

EARLY MODERN BRAVE NEW WORLDS?

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Abstract. The essay investigates how early modern maps of the New World both as a mode of representation (i.e. a view of the self) and as a scopic instrument (i.e. a view of the other) translated the European view of the other as a monstrous (and) female body (the latter on the verge of *object*-ification), consonant with its representation in anatomical illustrations belonging to the early modern culture of dissection. It is my contention that the early modern discourse of “discovery” expressed deeply ingrained European anxieties about corporeality as the realm of the irrational and uncontrollable, imaged cartographically in monstrous-qua-female terms and “tamed” through dissection in anatomical illustrations. Such representations were predicated on the *disciplinary* zeal of modernity, which successfully suppressed the workings of its rhetoric, and were the output of white men trying to conquer, know, tame and colonize a confected *other* construed in terms of (abject) female bodiliness or irrationality.

Relationally speaking, the map as a mode of representation actually presents a view of the self, while as a scopic instrument it shows how the other is seen. *Mutatis mutandis*, this relational dimension also undergirds anatomical illustration, especially as it thematizes the observer position (as a disembodied and rational male-qua-normative eye) and the object position (as strange or female to-be-looked-at-ness). Time doesn't allow me to consider the import of Renaissance perspectivism in generating a coldly geometrical and systematic sense of space in cartography. Nor can this investigation survey the political background, i.e. the emergence of nation states and the interconnections that had obtained between state centralization, international competition, and internal surveillance and social control by the late sixteenth century. Nonetheless, this essay assumes an intertwining influence of all these factors on the early modern proclivity for “exploratory discovery” whose unacknowledged underside has proved to be anything but benign.

Arguably, one of the roots of the two early modern media's construct of otherness was the medieval grand narrative of *Christianitas* as the body of Christ at once coherent and threatened with dismemberment. As I have tried to demonstrate in a recent article (“European Maps of the Mind: Medieval and Modern Cartography Between the Mythical and the Rational,” forthcoming), *underpinning both the medieval notion of Christendom and its cartographic encodation was the anxiety about body integrity (most compellingly imaged as Christ's fragmented body on the*

Ebstorf map, c. 1235-45), *translatable as the clash between claims to certain places and the identities of inhabitants and colonizers*.

The medieval “ethnic rationalization of space” (Mignolo, *qtd. in* Padrón, 2002: n. 4) would often impute cannibalism to the designated “enemy”: in the critical process of defining oneself by imposing limits which must not be transgressed by anyone but who needs to be restricted/repressed as “other” (cf. Douglas 1984, Kristeva 1992), cannibalism as abjected practice had been popular in European discourse ever since the beginnings of Christianity, when both the Christians and their opponents accused each other of it. When in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the western European identity was invented in terms of an ideally unitary construct of Christendom (*Christianitas*), the European Jews started to “enjoy” a new visibility: their unsavoury reputation of cannibalism perpetrated against the (male) Christian body surfaced in the dual accusation of ritual murder and the blood libel. *Christianitas* as an ecumenical *Corpus Christi* legitimized fictions of organic holism while it played down anxieties about the fragility of its ethos’s grip on the Christians by translating the latter as a fragile Christian body/identity always threatened by the presence of the non-Christian enemy.

In order to understand how an age’s dual construction of self and other comes to bear on its graphic representations of the cartographical and anatomical sort, we should first acknowledge that maps are powerful instruments in building up “geographical imaginations” (Massey 1995: 22): they have the power to inform the viewers, yet thereby they forge the people’s outlook by naturalizing the current episteme. One should distinguish, of course, between primarily practical “way-finding” maps (e.g. itinerary maps, nautical charts, travel narratives) and the more “scientific” ones that “conceptualiz[e] space or figur[e] geographical knowledge”: “the scale map and its spatiality serve as synecdoches for the cartography and the spatiality of the culture as a whole” (Padrón 2002: 42). This epistemological dimension is of paramount importance for understanding especially the world map: neither neutral nor entirely true, it is always technically inaccurate in some respect, while its very design, as Massey (1995: 6-51) cogently argues, covertly illustrates the rhetoric of power underlying mapping through the selections operated – partly naturalized by the *declared* purpose of the map.

