spiritual or moral corruption and impurity; ‘sometimes also with an implication of physical impurity conveyed by bodily contact’.⁴⁷ The *OED* suggests that pollution – as environmental contamination – did not gain traction until the late eighteenth century. Penthea, however, draws on both physical and moral understandings of the word as she grieves her contaminated blood. Considering emerging theories of systemic circulation, she perhaps imagines a widespread form of pollution, her blood traveling across her capillaries and veins.⁴⁸

In addition, she relies on the language of food preparation as she declares that her blood has been ‘seasoned’ by shame. Conceiving of her blood as a dish comprised of several elements, she alludes to the intimate link during the period between diet and humoral physiology; as Wendy Wall explains, early modern recipe books included instructions

⁴⁶ For more on the ecological implications of food consumption, see Amy Tigner, ‘The Ecology of Eating in Jonson’s “To Penshurst”’ in *Ecological Approaches to Early Modern English Texts: A Field Guide for Reading and Teaching*, ed. by Jennifer Munroe and Edward J. Geiswedit (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 109-20.

⁴⁷ ‘Pollution’ in The Oxford English Dictionary [online], <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/146992> [accessed 10 June 2018].

⁴⁸ See William Harvey’s *De Motu Cordis* (London, 1628). Harvey’s work on the circulatory system placed the heart at the centre of this intricate network.

for both food preparation and medical care.⁴⁹ Penthea's use of the passive voice here implies that other forces, beyond her control, have contaminated this dish. Though she could contribute to this internal cuisine through 'sustenance' or eating, she desires to manipulate the polluted concoction through self-starvation.⁵⁰ While critics tend to read Penthea's food refusal as the sign of a deteriorating mind, I argue that Penthea's self-starvation is, in fact, a very conscious choice that demonstrates an acute concern regarding what trespasses her body.⁵¹ As Gutierrez contends, food refusal allows Penthea to avoid the very communal act of eating,⁵² or commensality, which as David B. Goldstein notes was integral to maintaining English social structure during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵³ In doing so, she exerts an albeit limited form of female agency, but most significantly, food refusal allows Penthea to distance herself from both human networks and larger external ecologies of plant and animal life.

Moreover, playgoers would have likely been attuned to the reproductive consequences of fasting.⁵⁴ Early modern gynecological manuals attributed infertility to, amongst a variety of other factors, excessive thinness and a lack of proper nourishment. In *The Byrth of Mankynde*, one of the most popular gynecological texts during the period,

⁴⁹ Wendy Wall, *Recipes for Thought: Knowledge and Taste in the Early Modern English Kitchen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), p. 7.

⁵⁰ For more on women's domestic agency, see Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Wall writes, 'The conjoining of preservation and destruction evident in cooking and confectionery carried over into the job of managing flesh in all of its incarnations. Since each food was thought to contain properties that affected the balance of humors in the body, the housewife manipulated diet as part of medical care' (p. 3).

⁵¹ We see this association between fasting and madness in characters such as Hamlet and Cynthia in George Chapman's *The Widow's Tears* (Gutierrez, pp. 15-16). In regards to Penthea's madness, Gutierrez writes, 'Penthea's stage appearance and language typify the conventional attributes of the madwoman [...] her hair "is about her ears", and her speech seems distracted' (p. 70). Somewhat similarly, Cynthia Marshall argues that the play's prolonged forms of suffering – starvation and phlebotomy – cause 'calamitous death in which consciousness slowly slips away' (p. 146). Hopkins too proposes that Penthea 'go[es] quietly and irreversibly insane' (p. 182). While I agree that Penthea may take on the appearance of the early modern madwoman, I argue that her food refusal is a calculated form of retaliation against corporeal invasion. Patricia Cahill is unique in suggesting that Penthea does not fully act the role of the madwoman; Penthea instead makes 'it clear that she is merely going through the motions of living' (p. 17). Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); and Patricia Cahill, 'Going Through the Motions: Affects, Machines, and John Ford's *The Broken Heart*', in *Historical Affects and the Early Modern Theater*, ed. by Ronda Arab, Michelle Dowd, and Adam Zucker (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 15-27.

⁵² Gutierrez, p. 71.

⁵³ David B. Goldstein, *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 5.

