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In a series of articles, William Pietz has argued that

the fetish . . . as a novel object not proper to any prior discrete society, originated in the cross-cultural spaces of the coast of West Africa during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹

Focusing on Portuguese traders in the areas inhabited by the Akan people, Pietz traces the word fetish to the pidgin Fetisso, which can in turn be traced to the Portuguese feitiço, meaning magical practice or witchcraft. The fetish, Pietz shows, came into being above all as a term of religious abuse, by which Europeans rejected objects that were attributed with animating powers. African amulets, for instance, used for protection against disease or sorcery, were demonized by Portuguese Catholics, who

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are our own.
contrasted their "false" spiritual powers to the "true" spiritual powers of relics, indulgences, and the sacrament. In the seventeenth century, Dutch Protestants attacked Akan fetishes as idols, explicitly conflating these animated objects with the supposed idolatry of European Catholics. Through the attribution of belief in animated objects to demonized idolaters—whether Akan or Catholic—the proper European Protestant was imagined, by antithesis, as a subject unconstrained by the constituting power of objects.

Constituted as such "proper" subjects, we know that we should not treat people like things. Objectification is conceptualized from this perspective as the incapacitating of the subject. But what we all presume to know is historically specific. What did it mean in the Renaissance to be a monarch or an aristocrat if not to be powerfully objectified as land, both imagined and material? Shakespeare's Bolingbroke (the name of the castle where he was born) can scarcely sustain his name as Duke of Lancaster without the things that support that name. The king's favorites, he claims, have

Dispark'd my Parkes, and fell'd my Forrest Woods;
From mine owne Windowes torne my Household Coat,
Raz'd out my Impresse, leauing me no signe,
Saue mens opinions, and my liuing blood,
To shew the World I am a Gentleman.²

The value of "mens opinion" and "my liuing blood" (that is, the internalized sap of the family tree) is inadequate without the value of the actual trees of parks and forests that constitute Lancaster. Name is constituted by things. Take away the things and the name disappears or is emptied

². William Shakespeare, The Life and Death of Richard the Second, in The First Folio of Shakespeare: The Norton Facsimile, ed. Charlton Hinman (New York, 1968), 3.1.23–7 (TLN 1335–9, p. 355). Unless otherwise noted, all citations from Shakespeare are to this edition; references to act, scene, and line numbers are to The Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston, 1974), followed by the through line numbers (TLN) of Hinman's First Folio.

out. Without his retainers, King Lear is merely Lear, no longer the royal we but the I of the private—that is, deprived—subject.\(^3\)

To think of objectification as a form of power is a distinctively pre-capitalist way of thinking about the relations between person and thing. When we rewrite a precapitalist ideology of objectification in terms of the emergent subject, we get the past absolutely wrong. It is not the capitalist present that has suddenly started to obsess about the value of things. On the contrary, capitalist cultures are often squeamish about value, attempting to separate cultural value from economics, persons from things, subjects from objects, the priceless (us) from the valueless (the detachable world).

But detachable parts—rings, jewels, gloves, for instance—continued to trouble the conceptual opposition of person and thing, even as the concept of the fetish was forged to formalize such an opposition. Gloves, which we focus upon in this essay, not only materialized status, “gentling” the hand of the gentry, but also functioned as what Pietz calls “external organs of the body,” organs that could be transferred from beloved to lover, from monarch to subject, from master to servant.\(^4\) They thus materialized the power of people to be condensed and absorbed into things and of things to become persons.

As “external organs,” gloves could be preserved and transmitted as heirlooms. Gloves were among the material forms in which the English monarchy stored its supposed virtues. In 1655, Thomas Fuller wrote that

> posterity conceived so great an opinion of King Edward’s piety, that his Cloaths were deposited amongst the Regalia, and solemnly worn by our English Kings on their Coronation, never counting themselves so fine, as when invested with his Robes... It was to mind our Kings, when habited with his Cloaths, to be cloathed with the habit of his vertuous Endowments: as when putting on the Gloves of this Confessour, their Hands ought to be like his, in moderate taking of Taxes from their Subjects.\(^5\)

The monarch can be minded by putting on the clothes of the “pious” Edward. The inward habit of virtue is first materialized through the outward habit of robes and gloves.

