

Faithful Bodies: Anatomy and Emblematic Fugitive Sheets in Late Sixteenth-Century Wittenberg

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I. Introduction: History of Anatomy in Wittenberg

This essay will focus on the University of Wittenberg as a center for anatomy and dissemination of ideas about the body among German principalities. Further, through a close examination of the relationship between Melanchthon's *Liber de Anima* (first published in 1540 and again in an expanded version in 1553) and accompanying fugitive sheets (flap anatomies) used as pedagogical texts in Wittenberg in the second half of the sixteenth century, I will show that the study of anatomy provided much more than knowledge of the body.¹ Specifically, the peculiar mix of anatomical knowledge and Protestant natural philosophy that subsequently spread to many European universities taught social skills through the metaphor of the body. After a brief history of anatomy in Wittenberg, I will focus on the use of dialectic and rhetoric in Wittenberg fugitive sheet images and Melanchthon's *Liber de anima* to provide a glimpse of an emblematic² approach to anatomy that was both common to the broader uses of anatomy in the sixteenth century and specific to the needs and goals of a particular group of reform-focused individuals.

The following is a brief historiography of the use of anatomy and flap anatomy images at the University of Wittenberg. Two historians, Vivian Nutton and Sachiko Kusakawa, have provided the groundwork for much needed future investigations into the importance of German medicine and anatomy at the University of Wittenberg, which first opened its doors in 1502, followed by the grounding of the medical faculty 1508. Nutton's 1993 article on anatomy in Wittenberg uses archival material from the University to provide a glimpse into a network of German academic medicine and dissection whose foundation was grounded in reading Melanchthon's *Liber de Anima* (27). Rather than a specific text for those small few training for a higher degree in medicine, *Liber de anima* was taught to all students, only a few of which would travel to other locations for further instruction in medicine. Future Wittenberg-trained university teachers and doctors can

be seen in Protestant cities of Brandenburg (Johann Grün in 1580), Jena (Zacharias Brendel in 1583), Pirna (Matthaeus Dresser in 1580), Prague (Johann Jessen in 1601) and Copenhagen (Caspar Bartholin in 1613). Nutton shows that the legacy of Wittenberg anatomy also includes a few important medical faculty members such as Jacob Milich (1501-1559) and Caspar Peucer (1525-1602), each having contributed important expositions and refinements of Melanchthon's text (20-26). Nutton demonstrates that medical knowledge taught in Wittenberg spread to thriving Protestant circles through much of the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century.

In addition to Nutton's work, Kusakawa and Keen have taken painstaking time to translate useful parts of Melanchthon's works into English, thus facilitating further scholarship on the type of anatomy performed at Wittenberg that differed from other European centers. Kusakawa's article on Leonard Fuchs, anatomist and botanist in Tübingen, demonstrates that first drafts of *Liber de anima* were sent to Fuchs (among others) for revision and advice before publication ("The Use of Pictures" 73-97). Kusakawa also describes the individuality of a "Christian reading of Aristotle's *De anima*" that differed from much of the commentaries on Aristotle of the sixteenth century. A fusion of Aristotle's *De anima* and the most up to date collection of anatomical knowledge, Melanchthon's second edition of *Liber de anima* combines education on the dissected body as well as the soul in order to describe the "whole individual" (Kusakawa, *Transformation* 85). This distinctively Protestant combination of intellect and body contrasts sharply with the majority of European universities where Aristotle's *De anima* was taught separately from anatomy in order to give both adequate treatments.³

The specificity of anatomical knowledge taught in Wittenberg can be seen in Melanchthon's statement in the preface to his *Liber de anima* "Jesus had to enter this fleshy mass" (*A Melanchthon Reader* 239-240). Melanchthon situates Wittenberg anatomy as a tool to help the soul attain balance by transforming the 'fleshy mass' into a collection of ordered parts useable by human intellect. Melanchthon believed that the intellect was part of the rational soul and connected to the body through the ventricles in the brain. The instruments or organs of the human soul (the inner senses) in the brain ventricles were commonly called sense and common sense, reason and memory (ibid. 239). Since man could not access the divine language of the world through reason alone, but through the material faculties of sense and common sense, knowledge of the body provided man with a way to order and control the body. The combination of individual and social discipline with anatomical

knowledge was a unique way to apply the popular Renaissance phrase, *nosce teipsum* (know thyself).