⁵⁴ Marion Lomax, 'Introduction' in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore' and Other Plays*, p. xv.

Eucharius Röesslin explains that women who are ‘verye spare and leane in all theyr bodye’ and experience ‘a small quantite of flowres’ are susceptible to ‘over much heate or dryeth in the matrice’, or womb, which in turn prevents conception.⁵⁵ Röesslin proposes that leanness may be the result of a number of possible ailments, including and most pertinent to Penthea’s case, ‘over much fastynge’ and ‘sorowe.’⁵⁶ According to both Aristotelian and Galenic-Hippocratic models of generation, for very thin bodies, excessive heat threatened ‘the generative materials, either destroying them altogether or making them defective’.⁵⁷ Penthea silently revolts against her forced marriage to Bassanes – and his implicit wish for reproductive futurity – as she slowly destroys the bodily materials that would sustain his bloodline.⁵⁸ She erases herself, not only growing thinner by day, but also as she looks ahead and attempts to ensure her genealogical invisibility. Although the play dramatizes the body’s vulnerability to unruly forces, including invasive organs and melancholic infection, Ford proposes that self-starvation allows a degree of control over environmental and internal vicissitudes. Penthea does not articulate an aversion to childbirth; however, audiences would have likely read her lack of nourishment as an active attempt to thwart fertility.

Like his former lover, Orgilus discovers a sense of prideful agency in manipulating his own death. After Calantha sentences Orgilus to death for his murder of Ithocles, Orgilus requests that he perform his own phlebotomy. He tells those around him that he is ‘skilled in letting blood’ and then directs Bassanes to bind his arm (5.2.101).⁵⁹ Carving

⁵⁵ Eucharius Röesslin, *The Byrth of Mankynde, Newly Translated out of Laten into Englysshe* (London, 1540), p. lxxxiii. In this same passage, the manual also notes that ‘women which naturally are thus spare & lene’ may be ‘brought to a temperance agayne & be made apte to conceive’ (p. lxxxiii).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Sarah Toulalan, “‘If slenderesse be the cause of unfruitfulnesse; you must nourish and fatten the body’: Thin Bodies and Infertility in Early Modern England” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Infertility in History*, ed. by Gayle Davis and Tracey Loughran (London: Palgrave, 2017), pp. 171-97 (p. 177). As Toulalan explains, according to the Aristotelian model, only men contributed seed in the production of the fetus; however, women who lacked a sufficient supply of menstrual blood could not provide the fetus with matter or, during pregnancy, ‘nourish it in the womb’ (p. 177). In the Galenic-Hippocratic model, women contributed seed; an ‘overheated constitution’ could affect the production of both the seed and menstrual blood, thus harming fertility (p. 177).

⁵⁸ Addressing the court, Bassanes describes the joys of marriage as, amongst other things, ‘earthly immortality’, thus suggesting that he looks forward to the continuation of his bloodline (2.2.88).

⁵⁹ Although I argue that the play emphasizes the ways in which the self can and cannot manipulate the anatomical body, Orgilus’s repeated reverence for his own skills as an amateur barber-surgeon may be a way for him to avoid the common association between leakiness (specifically, through bleeding) and feminine porousness. In reference to Mutius’s bleeding body in *Coriolanus*, Paster argues that the wounded soldier attempts to figure bleeding as ‘voluntary and therapeutic’ (p. 288). Gail Kern Paster,

into his skin, he declares, ‘Thus I show cunning / In opening of a vein too full, too lively’ (5.2.121-2). He boasts that an abundance of blood courses through his body, appearing to delight in his skills as an amateur barber-surgeon.⁶⁰

Orgilus’s decision to bleed himself to death would have signaled to early modern audiences a desire to purge the body of corrupt matter. As Nancy Siraisi explains, phlebotomy was a fairly common practice during the middle ages and early modern period.⁶¹ Medical practitioners believed that bloodletting allowed one to release undesirable, corrupted humors and thus regain stable health.⁶² Noting that phlebotomy was occasionally used to treat lovesickness, Lesel Dawson argues that ‘Orgilus’s death functions as both a punishment for his murder of Ithocles and a purging for his lovesickness’.⁶³ While bloodletting would have had symbolic and ethical resonances for early modern playgoers – as Dawson suggests, the practice ‘purges the body politic of bad blood’ – I would add that Orgilus discovers joy in negotiating and manipulating his undoing. The play celebrates the individual’s capacity to control the body; however, Ford suggests that such control is only possible when an individual is willing to exclude themselves from larger human and nonhuman networks.