Clothing is here imagined as antithetical to fashion—that is, to the rapid shifting of different shapes and styles. The monarch will be molded

\(^3\) For a brilliant account of the function of Lear’s “train” in the formation of his royal identity, see Margreta de Grazia, “The Ideology of Superfluous Things: King Lear as Period Piece,” in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Stallybrass (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 17-42.


to his proper function visually and tactiley through what he wears, through his habits. As Daniel Defert argues:

To confuse the meaning of habit [l'habit] in the sixteenth century with that of fashion [la mode] is an anachronistic illusion. Habit has the original connotation of habitus, which implies work upon the body. The serious expression of a judge or the reticence of a virgin, the hairlessness or the tattoos of an Indian, body piercing or asceticism, are all part of the habit-habitus that defines the mode of being of established groups and not the free choice of individuals.⁶

Clothing, as habit, implies a way of life. This material shaping is clearest in relation to the habits that monks wore. As Defert notes:

No sixteenth-century French dictionary defines [habitus monasticus] simply as “garment.” The habitus monasticus designates the rule, the way of life, from which the garment cannot be disassociated: l'habit-habitus makes the monk... The garment is a rule of conduct and the memory of this rule for the wearer as well as for others.⁷

If Hamlet imagines habit or custom as a “monster,” it is because of its power to transform. Attempting to persuade his mother to abstain from sleeping with Claudius, Hamlet says:

> Assume a vertue if you haue it not,  
> That monster custome...  
> ... is angel yet in this  
> That to the vse of actions faire and good,  
> He likewise giues a frock or Liuery  
> That aptly is put on...  
> For vse almost can change the stamp of nature.⁸

What we would now describe as an ethical state is imagined by Hamlet as a bodily practice—virtue, like clothing, can be “put on.” Repeated wearing acts as an inscription upon the body that can work with or against alternative forms of inscription (here, “the stamp of nature”).

The monarch’s glove continued to be treated as a form of inscription as well as an extension of the monarch’s hand throughout the seven-

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⁷. Ibid., p. 28.
teenth century. Indeed, new ritual aspects of monarchy were elaborated, particularly in response to the execution of Charles I, but they had to compete against the "demystifying" discourses of idolatry and the fetish. Fuller’s records of Edward the Confessor’s coronation regalia is in fact a nostalgic lament for what has been lost: “But now Edward’s Staffe is broken, Chair overturned, Cloaths rent, and Crown melted; our present Age esteeming them the reliques of Superstition.” If the touch of the royal hand continued to be stored up in the material form of a glove, the glove was increasingly a museum piece that would no longer have the power to cure scrofula or to have other magical effects. A pair of Edward the Confessor’s gloves (in this case, knitted gloves) found their way into the Tradescant cabinet of wonders in Oxford, along with the gloves of Henry VIII and the “silke knit-gloves” of Anne Boleyn. But as the cabinet of wonders was transformed into the Ashmolean Museum, such gloves were stripped of their ability to transform their recipient with the power of the absent hand.

Of course, gloves were not necessarily connected to specific bodies, nor did they necessarily become powerful material agents. In the Renaissance as today there were many practical functions for gloves, whether to protect hands from heat and cold or from the rigors of labor. Gloves were functional, a protection for servants’ hands. As useful accessories, they were absorbed into the labor process. But the gloves of aristocrats and gentry—male and female alike—usually operated to display hands to which such labor was alien. The function of these gloves—for both men and women—was to occupy the hands in the manufacture of the immaterial. They thus materialize a paradox: they draw attention to the hands while making the hands useless, or useful only for putting on or taking off a glove, or for holding gloves or handkerchiefs or fans or flowers.

The play of hands and gloves, though, was an aspect of the ritual exchanges of social life by no means confined to the elite. Gloves, like hands, were given and taken as the embodied form of social acts—the bonding of friend to friend, of lover to lover. In his “Guide to the Tongues” (1617), John Minsheu derives “glove” from “gift-love” and from the Low Dutch “gheloove,” meaning faithfulness. Given to guests at weddings by anyone who could afford to give them, gloves extended the prosthetic

10. On the power of the royal touch to cure scrofula, see Marc Bloch, Les Rois thaumaturges (Strasbourg, 1924), and Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (Harmondsworth, 1973), pp. 227–44.
hand of affection.\textsuperscript{14} They reached out to pair the guests to the gift-givers and to each other. In 1560, Henry Machyn recorded in his diary that a vintner “gayff a C payre of glovys” to the guests at his wedding.\textsuperscript{15} It’s perhaps worth noting that such mass gifts had their problems; how often did the gloves fit? In Thomas Dekker’s \textit{Satiromastix} (1602), a gentlewoman claims that “fiue or sixe payre of the white innocent wedding gloues, did in my sight choose rather to be torne in peeces than to be drawne on.”\textsuperscript{16} The materialization of social connection through gloves was always threatened by the contingency of things: the gloves might not fit; they were easily lost (like handkerchiefs); they wore out and got stained.