Yet, as Jonathan Sawaday (1996) and Katherine Park (2006) have shown, individuals who dissected bodies in the Early Modern Period never claimed to only want body knowledge, to dissect in order to know the dissected. Knowledge of the body was emblematic; it combined the visual, tactile and verbal languages of the body with many other patterns of knowing. Susan Karr Schmidt's recent dissertation demonstrates that the fugitive sheet flap anatomies presented visual and tactile experiences of virtual bodies in various political, religious, social and private contexts (cf. 88-178).⁴ Daniel Russell has shown that the co-presentation of fragmented signs from multiple discourses is a specifically emblematic character of Renaissance knowledge (cf. *Emblematic Structures* 77-92). Following this current research that applies emblem theory to the body, the next section will present the emblematic character of the dissected body as it was created in late sixteenth century Wittenberg.

II: Dialectic and Rhetoric of Anatomized Bodies and Images

Images use a rhetorical strategy to communicate *something*. However, *what* that something is can be uncovered easily in some cases and only through meticulous effort in others. The following pages will use the arts of dialectic and rhetoric to uncover one possible strategy behind the presentation and reception of anatomical fugitive sheets used at the University of Wittenberg (Images 1-3), and thus emphasize the importance of emblematic body knowledge in Melanchthon's Protestant teachings.⁵ In her monograph, *Women's Secrets*, Katherine Park provides an introductory guide to interpreting anatomical images with emblematic character. Though her text focuses on the origins of dissection in Italy, her use of emblem theory may help direct the understanding of the broader use of anatomical images in the sixteenth century. Emblematic images are known to provide a small written inscription or motto that guides the overall construction and intended interpretation strategy for the image (240-243). By using the words as a frame, one can relate the image to the text in specific ways. Park uses such a motto as an entry point to interpret the title page from Andreas Vesalius' 1543 *On the Fabric of the Human Body*.

The fugitive sheets from Wittenberg also provide such a motto in dual form: At the top of the page, each sheet has a title that

introduces it as a representation of male body, female body or skeleton. At the bottom of the female image of this triptych, the sheet claims that it was printed for Philip Melanchthon's *Liber de anima*. Thus, these images should be seen as a visual aid to a specific text and not stand alone like the majority of fugitive sheets printed in the sixteenth century.⁶ Because dissections were preformed every one to three years at Wittenberg, images supplemented a growing desire for knowledge of the body in a culture that lacked actual bodies for dissection (Nutton 23). The specificity of the pedagogical information provided by these fugitive sheets, compared with other sixteenth-century flap images printed in the vernacular and used only for barber surgeons or private 'study and stimulation' in various locations, provide contemporary historians with access to the often difficult to uncover author, audience and context in and for which such fugitive sheet images were printed.⁷

Before we explore these images in more detail, I will briefly outline the unique humanist philosophy proposed by Melanchthon that is important to understanding the dialectic and rhetoric of the images and their accompanying text – or text and accompanying images – depending on one's starting point. As director of Wittenberg beginning in 1518, Melanchthon implemented a curriculum founded upon dialectic (logic) and rhetoric (organization of parts) following Aristotle's *Politics*, *Posterior Analytics* and *Rhetoric* (*Orations* xvi). Melanchthon believed that God created the world with a specific logic (dialectic), presented through the organization of nature (rhetoric). Knowledge of these two arts of demonstration organized the intellect and provided access to the first, divine orator (Schneider 44). Melanchthon writes in the preface to *Liber de anima*, "There is motion in the brain, as if it were arranging images just as the tongue arranges air in articulated voice" (*A Melanchthon Reader* 239-240). Through dialectic and rhetoric, one controlled the motion of the cerebral pneuma to create the *loci* or thesis by which one organized one's internal image and language collection.