Contagious Choreography

While suicide allows Penthea and Orgilus to manipulate their own bodies – and ultimately achieve their desired ends – Ford ends his play by emphasizing the body’s inescapable penetration. The play dramatizes an ecosystem of bodies and sounds as Calantha learns of her father, Penthea, and Ithocles’s deaths in the midst of her wedding

“‘In the Spirit of Men there is no Blood’”: Blood as Trope of Gender in *Julius Caesar*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 40.3 (1989), 284-98.

⁶⁰ During the twelfth century and onward, physicians were restricted from engaging directly with blood. A barber-surgeon rather than a physician would have performed phlebotomies (p. 15). Ariane M. Balizet, *Blood and Home in Early Modern Drama: Domestic Identity on the Renaissance Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁶¹ Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 140.

⁶² In his work, *The English Phlebotomy*, Nicholas Gyer explains, ‘for the bloud contained in the veines is not simple, or of one kind, as hath beene said; but consisteth of flewme, blacke & yellow choler, and pure bloud mingled together, which humors notwithstanding so mingled by common agreement and continuall use of speaking: we commonly call bloud [...] Bloud therefore faulteth in quantitie when the humors being settled in just proportion, do passe and exceede the agreeable measue of Nature: for then the whole frame of the bodie swelleth’ (p. 6). Nicholas Gyer, *The English Phlebotomy* (London, 1592).

⁶³ Lesel Dawson, *Lovesickness and Gender in Early Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 165.

dance. The play's stage directions specify that, even after Calantha learns of each death, she 'dance[s] again' (5.2.13, 16). Although Calantha continues to dance on, as if to suggest that she is unaffected by the news, her body is ultimately vulnerable these tragedies. She initially appears to resist what Heather James identifies as the feminized figure of the attendant listener.⁶⁴ Those around her comment that it is 'strange' that 'these tragedies should never touch on / Her female pity' and conclude that she possesses a 'masculine spirit' (5.2.94-5). While the court implicitly commends Calantha for her resilience, they simultaneously express surprise that the messages do not alter the princess's disposition. Calantha notes that a 'murmur / Pierced [her] unwilling ears'; however, she appears to be so emotionally immune to the disquieting reports that she asks Orgilus to repeat the news of her husband's death (5.2.39-40). In characterizing her ears as unwilling participants in the drama unfolding around her, Calantha attempts to resist the powerful potential of auditory experience as she moves through the motions of a courtly dance. Yet, as she notes that multiple voices invade her ears, she seems to recognize her unavoidable embeddedness within an ecosystem of human bodies and sounds.

While scholars tend to read Calantha's determination to dance as another example of Spartan stoicism, I argue that rather than exploring affective repression, Ford visually choreographs emotional contagion. Alan Brissenden suggests that plays such as *The Broken Heart* and Martson's *The Malcontent* – in which dance is interspersed with dialogue – would most likely have staged a *pavane*, a slow, stately dance.⁶⁵ As we know from the scene's stage directions and dialogue, the actors danced with a partner and completed a series of 'changes' or figures. Marion Lomax notes that 'Calantha's comments "To the other change" and "Lead to the next" suggest a formal patterned movement'.⁶⁶ Throughout the scene, messages of death punctuate each change. As Calantha steps through a series of presumably prescribed movements, news of death bombards her reluctant ears. The contrast between choreographed movement and undesirable auditory experience exposes the body's inability to resist invasion. In her discussion of Hamlet's *The Mousetrap* and the play's unseen poisoning, Tanya Pollard writes, 'while we can choose whether or not to eat a given substance, ears remain open, and receptive, regardless of intent'.⁶⁷ More specifically, Gina Bloom points out that, for

⁶⁴ Heather James, 'Dido's Ear: Tragedy and the Politics of Response', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 52.3 (2001), 360-82 (p. 368).

⁶⁵ Alan Brissenden, 'Jacobean Tragedy and the Dance', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 44.4 (1981), 249-62 (p. 261).