But the glove—particularly, as we argue, the single glove—conjured up the hand as the corporeal site of agency for Aristotle, Galen, and their followers.\textsuperscript{17} Hand and glove are, as the proverb still suggests, intimately related, even inseparable. In such a conjoining, it no longer seems to matter which is the glove and which the hand. Each is embraced and animated by the other. On the other hand, gloves are dropped, lost, discarded. If a person could “be laid at one side like a paire of old shooes,” one could equally be thrown aside like a cast-off glove.\textsuperscript{18} And if the hand is the site of agency, the \textit{pairing} of hands, as of gloves, is already problematic. The expression “on the one hand . . . on the other hand” unpairs the human body, setting the right hand against the left, the left against the right. This unpairing of the hands is staged again and again in Renaissance portraits where the sitter is posed with one glove on, one off. If one hand (“on the one hand”) is inseparable from its glove, the other hand (“on the other hand”) is naked, the glove absent, or resting on a table, or held loosely in the hand.

\textbf{Unpairing the Hands}

In “Restitutions of the Truth in Pointing,” Derrida conducts a sustained meditation on pairing and unpairing—the pairing and unpairing of a painting and what it represents, of a painting and its titles, of foot


\textsuperscript{15}. Quoted in Linthicum, \textit{Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries}, p. 268.


\textsuperscript{18}. Dekker, \textit{The Shoemakers’ Holiday}, in \textit{The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker}, 1:1.1.142–43, p. 27.
and shoe, of one shoe and its “pair.” Derrida’s speculations revolve around Van Gogh’s *Old Shoes with Laces* and Heidegger’s and Schapiro’s commentaries on Van Gogh. As Derrida notes:

A pair of shoes is more easily treated as a *utility* than a single shoe or two shoes which aren’t a pair. The pair inhibits, at least, if it does not prevent, the “fetishizing” movement; it rivets things to use, to “normal” use. . . . It is perhaps in order to exclude the question of a certain uselessness, or of a so-called perverse usage, that Heidegger and Schapiro denied themselves the slightest doubt as to the parity of pairedness of these two shoes. They bound them together in order to bind them to the law of normal usage.

Shoes and gloves are not, of course, a pair themselves. They are both put on and taken off; they both shape and are reshaped by the body; they both take in the oils and smells of the body (although the smell of the hand is not the same as the smell of the foot, and aristocratic—and even middle-class—gloves in the Renaissance were frequently perfumed anyway). But if your feet are accustomed to shoes, it will be painful to walk barefoot on rough ground or gravel. The shoe’s remolding of the foot is not the same as the glove’s remolding of the hand. If you walk with one shoe on and one shoe off, you limp. You are even more likely to “limp” with both gloves on. Wearing a pair of gloves makes it more difficult to blow your nose, to find change in your pocket or to sort out the right change, to retie your shoelaces, to do up buttons (particularly if the gloves are thick or if you’re wearing mittens).

The unpairing of gloves (the taking off of one to perform an action) is often a functional activity. But in Renaissance portraiture the hands are unpaired again and again as sitters are depicted with one glove on, the other off. And the hands are rarely doing anything. In this aristocratic iconography, both the uselessness of the hands and their differences from each other are immediately striking. In 1570, for instance, Antonio Mor depicted Anne of Austria with her white left hand resting on a chair (fig. 1). Her right hand is in a dark glove, even darker by contrast to the bright white handkerchief that she holds, as well as to her other naked hand. Two decades earlier, Mor had depicted Maria of Austria with her white left hand resting upon a table; on her right hand is a dark brown leather glove, slashed at the lower joints of the fingers to show her rings (fig. 2).

20. Ibid., pp. 332–33.
Here, the proverbial hand-in-glove takes on a new meaning: the gloved hand holds the other glove like a third, crushed hand. But how are we to read this detail? Are Mor’s queens about to give away, or have they already given away, their unworn glove as a favor? Or are they emphasizing the dazzling whiteness of the hand that can be kissed, in contrast to the other hidden and darkened hand?

