

**Mediating Machines:
Human Mechanisms and the Modern Stage**

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DEDICATION

To Sean, for your unwavering support and understanding,
and your unfailing ability to laugh with me when I need it most.

To my family, for your love and empathy.

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ABSTRACT

Vast changes in technology during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fundamentally altered the way living bodies related to the machines they increasingly encountered in everyday life. One consequence of this shift was a preoccupation with questions about bodily agency and creative authority that would continue into the modern era. While artists of all kinds engaged with these issues, the theatre proved uniquely suited to addressing the relationship between living bodies and their mechanical environments by not only cultivating a theoretical understanding of the relationship between live bodies and mechanism, but also necessitating the practical enactment of this relationship.

Modern theatre artists such as Alfred Jarry, Karel Čapek, Sophie Treadwell, and Jean Cocteau juxtaposed live and mechanical bodies onstage in unique ways to test the possibilities for and limits of these new relationships between man and machine. Focusing on plays and theatrical experiments that put human bodies in the roles of machine or mechanized bodies, this project invites us to reconsider the common reading of these works, which views mechanical bodies (such as puppets, automatons, and robots) as mediating human experience and, ultimately, displacing human bodies. I argue instead that the modern theatrical focus on mechanism purposefully directs attention to the role of the live performing body, which is still physically present even when it has been metaphorically or representationally subsumed. I examine how the swiftly changing landscape of modern theatre proceeds from earlier dramatic experiments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by showing how modern theatre artists appropriate earlier theatrical vocabularies to further the conversation in new and complex ways.

The modern theatre, then, became a practical laboratory in which different possibilities for the negotiation between the mechanical body and the human body were staged. By considering what happens when humans are inexorably physically present in the confrontation between man and machine, I argue that performing bodies on the modern stage are not *mediated by* mechanisms; rather, they enact a drama of mediation in which the live performing body negotiates between the material and physical requirements of both live and mechanical bodies before a living audience.

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Introduction

The 1889 World Exhibition in Paris heralded a new age for machinery and mechanism. In the shadow of the newly premiered Eiffel Tower, the 1889 fair featured a Galerie des Machines that placed new machines and mechanical methods on display. Visitors wandered through the cavernous space encountering such mechanical marvels as working printing presses, lighthouses, steam engines, and much more. Bathed in the light of electric lamps, they could ride in elevators and listen to Edison's phonograph (Durant 46),¹ thereby immersing themselves in this new mechanical world. The experience was, according to contemporary accounts, both exhilarating and unsettling. In *Palais des Machines: Ferdinand Dutert*, Stuart Durant describes a review by Tancred Martel, who, comparing the "modest ambitions" of the Galerie to the "bravado" of the Eiffel Tower, declared, "Man here shows himself the victor over matter" (4). The rhetorical use of "victory" reveals the implicit assumption that there is, in fact, a battle raging between man and matter. J.K. Huysmans envisioned the large iron beams of the Galerie as "shaped like ogees or inverted communion chalices," thus equating the experience to a spiritual revelation in which "the hall appears to expand and become infinite" (qtd. in Durant 4). Remembering the experience of riding in one of the elevators for the first time, the sculptor Raymond Duchamp-Villon described "the hallucinatory passage through the brightness of the nave in a traveling crane, above whirlpools of reptilean [sic] belts, creakings [sic], whistles, sirens, and black caverns containing circles, pyramids, and cubes" (qtd. in Stamper 347). These remarks highlight a variety of responses that would come to underscore debates over the nature of the relationship between man and machine in the modern age. Machines, here, were

¹ The nearby display by the Société Générale des Téléphones provided a complementary encounter with another Edison invention as visitors could listen to "live performances on Parisian stages" through a telephone line (Fauser 279).

alternately threatening, divine, and mystical, and they foreshadowed, in these associations, the deep impact these new relationships would have on man's perception of his physical, metaphysical, and spiritual place in the world.

The Galerie both accomplished everyday work in new ways and displayed a startling ability to change the way bodies move through space and interact with the world around them. Rather than the physical exertion of climbing stairs, for example, one could simply step into a mechanical contraption that lifted the body to ever increasing heights. Visitors could also ride the *pont roulants*, travelling cars that moved on steel railways high above the floor (Stamper 347), and observe the mass of machinery from above without having to physically walk around. Visitors to the Galerie des Machines thus enacted a relationship between the human body and machines in which the physical human body became a passive body, and the technological mechanism became the active agent in the exertion of energy, thereby taking on much of the labor of the body even in everyday endeavors. This exhibit thus immediately raised an urgent question: what happens to human bodies, human agency, and human authority in a world increasingly reliant on mechanical labor?

The experience of the Galerie des Machines highlights the shifting conception of the body in the modern era. Science, technology, industry, philosophy, theology, sociology, medicine, architecture, and aesthetics all saw major changes throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the changes in each of these fields had implications for the relationship between the human body and the mechanisms it encountered. The volatile relationship between man and machine was reflected in the art and literature of the modern period as artists struggled with a set of philosophical and practical questions about the way human bodies would relate to machines and mechanical bodies in an increasingly mechanized world. These artistic

experiments raised concerns about the effects of the new man-machine relationship on our perception of creative agency, authority, and authorship, concerns that would become much more pressing as the mechanical intervention seeping into everyday life also changed the way people perceived and interacted with art. What would be required for artists to retain creative agency and authority in what Walter Benjamin called the “age of mechanical reproduction?” What would count as authorship, and how would a work of art maintain a kind of artistic integrity or authority when machines could create and replicate works of art so easily and perfectly?

These questions represent deep philosophical, aesthetic, and metaphysical quandaries, but they are rooted in very real fears about the material and physical relationships between live bodies and machine bodies. In *Modernism, Technology, and the Body* Tim Armstrong makes a strong case that the body’s relationship with mechanism in the modern period was both physical and metaphysical. For example, Armstrong notes that the electric chair acted as a metaphorical symbol of societal “cleansing” while also physically removing unwanted bodies. Although Armstrong focuses primarily on prose and poetry, this layering of the physical and metaphorical happened in the theatre in a much more immediately visceral way. In the theatre, too, artists wrestled with the implications of mechanical intrusion into modern life and actively experimented with new relationships between live and mechanical bodies. Alfred Jarry placed the body of his grotesque, larger-than-life character Ubu within the artificial conventions of the puppet show. F.T. Marinetti dreamed of a man who could grow mechanical wings. Sophie Treadwell exposed the devastating impact the mechanization of modern life had on one particular body in *Machinal*. Jean Cocteau made human bodies into phonograph cabinets and photographic tableaux vivants in *The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower*. Over and over again, modern

theatre artists and dramatists put the relationship between living bodies and mechanical bodies at the center of their artistic endeavors.

What makes the *theatrical* engagement with these questions so compelling is that the theatre itself is an art form that requires a constant negotiation between man (human artists) and machine (the mechanisms of the stage) for a living audience. In the theatre, the symbolic or metaphorical implications of the live body's interaction with the mechanical body are underscored by the fact that the theatre also presents an actual physical live body in conversation with theatrical mechanism on stage. Audiences do not need to *imagine* the body in relation to machine or mechanism as both literal and metaphorical; the theatrical performing body *is* a live body in both a literal and metaphorical relationship to mechanism. What better way to experiment with the relationship between human bodies and mechanical bodies than through a medium that allows them to coexist in a moment that can act on both a practical and metaphorical level?

On the modern stage, then, discussions of the man-machine relationship were embodied and imbued with tangible material (both human and mechanical), bringing into focus a collection of concerns about the way bodies and machines might negotiate their changing relationship in an arena that allowed practical, theoretical, and metaphorical exploration. This dissertation examines the way that theatre became a medium uniquely qualified for the investigation of this collection of concerns about the impact of modern mechanization on the human body. While there is an immense amount of scholarship on the technological and mechanical anxieties of the modern period, what theatre offers to this discussion is a space in which the material realities of the live body within this relationship are inescapable. By introducing the live body into these conversations, actors, artists, and audiences alike dealt not just with an abstract possibility that

machines could replace human bodies and/or human labor, but with the much more complex physical, emotional, and material realities of bodies that were actively engaged in negotiating new spaces for themselves and new relationships with the increasingly mechanized world around them.

“Make it new,” the oft-repeated mantra of Ezra Pound that is generally applied to modern art and literature, also has resonances for the theatre’s mechanical investigations. New experiments in form and content meant that the modern stage was replete with exciting new possibilities, bursting with energy and creativity as artists experimented with innovative ideas about directing, acting, movement, voice, design (stage, costume, sound, lighting), play construction, and the nature of performance. August Strindberg may have insisted that one cannot put “new wine” into “old bottles” (56), but artists in this era were putting new wine in old bottles, new wine in new bottles, old wine in new bottles, and, sometimes, forgetting the bottles altogether as they bathed themselves in a Dionysian frenzy. Like the term “modernism,” which often stands in for a plethora of different and often contradictory ideas, “modern drama” is also made up of many different and sometimes contradictory movements that can be read in conversation with one another. In his introduction to *Modern Drama: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, Martin Puchner calls “modern drama” a “particular if also diffuse value,” quipping that “while it is thus relatively easy to come to an agreement about the beginning and end of modern drama,² it is much more difficult to specify what exactly modern drama was, or, to put this question somewhat differently, what was specifically modern about

² Like many scholars of theatre history, Puchner locates the beginning of modern drama around the time of Henrik Ibsen’s “triumph in the late nineteenth century” and the end around the end of World War II, when the realities of the Holocaust and nuclear war changed perceptions about humanity. Beyond these boundaries, Puchner makes a case both for looking at works that anticipate modern ideas and for including some post-war movements, such as absurdism, in discussions of modern drama (1).

modern drama” (1). This openness, again, allowed the theatre to act as a *tabula rasa* on which many different possibilities for new relationships between man and machine could be written, making it the perfect location for experimentation within a space in which the body asserts its presence. Further, as the theatre incorporated advances in technology into its design and stagecraft, it became a space in which human bodies encountered new mechanisms and new aesthetics, allowing the modern theatre to become the perfect testing ground for a variety of possibilities that had real-world implications. This active engagement with the relationship between the live performing body onstage and the new mechanisms of the modern world led to an array of theatrical experiments in which human bodies played the role of machines or machine bodies. Live actors, for example, played puppets, automatons, robots, and dolls in plays that directly or indirectly engaged with the challenges and possibilities faced by live bodies confronted by machine bodies (or, alternately, machine bodies confronted by live bodies).

This dissertation will argue that plays and theatrical experiments that negotiate the relationship between human bodies and machine bodies on the modern stage re-center live bodies as the primary medium and mediating force in this relationship. This negotiation involves issues of mediation, interface, creative agency, authorship, and authenticity raised by the ever-changing relationship between man and mechanism in the modern age. Most critical investigations of these works have focused on the mechanical side of things by investigating the way machines encroached on human territory as they increasingly came to mediate human experience. While this is an important avenue of investigation, it implicitly assumes that machinery is the primary mediator in the relationship. Against this view I argue that the modern theatre became a testing ground on which different perceptions and possibilities for the interplay between the mechanical and human body could be staged. For modern artists, the theatre

provided a space to explore not just the way machinery mediates human experience, but also the way human bodies could and would mediate mechanical life.

Although these questions gained urgency in the modern era (and this urgency is of primary importance to this investigation), this was not a debate that began in the modern era. While the topic of the relationship between man and mechanism in the theatre can be traced back even to antiquity (for example, the *deus ex machina* provides a compelling case study for the relationship between man, machine, and a kind of divine creative authority), this project originates in Enlightenment era explorations of inanimate performers (puppets, automata) that anticipate the issues that were made urgent by the Industrial Revolution and its mechanical and technological advancements. I argue that these earlier conversations act as a touch point for a very specific change in the cultural consciousness about what the man-machine relationship would be in the modern era. Because modern theatre artists were engaging (often explicitly) with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conversations over the changing landscape of the human-machine relationship, the project traces the relationship between live and mechanical bodies as they developed during the Enlightenment through the Industrial Revolution to better understand the concerns inherited from these cultural moments and how they shape the modern conversation.

In order to address the way in which live and mechanical bodies interact on the stage and the broader implications of this interaction for the modern relationship to mechanism it is necessary to clarify some key terms. Modern technology and new mechanical and industrial advancements in the wake of the Industrial Revolution changed the way humans related to the external mechanisms of the material world, bringing about a crisis of the body. For example, the rise of Frederick Winslow Taylor's theories on bodily efficiency in the factory workplace

integrated the human body—the body of the factory worker—into the factory line in new ways. This fundamentally changed the live body’s relationship to labor, creating a disconnect, as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels note in *The Communist Manifesto*, between the body’s efforts and the production of materials, and placed the ultimate authority for the production of materials into the mechanism of the factory line itself. The human body, in fact, might be the weakest link in a new mechanical world, since the human body has frailties and makes demands that the mechanical body does not. Human bodies become tired and sore. Human bodies age, and non-working parts cannot be as easily replaced. Human bodies require breaks, frequent nourishment, and air. Dystopian fiction, film, and drama, such as Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*, and Karel Čapek’s *R.U.R.*, raised the possibility that a more intelligent machine or mechanism could render human bodies expendable. The body on the factory line thus acts as both a subject (a person with a subjective interior consciousness and will) and an object (one cog in a much more complex system). This modern crisis of the body, then, was also a crisis of subjectivity; the body in distress in these cases became a sign of an anxiety over a loss of subjective agency and authority in the material world.

When a living body steps onto the stage it presents for the audience, in an immediate and visceral way, a similar subject-object relationship. We can see that it is a natural organism, living, breathing, and decaying in real-time in front of our eyes. We can recognize the similarity between the body onstage and our own body, also living, breathing, and decaying in real-time. The body in front of us simultaneously manifests itself as a person, with a subjective interior consciousness and will, and as a performing object working through the artificial mechanisms of the external performative moment. The performance itself also inhabits a similar subject-object state. While a performance may begin from a relatively static script—an objective outline for

dialogue and/or movement—the theatre is not a static art form; it is a living art, created out of living bodies, and experienced by a living audience. Each production of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, for example, recalls a kind of objective artistic merit (we think of *Hamlet* as inhabiting a codified place in theatre history) and enacts a living presence (the performance) that will be different from every other production (and, indeed, from every other night’s performance). It is thus both an artistic object and a subjective experience. This is not an “either/or” proposition—the live performing body does not sometimes divorce itself from its object or subject status just as theatre does not live solely as a performance or as a piece of dramatic literature—it is a “both/and.” The theatre and the live performing body are constantly negotiating this subject/object relationship. The theatre, then, becomes the perfect medium for testing the new relationship between man and machine, providing conditions that are closest to the conditions of actual bodies negotiating their relationship to mechanism in the modern moment.

The idea of the “body” comes replete with its own set of philosophical difficulties, and often these difficulties are connected with the complex subject/object relationship described above. There is, of course, more than one way to approach this relationship; many different lines of philosophical inquiry have carved out territory related to the relationship between subject and object, or subjectivity and objectivity, in terms of our embodied experience of the world. One might, for example, begin with René Descartes’s focus on the mind and the body, Thomas Hobbes’s musings on nature and artifice, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s conception of the master-slave dialectic, or Henri Bergson’s inquiries into time and space. Although each theorist listed here represents very different philosophical backgrounds, they are each concerned, at core, with the way we know the world, and how this knowledge is tied up in the relationship between subjective experience and objective reality.

Rather than endorsing one definitive philosophical explanation of the body as subject/object, I investigate the way the experimental use of the body on the modern stage gives these earlier perspectives material form, allowing the modern stage to provide a testing ground for both the philosophical and material possibilities. Stanton B. Garner, Jr.'s *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama* provides an excellent starting point for thinking about the performing body in terms of the phenomenological concerns of bodies on stage and situates the subject/object discussion within performance studies more specifically. The performing body has long been a source for consternation and, sometimes, distrust. Garner discusses the relationship between the audience and the performer's body both as a "constitutive element" of the theatre and as "a subject point from which the other elements receive competing orientation" (47). The performer's body becomes an ontologically ambiguous element malleable as part of the theatrical apparatus. This living body onstage mirrors the living bodies of the audience members, who breathe the same air, share the same space as the performers, and experience the theatrical event through their own physical senses.

The presentation of the living human body on stage, both by living actors and by non-living objects "standing in" for the living body, has raised a number of related issues, especially with regard to creative authority and theatre's aesthetic and moral merits. Many dramatists, theatre artists, and theatre theorists have attempted to tease out the nature of the ambiguous relationship between the audience, the live performing body as subject, and the objective function of the performer as tool. I wish to show that, by exploring these bodies as *performing* bodies, this ambiguity applies not just to the live performing body (the focus of many of these philosophical conversations), but also to the mechanical performing body, which signals a similar subject/object crisis on the modern stage in spite of the conventional assumption that

machine bodies have, in fact, no subjective interiority. The relationship between a living body and a machine body is not 1:1—“living body” and “machine body” are not equivalent terms, even on the stage—but they do point to an equivalent subject/object crisis that has stakes in the “real” world in terms of a body’s agency, authority, and sense of authenticity.

Scholarly inquiries into performing bodies generally fall into one of two categories: those that focus on live bodies and those concerned with non-live bodies on the stage. Into the first category fall inquiries about how the live body performs, including acting and movement studies. In tracing these conversations from the eighteenth century to the modern moment, I focus on the way the live body in performance functions in relation to the mechanisms of the stage. For instance, Joseph Roach’s *The Player’s Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* provides a thorough investigation of the relationship between the live performing body and the mechanisms of the eighteenth-century stage. He asserts that the eighteenth-century fascination with mechanism indicated a focus on craft; mechanisms and automata of this period, according to Roach, “attained the level of exquisitely and uniquely crafted works of art” (66). Relating this focus on the craft of mechanical bodies to a similar focus on the mechanical crafting of live bodies in performance, Roach describes the efforts on the part of different actors to use mechanism to improve their own artistic endeavors. As the action and effectiveness of the mechanical body is transferred to the live body, the latter becomes a mechanism in its own right, a double of the mechanical body. This reading has some precedent in the earlier work of Thomas Hobbes, who, in *Leviathan*, styles the body of man as a kind of puppet. Importantly, Hobbes describes the relationship as one in which the external mechanism has an effect on the internal senses. Other eighteenth-century conversations support this concept, reading the live body itself as a machine and thereby effectively collapsing the differences between the two. For example,

both Julien Offray de la Mettrie's *Man a Machine* and John Weaver's *Anatomical and Mechanical Lectures Upon Dancing* describe the live body in mechanical terms and envision the body as a machine through which the subjective consciousness is mediated. Weaver's argument is of particular interest, since it details the way the body as machine allows performers to present themselves with greater formal precision. The eighteenth-century body on stage, then, is not like a machine; the eighteenth-century body on stage *was* a machine that could be manipulated like any other mechanical tool. By dissecting, categorizing, and understanding the mechanisms of the body as one would dissect, categorize, and understand a machine, one would have access to better and more precise tools with which to improve the body's performance (in terms of both the body's operation on a physical level and its aesthetic function on the stage).

This Enlightenment understanding of the performing body's relation to mechanism is carried through early nineteenth-century acting exercises, such as François Delsarte's use of mechanistic forms for actors to mimic in order to perfect their embodied acting technique. Some modern theatre artists, such as Vsevolod Meyerhold, also followed this conception of the performing body as a mechanism that could be controlled and perfected. The onset of naturalism and realism in the modern era challenged these mechanistic forms as a new conception about the body's role in performance emerged. Differences of opinion about how to craft a performance (approaching the embodied performance from an interior vs. exterior focus) revealed a crisis of the body, underscoring the modern anxieties over the body's place in a newly mechanized world and raising the question of what (in this case, interior subjectivity or exterior objectivity) has the ultimate authority to determine the body's performance.

An alternate line of scholarly inquiry has focused on the way non-living objects, such as puppets, dolls, automatons, and props, function as performing bodies. Again, it is necessary to

trace these conversations from the eighteenth century to the modern moment and to put these inquiries into conversation with the discussions about live performing bodies. Gaby Wood's *Living Dolls: A Magical History of the Quest for Mechanical Life* is an informative overview of historical attempts to create lifelike puppets, automatons, and dolls. Wood describes each mechanical body as "a story about anxiety," but also "an idea" (xxvi), remarking that the mechanical bodies represent our desire "to play God" while simultaneously forcing us to confront "certain versions of ourselves," not all of them pleasant (xxvi). In this way, Wood presents the issue at stake in the eighteenth-century creation of mechanical bodies as one of creative authority. The mechanical body, then, says more about our own subjectivity, agency, and creative ability than about the mechanical object itself. Katia Pizzi, in her introduction to the edited collection *Pinocchio, Puppets, and Modernity: The Mechanical Body*, argues that modern puppet performance derives from nineteenth-century concerns, specifically looking to Pinocchio as the foundational myth for the modern fascination with puppets. The use of Pinocchio here is important, for it implies that the underlying concern over mechanical bodies is, as with Wood, a concern over agency and subjectivity.

Building on these historical frameworks, other scholars also read non-live performing objects as representative of specifically human concerns. Scott C. Shershow's *Puppets and "Popular" Culture* looks at the cultural implications of the puppet in performance in order to read a connection between an audience's cultural context and the way this is interpreted in an objective form in the puppet onstage. In *The Secret Life of Puppets*, Victoria Nelson considers how the performing puppet relates to issues of philosophy, religion, and the supernatural; puppets, she argues, are "human simulacra" that allow us to encounter our own beliefs about the divine (viii). Harold B. Segal's *Pinocchio's Progeny: Puppets, Marionettes, Automatons, and*

Robots in Modernist and Avant-Garde Drama is of particular interest, since he specifically looks at issues of body-object performance in the modern arena. Segal focuses on the puppet figure (reading marionettes, automatons, and robots as an extension of the puppet figure) and ultimately concludes, like Wood, that puppets are “a projection of the obsession of human beings with their own image” and that they reveal “a yearning to play god” (4). According to these scholars, the relationship between living and non-living stage bodies raises the question of who or what has the authority to shape external material reality. While theatrical performing objects such as puppets, automatons, and dolls are of interest to my project in terms of the way they are appropriated to stand in for a specific historical conversation about bodies and their liveness and/or agency, I focus here on those theatrical experiments that allow live bodies to take on the roles of these non-live and mechanical performing bodies and examine the way these experiments stage the necessity of the live body in mediating the material, philosophical, and metaphysical anxieties such non-live bodies represent.

The relationship between the live performing body and the non-live performing body has also been connected to Marxist conceptions of the material world, which adds a social and political component to the conversation. Katharina Boehm’s edited collection of essays entitled *Bodies and Things in Nineteenth Century Literature and Culture* traces the complexities of the body-object relationship in this much broader sense, focusing not solely on performance in a theatrical context but on the nineteenth century “relationship between the self and the physical world” (3). In this way, non-live bodies (objects) “perform” in a relationship with live bodies in a way that indicates something about commodification, consumerism, and labor practices. Bill Brown’s edited collection *Things* attempts to collapse the subject-object binary in a similar way, asserting that the way we create narratives about relationship between the material objective

world (things) and our subjective understanding of self has political and ethical implications. In short, the relationship between man and machine exists within specific understandings of socio-political power hierarchies, and as such, cannot be divorced from this context.

Approached in this way, the theatrical mediation of man and machine enters into a dialogue with other modern conversations about bodies and the way they signal meaning in the modern world. These conversations often address gender, race, and other ways that bodies signify within different socio-economic and political power structures. The 1889 Paris World's Fair at which the Galerie des Machines premiered, for example, also included "living ethnological exhibits" (often commonly called human zoos) in a "Colonial" section of the fair that featured constructed "primitive" villages populated by people indigenous to areas colonized by France (Fauser 242-52). By juxtaposing the drama of colonization with the Galerie des Machines' celebration of technology, the fair placed the display of living bodies and the display of technological mechanisms on an equivalent exhibitivite footing for the living audience. Both technological mechanisms and bodies of color were similarly exploited as something to be enjoyed by those visiting the exhibits. This suggests that technological mechanisms and bodies of color might trigger similar anxieties about the threats they represent to the perceived authority of the bodies of the audience members and/or fair organizers. Female bodies are often also aligned with mechanical bodies and other technological mechanisms to signal the way they can similarly enact a threat to patriarchal power hierarchies.³ In each of these cases, the living body becomes a site of crisis that maps the struggle for social and political authority onto a struggle between live and non-live bodies. The relationship between live and non-live bodies, in other

³ See, for example, Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, for an examination of the way female bodies become aligned with mechanism.

words, related to larger social and political issues that had to be navigated by performers and audience members alike. As such, this project will necessarily interact with the way the man-machine debates enter into a range of social, economic, gender, and racial power hierarchies as they enact the inescapable material presence of these live bodies in a way that other mediums do not.

In addition to the variety of performing bodies that became central to the way ideas about the “live” or the “human” might signal onstage in contrast to the “non-live” or the “mechanical,” new sound and lighting techniques and technologies such as photography, projection, and film raised new questions about technological and mechanical mediation in the modern era. These innovative mediums and technologies offered theatre artists new creative possibilities while simultaneously providing the viewing public different mechanical means of experiencing dramatic performance. Chris Salter explores the impact of the use of technology on the modern understanding of performance in *Entangled: Technology and the Transformation of Performance*. Salter’s definition of performance places the artistic engagement with bodies and technology within a framework of agency. Within this framework, Salter recognizes the relationship between man and machine as something that must be negotiated; as he observes, “humans, things, and matter are not fixed but always in the process of change and becoming” (xxx). These new possibilities for the mechanical mediation of performance intensified ongoing conversations about the role technology and mechanism play in determining the way we read bodies in performance.

Finally, the theatrical medium itself became central to conversations about the aesthetics of “liveness” and the way we encounter artistic events. Considering the way the issue of technological and mechanical mediation impacts the theatre, Philip Auslander’s *Liveness*:

Performance in a Mediatized Culture investigates a concern over bodies on stage and the way human bodies relate to different aspects of stage machinery or mechanical forms of performance, including the cinema. While Auslander is primarily concerned with contemporary examples, I wish to apply this framing of “live” versus “mediated” events to earlier cultural and theatrical manifestations. Auslander traces the way liveness and non-liveness become mapped onto assumptions about authenticity and artistic authority. As he remarks, “the common assumption is that the live event is “real” and that mediatized events are secondary and somehow artificial reproductions of the real” (3). In this way, the theatrical medium itself becomes mired in a subject/object crisis similar to that signaled by the performing body, in which arguments over a performance’s degree of “liveness” or “non-liveness” are believed to determine a performance’s “value,” or artistic authority.

At the heart of each of these critical discussions of the relationship between mechanical and living bodies is the assumption that the two are somehow inherently connected, and it is this connection that is of primary interest to my investigation. I argue that the primary way the relationship between subject/object and living body/machine body has been negotiated on the modern stage is through the concept of mediation. “Mediation” can be a tricky term to use here, since it has been used by different scholars, critics, and artists to carry implications of diffusion, interface, negotiation, supplementation, transmission, communication, and intervention. It has been further modified by terms like *immediacy*, *intermediation*, and *remediation*, and by discussions of *media* (another slippery term) and *medium*. It sometimes (though not always) implies a relationship between one thing and a mass audience (hence the prevalence of “mass media”). Rather than pinpointing one specific notion of mediation to use as an overarching definition for all modern theatrical explorations of the relationship between live body and

mechanism, I wish to suggest that modern theatre artists and dramatists tested the concept of “mediation” itself in a way that laid the foundation for the many different notions of what mediation can and cannot be. By toying with the way that the mediation between living and machine bodies could be a diffusion, interface, negotiation, supplementation, transmission, communication, or intervention, modern theatrical artists and dramatists and their predecessors from the Enlightenment forward tested the possibilities for and limitations of the relationship between mechanical and live bodies. My goal, however, is not to suggest that mediation as a term becomes meaningless, but to suggest, on the contrary, that the open nature of the concept of mediation is what allows these experiments to get into the complexities of the philosophical, ethical, and practical concerns of bodies in crisis without attempting to place those bodies into pre-specified forms. Recalling Strindberg’s metaphorical comments on new wine and old bottles, “mediation” as a concept does not outline the sort of bottle that must be used (or even make any claims that a bottle must be present), it simply acknowledges the negotiation of a relationship between form and content that *can* be understood.

While it is easy to see the Industrial Revolution as the starting point for the issues and anxieties over technology with which the modern theatre artists would wrestle, the nineteenth century reaction to the ever-increasing presence of bodily encounters with mechanism was firmly entrenched in a philosophical and aesthetic foundation laid during the eighteenth century, as these advancements were just beginning to appear on the horizon. Chapter one, “Nerves and Wires: Constructing the Staged Enlightenment Body,” investigates these anxieties in their nascent state during the Enlightenment as mechanical advancements foreshadowed the Industrial Revolution. In order to trace the way these modern conceptions of mediation develop from earlier efforts to understand the relationship between man and machine, I start with Clifford

Siskin and William Warner's assertion in *This is Enlightenment* that mediation involves a basic negotiation over the relationship between humans and tools and situate this claim in the dialectic between Immanuel Kant's philosophical focus on the human and Francis Bacon's philosophical focus on the machine or tool. The issue is not a man-machine divide, exactly, since both Kant and Bacon addressed the way humans and their tools interact; but rather, it is an issue of creative agency—who or what provides the creative catalyst for action? Because Siskin and Warner's emphasis is on the relationship between mediation and the Enlightenment (as an era, a concept, an event, and a philosophy), starting here allows the project to begin with a focus on a moment in the man-machine negotiation that anticipates the issues that will explode in the industrial age. In addition, it allows me to begin to build an understanding of mediation as a process of negotiating a relationship between live and mechanical bodies in a way that has historical and contemporary ramifications.

In the eighteenth century, theatre artists such as Henry Fielding, Samuel Foote, and Charlotte Charke used puppets to work through the shifting identity of human creative authority, questioning what it means to “act” as human and the relationship between human authors and mechanical creations. Experiments with automatons and constructed human bodies such as the dissectible wax Anatomical Venuses⁴ went further in engaging in a discussion on the connection between the human body and the mechanical body. During the Enlightenment, I argue, mechanism and mechanical bodies provided a path by which live bodies could improve or perfect themselves and their creations. In this period, artists did not show the modern anxiety about the human subject being replaced by a machine object. Rather than subsuming a live body,

⁴ For further information about the “Wax Venuses”—dissectible waxwork bodies containing removable organs and body parts and often embellished with human hair and jewels to look as life-like as possible, see Joanna Ebenstein's “Ode to an Anatomical Venus.”

mechanical bodies were extensions or signs of the live bodies “pulling the strings.” Messy, dull, or raucous mechanical bodies were signs of sub-par creators and sub-par authorship, while mechanical perfection was a sign of an accomplished human creator/artist. Thus, the Enlightenment mechanical body was a sign by which one shows human artistry (or the lack thereof).

The rise of the Industrial Revolution and the increasing visibility of machines led to a growing anxiety that the machines or mechanical bodies might not remain passive signs of human accomplishment. Chapter two, “Creation and Consumption: The Uncanny Body on the Nineteenth-Century Stage,” investigates the way machines and mechanical bodies onstage began to signal a challenge to human authors and human bodies alike by appropriating human agency and authority. For some theatre artists, such as Heinrich von Kleist, mechanical perfection and machinic precision increasingly implied a human lack rather than human technological achievement; the perfection of mechanical efforts could outshine human accomplishments while simultaneously magnifying human flaws. Further, the doubling of live and mechanical bodies signaled not only a crisis of authorship, but one of agency. Whereas Enlightenment encounters with mechanical bodies assumed a human was pulling the strings, during the nineteenth century it was increasingly feared that the mechanical bodies could and would pull back.

In order to frame the way the concept of the mediation between man and machine advanced during this period, I explore the evolving concept of the “uncanny,” which demonstrated an important resistance to a simple binary association of mechanical body/human body. In their discussions of the uncanny, both Ernst Jentsch and Sigmund Freud described the issue as a kind of reflexive haunting or supplementation, in which the performing body, in its dual role as subject/object, signals an unstable relationship between the live and the mechanical

as they inhabit and negotiate the same basic bodily space. In this way, mediation between the two is not reduced to simple mirroring or mimesis, but indicates a complex and often disturbing doubling of live and non-live bodies that can be experienced and negotiated in a variety of ways. Stage experiments such as Alfred Jarry's famous *Ubu Roi* engage with this kind of negotiation by presenting such uncanny instabilities onstage in all their visceral and sometimes violent material and physical realities.

The conversations surrounding authorship, bodies, and mechanisms as they progressed through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would strongly shape the modern conception of the relationship between bodies and machines. Dramatists and theatre artists in the modern period inherited this cultural and theatrical legacy as the possibilities for different kinds of man-machine relationships became vitally important in an increasingly mechanized world. Chapter three, "Muscles and Cogs: Controlled Bodies and Mechanical Marvels," examines the way the impact of the Industrial Revolution and increasing visibility of machines led to a deep divide over the role bodies would play in this new era of machinery. On one hand, artists such as F.T. Marinetti and Vsevolod Meyerhold embraced the possibilities machines and mechanical bodies might offer artists. On the other hand, the implementation of the factory system, changes in the perception of labor value, and anxieties over the role of human agency in an increasingly mechanical world led the live body to be viewed as a commodity—a product that could be bought, sold, and valued as an object. A serious fear of replacement informed such plays as Karel Čapek's *R.U.R.*, which grappled with the real possibility that the living human body could be replaced by a mechanical body. Human laborers, in this view, were in danger of becoming little more than mechanical objects themselves; cheap and expendable cogs in a larger machine. Once again the theatre provided an opportunity for experimentation on both a metaphorical and

practical level, thereby becoming a space that allowed artists to explore the possibilities and implications of these relationships. In this way, I describe the changing conception of the body's relationship to mechanism as it moved into the modern era as a shift in the concept of mediation; while eighteenth-century concerns saw mechanical and live bodies as separate entities—one which necessarily must mediate the other—modern audiences increasingly envisioned both live and mechanical as negotiating the space of one body, making the mediation of machinery both more complicated and more personal.

Chapter four, “Mechanized Humans and Human Mechanisms: War Machines and Mechanical Ubiquity,” further explores this complex mediation by examining theatre artists who proposed different ways that man and machinery might integrate, with humans appropriating the machine body and vice versa. Using the foundation built in the first three chapters and focusing on the period following WWI, I consider theatrical reactions to the dangerous aspects of the man-machine relationship that the war brought into sharp focus. While the war caused understandable unease over the destructive capabilities of machines, machines were simultaneously playing a much greater role in daily life, giving the theatrical experiments of this time a new urgency. Addressing the devastating effects of the widespread use of machine warfare during WWI, this chapter deals with the theatrical supplementation (in the Derridean sense) of the human body by different kinds of “machines” (some literal and some metaphorical).

As I have discussed, the theatre, in particular, does not allow for the displacement of the live body by the non-live body, although anxieties over this sort of displacement certainly proliferated during the modern period. Several critics have observed this apprehension over the intrusion of technology and mechanism, and it is important to note that this anxiety is not unique

to the post-war moment. Leo Marx, in *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, for example, investigates the way Americans reacted to the rise of technology well before WWI, asserting that the popularity of the pastoral was a reaction against the threat of displacement by mechanization. Fears of dehumanization were magnified, however, by the atrocities of the war. Jessica Burstein's *Cold Modernism: Literature, Fashion, Art* explores modern concerns with the mechanical as a method of depersonalization and dehumanization, declaring that the modern period was consumed by a focus on "ahumanism" (2) that reveals that "the status of the human has no especial purchase" (13). This anxiety about the encroachment of the inhuman that Burstein observes would be later strengthened by the devastation of WWII as the idea of the inhuman became increasingly synonymous with the inhumane. Even when mechanism appears to usurp the body onstage, however (as it seems to do in Jean Cocteau's *The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower*, where actors' bodies are represented by gramophone cabinets), the live body onstage resists this notion, for it is still materially present even when it has been metaphorically or representationally subsumed. Instead of a battle between man and machine that can be won or lost, then, the theatre presents a confrontation that necessitates mediation.

Working through fears of dehumanization and depersonalization, I look at works such as Susan Glaspell's *Tickless Time*, Jean Cocteau's *The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower*, and Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal*. Each of these works provides a different perspective on bodies in crisis by doubling a living body with a machine body (literally or figuratively) and enacting the limits of both human bodies and machine bodies in the process. By looking at the way these works place the mechanical and live body into conversation, I argue that the modern theatre becomes a vital testing ground for different methods of mediation of the man-machine relationship through

the live body for a living audience. In using the human body as a site of struggle, these works show that the issues of human agency and creative authority become an issue of mediation, not just of the human body by the machine body, but also of the machine body by the human body.

This project argues that, through the onstage doubling of live and mechanical bodies, the modern theatre in particular provided artists with a laboratory perfectly suited for investigating a variety of different possibilities for the relationship between man and mechanism. Seeing the stage as a space of human mediation (human performance, living human audience, a sense of human immediacy and human presence), the theatre artists of the modern period were able to test, in a practical arena, what might happen when mechanism, technology, and humanity meet. The results are alternately beautiful and devastating. In the end, this project considers not what happens when humans are displaced by mechanism, but what happens when humans are inexorably physically present in the confrontation between man and machine. In particular, I argue, these confrontations address perceptions of creative agency, authority, and authorship within the man-machine framework in terms of its specific embodiment on the stage. Focusing on plays and theatrical experiments that put human bodies in the roles of machine or mechanized bodies, I argue that performing bodies on the modern stage are not *mediated by* mechanisms; they instead enact a drama of mediation in which the live performing body negotiates between the material and physical requirements of both live and mechanical bodies before a living audience.

Chapter 1: Nerves and Wires: Constructing the Staged Enlightenment Body

“What have been all the playhouses a long time but puppet shows?”

~Luckless, *The Author’s Farce* by Henry Fielding

In 1724, the great satirist William Hogarth became so frustrated with what he perceived to be a lessening of the artistic value of the theatre that he published an engraving entitled “A Just View of the British Stage, or, three Heads are better than one” (see Fig. 1). Hogarth’s engraving was meant to condemn the fare offered at Lincoln’s Inn Fields, a theatrical space overseen by John Rich and known for spectacles, circuses, harlequinades, and pantomime. It was not prompted, however, by a show at Lincoln’s Inn Fields, but by a show meant to compete with Rich’s successes there: John Thurmond’s *Harlequin Sheppard*,⁵ unsuccessfully mounted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. Hogarth none-too-subtly suggests in this engraving that Colley Cibber, Robert Wilks, and Barton Booth, the managers of the Drury Lane Theatre and three of the primary leaders of the London theatrical world, were seduced by the box-office popularity of the nonsense produced by Rich. In the image, Cibber, Wilks, and Booth each play with puppets while their own bodies appear similarly puppet-like. Statues of tragedy and comedy in the foreground have been defaced by notices for Harlequinades.⁶ The subtitle calls the scene a rehearsal for “a new Farce,” and also notes that the presentation will include the tale of

⁵ *Harlequin Sheppard* told the story of Jack Sheppard, a well-known criminal who had managed to escape both Newgate prison and the New Prison in Clerkenwell. Sheppard, who was finally executed just weeks before this pantomime appeared in 1724, had become something of a public celebrity (O’Brien 151-3).

⁶ One is *Harlequin Sheppard*, the play that instigated Hogarth’s print, and the other is *Harlequin Doctor Faustus*, another very successful and well-known Harlequinade that was staged at Drury Lane in 1723, also by Thurmond. In *Harlequin Doctor Faustus*, Faustus himself was played by a Harlequin, and the pantomime centered on the mischievous tricks Faustus plays after he is granted power.

Scaramouch⁷ Jack Hall's "Escape from Newgate through the Privy." The privy in question, into which Booth is lowering a puppet, is depicted in the engraving with copies of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Julius Caesar* hanging on the wall to be used for toilet paper. The ghost of Ben Jonson rises from a trapdoor and urinates on a fallen figure in the foreground—a mannequin of a Roman soldier whose leg has broken off.

Hogarth's engraving is a scathing indictment of what he considers a deteriorating theatrical scene, and represents one side of a battle that was taking place in the eighteenth-century theatrical community. On one side of this conflict were those theatre artists and practitioners, such as Hogarth, who were interested in preserving the elite and high-culture status of the stage as a place for brilliant authors and high-minded aesthetic ideals. On the other side were those, such as Rich, who found success with bawdy spectacle, sensationalism, humor, and physical comedy. This battle was nothing particularly new; it had been raging in one form or another for centuries. What set the eighteenth-century engagement with these issues apart from earlier concerns was the way in which issues of creative integrity and artistic authority became clearly mapped onto issues of mechanical versus live bodies. Hogarth's distaste for the newly popular forms of spectacle is clearly tied up with images and representations of mechanical bodies as they clash with the less savory processes of living bodies. Hogarth foregrounds this tension through the material realities of live and mechanical bodies and the way they are represented onstage. For example, Hogarth assures us that "The Bricks, Rubbish, &c. will be

⁷ Scaramouch was a well-known figure in the popular Punch and Judy (or Punch and Joan, as his wife was then called) puppet shows, appropriated from commedia dell'arte. George Speaight notes in *The History of the English Puppet Theatre* that Scaramouch was an equivalent of the Harlequin character at this time (226), making him an appropriate addition here as a stand in for Jack Hall. Scaramouch was often constructed with an extendable neck that would stretch comically, adding yet another dimension to "Jack," whose real-life counterpart had been hanged just a few weeks earlier.

real, but the Excrement upon Jack Hall will be made of Chew'd Gingerbread to prevent Offence." In this way, the living processes of digestion and excretion are both "real" and "not real"; John Hall is a mechanical, not live, body, and the fecal matter of the puppet John Hall is not real feces. And yet, as the gingerbread will in fact be masticated and, one assumes, spit out for the effect of feces (crossing yet another bodily boundary as now we imagine the ingested gingerbread as both foodstuff and excrement in the mouth), it still invokes a visceral image of human digestion. Jack Hall would, in this telling, be a body that cannot digest covered with digestive juices.

Hogarth's image shows mechanical bodies doubling for live bodies in new and unsettling ways. It is not, however, the grotesque nature of the juxtaposition of living body and mechanical body on stage that raises such anxiety and concern on Hogarth's part about the state of theatre, but the fact that this juxtaposition has somehow overthrown the primacy of creative authorship. The excrement, whether it is human or puppet offal, is being wiped on works by revered authors of the past, and the mechanical spectacles have caused the defacement of statues representing hallowed notions of comedy and tragedy from antiquity. Ben Jonson has been appropriated as a spectacle, flaunted as a ghost, and, to add insult to injury, his urination associates him with the other scatological references in the image. The "authors" of this particular stage nonsense, Cibber, Wilks, and Booth, are also made ridiculous. Their clothes are unbuttoned and rumpled, and they are crowned by nooses that dangle above their heads in symmetry with the wires they use to manipulate their puppets. They have, in Hogarth's vision, effectively lost their creative authority; no better than puppets themselves, they have lost all creative agency in an attempt to pander to a public desire for mechanical spectacle. In addition, Hogarth ends his note at the bottom of the image with "Vivat Rex" ("long live the king"), which indicates, ironically, that this

lack of authority has been authorized by the highest authority in the land.