If dialectic was the ability to order various fragments into a whole, rhetoric was presentation, or the projection of organized minutiae into the world through speech, art or text. Nature was the projection of God's goodness, and thus his speech (*verbum*). In an oration praising Aristotle, Melanchthon writes, "Recognition of similitude and order in nature is knowledge of God" (*Orations* 86). By combining dialectic and rhetoric together to form the foundation for all teaching at the University of Wittenberg, it can be assumed, as John Schneider argues and Nutton and Kusakawa gesture toward, that

Melanchthon conceived of God as a kind of omnipotent orator (Schneider 44).

If we turn to the flap anatomies, the use of dialectic and rhetoric can be seen in images 1-3, where assembling and structuring the body is the images' tactile pedagogical method. One places representations of organs on top of each other through a virtual dissection. However, as a genre popular in the sixteenth century, these tactile images did not succeed as a rigorous pedagogical tool for doctors and academics, or in many locations outside of Germany (Schmidt 92-93). The first sheets were first printed by Heinrich Vogtherr in Strasbourg in the first half of the sixteenth century, but eventually became part of many print operations around Germany. That they were used in at the University of Wittenberg's education curriculum automatically places in question the knowledge presented because most fugitive sheets were printed in order that barber surgeons have a general knowledge of the body when told where to cut by academically trained physicians (cf. Carlino 107-110). Though not fully agreed upon by historians, Paul Luther and Barthomäus Schönborn, both medical instructors at Wittenberg, used the sheets as supplements for Melanchthon's text in their medical and anatomical lectures (cf. Carlino 240-261; Nutton 32). Nutton even posits that the visual representations would have been essential given the layout of the Wittenberg anatomy theater where seeing the dissected body, if there was one available, would have been very difficult for seated students (32). Though the importance of the sheets is disputed, a general glance over the images demonstrates both their usefulness as an *aide mémoire* and their connection to the popular authority on anatomy at the time: the head of the male figure represents Vesalius, whose text *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* is the basis for each isolated organ and bone.⁸ Melanchthon possessed a copy of Vesalius text and the changes made between the 1540 and 1556 editions of his *Liber de anima* include much of Vesalius' work in the later edition.⁹ However, instead of presenting an exact replica of the original woodcuts found in the *Fabrica*, each organ in the fugitive sheet is a rough copy (almost unrecognizably rough) of Vesalius' naturalistic representations.

To understand the dialectic and rhetoric of the images, one needs to move beyond an analysis of the general trends of fugitive sheet production and read more closely the connection between the image, knowledge of the body and *Liber de anima* in their emblematic presentation. Through a "close reading" of the organs and the text within the images, as well as their association with *Liber de Anima*, one finds that the organization of the images follows a specific logic. Rather

than representing all organs, the organs in the Wittenberg fugitive sheets were chosen because they correspond directly to passages in *Liber de Anima*, which provided the viewer with knowledge of the organ's place in the body hierarchy that is related to a social hierarchy. An organ's anatomical location and physiological function are only of secondary importance to its metaphoric, social significance.

In addition to their relationship with *Liber de Anima*, the fugitive sheet images also provided the student with a Greek and Latin name for the organ and simplified Latin text to explain the relationship of a particular organ both with other organs in the body and its subservient role to the intellect. These elements allowed the visual body to become a rhetorical device. Through their studies, students were often asked to participate in oral disputations against Epicureanism, Stoic fallacies and other threats to Protestantism using their anatomical and physiological knowledge taught in conjunction with other subjects such as philosophy, moral, ethics, law, theology (Kusukawa, *Transformation* 175). Anatomy's main focus, like other subjects taught at Wittenberg, centered on organizing one's intellect and providing young men with the proper way to think and thus live correctly (Nutton 18-19). The accuracy of the image or text was not as important as naming the organs and their role in disputations in defense of Christianity.