Renaissance courts staged a mathematics of the hand and glove, a physical meditation on the relations between one, two, three, and four. But it is through the odd numbers—one and three—that the fetish most powerfully emerges, for the reason that Derrida suggests. Unpaired, the gloves can no longer be seen as functional.

One of the most powerful and mysterious Renaissance portraits is Titian’s *Man with a Ripped Glove* (c. 1520–23) (figs. 3 and 4). In the portrait, a somber young man, his black doublet open to reveal a white shirt, stares to the viewer’s right. His right hand is naked, held horizontally across his belly; the index finger, with a signet ring, points. But this masterful hand contrasts strikingly to the gloved left hand, projecting forward to the

Fig. 4.—Titian, *Man with a Ripped Glove*. Detail of fig. 3.
viewer. The leather glove that he wears is folded back in a torn, ragged line at the cuff, while the back of the glove is torn in two different directions. Is it his hand or the glove's lining that is revealed through the torn back? Where does the skin of animal end and the skin of human begin? It is hard to tell. The index finger of the glove extends beyond the finger within to a flattened, detumescent end. Equally disturbing is the empty, ghostly glove that the gloved hand holds: a glove no longer structured by flesh and bone, collapsed in on itself, the fingers flattened and curling at the ends. The gloves are a pair. But the pair of gloves vividly materializes the unpairing of the hands, one hand naked and powerful, the other draped in aristocratic ease but marked by what looks like a violent assault. It is as if the marks of identity have been transferred from the anonymous and unwrinkled face to the torn glove that he wears, and that gives the painting one of its modern titles.

Despite the strangeness of the torn glove (materializing the thrift of the wearer? or the torn heart of a lover?), it is not unique. Indeed, its style, color, and even its tear were fashionable. In *Man in a Red Cap* (c. 1515), Titian had already painted a sitter wearing a skintight, gray glove on his left hand, with which he grasps the hilt of a sword. And, again, the glove is ripped on the back. But in the earlier painting, the ripped glove has to compete for attention with the gleaming hilt of the sword, the luxurious spotted fur, and the red cap of the sitter. In the later portrait, with the exception of the small jewel round the sitter's neck and the ring on his finger, the colors are reduced to the colors of the flesh and the black and white of the clothing.

The wrinkles and rips of the glove that the sitter in *Man with a Ripped Glove* wears transfer the ravages of age and violence from the enigmatic young man to the "thing" that he wears. The light that catches both the gloved hand and the ghostly "hand" that it holds highlights the irregularities of texture and form as the viewer passes from naked hand to gloved hand to empty glove. The painting stages the unpairing of hands. One hand naked, one gloved. The gloved hand is both protected and exposed, paired with the empty glove, but only so as to make more striking the emptying out of the bodily form that has already begun in the tip of the index finger of the worn glove.

If Titian's portrait remains unreadable, it nevertheless points to the complex attention to the hands that controlled the most public of Renaissance courtly rituals. At the center of the ceremony of Elizabeth I's court, for instance, was the kissing of her hand. In an anonymous watercolor from the 1570s, Elizabeth is depicted in the Presence Chamber, receiving two Dutch ambassadors. They kneel in front of her as she extends her right hand for them to kiss. Similarly, Paul Hentzner wrote of his visit to Greenwich: "While we were there, William Slawata, a Bohemian Baron, had letters to present to [Elizabeth]; and she, after pulling off her glove, gave him her right hand to kiss, sparkling with rings and jewels, a mark
of particular Favour."

On other occasions, however, the queen wore rings on top of her gloves, presumably not being disposed to dispense such marks of favor. Thomas Platter described her in 1599 as wearing “elegant gloves over which were drawn costly rings.” Despite the elegance of the gloves, they here remain a barrier between suitor and monarch. The naked hand is the mark of Elizabeth’s favor, her glove a mark of her distance and unapproachability.