Although it is tempting to see Hogarth's artistic anxiety over puppets as a simple distaste for popular culture and what he considered "low" art forms, and while a concern over the effects of "low" culture on "high" culture is clearly part of Hogarth's censure of the current state of the theatre,⁸ Hogarth's doubling of mechanical and live bodies in his images foregrounds a deep concern about the authority of live bodies. Another engraving published by Hogarth in 1724, "Some of the Principal Inhabitants of Ye Moon: Royalty, Episcopacy, and Law," highlights the way mechanical bodies, for Hogarth, signal this anxiety over authority. The image depicts a ruling class that is empty and hollow, literally made of nothing more than the earthly objects that typically signify their position (see Fig. 2). In the image, a King, a Bishop, and a Lawyer are seated on raised pedestals. The King has a coin for a head, and is flanked by attendants that also have coins for heads and have bodies made of mirrors. The Bishop's head is a Jew's harp,⁹ which operates a machine in the shape of a church steeple that is grinding out money. The Lawyer has a gavel for a head, and is accompanied by a woman made of a fan and a teapot and a man made of fan legs and a coat of arms.¹⁰ The engraving itself is framed as though we are seeing these figures through the lens of a telescope.

In this engraving, the mechanical object-bodies have been adopted by those in authority

⁸ Hogarth released yet another image in 1724 dealing with similar themes entitled "Masquerades and Operas," also known as "The Bad Taste of the Town." This image depicted long lines of eager audience members for pantomimes and masquerades led by a demon and a harlequin, while the beautiful Academy of Arts remains in the background devoid of all public interest, and a woman sells the masterpieces of the past as waste paper.

⁹ Although the *OED* asserts there is no evidence directly linking this instrument to the Jewish people, its use here does linguistically imply the Bishop carries the same miserliness with monetary concerns generally associated with the stereotyped character of a Jew at this time.

¹⁰ While the figures in this image might more accurately be called "object bodies" than mechanical bodies, the Bishop's body as the catalyst for the operation of the grinding machine turning out coins and the implicit assumption that these are "living" figures from a distant planet as seen through a telescope place these bodies in conversation with the mechanical bodies of puppets and automatons.

not to appeal to the lowest common denominator (as in “A Just View of the British Stage”), but to signal an elite and untouchable status. It is important to recognize that the doubling of mechanical and live body does not denote, in either image, a fear of the mechanical body subsuming the live body. Hogarth is not, in fact, afraid that the Bishop will literally be replaced by a coin-making machine. Instead, the replacement of the living body (the recognition that there is a living King, a living head of the church, and living men stewarding justice in the country) with mechanical object-bodies is meant to destabilize the quality and authenticity of the living figures’ authority. Rather than moral, physical, or intellectual strength, these figures remain in authority thanks to money and a privileging of objects. As with “A Just View of the British Stage,” this engraving uses the doubling of the live and the mechanical to reveal a lack of substance and a deteriorating authority, this time for the country’s highest offices. In both instances, Hogarth’s use of mechanical bodies carries a negative connotation. In the first, allowing a mechanical body a privileged status causes live bodies to lose their status as creative authorities; in the second, allowing the mechanical body a privileged status undermines the value and quality of the authority of living political, civic, and moral leaders.

While Hogarth saw the doubling of live and mechanical bodies as something that revealed an inherently negative relationship, others, such as John Weaver, saw the relationship between man and mechanism in a more positive light. An eighteenth-century dancing master, Weaver was one of the main players in the creation and success of the pantomimes to which Hogarth objected.¹¹ John O’Brien, in *Harlequin Britain: Pantomime and Entertainment, 1690-1760*, calls Weaver “the central figure in the effort to advance ‘pantomimic dancing’ as an

¹¹ John Thurmond, who choreographed the *Harlequin Sheppard* and *Harlequin Doctor Faustus* to which Hogarth objected in “A Just View of the British Stage,” was a student of Weaver’s.

enlightened science, a liberal art rather than just a mechanical craft” (87). O’Brien’s point is well-made, as Weaver worked both on the practical and the theoretical side of the art of dancing. Weaver’s 1712 publication, *An Essay towards an History of Dancing*, attempts to rescue several different forms of dancing, including mime and pantomime, from accusations of being “low” arts by showing their historical importance.¹² Further, Weaver describes pantomime as providing, in physical, bodily terms, the same kind of poetry that had previously been confined to words, thereby surmounting the issue of a public that was no longer interested in listening to poetry and instead wanted visual entertainment. As he observes, “the *Mimes* and *Pantomimes* invented a new sort of Diversion, tho’ grafted on an old Stock; which was by *Motion* and *Measure*, without the *Help of Words*, to represent all those *Stories of Antiquity*, which before us’d to *furnish* the Poets with *Plots* for their *Plays*” (119). Weaver thus emphasizes the live body as a crucial medium for artistic presentation at this time. These early experimentations in bringing the ancient form of pantomime to the British stage and the subsequent derision of the art of pantomime by figures such as Hogarth¹³ led Weaver to attempt a further defense of dancing as an art—a defense that would privilege rather than denigrate the role of mechanism in relation to the body in the art of dance.

In 1721, Weaver produced *Anatomical and Mechanical Lectures Upon Dancing*, which breaks the body into its constituent parts and then explains the bone and muscle structures and their connection to movement. Weaver’s goal was to use this scientific exploration of the body’s

¹² One of the first documented pantomimes in this era was Weaver’s *The Loves of Mars and Venus: A Dramatick Entertainment of Dancing* in 1717, followed quickly by his *The Fable of Orpheus and Eurydice, with a Dramatick Entertainment in Dancing Thereupon* in 1718. Both of these performances feature well-known Greek and Roman myths, and the title pages of the publications include the note that they are “in Imitation of” the performances of “the Ancient Greeks and Romans,” thus demonstrating his desire to connect the form to its historical roots

¹³ Many others shared Hogarth’s view, including Jeremy Collier, Alexander Pope, and David Garrick. See O’Brien’s *Harlequin Britain: Pantomime and Entertainment, 1690-1760* for a more thorough examination of contemporary rejections of pantomime and harlequinades.

mechanical nature as a “Means of recovering our Art from Contempt unjustly called upon it, by those who term it only a trifling Amusement” (1). In his introduction, Weaver explains that this study will investigate “the Laws of Motion, Mechanical and Natural, so far as they relate to the Regular, or Irregular Position, Motion, and Gesture of the Body” (vii). Weaver’s method uses the metaphor of mechanics—what he calls the “Human machine” (viii)—to double for the human body. Understanding the body as a machine allows, in Weaver’s view, for scientifically precise movement. Implicitly, this kind of precision enables better and more efficient control of the body and provides an opportunity for human artists to improve and perfect their physical artistic endeavors.

Weaver’s move to see the body as a natural double of a machine has philosophical precedent. In 1651 Thomas Hobbes published his famous *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*, theorizing on the nature of man, civilization, and free will. In it, Hobbes styles the body of man as a kind of puppet by describing the connection between external and internal in terms of the “mediation of Nerves and other strings and membranes of the body” (3). Importantly, Hobbes describes the relationship as one in which the external mechanism has an effect on the internal senses. As he asserts, “there is no conception in a Man’s mind, which hath not at first, totally, or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of Sense” (3). Weaver’s own essay reflects a similar sentiment when he remarks, “the Soul is inform’d from the external Objects of Sensation” (ix). In this way, emphasis is placed on the physical and material apparatus of the body in the negotiation between the objective experience of the world and the subjective experience of the mind. Jonathan Kramnick makes a similar assertion in *Actions and Objects: From Hobbes to Richardson*, when he observes that rather than emphasizing “the long-standing sense that the eighteenth century witnesses a new

language of inwardness or subjectivity,” the eighteenth century instead emphasizes the way in which “*Actions extend mind into the world*” (2-3). Hobbes’s tract, which focuses on rules of governance and social contract, is ultimately about authority. If the body and the “organs of sense” have such authority over the minds of men, and the minds of men grant power to an absolute ruler, then the implicit argument is that the ultimate authority in the land is mediated by the bodies of individuals. Interestingly, the frontispiece supports this theory. It depicts a larger-than-life ruling body, the arms and trunk of which are composed of hundreds of individual bodies. In this way, the live body, for Hobbes, negotiates the connection between political authority and the material manifestation of that authority.

Even earlier, Cartesian philosophy had already taken steps to identify the body as a machine. Kara Reilly gives an excellent overview of René Descartes’s mechanical philosophy in the chapter on “Descartes’s Mimetic Faculty” in *Automata and Mimesis on the Stage of Theatre History*. As she observes, Descartes not only “describes the ‘earth and indeed the whole invisible universe as a machine’” (49), but he also “often used theatrical metaphors” (48). In this way, Reilly connects Descartes’s idea of a juxtaposed live/mechanical body with the idea of display and performance. Indeed, it is likely that Descartes’s mechanical philosophy stemmed from his visits to the royal pleasure gardens at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which contained hydraulic moving statues, or automatons, on display for the entertainment of guests. R. Darren Gobert goes even further in exploring the impact of Descartes’s theories of the body on the theatre in *The Mind-Body Stage: Passion and Interaction in the Cartesian Theater*. Although many have seen Descartes as emphasizing an irreconcilable split between mind and body, Gobert instead argues that the relationship between mind and body was far more complex for Descartes than a simple binary. For Descartes, Gobert writes, the “explanation of how emotion informs reason relies on

the connection he finds between body and soul, since through our bodies we register (and retain) the experience that grounds understanding” (5).

The metaphor of mechanism emphasized by these philosophers in the negotiation between mind and body laid the foundation for eighteenth-century encounters with these issues. Further, the increasing popularity of life-sized puppets and constructed bodies such as automatons meant the pairing of live bodies and mechanical bodies was becoming a physical reality, and therefore required negotiation on both a philosophical and practical level. The concept of mediation as an active negotiation between mechanisms and the human pervades the eighteenth-century consciousness. Although not yet on the scale of the Industrial Revolution, there were key advances during the Enlightenment that caused crucial changes in perception about how our bodies interact with other bodies and with the world around us. In the introduction to *This is Enlightenment*, authors Clifford Siskin and William Warner even go so far as to define the Enlightenment as “an event in the history of mediation” (1), asserting that the concept of mediation is, in fact, the major characteristic of any attempt to demarcate the concept of “Enlightenment,” rather than the conventional definition of Enlightenment as a philosophical and political movement. It is not just a general idea of mediation, however; grounding the idea of mediation in the complex tension between the human and the mechanical, Siskin and Warner describe mediation as a dialectic between the human-oriented focus of Immanuel Kant and the mechanically-oriented focus of Francis Bacon. In fact, they locate the key difference between the two philosophers in their conceptions of the machine:

What changed between Bacon and Kant is nowhere more evident than in the ways they used the word “machine.” To push his readers into taking the dare, Kant ends *What Is Enlightenment?* with a before and after of what they will become: if they use their own

reason, “men” will be “more than machines” (Kant 2007, 37). [...] In Bacon, those terms are radically different: machines are not what we don’t want to be; they are the means for men to do what they should be doing—making “advances worthy of mankind” (Bacon 1994, 8). (4)

Here, then, we are provided with two options that form the core of the Enlightenment struggle with mediation. The machine is either something that must be eliminated in order for human bodies to be truly connected to their own humanity (the machine is a hindrance, prohibiting advancement) or it is something that improves the connection between human bodies and their humanity, thereby allowing for evolution (the machine is a facilitator, mediating advancement). In both cases, there is an implicit assumption that machines are somehow between human bodies and some larger conception of human experience or knowledge.

I wish to suggest an alternate perspective: that machinery is not the mediating force at all, but, rather, one of the elements that requires mediation. Instead of locating machines in between human bodies and human experience or knowledge, I propose that human bodies themselves are both the medium and the mediating force in these relationships. As the medium, the human body becomes the site on which the struggle, arbitration, and challenges between human understanding/experience and new mechanisms occur. As the mediating force, the human body becomes the interpreter; it must learn the language of human experience and the language of mechanism and technology and attempt to find common vocabulary in order to synthesize meaning. The emphasis here is on an active, not passive, process. Even the “medium”—the location or tool of mediation—is an active material in this conception. The human body is never inert, even in death; it is constantly growing, processing, decaying. This re-imagining of the role of human bodies in a new mechanically inclined world requires a complete re-ordering of our

understanding of the theatrical artist's struggle to apprehend the human, and places the theatre at the center of some of the most important philosophical debates of the past few hundred years. The theatre is a tactile space that facilitates this kind of active embodied work, allowing the muscles and nerves of the live body to viscerally enact the uncertainty of learning a new physical and mental vocabulary. This allows for direct engagement, through the body, between mechanism and a living audience. The theatrical engagement with the idea of mediation between man and machine during the Enlightenment poses the human body as both the medium and the primary mediating force between mechanism/mechanical bodies and the living audience.

Eighteenth-century puppet theatre served as an important experimental testing ground for what, exactly, this mediation between human and mechanical bodies might mean. Puppet theatre is one of several performative arenas in which we can find evidence of the human body as both medium and primary mediating force in the relationship between man and machine. It also provides an excellent focus for exploring the issue of embodied mediation as it played out on the eighteenth-century stage, since theatrical encounters with puppets at this time involved both mechanical bodies (puppets) imitating human bodies (actors) as well as human bodies (actors) imitating mechanical bodies (puppets). The eighteenth-century use of the puppet figure asks audiences to accept an uncanny juxtaposition of the live and mechanical body. In traditional puppet shows the performance is still a live performance, it still occurs in front of a live audience, and there is still a live human craftsman (the puppeteer) involved. The puppet actor, however, does not breathe the same air (does not, in fact, breathe at all), does not share the same embodied existence, and cannot sympathize with human triumphs or sorrows. In spite of this, the goal of the puppeteer is to convince the audience that the puppet body does, in fact, have breath, physical sensation, and emotion; in essence, the performative goal of the puppeteer is to

convince an audience that the puppet has its own agency.

Bodily agency is the central issue of the puppet; even the definition of a puppet relies on who or what has agency. George Speaight, in *The History of the English Puppet Theatre*, defines a puppet (as opposed to an automaton or a doll) as “an inanimate figure moved by human agency” (22). The construction of puppets in this period is also important in thinking about their role in the man-machine relationship. Speaight observes that although “glove puppets seem to have been the most common type of puppet in the first half of the seventeenth century [...] marionettes seem to have usurped that position for the second half of the century” (82). While glove puppets were still in use in the eighteenth century, especially at street fairs and festivals, the primary type of puppet used on the stage continued to be the marionette. These marionettes were, as Speaight further notes, controlled by “a stout wire to the crown of the head, with subsidiary strings to the hands and feet” on a specially constructed stage, with the actor’s voices modulated through use of a “squeaker” (called a “swatchel” or “swazzle”) (163-73). In addition, the performance typically involved a human intermediary who introduced the puppet characters to the audience (173). Thus the mediation by the live body occurs on two levels. First, a “hidden” live body physically mediates the animation and voice of the puppet’s body—it is the live body that must learn the precise movements and physical control of its arms and fingers, and the live body that must carefully modulate its voice, mediating through itself, in this way, the life of the puppet so that it can be understood by the living audience. Second, a visible human body acts as a narrative guide, meaning that the puppet’s story is facilitated through the body of a human storyteller for his or her living audience members. Although the live body of the actual puppeteer might be hidden in traditional puppet performances, the authority of the live body is still foregrounded by this live intermediary, ensuring that the artistic authority for the performance

remains with a live author.

In this way, the eighteenth-century puppet theatre foregrounds the tension between the living and the mechanical by calling into sharp relief the relationship between the live bodies of the audience members, the live bodies of the performers, and the not-so-live bodies of the marionettes. This makes the puppet theatre an appropriate and quite literal stage on which Enlightenment ideas about the mediation between man and machine can be played out. Speaight, remarks that “few periods of history can have been so sympathetic to the puppets as the eighteenth century, and never before could the puppets so naturally hold up the mirror of ridicule to their masters” (92). Puppets, which are mechanical bodies both representing and manipulated by living bodies, provide a kind of philosophical debate in miniature, and it is no surprise that their popularity grew exponentially during the eighteenth century.

Speaight compiles evidence from several sources to show the increasing popularity of puppet shows through the Restoration, which sets the stage for its later explosion on the eighteenth-century theatrical scene. He observes the prominence of the puppet shows at fairs and travelling productions, remarks on the references made in the diary of Samuel Pepys concerning his attendance at many puppet shows over the years, and notes that some of the puppet shows even received royal patronage (75-8). Many popular venues began offering puppet entertainments, and several prominent people in the theatre world dabbled in the genre. Speaight finds thirty different locations in central London alone that hosted puppet entertainments during the eighteenth century, up from eleven in the seventeenth century, and this number increases when locations outside London, especially popular society destinations such as Bath, are taken into account (61, 93). Speaight attributes the re-emergence of the puppet show’s popularity in the eighteenth century to the fact that it lent itself so well to farcical satire of the “domestic

sentimentalities” of the period and notes that “the shallow, artificial world of London Society discovered a delicious source of amusement in the little satires and artificial heroics of the puppet theatre” (92). Artists and audiences alike reveled in the possibilities for social and political satire offered by the puppet show format.

One artist whose use of the puppet show format is of particular interest in terms of its unique exploration of the relationship between live and mechanical bodies is Henry Fielding. On March 30, 1730, Fielding debuted his play *The Author’s Farce*¹⁴ to an appreciative crowd at the Little Theatre in Haymarket. The play was a satirical send-up of the state of artistic endeavors in London that offered a mocking caricature of prominent members of the theatrical business, such as Colley Cibber, John Henley,¹⁵ and John Rich, alongside a burlesque of popular genres and artistic mediums, such as farce, opera, the novel, and, most notably, the puppet show. In fact, the entire third act, in a play-within-a-play format, was presented as a puppet show. Instead of puppet actors, however, the puppet characters were played by human actors. The substitution of live for mechanical bodies along with the play’s exploration of different artistic conventions raises crucial Enlightenment concerns over how art is produced, authenticated, and dispersed. Fielding’s hybrid puppet play foregrounds the ways in which eighteenth-century artists and

¹⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all text references are to the first 1730 printing of the script, printed for J. Roberts. There was a second printing for J. Roberts in 1730 that, as Charles Woods notes, is not easily distinguishable from the first (xi). A third printing, marked “the second edition,” was also printed in 1730, for J. Watts. Fielding re-wrote *The Author’s Farce* for a re-staging of the show in 1734 at Drury Lane, and that text (not published until 1750 by J. Watts and re-printed in *The Dramatic Works of Henry Fielding, Esq., in Three Volumes* in 1755 by A. Millar) is very different from the original version. Although the version found in the 1755 edition is the one most commonly published today, it was not nearly as successful as the original. The changes to the script reflect the shifting winds of theatrical leadership at the time (for example, the character Marplay, Jr. is added to represent Colley Cibber’s son, Theophilus Cibber, who had risen to prominence in the theatrical world after his father’s retirement). For an extended discussion of the different textual versions, see Charles Woods’s introduction to *The Author’s Farce* in the Regents Restoration Drama series edition.

¹⁵ John Henley, often called “Orator Henley,” was a preacher who used theatricality and showmanship in his orations, lectures, and sermons. For a while he even used a theatre near Lincoln’s Inn Fields as his base of operations.

audiences wrestled with contrasting notions of what happens to creativity in the relationship between the live and the mechanical.

Fielding's relationship to the theatre in general, and to the puppet show in particular, is a curious one and can provide some context for understanding the critical role puppet shows and puppet show conventions play in *The Author's Farce*. Fielding's work for the theatre is certainly not the work for which he is typically remembered, and, in fact, was often dismissed in early scholarship as a kind of "trial run" for his later "serious" work in prose.¹⁶ More recent scholarship, however, has restored Fielding's place in theatre history. George Bernard Shaw wrote in the preface to the first volume of *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* in 1898 that Fielding was "the greatest dramatist, with the single exception of Shakespear [sic], produced by England between the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century" (xvii). This glowing assessment has been somewhat tempered by the fact that, as Thomas Lockwood remarks in "Fielding in Theatre," most critics have not taken Shaw's remark seriously (263).¹⁷ There are now, however, several studies of Fielding's work that emphasize or focus solely on his theatrical endeavors,¹⁸ and whether critics agree with Shaw's assessment or not, the fact that Fielding's work had such an

¹⁶ John Calvin Metcalf sums up the early Fielding criticism nicely in "Henry Fielding, Critic" when he asserts that, "for virtue's sake the world is generally quite willing to spare the remembrance of his [Fielding's] plays, and to admit the author into its affections because of his abiding goodness of heart and his deep-veined humanity" (138). See also Winfield H. Rogers's "Fielding's Early Aesthetic and Technique."

¹⁷ In spite of this it is not overly difficult to see why Shaw might have chosen Fielding as an important precursor to his own work. Both tended to write highly political plays satirizing contemporary events and figures, and both contended with political and moral resistance to their plays. Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, for example (one of the "unpleasant" plays in the *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* collection where his remark about Fielding appears), faced several challenges. In London the play was initially banned by the Lord Chamberlain in much the same way as Fielding's work was curtailed by the Licensing Act. Written in 1893, it did not have its first performance in London until 1902, when it was performed privately for a members-only club. Its first public performance in London didn't occur until 1925. A New York production in 1905 was closed by police and the cast arrested due to the indecent content.

¹⁸ See, for example, Albert J. Rivero's *The Plays of Henry Fielding: A Critical Study of His Dramatic Career*, Robert D. Hume's *Henry Fielding and the London Theatre, 1728-1737*, and Peter Lewis's *Fielding's Burlesque Drama: Its Place in the Tradition* (although even Rivero disagrees with Shaw's assessment in putting Fielding above authors like Dryden and Johnson).

impact on one of the foremost dramatists of the modern era makes him an important figure for this study. He was also an important figure of the early eighteenth-century stage; Fielding actively worked in the theatre from 1728, with the production of his first play, *Love in Several Masques*, until the Licensing Act of 1737 severely curtailed his participation in the theatrical sphere.¹⁹ Many of his plays were quite popular and were staged and re-staged for appreciative audiences. In addition, Fielding's work was often popular fare for puppet stages, and some of his plays were as likely to be performed by puppets as by live actors.²⁰

In 1966, Martin C. Battestin convincingly argued in an article entitled "Fielding and 'Master Punch' in Panton Street" that Madame de la Nash, a female producer of puppet theatre, was actually a pseudonym for Fielding.²¹ Battestin's article created a stronger connection between Fielding and the puppet theatre, and new criticism emerged that focused more specifically on *The Author's Farce* and Fielding's use of puppets and puppet show conventions.²² One of the primary conclusions was that Fielding used the puppet show conventions, especially in *The Author's Farce*, to satirize the decline of good taste in the theatre. For example, Susan K. Ahern's reading in "The Sense of Nonsense in Fielding's *The Author's Farce*" aligns Fielding with criticism against the theatre. She asserts that Fielding not only believed that "the theatre's greed and nonsense reflect that of society" but also, in fact, that the

¹⁹ As it was meant to; the Licensing Act, put in place by Sir Robert Walpole, was created in order to control the political satire Fielding and others were presenting on the English stage.

²⁰ Most notably was *Tom Thumb*, but *The Covent Garden Tragedy*, *The Mock Doctor*, and *The Old Debauchees* all enjoyed runs as puppet plays. See "Plays Performed by Puppets in England" in Speaight's *The History of the English Puppet Theatre* (324-43).

²¹ This is an important assertion, especially for Fielding, since it previously had been generally accepted that the Licensing Act effectively stifled his career in theatre. Battestin's argument, then, makes the case that Fielding not only owned and operated a puppet show, but that puppets were the medium through which Fielding would remain active in the theatre after 1737. This is once again an issue of agency and authority; puppet theatre provided Fielding the opportunity to retain his own creative agency in the theatrical sphere and the ability to question political authority after the passing of the Licensing Act.

²² See, for example, Anthony J. Hassall's "Fielding's Puppet Image"

theatre was responsible in some way for societal ills. Of *The Author's Farce*, she notes:

In the puppet show, Fielding also continues to criticize the confused, mercantile ethic of these entertainers. Not only do they abuse communication and good sense, but they are financially successful in doing so. If audience taste has become debased, a greedy theatre has pandered to the decline. (47)

These comments suggest a kind of shocked horror at the thought that “low” entertainment might be popular and financially successful and suggest that Fielding had an underlying anti-theatrical or, at least, anti-spectacle prejudice.

While Ahern might feel Fielding was disgusted by the ability of “low” entertainment to attain popular and financial success, *The Author's Farce*, which used the “low” spectacle of the puppet show conventions, was itself quite successful. First presented on March 30, 1730, *The Author's Farce* was Fielding's first great success as a playwright. Charles Woods, in his introduction to the play, notes that “it had forty-one performances at the Haymarket during the spring and summer of 1730” and that it was “the most successful opening season any play had enjoyed since that of *The Beggar's Opera* in 1728” (xvii). Some, however, like Ahern, felt the play's success was hypocritical. Albert J. Rivero, for example, observes in “Fielding's Artistic Accommodations in *The Author's Farce*” that Fielding “might protest his satiric intent as justification for parading puppets on his stage, but the ineluctable fact remains that he has stooped to this device to attract unsuspecting members of the public under false pretenses” (17). Was it, in fact, an “artistic accommodation” as Rivero would have it? This question is a vital one. If Fielding is actually as opposed to these “low” forms as the critics claim, why did he return to them again and again? In spite of this prevailing critical narrative about Fielding's theatrical endeavors, I would argue that Fielding intentionally turned to what was popularly considered

“low,” not to denigrate those forms, but to make a statement about the creative ability of those making art and the authority of those making decisions on the quality of art.²³ Fielding makes fun—not of the “lowness” of different art forms or their humor—but of those who invent and follow fixed “rules” for these forms with such religious zealotry that the forms themselves develop a kind of creative authority. Artists who work in this manner become puppets of the form or genre in which they are working, and it is this surrender of creative agency to the mechanical conventions of a genre or art form—in which is included, for Fielding, theatrical conventions—that *The Author’s Farce* ultimately satirizes. Forms, for Fielding, do not have (or, at least, should not have) creative authority, people do. Rather than an attack on “low” art forms, then, Fielding makes fun of those who give different art forms such agency over their own artistic endeavors. In no place is this more apparent than in *The Author’s Farce*, where Fielding maps questions of artistic authority, quality, and authenticity onto the relationship between live and puppet bodies.

Both the form and content of *The Author’s Farce* address concerns over how mechanical bodies and artificial mechanisms affect live bodies and human creativity and authorship. The play is split into three acts. The first two acts focus on the poet Harry Luckless’s attempts to gain the hand of Harriot, the daughter of his landlady, Mrs. Moneywood, and his efforts to write and sell a play. Luckless, who cannot manage to get his play presented at a theatre, eventually decides to present a puppet show. In the third act, an unsuccessful Luckless puts on a puppet

²³ In addition to Fielding’s use of satire and “low” comedy in the theatre, he also turned to these popular forms in his prose work. Indeed, Fielding appears to revel in sensationalism and spectacle. For example, *Shamela*, his highly popular spoof of Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* (1741), showcases far less noble and sentimental characters than Richardson’s novel. “The Female Husband” (1746), a short piece on Mary Hamilton, the woman who dressed as a man and even married several women as a man, features titillating tidbits about eighteenth-century dildos. Fielding even, along with several other authors of the period, wrote about the famed Jonathan Wild, a criminal gang leader who managed to work both sides of the law in order to further his criminal successes, in *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great* (1743).

show (called *The Pleasures of the Town*) in which different representations of “pleasures of the town” (Signor Opera, Don Tragedio, Mrs. Novel, Monsieur Pantomime, Sir Farcical Comic, and Dr. Orator) come to the court of Nonsense to try to win the hand of the Goddess of Nonsense.

The content of both the “play proper” and Luckless’s puppet show directly deal with the relationship between human creativity and artificial convention. While the main narrative obstacle is Luckless’s inability to publish or present his play, which causes him emotional and financial stress, it is Luckless’s struggle to maintain creative authority in the face of the inflexible conventions of the business side of the theatre in London that makes up the heart of the play’s dramaturgical urgency. Each of Luckless’s attempts to have his play published or produced is met with resistance by those currently in authority in the theatrical world, a resistance they base on their perception of what makes an “author.” In the first act, Bookweight refuses to help him, remarking, “Why, had you a great Reputation I might venture: But, truly, for young Beginners it is a very great Hazard: For, indeed, the Reputation of the Author carries the greatest Sway in these affairs” (11). In the second act, Marplay also refuses Luckless’s play, not due to any merit or lack thereof in the script, but because of his opinion of the author. When Sparkish asks Marplay what he thinks of the play, Marplay responds, “It may be a very good one, for ought I know; but I know the Author has no Interest” (18). Disgusted with the process, Luckless eventually returns to Bookweight and proposes a puppet show. Just as Fielding would later use the puppet show (as Madam de la Nash) to circumvent the artistic obstacle of the Licensing Act, so, too, does Luckless turn to this popular form of “low” entertainment to finally get his play on the stage.

The structure of the play thus sets up a dialectic between the frame narrative, involving the “real” actors, and the puppet show, involving the “puppet” actors, which raises important

questions about the nature of creativity in a world that would soon find itself increasingly relying on mechanisms. There is some precedent in the eighteenth century for the human portrayal of puppet characters. Speaight notes that Thomas Shadwell's *The Sullen Lovers* includes a short scene at the end in which a boy comes out dressed in the costume of Punchinello and dances in the manner of the puppet. In one performance, the actor was partially sitting on a hidden chair to make it look like his feet were dancing off the floor (84). Woods records several instances of live actors portraying puppets when he observes:

Since it was often charged that actors had become mere puppets, it is hardly unexpected to find them taking puppet parts: live Punches turned up, for example, at Lincoln Inn's Fields when Shaw acted Punch in *The Cheats* in 1717 and *The Jealous Doctor* in 1718; a Drury Lane production of *The Escapes of Harlequin* in 1722 offered two Punches as well as two "Punch Women." Still, there was little precedent for a complete puppet show performed by living actors... (40)

By using live bodies for *all* of the puppet characters, Fielding questions not just the artificial nature of one person's character, but the artificial conventions of art as a whole.

When we reach the third act's puppet show, the generic and formulaic conventions with which Luckless has been struggling are given anthropomorphic presence in the various characters. Opera, Tragedy, the Novel, Pantomime, Farce, Oration, and Poetry all have specific characters that satirize the more mechanical and artificial conventions of their mediums. For example, Pantomime will not speak at all, and instead dramatically mimes his contributions. In addition, through Punch and Joan we see the conventions of romance and the puppet show mocked, Lady Kingcall's card game mirrors the machinations of those at court, and Somebody

and Nobody²⁴ play out the role of the unwashed masses. The characters are made ridiculous by their religious devotion to the artificial conventions of their genre. Once again, however, the fact that the characters dancing on puppet strings are actually live actors is what makes Fielding's play so interesting. Further, these are not anonymous bodies; these are live bodies meant to invoke familiar public figures. The Orator, for example, would be easily recognizable to contemporary audiences as a satire of John Henley. This doubling of the puppet Orator and the real live John Henley mediated through the live body of the actor reveals something about the living Henley. It is not Henley's body that is being threatened by the puppet—the anxiety here is not that his living body will be subsumed by a mechanical body—instead, it is his creative agency and authority that are under attack. Rather than a simple dismissal of specific genres as artificial, then, Fielding questions the complicated relationship between humanity and artificial convention. While the comedy and the satire arises from the fact that these authors, by adhering to artificial convention, attempt to *act like* puppets, the live body is *never actually absent* in Fielding's play. Even when a living artist attempts to surrender creative agency, the live human body still remains here as the primary active element in the process of mediation, physically negotiating the demands of the mechanical body (and mechanical conventions of form) it is representationally doubling.

The contrast of Luckless's puppet show with its artificial characters and the “real” world (a misnomer since it is, of course, still part of the fictional drama) of the play proper de-stabilizes the audience's conception of the boundary between the real and the artificial and maps it onto notions of live versus mechanical bodies. All of this comes to a head at the end of the play when

²⁴ Somebody and Nobody were common comic figures that were adapted for the puppet stage, as Speaight observes, “the one caricatured as all head, legs, and arms, and the other just the reverse” (110).

the puppet show and play proper collide. In the final scene, Luckless discovers (thanks to a tutor with whom he is reunited through several events of chance) that he is actually the son of the King of Bantam. Just a moment later a messenger reveals that the old King has died, which makes Luckless the new King (72-4). Immediately following this discovery we learn that Mrs. Moneywood, Luckless's landlord, is actually the Queen of Old Brentford, making Harriot a Princess (75-6). This bit of information is divulged by the puppet Punch, who reveals himself to be Mrs. Moneywood's son and Harriot's brother (76). The ludicrous and quick resolution both authorizes Luckless as puppet master (he is King) while simultaneously implicating him in a direct and personal relationship with the puppets (Punch will now be his brother in law). In this way, the puppet show's Court of Nonsense is upstaged by the nonsense in Luckless's story.

It is certainly bizarre, after two acts of relatively conventional frame story about a down-on-his-luck artist and one act of puppet show spectacle (less realistic, perhaps, than the frame story but still well within traditional puppet show conventions), to suddenly have the two collide in a way that makes the frame story characters just as artificially contrived as wooden puppets and authenticates the puppet characters as part of the frame story. It is appropriate, in this context, that Luckless's story is resolved through a kind of *deus ex machina* in the form of his tutor and Punch. Latin for "god of the machine," the concept of the *deus ex machina* itself is a fitting mechanism with which to end a play so concerned with the relationship between an author-king and his creations. It is even more appropriate that it is not one body that provides the necessary resolution, but two—one representing a "live" character (Luckless's tutor) and one representing a "puppet" character (Punch). Luckless's own body provides the medium through which he attains his final authority as King; it becomes both puppet and human (related to both the "living" characters and the "puppet" characters) through this series of ridiculous events,

thereby effectively mediating between the mechanical puppets of the farce and the living characters of the play proper.

The Author's Farce raises questions about human authorship and creativity in a world being quickly saturated by scientific and mechanical progress. Fielding's use of live actors performing within the puppet show framework serves to illustrate both the fascination with the blending of the live and the mechanical as well as the fear that true human authorship might be subsumed by artificial convention. Rather than a simple satire on the use of familiar artistic devices, Fielding offers a complex exploration of the relationship between artificial convention and human creativity that reflects Enlightenment concerns over authorship and the production of art. Fielding does not look to the puppets or the mechanisms of convention for the path to perfection; he does not see the machine body as providing a way to improve the human body as Weaver does. Instead of glorifying the perfectly constructed performing body (or the constructed novel, opera, etc.), Fielding looks to the live performing body—the body that must negotiate the mechanisms of the stage and the conventions of the world. This body must reconcile both the aesthetic aims of mankind and the bodily processes to which we all must defer. For Fielding, privileging the mechanical as the primary mediating force in the relationship between man and mechanism, whether it is an artificial body or an artificial convention, negatively impacts artistic expression. Artificial bodies, like artificial conventions, force a living body (or art form) to conform to a standard idea of mechanical perfection, an action that, for Fielding, causes art to become dull, fixed, stagnant, and lacking in humanity and depth. It may no longer decay, but it also no longer grows. Mechanical bodies, for Fielding, are not autonomous—they are not and cannot be creative agents. Privileging the human body, even with its imperfections and its “low”-ness, as the mediator of art, Fielding asserts, again and again, that artistic authority comes from

the mediation of human perspective and mechanical means through embodied human engagement with the world.

Charlotte Charke, who worked with Fielding at the Haymarket Theatre, also experimented with puppets and their relationship to live bodies onstage. Charke, the daughter of Colley Cibber, was known for her eccentric personality and often dressed in men's clothing both on and off the stage. She appeared in several of Fielding's satires, and it was not uncommon for her to parody her own father. After the implementation of the Licensing Act, Charke briefly owned and operated a puppet theatre. While Fielding presented live bodies pretending to be mechanical bodies, Charke's puppet bodies were fashioned so as to be as life-like as possible. Rather than presenting an opposing view of the live versus the mechanical, however, Charke's experiments with puppets also ultimately foreground the importance of the live body in mediating mechanical concerns. Even from a young age Charke knew a little something about the importance of material performance and its ability to grant authority. As a young woman, Charke decided she wanted to be a physician. Lacking any medical training, experience, or qualifications, she nonetheless managed to convince many of the women in her town of her prowess by obtaining the correct costume and props and acting the part with confidence and conviction. As she concludes in *The Narrative of the Life of Charlotte Charke*, her autobiography, her success as a physician was "rather founded on the Faith of the Patient, than any real Merit in the Doctor or his Prescriptions" (37).²⁵ This account reveals an early acknowledgement of the power of performance in the construction of identity and the assertion

²⁵ Charke continually re-invented herself; the *Narrative* itself serves as a testament to her changeable personality and interests and her inability to settle into one profession, or even one geographical area, for any real length of time. The *Narrative* contains a rough outline of Charke's life from her own perspective, and is a winding and eccentric piece of prose that reads more like the modern stream-of-consciousness style of James Joyce than one might expect from an eighteenth-century novelist.

of authority, a power Charke exercised regularly in her own life.

Beyond the use of performance to craft identity, however, Charke's case is of particular interest here due to her acknowledgment and careful manipulation of her own body as a performing object. A notorious cross-dresser, Charke spent some time manipulating her physical identity in order to present herself as Mr. Brown. Charke even acknowledges her own objective status with an opening preface entitled "The Author to Herself" (13), in which she defines herself as two people: the author, and the object of the author's pen. She further describes herself as one of "*the greatest Curiosities* that ever were the Incentives to the most *profound Astonishment*" (13-4). This is important in terms of the way Charke sets up her own identity as a performing object. The term "curiosity" aligns Charke with an object found in a "Cabinet of Curiosity." Cabinets of Curiosities were collections in which objects of interest were displayed for the amusement or edification of their visitors. The size varied, as did the focus of the collection. Sometimes the objects found inside were "authentic," sometimes they were not. Cabinets that were open to the public usually leaned toward the titillating and fantastic, thereby wooing prospective visitors with promises of wonders and horrors in equal parts. As Arthur MacGregor notes in *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, "on any index of rarity (or curiosity), the common or everyday attracted little or no attention, while the exotic, the arcane or the abnormal were excessively prized" (44).²⁶ By using this phrase as an introduction, Charke invites people to look at her as an object of fascination and intrigue. She sets herself up as something astonishing and curious—something that demands observation, study, and dissection—while inciting a reaction in her audience.

²⁶ For more information on Cabinets of Curiosities, see Arthur MacGregor's *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, or Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor's *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe*.

Charke then, in her own presentation of self, sees her performing body as a material object to be manipulated and put on display for an audience.

It is not surprising that a person who presented her own body as a kind of manipulatable object on display, and who had such strong family connections with the theatre, would be interested in puppet shows. In 1737²⁷ Charlotte Charke became so enamored of marionettes and the puppet theatre that she purchased puppets and opened her own puppet show. In her *Narrative* she gives a few details about the endeavor:

For some Time I resided at the *Tennis-Court* with my Puppet-Show, which was allowed to be the most elegant that was ever exhibited. I was so very curious, that I bought Mezzotinto's of several eminent Persons, and had the Faces carved from them. Then, in regard to my Cloaths, I spared for no cost to make them splendidly magnificent, and the Scenes were agreeable to the rest. (70)

The language here certainly reveals the pride Charke had for her puppets, as well as the lengths to which she was willing to go to give her puppets "real" qualities, such as purchasing expensive clothing for their costumes. The fact that she had her puppets' faces carved to resemble living people is especially interesting (and disturbing), once again illustrating the connection between the mechanical puppet body and the live human body in her perspective. It also reveals the possibilities puppets offered for satire; Charke comments that her puppets were sculpted to look like "eminent persons," but does not specify who, exactly, was the recipient of such an honor. Given her tendency to work in theatres known for satire, comedy, and farce, it is exceedingly

²⁷ Interestingly, Charke worked with Fielding not long before opening her puppet show. Julie Park, in *The Self & It: Novel Objects in the Eighteenth Century*, even draws a connection between Charke's puppet theatre and her work with Fielding, noting that, "when the Licensing Act forced Fielding to leave the theater world altogether, Charke lost an employer" (174). Seen this way, the Licensing Act becomes the catalyzing force for both Charke's and Fielding's puppet shows.

likely that the goal was to parody these “eminent persons,” not promote them.

Charke’s puppet show opened in March 1738 in the theatre above the Tennis-Court in James Street, which she advertised as “Punch’s Theatre” (Speaight 103). Charke chose plays for her puppets that were staples on the theatrical stage and were normally performed by live actors, including several plays by Fielding.²⁸ One of her most successful strategies was to cast the puppet Punch in one of the roles, such as the Mock Doctor in Fielding’s play of the same name or Falstaff in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*. Two plays marked her puppet theatre’s debut; one was a version of Shakespeare’s *King Henry VIII* and the other was *Damon and Phillis*, a play written by her father, Colley Cibber. The use of Cibber’s play enacted yet another connection between live and puppet bodies, as it was concurrently running with live actors at the Drury Lane theatre. In this way, the puppets were not simply putting on a spectacle meant for puppet actors, but were also infiltrating roles normally assigned to live humans. Since it is likely that audience members were familiar with both productions, her puppet actors were haunted by the living bodies of other actors that had played these same roles on the larger stages in what Marvin Carlson, in *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*,²⁹ calls “ghosting.” As he describes the phenomenon, ghosting “presents the identical things they [the audience members] have encountered before, although now in a somewhat different context” (7). In this case, the audience must negotiate between two identical characters, but two very different bodies.³⁰ Of course, the theatre always requires the actor’s mediation of character, but the puppet bodies and their

²⁸ According to Jurkowski, these included *The Covent Garden Tragedy*, *The Old Debauchees*, or *the Jesuit Caught*, and *The Mock Doctor*, among others (*History* vol. 1 187).

²⁹ Even the use of the phrase “memory machine” in Carlson’s title calls attention to the theatre as a space of mediation between man and machine.

³⁰ Depending on whether or not any actors served as models for the carved faces of Charke’s puppets, it is possible the live body and the puppet body would even bear the same face.

juxtaposition with live bodies forces this relationship to become visible rather than remaining in the invisible wings of the actor's (or puppeteer's) craft. Essentially, juxtaposing the live body and the puppet body performing the same character calls attention to the artist—the actor or puppeteer who is “pulling the strings.”

Charke goes even further in addressing the connection between live bodies and puppet bodies when she reveals her desire to excuse the puppet show's poor financial showing.³¹ As she notes:

This Affair stood me in some Hundreds, and would have paid all Costs and Charges, if I had not, through excessive fatigue in accomplishing it, acquired a violent fever, which had like to have carried me off, and consequently gave a Damp to the Run I should otherwise have had. (70)

It is interesting here that Charke emphasizes the failure of her own physical body as the cause behind the failure of the mechanical bodies onstage. Charke implicitly makes a connection between her own living body as the puppet-master, or author of the creative endeavor, and the mechanical bodies of the puppets, as part of the creative product. For Charke, then, the failure of the mechanical bodies on the stage is directly tied to a failure in her live body. This is not metaphorical; the connection between her living body and the performing mechanical bodies is quite literal. This illustrates once again the authority granted to the living body of the author as the mediating substance in the man-machine relationship during the eighteenth century. Because the creative process was mediated through her own live body³² and not through the mechanical

³¹ She remarks that the total cost of the puppets was “near five hundred Pounds” and that she sold the entire endeavor for “twenty guineas” (73).