While later world maps in the medieval mappa mundi tradition, from Abraham Cresques’ *Catalan Atlas* (1375) to Fra Mauro’s world map (1457-9), no longer embraced the theocratic tradition and moreover grafted the navigational

portolan chart style onto the religiously informed *mappa mundi*, thus advancing progressively more abstract notions of space, the medieval “ethnic rationalization of space” would extend far into the modern age of discovery and purportedly objective scientific outlook.

Sebastian Münster’s *Map of the New World* is a case in point: the most widely circulated New World map of its time, it was originally published in 1540 in his Basle edition of Ptolemy’s *Geographia* as *Novae Insulae, XVII Nova Tabula*, and republished at Basle in his 1544 *Cosmographia universalis*. The map presents a view of North America before the Spanish explorations to the interior of the continent, hence its relatively blank depiction but for a few scattered woods. Münster subscribes to the already conventional European view of the South American “other” (popularized in Europe in the aftermath of Columbus’ 1492 voyage): gigantic in Patagonia (ever since Magellan’s 1520 encounter with and naming of the Tehuelche, *pata*, “paw”/“foot,” because of the large size of their feet) and cannibal in Brazil (where Münster shows human limbs hanging on a bush or pyre inscribed *canibali*, a generalization and demonization of the *ritual* cannibalism practised by *some* Tupí-speaking groups). In the 1550 German edition of the *Cosmographia*, Münster appended sections on religion, cultures, costumes and customs, where the “anomalous” other has again pride of place: a cannibal couple (f. 1349) finish off butchering a man; the cannibal Tartar (f. 1308) roasts a human carcass on the spit; more overtly fearsome to the author’s contemporaries, the inhabitants of Calicut (an Indian port trading with the Portuguese, 1513-25), have impaled four Portuguese on cross-joined staves mounted on top of a pole (f. 1342) – a gruesome spectacle of public punishment which may invoke an Indian revenge in true European style.

Such cartographic encodation of the subliminal European anxieties about the body and its integrity-qua-identity can also be discerned on the 1562 *Americae sive quartae orbis partis nova et exactissima descriptio* (*Map of America as the Fourth Part of the World*), plotted by Spanish cartographer Diego Gutiérrez and engraved by Hieronymus Cock from Antwerp. Based on Spanish and Portuguese navigations, the largest engraved map of America for a century depicts the eastern North American coast, Central and South America and the westernmost coasts of Europe and Africa. Gutiérrez’s was not intended to be a scientifically or navigationally exacting document, but a ceremonial-diplomatic map (Hébert): the Spanish, French and Portuguese coats of arms proclaim possession, while the Poseidon-driven chariot

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of (presumably) the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V (Charles I of Spain), as the reborn Caesar crosses the Atlantic to lay claim to America (*Fig. 1*).

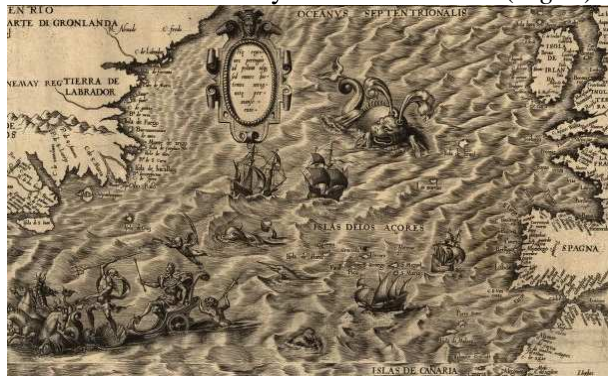


Figure 1 Gutiérrez – the Atlantic: the chariot of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V

Less allegorically, Spain proclaims to the nations of western Europe its American territory, outlining its sphere of control with a very broad, clearly drawn line for the Tropic of Cancer.