Yet there is nothing inevitable about this privileging of the naked hand over the gloved hand or even of the hand itself over the glove. If the hand could be kissed, it could also be withdrawn, whereas the favor of a glove could become an enduring materialization of the monarch’s love. Indeed, the giving away of a glove was crucial to Elizabeth’s transformation of court politics into courtly romance at the annual tournaments held to celebrate her accession. The material memory of Elizabeth’s favor has been preserved in two cabinet miniatures by Nicholas Hilliard. The first is a portrait of George Clifford, third Earl of Cumberland (fig. 5), who had appeared regularly at tilts for Elizabeth beginning in 1590, the year in which he became her official champion, undertaking to defend the superiority of her beauty and virtue against all comers. At Whitehall in the same year, Cumberland assumed the role of the Knight of Pendragon Castle, wearing a white surcoat over his armor and white feathers on his helmet in honor of his Virgin Queen. A similar helmet and plumes are visible at the lower right in the Hilliard painting, while his small tournament impresa shield hangs on the tree behind him. On the ground to either side of him are his discarded gauntlets. But Clifford’s paired pieces of armor are set off against the single dark glove that he wears on his hat. The glove is folded in half, with the fold set just above his forehead; the embroidered cuff is turned forward, the five fingers standing outlined against the upturned crown of the hat. A large jewel sparkles on the cuff of the glove. Elizabeth is materialized in the painting not as an abstract presence but as the giver of a specific glove—a glove now extravagantly unmatched from its mate, turned into the favor that transforms Cumberland into a favorite.

Five years after Cumberland’s appointment as the queen’s champion, at the Accession Day tilt in November 1595, Rowland White described Elizabeth’s gift of a glove to Robert Devereux. In a letter to Robert Sidney, White gave an account of the elaborate masque of Love and Self-love that Essex had requested Francis Bacon compose for him. As Essex’s page entered the tiltyard with a message for Elizabeth, she gave him one of her gloves; he took it to Essex, who added it to his costume of red and white, the colors of love. In a painting of about the same size as the portrait of Cumberland, Hilliard shows this second champion of the queen.

23. Ibid., p. 11.
also wearing a glove as a favor. It is not worn on his hat but tied with a gleaming, broad, gold-embroidered silver ribbon to his arm. The glove has a black hand, or body, and a brown-gold cuff. It may well be that the painting commemorates the specific tilt in 1595 and the gift of the glove. The portrait gives us another style of displaying the glove as a token of love: worn upon the armor, it marks the lover’s arms as arms transformed by the beloved. Here, the material memorials of favor translate politics into a public declaration of love.

But if such material memorials made present an absent beloved, they could also threaten the autonomy of their wearer. In Shakespeare’s *Troilus*

and Cressida, Cressida gives Troilus her glove while he gives her his sleeve. Both objects are imagined as material hauntings, animated by the separated partner. Cressida, speaking to Troilus's sleeve, says

O prettie, prettie pledge;
Thy Maister now lies thinking on his bed
Of thee and me, and sighes, and takes my Gloue,
And giues memoriall daintie kisses to it;
As I kisse thee.\(^{25}\)

The single glove carries enough of Cressida with it so that, in its separation from her, it can conjure up her presence. The second skin of her glove is transformed into her own skin, taken to bed by Troilus and kissed. The power of the fetish emerges through an act of separation, but that separation is haunted by the possibility of further separations, further exchanges. If the fetish keeps the absent beloved present to the lover, it also potentially gives a part of the lover away. Troilus, in the form of his sleeve, can be worn by Cressida, but the sleeve can also be taken and worn by Diomedes. In taking the sleeve from Cressida, Diomedes takes not only Troilus away from Cressida but Cressida away from herself. As Cressida says, "he that takes that, rakes my heart ith hall."\(^{26}\) Unpaired, the glove and the sleeve circulate, unpairing Troilus and Cressida, re-pairing Cressida and Diomedes.

In a sharply misogynist scene in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Scornful Lady* (1616), Welford, a young man about town, specifically remarks on the problematic value of the unpaired glove as the site of the emergence of fetishism and of the loss of use-value. Abigail, a middle-aged woman attracted to Welford, "drops her Glove," as the stage direction tells us. But, despising Abigail, Welford scorns the power of her unpaired glove:

What hidden vertue is there in this glove, that you would have me weare it? Is't good against sore eyes, or wil it charme the toothake? Or these red tops, beeing steept in white wine soluble, wilt kill the itch? or h'as it so conceald a providence to keepe my hand from bonds? If it have none of these, and proove no more but a bare glove of halfe a crowne a payre, twill bee but halfe a courtesie, I weare two alwaies: faith let's draw cuts, one will doe me no pleasure.\(^{27}\)

Unpaired, the single glove that Welford picks up will pair him to Abigail, calling out to its other half, which Abigail retains. As a pair, though, the

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 5.2.82 (TLN 3069, p. 611). The text of the first quarto reads "takes my heart withall."
gloves lose any imagined power. They have an unmagical function and an unmagical price—“half a crowne a payre.”