³² Literally, in this case, since Charke did not just own and manage the puppet show—she was also one of its principal performers.

bodies, the mechanical bodies could not succeed in charming the audience when the living body failed—there was no mediating force to act between the mechanical bodies of the puppets and the live bodies of the audience. In this subtle way, Charke scripts the plasticity of her own body as the medium through which she retains (or does not retain) creative authority, and through which the creative product succeeds or fails.

Julie Park also emphasizes this connection, at least in terms of Charke's relationship with her puppet show, in *The Self and It: Novel Objects in Eighteenth-Century England*. Remarking on Charke's fascination with the puppets, Park notes, "these details of Charke's career as a puppeteer, with its emphasis on mimesis, the mediation of character and voice through an inanimate object, and the human world in miniature, reflect the crucial terms of her own life, both in writing and living it" (175). For Park, Charke's manipulation of her puppets serves as a metaphor for her other performative endeavors. As Park argues, Charke uses both the puppets and her *Narrative* (which Park describes as a different kind of puppet) as a "medium of self-formation" (175). This implies that the external puppets somehow mediate Charke's "self." Instead, I would argue that Charke used her own body as a medium for self-formation. Rather than "the mediation of character and voice through an inanimate object," Charke mediates the character/voice she wants to project and the material mechanical body of the puppet through her own living body. Her modulated voice, her precise and altered movements, and her physical body become the site on which these two elements—character and mechanical body—meet and combine to become living performance.

By juxtaposing the mechanical bodies of the puppets with the live bodies of actors, both Fielding and Charke ultimately foregrounded the relationship between man and mechanism as something that is actively negotiated on the stage. Further, in both cases it is assumed that the

live body would retain agency as the primary authority over the creative endeavor. Given the philosophical precedent to conceive of the living body as a kind of machine, and attempts like Charke's to make her puppets as life-like as possible, it is unsurprising that interest in another type of mechanical body—the automaton—would also flourish during the eighteenth century.³³ Several notable figures attempted to actually fashion a real “human machine” by artificially replicating the processes and mechanisms of human life, both inside and out. These mechanical marvels became not just objects for scientific study, but also objects for display, gathering large crowds of spectators who wanted to watch the automatons perform. One such figure who encountered early success was Jacques de Vaucanson, who presented his mechanical creations around the same time that Fielding staged his *Author's Farce* and Charke debuted her puppets.

Vaucanson's first public exhibition of an automaton, a shepherd (modelled on a statue of a faun) playing a flute, premiered in 1738 to general acclaim. The mechanism showcased a full human form moving its fingers to cover and uncover the holes on the musical instrument. In order to get his automaton to work, Vaucanson based the artificial functioning of the machine on the biological functioning of the human breathing apparatus. The automaton actually breathed; it was built with a working diaphragm that expanded and contracted to take in and expel air, thus creating the force necessary to produce sound. While others before Vaucanson had created automaton musicians, the music was generally piped in. In contrast, Vaucanson's flute playing

³³ Automaton were not, of course, a new phenomenon in the eighteenth century. As previously discussed, Descartes had already encountered sophisticated automatons in the Saint-Germain-en-Laye pleasure gardens. References to automatons, moving statues, or clockwork people/animals go back even further. John Cohen, in *Human Robots in Myth and Science* traces the evolution of automatons from Greek myths, such as Hephaestus's self-moving metallic beings built to aid him in his smith and Daedalus's moving statues, through stories of the homunculus and the golem. Adelheid Voskuhl, in *Androids in the Enlightenment: Mechanics, Artisans, and Cultures of the Self*, also traces the automaton back to antiquity, and spends time discussing the works of Hero of Alexandria, who wrote two treatises, *Pneumatica* and *Automata*, which described “examples of technical-mechanical displays of human action,” including “two automaton theatres” (27-8).

automaton was a truly active participant; the automaton actually played the music. The mechanical fingers provided the seal on the holes of flute and moved with uncanny dexterity to play a selection of songs. When he ran into difficulty getting the seal between the fingers of the automaton and the flute tight enough to create the proper pitch, he decided to have a glove-maker cover the mechanical fingers of the machine with leather.³⁴ As Vaucanson remarks in his “Le mécanisme du flûteur automate”: “Chaque bout de doigt est garni de peau, pour imiter la molesse du doigt naturel, afin de pouvoir boucher le trou exactement” (11).³⁵ This small bit of organic material—the leather “skin”—meant that, even if the automaton had no way to access the information, there was a tactile organic mediation between mechanical flute and mechanical finger. In a sense, this piece of once-living tissue facilitates the relationship between the two mechanical objects (the finger of the automaton and the flute) in order to produce art in the form of music for living spectators.

In a manner almost opposite to Weaver’s use of the idea of mechanical man to improve the living body, Vaucanson used the idea of the living man to improve the machine body. This was one of the first real attempts to construct a mechanical human that worked internally in a manner as similar to that of a live human body as possible. As Adelheid Voskuhl notes in *Androids in the Enlightenment: Mechanics, Artisans, and Cultures of the Self*, “The mechanical sophistication and the verisimilitude of his flute player was unprecedented at the time” (30). Vaucanson’s later experiments with automatons also reflect attempts to simulate the processes of life with varying degrees of success, including a duck that would ingest corn and then, after

³⁴ Gaby Wood remarks in *Living Dolls: A Magical History of the Quest for Mechanical Life* that since “*peau* in French makes no distinction between animal and human skin,” it is merely an assumption that he used animal leather; Vaucanson himself “never specified one or the other” (24).

³⁵ “The Mechanism of the Flute Playing Automaton”: Each fingertip is lined with skin, to imitate the softness of a natural finger, in order to plug the hole exactly (French).

supposedly digesting it, excrete the processed remains.³⁶ Jessica Riskin, in “The Defecating Duck,” suggests that Vaucanson’s automaton was so important that they “set in motion a dynamic that has characterized the subsequent history of artificial life” (99-100). His automaton, however, was not merely for the academic edification of those interested in anatomy and mechanism; he actively displayed his automaton for appreciative audiences. They were, in this sense, performers.

In their advancing ability to mimic human bodies and simulate autonomous behavior, automaton began to anticipate later anxieties over creative agency. Who retains authority, for example, over the flute player’s musical creation? The automaton, as the body doing the actual flute playing, or Vaucanson, as the builder of the automaton? Vaucanson himself upheld the view that his automaton represented *him* as the ultimate creative agent. Vaucanson carefully marketed his automaton to ensure the right people saw them in order to improve his own social and political standing. As Voskuhl observes:

Vaucanson promoted his automata to natural philosophers by organizing shows in the Académie des Sciences and by publishing a manual on the flute player’s internal mechanisms as well as the physical theory underlying them. Doing so, he followed contemporary protocol on improving one’s standing as a natural philosopher and gaining access to the distinguished Académie. (30)

The automaton was, then, a display of Vaucanson’s own authority and skill as a creator. The

³⁶ It should be noted that this was a clever hoax. The duck did not actually digest food; it had a compartment into which the corn would disappear, and another compartment that would “excrete” pre-processed material. Nevertheless, contemporary audiences were fascinated by the duck’s apparent ability to defecate and the implications of mechanical bodies more accurately taking on the processes of life. Discussing Hogarth’s comments on the duck’s digestive process in *Imagining Methodism in 18th-Century Britain: Enthusiasm, Belief, and the Borders of the Self*, Misty G. Anderson notes that the duck’s “apparent ability to defecate, took the automata project to a new level: the ‘event’ was meant to prove that Vaucanson had achieved living process, or at least simulated it, a proposition that raised further questions about what was real, and what was representation” (167).

image used to market Vaucanson's automaton underscores this by presenting three of his mechanical marvels carefully arranged on pedestals for display. They may be life-like in their actions and construction, but these automata are not autonomous. They are referred to as "Vaucanson's Automata" in much the same way that one refers to "Michelangelo's David."

Vaucanson's work falls in a long line of scientific study of the body and human anatomy. The scientific desire to map the senses and the push to understand, explain, and categorize all aspects of the world, including human life, led to a need to better understand human bodies. Building on Renaissance discoveries, the eighteenth century saw major advances in the field of medical science. These medical advancements meant that humanity had a much more complete understanding of the inner mechanisms of the body. The eighteenth-century interest in automata reflects a growing interest in the living body as something that could be taken apart, classified, and understood. During the Enlightenment the human body and the machine body became equivalent objects in many ways. Medical operating theatres, dissectible waxwork bodies, and human automata revealed an underlying assumption that human bodies were, like machines, rationally and scientifically explainable. It is, perhaps, not surprising then that contemporary minds saw parallels between the inner workings of machines and the inner workings of the body.

In 1748 Julien Offray de La Mettrie published his famous *L'homme Machine* (*Man a Machine*). In the essay, La Mettrie notes that there are two different philosophical perspectives on how to explain the soul of man: one focused on "the system of materialism" and one focused on "spiritualism" (1). La Mettrie sided, of course, with the focus on materialism and argued that "To distrust the knowledge we may draw from animated bodies, is considering nature and religion, as two contraries that destroy one another; and consequently 'tis advancing this

absurdity, that God contradicts himself in his different works” (2-3). La Mettrie agreed with Descartes’s assertion that animals could be thought of as automatons—machines—but he went even further by arguing that humans, too, were simply more complex machines and asserting that “the transition from animals to man is no way violent” (23). As he notes:

In general, the form and composition of quadrupeds are very near the same with those of man. There is the same figure, the same composition throughout: with this essential difference, that man of all animals has the most brains, and fullest of windings and folds in proportion to the bulk of his body. (17)

La Mettrie’s claims stirred much controversy and provoked several counterarguments, including Élie Luzac’s “Man More than a Machine,” which called La Mettrie’s tract “wicked and atheistical” right on the title page. Although La Mettrie’s assertions made many uncomfortable, his theories sparked new ideas about the body, its function, and its functionality.

In the arts, these questions about the relationship between live and mechanical bodies prompted practitioners to explore the possibility that human performance could be scientifically dissected and explained. If the body was a machine, then understanding its manipulation could be highly useful to those, such as actors, who made their living through the use of the body. Denis Diderot, for example, in his essay “The Paradox of Acting,” goes so far as to remark that “A great actor is also a most ingenious puppet, and his strings are held by the poet, who at each line indicates the true form he must take” (46).³⁷ Diderot’s conception of a successful actor was shaped by his association with David Garrick, the famed actor, dramatist, and manager of the Drury Lane Theatre, who was also interested in improving an actor’s craft. As Joseph Roach

³⁷ It is easy to see, here, why Joseph Roach, in *The Player’s Passion*, draws a connection between Diderot’s “mechanized ideal of the actor’s impersonal craft” and the modernist Edward Gordon Craig’s “*übermarionetten*” (157).

remarks in *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting*, Garrick “recommended ‘science’—‘natural, metaphysical, and consequential deductions’ as the actor’s authority” (59), thus overthrowing the traditional repetitive gestures and grand rhetorical vocal stylings in favor of something that would strike the audience as “natural.” On one memorable occasion, he even wore a “fright wig” onstage in a production of *Hamlet*: a mechanical wig that could be manipulated so his hair would literally stand on end in order “to simulate the precise physiognomy of mortal dread” (Roach 58). Garrick’s acting, with its focus on research, deductions, and precise control of the actor’s body in order to provoke the proper effect, champions the mechanical reconstruction of physical action representing emotional interiority. Although from our modern perspective it is tempting to dismiss “mechanical” acting as “bad” acting, Roach asserts that we must be wary of viewing these desires for human mechanical perfection “with a post-industrial bias against the poisonous engines that have blighted the modern landscape and dehumanized modern relations” (66). Instead, we must recognize that in the eighteenth century mechanical objects “attained the level of exquisitely and uniquely crafted works of art—as delicately beautiful as the most intricate clocks and finest musical instruments of the period” (66). This is quite a powerful statement on the nature of mechanism both in the eighteenth century and in the modern period.

Once again, the emphasis here is on the artist; mechanically crafted movement, like mechanical objects, reveal the creative excellence of skilled craftsmen. While these acting studies used the idea of a mechanical body to improve the performance of a live body, others, such as the well-known inventor Wolfgang von Kempelen, used the actions of live bodies to make the performance of a mechanical body believable. Kempelen’s Turk was one of the best-known automatons of the later eighteenth century, and its popularity would continue well into

the nineteenth century.³⁸ The Turk was built in 1769, and initially toured Europe and America, presented by Kempelen himself (Riskin 120). A mechanical body seated at a low cabinet containing a chess board, the Turk would play an audience member, and often won. It even played (and beat) figures such as Benjamin Franklin and Napoleon (Riskin 120). Before the game, Kempelen went through a series of actions to open all the doors of the cabinet and show the inner mechanisms of the automaton. What makes Kempelen's Turk so interesting is that it was not, in fact, an automaton at all. The Turk was operated by a living human hidden inside the cabinet. In this case, the relationship of the mechanical Turk and his living human co-player was mediated through a very live human body.³⁹ What is even more interesting is that when the trick was finally revealed (not until the mid-nineteenth century), audiences became more fascinated than ever with the Turk. Rather than damping its popularity, the idea that the Turk was not an autonomous machine but a clever hoax actually increased its appeal. As Riskin remarks in "The Defecating Duck," a friend of Kempelen's, Karl Gottlieb von Windisch, asserted that the Turk's "deception" revealed "Kempelen's ability [...] to carry out the fraud," and "did 'honor to human nature'" (120-1). Windisch here sees the deception as the height of a human author's ingenuity; it is evidence of Kempelen's ability to move beyond what he sees as the limits of the mechanical. People were, in fact, more intrigued by a living body succeeding so well at pretending to be a mechanical body than they had been by a mechanical body pretending to be a living chess player.

³⁸ Walter Benjamin brought the Turk to the attention of modern audiences in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History," when he used it as a metaphor to discuss the relationship between theology and historical materialism (253). Again, we have evidence of a direct connection between the conception of the man-machine relationship in the eighteenth century and the modern engagement with the same issue.

³⁹ For more information on Kempelen's Mechanical Turk, see Jessica Riskin's "The Defecating Duck," Gaby Wood's *Living Dolls*, and Adelheid Voskuhl's *Androids in the Enlightenment*.

The fact that a living body could so effectively pass as a mechanical body possibly accounts for the success of another eighteenth-century theatre artist. Not long after Kempelen's Turk made his debut, another eighteenth-century figure's body became a literal and metaphorical sign of the juxtaposition of live and mechanical bodies on the stage. Samuel Foote, a fixture of the eighteenth-century stage, was well-known as a mimic and satirist of some renown. Although in his own time he was often referred to as "the English Aristophanes," his work as a dramatist has historically garnered somewhat less than enthusiastic responses in critical and scholarly circles. Mary Megie Belden, in her *The Dramatic Work of Samuel Foote*, describes how "in his own day Foote was extravagantly praised," but tempers this by immediately remarking, "Such views would not now be maintained by anyone" (167). Samuel N. Bogorad and Robert Cayle Noyes call Foote a "minor dramatist," but "the theatrical caricaturist of his age" in their introduction to the 1973 special edition of *Theatre Survey* on Foote's *The Primitive Puppet-Shew* (2). Similarly, Speaight describes Foote as follows: "an actor and dramatist of minor and limited talents, he was nevertheless a mimic of genius" (110). Like Fielding, then, Foote's work was highly praised by his contemporaries but later fell out of favor for more "serious" works, although scholars such as Jane Moody have more recently reclaimed Foote as "one of the most celebrated personages in mid-eighteenth-century British culture" ("Stolen Identities" 65). Part of the difficulty, especially for today's audiences, lies precisely in the talents for which Foote was best known. He devoted much of his theatrical effort to commenting on and critiquing the foibles of religious, political, and theatrical leaders; Foote mimicked and satirized personages and events familiar to contemporary audiences through his physical gestures and vocal manipulations. Because the jokes rely on people and events now consigned to history, understanding the joke often requires understanding considerable historical context. Regardless, Foote was a force in the

theatre world of the mid-eighteenth century who was centrally involved in important theatrical and aesthetic conversations.

Foote's centrality in the theatrical world was due, in part, to a frightening physical accident. In 1766 Foote was visiting the Lord Mexborough's estate in the country when friends urged him to ride a difficult horse. Foote was, as Beldon observes, "a good boaster but a poor rider" (28). The horse threw him, and Foote's leg, which was broken in two places, required amputation. Out of this tragedy came two surprising benefits. First, the Duke of York (the owner of the horse that had thrown Foote) was so apologetic about the accident that he arranged for Foote to have a special license to perform plays at the Little Theatre in Haymarket during the summer, which gave Foote the ability to present his work through authorized channels. This was a great benefit in this post-Licensing Act moment; Foote had previously been well-known for using creative methods to by-pass the legal restrictions.⁴⁰ Foote subsequently purchased the Haymarket and proceeded to manage the theatrical fare there. Second, the wooden prosthetic limb with which Foote was fitted in place of his real leg caused him to be associated quite literally with the puppets to which he had already been metaphorically connected through his work as a mimic.⁴¹ Fielding, who constantly satirized Foote, called him "Mr. Puppet Fut," and Simon Trefman notes in *Sam Foote, Comedian: 1720-1777*, that Fielding engaged in a lengthy rivalry with Foote through his competing puppet show under the pseudonym Madam de la Nash (31-5). Foote himself adopted the moniker "Captain Timbertoe," according to a contemporary (Belden 29). In any case, after the accident Foote found himself intimately aligned with puppets,

⁴⁰ For example, Foote would sell hot chocolate to visitors, with which they would receive a play, gratis. In this way they were purchasing a drink, not a play—a clever, if dubious, legal loophole.

⁴¹ This is because puppets were, at this time, traditionally made of wood, as was his prosthetic leg—a subject Foote himself would address in his play *The Primitive Puppet-Shew* as I will discuss in a moment.

and he took advantage of this perception in his theatrical pursuits.

Foote cast himself as characters that were lame or elderly in order to capitalize on his wooden leg.⁴² He also began to write plays for himself that allowed him to exploit the prosthetic, including *The Devil Upon Two Sticks* and *The Lame Lover*.⁴³ He had already produced several puppet shows at the Haymarket Theatre “as a cheap means of augmenting his company” (Speaight 111), but in 1773 Foote wrote and produced *The Primitive Puppet-Shew*,⁴⁴ a production that put his dual role as man and puppet center stage. He meticulously marketed the production with puff pieces in several magazines in order to build interest in his “primitive” puppet show. It was advertised in the *London Chronicle* as “a new species of entertainment”⁴⁵ and promised an audience familiar with Foote’s work the possibility of seeing several of their favorite figures lampooned, including the famed David Garrick (Bogorad and Noyes 61-3). For Foote, it appears, the “new species” refers to the puppet itself. An unsigned puff piece in the *Westminster Magazine*, presumably written by Foote, calls his puppets “a new species of creatures, with features so similar to the originals, that you will not know the man of paste-board from the man of nature” (Bogorad and Noyes 63). The puppets are given further description:

The execution of the figures is amazing, and much superior to that first-rate, original

⁴² Beldon notes that Foote’s first performances after the accident included taking the part of “stout old rheumatic Mrs. Cole in his *Minor*” and Peter Paragraph, who was a satirical send-up of the one-legged publisher George Faulkner (29).

⁴³ *The Devil Upon Two Sticks* premiered in 1768 and was not first published until 1778. *The Lame Lover* premiered in 1770 and was published in 1771.

⁴⁴ Although the manuscript was submitted for licensing, the text of *The Primitive Puppet-Shew* was not published in Foote’s lifetime. There are two extant copies, one contained in the Henry E. Huntington Library and one in the Shakespeare Folger Library. Both were finally published in 1973 in a special issue of *Theatre Survey* devoted entirely to *The Primitive Puppet-Shew*. All citations from the text refer to this publication.

⁴⁵ In the *London Chronicle*, January 12, 1773.

pagan puppet-show-man Prometheus.⁴⁶ They are as tall in general as Mr. Garrick,⁴⁷ and none of them less than Mr. Colman.⁴⁸ They likewise strongly resemble these gentlemen in features. We never were so astonished as with the appearance of Mr. Colman's head as it lay on a table. We started at the idea of decollation; but calming our feelings for the fate of the manager, we laughed at the notion of his looking as well with his head off as on. (Bogorad and Noyes 63)

Foote quite clearly associates the novelty of his play with how closely the live and puppet bodies will double. Further, these are not anonymous bodies; the puppets were built with specific people in mind. Garrick, with whom Foote had a public rivalry, is an obvious referent,⁴⁹ but Foote unmistakably tantalizes his audience with the possibility of seeing other public figures so perfectly doubled in puppet form.

As the day of the performance approached, interest in the show reached a frenzy. A reviewer for the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* captured the atmosphere of the opening night of February 15th:

The croud was so great before six o'clock, from the numbers that resorted to the above entertainment, the Haymarket was impassable for above an hour; the doors of the Theatre were broken open, and great numbers entered the house without paying any thing for

⁴⁶ Prometheus of legend was a "master-craftsman who made men from clay" (Bogorad and Noyes 102), further connecting Foote's play to ideas about authorship in relation to constructed bodies.

⁴⁷ Garrick's height (he was not very tall) was commonly the butt of eighteenth-century jokes.

⁴⁸ George Colman (the Elder) was a playwright, essayist, and theatre manager. He managed the Covent Garden Theatre, the rival to Garrick's Drury Lane Theatre. Although he and Garrick had public disagreements, they nevertheless wrote a play together: *The Clandestine Marriage* (1766). In 1761 Colman wrote *The Jealous Wife*, a highly popular comedy that spoofed Fielding's *Tom Jones*. In 1777 he purchased the Haymarket from Foote.

⁴⁹ Current parlance would probably deem them "frenemies." Although Foote often scathingly satirized Garrick, the feud benefited both parties in terms of marketing, and they seemed to have a respect for one another, however grudging. As Bogorad and Noyes note, Garrick even wrote to a friend, Peter Fountain, the night *The Primitive Puppet-Shew* opened: "I hope you will be Entertain'd to Night with Aristophanes – He is a Genius, & ought to be Encourag'd" (67).

their admission. Several hats, swords, canes, cloaks &c. were lost among the mob; three ladies fainted away, and a girl had her arm broke in endeavoring to get into the pit.

(Bogorad and Noyes 69-70)

In spite of this anticipation, the show was not, on this first night, a great success. Thanks, no doubt, to Foote's hype and the audience's agitation, however, we have ample records of what occurred that evening, as several quite thorough reviews appeared afterward.

The show consisted of three main sections: an exordium, a presentation of the play *The Handsome Housemaid, or Piety in Pattens*, and an epilogue or afterpiece involving the arrest of the puppets. Foote himself gave the exordium, which directly addressed the role of the puppet show in the theatre. Noting the "corruption of its original principles," Foote reminded the audience of the long history and ancient connections of the puppet show in order to restore it to its former glory (17), much as Weaver had taken great pains to call attention to pantomime's ancient roots. Foote makes a distinction here between the "primitive" puppet shows—puppet shows who owe their roots to a moment in antiquity and have dramatic excellence as their aim (exactly what this means is not clear)—and what he terms more "modern" fare: the current interest in puppet shows featuring Punch and Joan. This distinction would serve as one of the primary criticisms of the opening night performance; it seems that audiences did not appreciate the loss of their beloved Punch.⁵⁰ A review in the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* remarked, "it seemed as if some of the persons there had come to the theatre, not in hopes of seeing a primitive, but a modern puppet-shew, and that they grew out of temper because Punch, his wife Joan, and little Ben the Sailor, did not make their appearance" (Bogorad and Noyes 69).

⁵⁰ As Bogorad and Noyes note, an advance piece in the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* predicted this outcome, remarking that "if Punch and the Devil are not engaged at Foote's Puppet-Shew, it will certainly be damn'd" (62).

Foote would later address this issue in his revision of the show, but the opening performance focused on his conception of the “primitive” puppet body and how it would be used to create his “primitive” puppet show.

Foote takes great pains in the exordium to outline the historical progression of puppet animation in his explanation for his show. Importantly, his focus is on the relationship between the live body of the puppet’s manipulator and the mechanical body of the puppet. In the early uses of the puppet, he notes, “nothing human was visible, the whole appearance was but a puppet, and whether the voice proceeded from within, or from behind the figure, the difference could not be very essential” (18). The implicit claim here is that the role of the author—the animator of the puppet and interpreter of character—was made invisible by the puppet body. The rhetorical work of the phrase “but a puppet” suggests that this configuration is somehow lesser—“only” a puppet—due to the way it hides the role of the living body, and for Foote, this was only one step in bringing the art form to “puppet perfection” (18). Moving forward, Foote remarks that Livius Andronicus, a Roman author and actor, was so often asked for encores of his performances that he began having “one of his scholars” stand on stage and “declaim the passage” while he himself “would attempt to gesticulate” (18). Foote praises this practice, asserting, “Here, gentlemen, by the separation of the personages, you have the puppet complete; at this period he reached his utmost pitch of perfection, and to that lustre we wish this night to restore him” (18). The difference, of course, is that here the author’s living body actively and visibly works to mediate the story for the audience.

Foote clearly privileges the exposure of the author’s role and the primacy of the live body. This creates a puppet body/human body relationship in which the puppet is simply a sign of the human, doubly emphasized here by the live body (the scholar aiding Andronicus) taking

the role of mechanical body. Foote spends ample time in the exordium describing situations that transgress the boundaries between live body and mechanical body; organic and non-organic matter, human and puppet character traits, and human and puppet bodies are all juxtaposed in an eclectic mix. For example, in one memorable passage Foote gives precise material information about the wood used in the puppet's object bodies:

We have modern patriots made from the box, it is a wood that carries an imposing gloss, and may be easily turned: for constant lovers we have the circling ivy, crab-stocks for old maids, and weeping willows for Methodist preachers: for modish wives, we have the brittle poplar: their husbands we shall give you in hornbeam: for the serenity of philosophic unimpassioned tragedy, we have frigid actors hewn out of petrified blocks; and a theatrical manager upon stilts made out of the mulberry tree: for incorrigible poets, we have plenty of birch, and thorns for fraudulent bankrupts, directors, and nabobs: for conjugal virtue, we have the fruitful, the unfading olive; and for public spirit, that lord of the forest, the majestic oak. (19)

Foote has taken metaphorical jokes here and given them practical material presence. The construction of the body and the construction of the character are equated; the body of the puppet becomes an object that materially doubles an immaterial character trait of the live body it represents. Foote further blurs the line between live body and puppet body by announcing that the audience will not miss the lack of "real flesh and blood of the face" on the puppets because, as he implies, real ladies' faces contain so much paint it is impossible to see flesh and blood there either (18-9). Beyond puppet bodies becoming signs for living bodies, Foote also proposes living bodies as signs of puppet bodies. He even tells a story of a "raw country girl" who cannot tell the difference between puppets and real actors and thinks the puppet actors are actually live

performers and the live actors are actually puppets (19-20). This verbal account of the blending between human and puppet is visually underscored by the fact that it is fully embodied on stage in the person of Samuel Foote himself.

With his wooden leg and celebrity as a mimic, Foote provided an appropriately ironic comment on live and puppet bodies in the theatre, something of which he took full advantage in his presentation of *The Primitive Puppet-Shew*. After the exordium, Foote remained onstage as a kind of master of ceremonies during the performance of the play, *The Handsome Housemaid, or Piety in Pattens*. An obvious send-up of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and other sentimental dramas, *Piety in Pattens* centers on Polly, the young servant girl who is wooed by her master. She is also wooed by the butler, Thomas, who warns her of her master's designs. Although she is eventually offered marriage by both her master and by Thomas, she ultimately refuses both men, because, as she remarks, "I cannot purfur one without afflicting the other. Justice & Gratitude therefore demand as I must not have both, to take—neither" (35 sic). While the narrative story of the play itself may not be remarkably new or original (another source of disappointment for the audience), Foote's physical involvement in the theatrical presentation was quite ingenious. Foote, positioned on the side of the action, would make comments on the play and have side discussions with audience members throughout the performance (some of whom were likely "strategically placed" for effect).⁵¹ The puppet bodies onstage with their insipid mechanical drama were thus mediated by the half-man-half-puppet body of the living Foote for the living audience members in attendance. In this way, Foote became his own "new species," foregrounding of the negotiation between live and mechanical bodies through his own body—a

⁵¹ See Bogorad and Noyes p. 71.

body that represented, in microcosm, the doubling of human and machine.

Rather than presenting a human pretending to be a puppet, Foote thus embodied both the human and the puppet and therefore walked the liminal space between the two. Foote's dual role as a man and as a puppet was explored by Julie Park, who notes, "with his wooden leg, Foote was able to claim anatomical kinship with the very puppets he manipulated and presented onstage" (166). Park sees Foote "interacting with them [his puppets] as an equal" (166). This concept was embraced by Foote himself in the third part of *The Primitive Puppet-Shew*. At the end of *Piety in Pattens*, a constable rushed in and arrested the puppets as vagabonds. This was an interesting echo of Luckless's arrest by a constable at the end of his faux-puppet play, *Pleasures of the Town*, during the third act of Fielding's *The Author's Farce*. As in that play, the "author," Foote, was arrested along with the puppets. Unlike *The Author's Farce*, however, Foote and his puppet performers actually faced judgment. The company was rounded up and sent before the magistrate, Justice Girkin, for punishment. The difficulty was that no punishment would have any effect on the puppets, and, as the reviewer in the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* remarked, "Foote is certainly a fourth part of him a puppet, his left leg being composed of the same materials as his figures," so that the only course of action was to wait "till they can catch his body without his leg, or his leg without his body" (Bogorad and Noyes 37). Foote, like Luckless, thus claimed kinship with both human and puppet bodies, albeit in a much more physically personal manner.

Two satiric prints published not long after the premiere underscored Foote's close association with his puppets in *The Primitive Puppet-Shew*. In February of 1773, *The Macaroni & Theatrical Magazine* published an anonymous print, entitled "Foote, the Devil and Polly Pattens" showing Foote and his puppets joined on stage by the Devil, a Harlequin, and Punch

(see Fig. 3). In March of 1773 an anonymous satirist published a print entitled “Piety in Pattens, or Timbertoe on Tiptoe,” depicting Foote attempting to woo Polly from his own *Piety in Pattens* (see Fig. 4). In the image, Polly stands on a set of “pattens,” small stilts attachable to the shoes in order to keep one’s feet out of mud or, in this case, off of the wet floors she is mopping, as Foote attempts to stand on tiptoe on his right leg, while his left, wooden, leg is held up in the air. In both cases Foote himself is implicated in relation to the characters in his show. In the first, his placement implies that he is on an equal level with the “low” characters depicted around him. In the second, his puppet foot does nothing to raise him off the dirty floors as he places his hand indecently on Polly’s bosom. Although these prints are clearly making a statement about the quality of Foote’s drama in a manner similar to Hogarth’s censure of Cibber, Wilks, and Booth in “A Just View of the British Stage,” they are not solely indictments of Foote’s entertainment; they also implicate Foote himself by foregrounding his body in its dual role as man and puppet. As with Hogarth’s print, this association with the mechanical is a negative one. He is presented not as the author of these creations, but as a character himself, whose body traps him within the confines of the “low” subject matter.

Not only did Foote visibly interact with the characters on stage during *The Primitive Puppet-Shew*, he was also intimately connected with the audience. Although, as previously mentioned, Foote likely had accomplices among the audience members with whom he conversed and argued during the initial performance, the audience’s displeasure with the lack of Punch meant that his engagement with an unhappy crowd became much less rehearsed than planned. At the end of the performance an angry group began to literally tear up the theatre and rip upholstery. Foote’s mediation of the puppets for his audience was an active process; he learned from this performative encounter, and *The Primitive Puppet-Shew* was put on hold as he re-

worked the piece. When it re-appeared on March 6, the show included an additional finale starring Punch, in which Punch and Foote himself argued onstage over the merits of puppetry. According to the review of the lengthened version in the *General Evening Post*, “Punch complained loudly of Mr. Foote’s interfering in his immediate province, without calling for *his* assistance” (Bogorad and Noyes 38). In this way, Foote actively negotiates between Punch’s “modern” puppet show and his own authority as author, using his physical body (which had just been put on trial and determined to be both living and puppet body) to visually emphasize the mediation.

Foote’s *The Primitive Puppet-Shew* marks a transitional moment between Enlightenment era concerns over live versus mechanical bodies and concerns that will become more pressing as we move into the Romantic and Victorian periods. The fact that Foote was not simply a human body pretending to be a puppet body or a puppet body pretending to be a live body but managed instead to simultaneously double as both anticipated territory Sigmund Freud would later outline as uncanny. In addition, Foote openly acknowledged and exploited his body as a commodity, granting himself an object value status that aligned him with a nascent version of the materialist perspective that would shortly be delineated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Foote’s decision to theatricalize an argument with Punch gave the mechanical bodies onstage new authority. The final event of the show, then—Foote, a body representing both live and mechanical status, grappling with the puppet Punch for the ability to retain creative authority over his production—suggests a rising anxiety that the mechanical *could*, in fact, replace the human in matters of creative agency.

The explosion of interest in automatons, puppets, and other mechanical bodies during the Enlightenment in England and across Europe was a sign of evolving concerns about the living

body and its performative representation. The juxtaposition of live and mechanical bodies on the stage became a microcosm for experimentation on the subject of human creative authority, ultimately foregrounding the active role of the live body as the primary medium and mediating force in the relationship between man and mechanism. The mechanical in the eighteenth century was a human invention, a human aspiration, and a human endeavor. Representations of humans becoming mechanical and machine-like were primarily used as a satirical strategy meant to mock human authors over a perceived lack in their creative talent or skill; it had not yet developed into a serious fear that the machines were taking over. Instead, the live body is consistently privileged in the eighteenth-century relationship between live and mechanical bodies. By juxtaposing living bodies and non-living bodies on the stage, Enlightenment artists began the long process of addressing questions of authorship, agency, and creative authority in a world that was just beginning to comprehend the impact of the rise of mechanism in daily life.

Chapter 2: Creation and Consumption: The Uncanny Body on the Nineteenth-Century Stage

“...however skillfully he might propose his paradox, he could never make me believe that more charm might inhere in a mechanical doll than in the structure of the human body.”

~Heinrich von Kleist, “On the Puppet Theatre”

As the end of the eighteenth century approached, the tenor of the conversation about the relationship between man and machine began to change. A tone of wariness and uncertainty crept into the Enlightenment’s optimism over human accomplishment. In 1796,⁵² Charles Dibdin,⁵³ the famous composer and dramatist, published a novel entitled *Hannah Hewit; Or the Female Crusoe*. Modeled on Daniel Defoe’s wildly popular *Robinson Crusoe*, Dibdin’s *Female Crusoe* follows the adventures of Hannah Hewit, who is marooned on an island and uses her wits and ingenuity to survive. Lonely and staving off boredom, she decides one day, while taking

⁵² There is some scholarly contention about the exact publication date. No date is given on the manuscript itself. The British Library provides the date 1792 in brackets in the citation information, and the *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* digitization keeps this denotation; this is the date that is often cited. Maximillian E. Novak notes in “Ideological Tendencies in Three Crusoe Narratives [...]” that Dibdin, in his *The Professional Life of Mr. Dibdin, Written by Himself*, remarked that the novel was published in 1795 (262). Robert Fahrner, in *The Theatre Career of Charles Dibdin the Elder (1745-1814)* also notes that novel was originally published in 1795, although he gives no information regarding the source of this date (149). Carl Thompson, in “The Grosvenor Shipwreck and the Figure of the Female Crusoe: *Hannah Hewit*, *Mary Jane Meadows*, and Romantic-Era Feminist and Anti-Feminist Debate” gives the publication date as 1796 based on advertising notices in the press (14, see note 7 pp. 19), although no specific press notice is mentioned. An advertisement in *The Public Ledger* on April 17, 1796 remarks that “Mr. Dibdin’s Novel. The first week in May will be published, in three vols. [...]” I have used 1796 here as the publication date to align with the press notice.

⁵³ Samuel Foote used some of Charles Dibdin’s music in *The Primitive Puppet-Shew* in 1773, although Dibdin apparently was not overly impressed with the results. In his *The Complete History of the English Stage* Volume 5, Dibdin remarks that the production was “celebrated at that time as the achmé of eloquence, genius, and erudition, but after wards found to be a mixture of historical narrative, abuse against other Theatres, and a promise of excellence at his own, that was never kept” (248). According to Bogorad and Noyes, Dibdin himself presented a puppet show just two years after Foote’s, called *The Comic Mirror*, that clearly appropriated elements from Foote’s piece. Indeed, Dibdin even included a puppet version of Foote, who spoke the exordium Foote presented in *The Primitive Puppet-Shew* (113). Dibdin was thus clearly already immersed in conversations over the relationship between live and mechanical bodies.

apart a time-piece, to build an automaton. Hannah had seen Kempelen's animated "chess player"⁵⁴ before she was marooned, but she determines that simply making a moving automaton like the chess player is "unworthy of her genius" (92). Rather, as Hannah remarks, "I was determined to make an automaton that should speak, and nothing appeared to me more easy" (92). She begins by using a bellows and fashioning reeds "in imitation of the vox-humane" (94), describing how she models the workings of the automaton on the workings of the human body in much the same way Vaucanson modeled his automaton flute player's breathing apparatus on the movements of the human lungs, mouth, and tongue. At first her automaton can only make rudimentary breath-based interjections, crying out, "oh, ah, humph, as correctly as a critic who was asked if he recollected a particular beauty in Shakespeare" (94-5), but eventually she is able to refine the automaton until it can "converse pretty well" (95).⁵⁵ Up to this point her relationship to the automaton is similar to the relationship between creator and mechanical creation in the eighteenth century as discussed in the previous chapter. Hannah's automaton acts as a display of her own skill and learning that gives her purpose and a sense of accomplishment even in her isolation. Hannah's narrative, however, begins to change here at the moment of her mechanical triumph.

Hannah becomes strangely wary of her artificial companion as he is able to better mimic human speech. As she uneasily notes:

⁵⁴Dibdin's invocation of Kempelen is fitting, since Kempelen had been working on a speaking machine for some time. In 1791 Kempelen published *The Mechanism of Human Speech, with a Description of a Speaking Machine*, which included his plans and technical designs for a speaking machine that mimicked the human vocal tract (Broecke 9). It is worth noting that Kempelen's speaking machine was just that—a machine. Although its operation was based on the workings of the lung, mouth, and glottis, it was not meant to look like a body. While the machine's "speech" reportedly sounded like that of a young child, and while Kempelen felt the public's acceptance of the flaws in the speech reproduction was due to their association of the machine with a child, the machine itself was large and not in any way made to represent a person, child or otherwise.

⁵⁵ Daniel Defoe's original Robinson Crusoe has a similar encounter with a parrot he tames and teaches to speak. Crusoe remarks, "at last I taught him to call me by my name very familiarly" (128).

At first I was wonderfully pleased with my contrivance, but there was something so hollow and so ghostly in the sound that, after a time, I grew perfectly shocked at it, particularly at night; and having taught it to say ‘O ow I luv u Anna,’ it spoke, or I fancied it spoke, so much in the tone of John Hewit’s voice, who from a natural dialect pronounced with difficulty the aspiration H, that I began to fear it might introduce a melancholy which would trench upon all those laudable resolutions I had so properly and so firmly made. (95-6)⁵⁶

The automaton, which initially represented Hannah’s ability to create an artificial replacement for human companionship, becomes a source of anxiety simply because it so successfully accomplishes that goal. In fact, the automaton so worries Hannah that she “placed it in a corner of my dormitory, resolving never to use it unless when I could be sure my resolution would be equal to the trial” (96). Rather than seeing her automaton as a sign of her own ingenuity, Hannah feels threatened by it, as if it has its own agency that could, in some way, compromise hers. The use of the word “trial” rhetorically underscores the automaton as an agent in its own right that challenges Hannah; more importantly, it is Hannah’s “trial,” and Hannah who must be equal to the task. The conflict through which Hannah must struggle is an internal battle with herself to retain her sense of control over her creation, rather than the other way around. In other words, the automaton’s agency is not in question; it is Hannah’s own agency—her ability to hold on to the sense of self she has been carefully constructing—that is challenged. This raises some very important questions about the relationship between creator and creation that are specific to the creation of the mechanical body: what does it mean for creative authority and/or authorship if the

⁵⁶ This again mirrors a similar instance in Defoe’s original narrative in which Crusoe becomes startled by the parrot when it wakes him up from a deep sleep by repeating his name. Crusoe remarks, “even though I knew it was the Parrot, and that indeed it could be no Body else, it was a good while before I could compose myself” (168).

creation can claim its own agency? What role does the author play in allowing or providing the possibility for such a claim? Here, it is Hannah that hails her creation as an authority separate from herself.

The incident with the automaton is only a small event in Dibdin's three-volume novel, but it represents an early incident of the discomfort over live versus mechanical bodies that would become prevalent during the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ While Dibdin's novel did not receive high praise,⁵⁸ this incident highlights a transitional moment between the Enlightenment perspective on mechanism as a sign of human skill and the anxious relationship with mechanism that develops during the Romantic and Victorian periods. Hannah's description of the mechanical automaton as "so hollow and so ghostly" raises two important and competing issues central to the concerns over mechanical bodies during this period. The mechanical body's hollowness indicates a coldness or lack of life; something important is missing from this body. Its ghostly quality simultaneously implies, however, that rather than being animated by its artistic author/creator, this body is *already inhabited* by something else, something other; this is

⁵⁷ It also represents an early example of the pairing of mechanical bodies with female bodies, although, interestingly, it inverts what would become a common trope for the presentation of these bodies: a female automaton provoking anxiety in a living male creator. For further discussion of this, see Andrea Haslanger's "From Man-Machine to Woman-Machine: Automata, Fiction, and Femininity in Dibdin's *Hannah Hewit* and Burney's *Camilla*."

⁵⁸ Although recently there has been a push to reclaim *Hannah Hewit*'s place in the development of feminist literature and the tradition of the "female Crusoe" (see, for example, the above-mentioned "From Man-Machine to Woman-Machine: Automata, Fiction, and Femininity in Dibdin's *Hannah Hewit* and Burney's *Camilla*" by Andrea Haslanger, or Carl Thompson's "The Grosvenor Shipwreck and the Figure of the Female Crusoe: *Hannah Hewit*, *Mary Jane Meadows*, and Romantic-Era Feminist and Anti-Feminist Debate"), the novel itself does not appear to have garnered much positive critical attention, as noted by Thompson (14). Ironically, the most common mentions in the press are not reviews but advertisements, probably placed by Dibdin himself, either for *The Female Crusoe* or for Dibdin's other works, that call the piece his "celebrated Novel" (see advertisements in *The Sun*, *The Telegraph*, or *True Briton* (1793) for September 27, 1796) or his "popular Novel" (see the broadsheet, "For one night only. Sans Souci [...]," advertising Dibdin's performance on July 23, 1800). Dibdin also attempted to adapt his novel into a theatrical production. On May 7, 1798, the comic opera version of *Hannah Hewit; Or The Female Crusoe* was presented at the Theatre Royal Drury-Lane as a benefit for Mr. Bannister, Jr. (John Bannister). The theatre's broadsheet advertisement for the performance noted that it was "founded on his Popular Novel." In spite of this promise of popularity, it was a dismal failure, and, as Robert Fahrner notes in *The Theatre Career of Charles Dibdin the Elder (1745-1814)*, Dibdin's *Hannah Hewit* was "neither published nor performed again" (149).

a body in which something additional is already present. Hannah's reaction to her automaton's competing performances—both as something empty and as something already full—causes her to reconceive her own role as its creator. Instead of signaling her own accomplishment, Hannah's automaton signals an ongoing struggle between herself and her creation for agency.