An example of the use of anatomy to teach intellectual order and ethical behavior can be found in the image of the stomach (Images 2 & 3). In *Liber de anima*, Melanchthon writes that the stomach received yellow bile from the gall bladder and black bile from the spleen, though he does not engage in the academic debate over the anatomical and physiological purpose of the organ. The former combination (stomach / yellow bile / gall bladder) corresponds to "hope, fear, love, anger, hatred, envy, and zeal," while the later (stomach / black bile / spleen) corresponds to "shame, sadness and melancholy" (*A Melanchthon Reader* 245). This organization of knowledge on the fugitive sheet (name of organ, image of the organ, exposition of meaning) provided a location in the body for feelings, emotions or passions that arise from a specific location; ordering the intellect meant having a named site in the body that the intellect could discipline.

In addition to connecting the image of an organ with a name and a passion to control, the intellect's process of naming, imaging and interpreting the body follows the *inscriptio, pictura, subscriptio* structure of the printed emblem very closely. The social effects stemming from the stomach, liver, spleen, gall bladder and heart could be trained through this emblematic process. Visualizing and naming organs on paper,

which subsequently guided a reader to an analogous location in his body, made the self-disciplining process easier. Those who could not discipline their internal organs were by default living in a ‘mass of flesh.’ Alternately, Melanchthon states in an early speech on education, one could inadequately know the body as “a series of unconnected items lying together” (*A Melanchthon Reader* 53). Disorder, random conflicts, and claims of individual spirituality outside of the “common peace” of the established community were the effects of this type of ignorance (275). By organizing the body emblematically, one could control the many fluctuating parts.

III. Visual Dialectics and Reading an Image

Like the fugitive sheets, Melanchthon’s *Liber de Anima* focuses much of its attention on how the intellect controls the body. The first half of the book provides detailed descriptions of essential body organs; the second half provides anatomical refutations for religious threats to Protestant teaching as well as demonstrates how the intellect can name and control body parts. For Melanchthon, the rational intellect was the essence of man. This instrument of the soul resides in the ventricles of the brain and controls the body either through political or despotic means. Taken from Aristotle’s *Politics* (*Politica*, Book III-IX) and *Rhetoric* (*Rhetorica*, Book I, Ch. 8), these two forms of self-government analogically corresponded to larger social structures. “The political” was the most ideal; it occurs when each body part ‘desires of its own’ to be a balanced and democratic part of the whole. “The despotic” occurs when force is required to control the rest of the body through coercion or manipulation. For Melanchthon, and other Reformation thinkers, since man was no longer perfect after the fall, the despotic occurs more often than not (*A Melanchthon Reader* 249). One could say that *Liber de anima*, as well as the fugitive sheet images, were part of the program of despotic self-discipline; teaching the intellect how to force the unruly body to obey.

If this was the case, what was the relationship of image, words and text in the program of discipline for the body? In addition to Park’s focus on the written *motto* of an emblem as the key to unlocking the meaning, one could also focus on the primacy of the image with its own interpretive strategy. Applied emblematics demonstrates the plethora of strategies used to create and interpret sixteenth-century emblematic forms, none of which are exhaustive.¹⁰ One could begin with the image,

which is then focused by the text to provide access to various signified ideas. Or, one could begin with the social setting in which one engages the image, text or both. Gestures, such as dissection, could also be one of performative fragments used to interpret the emblematic whole. Emblems, like these fugitive sheets and the body, were unruly medleys that needed to be disciplined. By naming the various organs and their functions, and thus visualizing an approximate location in the body (gained through a virtual self-dissection), reason could align the body with accepted behaviors found on the printed page.

Whichever interpretive model one chooses to approach the emblematic body image, individuals in the sixteenth century believed that there was a *locus* that brought together the fragmented parts. Without the ability to organize the parts based on a particular idea, the body would be chaotic. Melanchthon argued that knowing and ordering, dialectic and rhetoric, allowed one to control the stricken body parts and bring control under the intellect (*A Melanchthon Reader* 247).¹¹ As Hillman and Mazzio have shown, the failure to discipline all the parts around a single idea created personal and social anarchy where a single part ruled the whole (xi-xxix).