At the same time, Welford crudely spells out the sexual implications of a single glove. As a pair, the gloves recall hands. Single, the glove becomes a vagina. Women, he claims, “love this whorson doing so directly, that that they wil not sticke to make their very skinnes Bawdes to their flesh.” In this story, the skin is here the glove, the flesh is Abigail. But the skin of the glove is imagined both as a displacement of Abigail and as an undesired foretaste of her body.

The single glove, materializing a woman’s body, wavers in the Renaissance discourse of the glove between the priceless and the valueless. The glove as a female body, used and discarded, figures in a story by Arthur Wilson published in 1653 in his History of Great Britain, Being the Life and Reign of King James I. Wilson claims that the young Henry, Prince of Wales, was rumored to be having a flirtation with Frances Howard. Henry supposedly lost interest in Howard when he found that her favors inclined to the Earl of Rochester. Wilson claims, “dancing one day among the Ladies, her Glove falling down, it was taken up, and presented to [Prince Henry], by one that thought he did him an acceptable service; but the Prince refused to receive it, saying publicly, He would not have it, it is stretcht by another.”

The glove is animated by a human presence, but the human presence is reduced to an inanimate part, a part that men can appropriate and discard as they choose. It is in this vein that Lafew in All’s Well That Ends Well sneers at Diana: “This womans an easie gloue my Lord, she goes off and on at pleasure.”

The circulation of glove from hand to hand is transformed from the circulation of the beloved’s favor to the circulation of her body. In such stories, the detachability of the glove suggests not the difference between thing and person but the resemblance between them.

In Thomas Middleton and William Rowley’s The Changeling (1623), the sexual implications of the circulation of a glove as favor and as curse are complexly elaborated. At the end of the first scene, Beatrice-Joanna, perhaps in an attempt to show her favor to the newly arrived Alsemoro, drops her glove. But it is her father who notices the dropped glove, and Deflores, a man she loathes, picks it up. Insofar as the single glove condenses Beatrice-Joanna’s own body, Deflores handles her when he handles her glove. Beatrice-Joanna remedies the situation by casting away her other glove. Re-paired, the single dropped glove loses its status as fetish. But in re-pairing the gloves as Deflores’s possession, Beatrice-Joanna animates them as material curse. On Deflores’s hands, she wishes that they will be a physical reminder of her hatred for him, eating his

28. Ibid., 2:3.1.6–7, p. 493.
skin like poison, so that when he takes them off, he will strip off his own skin:

Bea. Mischief on your officious forwardness,
Who bade you stoop? they touch my hand no more:
There, for t'other's sake I part with this,
[She takes off the other glove and casts it down.]
Take 'em and draw thine own skin off with 'em.31

This “favour,” as Deflores notes, comes “with a mischief.” Beatrice-Joanna would, as he puts it, rather wear his skinned body as a pair of dancing pumps than that “I should thrust my fingers/ Into her sockets here” (C, 1.1.233–34). But the fact that he can thrust his fingers into her prosthetic body, the glove, materializes what the play will enact: Deflores, the deflowerer, will “haunt her still;/ Though I get nothing else, I'll have my will” (C, 1.1.231–2). Indeed, he already haunts her by inserting his fingers into the skin she has worn.

These stagings of the glove as fetish seem at first all too predictable in a post-Freudian age. The woman is materialized as stretchable skin, the man as phallic finger. Yet Deflores reminds us that the relation between inside and outside, penetrator and penetrated, was anything but obvious in the Renaissance. In the courtly paradigms of heterosexual love, it was the woman who shot Cupid’s arrows from her eyes and who pierced the man; it was her image that penetrated his heart and impressed itself upon him; she was the hunter, he the hunted. Deflores conjures up this instability in the gendering of male lover and female beloved by imagining his own skin turned into shoes that Beatrice-Joanna will stretch and wear.

In the Renaissance, the obsession is less that men have penises and women don’t. It is, rather, that men and women alike have tongues, have mouths, have feet.32 Men and women alike are constituted through presences and absences. And male lovers repeatedly imagine themselves as the hollow forms (necklaces, shoes, shifts, gloves) into which the female beloved enters.