By no means a new issue in the Romantic period, the challenge to artistic and authorial agency was, however, a primary topic of concern for many prominent Romantic figures. Percy Bysshe Shelley, for example, famously declared poets “the unacknowledged legislators of the world” in his “Defence of Poetry” (14). Shelley's comment, and the “Defence” as a whole, stages poets/authors as almost divine figures with the power to shape the world through their ability to shape the minds of those who read their work. This implies a certain kind of control over both the artistic process and the artistic creation. It is somewhat ironic that as England had firmly moved away from the divine right of kings, the major Romantic poets began to subscribe to a kind of “divine right of artists.” The act of creation, be it of a play, a poem, a song, or something else entirely, became infused with connotations of divine authorial agency.

In the theatre, this conversation was carried out in terms of the relationship of the authorial agency of the playwright to the rise of new mechanical stage mechanisms and spectacles. Over the course of the nineteenth century, technological, industrial, and mechanical progress influenced everything from staging and set design to lighting and special effects. As Christopher Baugh notes in “Baroque to Romantic Theatre,” “Extensive use of the discoveries of the Industrial Revolution, such as new scenic pigments, cast iron structures, gas lighting, and limelight, helped project the theatre into the forefront of progress and metropolitan life” (49). While this sense of progress increased the importance of the theatrical production, there was a simultaneous lessening of the importance of the author. In *The Profession of the Playwright*:

British Theatre, 1800-1900 John Russell Stephens notes a decrease in the fees paid to authors for their work, which signaled a shift from “an era when it was possible to sustain a career wholly dedicated to dramatic authorship and a period around mid-century when it clearly wasn’t” (19). Further, Stephens observes a long struggle in the early-mid nineteenth century over copyright. Copyright laws in 1709 and 1814 made provisions for written dramatic texts that were published, but “the disastrous omission as far as the playwright was concerned was that in neither case was any recognition given to dramatic performance” (84). In this way, “once a play was printed the author’s property passed out of his hands into the public domain and he lost or relinquished all further rights to it” (85). The theatre, then, provided an especially troubling challenge to the Romantic valuation of authorship as the work of divinely inspired individual genius when the artistic product claimed, like Hannah Hewit’s automaton, its own agency outside of the author’s domain.

Several of the leading proponents of an author-centered perspective, including Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Lord Byron, among others, tried their hands at playwriting, thereby attempting, perhaps, to counter this perceived threat to authorial autonomy.⁵⁹ In spite of the fact that many of these plays remained in the realm of the closet drama, and most failed to find a theatrical audience in their time, these dramas are often held aloft as examples of the height of the Romantic period’s theatrical output.⁶⁰ Jane Moody

⁵⁹ This development was not unprecedented. In many ways, the conflict between artist and creation recalls Luckless’s struggles in Fielding’s *The Author’s Farce* to retain his authority over his own creation in an artistic milieu that had become obsessed with exploiting artistic (and social) artifices.

⁶⁰ It is important to recognize that while we tend to view the theatrical efforts of these major Romantic poets as “closet dramas,” in many cases they themselves did not necessarily view them as such until it became clear they would not succeed on the stage. For example, Coleridge spent much time in 1797 trying to get Sheridan to produce his play *Osorio* to no avail. It would be fifteen years before the play would finally be produced on stage in a re-worked version entitled *Remorse*. Wordsworth submitted *The Borderers* to the manager of the Covent Garden theatre for performance in 1797, and it was only after its rejection that he mentioned writing specifically for the

describes this phenomenon in *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770-1840*:

In particular, critics implicitly defend the Romantic poet-playwrights for having invented a ‘mental theatre’ consisting of lyrical, experimental tragedies which brilliantly transcend the irrational and capricious desires of mass audiences and the degraded condition of dramatic institutions such as Drury Lane and Covent Garden. The result of this complicity is that Romantic tragedy has remained the unquestioned cultural apex of late Georgian drama, and the closet the definitive location of authentic Romantic performance. Theatres, by contrast, are briskly dismissed as places of noise, dirt, spectacle and unbridled sexual commerce, where Shakespeare was being mangled into opera, and ignorant audiences preferred performing dogs to the pleasures of Sheridan and John Gay. (2-3)

The language here is telling. The popular stage is saturated with the physical and firmly places the theatrical focus on the body’s visceral experience of the production. The “illegitimate” theatre is thus portrayed as a feast for the bodily senses—sight, smell, sound, touch—which the “legitimate” theatre should transcend.

Although they were derided by the leading intellectual figures of the Romantic

closet (Kauvar and Sorenson 14). Shelley also intended his play, *The Cenci*, for performance at Covent Garden, and remarked in a letter to Leigh Hunt that it “was certainly not inferior to any of the modern plays that have been acted” (Parker 180-3). Shelley sent a letter to Thomas Love Peacock to ask for his help getting the play staged, remarking that his only reservation about whether or not it would “succeed as an acting play” rested on a concern over the audience reception of the incest in the piece (Parker 182). *The Cenci*, however, did not appear on stage until 1886. *Osorio/Remorse*, *The Cenci* and *The Borderers* have all been roundly criticized for their unfitness for the stage and the lack of theatricality in form and content. In “Byron’s Stage Fright: the History of his Ambition and Fear of Writing for the Stage,” David V. Erdman convincingly argues that Byron’s early theatrical endeavors were fully meant to be performed, and that his well-documented “horror of the stage” (220) and his focus on “mental theatre” (231) only manifested after he learned of the failure of his play *Mariano Faliero* (243).

movement,⁶¹ the mechanical spectacles of the popular stage did develop a theatrical audience. Rather than suggesting that these productions were popular *solely* due to the entertaining appeal of the spectacle or due to their exploitation of physical excess, I would like to suggest that the popular theatrical spectacles were interesting to audiences because they embraced both the mechanisms of the new era and the embodied realities of the live performers on stage. Rather than divorcing the body from both mind and mechanisms to reassert an outdated notion of authenticity, authority, and authorship, the popular stage began the long work of presenting the body and machinery in a constant performative negotiation, thereby reflecting and engaging with the less stable relationship between human and machine bodies audiences were beginning to encounter in their day-to-day lives.

One Romantic dramatist who did not avoid the relationship between live bodies, mechanical bodies, and human creativity was the German playwright Heinrich von Kleist. In 1810 Kleist wrote a short piece published in the *Berliner Abendblätter* entitled “On the Puppet Theatre” [“Über das Marionettentheater”],⁶² in which he recounts a discussion over the relative value of puppets versus live performers. In the piece, the narrator is surprised to discover that “Herr C.,” a well-known dancer, has been visiting puppet shows. Herr C. responds, “[...] the pantomime of these puppets gave him much pleasure, and suggested in no uncertain terms that any dancer who wished to improve his art might learn all sorts of things from them” (211). In a manner reminiscent of John Weaver’s 1721 *Anatomical and Mechanical Lectures Upon Dancing*, Herr C. proposes that live dancers can improve their craft by paying attention to the

⁶¹ Wordsworth, for example, lamented, “The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse” (Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* xix).

⁶² All quotations are from the translation by Philip B. Miller in *An Abyss Deep Enough: Letters of Heinrich von Kleist*.

movements of mechanical bodies. Where Herr C.'s proposal deviates from Weaver's is in what, exactly, the mechanical bodies have to offer the live dancers. For Weaver, mechanical bodies offer a precise understanding of the dancer's live body; being able to precisely calculate the way, for example, a finger moves will provide the live dancer with the ability to precisely control his own finger. This clearly indicates that such an increase in control equates to an increase in artistic skill. For Herr C., however, it is the puppet's ability to be empty of such precise control and self-examination that provides the physical artistry that artistically trumps the efforts of a live dancer.

This "paradox," as Kleist call it, represents a perspective on the use of mechanical bodies for dancers that both builds on the foundation set in the eighteenth century and is diametrically opposed to it. Rather than focusing on increasing the control a live actor has on his or her own body, Herr C. praises the puppet for its complete lack of self-regulation. Herr C. even goes so far as to suggest that the marionettes do not require a human author to perform their graceful movements; he sees the human manipulation of the marionette's strings as nothing so unique that it could not be handled by rigging operated by the turn of a crank. This does not mean there is no requirement for a human *body*, but it does imply that there is no requirement for a human *author*. Even in Herr C.'s most controversial statements he still acknowledges the necessity of, at the very least, a human arm to turn the crank. The human creative force, though—the human author behind the creative product—could, in fact, be completely absent while the artistic product was being created. This is a powerful and unsettling statement about the relative value of the live body versus the mechanical body in this situation. The live body might still be a necessity, but it is completely divorced from artistic agency, authenticity, or authority. A hand-crank marionette performs through the labor efforts of a human actor (the one turning the crank), but the action

emphasizes the marionette itself—the mechanical body—as the artistic authority.

Instead of mimicking the precise control of a mechanical body to improve the self-control of a human body, Herr C. proposes that a human body learn the art of self-erasure and worldly detachment from a mechanical body. He suggests that puppets have two qualities that make them more graceful than humans, both of which are related to forces with which humans must contend and from which puppets are naturally free. The easiest to understand and the one to which Kleist devotes the least amount of linguistic effort is that of gravity. Puppets, as Herr C. explains, have “the advantage of countergravity” over human actors (214). He continues to observe that:

Puppets, like elves, require the ground only to *touch* on, and by that momentary obstruction to reanimate the spring in their limbs; while we require it to *rest* on, and to recover from the exertions of the dance: a moment which is clearly not dance in itself, and with which there is nothing to be done except to make it disappear by all possible means. (214)

Gravity, then, is an external force that restricts movement and provides a physical barrier with which the human body must contend. This challenges the human as an artist by forcing the dancer to enter a moment that is “clearly not dance” and bringing attention to the limits of the body of the artist. Herr. C. flippantly remarks that many human artists, such as “Madam G—,” would give almost anything “to be lighter by sixty pounds” (214). Note that puppets are not necessarily free from gravity; instead, as Herr C. explains, “the force that lifts them into the air is greater than that which pulls them to the ground” (214). Through this application of counter-gravity, then, the puppets are freed from the necessity of struggling with this external force. The implicit argument, then, is that puppets never face the challenge to their artistry that humans do—they never have a moment that is “clearly not dance.” Humans, by contrast, must constantly

contend with this external demand upon the body, which means that the body becomes the site where the mediation between art, the laws of physics, and the demands of the flesh must be negotiated. The suggestion is that, for Herr C., this mediation necessarily involves the attempt to suppress the live body's material realities.

The second advantage Herr C. states that puppets have over human actors is that puppets are “incapable of affectation” (213). He illustrates this point with two stories. The first one is about a youth on the cusp of adulthood who is beautifully graceful until he becomes self-aware and self-conscious. The other is about a fencing bear who defeats Herr C. in a match because the bear does not feint (or succumb to feints) and all of his moves are in earnest. The point is, of course, that the self-awareness and self-reflection found in the adult (versus the child or the bear) challenges pure effective expression. This is supported by another of Kleist's short pieces, “On Thinking Things Over: A Paradox” [“Von der Überlegung”],⁶³ in which he asserts that an athlete must, in the moment, act without self-reflection, and that it is only later—after the moment of contest—that he can stop and think about his actions. As he observes, if an athlete in the middle of wrestling match “begins to calculate which muscles to contract and which limbs to move in order to throw him [his opponent], he will always draw the short straw and be thrown himself” (217). Once a person has “eaten of the tree of knowledge” (“On the Puppet Theatre” 213), he or she is no longer able to move without an inner restraint—an inner force of self-consciousness that restrains bodily movement and restricts embodied grace.

In this way, Kleist's Herr C. outlines two major forces with which human bodies must contend—an internal force (self-consciousness) and an external force (gravity). When the puppet

⁶³ Published in *Berliner Abendblätter*, 10 December 1810. Citations are from the translation by Philip B. Miller found in *An Abyss Deep Enough: Letters of Heinrich von Kleist*.

manages to erase its internal force (its self-awareness and self-consciousness) and its external presence in the world (its subjectivity to the laws of physics and requirements of the flesh), this particular erasure leads to unconstrained, uncontrolled movement that traces “nothing less than the path of the dancer’s soul” (212). The paradox of the puppet, then, is that such a thorough erasure of those qualities that seem to belong most to the realm of the human can somehow equal something that is, in Herr C.’s opinion, so perfectly representative of human beauty and grace.

By contending with these internal and external forces, the body becomes a mediating mechanism—not of machinery, necessarily, but of the soul’s striving toward grace as achieved through artistic creation. In this case, the non-live human body is able to more perfectly generate the desired outcome: creative perfection, perfect grace, and perfect expression, through material means, of the purity of the soul. Kleist’s alignment of the body, mind, and soul echoes his contemporaries’ association of the Romantic author with the divine, but it is the mechanical body, not the human body, that achieves a perfect relationship to the divine and perfect grace, as manifest in the works that body can produce. This is an important challenge to human authorship, as it divorces the idea of the expression of the soul from being solely the domain of the human. Further, the human body’s creative product is viewed as flawed in comparison to the mechanical body’s creative product, as the mechanical body can allow an expressivity not subject to the flesh’s vulnerabilities. These struggles for the soul are layered onto struggles for agency, and it is easy to see how this narrative—that a non-live body is valued above a live body, here primarily meant in a metaphorical fashion—might be easily picked up by those who found themselves confronted with the more literal mechanisms of rising consumer culture. It is also easy to see how those who felt their own bodily agency was being subsumed by new technologies and ideas might latch on to the overarching narrative of a live body being compared

unfavorably to a mechanism or mechanical body as an appropriate expression of these new anxieties.

This kind of doubling of live and mechanical bodies found its greatest nineteenth-century expression in the rise of gothic genre, and the discomfort caused by this doubling would shape modern anxieties over how humanity, and, more specifically, the human body, would relate to new mechanisms. The burgeoning gothic genre offered many opportunities for artists to map these anxieties more directly onto the juxtaposition of live bodies and mechanical bodies or mechanisms. In literature, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus* (1818) saw an inventor who, lamenting his success in creating a constructed human, ultimately ran away in fear of his creation and the horrible agency it assumed outside of his control. ETA Hoffmann, the darling of the gothic genre, wrote several short stories featuring automatons or constructed humans whose agency caused trauma and anxiety. For example, in his famous story "The Sandman" (1817), the narrator Nathanael is terrified as a child by the apparition of the Sandman, who brutally cuts out people's eyes; he later discovers the beautiful Olympia with whom he has fallen in love is actually a mechanical doll and the recipient of a pair of eyes from the Sandman.

The interest in the gothic was not relegated to fiction; the gothic genre provided ample opportunities for stage spectacle as well, thus giving material reality to the highly imaginative characters, exotic locales, and, especially, to the confrontation of live and mechanical bodies. A number of productions based on Hoffmann stories featuring automatons or dolls premiered as the nineteenth century neared completion, allowing for the gleeful doubling of live and mechanical bodies on the late nineteenth-century stage.⁶⁴ In addition to being spectacularly theatrical and

⁶⁴ *Le Contes Fantastiques d'Hoffmann*, a play by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, played at the Odeon Theatre in Paris in 1851 and was seen by Jacques Offenbach (Traubner 72); it would later form the basis of his opera *Tales of*

good material for engaging the interest of general audiences, Hoffmann's work provided much fodder for a public that was clearly titillated by the prospect of objects and mechanisms suddenly coming to life. One such adaptation, an opéra comique by Edmond Audran and Maurice Ordonneau entitled *La Poupée*, premiered on October 21, 1896 at the Théâtre de la Gaîté in Montparnasse. Using Hoffmann's "The Sandman" as inspiration, the piece tells the story of Lancelot, a young monk who wants nothing more than to eat and be lazy with his brothers in the monastery. Lancelot's uncle, who is very wealthy, will not allow Lancelot to have any money unless Lancelot gets married. Lancelot's brethren concoct a scheme to allow Lancelot to pretend to marry and therefore inherit the money, thereby allowing the monastic brothers extra funds for food. The plan is to have Master Hilarius, a local "inventeur d'automates perfectionnés" (9),⁶⁵ make a mechanical doll version of a woman; Lancelot will then trick his uncle by pretending to marry this automaton. The plan goes somewhat awry when Hilarius's real daughter, Alesia, pretends to be the automaton, and Lancelot, unable to tell that his bride to be is truly a flesh-and-blood woman and not a mechanical doll, marries her. After many revelations and reversals, the piece ends with happy declarations of love and the marriage of Lancelot and Alesia legitimated

Hoffmann, which premiered in 1881 at the Opéra-Comique in Paris. *Tales of Hoffmann* included an act centered on the doll Olympia from Hoffmann's "The Sandman" as well as acts invoking Hoffmann's "The Cremona Violin" and "The Lost Reflection." Well received, the production had several remounts in Paris by the end of the century, as well as productions in other countries around the world, including Italy, Germany, the United States, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Mexico, Argentina, and Russia, and it is frequently revived today. The popular opéra comique *La Poupée de Nuremberg* by Adolphe Adam was performed at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris in 1852, and its popularity continued through the next few decades; it was performed over 100 times in the following 18 years. In 1870 Léo Delibes's ballet *Coppélia*, based on Hoffmann's "The Sandman," opened at the Théâtre Impérial l'Opéra in Paris. The ballet has enjoyed wide popularity since its initial premiere; it has been performed all over the world, and is still a staple of the ballet repertoire. In 2013, *Coppélia* was performed by digital avatars in the online digital world Second Life by the Little Princess Ballet Academy; in this way it has remained relevant not only for ballet companies, but also for discussions of the human relationship with mechanical, and now digital, technologies in the creation of art. *The Nutcracker*, Tchaikovsky's ballet based on Hoffmann's *The Nutcracker and The Mouse King*, opened in 1892 at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. Although its initial production was less well received, *The Nutcracker*, like *Coppélia*, has since enjoyed immense popularity with audiences worldwide.

⁶⁵ A local "inventor of sophisticated automatons." All French citations are from the Libretto published by the Librairie Théâtrale, 1896. All English translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

by the approval of their respective relatives.

In spite of mixed reviews, the opera ran for 121 performances in Paris (Traubner 95), and received an English translation by Arthur Sturges that premiered at the Prince of Wales Theatre in London in February of 1897. The London production ran for 576 performances—a spectacular run for this time period. The English translation also made its way across the Atlantic to premiere on Broadway exactly one year after its Paris debut. It would later form the basis of Ernst Lubitsch’s popular 1919 film, *Die Puppe* (The Doll), which makes it an important precedent for the modern engagement with these issues. While the play invokes the anxieties over the threat posed by mechanical bodies to human bodies and human authority that are clear in Hoffmann’s original tale, it purposefully stages live bodies as the primary medium and mediating force in the relationship between man and machine in order to reassure audiences of the ultimate authority of the human domain.

The juxtaposition of live and mechanical bodies is established very early in the play as a central narrative feature. Describing his plan to trick Lancelot’s Uncle, Father Maximin shows Lancelot the description of Master Hilarius, the automaton maker, as it is given in a newspaper advertisement. He reads:

Maître Hilarius [...] a surpassé l'inventeur Vaucanson... celui-ci fabriquait des automates auxquels il ne manquait que la parole! Maître Hilarius a réalisé la poupée parfaite qui marche et parle comme créature humaine. Ou s'arrêtera l'esprit inventif des hommes, ô mon Dieu! (9)⁶⁶

This description of Hilarius’s work puts the piece into an immediate dialogue with

⁶⁶ “Master Hilarius [...] has surpassed the inventor Vaucanson... that one manufactured automatons that lacked speech! Master Hilarius has realized the perfect doll that walks and talks like a human creature. Where will the inventive spirit of man stop, oh my God!”

Enlightenment conversations about the relationship between man and machine. Just as Charles Dibdin, one hundred years earlier, introduced Hannah Hewit as surpassing Vaucanson's work with automatons by adding speech, so, too, does Audran script his master craftsman's skill as moving beyond the work of eighteenth-century automaton makers. While this might suggest that Hilarius would represent a new perspective on the relationship between live and mechanical bodies, Audran instead appropriates an Enlightenment perspective on the issue by presenting mechanical bodies as indicative of the skill of live authors/creators.

Hilarius's skill, like Hannah's, has advanced to the point where he himself cannot tell the difference between his creations and the real human beings on which they are modeled. As Hilarius talks with his assistant Josse in the second act, we learn that the pinnacle of the craftsman's work are two mechanical automatons made in the image of his wife and his daughter.⁶⁷ The resemblance between the mechanical bodies and the live bodies is so perfect, that Hilarius remarks, "Je les ai faites à l'image de ma fille et de ma femme, et leur ressemblance est si grande, Josse, qu'un jour je me mis à modeler le nez de ma propre femme, croyant retoucher celui de son Sosie..." (17).⁶⁸ Here, Hilarius mistakes his living wife for his automaton, and attempts to "perfect" the live nose to be more like the artificial nose. In this case, the mechanical body becomes the template to which the live body must be constructed. The slippage goes in the opposite direction as well, as Hilarius goes on to remark, "Une autre fois, c'est le contraire qui m'est arrivé, j'ai fait prendre à ma poupée, Alésia, de l'huile de ricin que le docteur

⁶⁷ The fact that the mechanical bodies that are created, bought, and sold in the play are female bodies is certainly relevant; any threat posed by these mechanical bodies to the authority of their owner/creators would thus be amplified by the socio-political power hierarchies of the Victorian era that similarly figured women as property to be bought and sold by men.

⁶⁸ "I have made them in the image of my daughter and my wife, and their resemblance is so great. Josse, that one day I began to shape the nose of my own wife, believing I was retouching that of her Double." The capitalization of "Double" in the same manner as a proper noun is in the published text.

avait ordonné à ma fille...” (18).⁶⁹ Here he attempts to administer medicine to the automaton that was meant for his ailing living daughter. Clearly, he felt the automaton looked like a body that needed castor oil. These misrecognitions certainly raise the specter of Hannah’s automaton and its ability to claim its own agency outside of her human control, but unlike Hannah, who finds this slippage between the live and the mechanical disturbing, Hilarius finds such mistakes... well... hilarious. The automatons and their perfect likenesses to their living counterparts do not develop their own agency outside of Hilarius’s sense of himself—they do not challenge his authority—instead they are, for him, an indication of his personal skill.

Like Hannah’s anxieties over her speaking automaton, which occurred in the shadow of Kempelen’s plans for a speaking machine, Hilarius’s speaking automatons were born in the wake of yet another leap forward in aural recording and reproduction. In 1877 Thomas Edison’s phonograph became the first device that could both record and play back sound.⁷⁰ Edison soon began to imagine the commercial applications for his device, and quickly developed a “talking doll.”⁷¹ By 1890, the first of Edison’s widely anticipated “talking dolls” went on the market. While dolls that could speak a limited range of words (“mama” or “papa,” for example) and toys that made sounds (such as a frog that croaks) had been on the market for decades, the difference with Edison’s talking doll was that, based on the designs for the phonograph, a recording of a young girl could be made saying any number of things that could then be played back through the doll’s body. Its speech, then, would not only reflect human speech more perfectly, but it

⁶⁹ “Another time, the opposite happened to me, I did take to my doll, Alesia, the castor oil that the doctor had ordered for my daughter.”

⁷⁰ Edison was certainly not the first to experiment with sound recording and reproduction. See Chapter 8 of Neil Baldwin’s *Edison: Inventing the Century* for a discussion of early experiments in sound recording and reproduction and Edison’s successful phonograph (76-86).

⁷¹ Paul Israel notes in *Edison: A Life of Invention* that “Edison had originally proposed the use of the phonograph for toys in 1877,” and he briefly traces the progression of the idea from its early days to its manufacture in 1889 (288).

would *be* human speech recorded and played back (rather than speech that was never human, but was mechanically produced through gears, springs, and other artificial means). It would, in fact, be human speech *mediated* through a mechanical body.

As with Hannah's automaton, the re-creations of the sound produced by these mechanical dolls were haunting and quite disturbing. One customer described them as "little monsters" (Formanek-Brunell 129). The doll stared, glassy-eyed, as a voice, both emanating from within that small body and entirely disconnected from that body's own facial and vocal tract,⁷² recited a poem such as "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" or "Mary Had a Little Lamb."⁷³ Edison's doll in action provides a physical and real-world representation of Hannah Hewit's concern over her automaton's body that was both so "haunted" and so "hollow." The vacant eyes and puppet-like wooden limbs of Edison's talking dolls seem in direct contradiction to the forceful, almost belligerently bold recitation of a child's poem.⁷⁴ In this way, Edison's talking dolls represent exactly the anxiety that comes to define this moment: both the fascination with and the disturbing fear that this mechanical body could take human life and mediate it to a point that it becomes decidedly "un-human" and unrecognizable.

In spite of public excitement over the new dolls in advance of their release, they quickly became a commercial failure. While some of the commercial failure of Edison's talking doll might be attributed to its disturbing and imperfect embodiment of human speech, the product

⁷² While a crank connected to the sound cylinder was turned on the doll's back, the lips and throat did not move; indeed, the entire face was immobile.

⁷³ In *Edison: Inventing the Century*, Neil Baldwin remarks of the doll's production: "One entire wall was taken up with partitioned stalls occupied by young women whose sole responsibility was to spend the working day making cylinder recordings of 'Mary Had a Little Lamb,' 'Jack and Jill,' 'Little Bo Peep,' and other rhymes and stories" (196).

⁷⁴ It is possible to listen to the recordings today through digitized versions on the National Park Service website for the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in New Jersey (<https://www.nps.gov/edis/learn/photosmultimedia/hear-edison-talking-doll-sound-recordings.htm>). There is a definite incongruity between the human voice emanating from the doll and the small, female body the doll was supposed to represent.

primarily owed its failure to its fragility. The high cost of the doll was not substantiated by the quality or longevity of the product.⁷⁵ The dolls were easily broken; the mechanism that provided the sound playback was easily damaged in shipping and/or when small hands played with the toy.⁷⁶ The fragility of these speaking machines is mirrored in Audran's comic opera, and the frailty of Hilarius's automatons provides both the primary dramaturgical conflict of the comic opera and the primary means of soothing anxieties over the possible dangers of a new relationship between man and machine.

Before Lancelot goes to Master Hilarius's workshop in *La Poupée*, we learn that Hilarius's daughter and wife have accidentally broken the automaton versions of themselves as they tried to dress them in clothes they had prepared. As Madame Hilarius remarks to Josse, "il y a trois jours, en voulant leur mettre les toilettes que nous leur avions préparées... Crac... Elles tombent de leur planchette, et se brisent en mille morceaux..." (20).⁷⁷ Worried about Hilarius's reaction to the destruction of his prized inventions, Madame Hilarius and Alesia decide to pretend to be the automatons until they can get another craftsman in to fix the broken dolls. In this way, the fragility of the dolls provides the conflict that necessitates the juxtaposition of live and mechanical bodies. While on the surface it may seem that this sequence of events would thus

⁷⁵ The dolls cost about \$10 each undressed and upward of \$12-\$20 dressed, depending on the costliness of the costume (*New York Tribune* "Edison's Talking Dolls" April 20, 1890). Bill Klinger, a founding member of the National Recording Preservation Board of the Library of Congress, remarks in the general FAQ about the dolls on the National Park Service website, "According to the Federal Reserve Bank's Consumer Price Index, \$1 in 1890 is worth \$26.68 in 2015. Therefore, the \$10 "undressed" Edison Talking Doll (of 1890) might be priced at \$267 today."

⁷⁶ A review in the *Philadelphia Times* published January 2, 1891 describes the fragility of the dolls, and notes, "One dealer, out of the first 200 phonographic dolls he sold, had 188 returned" (Collins and Gitelman 131). In addition, the crank mechanism had no way of standardizing the rotation of the turn, meaning that the vocal playback was seriously altered when turned too fast or too slow—a technical difficulty that contributed to reviews remarking on how hard the recording was to understand.

⁷⁷ "Three days ago, wanting to put the clothes on them that we had prepared... Crack!... They fall off their board, and break into a thousand pieces"

present a live body attempting to subvert its own humanity in order to “become” a mechanical body (the living wife and daughter “becoming” mechanical dolls), the play itself undercuts this position. Rather than extolling the “perfection” of the mechanical body, as Kleist does, Audran presents his mechanical bodies like Edison’s dolls: as fragile, easily damaged, and costly (and difficult) to repair. Importantly, it is the *live* body—the bodies of Alesia and Madame Hilarius—that serves to provide a “patch” in the system until the mechanical body can be repaired. In this way, Alesia and Madame Hilarius are not mediated by their duplicate mechanical bodies; instead the live Alesia and Madame Hilarius mediate the machine bodies and their function in order to protect (they believe) Master Hilarius’s very human ego.⁷⁸

The story works on several levels by playing on apparent dangers possible in human-mechanical relations, but the play sanitizes the unsettling nature of Hoffmann’s original tale by simplifying the relationship of the mechanical bodies to the live bodies. Mechanical bodies are not a physical threat to live bodies in this play. Unlike the original tale by Hoffmann, which sees the gruesome removal of human eyes for the benefit of mechanical bodies, here, mechanical bodies do not subsume or consume live bodies. They also do not challenge a human individual’s agency, and they do not defy human authority. Live bodies instead mediate and manipulate mechanical bodies to their advantage, underscored by the fact that what the audience actually witnesses onstage are live actors embodying the language and movements of the mechanical automatons in order to entertain. Alesia may pretend to be the automaton version of herself, but

⁷⁸ The women learn that Master Hilarius has fallen into a canal and assume that he threw himself in in an attempted suicide after discovering his automatons missing. The audience knows, however, that Hilarius’s myopia has caused him to simply miss the edge of the walk and fall in. It is quite appropriate for this re-telling of Hoffmann’s “The Sandman” that Master Hilarius would have faulty eyes, since the brutal theft of eyes was a focal point of Hoffmann’s story. Whereas Hoffmann’s story saw the inventor stealing human eyes to integrate into his automatons, in Audran’s version it is easy to feel that Master Hilarius should consider integrating mechanical eyes (or, in a less literal fashion, a mechanical apparatus such as eyeglasses) into his own human body in order to improve his eyesight.

she chooses to do so to achieve her own goals; her agency is not subsumed by mechanism just as her body is not ultimately subsumed by machinery.

The social threat the mechanical bodies pose to live bodies in Hoffmann's tale is likewise sanitized in Audran's comic opera. In both stories the slippage between a live body and a mechanical body is presented as obstructing the social expectation of a traditional marriage between two human bodies. It is important to note that, in both instances, it is specifically the specter of the female automaton that provides the obstruction, which places the female body and the reproductive authority it represents at the center of anxieties signaled by the juxtaposition of live and mechanical bodies, a trend that would continue as modern engagements with these issues developed. Whereas Hoffmann's tale upsets traditional social structures when a live woman's desire to be a bride is obstructed by a man's interest in an automaton, Audran instead reaffirms traditional social structures when a young man's desire to use an automaton to avoid marriage is obstructed by a live woman's successful mediation of a mechanical doll. Lancelot's interest in an automaton bride is scripted as naïveté; a product of Victorian anxieties over sexual pleasure, Lancelot has little experience with women and is innocent about sexual relations. When he becomes intrigued by his "mechanical" fiancé and decides he would like to "experiment" with her—he believes this to be harmless since she is a mere machine—the audience is able to delight in the unwitting naughtiness of his desires made less transgressive by the fact that Alesia is real and the knowledge that they will be married. Interestingly, this may be the most transgressive element of the play in this late Victorian context, as it clearly calls attention to the live body's fleshly desires and suggests that sexual pleasure and experimentation are a vital part of human

(not automaton) nature.⁷⁹ The play ultimately emphasizes the live body as the primary medium and mediating force in the relationship between man and machine and removes the threat the mechanical body might represent were it to claim its own agency. Indeed, there is a conspicuous absence of actual mechanical bodies in a play that is supposedly all about mechanical dolls.

In view of the rising concern over new relationships between live and mechanical bodies in the modern period, Audran removes the “haunting” and perfect qualities of the mechanical bodies and instead returns to Enlightenment conceptions of these bodies to present them as signs of human artistry, as tools for human manipulation, and ultimately as fragile bodies inferior to the resilience of live bodies and human ingenuity. That mechanical bodies had to be almost completely suppressed in order to reaffirm middle class values that were beginning to be destabilized in a new modern world surely indicates the level of apprehension they caused; Audran’s piece, however, soothes audience anxieties by returning to earlier conceptions of the relationship between man and machine and by foregrounding mechanical failure and the fragility of mechanical bodies. While the play invokes the dangers presented by the slippage between live and mechanical bodies, it ultimately reassures audiences of the primacy of live human bodies, reclaiming the live body’s role as the primary mediator of human experience while simultaneously reaffirming middle class morals in the manner of conventional nineteenth-century melodrama.

Not only did the theatrical representations of automatons and dolls from Hoffmann’s tales alternately horrify and delight the theatergoing public, they also inspired one of the primary theoretical engagements with the anxieties over the slippage between live and mechanical bodies: the concept of “the uncanny.” Ernst Jentsch’s 1906 essay “On the Psychology of the

⁷⁹ As I will discuss further in Chapter 3, later artists such as F.T. Marinetti and Karel Čapek would go further in connecting sexuality and the body’s role in sexual reproduction to anxieties represented by the juxtaposition of live and mechanical bodies.

Uncanny” and Sigmund Freud’s more widely known 1919 essay “The Uncanny” began the long work of detailing the experience of the uncanny and the elements involved in its creation. Both essays use Hoffmann’s work to illustrate their concepts, and it is certainly relevant that these psychological investigations occurred in a cultural moment that not only included an obvious interest in Hoffmann’s stories in print, but was also saturated by his work as it was staged with bodies in space.

Jentsch’s essay outlines a basic theory about the affective state of the “uncanny” that is associated, for him, with “a lack of orientation” (8). For Jentsch, the person who experiences the uncanny comes into contact with something new, foreign, or hostile; the uncanny effect occurs in the transitional state during which a person attempts to re-orient his world view (and his self-view) to account for this new object, idea, or environment. Jentsch uses the language of mastery when discussing this effect; he begins by describing it as the difficulty of a person to achieve “intellectual mastery of the new thing” (8), and ends his essay with a long paragraph once again asserting the desire to master one’s environment as the primary catalyst for the uncanny effect:

The human desire for the intellectual mastery of one’s environment is a strong one.

Intellectual certainty provides psychical shelter in the struggle for existence. However it came to be, it signifies a defensive position against the assault of hostile forces, and the lack of such certainty is equivalent to lack of cover in that never-ending war of the human and organic worlds for the sake of which the strongest and most impregnable bastions of science were erected. (15)

Importantly, the “hostile forces” against which this “intellectual mastery” is attempting to provide a defense are not solely located in the external environment, although, for Jentsch, the external environment provides the impetus of recognition. Instead, Jentsch argues that one of the

primary terrors of the uncanny effect is the recognition of one's own body as an un-masterable force. A person is forced to acknowledge his own body not as a unified psyche, but as a system of independent mechanical operations, any one of which could, in theory, become suddenly and terrifyingly outside of one's sense of self-control. As he notes, "the dark knowledge dawns on the unschooled observer that mechanical processes are taking place in that which he was previously used to regarding as a unified psyche" (14). In this way, the "uncanny" is aligned with a challenge to a person's sense of agency over *both* one's environment and one's own body.

The challenging entity (both internal and external) is aligned rhetorically with terms of mechanism and mechanical otherness, and Jentsch presents the slippage between live and non-live bodies as one of the primary catalysts of the uncanny effect:

Among all the psychical uncertainties that can become an original cause of the uncanny feeling, there is one in particular that is able to develop a fairly regular, powerful, and very general effect: namely, doubt as to whether an apparently living being is animate and, conversely, doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate. (11)

Paraphrasing this statement in his 1919 essay "The 'Uncanny,'" Freud objects to Jentsch's focus on the slippage between the animate and the inanimate and reductively describes his argument as "intellectual uncertainty" about "the novel and unfamiliar" (221). As we can see from the scope of Jentsch's comments on the uncanny effect, however, his focus on this point was not nearly as exclusive as Freud presents it in his own reading of the uncanny, and many of Freud's comments on the uncanny implicitly, if not explicitly, echo Jentsch's arguments, which makes it useful to consider the two texts together.⁸⁰ Rather than assuming that the impetus for the uncanny effect

⁸⁰ Indeed, reading the two side-by-side, it is difficult to see Freud's analysis as anything other than a deliberate misreading of Jentsch. Julie Park also remarks on Freud's conflicted reading of Jentsch in "Unheimlich Maneuvers:

occurs when something new and unfamiliar is introduced as Jentsch does, I want to take Freud's nuance that the uncanny occurs when something one felt was tamed—part of the known landscape of one's world or one's self (the "home-like" suggested by the German "heimliche")—shows itself to be untamed, wild, and unknown ("un-home-like"). I want, however, to keep Jentsch's suggestion that the self is central to this experience, so that the uncanny effect ultimately involves the unsettling notion that one's own self (both one's intellectual and metaphysical sense of one's self and one's embodied experience of one's self) becomes unfamiliar, untamed, and outside of one's control. While this definition of the uncanny effect does not necessarily require mechanisms or machinery—mechanisms and machinery are not inherently uncanny—it is unsurprising that mechanisms and machinery act as touchstones for those things that represent a challenge to both the self and the familiar. As a symbol of human technological progress, mechanisms act as a sign of what Jentsch might call human mastery over our environment and ourselves. As humans increasingly rely on machines and mechanisms as a foundational part of their experience of the world—the way we have categorized, explained, and controlled the world around us—the possibility that these machines might suddenly reveal themselves to be outside our control is terrifying. In the theatre, this possibility that our control over our own world and our embodied place in that world might be destabilized is not simply a metaphor but a powerful material reality.

Enlightenment Dolls and Repetitions in Freud," noting, "The most inconsistent aspect of Freud's "The Uncanny" is its habit of refuting Jentsch's main ideas, only to recapitulate them at later points in the essay. As Freud's discussion progresses, we begin to lose track of exactly where his ideas diverge from Jentsch's" (59). Freud's own ultimate conclusion does not remarkably differ in its substance; Freud is still presenting the uncanny as a form of disorientation, although he re-classifies the cause in terms of his own psychological taxonomies, attributing the disorientation to the return of the repressed or the return of primitive ideas one has previously dismissed. In fact, Freud's inelegant attempt to frame all aspects of the uncanny in terms of the repressed and his equally inelegant reading of Nathanael's fear of having his eyes stolen by the Sand-man in Hoffman's short story as a fear of castration are heavy-handed, add an explicit gendering to a concept that does not appear to necessitate such gendering, and are far less compelling than Jentsch's explorations of the topic.

There is no better example of the live body becoming frighteningly uncanny through its juxtaposition with a mechanical body than Alfred Jarry's obscenely funny and deliciously vulgar *Ubu Roi* (*Ubu the King*). Premiering on December 9 and opening December 10, 1896 at the Nouveau-Théâtre in Paris,⁸¹ the play presents a much more dangerous example of the pairing of live and mechanical bodies than Audran's *La Poupée*, which was still playing not far away. Loosely re-telling the story of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, along with elements from other tales, *Ubu Roi* is a play that pairs the living and the mechanical to reveal a body in revolt (and a revolting body) in both content and form. The larger-than-life character of Père Ubu, played by a live actor pretending to be a marionette, has become a touchstone for a grossly selfish and grotesque body representing the less savory aspects of the embodied human experience. Scatological references abound; from the infamous opening utterance—"merdre!" ("shitsky!")⁸²—ingestion, mastication, digestion, and excretion take center stage in all of the

⁸¹ *Ubu Roi* was produced by the Théâtre de l'Œuvre. The exact date(s) of the performance(s) and the sequence of events for the production of *Ubu Roi* are surprisingly contentious topics. As Thomas Postlewait points out, there is some disagreement "on the date of the production and the number of performances" (66). While some, such as Roger Shattuck in *The Banquet Years*, mark the premiere as occurring on December 11, 1896 (206), others, such as Harold Hobson, in *French Theatre Since 1830*, place the date of the opening on December 10, 1896 (22). To add further to the confusion, some scholars report one performance (such as the above-mentioned Shattuck and Hobson), while others report two, occurring on December 9 and 10 (with no performance on the 11th). As Postlewait suggests, this is possibly due to confusion over the French practice of a *répétition générale*, a dress rehearsal that was generally attended by critics and other artists before the première, or the official "opening" (66). Based on Jarry's own account and the evidence offered by contemporary reviews and documentation, I am inclined to agree with Postlewait's conclusion that there were two performances, the *répétition générale* on December 9 and the première on December 10, and that Jarry appeared before the audience to give his opening speech on the evening of the first performance, the *répétition générale* on December 9. See Postlewait's excellent account of the different scholarly claims in his case study on *Ubu Roi* in *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography* (60-85).

⁸² All English quotations are from David Ball's translation unless otherwise noted. There are many excellent translations of *Ubu Roi*, and each version takes some liberties with the text in order to translate Jarry's linguistic playfulness into English. The famous "merdre," for example, a bastardization of the French "merde," meaning "shit," has been translated into English in a number of ways to preserve the spirit of Jarry's added "r" and to still convey the obscene nature of the root word. Various translations include Michael Benedikt and George E. Wellwarth's "shitr" (*Modern French Theatre*), Kenneth McLeish's "shikt" (*The Ubu Plays*), Simon Watson Taylor's "pschitt" (*Selected Works* 80) and David Ball's "shitsky" (*Ubu the King*). I have chosen to use Ball's "shitsky" when using the English translation in my discussion of the fateful word here, in part because, like

play's five acts. It would be easy, on these grounds, to dismiss the play as simply throwing excrement in the face of high-minded aesthetic ideals, and, on one level, this is exactly what it is doing. The play overtly parodies the language and physicality associated with classical theatrical staging and the presentation of "noble" characters as well as the new symbolist fare typically offered by Aurélien Lugné-Poe's Théâtre de l'Œuvre where *Ubu Roi* was first presented. Beyond this, however, Jarry's play explicitly invokes a complex doubling of live and mechanical bodies that experiments with, and ultimately emphasizes, the live body's contested role in human creative, social, and political authority.

At its most basic level, *Ubu Roi* posits the fundamental idea that what we excrete probably has something to do with what we consume, and that we are contaminating what we consume. This is as true of art as it is of bodies both living and mechanical, and Jarry's overt use of offal to call into question ideas about artistic merit recalls Hogarth's scatological references in "A Just View of the British Stage" to signal similar anxieties. This sense of processing and digesting "high" art, represented by the way the puppet play cannibalizes the conventions of Shakespeare in the piece, is also emphasized by its staging as a play in which the bodies of live actors cannibalize the language and movements of puppet bodies. The play oozes with bodily fluids and functions in nearly every scene, pairing this intense focus on bodily function with the mechanized bodily movement and mechanical repetition of the Punch and Judy puppet show. From the opening "merdre," Jarry's *Ubu* foregrounds a vulgarity that is at once linguistic, aesthetic, and viscerally corporeal. It is, importantly, also a vulgarity that is mechanical. Jarry uses the mechanistic quality of the puppets to invoke the way the relationship between bodies

"merdre," there is both an aural and visual difference from "shit" as well as a playfully diminutive quality in the resulting linguistic aberration, and in part simply because I like it.

and mechanisms intervenes in broader conversations about cultural capital, authorship, authority, and the body in crisis.