If we return to the fugitive sheets, each image provides such an ideal dialectical center, or locus around which the image parts move (Images 1-3). In the first image (Image 1), the skeleton raises a skull with the base open toward the viewer (Roman Numeral II). The male figure in the second of the three images also provides viewers with such a guided approach (Image 2). Clutched in his right hand, scepter-like, an eye (Letter A) directed heavenward, provides the viewer not only insight into Wittenberg anatomy, but also the symbolic focal point of the image. Finally, in the third image of the female, the spleen (Roman Numeral II) stands as the major physical adversary of the intellect (Image 3). The following paragraphs will explore the representation of each of these central ideas (dialectical loci) from which the images speak (rhetorical persuasion).

IV. Emblematic Fugitive Sheets

In the first image, the bony figure offers the viewer access to the inside of the skull, a gesture of the intellect from death's hand as well as an inclusion of the reader in the frame of the image. As with many anatomy and popular culture images, skeletons were used through the

eighteenth century as a *vanitas* motif to symbolize mortality (*memento mori*) and the inevitability of death as well as knowledge of death while one is alive (*danse macabre*). Choulant negatively calls this multiple meaning presentation emblematic: The manifold messages distract from the anatomical content (*History and Bibliography* 42-43). However, the polysemic messages – moral, gender, anatomical, material, theological, etc. – may have been essential to the transition from the Middle Ages to an early modern mentality (Russell, *Emblematic Structures* 88).

For the young men viewing these sheets while they read *Liber de Anima*, the image of Death offered them access to the opening at the base of the skull. This gesture provided viewers with an idealized view of the ventricles of the brain. In his text, Melanchthon presents a version of the medieval ventricular theory that posits three distinct parts of the intellect – common sense, thought, memory that are “housed” in one of three cerebral ventricles (*A Melanchthon Reader* 239-41). Through this outlet at the base of the skull, the spirits in the head interacted with those in the body; the thorax also separated the head from the lower spirits. By visualizing one’s access to the body, one was taught to control that which was named. This “gateway” at the base of the skull was the anatomical and virtual pathway through which the intellect could control the rogue appetites of the lesser spirits in the heart (vital spirit) and the liver (nutritive spirit). By allowing students to visualize how and where they accessed their body, the inchoate and uncontrollable “mass of flesh” began to acquire a figure.

In this first image, Death uses persuasion to justify anatomy by providing the viewer with a gesture of goodwill through knowledge of the skeleton: Dissection is for the good of the individual and the community. The passage from the intellect to the body can also be seen in bottom right corner of the third image (Image 3; Roman Numeral IV). For Melanchthon, the ventricles were more important than the brain matter itself. Taken from Vesalius’ *De Humani*, this image is a representation of the pituitary gland and brain “pelvis” (Saunders and O’Malley 198). Pre-Cartesian physiology ascribes to the pituitary gland and the “tortoise shell / Pelvis” (the front of the ventricles and rear of the sinus cavity) the place for collecting the cerebral spinal fluid, which transports the “spirits” to the rest of the body and expels the excess through nose and mouth. As an organ, the brain was not important but as a chamber for the “spirit” and the protector of the ventricles. Melanchthon calls that which resides in the skull “the inner senses, which are more important than the external senses” (*A Melanchthon Reader* 239). Thus, the skeleton holding the skull depicts exactly where

the ventricles and the intellect would be, allowing viewers a reverse access to themselves. Through a symbol of death, from the image of the pathway to the body's lesser parts, students could order their own body and control the unruly spirits that resided below the head.

The second image, that of the anatomized male figure, also has a locus around which the image turns. The relative size of the eye in man's right hand provides the idea by which the image could be read. Compared with the male figure's body on a bench and the organs surrounding the body, the eye is the largest in size and has the most explanatory text on the right side of the image. That the male figure is also touching the eye provides a transition from the various sense organs to the intellect, as if that which is touched with the eye is also seen as an image in the intellect (cf. Lindberg 168-177). It has been argued that in the Renaissance, there was no detached gaze; only a reciprocity of looking and being seen, touching and being touched (Park 73). This symbiotic perception becomes important for the audience of "young men" who were also required to simultaneously "touch and see" the fugitive sheet by lifting up the pasted flaps to reveal the body interior beneath. Through virtual dissection of their own body while visibly unfolding flaps, individuals became anatomist, criminal, martyr and executioner, each role separate yet intricately intertwined in the systematization of their own body through the paper cadaver before them.