⁶⁶ Marion Lomax, *Stage Images and Traditions: Shakespeare to Ford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 179.

⁶⁷ Pollard, p. 124.

women in early modern drama, ‘aural vulnerability is figured as a particularly fraught state’.⁶⁸ She writes, ‘It is through their resistance to aural subjugation, rather than their surrender to it, that female characters [...] emerge as agentive subjects’.⁶⁹ Although Calantha initially convinces the court of her resilience to such tragic events, she is ultimately besieged by the unfolding news of death. She admits:

...O my lords,
I but deceived your eyes with antic gesture,
When one news straight came huddling on another,
Of death, and death, and death. Still I danced forward;
But it struck home, and here, and in an instant.
Be such mere women, who with shrieks and outcries
Can vow a present end to all their sorrows,
Yet live to vow new pleasures, and outlive them.
They are the silent griefs which cut the heartstrings. (5.3.67-75)

Calantha’s description of auditory huddling or crowding – the concussive tripling ‘of death, and death, and death’ – underscores the physical reverberations of this aural assault, her ears’ cavities defenseless against the successive waves of dismal news. She differentiates herself from most women, not because of her ability to withstand grief, but because of her deeply physical vulnerability to it; although she attempts to *still* dance forward, Calantha confesses that the news ‘huddles’, ‘strikes’, and finally ‘cuts’ her interior. She describes the process of heartbreak, or death by grief, in which mournful news penetrates the body and tears it apart. As Calantha suggests, sorrow may move us, even if our bodies are unwilling.

By staging the ways in which the body cannot give consent – and specifically the psychophysiological effects of morbid news – the play visually represents the physical processes of affective contagion. Patricia Cahill suggests the play’s affective atmosphere ‘comes into being through a technological imaginary,’ through ‘the regulated movement of mechanical devices’.⁷⁰ *The Broken Heart*, Cahill contends, ‘addresses playgoers viscerally, appealing through the mechanical not only to sight and sound, but to kinesthesia or what Deidre Sklar defines as the “proprioceptive sense of movement within our own bodies”’.⁷¹ Akin to the mechanical instruments and repetitive

⁶⁸ Gina Bloom, *Voice in Motion: Staging Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Penn Press, 2007), p. 115.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁷⁰ Cahill, p. 16.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

gestures Cahill discusses, the dance's choreographed movements produce the scene's affective environment. Those viewing the dancers, both on and off stage, may feel the physical repercussions of loss as they confront not only the reoccurring news of death, but also the startling sight of Calantha's body as she continues to dance. Bassanes, for example, notices a change in a fellow bystander's, Armostes's, disposition and advises him to 'rend not / Thine arteries with hearing the bare circumstances / Of these calamities' (5.2.54-6). Bassanes recognizes that as the news of death moves through Calantha's ears so too does it move through the ears of those around her. Yet, given the play's interest in contagion, Ford I argue moves beyond representing the visceral experience of melancholy by staging, even more radically, its miasmatic transmission. That Calantha learns of these deaths while continuing to move across stage visually dramatizes affective contagion, the potential for melancholy to strike, huddle, and cut the bodies with which it makes contact. Calantha's failed attempt to 'dance forward', the remarks of onlookers, and perhaps even the felt experience of playgoers demonstrate that the body – as Penthea insists in act three – cannot always guard itself from melancholic invasion; rather, like the involuntary experience of aurality, affective states can seep through the body in insidious and unpredictable ways.

The Broken Heart signals a turn toward a more closed conception of the humoral body, illustrating the dangers of sympathetic intimacy and dismal alternatives to the body's forced invasion. For Penthea and Orgilus, self-starvation and bloodletting provide means by which these characters may exclude themselves from the networks of which they were once a part. While Penthea encloses her body, denying herself food, Orgilus controls his humoral output, refusing to participate in his ecosystem's natural progression of death and decay. Despite their efforts to sever their bodies from their environments, total separation, as Calantha in particular proves, is ultimately impossible for melancholy, in this play, moves like a contagion, traveling through the human body's porous frame. Invasive agents exploit the cracks of *The Broken Heart*, as Ford's tragedy exposes the widening ideological rifts of humoral medicine during the seventeenth century.