The doubling of live and non-live bodies in *Ubu Roi* is not just a narrative and theatrical feature, it is intrinsic to the history of Ubu's creation. Initially created as a mocking parody of Jarry's unfortunate high-school physics teacher, Père Hébert (whose character was called Père Heb or Ebé), the precursor to the character of Ubu was first brought to theatrical life by Jarry, his sister Charlotte, and their friends Charles and Henri Morin.⁸³ The group of adolescents sometimes performed themselves and sometimes used marionettes as performers.⁸⁴ The fluidity of the performers' bodies implies that, even from his earliest ventures, Jarry viewed the boundary between live body and non-live body as highly permeable. When, in 1891, the Jarry family moved to the Latin Quarter in Paris, not far from the site of the 1889 World's Fair and the newly constructed Eiffel Tower, Jarry took his puppets with him. At his new school, the Lycée Henri IV, it seems that Jarry began to adopt the Ebé/Ubu persona himself when he was required to "perform" in public. An account by Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes of Jarry expostulating on a random subject—a right-of-passage often taken on by new students—reveals Jarry embodying the mechanistic characteristics of his most famous character. Gens-D'Armes writes:

⁸³ In fact, the initial story that Jarry would eventually develop into his play was written by the Morin brothers. As Jill Fell remarks in *Alfred Jarry: An Imagination in Revolt*, it is likely, based on Charlotte Jarry's account, that Monsieur Hébert's daughter, Alice, was part of the group and was present (and possibly performed in) some of the plays parodying her father. Fell also notes that the Héberts were friends of the family, and that it is quite possible Père Ubu's inspiration attended at least one of these attic presentations (142).

⁸⁴ The exact order of events, and when the characters in these early productions were performed by live actors and when they were performed by marionettes, is somewhat nebulous. Conflicting accounts indicate that the characters of Père Heb and his cohorts were played, at various times, by live actors (with the adolescents taking the parts themselves), by marionettes (fashioned by Charlotte and Alfred Jarry), and by shadow puppets. In *Alfred Jarry: A Pataphysical Life*, Alastair Brotchie suggests the initial performances in the Morins' attic were live performances, and that the group transitioned to using puppets after they were forced to move to the Jarry's smaller attic when the Morins moved in the summer of 1889 (14). He hesitates to say this is definitely what happened, however, calling it his "best guess" based on Henri Morin's account (15). Jill Fell, in *Alfred Jarry: An Imagination in Revolt*, also comments on the difficulty of clarifying when, exactly, "the transition from live acting to puppetry took place" (142), but this statement implicitly suggests she believes the live acting occurred first.

[H]enceforth I found Jarry's mental processes disturbing. When he let himself go he seemed in thrall to a torrent of words outside his control. It was no longer a person speaking, but a machine controlled by a demon. His staccato voice, metallic and nasal, his abrupt puppet-like gestures, his fixed expression and uncontrollable flood of language, his grotesque and brilliant turns of phrase, ended up provoking a feeling of disquiet. (qtd. in Brotchie 39)

Gens-d'Armes's description of the disorientation Jarry causes in him echoes Jentsch's description of the uncanny, here tied to an uncertainty about Jarry's very nature; is he human, or machine? Jarry channels the linguistic and physical attributes of his grotesque marionette creation, discomfiting his classmate in such a way as to inspire in him this uncanny description. Gens-d'Armes's rhetorical choices clearly illustrate his discomfiture is tied to the idea of control; he repeatedly invokes the possibility of Jarry as no longer in control of his own body (or, perhaps, even his own mental process). Even more disturbing for Gens-d'Armes is the possibility that Jarry's embodied doubling with mechanization might allow him to be controlled by something else—something other—echoing Hannah Hewit's fears over the haunted nature of her automaton. In this way, the curious hybridization of man and puppet is woven not just into the fabric of the character of Ubu, but also into Jarry's own self-performance and self-embodiment of the character throughout his life.

When Père Ubu took his first lumbering steps on the professional stage in 1896, he embodied this same slippage between the live and the non-live body. Ubu's grand entrance was made under the watchful eye of Jarry himself, who carefully orchestrated his most famous character's premiere to resemble the proceedings of a puppet show. Ubu's path to his professional debut began when Jarry joined Lugné-Poe at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre after entering

into the literary avant-garde movement in Paris.⁸⁵ He began pestering Lugné-Poe to produce *Ubu* sometime late in 1895 and sent him the script along with some suggestions for staging the show in a series of letters. A letter dated January 8, 1896 included specific suggestions for the character of Ubu, including the use of “A mask for the principle character,” “A cardboard horse’s head which he would hang round his neck [...] since my intention was, in any case, to write a puppet play,” and the use of “a special ‘accent,’ or, better still, a special ‘voice’ for the principle character” (*Selected Works* 67-8). The letter also makes clear that Jarry envisioned staging modelled on Punch and Judy shows, as he remarks on the use of a plain backdrop with “A formally dressed individual [who] would walk on stage, just as he does in puppet shows, and hang up a placard indicating where the next scene takes place” (*Selected Works* 67). Even before the play had been accepted, then, Jarry’s remarks underscore the idea that the live body in this piece would be “playing” a puppet body; the actor would need to be able to mediate, through his own body, the movements and sounds of a puppet.

By the time Père Ubu finally uttered the infamous obscenity for the first time, Jarry had mostly prevailed with his wishes in regards to the characterization and the staging. The set was a painted backdrop depicting all manner of incongruous locales. Arthur Symons described the features of the set:

[...] the scenery was painted to represent, by a child’s conventions, indoors and out of doors, and even the torrid, temperate, and arctic zones at once. Opposite you, at the back of the stage, you saw apple trees in bloom, under a blue sky, and against the sky a small closed window and a fireplace... through the very midst of which... trooped in and out

⁸⁵ By the time Jarry began working with Lugné-Poe at the l’Œuvre, he had already published several articles and reviews in avant-garde journals.

the clamorous and sanguinary persons of the drama. On the left was painted a bed, and at the foot of the bed a bare tree and snow falling. On the right there were palm trees... (qtd. in Shattuck 207)

The costumes were similarly “child-like.” As Harold B. Segal remarks in *Pinocchio’s Progeny: Puppets, Marionettes, Automatons, and Robots in Modernist and Avant-Garde Drama*, the actor who played Père Ubu, Firmin Gémier, “wore a heavy, pear-shaped or triangular mask, designed for him by Jarry, as well as a huge cardboard belly” (88). The live bodies onstage took their cues from the puppet Punch. Although Lugné-Poe and Jarry did not go so far as to take up a suggestion made by the poet Rachilde to tie strings to the hands and feet of their actors,⁸⁶ the actors were instructed to act like puppets or marionettes. When Gémier reportedly developed cold feet before the premiere—he was worried about how to play such a grandiose and grotesque character—Lugné-Poe instructed him to model his voice and movement on Jarry’s puppet-like qualities (Brotchie 155). Gémier mimicked the infamous mechanical stuttering and jerky movements of the piece’s author in a striking inversion of the traditional notion of author; here, Jarry serves as mechanical model rather than artistic engineer. In this way the performing body onstage becomes an uncanny mix of live and mechanical. This juxtaposition draws attention to the mechanical and artificial structures underpinning both the bodies onstage and the society in which they exist, and, of course, it reflects these mechanical and artificial structures in the audience’s society. It ultimately, however, draws attention to the more visceral aspects of live bodies as they attempt to mediate these mechanical and artificial structures, underscored by the fact that what the audience actually witnesses are the living bodies of the actors cannibalizing the

⁸⁶ Rachilde’s letter is transcribed in Brotchie’s *Alfred Jarry: A Pataphysical Life* (151-2).

caricatured bodies of the puppets.

Almost all of Père Ubu's interactions with the world of the play are eventually and often crassly reduced to bodily functions. Père Ubu, so concerned with hoarding everything from greasy sausages to piles of gold, can only repeatedly produce shitsky. Social and political situations are reduced to the corporeal, such as in the opening scene in which a meal devolves from shared consumption to shared excretion. When Père Ubu decides to improve a feast laid out for guests, the stage directions remark, "*He is holding an incredibly disgusting toilet brush that he throws into the midst of the banquet*" (358). The toilet brush thus joins the food laid out for his guests, contaminating his table. The table, however, was already contaminated; Ubu does not distinguish between nourishment and excrement—between that which is meant to be consumed and that which has been marked as waste—and his banquet gathers together "chicken," "salad," and "fruit" along with less polite table fare such as "ratsky cutlets," "dog paté," and "cauliflower à la shitsky" (356). Further, Père Ubu himself is equated with waste and filth, such as when Capitaine Bordure comments on his smell:

CAPTAIN BARBAGE.⁸⁷ Hey, you stink, Papa Ubu. Don't you ever wash?

PAPA UBU. Rarely.

MAMA UBU. Never!

PAPA UBU. I'm going to stamp on thy toes!

MAMA UBU. You big shitsky! (359)

He does not ever wash, and thus never gets rid of the filth and waste he encounters on a daily

⁸⁷ Like many translators, Ball takes liberties with Capitaine Bordure's name in order to emphasize the connotations of waste/garbage the word has in French. In French, "Bordure" rhymes with "les ordures," meaning garbage or waste; Ball's translation allows Barbage to rhyme with "garbage." Other translations of his name include "Captain Macnure" (Benedikt and Wellwarth) and "Dogpile" (McLeish).

basis. In this way we learn that Père Ubu is, quite literally in Mère Ubu's opinion, walking excrement ("gross merdre"—"big shitsky").

Like the "chew'd gingerbread" employed by Hogarth as feces in his "A Just View of the British Stage," Jarry's juxtaposition of real and artificial offal transgresses both real and artificial social, political, and corporeal boundaries. The pairing of live actors with the puppet's world of feigned vulgarity allows Jarry to blur the lines of the bodily boundaries normally observed by societal expectations, thereby implicating these expectations as constructions that are as artificial as the puppets the actors are parodying. Toilet humor and toilet-based props are not uncommon for puppet shows, and a toilet brush would certainly not be out of place in Punch's home. By having the puppet mediated by a live actor, however, Jarry has changed the value of the feces. Human excrement is not the same as puppet poop. A wooden puppet's toilet contains no real excrement, therefore the toilet brush of a puppet can only *look* disgusting, while a live Père Ubu has the ability to produce actual excrement, something that is far more disturbing when put into contact with food meant for consumption. Puppets cannot produce excrement—indeed, puppets cannot produce anything, good or bad—at least, not without human assistance. Humans, however, must physically deal with bodily fluids and the necessary implacable forces within themselves that require consumption and catalyze excretion. In a world becoming increasingly concerned with the efficiency of industrial processing, Père Ubu's insistence on retaining his waste is decadently inefficient.

The modern relationship to waste, and especially to bodily waste, is fraught with anxiety, and Jarry's *Ubu*, rather than pandering to this anxiety, exposes it. In "Merdre! Performing Filth in the Bourgeois Public Sphere," Neil Blackadder thoroughly discusses Ubu's relation to socially constructed anxieties about waste products. As he observes, "the more 'civilized' a culture

becomes, the more it repudiates any positive relationship to excrement” (192). It is a biological necessity that is tainted by societal expectations about morality and hygiene. It is something that every human deals with, and yet is often shunned and hidden away as shameful and dirty. The play thus dramatizes a body in crisis; internal forces require the live body to deal with these fluids, while external pressures require the live body to appear to have nothing whatsoever to do with them. In essence, social pressures require the live body to become absent behind an artificial presentation of mechanical efficiency. By presenting the live body’s transgression of this artificial social expectation onstage, in full view of a public audience, Jarry’s play revels in the unsavory processes that signal a properly functioning live body. The emphasis is thus on the body’s organic nature rather than its mechanization. The confrontation between live and mechanical bodies allows Jarry to bring his embodied attack on artificial convention into the realm of aesthetics, morality, and social custom. Blackadder sees the play as allowing the audience to take “advantage of the chance to reconnect with an ‘obstructed source of pleasure’” (194). With *Ubu*, Jarry allowed audience members to revel in their freedom to publicly interact with this repressed bodily function.

The body thus becomes the locus for a kind of revolt against social control. Although he does not specifically address *Ubu Roi*, Tim Armstrong makes a similar observation in his book, *Modernism, Technology, and the Body*. Here, Armstrong focuses on modern technological advances, reading them as interventions that both fragment and augment body. In the chapter on “Waste Products,” Armstrong sees the concept of waste acting both as a biological necessity and as a metaphorical way to discuss purification, efficiency, production, and consumption in modernist society. He also, however, reads a resistance to the metaphorical insistence on this kind of efficiency, noting, “Waste-production is the point where the man-machine metaphor

fails; where the body declares its irreducible presence” (65). Waste, then, is a decidedly human product. The body’s need to produce waste is something that resists mechanization. In a perfectly constructed machine or an efficient factory there would be an effort to reduce or eliminate waste. A well-functioning body naturally produces waste; the body is made to consume, process, and produce material. A healthy body will create a stable equilibrium, thus maintaining a balance between consumption and excretion. Just a little over a century earlier, in fact, audiences had been awed by the possibility that one of Vaucanson’s automatons, the “defecating duck,” might be naturally producing waste. Modern industry, however, attempts to eliminate waste altogether; the kind of production it is concerned about has nothing to do with waste. Energy spent creating waste is energy, well, wasted; it is inefficient. Whereas modern industry attempts to take waste and craft it into useful products, the body takes products and turns them into waste, and this is a useful bodily process that signals nourishment. In this way, Jarry reclaims waste as a sign of a functioning body made anathema by a Victorian distaste for bodily functions and a modern emphasis on efficiency.

While it is easy to see the implication that the audience is part of the waste-producing system of Victorian consumer culture, which is depicted in this play as commercialization, greed, and grotesqueness, the audience members are also implicated as live bodies—as one element that the body onstage is negotiating in the man-machine conversation. The juxtaposition of live and non-live bodies certainly did not remain behind a fourth wall in Jarry’s play; the audience does not witness the event from the passive role of spectator. Instead, Jarry used the performance to illustrate how the performing body onstage implicates the audience; he went to great lengths to stage the centrality of the live body in the mediation of man and machine for his audience. Jarry

himself gave an opening speech to the audience on its first night of performance,⁸⁸ the répétition générale (similar to a final dress rehearsal or preview night), thereby setting the stage and priming the audience for the show they were about to experience. Jarry once again played on the conventions of the puppet show by mirroring the role of the puppet show announcer for his own piece and mediating the relationship human bodies were to play in his human/puppet hybrid of a show in a manner not unlike that of Luckless in Henry Fielding's *The Author's Farce* or Samuel Foote in his *Piety in Pattens*.

After Jarry had thus primed the audience, the massive form of Père Ubu waddled onto the professional stage for the very first time and muttered the obscenity that cemented his place in history: “merdre!” (“shitsky”). The audience, it has been widely reported, exploded,⁸⁹ with some cheering the daring vulgarity, and some jeering the ridiculous offense of the grotesque body and its language. The poet William Butler Yeats, who attended this first evening's performance, later wrote of the experience:

The audience shake their fists at one another, and the Rhymer whispers to me, ‘There are often duels after these performances,’ and he explains to me what is happening on the stage. The players are supposed to be dolls, toys, marionettes, and now they are all

⁸⁸ As Brothie notes, this was “a tradition at the Œuvre,” and Jarry was likely in attendance three years earlier when a similar inflammatory speech was given before the Théâtre de l'Œuvre's 1893 staging of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* (54).

⁸⁹ The Ubu “riot” is often marked as a turning point in modern drama that ushered in a new era of avant-garde theatre and foreshadowing the kind of experimentation that would come to define the modern stage. The extent and circumstances of the riot itself (as well as its claim to the term “riot”), however, have recently been called into question. Thomas Postlewait challenges the common narrative often repeated about whether or not there was a “riot,” what that might or might not have entailed, and the general scholarly consensus that the audience was “shocked” by the play's first word (60-85). Importantly, however, Postlewait still sees Jarry and his play as holding a place “in a history of modernist theatre” (78) Sebastian Trainor makes a similar claim in “Rachilde's *Supermale of Letters* and the Invention of the Ubu Roi Riot,” arguing that the poet Rachilde created the story about the riotous effect of the play's first word in order to “wrest cultural control of the *idea* of Jarry” (93). Regardless of the exact details of the vehemence of the audience reaction, the piece still acts as a touchstone in the development of the modern understanding of theatre, and became central to discussions about what theatre could and/or should express as well as the theatre's important intervention in public conversations about aesthetics.

hopping like wooden frogs, and I can see for myself that the chief personage, who is some kind of King, carries for sceptre a brush of the kind that we use to clean a closet. Feeling bound to support the most spirited party, we have shouted for the play, but that night at the Hôtel Corneille I am very sad, for comedy, objectivity, has displayed its growing power once more. I say: ‘After Stephane Mallarmé, after Paul Verlaine, after Gustave Moreau, after Puvis de Chavannes, after our own verse, after all our subtle colour and nervous rhythm, after the faint mixed tints of Conder, what more is possible? After us the Savage God.’ (348-9)

While the shouting and jeering may not have been unique to this particular production given the French practice of using *claques*, or people hired to vocally respond to a play, Yeats’s response anticipates the deeper impact the show was to have on modern drama.

Rather than villainizing the mechanization or the humanization, *Ubu* relishes in the excesses and the faults of both live and mechanical bodies. Neither the unsavory aspects of the visceral body nor the unsavory aspects of the mechanized body escape scathing critical parody. The play’s uncanny disorientation through the pairing of the untamed grotesque body of *Ubu* with the similarly untamed body of the mechanized puppet *Punch* represents a challenge to conceptions of bodily agency as well as theatrical forms both new and old. The challenge that *Ubu* represents is not metaphorical, or, rather, it is not purely metaphorical. The play presents this challenge in all of its messy materiality through the slippage between the live body onstage and the mechanical double it invokes and mediates. The body onstage—the live body of the actor Gémier—must negotiate between the gleeful saturation of bodily excess (the embodied grotesqueness of eating and excreting) and the fear of dehumanizing mechanism (the physical and vocal stylings of the marionette).

These nineteenth-century investigations into the relationship between man and machine highlight a transitional moment between the Enlightenment perspective on mechanism as a sign of human skill and the anxious relationship with mechanism that would be on full display by the premiere of proto-avant-garde *Ubu Roi*. Machinic precision and mechanical perfection began to magnify, for some, fears that mechanical bodies would outshine human accomplishments. This became not just an anxiety over authorship, but also an anxiety over agency as it was increasingly feared that mechanical bodies might be able to directly challenge their human creators. The deeply unsettling reactions to these challenges provoked a shifting understanding of the live body as implicated in an uncanny relationship to machinery. On stage, the uncanny juxtaposition of live and mechanical bodies resisted simple binary notions of live versus mechanical, and this resistance allowed for a more complex examination of the way the live body negotiates its relationship to machinery. Further, the live body's necessary alignment with waste figures it as a dangerous reality in the face of mechanized purity. The uncanny doubling of live and mechanical bodies foreground (and, in Jarry's case, celebrate) the demands of human flesh and human consciousness as central to human ingenuity and creative authority, even when those demands are considered less-than-savory or impolite by social mores. Human waste, for example, may be distasteful and inefficient, but it acts as a very effective fertilizer. While some of these investigations of live and mechanical bodies might ultimately present the dangers of mechanical bodies to live bodies (it is true that many theatrical experiments do not present the relationship between live bodies and mechanical bodies as a positive one), that danger comes not through mechanical consumption of bodies, but through the body's ability (or inability) to act a mediator and mediating force of both the internal and external effects of new mechanisms. The doubling of live and mechanical bodies doubles the weaknesses, vulgarities, inadequacies, and

demands of bodies in general, all of which must be negotiated by the live performing body onstage. These experiments ultimately present bodies in crisis—not a crisis of erasure (of the human), but a crisis of mediation—as the live body tries (and sometimes fails) to adequately reconcile the demands of both man and mechanism.

Chapter 3: Muscles and Cogs: Controlled Bodies and Mechanical Marvels

*“[...] whether of rag or gold, rich or poor, king or peasant the marionette
is always distinguished, and it is curious that he only loses his distinction
when allied with a human being.”*

~Edward Gordon Craig writing as Adolf Furst, “A Note on Marionettes”

The bodily disorientation signaled by the uncanny juxtaposition of live and mechanical bodies became more pervasive as an avalanche of new technological and mechanical advances in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries meant that much of the way human bodies related to the world was swiftly and fundamentally changing. Planes, trains, and automobiles, for example, changed the way people moved through and conceived of geographical space, while the adoption of Greenwich Mean Time across Britain in 1880 standardized the way people thought of themselves as located in time.⁹⁰ On one hand, these changes marked an era of human creative possibility. Technology and mechanism provided new and greater opportunities for human interaction with the world. Man, it seemed, could command light, sound, space, and time. Man could fly. *Anything* might happen. On the other hand, the way the human body related to the world around it was consistently destabilized, which provoked feelings of uncertainty, alienation, and fear that the value of human life might be lost in a newly mechanized landscape. This

⁹⁰ By the 1840s, trains crisscrossed the United States; Karl Benz’s Motorwagon premiered in 1886, followed by Henry Ford’s Model T in 1908. Orville and Wilbur Wright’s experiments in flight captured the public imagination in the early 1900s. Alexander Graham Bell’s telephone in 1876 and Thomas Edison’s incandescent lightbulb in 1879 quite literally altered the way people heard and saw the world. In the early 1900s, Albert Einstein’s theories of relativity re-framed scientific understandings of space, time, and the laws of physics. The cultural landscape into which “modern drama” premiered was thus a landscape marked by transformations in a wide variety of areas of human understanding of the world around us.

created a deep ambivalence over both the benefits and dangers represented by the new mechanisms of a technologically ordered world.

In addition to the necessity of contending with new technology and machinery, such as electric lightbulbs and automobiles, the rise of the factory system and new methods of industrial processing further changed the way bodies would be expected to relate to machinery in the modern world. In the late nineteenth century Frederick Winslow Taylor began working on a new way to think about the work that bodies could do. Observing the way workers conducted different physical tasks as they went about manufacturing products, Taylor discovered that, among other things, the bodies of the workers themselves reduced efficiency and, therefore, profit. Compared to the machinery with which they worked, workers' bodies were weaker: they easily became tired and sore, they required rest and frequent nourishment, and they could not be as easily fixed when they became broken. Taylor set about developing an organized method of bodily movement that took into account the weaknesses and requirements of live bodies in order to more fully integrate them with the processes and machinery of factory assembly lines. In 1911, he published his theories in a book entitled *The Principles of Scientific Management*. Taylor's goal was to reduce wear and tear on the live bodies of the workers by making them act as efficiently and as much like mechanical bodies as possible, which would in turn increase production. As he remarks, "the greatest prosperity can exist only when the individual has reached its highest state of efficiency; that is, when he is turning out his largest daily output" (11). Much like the actors in Jarry's *Ubu Roi* or Fielding's *The Author's Farce*, the live bodies of workers were meant, as much as possible, to mimic the mechanical bodies of the machines around them.

Taylor's theories about bodies and mechanism in relation to manufacturing, efficiency,

and productivity marked one aspect of a broader ambivalence over mechanization in the nineteenth century that would become central to explorations of the relationship between bodies and technology.⁹¹ In *Manufacturing Culture: Vindications of Early Victorian Industry*, Joseph Bizup discusses this ambivalence by tracing a cultural dialectic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries between the positive and negative effects industrialization might have on the body. He aligns those, such as John Ruskin and Robert Southey, who saw the relationship between live bodies and the manufacturing system as primarily negative with Elaine Scarry's concept of the "body in pain," remarking, "Opponents of the factory system vociferously insisted on the deleterious effects of factory labor on operatives' bodies, routinely emphasizing their mutilation and deformation, as well as their figurative enslavement to machinery and uncanny transformation into machines themselves" (18). The use of the term "uncanny" suggests that the encroachment of the factory system onto the territory of the live body is a matter of control; the mechanization of the body through industrialization indicates, in a manner that recalls Jentsch's description of the uncanny, a body terrifyingly outside of one's own control. Here, the mechanization of the body denotes both a literal physical attack (the body is mutilated by its encounter with machinery) and an attack on the body's agency (the body becomes a slave).

On the other side of the cultural spectrum, Bizup aligns those, such as William Cooke Taylor, who saw the relationship between the live body and industrialization as primarily

⁹¹ In addition to concerns over industry and socio-political structures such as capitalism, bodily mechanization also underscored conversations tracing ambivalence over mental processes and behavior such as habit and impulse. For example, in "Defining Habits: Dickens and the Psychology of Repetition," Athena Vrettos remarks, "The very capacity for moral transformation was problematized in and by nineteenth-century writings on habit, as habit became a contested area of psychological debate. It evoked concerns about the status of the individual in an increasingly modern, mechanized culture in which human behavior, like industrial objects, might be mass-produced" (400). See also Lisi Schoenbach's *Pragmatic Modernism*, especially chapter one, "Modernist Habit," for a thorough discussion of modern ambivalence over habit and its situation in larger discussions of bodily mechanization (19-48).

positive with Anson Rabinbach's figure of the "body without fatigue" (18). The "body without fatigue," Bizup notes, "came to constitute a particularly nineteenth-century utopian ideal in which 'maximum productive output' was reconciled with 'minimum exhaustion,'" and, ultimately, proponents of this ideology "argued that factory labor fostered bodily health" (20). Here the mechanization of the body becomes not an attack, but an instrument or tool by which human bodies can become stronger. Rather than losing agency to the mechanizing effects of industrialization, in this conception, live bodies can increase their productivity and better control their output. Frederick Winslow Taylor's work became pivotal for these competing ideas about the relationship between bodies and machines as they developed through the modern period. While Taylor's theories of scientific management were intended to improve the efficiency of live bodies, his method—requiring live bodies to take on the efficiency of machinic form and function—implied, for some, that mechanical bodies were better suited to producing material and reducing waste. His theories became central to an increasing anxiety that, ultimately, the best option might be to replace live human bodies altogether.

As the ramifications of the Industrial Revolution progressed and the material conditions of life in the modern era solidified, these anxieties about bodily efficiency were present not just in conversations about the manufacture of products, but also in conversations about the creation of art. Once again, the theatre's ability to offer simultaneously a material and philosophical accounting of the relationship between body and mechanism provided artists a particularly fruitful platform for the exploration of these issues. By staging a physical enactment of the efficiencies and inefficiencies of live bodies relative to machine bodies and new mechanisms, the theatre again allowed artists to test the practical implications of a variety of perspectives on modern mechanization. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that bodies are one of the primary tools of

theatrical expression, actors' bodies and the craft of acting itself became crucial elements of these new relationships between live and mechanical bodies in a world in which mechanisms were becoming increasingly present.

Although early nineteenth-century acting styles, such as the highly stylized body shapes proposed by François Delsarte, provided a mechanistic form for actors to mimic in order to perfect their embodied acting technique,⁹² the onset of naturalism and realism in the modern era challenged these mechanistic forms as a new conception about the body's role in performance emerged. Constantin Stanislavski, for example, envisioned a new kind of actor, whose body would represent an interior psychological state. In *An Actor Prepares*, the director Tortsov declares:

[The artist's] job is not to present merely the external life of his character. He must fit his own human qualities to the life of this other person, and pour into it all of his own soul. The fundamental aim of our art is the creation of this inner life of a human spirit, and its expression in an artistic form. (14)

In the age of the factory system, Stanislavski focuses not simply on the product but on the process through which the live body mediates both its internal psychology and the external expression of that psychology.⁹³ He concentrates not simply on what the performance looks like, but *how* the body performs, *why* it performs, and *why* it does so in a specific way. In this way, Stanislavski emphasizes both an actor's authority over his own body as well as his creative

⁹² See, for example, the descriptions given by Delsarte's student, Delaumosne, in the section on "Gesture" in *Delsarte: System of Oratory*, which includes careful descriptions of exact eyebrow placement, hand gestures, head tilt, etc., for use by actors in order to display specific emotions or interior states to an audience (39-119).

⁹³ Although Stanislavski's method is sometimes read as solely focused on interior psychology, it is important to note that he himself emphasized both the psychological and physical aspects of developing a character over the course of his career.

authority over the artistic endeavor. In Stanislavski's method, then, creative authority remains quite firmly with the individual bodies of actors.

Although realism and naturalism were themselves something like avant-garde movements when first introduced in the theatre, they were quickly popularized with the success of the Moscow Art Theatre (co-founded by Stanislavski and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko) and playwrights such as Ibsen, Strindberg, and Chekhov. Stanislavski's acting system became highly influential, prompting some theatre artists to expand his theories, while others pushed back against a method they now saw as mainstream. While Stanislavski emphasized the creative authority of actors and the necessity of accepting the psychological and physical demands of human bodies, other modern theatre artists, such as Edward Gordon Craig, took their cues from the factory system's focus on efficiency and production and conceived of the performing body as a mechanism that could and should be controlled in order to perfect the artistic product. In 1908, Craig published the first issue of his journal *The Mask* in Florence, Italy.⁹⁴ The journal focused primarily on destroying realism in the theatre and promoting the director as the predominant artist of any production; the articles printed within its pages discuss all elements of theatrical production, from stage design to the role of the audience and the actors. Craig used the magazine to promote his ideas about the art of the theatre and his vision for a new kind of actor; it is here that many of his famous articles first appeared, including "The Actor and the Über-

⁹⁴ *The Mask* would remain in publication until 1929, although the publication schedule was irregular, and there were some breaks in publication. *The Mask* was neither Craig's first nor his final foray into the world of journal publication. In 1898 he published a small journal entitled *The Page*, which his son Edward Craig describes as "a magazine that consisted of eighty-five percent decorative illustrations and fifteen percent irrelevant reading matter" (241). *The Page* primarily included woodcut engravings done by Craig, and although it featured some content about the theatre, the content is, as Craig's son suggests, not of a very profound nature. Craig also briefly published a periodical in 1918 entitled *The Marionette*.

Marionette.”⁹⁵

“The Actor and the Über-Marionette” lays out a theory of theatrical bodies that, like Kleist’s “On the Puppet Theatre,” privileges the mechanical body of the marionette over the live body of the actor. Craig advocates for precise control over the artistic medium as the measure of aesthetic accomplishment, and, because the live body does not, in Craig’s view, provide this control, he derides the live body as an inappropriate medium for art: “It is therefore incorrect to speak of the actor as an artist” (3). Craig’s strong distrust of the actor’s live body is evident in the text, and this distrust is based on his belief that control of the live body can be easily preempted by the whims of emotion. As he remarks:

In the modern theatre, owing to the use of the bodies of men and women *as their material*, all which is presented there is of an accidental nature. The actions of the actor’s body, the expression of his face, the sounds of his voice, all are at the mercy of the winds of his emotions; these winds which must blow for ever around the artist, moving without unbalancing him. But with the actor, emotion *possesses* him; it seizes upon his limbs moving them wither it will. (3)

The actor’s body, in Craig’s view, is unable to truly be useful as a medium of art because the actor is undermined by his inability to detach his artistic endeavors from an instinctive and almost animalistic connection to the deeply physical sensory apparatus of the body. Stanton B. Garner, Jr. describes Craig’s general abhorrence of the effects of the flesh on artistic undertakings in *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*. Using Craig’s disgust over a Renaissance painting as an example, Garner remarks, “Flushed

⁹⁵ “The Actor and the Über-Marionette” first appeared in vol. 1 no. 2 of *The Mask*, 1908.

faces, bulging eyes, wrists that register the pulse's rhythms—the human body threatens artistic control, breaks form into panic, through a physicality that stands outside and consumes (heats, fires, blazes, destroys) the formal tranquility of the spirit" (59). For Craig, an actor's physical body thus retains a terrifyingly uncanny agency outside of the actor's control that consistently interrupts the artistic process.

Like the youth that Kleist remarked could never replicate a beautiful action once he became self-aware, Craig's live actors are impeded in their attempts to create true artistic beauty by their independent desires and vanities (physical, emotional, and intellectual), which hobble their ability to control the actions of their physical bodies. Craig thus mocks his fictitious actor: "The actor's is an inward and personal gaze at himself. He is unconsciously enjoying the sense of himself, as representing the main and central figure in a really good scene" (6). Craig's actor attempts to excuse his inability to use his own body as a completely pliable artistic instrument by defensively remarking, "there never has been an actor who reached such a state of mechanical perfection that his body was *absolutely* the slave of his mind" (7). The unsubtle suggestion is, of course, that an actor's body *should* be absolutely the slave of his mind.

Craig reveals in this statement the source of his frustration. He expresses a desire for a mind/body binary—his rhetoric continually suggests *either* mind *or* body should be in control—but his comments about how this would work in practice simultaneously assert that the true problem for actors is that the mind and body are so interconnected that they cannot ever be usefully separated. It should be noted that, while Craig himself advocates working toward the mechanical perfection of complete intellectual control (the body becoming the slave of the mind), he does express grudging respect for actors who embrace the opposite approach. Of an actor who decides, "I will throw my mind overboard, let my body pull me and the play through,"

Craig remarks, “there seems to me to be some wisdom in the standpoint of such an actor. He does not dilly dally between the two things which are contending in him, the one against the other” (7). In this way Craig frames an actor’s problem as a body in conflict with itself. He maps this conflict onto the relationship between the live and the mechanical; Craig consistently aligns the mind with mechanical precision and the body with emotional and physical chaos, and he insists that the chaotic body upsets the discipline of the ordered mind. Embracing the chaos of the live body may be a valid choice for Craig, but, importantly, it is *not* an artistic choice. Choosing the body over the mind, for Craig, results in the display of a “personality” rather than an indication of true artistic skill.

In order to truly exercise artistic skill (and to transform the mind/body amalgamation into a mind/body binary in favor of the mind), Craig emphasizes the necessity of sublimating the live aspects of the body to the mind.⁹⁶ He begins by having his painter remark to his actor, “*if* you could make your body into a machine, or into a dead piece of material such as clay, and *if* it could obey you in every movement for the entire space of time it was before the audience [...] you would be able to make a work of art out of what [sic] which is in you” (8). Craig thus prepares his readers for his suggestion of a new kind of actor by destabilizing the importance of the “liveness” of the body; he calls for the body to become like an object or a machine—to approximate dead or inanimate material rather than living material. He goes on to disparage

⁹⁶ Craig himself enacted a kind of total sublimation of the body to the mind in the creation of his journal. Most, although not all, of the contributors to *The Mask* (as well as the “editor” of the journal, John Semar) were actually pseudonyms created by Craig for himself. As Lorelei Guidry notes, Craig wrote the bulk of the material that was published in the journal, and “in later issues he used some 65 pseudonyms” (8). This allowed him to erase his own “personality” in his pursuit of his aesthetic goals. “Puppet personas” enabled Craig to more effectively stage his own theatrical theories by imbuing his creations with enough identity that the audience would hear a choir of voices raised in harmony to support his ideal theatre instead of the wheedling voice of one man egotistically repeating his own refrain ad nauseam.

living flesh in favor of non-living flesh, observing:

This flesh and blood life, lovely as it is to us all is for me not a thing made to search into, or to give out again to the world, even conventionalized. I think that my aim shall rather be to catch some far off glimpse of that spirit which we call *death*... to recall beautiful things from the imaginary world;... they say they are cold, these dead things,... I do not know... they often seem warmer and more living than that which parades as life. (8-9)

Craig follows this emphasis on removing the “flesh and blood” qualities of the actor with testimonies by literary and theatrical figures about the vulgarity of live actors with delusions of artistry. For his final testimony, Craig offers the words of Napoleon: “In Life there is much that is unworthy which in art should be omitted; much of doubt and vacillation; and all should disappear in the representation of the hero. *We should see him as a statue in which the weaknesses and tremors of the flesh are no longer perceptible*” (10). The obvious implication is that, for Craig, what is “unworthy” and should be omitted is the live body itself. Craig’s words echo Taylor’s goal for bodies in factory systems, bodies in which the weaknesses or “tremors of the flesh” should be successfully managed and filtered out like waste products. Instead, the ultimate artistic product is a statue: perfect, unchanging in its artistic perfection, and void of anything superfluous to the artistic product itself.

In his rejection of a flesh and blood actor, Craig finds recourse in the puppet tradition and its long-standing concern with mechanism and aliveness. Craig invokes rhetoric similar to that found in the eighteenth century in his employment of this tradition, whereby mechanical bodies indicate the skill of their artistic creator and act as tools by which human artists can achieve their artistic goals. It is here that he proposes his famous über-marionette: “The actor must go, and in his place comes the inanimate figure—the über-marionette we may call him, until he has won for

himself a better name” (11). Craig begins by extolling the virtues of wooden puppets and praises their ability to not be swayed by external factors or internal egos, observing, “The applause may thunder or dribble, their hearts beat no faster, no slower, their signals do not grow hurried or confused; and, though drenched in a torrent of bouquets and love, the face of the leading lady remains as solemn, as beautiful and as remote as ever” (11). These mechanical bodies, then, provide the theatre director an instrument that, in Craig’s opinion, makes a more reliable medium for artistic expression. They remain precise and controlled in all the ways live bodies do not. All that is “unworthy” can easily be omitted. There will be no unscripted “tremors of the flesh” here.

Craig acknowledges the crisis of the body that occurs as the live body attempts to mediate between “the two things which are contending in him” (7): the mechanical precision of the artistic mind and the physical and emotional demands of the flesh. He ultimately asserts that overcoming this crisis requires the erasure of those traits that make the live body “live,” such as the passions that are revealed in physical movement and the bodily functions that dare to erupt at inopportune moments. In short, Craig wants to remove anything that reveals that uncanny fear Jentsch observed of the body outside of one’s own control. For Jentsch, the mechanization of the body prompted such disorientation; here it is the body’s liveness that signals a lack of control. The mechanical body, for Craig, is a body perfectly able to be tamed and manipulated for his artistic ends. Control, of course, would be highly desirable to a director such as Craig, who lamented any challenge to his vision of the theatre and felt that actors with their unstable bodies were likely to ruin his artistic perfection by doing something unforgivable, such as shivering at the wrong moment.

While “The Actor and the Über-Marionette” would become Craig’s most famous treatise

on the theatre and the actor's body, there is a strong tension, even from the magazine's first pages, between the visceral live body and an idealized mechanically controlled body that Craig espoused for true "artists" of the theatre. Craig introduced his journal with an image of a human body measured and controlled. The image on the front cover of the first issue of *The Mask*, titled in the issue's index as "Humani Corporis Mensura,"⁹⁷ is based on Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man. Following this depiction of the human is a brief passage entitled "Geometry."⁹⁸ The text describes the differences between divine creation and human creation, aligning divine creation with silence, symbolism, and "Beauty" and human creation with science, words, "Terror," and "Evil" (1). Craig associates his own vision of art with the divine, calling for "Three Arts...Music, Architecture, and movement, [which] together form the one great and perfect Religion in which we may see and hear all the Revelations of Truth" (2). Craig uses a passage from Whitman to justify the necessity of silencing the human ego and to criticize the vulgarities of the body in his new "religion":

I think I could turn and live with the animals, they are so
placid and self-contained,
I stand and look at them long.
They do not sweat and whine about their conditions,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God. (2)

Craig's distaste for bodies that "sweat" and "weep" thus underscores his desire for bodies that

⁹⁷ Latin for "measure of the human body."

⁹⁸ Although not attributed to an author in the journal, the passage was in fact written by Craig, and was later printed in *The Theatre—Advancing* in 1919, under the title "Divine Demonstration," with the note that it was originally written in Florence in 1908.

are “self-contained.” Instead of such uncontrolled bodies, Craig proposes “symbols in silence” as “the nature of our Art” (2). While this may sound rather theoretical or metaphorical, on the very next page Craig provides his essay on “The Artists of the Theatre of the Future” (3), thus connecting the idea of this silent and symbolic figure of artistic perfection to his plans for a new kind of actor. The opening image of the Vitruvian man thus suggests that the human body is the site on which this tension between aesthetic symbol and practical reality will occur. In this way, Craig’s first foray into this “new art of the theatre” begins not with the erasure of the body, but with the body front and center.

Craig’s theories clearly express anxiety over the actor’s ability to preempt his own creative authority in the artistic process, and they present the mechanical body not as a challenge to the artistic authority of the actor (as Dibdin’s Hannah Hewit feared), but as a facilitator of artistic authority. Craig was undeniably interested in puppet theatre; he consistently praises puppets and spends ample time in *The Mask* extolling the virtues of wooden actors (for example, an entire issue in 1912 is devoted to the history and workings of these mechanical bodies⁹⁹). Further, Craig wrote several marionette plays under the name Tom Fool that appeared in another of his periodicals, the aptly named *The Marionette*. While his theories are often, and not inappropriately, read as attempts to replace the live body with a mechanical body, it is important to note that he himself did not transition to working in puppet theatre.¹⁰⁰ Craig’s fraught rhetoric

⁹⁹ *The Mask* Volume 5, Issue 2.

¹⁰⁰ Harold B. Segal remarks, “Although he actually wrote plays for marionettes [...], Craig’s enthusiasm for puppet and marionette related mostly to his desire to transform the human actor into a totally submissive instrument” (55). In other words, although he wrote extensively on the subject, and he certainly, as Henryk Jurkowski notes, “helped the development of puppet theatre by showing in his essays, his plays, and his practice, the artistic potential of puppets” (*History* vol. 2 47), he did not turn to puppets for use as his own theatrical instruments on the stage.

instead ultimately underscores not a mechanical body but a live body in crisis.¹⁰¹ Craig continued to work with live actors, encouraging them to discover the way they might more perfectly mediate the live and the mechanical within their own bodies so that they would provide him with the artistic control he craved from puppets, but through the medium of live bodies. His theatrical vision is still a vision of live bodies,¹⁰² no matter how much he scorns the weaknesses of these bodies.

Even in the early description of his über-marionette in “The Actor and the Über-Marionette,” Craig sets this new performing body apart from the mechanical bodies of puppets. As he states:

[...] no longer content with a puppet, we must create an über-marionette. The über-marionette will not compete with Life—but will rather go beyond it. Its ideal will not be the flesh and blood but rather the body in a Trance—it will aim to clothe itself with a death-like Beauty while exhaling a living spirit. (12)

Thus, the über-marionette is not, in fact, a puppet; rather, it is a living body that must, through a

¹⁰¹ A common reading of Craig’s theories emphasizes a desire to replace the human actor with a puppet. Scott Shershow, for example, describes Craig’s über-marionette as “a kind of ‘super puppet’ that could literally replace the human actor” (195). Paul Menard insists that Craig was “explicitly articulating the desire to replace the human actor with a mechanical one” (122). Henryk Jurkowski also insists that Craig’s vision involved the construction of an artificial actor that would replace the human actor, using as evidence notes from Craig’s copybooks and the order he made for an “experimental marionette” (*History* vol. 2 39-41). Others, however, have suggested that Craig’s vision of an “über-marionette” was not intended to completely erase the actor from the stage. Christopher Innes calls Craig’s über-marionette “misunderstood,” noting, “His argument was against the ‘actor,’ but not against the human performer per se” (123). Harold B. Segal notes, “Craig fantasized about substituting puppets and marionettes for the living actor. But his pronouncements on the subject did not have as their goal the elimination of the theater of human actors” (55). Kenneth Gross remarks that Craig’s über-marionette is “not so much an actual puppet as a more impersonal, less ego-driven version of the human actor” (30).