Touching and seeing a corpse also helped to organize one's own body. From Melanchthon's many orations in general, and those extolling anatomy and medicine in particular, students were taught that all knowledge is predicated on how it is organized: Random facts are useless as well as detrimental to a healthy individual (Siriasi 201-204). By looking at the image, students saw not "a mass" but a cleanly separated group of parts. Like an emblem with parts that need a locus to put them together meaningfully, the body as a collection of parts needed a locus to work harmoniously. In naming each of the essential parts that were visible to the eye and touchable by the hand, the goal was for students to begin to bring the parts together, to control rather than to be controlled by those unnamed fragments. The art of rhetorical persuasion is clearly evident in the eyes of each character, either looking at the viewer (skeleton), the eye (male figure) or at the spleen (female figure). Students were urged to see with their eyes, touch with their hands, and then move beyond the visible to organize the images in their intellect.

As we have seen, these fugitive sheets provided a unique means to unite youthful academic knowledge, Protestant theology and popular media forms. Anatomical knowledge of a body organ was useless unless it was

applied to the social interaction of Christians. In each of these images and *Liber de anima*, theology, politics and anatomy meet in a virtual dissection that encourages young men to control their bodies through rational order. As will become evident in the female figure (Image 3), specifically the attention paid to the spleen in this image and *Liber de anima*, not only anatomists needed to know the body's structure: Each member of the Christian community (body) was encouraged to know how to discipline his or her own body to be both a productive citizen as well as a good Christian (Melancthon, *Orations* 159).

Upon close inspection, the female fugitive sheet presents a problematic yet standard representation of female anatomy of the time. The various stages of an anatomized uterus at the bottom of the page fit with other images and anatomy texts of the sixteenth century: The uterus stands in as a metonym for woman (Encarnación 221; cf. Park 103-112). Her sitting position and partial nudity also present sexualized and exploitative access to knowledge through sense experience and the gestures of self-stimulation (Carlino 26). Immediately, valid questions of gender roles arise for contemporary audiences. The association with the eye for the male figure and the uterus and child with the female figure are typical of synecdochal Early Modern body knowledge. However, if one compares the enlarged spleen with the text *Liber de Anima*, the focus on this organ fits with the overall dialectical strategy of these fugitive sheets and the printed commentary's persuasive style.

As an entry point into these emblematic images, the spleen becomes more important when one remembers that this sheet was printed for young men to look at and see themselves through the image of a female figure. The spleen provided a metaphoric entry point into the female body that was also part of the male body. The spleen was an organ that needs to be controlled. By naming specific appetitive organs and having the anatomized woman gaze at the spleen, as well the various tissues and vessels that connect the rational spirit in the brain ventricles with rest of the body network, this image provided not only body knowledge, but a step by step process by which students could follow the body's "appetitive paths" in order to control them.

The image of the spleen, like that of the eye in the male figure and the opening of the skull in the first image, is not what one would find in any normal human body or anatomy image. Like the rest of the organs used in the fugitive sheets, each of these "representations" is a barely discernable, reduced copy of images taken from Vesalius' *De humani*. Carlino has followed this plagiarizing process as it developed in anatomical texts and broadsides throughout the sixteenth century (cf.

46-73). Because the organs surrounding the body were intended to be cut out and placed in the central figure of the female body (as with the male figure), the spleen does not fit the overall structure of the body unless, as I have argued, it is the dialectical locus by which the image is read emblematically. Possibly a mistake on the part of the supervising professor, typographer, woodcutter or printer in choosing the correct organs for the fugitive sheet (though this is unlikely given that the sheets went through several printings with multiple changes over the span of thirty years and the spleen remained untouched), the already unfolded spleen, as well as the women's gaze, directs one's attention to this disproportionately sized organ. In Vesalius' *De Humani*, the spleen is shown in various states of dissection, both as a whole, halved and incised laterally to show the unraveled internal vessels that are not visible from the external view.¹² This larger, filleted view shows how the spleen is connected to the stomach and heart through blood vessels.