It is this desire to be worn that the Spaniard Antonio Pérez, living in exile at Elizabeth’s court, wittily elaborates in a letter to Lady Penelope Rich:

I have been so troubled not to have at hand the dog’s skin gloves your ladyship desires that, pending the time when they shall arrive,

32. For a fine account of the ambivalence of the tongue in the Renaissance, see Mazzio, “Sins of the Tongue,” in The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe, pp. 52–79.
I have resolved to sacrifice myself to your service and flay a piece of my own skin from the most tender part of my body, if such an uncouth carcass as mine can have any tender skin. To this length can love and the wish to serve a lady be carried that a man should flay himself to make gloves for his lady out of his own skin. But in my case this is nothing, for even my soul will skin itself for the person it loves. If my soul were visible like my body, the most pitiful soul would be seen and the most pitiful thing that has ever been looked upon.

The gloves, my Lady, are made of dog's skin, though they are mine; for I hold myself a dog and beg your ladyship to keep me in your service upon the honour and love of a faithful dog. —Your Ladyship's flayed dog.33

Pérez expands a trope that was already well established in classical antiquity. The lover, transformed into gloves, will always be near his beloved. When she wears him, he will be able to touch her. Intimacy is gained here not through potency but through diminution. Reduced to a malleable layer of skin, the lover can attain his desires, even if it is at the cost of becoming a flayed dog.

Similarly, Romeo imagines a glove as achieving the intimacy that is denied him:

See how she leanes her cheeke vpon her hand.  
O that I were a Gloue vpon that hand,  
That I might touch that cheeke.34

As a thing, Romeo would experience the personal touch that is denied him as a person. As a glove, he would be pressed between Juliet’s hand and cheek.

But in Renaissance portraiture, the worn glove often seems to be absorbed into the frozen life of the sitter, while the detached glove takes on a life of its own. Both the detachability and the animation are foregrounded in English paintings of the early seventeenth century. Gloves—of males and females alike—are shown as if they are about to be dropped, suspended by a single finger. John de Critz paints Anne Vavasour (c. 1605) with one glove dangling by a finger from her left hand (fig. 6); Marcus Gheeraerts paints Mary Throckmorton, Lady Scudamore (c. 1614–15), with one naked hand partially concealed in her gown and her right, gloved hand dangling the other glove (fig. 7); and in Gheeraerts’s depiction of Anne Hale, Mrs. Hoskins (1629), the left glove again dangles from the gloved right hand (fig. 8). At the same time, gloves no longer lie


Fig. 7.—Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *Mary Throckmorton, Lady Scudamore* (1614–15). Tate Gallery, London. From Strong, *The English Icon*, p. 285.

Fig. 8.—Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *Anne Hale, Mrs. Hoskins* (1629), private collection. From Strong, *The English Icon*, p. 276.
flat on tables or chairs, awaiting the animation of a wearer. They seem to fill out, haunted by having already been worn, or they lie hollowed out for the hands of another wearer or for the viewer's eyes. In Gheeraerts's *An Unknown Lady* (1618), the lady's animated gloves lie on the chair beside her, one half-turning its opening to the viewer (figs. 9 and 10); and in William Larkin's *Sir William Sidney* (c. 1611), Sidney wears one glove while the other lies on a table, its hollow opening again turned to the viewer (fig. 11). The gloves' fingers curl and twist like material ghosts, bewitched matter animated in contrast to the still life of the sitter.

At the very moment, then, that the demonized concept of the fetish is emerging to characterize the false animations of the idolater (Akan or Catholic), the unpaired glove takes on a new animation, as it is released from the "utility" of the pair. It is materialized as pledge or gage, absent lover or material memory, tactile presence or gaping hollow. If, as Derrida suggests, the fetish emerges when the unpaired object is no longer bound "to 'normal' use," the paradox of the single glove in the Renaissance is that it is the *norm*, at least within literary and artistic representations.\(^\text{35}\)

Materializing the unpairedness of the human body, the single glove was

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\(^{35}\) Derrida, "Restitutions," pp. 332, 333.
haunted by its absent other, whether that glove was with a lover or a messenger, whether it remained on the table beside the sitter or was held as a withered and spectral hand. Even as the hand was used as the sign of good faith in a proliferating range of commercial contracts, where questions of “true value” emerged with ever more urgent force, the single glove became a site where the thing was animated with a life that oscillated between the priceless and the worthless.