¹⁰² Craig himself later attempted to distance his theory of the über-marionette from the idea that a human actor would be replaced by a puppet. In “Gentlemen, the Marionette,” the introduction to vol. 5, no. 2 of *The Mask* (1912), Craig writes, “And did you think when I wrote five years ago of this new figure who should stand as the symbol of man.... and when I christened him the ueber-marionette..... [sic] to see real metal or silken threads? I hope that another five years will be long enough time for you to draw those tangible tangle-able wires out of your thoughts” (97).

trance-like state, learn to channel its own living spirit through a body that becomes the mediator between the mechanical precision of a puppet and the live human vibrancy of the artist.¹⁰³ The live body must physically learn to mediate the “death-like Beauty” of the mechanical precision of puppets (notice it is “death-like,” not death—there is a desire to mitigate the liveness of the body without completely transforming it into a non-live state). For Craig, this merging of mechanical and live bodies within one performing body allows for an almost transcendent experience that surpasses any human artistic achievement up to this point.

Craig’s grandiose language emphatically calls for a new merging of human and machine into something transcendental. What this actually entailed, and how one might go about achieving it, was somewhat nebulous;¹⁰⁴ vague at the best of times, Craig was often criticized for theories that were not, in fact, practicable on the stage.¹⁰⁵ Craig’s doubling of the live body and mechanical body is contradictory and fraught with concern, reflecting the ambivalence over mechanization in the broader cultural consciousness.¹⁰⁶ On one hand, he describes mechanical

¹⁰³ Etienne Decroux, the French actor and mime, would use Craig’s desire for more perfect mechanical control of the body as inspiration in the development of what he called corporeal mime. In the introduction to *The Decroux Sourcebook*, Thomas Leabhart and Franc Chamberlain remark that Decroux’s “vision of an artistic (artificial and articulated) theatre” began, like Craig’s, with “a newly conceived actor at its centre” (3). Craig himself, after seeing one of Decroux’s pieces in 1945, would apply what was, for him, high praise; Craig calls Decroux’s work “a serious attempt to create an art for the theatre” (qtd. in Leabhart and Chamberlain 24).

¹⁰⁴ Others have commented on the contradictory nature of the essay. Shershow notes the “fundamental instability of Craig’s position” and critiques the essay for the “infelicity of its metaphors” (196).

¹⁰⁵ Craig has often been accused, at times unfairly, of being out of touch with the more practical aspects of running a theatre and producing a show. Guidry observes, for example, that critics would often say “he designed beautiful stage sets, but they are impractical, so it shows he did not know much about the theatre” (2).

¹⁰⁶ One of the primary criticisms of Craig’s theories focuses on his conception of women and their contributions to art. Like Alfred Jarry, Craig’s views on women were less than progressive. Craig himself wrote many articles in later issues of *The Mask* reflecting a decidedly regressive view of women’s role in the theatre, and Craig’s issues with women have been well documented by many critics, including Olga Taxidou who succinctly notes in “A New ‘Art of the Theatre’” that “for Craig the theatre had no place for women” (804). See also Amy Koritz’s *Gendering Bodies/Performing Art*, which investigates Craig’s misogynist views on women through his relationship with Isadora Duncan. Koritz remarks, “Craig insisted on the inferiority of women to men in the arts and incorporated his misogyny into his theoretical stance” (60). Craig consistently maps his issues with women onto their inability to separate themselves from the eruption of the female body. In a letter to Duncan dated October 1907, for example, he

bodies as the perfect vehicles for theatrical art since they are completely controllable and passive, and, on the other hand, he emphasizes the importance for actors to conceive of a new way of inhabiting their bodies as instruments of art—as creators. Craig’s actor-artist will be a new man-machine hybrid that will allow the live body to mediate between its own humanity and the qualities of mechanical bodies that Craig appreciated.

Craig’s theory of the über-marionette, of course, was not the only theoretical attempt to glorify a performing body that would integrate the live and the mechanical. Craig’s vision of a new man-puppet hybrid was rooted in his professed desire to return to earlier conceptions of the theatrical arts, and he attempted to reclaim a historical perspective on the theatrical form and function of a mechanical body in order to further his authoritarian artistic goals. Others, however, were looking to the future. As Craig was working on the über-marionette, the Futurists were also raising their voices in support of a new kind of performing body that would somehow bring a different artistic vision to the world. Led by F.T. Marinetti, the Futurists saw the possibility for technological and theatrical progress in the integration of man and machine, and glorified machinery and mechanical bodies in their theatrical and political pursuits. In his 1909 essay “The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism,” Marinetti glamorizes new technology and machinery such as the locomotive, electric lighting, and automobiles. Marinetti aligns machines and machine bodies with the new, the dangerous, and the exciting—all things the Futurists held up as crucial in the creation of art. Rather than evoking the cerebral, retrospective vision of Craig’s classical mechanical bodies, Marinetti’s descriptions of mechanical bodies are full of raw power, erotic language, and calls for constant technological advancement; he imbues his

calls women “the most material packet of goods in this earth” (qtd. in Koritz 61). He uses his certainty that women cannot transcend the weaknesses of female flesh as justification for his assertion that women cannot truly be artists.

mechanical objects with human body parts as well as human tactile passions and desires.

Marinetti, for example, describes the “red-hot bellies of locomotives” and “ravening motorcars” (11),¹⁰⁷ instilling these bodies with both a mythological status and an embodied materiality.

Mechanical bodies do not, for Marinetti, represent bodies purified of the uncontrollable physical eruptions Craig so detested; rather, Marinetti’s mechanical bodies model a path to claiming the raw power and immediate visceral nature of the human experience without the impediments imposed by human social and political mores or human emotional inhibitions.

Theatricality was a crucial part of Marinetti’s Futurist agenda from the movement’s inception, and the theatre provided an important staging ground for his theories, and, more specifically, for investigations into the way the relationship between live and mechanical bodies could impact aesthetics. Marinetti developed his Futurist manifesto as he was simultaneously working on the production of his play, *Poupées Électriques* (Electric Dolls).¹⁰⁸ As Günter Berghaus notes in *Italian Futurist Theatre: 1909-1944*, Marinetti later claimed “to have read The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism during the performance,” which, for Berghaus, “indicates that he regarded the production as a practical demonstration of the ideas Futurism sought to promote” (32). *Poupées Électriques* premiered in Turin at the Teatro Alfieri on January 15, 1909.¹⁰⁹ The play tells the story of John Wilson, an engineer, and his wife, Mary, who encounter

¹⁰⁷ Quotations from Marinetti’s work, with the exception of *Poupées Électriques*, are from *Critical Writings*, translated by Doug Thompson.

¹⁰⁸ In fact, when the first published edition of *Poupées Électriques* later appeared, it included the Futurist manifesto as a preface entitled “Le Futurisme,” with the note that it was re-printed from the February 1909 issue of *Le Figaro* (7). *Poupées Électriques* was the second play Marinetti wrote, but the first he produced. The first play he wrote was *Le Roi Bombance*, an overt echo of Alfred Jarry’s *Ubu Roi*, which, like *Ubu*, was initially staged (not long after the premiere of *Poupées Électriques*) at the Théâtre de l’Œuvre and directed by Lugné Poe.

¹⁰⁹ As Berghaus notes, the play was published in French under the title *Poupées Électriques*, but was performed before its publication in Italian, translated by Decio Cinti, in Turin with the title *La Donna è Mobile* (*The Woman Is Fickle*) (41 n. 27). All quotations are from the initial 1909 French text. All English translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

another couple, Paul and Juliette, while at a resort. John and Juliette believe that Paul is in love with Mary, which causes marital strife in both relationships and leads to the suicide of Juliette. While the story itself is rather forced and the love triangle somewhat awkwardly executed, it is the appearance of life-sized puppets in the second act that is of interest here.

John, we learn, has built many life-size puppets in order to spice up his marriage, although only two—Monsieur Prudent and La Mère Prunelle—appear onstage (the rest are reportedly kept in the attic). John brings the puppets in when he is intimate with his wife, thereby allowing him to feel he is sneaking their love-making in behind someone's back and giving the relationship a sense of danger and excitement. As the chambermaid Rosina explains, “Les pommes volées sont plus savoureuses que celles achetées... En amour, c'est la même chose” (112).¹¹⁰ John, however, becomes annoyed with the puppets because they so perfectly imitate life, and he complains when they snore and cough. Eventually, John throws the puppets out the window into the lake, but nearby fishermen see this and assume he has murdered actual living people. John is thus required to dredge up the puppets to prove they are mechanical, and not living, people. The sailors are mystified by the mechanical puppets, and the second act ends as they cry out that John is crazy. The puppets, which were played by human actors in the initial production (Menard 123), are described as mechanical bodies animated by electricity. There are echoes here of Craig's concept of the über-marionette, but Marinetti's mechanical bodies are not cleanly devoid of embodied physicality and his puppets are not symbols of a classical ideal. Instead, the puppets are aligned with John's sexual needs and his authority as an engineer/creator. The electricity that animates them serves, for Marinetti, as a primal

¹¹⁰ “Stolen apples are tastier than those bought...In love, it's the same thing.”

transcendent force that can be accessed by both mechanical bodies and live human bodies but, importantly, must also be purified of human weakness. In the play, the weakness that requires cleansing is most closely associated with women, who are presented as damaging to the vital forces of masculine power.¹¹¹ The play's ending, which sees Mary commit suicide at John's urging (and with his gun), provides a theatrical staging of this kind of purification, removing the feminine threat to John's masculine autonomy.

The mechanical bodies and the electricity that animated them would become an important pillar of Marinetti's aesthetic theories. He would later adapt the play to focus more strongly on the automatons and to underscore the human connection to mechanism and sexual electricity as he developed his ideas about art and its relation to bodies.¹¹² His later work builds on this initial foundation, and Marinetti continued to glorify electricity and new kinds of man-machine integrations as the impetus for artistic advancement. His essay "Extended Man and the Kingdom of the Machine," for example, calls for "mechanical beauty" and "love of the machine" (85), and, ultimately, he envisions a Lamarckian hybridization of human and machine that would allow humans to quite literally transform into a new "mechanical species" (86). While disparaging women as "too earthbound" in "Against Sentimentalized Love and Parliamentaryism," Marinetti wistfully remarks that the Futurists "have dreamt of one day

¹¹¹ John metaphorically compares a man loved by a woman to a man in a sickbed, implying that women keep men in a sickly and infantilized state (161-2). Like Craig and Jarry, Marinetti was also quite negative in his views on women, and advocated for the abolition of any kind of sentimental love in his "Variety Theatre" in favor of a mechanized love, which he asserts "healthily devalues and tramples upon obsession with sexual possession" and "reduces lust to its natural function of coitus" (188). His language is often overtly violent against women, such as when he remarks, "The Variety Theater is an instructive schooling in sincerity for the male, since it plays up his predatory instincts as well as tearing away all the woman's veils, all her words, her sighs, her romantic sobs that deform her and conceal her true qualities" (187). As Shershow, among others, has noted, this is "an almost explicit image of rape" (203).

¹¹² Berghaus notes that the 1914 production in Milan "carried the title *Elettricità*," and the first published Italian version in 1920 "contained only the second act of the French version" (the act featuring the automatons) under the title *Elettricità sessuale* (41 n. 27).

being able to create our own mechanical son” (59). He also emphasizes the juxtaposition of live bodies and new mechanisms and technologies in his vision for a “Variety Theatre,” which involved “the use of film” and “modern gadgetry” in its synthesis of “well-conceived analogies between human beings, the animal kingdom, the plant world, and the world of machines” (186). He calls for “A Futurist Theatre of Essential Brevity” that will make it “possible to arrive mechanically at a theater that is entirely new, and perfectly in harmony with our lightning-fast yet pithy Futurist sensibilities” (201). He notes that this brevity will cleanse the shows of the “lingering agony” of all the “undigested time” that can be seen in the “detailed analysis, and lengthy exposition” and otherwise superficial trappings of the modern stage (201-2). In each case, the mechanical body is presented as the pinnacle of what man might hope to attain—physically, emotionally, politically, and artistically.

Although Marinetti continually emphasizes mechanical bodies and technological progress in his artistic vision, he does not completely scorn the live body in favor of mechanism; almost all his work simultaneously emphasizes the visceral and tactile experience of the live body. He does, however, employ rhetoric that suggests that mechanism can improve art by helping to remove wasteful or useless human elements, which he aligns with bourgeois laziness, female weakness, and the restrictions placed on human impulses by social mores and political perspectives he disliked. Mechanism and mechanical bodies, then, are aligned with the idea of a more pure artistic control that will allow artists to remove the chaff and leave only what is crucial to the artistic endeavor. Marinetti’s conception of purification recalls Taylor’s industrialized efficiency but brings it more solidly into conversation with social and political transformations. This political element was present from Marinetti’s earliest work; as Paul Menard observes of the man-machine relationship in *Poupées Électriques*, the play “defines

electricity as the ultimate socio-technological element of change [...] reflecting the movement's fascination with the transformative forces of sweeping industrialization and fascist politics" (123). Marinetti thus maps the aesthetic possibilities for the relationship between live and mechanical bodies onto issues of social and political control.

The focus on control was also reflected in the constructivist movement, in which the glorification of mechanical bodies was meant to provide a path to artistic perfection by eliminating bodily inefficiencies. Promoting useful work, productivity, and the efficient use of time and resources, constructivist artists often emphasized the elements of an object's (or artwork's) construction and its function in their work. Vsevolod Meyerhold developed a theory of actor training, "biomechanics," that sought to apply Taylor's theories of efficiency in a very practical way to actor's bodies. As Edward Braun notes in *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*, Meyerhold's method of training "was designed to give actors methodical instruction in speech and movement 'based on the general physical laws of technology, as expressed most clearly in physics, mechanics, music and architecture'" (172). In his introductory lecture on biomechanics in June of 1922, Meyerhold remarks:

In art our constant concern is the organisation of raw material. Constructivism has forced the artist to become both artist and engineer. Art should be based on scientific principles; the entire creative act should be a conscious process. The art of the actor consists in organising his material: that is, in his capacity to utilise correctly his body's means of expression. (qtd. in Braun 173)

Meyerhold's goal, then, is to help actors to train the "raw material" of their physical bodies—a phrase that immediately suggests they need to be processed and refined to remove impurities. Importantly, Meyerhold was not simply focused on physical impurities, but also felt working

toward embodied mechanical precision would help actors control their emotions. Meyerhold observes:

All psychological states are determined by specific physiological processes. By correctly resolving the nature of his state physically, the actor reaches the point where he experiences the excitation that communicates itself to the spectator and induces him to share in the actor's performance. (qtd. in Braun 173)

In other words, training the body to mechanical perfection also allows an actor to precisely control his own psychological state and affect the psychological state of spectators.

Meyerhold thus developed physical training techniques focused on bodily control, and his method was intended to increase artistic control. Although Meyerhold proposed that actors could increase their own artistic prowess by working toward mechanical control of their bodies, he did not intend for actors to act like machines on the stage. As Alma Law and Mel Gordon note in *Meyerhold, Eisenstein, and Biomechanics: Actor Training in Revolutionary Russia*, Meyerhold's method is often unfairly described as "a machine-like acting vocabulary, or a mechanical style of acting" (3). Instead, Law and Gordon explain that biomechanics was meant for training the body, and that "the outward appearance of Biomechanics should (and would) completely disappear from his actors' movements on the stage, leaving only their kinesthetic effects to act on the spectator" (4). The actor in performance, then, is not expected to *become* a machine, but is instead expected to *mediate*, through his own body, the kinesthetic efficiency of the mechanical movement from biomechanical training. In this way, by acting as both artist and engineer, the actor can be more productively efficient in his work and retain a more thorough sense of artistic authority in the creation of his art. Meyerhold's actor thus provides the perfect practical enactment of Rabinbach's positive take on the Taylorized "body without fatigue." The mediation

of mechanization by Meyerhold's actors is meant to be an instrument or tool by which the live bodies of the actors can become stronger and more efficient, increase their productivity, and better control the quality of their creative output.

After the violence and devastation of WWI, this sort of bodily mechanization and focus on function became increasingly associated not with efficiency and productivity, but with totalitarian control. Rather than a pathway to perfection, attempts to mechanize the body were progressively seen with suspicion as efforts to dehumanize people in order to turn them into controllable machines. A new wariness of mechanical bodies gradually took hold in this age that vacillated between the strong productive impulse of rising consumer culture and the demoralizing destruction left in the wake of the war. There was a great anxiety that masses of people were being reduced to their moving parts and mechanized as disposable cogs in the Taylorized factory machine. The value of the human, according to this view, had been diminished. As Marx insisted, humans had lost their "personal worth" as their humanity became reduced to their "exchange value" (62). In a mechanical world, human bodies were no longer the sole agents of the industrial or the artistic process. Human bodies, which were constantly decaying and relatively easy to damage, were impediments on the path to modernity; they therefore represented something to be controlled, processed, and purified in an increasingly mechanized world. Those who began to fear a more dangerous application of Taylor's methods—especially in connection to the eugenics movement—saw an ever-decreasing gap between the idea of improving those bodies that might be most wasteful and simply removing them altogether.¹¹³ "Purification" began to more firmly take on the negative connotation of

¹¹³ While it is difficult today to separate the idea of "purification" from the horrors of genocides such the Holocaust, it is important to remember that anxieties about the more frightening applications of the eugenics movement were

sterilization, thus politicizing the connection between production and reproduction. Mark Seltzer, in *Bodies and Machines*, describes this connection as “a rivalry between technological and biological modes of generating persons and things that involves at once a radical transformation in processes of production and a politics of reproduction” (3). The theatre manifested these fears over dehumanization and the intensifying conversations about production and reproduction in its theatrical representations of live and mechanized bodies on the stage.

In early 1921, Karel Čapek’s play *R.U.R.* (short for *Rossum’s Universal Robots*) premiered at Prague’s National Theatre.¹¹⁴ Firmly focused on the relationship of live and mechanical bodies to production and reproduction, the play centers on a factory that produces artificial workers who eventually revolt against their human creators. The play, in which the word “robot”¹¹⁵ appears for the first time, has become something of a touchstone in studies of modern anxieties over the relationship between humans and technology. The very real concerns present in *R.U.R.*, concerns over human creative agency and authority in an increasingly mechanized world, are not metaphorical or abstract; they are clearly and realistically (as much as possible) presented in material relation to physical human bodies.

only one side of the eugenics discussion. Tamsen Wolff, in *Mendel’s Theatre: Heredity, Eugenics, and Early Twentieth-Century American Drama*, notes that eugenics was “far from a new idea” in the early twentieth century (3) and represented a long line of historical discussions about the makeup of the human race. The eugenics movement itself was highly popular at this time, and, as Wolff remarks, “While eugenics is now generally considered synonymous with racism, this assumption elides the many possible directions and degrees of that racism, as well as overlooks other uses of and approaches to eugenic ideas,” including the fact that “eugenics was also enlisted to support numerous feminist, liberal, and progressive arguments” (5).

¹¹⁴ The basic theme of *R.U.R.* was first addressed in the short story “The System” by Karel Čapek and his brother Josef, published in 1908. “The System” includes a factory owner who, in his desire to increase productivity, remarks that “the worker must become a machine.” In order to accomplish this, the owner decides to remove the souls of men, exclaiming, “I have sterilized the worker, purified him” (qtd. in Klíma 72-3).

¹¹⁵ In Czech, the word “robot” carries the connotation of forced labor. Paul Menard explains: “Derived from the Czech *robota*, meaning servitude or forced labor, it also related to the Russian *rabota*, meaning simply “work.” [...] But more explicitly, *robota* refers to the feudal days of Czechoslovakia when peasants were obliged to leave their fields and work for the nobles, without compensation; in more recent times, *robota* is used to describe work that is not done voluntarily. In *R.U.R.* the term is synonymous with function; the robots are manufactured, soulless, and dehumanized forms of slave labor” (126).

The play situates its narrative within a literal landscape of technological progress. The setting in the prologue features “an endless row of factory buildings,” “a lamp, a telephone,” “big maps depicting ship and railway lines,” “a clock,” “a chart with entries of telegraph rates,” and a typewriter that is in use at the top of the opening scene (35-6).¹¹⁶ This is paired with luxury items: “wall decorations,” “a splendid Turkish carpet,” “a leather club-style armchair,” and “bottles of wine and brandy” (36). In this way, the technological and mechanical progress of man is immediately aligned with luxury and comfort. The play begins with a scene in which the young and naïvely idealistic Helena Glory confronts Harry Domin, the central director of Rossum’s Universal Robots, a company that has been making and selling robot workers. We learn that old Rossum discovered “a substance which behaved exactly like living matter although it was of a different chemical composition” (38), and from this substance he could artificially create life. Old Rossum, lacking imagination, decided not just to “manufacture a human being,” but, as Domin explains incredulously, “[...] he took it into his head to manufacture everything just as it is in the human body, right down to the last gland. The appendix, the tonsils, the belly button—all the superfluities” (39). According to Domin, old Rossum ultimately “wanted somehow to scientifically dethrone God” in his recreation of life (39), but his son, the young Rossum, instead focused on the manufacturing promise of such an endeavor.

Rather than attempting to artificially create something equivalent to live human bodies, young Rossum recognized the financial and commercial benefit of creating bodies that would be simpler and more cost effective to produce. As Domin remarks, “So then young Rossum said to himself: A human being. That’s something that feels joy, plays the violin, wants to go for a walk,

¹¹⁶ Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the play are from Claudia Novack-Jones’s translation in Peter Kussi’s edited collection, *Toward the Radical Center*.

and in general requires a lot of things which—which are, in effect, superfluous” (41). Young Rossum’s goals, then, involved removing those things he felt to be wasteful or useless in an artificial body, ultimately resulting in something that would be, in his opinion, better built and more useful than live human bodies. Domin’s description makes it clear that he sides with young Rossum in finding old Rossum’s process ridiculous because there are so many elements to the live human body that he sees as inefficient in the creation of useful products and that can be removed, including feelings, artistic impulses, and, importantly, “even the sexual organs” (39). When Helena objects to the removal of the sexual organs, asserting in a stutteringly embarrassed manner that sexual organs do, in fact, have a useful function, Domin remarks that if bodies are “produced artificially,” then sexual methods of (re)production are “not—hm—in any way necessary” for those artificial bodies (39-40). The construction of bodies thus becomes central to the play’s focus on production and reproduction.

This exchange also sets up a dynamic that calls into question the relative agency of live versus mechanical bodies in the process of bodily reproduction. Domin’s explanation aligns divine creative authority with live human creation and human creative authority with artificial production. Old Rossum presents an eighteenth-century view of the creation of artificial bodies; he believes his production of perfect artificial bodies will reflect his own skill and make his authority as a creator equal to that of god, who is, for old Rossum, the highest creative authority. While old Rossum wanted to prove his skill, young Rossum explicitly challenges the supremacy of divine creative authority by arguing that human creative authority can strip away “useless” things the divine creator did not. Importantly, these things include both physical and metaphysical elements: souls are just as unnecessary as tonsils for robots. In young Rossum’s view, humans—god’s creations—can claim for themselves a role of creative authority more

powerful than that of god; humans, for young Rossum, will essentially unseat god as the primary authority over creation. This theory will be paralleled later in the play when the robots make a similar move, deciding that they, in fact, can claim creative authority more perfectly than their human creators, essentially unseating man as the primary authority over his own creation. In this way, Čapek juxtaposes the effects of the Taylorized factory system on the production and reproduction of human bodies with broader conversations about human creative authority.

As the play moves forward, we learn that tensions between human workers and the robot workers increasingly replacing them have turned violent. Helena asks Domin if he ever had any doubts about creating so many robots as the violence between humans and robots escalated:

When Workers rose up against the Robots and destroyed them, and when people gave the Robots weapons to defend themselves and the Robots killed so many people—And when governments began using Robots as soldiers and there were so many wars and everything, remember? (60)

Helena's comments give a terrifying account of live bodies destroyed by artificial bodies.

Importantly, however, Čapek allows sympathetic Helena to continue to lay the blame on the live bodies themselves; for her, it is humans who began the destruction, humans who gave the robots weapons, and humans who ordered the robots to use deadly force against other humans. Helena's remarks indicate that, while the artificial bodies were carrying out the violent actions, she still believes human bodies maintain the role of agent. As the act moves forward, however, it becomes clear, even to Helena, that robots have claimed agency for themselves in this matter. By the end of act one, the robots have disseminated revolutionary propaganda calling for the overthrow of the human race. We discover that they have been killing humans en masse, and that they have now surrounded the main office of the R.U.R factory. When Helena brings in the

Robot Radius to discover why robots have turned violent, Radius couches his answer in terms of production and use value. Humans, he says, “are not as capable as Robots” (66); while “Robots do everything,” humans “only give orders—utter empty words” (66). In this way, the shift in power between robots and humans is discussed in relation to the value of the work they do. Radius assumes that the authority of bodies should be based on the market value of their labor. For Radius, it is simple; humans do not work, and robots do. Humans, then, are inefficient, wasteful. The robots thus turn the code of efficiency against the humans that created them. In a natural extension of the logic the robots themselves embody, Radius expresses his desire to invert the power hierarchy, stating clearly, “I want to be the master of people” (67).

The increasing awareness of the destruction of the human race by robots is paired in the act with discussions about the human race’s increasing sterility. It appears that the robots would not need to harm humans in order to kill them off; no longer able to procreate, humans themselves are a dying race. Helena asks her Nana, Alquist, and Dr. Gall about the decrease in children born to humans, bemoaning her own childless state. It seems that sex organs have now become as superfluous for humans as Domin felt they were for robots. Although the human characters see themselves as creators, they lack sexual desire, and the text becomes fraught with language that infantilizes them, thereby undermining their ability to procreate. Helena is constantly treated like a child. Domin is initially taken with her primarily because she is “very young” (37). In later scenes, Helena is often in the company of Nana, her “nurse” (34), who stands both as a reminder of the children that Helena has not, at thirty-one years of age, managed to produce, and as a figure that continually writes Helena into the role of child. Nana even explicitly describes Helena as “just like a little child” (70). The men in the R.U.R. office act like large children, and, in spite of the fact that they all seem to be in love with Helena, it is clear that

they have “failed” in their duty to procreate with her. This presents a major difficulty for the human race, as it appears to be a problem that is not just found among this small group. The discussions about the loss of human-kind’s reproductive ability take place in Helena’s room, decorated with the beautiful blooming flowers Dr. Hallemeier has created for her in his lab; these flowers, we later learn from Dr. Gall, are themselves sterile due to the artificial manner by which they were created (69). The artificial production of robot bodies is thus continually connected with the human race’s loss of its own natural ability to procreate. In essence, the overproduction of robots is directly proportional to the underproduction (lack of conception, pregnancy, and birth) of humans. There is a serious anxiety here that the increasing mechanization of human life will lead to humans re-figured as children: helpless, weak, and infertile.¹¹⁷ Two different kinds of human labor—manufacturing and childbirth—are thus equated and equally replaced by robot labor.

R.U.R. stages an obsession with procreation. Both the human and robot characters fixate on issues of production and reproduction. The method by which bodies are created becomes the center of the dramaturgical conflict as the robots learn that they cannot themselves create new robots. While robots did make the materials necessary for the creation of new robots—manning the vats that mix the raw materials, spinning the veins and nerves, and assembling the pieces (44-5)—the rhetoric here indicates that the robots did not ever themselves become creators; they were always simply cogs in a factory machine turning out tools. This distinction will, of course, be crucial to the play’s dénouement. The robots do not know the scientific formula for making new artificial bodies live, and Helena has destroyed Rossum’s notes. Further, the robots have

¹¹⁷ A similar concern would provide the foundation for Aldous Huxley’s 1932 novel, *Brave New World*.

killed all the human scientists who might have been able to reproduce Rossum's results; here, the "reproduction" of scientific knowledge also gains status as a kind of metaphorical maternal labor. While robots have claimed superiority in terms of their use value and bodily efficiency, they have not been able to claim creative authority in terms of the production of living bodies.

Young Rossum made artificial bodies into perfect workers by removing those things involved in the process of a person's emotional and physical development, thereby removing the capacity for growth outside the realm of physical work and placing the robots into a prelapsarian role. In addition to the lack of sexual organs and sexual impulses, Čapek notes that the robots "are slightly mechanical in their speech and movements, blank of expression, fixed in their gaze" (35). They are tabula rasa, blank slates, children. They are, perhaps, what Alan Turing would later term "child-machines"¹¹⁸—still learning, and not advanced enough to claim agency on a par with humanity, although they are visually no different. Since the only differences, we have been told, between live bodies and mechanical bodies are the elements that were considered "superfluous," the obvious conclusion is that those superfluous elements—feelings, art, and sexuality—do, in fact, serve a purpose in allowing humanity to claim their role as creators. Waste, it seems, was not, in fact, wasteful.

The struggle for ultimate authority in this world thus becomes a struggle to be able to reproduce. In the final act of *R.U.R.*, it is the robots (specifically, Robot Primus and Robot Helena) and not the humans that ultimately move beyond the creative block plaguing both races. The process by which creative authority is again claimed begins with an acceptance of those things young Rossum would have deemed superfluous. Robot Helena, for example, is described

¹¹⁸ In "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" (1950), Alan Turing proposed, "Instead of trying to produce a program to simulate the adult mind, why not rather try to produce one that simulates the child's? If this were then subjected to an appropriate course of education one would obtain the adult brain" (52).

as silly; she wanders in gardens, puts flowers in her hair, and seems to have no purpose (105). She does not accomplish work like the other robots and thus thinks she is inferior. It is implied, however, that this sense of inferiority is because she is being measured against the wrong function. Instead of laboring as the manufacturer of goods, robot Helena should be laboring as a maternal creator—she is not “working” because she is not fulfilling the (decidedly narrow and stereotypically heteronormative) function of womanhood, which includes her primary role as mother/creator. The play ends in a strikingly romantic fashion, with Alquist’s melodramatic introduction of Robot Primus and Robot Helena, now capable of emotion and in love with one another, as the new Adam and Eve. It is a metaphorical return to the garden, a return to embracing that which had been marked as wasteful, such as emotions and sexual desire, and, in theory, a return to sexual relations producing children.

On the level of narrative, the play’s ending thus seems to suggest that robots have now taken the place of their human creators. In this sense, the artificial bodies of the robots have been legitimized in their agency, taking both the literal space of the live bodies of humans and the authoritative role of creators. What actually occurs in the theatrical staging of the play, however, is far more complicated. Although focused on concerns of the modern age, the theatrical construction of the play itself does not feel very “modern.” Peter Kussi, in *Toward the Radical Center*, calls the play a “classic comedy” (32), while Ivan Klíma, in *Karel Čapek: Life and Work*, remarks, “Formally, the play was considered a dramatic utopia” (83); both are rather vague descriptions. The play follows a linear structure, although there are time gaps in between acts (most notably between the Prologue and act one, when ten years pass). The characters are named and given descriptions and actions that follow basic decorum and verisimilitude, but they do not carry the naturalist feel of Chekhov or Strindberg, and the dialogue and characterizations do not

have the depth of Ibsen's realism. They are also not abstractions, although they are somewhat two-dimensional; the play does not present a challenge to aesthetics or attempt to reframe the theatrical experience in the manner of the avant-garde movement.

Instead, the structure of the play recalls earlier forms of narrative and dramatic construction; there are strong elements of the well-made play and of melodrama. Thus, while the play deals with themes of concern to modern audiences (robots, technology, progress), it consistently returns to romantic metaphors and presents its issues, characters, and sometimes even its dialogue as though they are ghostly presences from a long-lost romantic poem. Indeed, in terms of style, this play would much more comfortably wear the name "romantic" than "modern." The text is peppered with wistful appeals to Nature (with a capital 'N'), nostalgic memories of the past, earnest calls for revolution, concerns over sleep, dreams, and imagination, poetic entreaties to God, the soul, and the spiritual world, and an overwhelming obsession with the figure of the child, innocence, and the concept of childhood. Rather than heeding Strindberg's caution not to put "new wine" into "old bottles," then, Čapek has somewhat paradoxically decided the best bottle for his play about modern machinery is an old romantic one. It is the metatheatrical equivalent of the uncanny, familiar and yet strange. It is also the perfect representational landscape in which to present his uncanny robot bodies, tackling questions about the way creation and procreation, as well as production and reproduction, function in a new modern world both strange and familiar.

The uncanniness of the theatrical style is complemented by the way bodies are presented on stage. Visually, the live and mechanical bodies are presented in the play as interchangeable. The play begins with Helena's inability to discern robot from human. When she is introduced to the robot secretary, Sulla, Helena is certain Domin has had a live human pretend to be a robot in

a sort of bait-and-switch marketing ploy to convince potential buyers of how life-like their robots are. Likewise, when she is introduced to the other directors of the company, Helena is convinced they are actually robots; she doesn't realize they are living humans until she is told. The stage directions, which remark that "In the Prologue the ROBOTS are dressed like people" (35), underscore that this is not simply a lack of discernment on Helena's part; the robot bodies are *meant* to look no different from the live human bodies onstage.¹¹⁹ We are also told, as previously mentioned, that the artificial bodies are organic, albeit of a substance that is "of a different chemical composition" to the "living matter" from which humans are made (38). Although the artificial bodies are clearly meant to metaphorically invoke mechanical bodies, conjuring images of vulnerable flesh meeting cold steel, Čapek insists that the material at the core of the construction of artificial bodies is not substantially different from the material at the core of live human bodies. The fact that all the characters are played by live actors, of course, also serves to support the slippage between live and mechanical bodies here. By juxtaposing the live and mechanical bodies in this way, when the audience gets to the final stage picture of Robot Helena and Robot Primus, they have already been trained to see the live, the artificial, and the mechanical as existing in the same body.

The play quite explicitly invokes fears of live bodies conquered and consumed by mechanical bodies and presents what might at first appear to be a simple cautionary parable

¹¹⁹ While Čapek clearly indicates that the robot bodies should look no different from the human bodies onstage during the prologue (and the play's dialogue indicating Helena's inability to discern human from robot dramaturgically supports this), many productions have chosen to emphasize the artificiality of the robots in their costume and/or physical mannerisms from the play's opening moments. Čapek does note that "in the play proper they [the robots] are wearing linen shirts tightened at their waists with a belt, and have brass numbers on their chests" (35). This offers opportunities in the production design to emphasize the artificiality of the bodies for the later parts of the play, which suggests that either the humans or the robots (or both) may have found it expedient to include a visual differentiation between robot and human bodies as more robots entered the workforce. Regardless, the robots are still traditionally played by human actors, and the play's dramaturgical conflict depends on the audience recognition of the slippage between live and artificial bodies that opens the play.

against the encroachment of technology and mechanism onto human territory. Many scholars have emphasized the darkness and foreboding of mechanical invasion in their readings of the play. Klíma, for example, maintains that Čapek intended his play to suggest that both those who argue for and against technology are correct but ultimately concludes that “the author himself obviously sided with Alquist, who resisted Domin’s technocratic vision,” and, further, that the play’s “vision of the destruction of the world, brought on by the terrible machinery of production, eclipsed the thesis that each has his own noble idealism” (79). Menard states, “The key element is *R.U.R.*’s cautionary vision of mechanistic dehumanization [...]. Man is devalued, imprisoned, and threatened by his own man-made mechanized world where humans become Robots before ultimately being destroyed by Robots” (128). Even Segal, who acknowledges Čapek’s overall “sense of optimism” in the final image of Adam and Eve, observes, “For Karel Čapek, the robot, the culmination of machine culture, represented the Apocalypse. The ultimate anti-utopian nightmare would be fulfilled. Humankind would destroy its own species through the invention of a human-like machine that would make humans obsolete” (309-10). There is no question that the play’s vision is a stark one, and that the narrative extermination of humanity is meant to illustrate a pressing threat represented by mechanism.

Although the narrative suggests that mechanical bodies have replaced live bodies by the end of the play (all the humans are dead and the robots will be the creators of a new race), what is actually occurring in the space of the theatre in real-time, however, is something quite different. On stage, it is not a mechanical body, but a live body, that presents this final picture to the audience. The play, then, doubles the live bodies onstage with a metaphorical, rather than literal mechanical body. The “human” characters represent the frailties and weaknesses of live bodies—weak, soft, lazy, and too full of childish emotions and selfishness to accomplish

anything. They lose the ability to procreate through their capitulation of their productive impulse (the desire to work and the desire to mate). The “robot” characters represent the anxieties and fears humans have over mechanical bodies and machinery. They are cold, distant, and also selfish, but in the opposite manner; so concerned with efficiency and the productivity of the factory line that they refuse to consider any individual needs. They, too, lose their ability to procreate, but through their lack of passion. It is only when the two kinds of bodies—mechanical and live—are able to integrate that there is hope again for the human race. The live bodies of the actors playing Robot Helena and Robot Primus thus become the medium and mediating force of this narrative *dénouement*. The actors literally must mediate between the mechanical bodies evoked by the robots they are portraying and the live bodies of the audience, meta-theatrically enacting the mediation of man and machine through their own performance. What, content-wise, is a story of robots taking the place of humans, becomes, on the stage, a parable of live bodies learning to mediate the live and the mechanical aspects of modern life.

The changing relationship between bodies and machinery in the wake of the Industrial Revolution led to a deep ambivalence over what the future of this relationship might be. Craig, Marinetti, Meyerhold, and Čapek each appropriated earlier eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conceptions of the man-machine relationship in their theatrical experiments. These experiments used actors’ bodies to investigate anxieties about losing creative control over one’s creations as technology changed the way human bodies related to and experienced the world. Responding to broader cultural anxieties over industrialization and an increasing emphasis on efficiency, each of these theatre artists envisioned a new model of performance, renegotiating the relationship between the live body and the mechanical body in order to theorize new methods for their craft. As the line between “art” and “products” became destabilized, issues of creative authority,

authorship, and authenticity, and the questions and complications these issues suggest, are implicit in their work in both theoretical and practical ways. Those who heralded the merging of humanity with machinery as a step forward in human evolution focused on the way live bodies would need to change in order to better suit their new roles as mediators of mechanism, while those who felt the live body might be subsumed by mechanical bodies searched for ways live bodies could ensure that they did not become obsolete or unnecessary next to the imagined specter of mechanical progression. The juxtaposition of mechanical production with sexual reproduction by artists such as F.T. Marinetti and Karel Čapek brings the visceral organic impulse and aesthetic challenge represented by Jarry's *Ubu* together with more specific questions about the human ability to retain creative authority in a mechanized world. Although it might seem that these experiments move even further toward providing examples of the live body usurped by mechanism, in fact, the focus on the mechanism here involves a necessarily heightened attention to the living body. It is not the mechanical body, but the living body and its ability (or not) to mediate the mechanical apparatus that becomes crucial. In each case, the theatrical focus on the mechanization of bodies reveals the live body as a site of crisis as it mediates between new mechanisms and a living audience.

Chapter 4: Mechanized Humans and Human Mechanisms: War Machines and Mechanical Ubiquity

“We must believe in a sense of life renewed by the theater, a sense of life in which man fearlessly makes himself master of what does not yet exist, and brings it into being. And everything that has not been born can still be brought to life if we are not satisfied to remain merely recording mechanisms.”

~Antonin Artaud, “Preface,” *The Theatre and Its Double*

Just a little over one month after Germany signed the armistice agreement that would mark the official end of WWI, the Provincetown Players staged Susan Glaspell and George Cram (“Jig”) Cook’s one-act play, *Tickless Time*.¹²⁰ The play tells the story of Ian Joyce, who decides to build a sundial in his yard so that he can live on “true” time (tickless time) rather than “clock” time (ticking time). Ian equates the clocks with what he perceives as the mechanization of humanity, while the sundial, for him, represents a way for humanity to remove the bonds of mechanism. As he remarks, “The sun-dial is more than [a] sun-dial. It’s a first-hand relation with truth. A personal relation. When you take your time from a clock you are mechanically getting information from a machine. You’re nothing but a clock yourself...” (81).¹²¹ Ian thus presents the mechanism of the clock as mediating human experience, and this mediation means, for him, that the mechanism is obstructing human experience; the clock is somehow in-between human bodies

¹²⁰ A crucial force in the development of American theatre, Glaspell and her husband Cook were the founders of The Provincetown Players, which provided a transfusion of new American voices and forms into the modern theatrical landscape. *Tickless Time* premiered on December 20, 1918, after the group had moved into their new theatre at 133 MacDougal Street in New York, which they dubbed “The Provincetown Playhouse.” The play would later be presented as the “curtain-raiser” for the Broadway premiere of another of Provincetown Players’ central playwrights: Eugene O’Neill’s *The Emperor Jones* in 1920.

¹²¹ All quotes are from *Susan Glaspell: The Complete Plays*, edited by Linda Ben-Zvi and J. Ellen Gainor.

and their perception of the world around them.

At Ian's insistence, he and his wife, Eloise, bury their clocks in the backyard, vowing to live in accordance with "true" time from this point forward. In an increasingly animated monologue, Ian exclaims:

We will bury the clocks before the sun-dial—an offering, a living sacrifice. I tell you this is *great*, Eloise. What is a clock? Something agreed upon and arbitrarily imposed upon us. Standard time. Not true time. Symbolizing the whole standardization of our lives.

Clocks! Why, it is clockiness that makes America mechanical and mean! Clock-minded!

A clock is a little machine that shuts us out from the wonder of time... (82).

Here, the mechanical timepieces are not only rhetorically granted the agency and authority to *hinder* human bodies, they also have the power to *mechanize* human bodies. This is emphasized by the fact that Eddy and Alice Knight, the Joyces' friends who live on clock-time, are described as "a Standardized Mind" and "a Standardized Wife" (80). Further, Ian declares that giving up the clocks is "a pledge that we ourselves refuse to be automatons!" (82).

The dramaturgical conflict in the play, as well as the humor, arises as the idealistic dream of individual "truth" detached from mechanism encounters the practical realities of everyday life. Eloise becomes anxious upon realizing that if they live on tickless time they will always be late for the trains, since "The train doesn't run by the sun" (83). In addition, they will miss appointments and never be able to invite guests for dinner, since the ticking time that governs the train schedule and their guest's calculation of dinner time might not align with the tickless time by which the Joyces now live (83-4). The Joyces' neighbors and friends provide an outside critical perspective on the endeavor—they note, for instance, the difficulty of telling time by a sun-dial at night or on a cloudy day—while their cook, Annie, works herself into a frenzy over

not being able to precisely time her recipes. When Eloise discovers that, in fact, the sun itself only tells the time by the sun-dial four days out of the year, and the rest of the days require complicated mathematical adjustments to accurately calculate “sun-time,” she becomes distraught and feels betrayed by Ian’s “true” time. The action becomes increasingly frantic and farcical as the Joyces dig up the clocks, bury the sun-dial, re-bury the clocks, and then re-dig up the clocks and sun-dial both. The play ends with the savvy neighbor, Mrs. Stubbs, declaring, “Let them that want sun-time have sun time and them that want tick time have tick time,” as the cook enters and announces with finality, “It’s dinner time!” (91). In this way, the practical demands of the body (for food, in this case) become the focal point in a final uneasy truce between tick time and tickless time.