By demonstrating the arterial pathways rather than the organ, this image emphasizes spatial knowledge of melancholy (black bile) in transit and the path it travels throughout the body. Further notation of the spleen's central status in the fugitive sheet can be found in Vesalius' comment on the preparation of the spleen for viewing: He recommends that one boil the spleen after removing it from the body in order to remove fat, viscera and to better see that which is covered naturally by the body (Saunders and O'Malley 166-167). The image chosen for the Wittenberg fugitive sheet is thus a 'prepared' organ and would never be recognized as such had students been looking for it in a body during an actual dissection. In any case, the image of the spleen is also enlarged in proportion to the image of the body and offers informed viewers a dilemma: Was this simply a mistake, or, like the other loci, a rhetorical strategy?

Let us continue the path and argue that choosing this particular representation of the spleen was not a mistake. As one can imagine, using the intellect to control the spleen would have been a monumental task. Yet, showing blood vessels and their connection to other namable parts was more important than showing an anatomical view *in situ*. Yet, through the political argument that one could use despotic control over unwilling subjects, proper citizens were required to bring to order that which is out of order. In a speech, "Praise of Eloquence," given by Melanchthon early in his career (1523), one can see the importance of naming that which is causing one problems: "As doctors tell us, no bilious man can have habits as he is controlled by his passions, like storms, which are ruled with the greatest difficulty" (*A Melanchthon Reader* 143). In this image, then, the spleen was not just the "spleen:" It

was the site of “black bile” or that ubiquitous cause of undisciplined and antisocial behaviors. Other Wittenberg texts ascribe the same behaviors to Stoics, Epicureans, Anabaptists and Catholics, not just women.¹³ For one to “see” and “name” those pathologies in an image of a woman, and thus know them in oneself, adds another layer of complexity to these flap anatomies.

Some may still argue that the uterus was the telos of woman in the Early Modern Period. In the one-sex model outlined by Thomas Laquer, man’s hot and dry brain provide him with the ability to use the intellect to create a child in the woman and an idea in his head. In a female body, however, cold and moist complexions confined her to only a passive, physical birth (cf. Laqueur 134-148). The physical birth also directly connected the female body to death and motherly sacrifice for the sake of the community and child (Crowther-Heyck 922). Generation is a divine act understood in a hierarchy from the physical toward an intellectual creation (913). This image shows that the uterus is important for knowledge of the female figure. However, for a male reader’s knowledge of himself – to follow the popular Renaissance anatomical motto of *nosce teipsum* – the spleen controlled bad humors and the feminine (material) in the male reader’s own body. The gendered stereotype is reinforced doubly through this anatomical image of the female body and male reader: Through control over the spleen and its vessels that transported black bile and the feminized material, the young man could bring the melancholic humors under control to balance himself. ‘The mass of flesh’ becomes twice formed into an intelligible figure: once in the mother’s womb and again in womb (venter) of the brain through purified, non-bilious pneuma that the intellect can control.

This mental ability allowed the masculine individual to re-conceive his own body through his intellect, reinforcing the analogy of the microcosm to macrocosm, human and divine reason. The resemblance of many of the fugitive sheet figures to Adam and Eve – which reiterates an emphasis on naming and creation – follows the shift from physical to intellectual generation (Crowther-Heyck 918-919). The reader’s new intellectual body in which the parts were ordered under an idea, was also the beginning of his entrance into the political body, a body that provided harmony for all disciplined subjects in a masculine social culture. Knowing the location of the spleen through the woman’s body provided both distance from oneself and access to this masculine group. As Jonathan Sawday has shown with the French *blazon*, the isolated praise or focus on a female body part in poetic form allowed men to enter homo-social circles through, or because of the dissected

female body (191-212). The *blazon*, it should be noted, was part of the emblem genre, or method of presenting an intellectual idea through sign fragments from multiple languages.