The play, which premiered in the wake of the many scientific discoveries and technological advancements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, directly addresses the general public’s attempts to experience and understand the world in light of these new technologies and mechanisms.¹²² The play had its genesis in Cook’s own anxieties about the body’s relationship with mechanism in this unstable technological landscape; Cook reportedly began working on the play as he was consumed by worries over the effect of standardized time on human bodies. Barbara Ozieblo remarks in *Susan Glaspell: A Critical Biography* that “Cook transferred his personal fear of aging into an obsession with the mechanics of timekeeping. Logically, given his passion for the primeval, he studied ancient methods of measuring time and

¹²² As Marcia Noe and Robert Marlowe remark in “*Suppressed Desires and Tickless Time: An Intertextual Critique of Modernity*,” the play, which was “written thirty-four years after the establishment of World Standard Time by the Prime Meridian Conference, thirteen years after Einstein’s discovery of special relativity, and two years after his discovery of general relativity, reflects scientific and lay concerns with the nature of time and space” (3). J. Ellen Gainor also reads the play as a response to new ways of understanding the body’s relationship to the world, discussing the play in *Susan Glaspell in Context* as an illustration of Leo Marx’s vision of “technology and the pastoral ideal in America,” as a “dramatization of the philosophy of Henri Bergson,” and as a “response to then current concerns with the growth of industrialism in America” (87).

discovered that modern calculations hurry it along too fast” (136). His preoccupation with the mechanical process of measuring time and its impact on human bodies led him to build his own sundial, which was held up on a pedestal by four nude statues that Cook sculpted himself.¹²³ The play, while light-heartedly showcasing the silliness that results from the Joyces’ adoption of tickless time, also raises important questions that would become central to modern considerations of the relationship between bodies and machines: How should human bodies respond in an age of increasing mechanical ubiquity? What authority does the human have to carve out his or her own space detached from the mechanisms of the modern world? Are the machines of the modern age—even seemingly benign mechanical devices such as clocks—a threat to human agency?

Tickless Time occurred in an important moment in modern investigations into the relationship between man and machine. Machines and mechanisms were becoming an everyday part of the way people experienced and interacted with the world. The inventions that had, in the previous century, seemed extraordinary and wondrous, would become, by the 1920s, part of the common fabric of day-to-day living.¹²⁴ Electric and telephone companies expanded their infrastructure, while automobiles became a more prevalent form of transportation. Mass transit,

¹²³ Glaspell assisted in the creation of the molds for the figures, a process that she describes in her biography of Cook, *The Road to the Temple*, using language that reveals the intensity (bordering on violence) with which Cook approached the process (222). The fact that the sundial was supported by these statues further underscores that, for Cook, the importance of the sundial was connected with the bodies that would ultimately be expected to live under the conditions set by machinic or non-machinic measuring methods. Glaspell describes the figures as “Dawn—or the dreamer. She who faces south—Noon, the work of the world. Sunset—work done, old age, the grave. And the North Star, the beyond-the-sun” (221). In this way, the figures not only resemble human bodies, but also, in the tradition of the Moirai or the Fates, metaphorically represent the human life cycle.

¹²⁴ See Vaclav Smil’s *Transforming the Twentieth Century* for a thorough discussion of the pre- and post-war (and beyond) transformations of several key technological and mechanical advancements. Smil traces improvements in manufacturing and infrastructure that allowed many pre-WWI inventions to be commercialized. He remarks, “the innovators of the pre-WWI era would be impressed by the extent of this mass production that made their inventions so much more affordable as the economies of scale helped to turn rare possessions into objects of common ownership and spread them around the world” (19).

such as New York City's subway system, became part of the foundation of city life, while typewriters, adding machines, and other mechanical aids like cash registers became more powerful, more effective, and more cost efficient, allowing them to be more universally embraced by businesses and other institutions. Even entertainment became mechanized; radios could be found in almost every home, and popular programs like *Dick Tracy* regaled listeners with fantastic tales of daring escapades and romance.¹²⁵ The film industry continued to expand its reach, and, in 1927, added sound to the experience; going to the movies was a common pastime.¹²⁶

Simultaneously, however, the war had increased the association of machinery and mechanism with the cold cruelty of violence. The generative possibilities for machines and warfare exuberantly embraced by pre-war movements such as Marinetti's Futurism¹²⁷ were quickly tempered by the realities of World War I as the violence of machine warfare instead branded machinery and mechanism as forces responsible for bodily trauma. The effects of the mechanical warfare used during the Great War provided much fodder for those who saw the encroachment of mechanism on the realm of the human to be a devastatingly negative affair. While WWI was not the first conflict to use machines in war,¹²⁸ advancements in technology and

¹²⁵ Although, as Richard J. Hand and Mary Trainor note in *The Radio Drama Handbook*, "it is difficult to put a precise date on the invention of the radio" (5), they remark that, "nevertheless many nations saw the appeal of radio broadcasting and embraced the technology with passion in the 1920s" (7). See, also, Tim Crook's *Radio Drama: Theory and Practice*, for a discussion of the rise of the radio medium in relation to the broadcast of radio drama.

¹²⁶ Gerald Mast and Bruce F. Kawin note, in *A Short History of the Movies*, that although "preparation for the entrance of sound had been building for over 30 years" (196), the first feature-length commercial film "to use synchronized sound as a means of telling a story" was *The Jazz Singer*, released in October 1927 (200). It was a major success, and although it took a few years for the infrastructure for sound in studios and theatres to be in place more widely, by 1930 the major Hollywood studios had transitioned to making sound films.

¹²⁷ In "The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism," Marinetti writes, "We wish to glorify war—the sole cleanser of the world" (14), a sentiment he continues in many of his essays, including, notably, "War, the Sole Cleanser of the World" and "The Necessity and Beauty of Violence."

¹²⁸ See John M. Kinder's *Playing with their Bodies: American War and the Problem of the Disabled Veteran* for a discussion of different historical conflicts and their impact on human soldiers. Kinder names the Civil War the first

industrial manufacturing meant that machinery played a much larger and deadlier role than it had in previous conflicts.¹²⁹ Soldiers were cut down in the fields en masse as machine guns and automatic rifles became lighter and faster over the course of the war. By 1916 heavy tanks joined the armored cars already in use. Improvements to the design of airplanes and zeppelins increased the risk and dangers of aerial attack, while enhancements to the artillery and armament of naval ships meant attacks at sea could occur over far greater distances. Chemical warfare, high explosive shells, and grenades left trenches full of men blind, bleeding, or literally torn apart.¹³⁰ As John M. Kinder remarks in *Playing with their Bodies: American War and the Problem of the Disabled Veteran*, “By the close of 1916, many believed that modernity’s technoscientific triumphs—railroads, telegraphs, automated assembly lines, industrial discipline, medicine—had made possible a future of unprecedented human destruction” (50). Men who returned from the front, when they returned at all, faced the after-effects of serious mental and physical trauma. The questions raised by the light-hearted humor of the Joyces’ encounter with clocks and sundials become far more urgent in a world in which machines perpetrate such ruthless acts of violence on human bodies.

The era was marked, then, by an uneasiness rising from, on the one hand, a new understanding of the level of destruction that could be caused by machinery and, on the other

war to truly traumatize through its use of machinery, noting that it “inaugurated a frightening new age of industrialized slaughter” (22).

¹²⁹ See chapter 6 of Michael Adas’s *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* for a thorough discussion of the way industrial and technological advancements intensified the impact of the war’s violence (345–401). Adas also aligns the anxiety caused by the machines of war with a struggle for control; specifically, a struggle to maintain Western control over its own image of self-superiority. As he asserts, “The theme of humanity betrayed and consumed by the technology that Europeans had long considered the surest proof of their civilization’s superiority runs through accounts of those engaged in trench madness” (367). Adas describes the machines as countering a specifically Western political (and colonizing) ideological authority as they also, in their brutal violence, negated the agency, authority, and dignity of individual soldiers’ bodies.

¹³⁰ See Eric Dorn Brose’s *A History of the Great War* for more information about advancements in weaponry and technology during WWI.

hand, the increasing presence of mechanism and machinery in everyday life. Understandably, this conflict became central to modern artistic explorations of the human condition. Accounts of the war and its consequences dominated the work of the artists of the “Lost Generation”¹³¹ as artists struggled to find sense and purpose in its aftermath. Novelists such as Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald detailed both failure and success in attempts to reintegrate into the banality of ordinary life after the extraordinary experiences of the war. This also became an issue of medium, as, rather than simply describing the ennui and devastation, some novelists and poets attempted to make their mediums reflect the chaos and despair involved in re-creating meaning after such violence and loss. John Dos Passos, for example, fragmented his narrative in the *U.S.A.* trilogy to highlight the similarly fragmented post-war experience (a common strategy of modernist artworks).¹³² Ezra Pound attempted to “make things new,” and he championed in his poetry a stark imagism that strove to cut experience down until it could be expressed in the brief purity of one perfect image. Writers such as James Joyce and Gertrude Stein popularized other experiments with language and style, such as automatic writing and stream-of-consciousness. The cinema followed suit, with avant-garde work that began to experiment more intensely with cinematic form and function, embracing such aesthetic forms as German expressionism and Soviet montage.

¹³¹ Ernest Hemingway included the epigraph, “You are all a lost generation,” in his 1926 novel *The Sun Also Rises*, and he attributed the phrase to Gertrude Stein. According to Hemingway’s account in his posthumous *The Moveable Feast*, Stein overheard a garage owner say to one of his mechanics that was not working quickly enough, “You are all a ‘génération perdue.’” She then told Hemingway, “That is what you are. That’s what you all are. [...] All of you young people who served in the war. You are a lost generation” (29). It seems appropriate for the purposes of this discussion that the phrase arose out of an employer’s perception of an inefficient relationship between man and machine: a mechanic’s slow work on the machinery of an automobile.

¹³² Dos Passos also experimented in the piece with translating new cinematic formats including the Newsreel into his textual medium. The Newsreel’s presentation of the machinery of war (in reports on military conflicts) within the mechanical performative aesthetic represented by film makes it a perfect example of the ambivalence over machinery in this moment by bringing together the horrors of war and a medium crafted for entertainment.

The modern stage gave embodied material expression to the aspects of the man-machine relationship that the war brought into sharp focus. The war featured, either directly or indirectly, in many plays of the period.¹³³ Stage productions experimented with the cruelty represented by cold machine bodies haunted by the violence of war coupled with the increasing ubiquity of mechanisms and machinery in everyday life. The theatre's ability to provide both a metaphorical as well as a material and physical reality meant that, once again, it became a vital testing ground not just for theories of mediation and interface between live and mechanical bodies, but also for the physical and psychological possibilities and limits of such relationships. The body became the crucial site on which the conflict over mechanism versus humanity was played out. In fact, the body was, for some modern artists, quite possibly the only place where the invasive and all-encompassing encroachment of mechanism—or humanity's resistance to such encroachment—could be observed. Further, this experimentation, occurring as it did, in a theatre, also linked the body with conversations about aesthetics and the possibilities for artistic authority in a world in which such violence could occur. Many avant-garde artists, including those involved with surrealism, expressionism, and Dada, among others, often invoked the relationship between the live body and the machine body in their efforts to reject traditional forms of theatre-making and press on the role of the human body (and the machine body) in this new world.

First staged in Paris on June 10, 1921,¹³⁴ Tristan Tzara's play, *Le Coeur à Gaz* (*The Gas*

¹³³ See Heinz Kosok's *The Theatre of War: The First World War in British and Irish Drama* for a detailed analysis of over 200 British and Irish plays about the war. See also L.J. Collins's *Theatre at War: 1914-18* for an examination of the war's impact on theatrical production during the years of conflict.

¹³⁴ The play was first staged as part of a Dada salon organized by Tzara himself (Hentea 168). The evening consisted of several performances; the first act included songs, a pantomime, and a dance performance entitled *The Miraculous Poultry* (Hentea 169). *The Gas Heart* premiered after the intermission.

Heart), presents a Dada vision of a body in pieces. The characters are body parts—Eye, Mouth, Nose, Ear, Neck, and Eyebrow¹³⁵—that move around the stage speaking in fragments while “the gas heart walks slowly around, circulating widely” (133).¹³⁶ In true Dada fashion, there is no real narrative and no easily identifiable thematic cohesion or formal structure. The play’s text is a jumbled concoction of puns and wordplay. The bodies that speak these lines are often disconnected from the words in a kind of synesthesia; for example, Ear remarks, “The eye tells the mouth: open your mouth for the candy of the eye” (135). Here, “eye-candy” is used to cross sight with taste, and is disconnected from both senses by the fact that the line is spoken by the body part responsible for sound. A moment later, Eye says, “my teeth tremble. I’m cold. I’m afraid” (135). Beyond drawing the connection between Eye and Mouth, the phrase also calls attention to the physical sensation of cold and trembling bodies through the sensory apparatus associated with sight. The play never allows for a “whole” consciousness, or even a “whole” body (putting the pieces together still would not result in a face). Sonia Delaunay’s costumes for the revival of the play at the 1923 Dada salon¹³⁷ further emphasized a body alienated from itself, placing the actors in “thick cardboard trapezoids which divided the body into angular parts [...] They were flat surfaces, podiums on which rested the head of an immobilized, reciting actor” (Melzer 160). In this way, the human bodies of the actors onstage were likewise deconstructed.

Given the linguistic deconstruction and the emphasis on bodies in pieces, it is easy to see Tzara’s play as a material expression of dehumanization and bodily alienation. Indeed, Sarah Bay-Cheng goes so far as to claim that “Tzara’s play introduces an impossible theatre

¹³⁵ Tzara himself played “Eyebrow” (Hentea 169).

¹³⁶ All quotations from the play are from *Modern French Theatre*, translated by Michael Benedikt. References to the original French text can be found in *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 1.

¹³⁷ Performed at the Théâtre Michel in Paris, July 6 and 7, as part of the “Soirée du Coeur à barbe” (Evening of the Bearded Heart) (Hentea 194).

fundamentally opposed to the physical performing body: an anti-body theatre” in her essay “Translation, Typography, and the Avant-Garde’s Impossible Text.”¹³⁸ Even within a play so loosely structured, the bodily dislocation reflects contemporary anxieties about bodies in the wake of the war. While war is only occasionally directly mentioned, such as when Eye asks, “Have you felt the horrors of the war?” (140), references to scars, wounds, and violence abound. Stanton B. Garner Jr., in his article, “*The Gas Heart*: Disfigurement and the Dada Body,” relates the fragmented body parts presented here to “the wider historical, cultural, and aesthetic preoccupations of a Europe traumatized by World War I” (501). Garner sees in *The Gas Heart* echoes of anxieties and trauma tied to the “facial injuries and other physical mutilation” that occurred during the war and the “developments in reconstructive surgery” (505). For Garner, then, the play becomes a complex “effort to remake the human form” (511) that engages with conversations about human and non-human supplementary materials. Garner concludes that the play performs a “body in crisis,” and that the fragmentation staged therein “enable[s] the reconstructive operations by which the human is reimagined at the site of its wounding” (513).

While the textual performance of Tzara’s play may be “anti-body” in the manner described by Bay-Cheng, in performance the anti-body sentiment becomes something more akin to the medical definition of “antibody,” a protein meant to fight infection and preserve, rather

¹³⁸ Bay-Cheng is primarily concerned with the conflict between typography and performing body, and reads the text—specifically the image of the “danse”—as a performance in its own right that challenges the embodied performance onstage. Her comparison of Tzara to Edward Gordon Craig rhetorically places the performing bodies once again into the role of bodies losing their authority to the mechanisms of an overbearing director (or, in this case, the artistic authority of the typography, no less fixed in its artistic intent than Craig’s authoritarian director). While Bay-Cheng ultimately declares that the conflict between avant-garde text and avant-garde performance renders the play “unperformable” as it was intended to be performed, she herself admits “neither title nor costume can fully displace the mimesis of the actor’s human body within the performance itself” (480).

than destroy, the body.¹³⁹ Read in this way, the body's own wounding is the catalyst for resistance: an "antibody" resistance to an "anti-body" performance. Here again the body becomes a site of crisis that mediates mechanical encroachment—both the mechanisms of the war and the mechanical interventions of medical prosthesis—for its live audience. The body onstage acts as the antibody in both senses of the word. The live bodies of the actors are both acted *on* in the anti-performative manner outlined by Bay-Cheng and acting as the reconstructive apparatus described by Garner. The bodily pieces onstage (Ear, Eye, etc.) are never *only* bodily pieces; because they are performed by living actors, the body parts are always doubled with the live body animating them. Although the body parts used as characters could not be put together to form a "whole" face, there is, nevertheless, a "whole" face—several, in fact—not only metaphorically invoked but also literally present in the bodies of the live actors onstage. The live bodies onstage, even when purposefully hindered, dehumanized, or fragmented (through costuming, for example), insist on their presence. On the stage, the bodies of the actors mediate the fragmented individual bodily pieces, the fragmented language, and the fragmented implications of machine as threat or as support (war/medicine). The mediation of mechanism by the body is even embedded into the title itself. Although Michael Benedikt translates the title, *Le Coeur à Gaz*, as simply, *The Gas Heart*, the first English translation of the title by Leslie Singer,

¹³⁹ There were a series of advances in medical science at the end of the nineteenth century that led to the discovery of the antibody. See the chapter on "The History of Immunology" in Milton W. Taylor's *Viruses and Man: A History of Interactions* for an overview of the historical development of antibodies (77-99). The term "antibody" as it related to immunology was developed in the late nineteenth century and the scientific understanding of the way in which these proteins acted to resist harmful pathogens was still in its early stages in the early twentieth century. While I am primarily using the medical idea of the "antibody" as a metaphor here, and I have no direct evidence that Tzara meant to invoke such medical discourse, it is nevertheless interesting that the "Y" symbol that dominates his "danse" image resembles the "Y" shape of the antibody protein.

as Bay-Cheng notes,¹⁴⁰ was *The Gas-Burning Heart*. Further, the opening stage directions read, “Le coeur chauffé au gaz” (154), or “the gas-warmed heart.” The description juxtaposes the bodily organ pumping blood with the mechanical engine pumping gas, as though the organ has learned to physically consume and run on the fuel preferred by machinery.

Tickless Time and *The Gas Heart* are far from anomalies in their focus on the relationship between man and machine; over and over again modern plays invoked literal or metaphorical mechanical bodies in order to stage the threat of the loss of human agency and creative authority. These modern conversations took earlier eighteenth- and nineteenth-century perspectives as their starting point, beginning with the basic conflict over whether machines provide a tool by which humans can transcend their own weaknesses and improve and perfect their art, or whether machines act as something that works against human creativity and usurps human creative authority. Some modernist artists turned once again to puppets and marionettes, both using living actors to play non-living objects and using non-living objects to represent living people, thereby re-enacting earlier conversations over the relationship of human creative authority to mechanical bodies. Henryk Jurkowski notes a “renewal” of interest in puppets and marionettes in the twenties, both as a kind of nostalgic longing for the past and as “an instrument of agitation and propaganda” (*History* vol. 2 136, 152). The Federal Theatre Project, for example, a group established as part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal, often employed masks and puppets in their productions in order to comment on political issues, as they did in the “Living Newspaper” production of Arthur Arent’s *Power*. In addition, the Federal Theatre Project

¹⁴⁰ Bay-Cheng remarks, “the play’s title produces a central image both of a heart dislocated from an organic whole and transformed into a kind of machine, and simultaneously that of a heart reduced to a less solid molecular state—the heart of gas” (480).

included an entire team dedicated to marionette performance.¹⁴¹

As the horrors of machine warfare and the increasing presence of mechanisms in daily life impacted the cultural consciousness, the boundary between the live and mechanical body became much less clearly delineated. Rather than puppets, automatons, dolls, or robots revealing the mechanical nature of the live body, the live body itself became implicated as a kind of machine; as it appropriated modern mechanisms for its own benefit, the body seemed to unwittingly allow mechanism to infiltrate its organic borders. Ernst Toller's *Man and the Masses* (1921), for example, reduces people to little more than mechanical slaves in a critique of war and capitalism. Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* (1921) turns a sailor who works on the engine of a transatlantic liner into a gorilla who dies at the end of the play, in a cage in a zoo. Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine* (1923) sees a man murder his boss after his job is taken over by an adding machine and he can no longer cope with the mechanization of modern life. Even as the line between live bodies and the mechanization of the modern era became further destabilized, the theatre offered a space in which the material realities of these relationships were inescapable. As a space in which the live body continually insists on its presence, the theatre demanded a practical negotiation between man and machine that did not allow anxieties over dehumanization and mechanization to devolve into a solely metaphorical erasure of the live body.

Rather than presenting the live and the mechanical as two separate competing bodies, plays of the post-war period began to increasingly envision the live and the mechanical as existing in one body: a live body becoming mechanized. In a striking illustration of the concept

¹⁴¹ Eugene O'Neill's one-act play, *The Emperor Jones*, was later made into a puppet play in 1937 by the Federal Theatre Project, with marionettes made by Ralph Chessé. O'Neill's stage directions for many of the characters in the visions Jones encounters in the woods call for mechanical movement; for example, one of the first characters Jones meets is Jeff, the man Jones killed, who "is throwing a pair of dice [...] with the regular, rigid, mechanical movements of an automaton" (19).

of the “mechanized body,” Jean Cocteau’s 1921 *Le Mariés de la Tour Eiffel* (*The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower*)¹⁴² presents bodies as the site of crisis in a confrontation between the violence of the war and the invasion of new mechanisms and mechanical mediums. Technology and mechanism permeate the play; as Felicia McCarren remarks in *Dancing Machines: Choreographies of the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, “Cocteau stages the chaos of contemporary life by featuring technology with both mythic resonance and menacing potential” (114). Cocteau does not simply address these issues in the content of his play; rather, the relationship between man and machine is imbued in the very form, structure, and staging of the play. As an avant-garde surrealist endeavor, the play does not have a simple narrative, but the piece roughly follows a photographer who is struggling to take a picture of a wedding party. The bodies onstage are, in fact, literally placed in the shadow of technological and mechanical advancement as we are informed from the very first stage direction that the action of the play occurs on the “*First platform of the Eiffel Tower*” (101).¹⁴³ The presence of the Eiffel Tower, built for the 1889 Paris World’s Fair and unveiled along with the Galerie des Machines as a representation of man’s technological, mechanical, and industrial progress, immediately asks the audience to read the action of the play in relation to this continuing historical narrative about human progress.

The Eiffel Tower was meant to be a positive symbol of human accomplishment—a

¹⁴² The play premiered on June 18, just a week after Tzara’s *The Gas Heart*, and in the same theatre. In fact, Tzara’s play could only be performed one night because the original organizer of the event at which it was performed did not secure the use of the theatre for more than one night (Hentea 170). Angered, Tzara first attempted to interrupt a concert occurring the night before Cocteau’s play, but was hindered when another scion of the avant-garde scene, F.T. Marinetti, called the police and stopped Tzara’s interference. Tzara and his supporters returned the next night, for the premiere of Cocteau’s play, and proceeded to randomly stand up and sit down during the performance in an attempt to disrupt it (Arnaud 293).

¹⁴³ English quotations are from *Modern French Theatre*, translated by Michael Benedikt. All references to the original French text can be found in *Théâtre*, Vol. 1.

representation of the way humanity employs machines and industrial advancement in order to reach new heights (literally). In this view, the Tower represents, in Enlightenment fashion, the skill and creative authority of its human creators. The reality of the iconic structure and its meaning, however, is far more complicated. Critics of the Tower were quick to describe it as an ugly and useless structure, undercutting the Enlightenment idealism with nineteenth century conversations about issues of aesthetics, productivity, efficiency, and function.¹⁴⁴ In addition to these criticisms, the Tower is also, to some, a symbol of human despair. Almost four hundred people have committed suicide either on or jumping from the Tower since its unveiling.¹⁴⁵ The Tower is thus a symbol whose meaning is highly contested.

Roland Barthes explored the Tower's contested meaning when he chose the Eiffel Tower as a one of the central symbols in his theory of "mythologies," remarking:

[...] the Tower attracts meaning, the way a lightning rod attracts thunderbolts; for all lovers of signification, it plays a glamorous part, that of a pure signifier, i.e., of a form in which men unceasingly put meaning (which they extract at will from their knowledge,

¹⁴⁴ A pamphlet released during the Exposition detailing information about the Tower and its designer, Gustave Eiffel, included a section, entitled "What is the Use of the Eiffel Tower?," in part to counter these criticisms. Gaston Tissandier, the author of the pamphlet, remarks, "It will be remembered with what animosity the original project of the Tower was attacked," but asserts that, "Nowadays the critics are almost silent, and the bitterest enemies of the enterprise have ceased their unjust recriminations" (82). Although Tissandier implies that the Tower should not need justification, he nevertheless continues to explain possible uses and benefits of the Tower. In addition to the advances in engineering that occurred because of the Tower's construction (83), Tissandier also suggests the Tower could be used for telegraphic communication and for war-time, meteorological, and/or astronomical observations (84). Tissandier is careful to counter criticisms about the Tower's aesthetics as well; he spends ample time describing the metal structure as "light and graceful and slender," and even goes so far as to remark that "its whole figure is poetical" (93).

¹⁴⁵ In "Noose Allure: Little Suicides and Singularity in Beckett's *Godot*," Doug Phillips remarks on the "nearly four hundred" people who have committed suicide either on or jumping from the Eiffel Tower (163). Although Phillips is specifically discussing the Tower's important symbolic role in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, his emphasis on the tower as "point[ing] not only to something outside of us, but to something within, to what Lacan calls the constitutive void of human subjectivity" (164), is also a useful perspective for Cocteau's play. The Tower, in this way, invokes a crisis of subjectivity that is also an uncanny crisis of the body; a body that must contend with the forces inside and outside of itself in order to continuously re-insist on its presence.

their dreams, their history), without this meaning thereby ever being finite and fixed:

who can say what the Tower will be for humanity tomorrow? (5)

For Barthes, the Tower acts as both subject and object; it is both something at which humanity looks and something which, towering over Paris, appears to look back at us, all-seeing. In this way, it functions as both the object of the gaze and as a gazing subject, what Barthes calls a “functional organism (camera or eye)” (5). The Tower, for Barthes, thus performs a subject-object negotiation similar to that of the mechanical body; like Hannah Hewit’s automaton, it acts as an object of our creation and as a subject that both resists such objectification and turns the tables on our own sense of subjective selfhood, thereby interpellating us as objects in relation to its own subjective agency. Further, Barthes describes the people visiting the tower as essential to this negotiation: it is, for example, the tourist whose bird’s-eye view opens up “a new sensibility of vision” (9), the tourist who must practice what Barthes calls “decipherment” (10), and the tourist who “becomes an engineer by proxy” and must navigate “a certain number of performances, or, if one prefers, paradoxes” (15) when visiting the Tower. In a manner that anticipates Tracy C. Davis’s explanation of the role of museum visitors in “Performing and the Real Thing in the Postmodern Museum,”¹⁴⁶ it is the bodies of the tourists that encounter and physically enact the conflict between competing subject/object positions and that must mediate the unfixed uncertainty of this conflict. In this way, the bodies of the tourists become authorial agents, both creating and resisting the different meanings the symbolic Tower might represent through their physical encounter with the material Tower. Cocteau’s play dramatizes this

¹⁴⁶ In discussing visitors’ engagement with museum displays, Davis remarks, “[...] through a physical relationship to the artifacts (invariably the viewer’s ocular and kinetic experience in the objects’ midst) the installation is constructed in such a way that a performance about the underlying meaning of the place occurs, and it is made by the visitor without the intercession of docents. (15)

phenomenon¹⁴⁷ with the bodies of his actors similarly creating and resisting meaning; the actors' bodies are staged as sites of crisis that act as the medium and mediating force between the several seemingly paradoxical relationships with machinery and mechanism represented by the Tower.

In addition to placing the action of the play in a location that invokes a complicated relationship between man and mechanism, Cocteau also stages his actors in a way that immediately presents a tangled juxtaposition of live and mechanical bodies. The initial stage directions read:

To the right, upstage, a professional photographer's camera, the height of a man. The bellows of the camera forms a corridor joining the wings. At the front of the bellows the camera opens like a door, to let the characters enter and exit.

Downstage, right and left, half-hidden behind the proscenium arch, are stationed two actors dressed as phonographs, their bodies the cabinets,¹⁴⁸ horns corresponding to their mouths. These phonographs narrate the play and recite the parts of the characters. They speak very loudly, very quickly, and pronounce each syllable very distinctly. (101)

In this way, Cocteau foregrounds the fact that everything the audience sees and hears is produced

¹⁴⁷ Others have noted the fertile possibilities of pairing the work of Barthes with the work of Cocteau in order to think about the bodies onstage. See, for example, the chapter "Dancing About Architecture" in Charles R. Batson's *Dance, Desire, and Anxiety in Early Twentieth-Century French Theater: Playing Identities* (68-117), in which he remarks that using Barthes as a theoretical lens through which to examine Cocteau's play reveals a piece "in which bodies are continually present, continually escaping the laws of the signified" and which allows "performers and their performing bodies [to] spring to the foreground, seen and heard, sparking disruptive pleasure" (108). In "Barthes Explores Photography 'as a Wound,'" Corinna A. Tsakiridou sees Cocteau as a precursor to Barthes's vision of bodies and authorship. Although she does not mention *Wedding* directly, Tsakiridou discusses the way Barthes channels the work of Cocteau in his vision of photography as a wound that "affects [the body's] consistency and the way it views itself" (274).

¹⁴⁸ The original French is slightly different here: "la boîte contenant le corps" (52) translates more literally as "the cabinet contains the body," adding connotations of entrapment and control and underscoring the anxiety that the mechanical body is physically encroaching on the live body's territory.

by bodies juxtaposed with mechanical apparatuses. Cocteau's carefully constructed *mise en scène* directs the audience to read all the action of the play as occurring within this complicated relationship between man and machine. Further, this relationship is directly related to issues of creative authority. In pairing the human bodies producing the theatrical spectacle with the mechanisms of technology such as the camera and the phonograph, Cocteau's play stages the question of the human body's role in creative authorship in a mechanical world.

It is easy to see how the play might be read as emphasizing the encroachment of mechanism on the realm of the human—specifically, onto the realm of human creation. Characters originate from the mechanical apparatus of the camera; the action of the camera causes changes in the world of the play, releasing absurd elements and wreaking havoc on the characters in the scene. At the end of the play, the characters disappear back into the camera, which could be seen as an indication that they have no existence apart from their mediation through the machine. As McCarren remarks, “The camera, human-sized, functions significantly as the initiator of the action, producing characters and eventually swallowing them up” (114). The phonograph is likewise staged to dramatize the relationship between man and machine as one in which machinery mediates human experience. The mechanical apparatus of the phonograph is, literally, in between the bodies of the actors speaking the text of the play and the bodies of the actors onstage that then act out the dictation received through the apparatus. Looking solely at this description of action, it is logical to interpret the mechanism as mediating the human creative efforts; the mechanisms of sight, sound, and recording are described as “in-between” human creators and the results of their creative initiative. Read this way, experience becomes completely dictated by and mediated through the mechanism; humans can only scramble to keep up with the narrative imposed by the mechanical elements. Cocteau, however,

undermines this vision of mechanism as the medium and mediating force of the creative endeavor by consistently drawing attention to the role of the bodies onstage in the creative process. While the actors onstage clearly take their cues from the phonographs by matching their actions to the dictation of the mechanical apparatus, the phonographs are themselves ultimately mechanisms mediated by the live bodies of their human actors. Rather than separate mechanical bodies that challenge the authority of the live bodies interacting with them, the phonographs instead relate to the human bodies onstage in a manner more reminiscent of puppetry.

The connection to puppet theatre was underscored in the original production through costume and set, which used large cardboard figures and papier-mâché masks for the different characters within a box-like proscenium that resembled nothing so much as the street performer's puppet stage. This allowed audience members to see the caricatured bodies onstage as operated by human actors in the manner of puppeteers. The phonographs, as constructed pieces similarly inhabited by live bodies, thus take their place in this puppet theatre as no more or less than the other puppet bodies onstage. It is the human actors¹⁴⁹ who operate and speak through the phonograph just as the human actors manipulate the other papier-mâché forms onstage. Although Harold B. Segal remarks that Cocteau "does not seek inspiration for his early stage pieces in puppet theater, nor does he make specific use in them of puppets, marionettes, and related figures" (97), the phonographs themselves are no more than marionettes. Further, Cocteau undermines the authority of these mechanical bodies by staging them as puppets that require human manipulation; they become something "put on" by the human actors rather than

¹⁴⁹ Cocteau himself played one of the phonographs in the play's premiere, joined by the French actor, Pierre Bertin. In this way, Cocteau stages his own authorial relationship to his artificial creations in a manner not too far removed from Samuel Foote's appearance in *Piety in Pattens* or Luckless's mediation of his puppet show in Henry Fielding's *The Author's Farce*.

bodies with agency in their own right. The actors playing the phonographs onstage mediate the mechanical form and function of the phonograph to create the theatrical event, while the other actors must similarly negotiate between the demands of the phonograph and the practical necessities of their own bodies.

The camera, likewise, is operated by a human photographer, and the human bodies onstage continually resist the camera's efforts to "fix" them into a photographic representation. The final moment of the play reinforces the live bodies as the primary agent in these relationships as the camera appears to transform into a train, with windows in the bellows. Rather than the machine body (camera/train) now moving under its own agency, Cocteau notes in the stage directions, "*Through various apertures one sees the wedding party waving handkerchiefs, and, beneath, feet walking*" (115). The camera, then, which might be said to have been an authority over the human bodies onstage¹⁵⁰ (since all entrances and exits have been dictated by the body of the camera itself), is undermined in its role as we literally see it inhabited and powered by the human bodies onstage as the piece's final stage picture. In this way, Cocteau's play ultimately mines historical discourses on puppetry in order to stage a crisis of the body encountering mechanism that resolves itself as bodies mediating mechanisms for the audiences witnessing the theatrical event.

Cocteau's play stages both an anxiety over the perception that mechanical bodies interpellate human bodies into a specific role and the way human bodies resist such interpellations. This is not *just* a crisis of the body; it is specifically a crisis of bodily mediation.

¹⁵⁰ Cocteau was not, of course, the first playwright to use the camera to address issues of bodily authority. Dion Boucicault, for example, in his 1859 *The Octoroon*, raises strong questions about the camera's authority over human bodies and human identity. Henrik Ibsen's 1884 play *The Wild Duck* uses the relationship between Hjalmer (a photographer) and his wife (who "retouches" the photographs) to work through questions about truth in representation.

At the core of this conflict is the idea of “liveness” and its relation to creative authority, authenticity, and meaning. The staging of the play, with its focus on aural and visual recording devices (camera and phonograph), immediately challenges traditional notions of theatre as a “live” event. In addition, the play overtly handles the idea of “liveness” and the questions this raises about medium and mediation from its opening moments. In the very first encounter of the play, a hunter appears and shoots at an ostrich he is following. He instead hits a telegram, which falls, dead, to the stage. The manager of the Eiffel Tower reads the telegram, which informs him of the impending wedding party’s arrival. The manager exclaims, “But this telegram is dead,” which causes one of the phonographs to remark, “It’s precisely because it is dead that everybody understands it” (103). This is a startling echo of Edward Gordon Craig’s desire for an actor to become a “death-like” instrument in order to more perfectly communicate his artistic message. The idea that something must be “killed” (or made non-“live”) to be understood becomes an important part of the play’s investigations into the relationship between man, mechanism, and creative authority.

If live bodies must be made non-live to be understandable, this could potentially be a very uncomfortable relationship for humans. If one privileges a creative “product” as something fixed, complete, or perfect, then machines, whose non-liveness does not interrupt the “finished” and “fixed” meanings of art, would appear to have better authority over the artistic endeavor than humans. The stage not only makes a metaphorical threat a physical reality, it underscores the challenge to the primacy of human bodies in the process of creation. Cocteau thus dramatizes a marriage between the eighteenth-century insistence on mechanical bodies as an indication of human authorship and a nineteenth-century discomfort over mechanical challenge to authorship against the backdrop of an unstable symbol of human progress.

The products of this marriage are likewise unstable; both the live offspring of the wedding party (the boy) and the objet d'art that is the non-live offspring of the mechanisms (the photograph) fail in their attempts to stabilize the man-machine relationship. Near the end of the play the young boy, who is described as "A beautiful little victim for the next war" (107), massacres the wedding party in a farce of the brutality of war. After the massacre, however, the murdered wedding guests eventually pick themselves up and continue on. As Annabelle Henkin Melzer writes in *Dada and Surrealist Performance*, "The wedding party is massacred and reassembled" (188). Not unlike Tzara's *The Gas Heart*, then, the massacre of the wedding party stages wartime violence against human bodies that ends in a kind of bodily reconstruction; yet another antibody resistance to the anti-body machines of war. Similarly, when the photographer finally gets the camera working, the Dealer in modern paintings and the Collector of modern paintings appear in what seems to be the legitimization of the photograph as an "authentic" piece of art. This is, however, also undermined as the "photograph" under consideration is never a stable object but the tableau vivant of the wedding party itself in all its messy, embodied imperfection. Further, as the Dealer and Collector discuss the future of their "find," we learn that the photograph will not go in a museum but will instead be mass produced in "every magazine in America" (113). In this way, although the camera might be seen as a mechanism for offering an authentic and perfectly "fixed" piece of art (you take a picture and the picture does not change), the play highlights the way the live bodies upset the "authentic" and "fixed" quality of the mechanical world both at its moment of production and at its moment of consumption. The attempts at mechanical mediation, both through the war machine's violent attack on bodies and through the Dealer's efforts toward mass reproduction of the artwork, are upset by the live bodies onstage.

The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower was neither the first nor last play by Cocteau that would experiment with the relationship between the live and mechanical,¹⁵¹ nor was the theatre the only performative medium Cocteau would employ for this purpose. Cocteau experimented with the way film, theatre, music, dance, pantomime, photography, and more engaged the body in different ways. Throughout his career, Cocteau tested the way this relationship exists within and in relation to the artistic medium in which these bodies are presented, specifically challenging ideas of embodied, technological, and artistic mediation. In his 1930 cinematic masterpiece, *Le Sang d'un Poète* (*The Blood of a Poet*), for example, Cocteau presents drawings and sculptures that speak, as well as bodies—live and non-live—violently attacked and reconstituted. In his theatrical piece, *La Boeuf sur le Toit* (*The Ox on the Roof*),¹⁵² staged in 1920, Cocteau used papier-mâché puppet bodies in a manner similar to the method he would employ in *Wedding* and mined the style of silent cinema and the work of Charlie Chaplin to stage a parody pantomime. Cocteau's experimentation allowed for a dialogical conversation between theatre and other mediums. His work in film, and his use of the phonograph, telegram, and camera, among other mechanical devices, explores the way new mechanisms impacted ideas about bodies and medium (and bodies *as* medium).

The rise in popularity of new mechanical performative technologies such as film and

¹⁵¹ The initial concept for *The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower*, for example, came out of one of Cocteau's first theatrical collaborations, *Parade*, which premiered on May 18, 1917, at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. The score for *Parade*, by Erik Satie, featured "typewriters, sirens, airplane propellers, Morse tappers, and lottery wheels," while the costumes by Picasso boxed the actors in unwieldy geometrical shapes meant to invoke the architecture of skyscrapers (Melzer 121). Cocteau had to make several concessions on his initial ideas for *Parade*, many of which he used in *Wedding*. For example, Cocteau envisioned that "an anonymous voice issuing from an amplifying orifice (a theatrical imitation of a circus megaphone, the mask of antiquity in modern guise) was to sing a type-phrase outlining the performer's activity so as to open up the world of make-believe" (qtd. in Cooper 21). Cocteau's 1930 play *La Voix Humaine* (*The Human Voice*) presents a woman on a telephone who is desperately trying to keep her lover, supposedly on the other end of the line, from breaking off their affair to marry another woman.

¹⁵² For more information on *La Boeuf sur le Toit*, see the contemporary documents collected in *The Drama Review* vol. 16, no. 3, September 1972, pp. 27-45, by Darius Milhaud et. al.

radio became an important feature for many discussions of what makes art truly art and what separates the authentic human creation (art) from mass produced items (products). It also became an important cautionary warning against what machines might take away from humanity in terms of creative authority. Walter Benjamin's famous 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" raises questions about how art could and would be valued when human creative authority appeared to be being undermined by mechanical copies. Benjamin situates his exploration of changing concepts of artistic authority within the dialectic between theatre and film. As he writes, "The artistic performance of a stage actor is definitely presented to the public by the actor in person; that of the screen actor, however, is presented by the camera" (228). In this way, Benjamin explicitly situates the primary difference between theatre and film as a difference in bodily mediation. Further, he notes that "the film actor lacks the opportunity of the stage actor to adjust to the audience during his performance" (228). For Benjamin, then, the theatre stages the live body of the actor as the primary interface between the mechanisms of the performance and the audience. Film, on the other hand, situates the mechanisms of the performance as permanently in-between the live bodies of the actors and the live bodies of the audience members.

This cinematic conception of the mechanically mediated body did not remain fixed to the silver screen; the possibilities for a cinematic perspective began to pervade the cultural consciousness more broadly. As Susan McCabe remarks in *Cinematic Modernism: Modernist Poetry and Film*, "the body could be deliriously elsewhere, uncannily absent, yet viscerally present" (1). The mediated bodies and cinematic techniques found in early film permeated literary representations of the body in other modernist works. Gertrude Stein wrote in "Portraits and Repetitions" that the modern period was "undoubtedly the period of the cinema and series

production” (177). In addition to novelists and poets, modernist theatre artists from a variety of backgrounds experimented with style, form, and content that alternately engaged with or challenged a cinematic relationship between body and mechanism. Theatre artists began to experiment with use of photography, projection, and film, thereby bringing these questions about technological mediation into play in the practical arena the theatre offered. Bertolt Brecht and his mentor Erwin Piscator, for example, famously experimented with projection and other mechanisms of visual and aural reproduction in their theatrical endeavors. Felicia McCarren remarks in *Dancing Machines* that, through “references to photography and cinema,” theatrical artists experimenting with medium “parodied, commented on, and competed with cinema” (113). Film offered artists new creative possibilities while simultaneously offering the viewing public different mechanical means of experiencing dramatic performance, thereby intensifying ongoing conversations about the role the theatrical medium itself plays in determining the way we read bodies in performance.

The film industry at this time was also testing the boundaries of its medium, and became a touchstone for conversations about the way modernity (and modern art) would be created and experienced. As cheaper admission prices and new cinematic effects meant that the cinema began to compete in earnest with the theatre for audiences, the cinema began to be positioned as an artistic rival to theatrical performance. It is, perhaps, unsurprising that the conversations about the way these different mediums (theatre, film, and radio) relate to one another begin to take on a similar pattern to the conversations about the way human bodies and mechanical bodies interact, with the theatre playing the role of “live” performance (live performing bodies) and film and radio relegated to “mediated” performance (mechanical bodies). Cocteau himself wrote, “The fact is that stage and screen are incompatible: the craft of the theatre cannot serve the film artist,

or vice versa. You could say that these two, the one a craft of breathing and reflection, the other of mechanics and animal life caught unawares, actually do each other a disservice” (*Art of the Cinema* 27).¹⁵³ The mediation of the body through the apparatus of the cinema is a long and multi-stepped process. By the time a film is produced for viewing audiences, it is several steps removed from the live body with which it began, and each of these steps allows for different kinds of mechanical control of the body on display and changes the perspective of the viewer, which, as Benjamin asserts, is aligned with the camera eye.¹⁵⁴ This mechanical manipulation and mediation of the live body was a source of both creative inspiration and cultural anxiety for many prominent filmmakers of the time.

Many films addressed the same issues of mechanization that were being investigated on the modern stage. Perhaps in an attempt to counter the anxieties the cinematic form raised in terms of mechanized bodies and a lack of “liveness,” many of these films either emphasized a “live” creator behind the performance in the film itself or appropriated the vocabulary of the theatre in their presentation of the relationship between live and mechanical bodies. Ernst Lubitsch’s 1919 film *The Doll*, based on Audran’s stage production *La Poupée*, began with a live performer setting a miniature stage with models of the characters. The camera, placed to mimic the conventional position of the audience at a stage performance, invites spectators to view the film that follows as similarly staged by human hands. Mervyn LeRoy’s *Gold Diggers of 1933*, a Busby Berkeley film, also takes the theatre as its central narrative frame. The film centers on four chorus girls who, out of work due to the Great Depression, decide to try and find rich

¹⁵³ The quote is originally from Cocteau’s program notes for *La Machine Infernal* (The Infernal Machine), 1934, reprinted as part of the collection of Cocteau’s writings found in *The Art of the Cinema* translated by Robin Buss.

¹⁵⁴ Benjamin remarks that, for film, “The audience’s identification with the actor is really an identification with the camera” (228).

husbands to finance their theatrical endeavors. The piece ends with the striking number, “My Forgotten Man,” which explicitly invokes the mechanical horrors of war as long lines of men marching on a conveyer belt go from healthy and happy to increasingly bloodied and injured, until men are carrying fallen soldiers over their shoulders or on stretchers and, finally, passively waiting in long breadlines as the conveyor continues to move them forward with detached inevitability. While the sequence is explicitly presented as a theatrical, not cinematic, spectacle (complete with orchestra pit and stage curtain) to emphasize the individual struggles and creative effort on the part of the actors presenting the piece, it cannot escape its consumption as mechanically reproduced mass entertainment, which invites the juxtaposition of the mechanical mediation of actors, the mechanical consumption of soldiers, and the mechanical repetition of bodies that will be forever stuck on the conveyor belt for its viewing audience.

The fear of bodies subsumed and consumed by the mechanisms of modern life that the cinematic medium, from one perspective, made into both a physical and aesthetic reality,¹⁵⁵ can be seen in many contemporary depictions of machines as cold, cruel, and impersonal. Jessica Burstein explores this move to depersonalize and dehumanize in her book *Cold Modernism*, asserting that the modern period was consumed by a focus on “ahumanism” (2), specifically examining the possibility of “a world in which the self is simply not part of the aesthetic register” (3). For modern writers, according to Burstein:

the status of the human has no especial purchase, and thus the human form is on par with

¹⁵⁵ The cinematic representation of anxieties over bodies subsumed by machinery certainly does not represent a novel idea; as we have seen, these issues are part of a long ongoing conversation about performing bodies and their relationship to both the mechanisms of the performance and the live audience for which they performed. It is also important to note that later critiques would call into question the reductive binary that sees theatre as an unmediated “live” art form and film as an entirely mechanically mediated art form. Instead, the interplay between film and theatre crystallized an emphasis in these conversations on bodies and medium and bodies *as* medium.

seemingly dissimilar entities in the world: clothing, cars, and curtains, for example [...]. The body is a machine to be toyed with, one that toys or ticks, or ties. In its most extreme form, cold modernism offers an account of the human form in which the mind plays no role; or, in a slightly less extreme form, in which the mind is so physicalized as to have no more or less purchase than pure anatomy. (13)

The cinematic body could be described as the perfect example of this kind of “ahumanism”: a body that, through the mechanizing apparatus of film, becomes little more than a prop or set piece edited and framed by the cinematic machine. Burstein here describes the exact specter raised by anxieties over the relationship between man and machine: the mechanized human body, sterilized of all that makes it human, and now no more than an object or a machine itself. In many of the literary examples Burstein supplies, bodies and mechanisms are similarly impersonal, unreachable, and permanently other.

While dehumanization was certainly an ever-present threat in theatrical investigations into the man-machine relationship, bodies onstage were not as easily divorced from their humanity as they could be in novels or on film. Because the theatre is largely a medium of live bodies, the theatrical investigations force artists and audiences alike to contend with what happens when live bodies insist on their presence even as mechanical bodies and other literal and metaphorical machines are changing the way live bodies interact with the world around them. Burstein’s theory is useful, however, since it outlines an idea that would become central to competing notions of the way bodies could or could not resist mechanical encroachment in the post-war period. While eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fears over encroaching machinery centered on notions of an empty machine body becoming no longer empty—a mechanical body now haunted by a consciousness with an agency that could run counter to a human agent (the

machine becomes “alive” in a way that could, physically and/or psychologically, threaten the live body’s “aliveness”)—a new strand of anxiety in the modern period centered on fears that there was really nothing behind that mechanical façade and, hence, that there was nothing haunting that machine after all. While this may, at first, appear to neutralize the threat to human bodies, in actuality it removed the clear path to resistance. A threatening mechanical body with its own consciousness provides a clear obstacle to overcome. How does one resist impersonal emptiness?

Proceeding from a philosophical foundation laid by early thinkers such as Descartes and de la Mettrie that viewed the live body as a kind of complex machine, it was assumed that a machine advanced enough to achieve authority over the human domain would operate by a consciousness similar to that of a human consciousness. This idea carried through into the modern period as artists inscribed humanity onto mechanical bodies;¹⁵⁶ both the desires for perfection and improvement and the desires for power and control were framed from the human perspective and ultimately understood in terms of the needs of either a human individual (power for a totalitarian ruler) or group (products for mass consumption by the bourgeoisie). Čapek’s *R.U.R.*, discussed in the previous chapter, takes this idea as its premise, presenting robots who embody both the best and worst traits of humanity, and who, by the end, reflect the human bodies they wanted to replace. This idea of the machine as a kind of alternate human, however, was undermined by the pervasiveness of machines that did not seem to have any consciousness whatsoever, and yet were unyielding in their infringement onto the territory of the human. Soldiers coming up against the war machine, for example, wrote about its impersonal nature and

¹⁵⁶ And, of course, we still do this today.

how its impersonality caused live bodies to become similarly divorced from their humanity. Soldiers themselves became “machine-like,”¹⁵⁷ a rhetorical gloss here meaning that they were transformed into unfeeling and inhuman instruments of violence.¹⁵⁸ They lost their human identity along with their individual agency. Bertolt Brecht’s *A Man’s A Man*, which premiered in 1926, stages this kind of loss of identity as a regular man, the Porter Galy Gay, is eventually turned into a “human fighting machine” when he forfeits his claim to his personal identity (147). As Gay explains succinctly, “A Man’s a Man” (146), or, as another character remarks earlier in the play, “One man is just like all the others” (102), thereby emphasizing the fact that his body has become interchangeable with all other bodies in the network of the impersonal war machine. In war, this lack of feeling might be perceived as a blessing that allowed the soldiers to accomplish their missions without becoming mired in the guilt and trauma of the violence they inflicted, thereby preserving their own humanity. On the other hand, a soldier’s loss of identity might also be perceived as a curse that would ultimately extinguish his humanity and lead to unchecked cruelty. Either way, this loss of human agency and human authority on the battlefield is connected to the cold emptiness of the war machine somehow turning soldiers into empty shells themselves.

This new threat did not restrict itself to machines of war but began to bleed into other areas of human-machine relations. The mechanisms encountered by human individuals in the course of their day-to-day lives began to similarly signal a faceless, conscious-less threat against human bodies and human agency. Specifically addressing the perils of mechanical

¹⁵⁷ Adas provides an ample list (369 n. 75) of examples of the rhetorical reclassification of soldiers as machines, remarking, “Their bodies become machines; they respond to one’s questions mechanically” (369).

¹⁵⁸ Michel Foucault explored the soldier as a figure representative of a body made “docile” by the structure of the modern war machine in *Discipline and Punish*. As he observes, “The body [of the soldier] is constituted as a part of a multi-segmentary machine” (164).

dehumanization, Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal* dramatizes one woman's life as caught in various modern mechanisms, some metaphorical (marriage, motherhood) and some literal (the subway, the clinical aspects of child-birth). Though the play is a devastating warning about the dangers of mechanized bodies—both the threat mechanization poses to individual live bodies and the physical and psychological limits of live bodies encountering machines—it still ultimately reinforces the live body as the central medium and mediating force of human experience.

First performed in September of 1928,¹⁵⁹ *Machinal* imagines a woman ensnared by the punishing discipline of mechanized society. Treadwell illustrates the ubiquity of machines, the mechanistic qualities of the societal structure, and the impact of mechanization on bodies from the play's opening sequence. Treadwell's list of characters for the first episode, "To Business," immediately connects the live bodies and the mechanical bodies onstage. Titled "Characters and their Machines," each character and his or her related machine is thus presented as already coexisting in an integrated relationship with machinery. This is underscored in the opening moments as the audience hears the sounds of the typewriter, the adding machine, and the switchboard in perfect alignment with the disjointed fragments of speech given by the characters who speak "*in a monotonous voice*" revealing their "*monotonous thoughts*" while they go about the mundane tasks of the day (177). The office workers are the ultimate realization of the outcome that Ian Joyce, in Glaspell's *Tickless Time*, so feared: that the benign machinery of daily life would lead to mechanized bodies and standardized minds. In this way, Treadwell dramatizes the office characters as part of a mechanical system, their language and physical bodies

¹⁵⁹ *Machinal* opened on September 7, 1928 at the Plymouth Theatre in New York, directed by Arthur Hopkins.

disciplined into efficiency by the routine of the office space and its appliances.

The main protagonist, by contrast, is described in a manner that clearly places her against this mechanization. As Treadwell remarks, “*The confusion of her own inner thoughts, emotions, desires, dreams cuts her off from any actual adjustment to the routine of work*” (177). Treadwell uses a stream-of-consciousness monologue at the end of the scene (and in several other places throughout the play) to allow the audience to hear the Young Woman’s inner thoughts; her rambling, scattered, and contradictory inner impulses provide a sharp counterpoint to the ordered and systematic mutterings of the office workers and other characters. Rather than fitting into this environment that favors bodies as parts in a larger system, the Young Woman “*is preoccupied with herself—with her person*” (177). Further, she admits in the scene, “My machine’s out of order” (184), connecting this struggle for self-identification with a mechanical malfunction. It is clear that she sees this as a failure on the part of the machinery, while her co-workers see this as a failure on the part of the live body operating that machinery. Here, then, the Young Woman’s individual identity and interiority is pitted against the monotonous efficiency of the exterior mechanization. She does not fit in this system; her labor is unproductive. She is, as the Stenographer proclaims, “inefficient” (179). The Young Woman’s encounter with machines thus takes as its starting point the nineteenth-century conversation about factory systems, efficiency, and the elimination of waste.

This focus on waste is carried through to the second episode, “At Home,” where the Young Woman has dinner with her mother. When a janitor stops by to collect the garbage, the Young Woman becomes agitated. Her mother, annoyed with her, exclaims, “If it weren’t for garbage cans where would we be? Where would we all be? Living in filth—that’s what! Filth!” (188). Thus, the figurative waste the Young Woman represents in her inefficiencies in the office

is juxtaposed with the removal of literal waste from the home, and it is perhaps the recognition of her own inefficient, wasteful role that causes her to “[jump] up from the table every night the garbage is collected” (188).¹⁶⁰ The scene may be far removed from the visceral grotesqueness of Ubu’s similar juxtaposition of garbage and the dinner table in Jarry’s *Ubu Roi*, but the relationship between waste and food similarly underscores the Young Woman’s recognition of her own body signaling as uncannily uncontrolled in this environment. Haunted by the possibility of being removed from the system as waste, the Young Woman attempts to better fit into the artificial expectations of society by marrying Mr. Jones, the Vice President at the office where she works, even though this causes her physical revulsion. The play does not stage her husband as physically abusive or otherwise cruel—as a product himself of a patriarchal system, he is more blundering and oblivious than intentionally malevolent. Instead, the Young Woman’s revulsion is connected to her husband’s consistent alignment with mechanism.¹⁶¹ His movements and speech are repetitive; like a speaking automaton with only a few programmed phrases, he tells and re-tells the same jokes and stories, repeatedly insisting, for example, “all my life I’ve wanted a Swiss watch that I bought right there” (199, 231).

Although the Young Woman attempts to accept the role of wife and mother in this mechanized system, her physical and psychological fears of the overwhelming nature of mechanism inhibit her ability to perform the requirements of these roles. These fears often manifest in the play in the form of sound; sounds of riveting, for example, create a menacing

¹⁶⁰ John Dos Passos’s play *The Garbage Man (The Moon is a Gong)*, published in 1923 and first performed in 1925, enacted a similar connection between human garbage and humans as garbage in the machine age; in the play, the character “The Garbage Man” is actually Death in disguise, and the play ends when he removes the main characters, Tom and Jane.

¹⁶¹ Even his lack of intentional cruelty can be read as aligning him with a blind adherence to a mechanized system of patriarchal expectations.

mechanical soundscape that directly counters what should be a scene of familial happiness in episode four, “Maternal.” Although the Young Woman has produced a child, her wifely and maternal labor are just as inefficient as her work in the office. The Young Woman refuses to see her baby daughter and begins to gag when her husband visits. Like Helena in Čapek’s *R.U.R.*, the female labor of Treadwell’s Young Woman¹⁶² is stunted in the mechanical environment in which she finds herself. Unlike Helena, however, who lost her ability to produce altogether when confronted by the mechanisms of modern society, the Young Woman *can* produce but is terrified by the implications for her own individual agency/authority of producing within this mechanized system. She does not fear a mechanized body; rather, she fears her own mechanization within this system as an erasure of her individual identity.

As the play progresses, the Young Woman is subsumed in each scene by the systematic mechanization of her world through different social institutions such as work, marriage, motherhood, and, eventually, law. When she meets the handsome young Richard Roe,¹⁶³ the Young Woman sees her relationship with him as offering a possible opportunity outside of the literal and metaphorical machines that have circumscribed her life. Their initial meeting occurs in a speakeasy in the era of Prohibition, which gives their budding relationship an aura of counter-culture rule-breaking. This is underscored by the other couples in the speakeasy whose conversations render them as also outside of acceptable social practice; there are extra-marital

¹⁶² The linguistic similarity between the names of Čapek’s Helena and Treadwell’s Young Woman, who we will later discover is named Helen, is interesting, although no doubt coincidental.

¹⁶³ Roe was played in the original production by a young and not-yet-famous Clark Gable. Gable had played small roles as an extra in a few silent films before appearing in *Machinal*, but would not become a major Hollywood star until the early 1930s. In an interesting twist, since characters are listed by description and not by name (characters were called “Man,” “Young Man,” “Another Man,” etc.), several critics mistakenly listed Roe as played by Hal K. Dawson, and, later, this caused some to incorrectly declare that “Hal K. Dawson” was actually a stage name for Gable (Dickey 70). In a play concerned with the dehumanization of individuals in the modern age, it is strangely appropriate that the actors, their names, and their characters’ names became eerily interchangeable.

affairs, discussions about abortions, and a homosexual encounter. In addition, the Young Woman's interest in Richard is linked with his connection to illegal activities; he woos her with a story of how he murdered some bandits (214-5). Unlike her husband, who is consistently aligned with mechanism, Richard is aligned with natural materials such as the sea shell and lilies he keeps in his room. Richard does not even use a gun or a knife for the violence he carries out; rejecting metal and mechanism both, he instead constructs a weapon from pebbles and a glass bottle. The emphasis on the "natural" as opposed to the "mechanical" is underscored by the soundscape in this scene. Instead of the mechanical noises of typewriters or the intrusion of rivet guns, the Young Woman and Richard are serenaded by "the sound of a hand organ, very faint, and the irregular rhythm of passing feet" (219). Richard thus represents, for the Young Woman, an alternative to the machines of everyday life and the impersonal mechanization of society.

The Young Woman finds the mechanization of her life unbearable after her experiences with Richard, and she determines that the best way to be "free" is to follow Richard's example and use some small stones in a bottle to murder her husband. The play, however, clearly stages the Young Woman's desire to live outside the mechanisms of society as just as naïve as the Joyces' desire to bury their clocks and live in accordance with "true" time. The Young Woman kills her husband believing this will allow her to escape the mechanization of her life, but her husband is not the threat to her agency and authority. In the penultimate episode, "The Law," the Young Woman is brought to trial for the murder of her husband, and here we see the mechanization of society inscribed on the courtroom. Amidst the sounds of the "*clicking of telegraph instruments offstage*," we are told that "*the words and movements of all these people except the YOUNG WOMAN are routine—mechanical. Each is going through the motions of his own game*" (233). As the Young Woman's story about two strangers breaking into her home and

murdering her husband begins to fall apart under the questioning of the Lawyer for the Defense and the Lawyer for the Prosecution, two reporters weave contradictory stories about whether she is a grieving wife or a callous murderer. The scene thus stages the Young Woman's body as physically present in between the narratives the lawyers and the reporters enact. When she finally confesses, however, the news industry quickly capitalizes on controlling her story, and the Young Woman loses authority over her own narrative as the reporters rush to get out their headlines in "*a great burst of speed from the telegraphic instruments*" (248). The violent murder of her husband thus results in her ultimate incarceration within the system; she is condemned to be executed by the electric chair. Treadwell here allows us to recognize the decentered and impersonal power of the mechanization of this society; there is no focal point for the adversary the Young Woman faces, no clear obstacle she can surmount or person, mechanical or otherwise, she needs to best. In a manner that anticipates Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, even the domains that she perceived as "outside" the system—crime, deviancy—are systematized; the Young Woman is continually re-interpellated into the system even as she attempts to escape it.¹⁶⁴ "Outside" the machine does not exist.

When the Young Woman is finally led offstage to the electric chair, "*the scene blacks out*" (254), and the final dialogue of the play comes from a darkened stage. As the reporters muse, "Suppose the machine shouldn't work!" and the priest drones on in prayer, we hear the Young Woman's final haunting cry issuing from the darkness:

¹⁶⁴ The Young Woman's attempts to claim her own agency outside the system are underscored by the handling of her name in the play. Treadwell withholds the Young Woman's name until the scene in which she meets Richard Roe where she finally announces her name is Helen. The use of the name provides a linguistic resistance to the textual characterization Treadwell outlines in the opening notes that she is "*an ordinary young woman, any woman*" (173), just as she resists, throughout the play, her situation within the mechanized systems of society. She fails to escape this linguistic imposition just as she fails to escape the imposition of mechanized society; even after her name is formally mentioned, she continues to be branded "Young Woman" in the printed text.

YOUNG WOMAN: [*Calling out*] Somebody! Somebod— [*Her voice is cut off.*]

PRIEST: Christ have mercy—Lord have mercy—Christ have mercy—

CURTAIN (255)

This is, indeed, a stark picture of impersonal mechanism and cruel bodies (human and mechanical) that impose mechanized systems into human lives. The Young Woman's electrocution, and the play's invocation of the violence of her living body literally consumed by the machinery of the electric chair, serves to underscore the modern expectation that the removal of the live human body by the literal machine will also remove the metaphorical threat that body posed to the underlying ideological machine.

This ideological machine has been the subject of much of the scholarship on the play to date. The use of the electric chair, which, as Tim Armstrong notes in *Modernism, Technology, and the Body*, operates as both a metaphorical and literal means of social purification (35), certainly invites a critique of the social system that led to this end.¹⁶⁵ Many scholars have read the play's final moments through a feminist lens, thus seeing the removal of the Young Woman's body as connected to a cultural move to erase female bodies behaving badly and/or a connection to historical perspectives on the alignment of a technological threat with a threat represented by women's bodies.¹⁶⁶ Given Treadwell's history of addressing questions of gender, her clear interest in women's issues, and the play's situation at an important moment in the history of the women's rights movement, these readings are appropriate for understanding the political and

¹⁶⁵ Armstrong mentions *Machinal* only in passing, but his discussion of the modern perception of the electric chair as "a 'clean' way of solving the problem of transgressive behavior" (32) is applicable to the play.

¹⁶⁶ Donna J. Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" is one of the earliest and best-known discussion of the way machines and the threat of mechanical bodies are often aligned with women and a feminine threat. Jennifer Parker-Starbuck furthers this conversation in *Cyborg Theatre*, remarking, "The female has often been a site through which to play out the anxieties of technological displacement, often writ large through the trope of reproduction and the maternal" (2).

gendered views the mechanized system reinforces in the play. Rita Felski, in *The Gender of Modernity*, asserts that the “figure of woman” becomes “a powerful symbol of both the dangers and the promises of the modern age” (3), and plays such as *Machinal* heighten this effect even further when gender is appropriated by modern theatre artists to express the dialectic between man and machine. Read this way, *Machinal* thus dramatizes the fear of the live body dehumanized and subsumed by mechanism directed by human ideological power structures. These readings dissect the gendered power structure of the machine as a metaphor for human perspectives and assume the machine operates at the behest of human power struggles. While understanding the way machines are used to emphasize certain power structures/hierarchies already present in human society is certainly an important avenue of investigation, I want to focus here on the way the play stages the relationship between man and machine as a drama of bodily mediation.

Machinal ultimately dramatizes a failure of the live body to mediate between man and machine. The obvious failure is that of the Young Woman, who has failed to mediate between her own human physical and emotional needs and the machinery and the mechanisms of society (metaphorical and literal). Her adherence to the requirements of the human over the requirements of the machine cause her removal from the system (in a manner much more dangerous and disturbing than the silliness of Mrs. Joyce simply not making her dentist appointment in *Tickless Time*). The threat posed by the bodies of the other characters onstage, however, is also a representation of a failed bodily meditation. Their adherence to the requirements of the machine over the requirements of the human is portrayed as a loss of humanity; they may not be physically removed as the Young Woman is, but their monotonous tone and mechanical movements indicate for the audience that they have been emotionally and psychologically

detached from their bodies. While the bombardment of mechanical sounds and the integration of machines such as the appliances of the office workers or the telegraphs of the reporters suggest an ominous ubiquity of machines, the actual threat to both the Young Woman and to the other characters is the live body itself when it ceases to mediate between the needs of the human and the demands of the machine. The mechanized live body—the body that lacks the antibody resistance to the anti-body consumption of the machine—that the Young Woman so fears and the other characters so hauntingly embody represents a greater challenge to human agency and authority than the machines themselves.

While the play thus presents a stark vision of the failure of bodily mediation, I would like to suggest that it also meta-critically stages the erasure of the machine body in a complex comment on the live body's role in creative authority. The blackout as the Young Woman leaves the stage to be strapped into the electric chair is our first indication that the removal of the live body will also have a detrimental effect on the functioning of the theatrical machine. Onstage, we do not see a world made better (or worse) after the live body's removal. We do not even see a final image of the Young Woman slumped in the electric chair, which would be a powerful vision of a body consumed by machinery. We see... nothing. When Ruth Snyder was executed in January 1928 for the murder of her husband Albert with the help of her lover, Henry Judd Gray—the trial on which Treadwell's play was based—a reporter snuck a camera into the execution chamber and snapped a picture, which was subsequently published on the front page of newspapers across the US. It was a national sensation, and audiences would certainly have had this image of a woman in an electric chair fresh in their minds during the play's final moments. Given the fact that audiences would have been expecting it, and given the highly

theatrical possibilities for staging a dramatic electrocution,¹⁶⁷ it is especially important that Treadwell clearly chooses *not* to stage the electrocution itself.

This absence is, like the ending of *R.U.R.*, a parable of something deeper when presented on the stage. Rather than a simple story of a human removed by modern mechanization (although it is, indeed, this), I want to suggest that this also stages for the audience the limits of mechanical bodies. The play's ending underscores the notion that the machine, here, does not operate according to a consciousness similar to that of a human. The failure of the live body is not, on stage, a success for mechanical bodies. Mechanical bodies do not "win;" there is no triumphant robot race, there are no mechanical villains happily cheering in code, and there is no electronic exultation. Neither do machines surpass or usurp human bodies to take the role of primary mediator of human experience. While the body is able to mediate the relationship between man and machine the play continues.¹⁶⁸ When the body is removed, the play is over; the machine alone lacks creative agency/creative authority to continue. The play thus meta-theatrically stages a parable that reinforces creative agency/authority as solely the domain of the human even as it dramatizes the stark removal of that authority by the machine.

The terrifying mechanization of live bodies and the final, inescapable removal of the Young Woman's body in *Machinal* dramatizes a threat of the pervasiveness of machinery and mechanization in modern life that resembles the bombardment of physical bodies by the violent

¹⁶⁷ It should be noted that many staged versions of *Machinal* do, in fact, leave Helen onstage through the end of the play, and they often also bring on an electric chair in order to take advantage of the dramatic impact of an onstage electrocution. In the 2014 Broadway production starring Rebecca Hall, for example, the Young Woman was led to an electric chair placed on a raised dais center stage, and strapped in. At the moment in which the electrocution occurred, the lights flashed up and then the stage went quickly dark, as though due to an electrical overload. While this stages more concretely the machine's role in the removal of the human body, it also still marks the removal of the human body as the end of the theatrical endeavor.

¹⁶⁸ Perhaps this idea underscored the decision on the part of the 1931 London production to change the title of the play to *The Life Machine*.

and impersonal machines of war. *Machinal* certainly performs anxieties over dehumanization that highlight the threat of the live body becoming mechanized rather than the threat of an easily identifiable mechanical body with a separate agency that can be overcome. Although the play stages the failure of the body to mediate between man and machine, Treadwell's play still privileges the live body as the primary, if unstable, physical presence that must continually negotiate between live and mechanical bodies. Mechanization is a threat, but it is also a threat to be unable to mediate mechanization in any way. The Young Woman fears becoming mechanized, but because she cannot negotiate with the mechanization of modern society she is removed from it altogether.

Although the threat of dehumanization, fragmentation, and bodily violence were consistently foregrounded in modern investigations into the relationship between man and machine, in the theatre artists and audiences alike were forced to contend not with the body's absence, but with the implications of its necessary presence. The theatrical supplementation (in the Derridean sense) of the human body by different kinds of "machines" (some literal and some metaphorical) addresses both the devastating effects of the widespread use of machine warfare during WWI as well as the anxiety caused by the increasing presence of machinery in daily life. The theatrical works of the post-war period performatively experiment with doubling a living body with a machine body (whether literal or metaphorical) in order to explore, in a practical and metaphorical arena, the possibilities for and ramifications of the bodily mediation of machinery. The end result of many of these modern theatrical experiments, whether intentional or not, was to call attention to the body as a site of crisis that fluctuates between an integration with and a resistance to the encroachment of machines. The modern theatre thus re-centered the human body as the primary medium in these encounters through its continued renegotiation of its

material presence in the face of all these ongoing assaults on its integrity, coherence, and meaning, even when the stories being enacted involved destruction and mechanization. As I have discussed, the stage was no less intense in its presentation of machines and mechanical bodies as a possible threat to live bodies and their humanity than were other art forms. In presenting these issues through the medium of live bodies onstage, however, the theatrical presentation of the threat to the live body specifically dramatized an experiment of bodily mediation. Even when the attempt at mediation failed, the theatrical experiments continued to re-emphasize the live body as the primary medium and mediating force in the relationship between live and mechanical bodies, between mechanical encroachment and embodied resistance, and between personal individuality and impersonal collectivity.

Afterword

Through this project I have traced a shift in the relationship between man and machine that began with an Enlightenment recognition of this relationship as an active negotiation. The theatrical engagement with this evolving understanding of the relationship between man and machine offered a space uniquely qualified for experimenting with the physical practicalities of this negotiation in action and the impact these new relationships might have on a set of philosophical, spiritual, and metaphysical concerns. Proceeding from an Enlightenment era emphasis on the machine as something that must be mediated by human authors and that signaled human accomplishment, the live performing body in the visceral space of the stage had to materially navigate such encounters, physically mediating the embodied reality of the demands of the flesh and the demands of the machine.

When the human-centric focus of the Enlightenment was complicated by the industrialization of the nineteenth century, the modern experience of technology became marked by fears of mechanical encroachment onto human territory. These fears were founded on the assumption that machines were increasingly mediating human experiences, a perspective that centered machines and mechanisms as the primary medium and mediating force in the relationship between man and machinery. If machines were becoming progressively responsible for mediating human experience, it might be possible for them to become permanently in-between in such a way that human bodies could be ultimately disconnected from the human experience entirely. Machines acting “in-between” human bodies and human experience could therefore disturb human bodily agency as well as human authority over those things that had previously been considered the domain of the human, such as art, creativity, and invention.

While bodies could easily disappear or merge with machinery in novels or on film, in the

theatre artists and audiences alike were forced to contend not with the body's absence, but with its necessary presence. The end result of many of these modern theatrical experiments, intentionally or not, was to call attention to what was wholly human. These works expose a modern emphasis on process, rehearsal, and experimentation in contrast to a modern tendency toward mechanical precision and efficiency. While machines and mechanical bodies are often used as metaphors to describe immutable perfection of all kinds (machine precision, mechanical efficiency), human bodies onstage, for better or for worse, do not remain fixed, and cannot be archived into perfect unchanging relationships. Things that do not change, however, also do not grow, and things that have achieved immutable perfection struggle to remain immutably perfect when faced with challenges that require the resilient adaptive abilities of the human body and human creativity. The relationship between live and mechanical bodies onstage reveals the possibilities for and limits of both live and mechanical bodies; both live and mechanical bodies make mistakes, age (though, obviously, in different ways), and face becoming functionally obsolete as human or mechanical "progress" moves beyond their initial parameters. While the theatrical encounters with these issues still engaged with anxieties over live bodies that were flawed, aging, or facing violent erasure, the necessary presence of the human body emphasized the capacity for growth, ingenuity, and invention as the domain of the human.

As I have argued, the theatre provided a theoretical and practical space that resisted the erasure of bodies by machines. On stage, bodies insist on their presence, mandating a negotiation between live and mechanical bodies that situates the live body as the primary mediator and mediating force of the negotiation. The performing body thus becomes a site of crisis that concentrates and reframes the issues of creative agency, authority, and authorship as an issue of mediation, ultimately enacting a performance of bodily mediation between man and machine for

its living audience. The evolution of the way live bodies mediate machinery through the theatrical doubling of living and mechanical bodies onstage has ramifications not just for the modern moment, but also for the contemporary period. Modern anxieties over the relationship between live and mechanical bodies certainly did not disappear as the modern age moved on; we are inundated today with new technologies and interactive mechanisms. Science fiction shows such as HBO's popular *Westworld* directly address the way advancing technology might collapse the divide between live human bodies and "mechanical" bodies and what that might mean for the relationship between the two. Further, concerns over the authorial agency behind mechanical bodies such as puppets become even more disturbing when Bluetooth and wireless technologies mean the strings are now often invisible. A doll created by Vivid Toy Group, My Friend Cayla, for example, has come under suspicion because its digital technology, which allows the doll to converse with young girls and answer questions, has been found to be vulnerable to outside hacking.¹⁶⁹ This means that anyone within the range of the doll's sensors who has access to Bluetooth could, theoretically, hack into the doll's software and listen to (and talk with) your child.

In the theatre, too, we are still working through the relationship between live bodies and technological mechanisms, and this continues to involve the doubling of live and mechanical/digital bodies onstage. Jordan Harrison's play *Marjorie Prime*,¹⁷⁰ for instance, presents a family that uses artificial "companions" equipped with artificial intelligence in order to help an aging family member and relieve the grieving process after family members die. *The*

¹⁶⁹ See Chris Baraniuk, "Call for Privacy Probes over Cayla Doll and i-Que Toys," *BBC News*, December 6, 2016.

¹⁷⁰ *Marjorie Prime* premiered at Playwrights Horizons in 2015.

Nether, a play by Jennifer Haley,¹⁷¹ stages a virtual space called The Hideaway, which is created for visitors who want to have sex with (or harm) virtual children. Live actors play both the robot replicas of *Marjorie Prime* and the virtual child avatars of *The Nether*. Theatre, then, continues to assert the presence of live bodies even as advancements in technology, including the addition of digital bodies and artificial intelligence, have continued to impose themselves.

Death and the Powers, a technological opera composed by Tod Machover and developed in conjunction with the MIT Media Lab, explored the ramifications of complex new relationships between man and machine.¹⁷² In this opera, the rich inventor Simon Powers discovers he is dying and decides to upload his consciousness into what he calls “The System”—a digital interface that will allow him continued existence after his body has died. Much of the story occurs after he successfully uploads himself to this system and his friends and family try to come to terms with his new digital form. The piece was an amazing feat of technological and mechanical engineering, juxtaposing live actors, technological mechanisms, and performing robots on the stage in new ways. The live actor playing Simon, for example, continued to perform offstage after he had “died” and been uploaded to The System in a method the creators call “Disembodied Performance” whereby the actor’s “gestures, breath, and voice” were captured through body sensors and interpreted in two major onstage elements (Jessup et. al. Sec. 3). The first element consisted of “three fifteen-foot tall wall structures” onstage that could move and rotate (Jessup et. al. Sec. 3). The structures were meant to “represent bookshelves and each book spine form[ed] an LED display surface” (Jessup et. al. Sec. 3). The second element was a giant

¹⁷¹ *The Nether* was developed as part of the 2011 National Playwright’s Conference, and had its world premiere in 2013 at the Kirk Douglas Theatre.

¹⁷² *Death and the Powers* had its world premiere in Monaco in September of 2010, followed by its US premiere in Boston and Chicago in 2011.

chandelier that, when inhabited by Simon later in the opera, became a stringed instrument that his wife could play. In addition, nine “robot actors”—tall robots with flat plastic triangle-shaped heads lovingly called “operabots” (Jessup et al. Sec. 4)—performed as a chorus. The narrative itself was set up as a play-within-a-play that opened and closed with the operabots; in the frame story, all the humans are gone, but, having been instructed by Simon to re-enact his life and his integration with The System, the operabots continue to meet each year to carry out this memorial performance. As such, the opera juxtaposed both a human family drama in which Simon’s family must learn to interact with Simon’s digital and technological form and a robot drama of humanity in which robots performatively attempt to understand human life and death.¹⁷³

Machover’s opera foregrounded the way live and mechanical bodies function together in a shared space and attempt to understand the physical realities of one another. It is clear that these conversations fall into a long line of evolving understandings about the nature of human bodies and mechanical bodies and their relative agency and authority in relation to their performances on stage. The opening prologue, for example, recalled conversations about efficiency as one of the operabots attempting to understand the concept of death asks, “is it a form of waste?” The character of Nicholas, Simon’s friend and protégé, physically represented the juxtaposition of live and mechanical elements in one body; rescued by Simon as a young boy from a ward for disabled children, Nicholas wore mechanical prostheses developed by Simon to improve his mobility, which made him, for the purposes of the opera, a “master of ceremonies”

¹⁷³ The opera was so intriguing that creator Machover and director Diane Paulus eventually decided to reprise the performance with an interactive component that would not only allow it to be broadcast to theatres nationwide, but would also allow audiences to engage with the performance through smart devices such as phones or tablets. In 2014, the final performance in Dallas included a global live simulcast. Audiences engaging with the show via their devices could view different aspects of the performance as though they were part of The System, allowing them an omniscient view. Audiences could also interact with and influence lights on a chandelier in the auditorium.

who was part man and part machine. Like Samuel Foote in *Piety and Pattens*, Nicholas's human/machine hybrid body onstage physically enacted an active negotiation of the live and the mechanical for the living audience.

The relationship to earlier understandings of bodily performance and theatrical theory was also explicit in the way the team approached the live and mechanical bodies in performance. In writing the code, for example, that translated the performance of the actor playing Simon into technological and mechanical manifestations, the MIT Media Lab team turned to Rudolf von Laban's early twentieth-century work on the notation of body movement.¹⁷⁴ Not only, then, did the theatre's historical focus on the live body in conversation with technological mechanisms and machine bodies provide the space in which man and machine could meet on both a practical and philosophical level, it also provided the shared vocabulary through which the machine's code could understand, recognize, and engage with the live performing human. Humans attempting to understand the workings of the machine dealt with similar slippages that frame the mechanical in terms of the live and recall earlier theatrical conversations about these issues. Bob Hsiung, who was in charge of robot mechanical design, described how one of the operabots (named "Q") kept shaking whenever he was onstage. Not able to find a mechanical or technological reason for the behavior, Hsiung quips "maybe he's just nervous."¹⁷⁵ One can almost hear Edward Gordon Craig's horror from beyond the grave that the bodies of such advanced über-marionettes are just

¹⁷⁴ In "Music and Technology in *Death and the Powers*," Elena Jessup, Peter A. Torpey, and Benjamin Bloomberg write "In our analysis of movement data, we decided that the performer should not be required to use any particular movement vocabulary (essentially, his performance should not be choreographed); instead, the system should adapt to the performer's personal style of expression and augment his normal performance. We therefore chose to transform live movement data into information about the performer's emotionally-driven quality of movement. We analyzed the qualities of movement using concepts borrowed [from] Laban Effort Notion" (Sec. 3.1.2). Peter A. Torpey, in his Master's Thesis about the work he did on the code for *Death and the Powers*, also locates historical precedent for the team's work in the gestural taxonomies of François Delsarte (41).

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in "Singing Robots Show Humanity of Technology in Opera of the Future," a special feature on *PBS Newshour*, February 10, 2014.

as susceptible to bodily unpredictability in performance as live bodies, or Heinrich von Kleist's disappointment to learn that today's puppets might be vulnerable to the performative flaws caused by self-awareness. One might also recall the "robot cramp" that marks the rebellion of the robot workers in Karel Čapek's *R.U.R.* Further underscoring the historical roots of this contemporary issue, Machover himself worked on his technological masterpiece for MIT's "Opera of the Future" group from the comfort of an eighteenth-century barn he converted into his workspace. *Death and the Powers*, then, perfectly illustrates the way the mediation of the relationship between man and machine is still at the core of our conversations about these issues. Its theatrical experimentation inherits and proceeds from an evolving understanding of the mediation between man and machine that has deep historical roots.

Because it can be easy, in today's digital world, to erase, or simply forget, the live body in these negotiations, the theatre remains an important testing ground for examining new relationships between man and machine by insisting that the live body must be taken into account. The theatre's juxtaposition of live bodies and mechanical bodies, as we have seen, stretches back to Enlightenment experiments with these issues. A fundamental shift in the understanding of the way these relationships are negotiated occurred as Enlightenment understandings of the body and machinery encountered the anxieties of the Industrial Revolution. Inheriting this shift in the cultural consciousness about what the relationship between the live body and machinery might be in a newly mechanized world, modern theatre artists tested the concept of mediation itself, using the theatre as a laboratory for a variety of iterations of the man-machine relationship that investigated both the real-world implications of such relationships and their ethical, spiritual, and philosophical ramifications. Appreciating this complex historical framework allows us to better understand the contemporary encounter

between live and mechanical bodies, and it reminds us that theatre is a medium uniquely suited to exploring this relationship. As an art form that engages live and mechanical bodies before a living audience, theater is a privileged site for enacting the complex negotiation between man and machine.

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Appendix

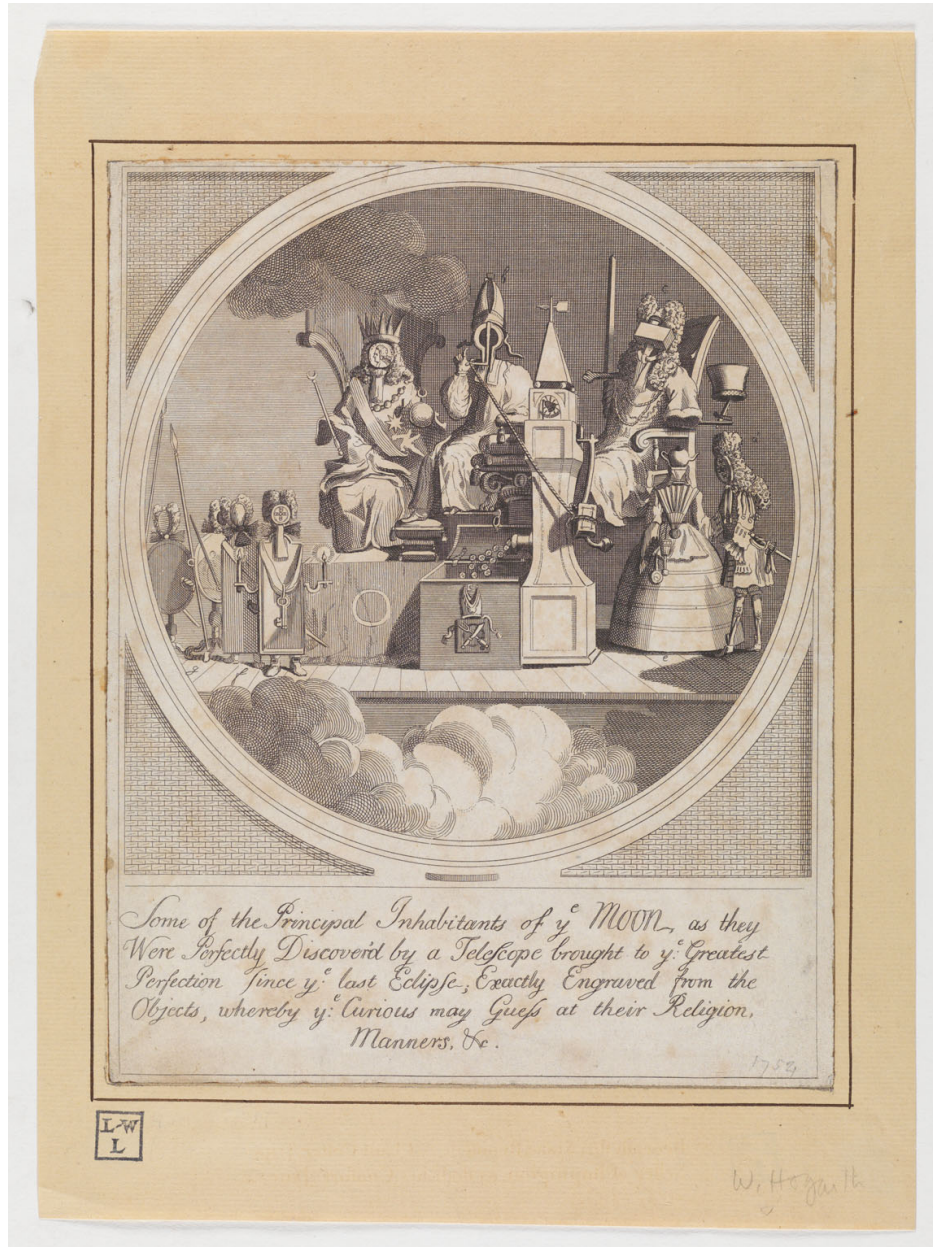


Fig. 2: William Hogarth, “Some of the Principal Inhabitants of Ye Moon: Royalty, Episcopacy, and Law” (1724). Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.



Fig. 3: Foote, the Devil and Polly Pattens, published in *The Macaroni & Theatrical Magazine*, author unknown (February 1773). © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 4: “Piety in Pattens, or Timbertoe on Tiptoe,” published by M. Darly, author unknown (March 12, 1773). Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

Vita

Kerri Ann Considine earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts in 2003. She went on to serve as an Artistic Intern at Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago before working in non-profit and arts administration with the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. In 2011 she earned her Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Tennessee, and then was accepted into the department's doctoral program. Working across disciplinary lines while at the University of Tennessee and developing her research interest in drama, theatre, and performance studies, Kerri taught in both the English and Theatre departments and served as a dramaturg for productions with the Clarence Brown Theatre. She was honored to receive a Graduate Fellowship in the University of Tennessee Humanities Center for the 2016-2017 academic year. In 2017 she received her Doctor of Philosophy degree in English from the University of Tennessee.