V. Conclusion

As I have shown, when early modern individuals looked at images of anatomized bodies, they did not simply see the body. Melanchthon sought a divine language through the material, to find the logic through the rhetoric of the divine orator. Further support for this argument can be found in the following poem written in Melanchthon's edition of Vesalius' *Fabrica*:

*Think not that atoms, rushing in a senseless, hurried flight
Produced without a guiding will this world of novel form.
The mind that shaped them wise beyond all other intellects
Maintains and fashions everything in logical design.
The ordered movements of the stars recurring in their course
Bear witness that a deity intelligent and good
Established these provisions and now holds them in control.*
(Cunningham 231-232)¹⁴

As these fugitive sheets show, education of anatomy at the University of Wittenberg did not teach the most rigorous dissection methods or ascribe to specific authorities in order to know the exact place and name of each part: The goal of anatomical study was to recognize intellectual order based on divine wisdom. One followed the parts of the body (rhetoric) to access the idea organizing the parts (dialectic). Like atoms rushing in a senseless, hurried flight, the body would be a fragmented 'mass of flesh' without order. Anatomical knowledge provided the intellect a means of bringing the body under control. The specificity of these images for a Wittenberg audience, compared with other fugitive sheets printed for popular consumption during the sixteenth century, indeed provides us with access to a more nuanced understanding of their use and epistemological value.

Images



Image 1

Skeleton Anatomical Fugitive Sheet: Wittenberg, 1573. Wellcome Institute, London.



Image 3

Female Figure Anatomical Fugitive Sheet: Wittenberg, 1573. Wellcome Institute, London.

Notes

- ¹ For more on uses of anatomy and dissection in Renaissance culture, see French.
 - ² I use the term 'emblematic' following Russell (1995) in a broader sense than that used by traditional emblem studies, such as the printed *inscriptio*, *pictura* and *subscriptio* found in many printed emblems after 1531. The adjective 'emblematic' describes epistemic practices that require an active attempt to unify fragmented signs from diverse languages.
 - ³ For a general discussion of Renaissance academic commentaries on *Aristotle's De Anima*, see Lohr's *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*. For a specific discussion of Melanchthon's commentary on Aristotle, see Blackwell & Kusukawa or Schneider.
 - ⁴ Much of Karr Schmidt's work on fugitive sheets is indebted to Carlino's well know survey (1999).
 - ⁵ These images were published continuously with minor alterations from 1573 until the mid-seventeenth century. See Carlino 240-277; Nutton 17-20; and Kusukawa (1995) 179.
 - ⁶ Printed at the bottom of the image of the female body is the phrase, "Edita Vittebergae in gratiam studiosae inuentus, discentis elementa doctrinae Anatomicae in libello de anima. M.D.X.X.I.I.I."
 - ⁷ For commentary on the difficulty of uncovering the meaning of printed images in the Renaissance, see Scribner 1-14; and Carlino 1-45. For an outline of sixteenth-century printers of fugitive sheets and their location, see Schmidt and Carlino.
 - ⁸ For information on the use of anatomy for *aide mémoire*, see Nutton 17; and Carlino 41. One can compare the fugitive sheets with images from Vesalius' 1543 *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*; see Saunders & O'Malley for a collection of all image prints from Vesalius' text.
 - ⁹ Melanchthon's copy of Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* is found in the National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland. I am indebted to the archival staff for their help and patience.
 - ¹⁰ For more on emblems and the body, see Russell, "Perceiving, Seeing and Mapping" 77-92.
 - ¹¹ This is a direct reference to Genesis 4:7, in which God commands Cain to 'order and control himself.'
 - ¹² For a discussion of the various debates of the spleen's function in Early Modern medicine, see Wear.
 - ¹³ For a brief view of Melanchthon's use of anatomy in political and religious rhetoric, see orations in Kusukawa (1999): 133-138; 158-166; 169-174; 212-219.
 - ¹⁴ Poem translation found in Cunningham, Chapter 8. Poem translated by Dorothy M. Schullian.
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