Gutiérrez's map invites scrutinizing the European asseveration of power – political, maritime and scientific – and cartographic (stereotyped) images of self and other, in the context of the history of the Spanish–Portuguese conflict for dominion in the New World (precariously settled by the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas). There is an important triangulation at work on this map – not unlike the one identified by Montrose (1991) in his investigation of the protocolonialist discourse in Walter Raleigh's 1596 *Discoverie of... Guiana*. On the one hand, Gutiérrez constructs the Portuguese as the other for the Spanish, as can be inferred from the asymmetrical positioning and rendition of the three coats of arms: at the top left of the map the coats of arms of Spain and France (acknowledging the marriage of Elizabeth of Valois, daughter of Henry II, King of France, to Philip II in 1559) are held by *putti* and a winged Victory; Portugal's coat of arms, however, is "demoted" to the lower margin and held by a hirsute, "savage," menacing-looking old man riding a sea monster, accompanied by his young replica "trumpeting" the Portuguese claims to territory. On the other hand, the New World is the other for the Europeans, though its representation ranges from an amazingly uninhabited North America that translates the myth of the "empty frontier" underpinning the ideology of conquest (Harley, qtd. in Massey 29) to its inverse match of a South America of giant Patagonians and cannibal Brazilians ready to roast Europeans on the spit (*Fig. 2*).

(Could it be that the cannibal reputé of the Brazilian tribes was *also* a polemical hint on this official Spanish map to the Portuguese dominion of Brazil in the wake of the Treaty of Tordesillas, implicating that one “other” annihilates the other “other”?) Here the image of cannibalism abides by the “technology of monsterization” at work in the colonialist encounter: Cohen (1999: 34) argues that this aids the new settlers as self-styled heroes to displace an anterior culture by construing the indigenous inhabitants as archaic forces *embodying* resistance to the origin of (a new) culture.



Fig. 2 Gutiérrez – cannibal Brazilians

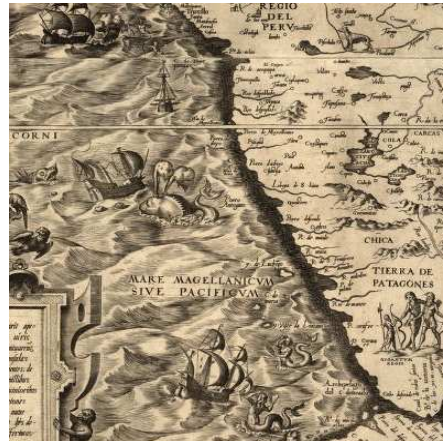


Fig. 3 Gutiérrez – the Pacific monsters and sirens

Gutiérrez’s America is surrounded by an oceanic expanse teeming with monstrous sea creatures (giant hybrid whales of Leviathanic stock and huge popularity with cartographers, e.g. Ortelius) attacking the European ships, and south Pacific sirens luring the sailors to their death by water (*Figs. 1, 3*). The classical warning *hic sunt leones* would now translate cartographically as *hic sunt dracones, monstri et sirenae*. That sea monsters patrol off the coasts of the New World and attack ships would seem a “natural” way (pertaining to the collective imagination) of embodying the perils of any voyage: the maw threatening to engulf a ship is a metaphor for the very ocean where the ship may sink. Then what about the peaceful sirens combing their hair to better exert their feminine lures on the male crews? The female–fish hybrid had lingered in the European collective imagination ever since the *Liber monstrorum*’s (c. 650-750) reinterpretation of the ancient siren as half-woman and half-fish (or sea serpent) embodying female lust. Previously, Jerome and other early Church Fathers popularized the *idea* of the siren as courtesan, the embodiment of female lust and deceptive lure to the righteous Christian’s soul; in

the late eleventh- and twelfth-century monastic writings, the siren was glossed and demonized as the symbol of monastic vices – at a time of its recurrence on cloister capitals. However, Gutiérrez’s map duplicates, deliberately or not, this sexual enticing by the siren in the very gigantic dimensions of the sea monsters attacking with their (usually) open maws: the interchangeability of mouth and vagina in medieval (c. 1100) and post-medieval texts (viz. the topos of *vagina dentata*) was based on the medieval etymologists’ connection of *gula* (throat, glutton, mouth) with *Golias* (Latin for Goliath) and translated as the devil’s anthropophagous mouth in iconography (as late as Hieronymus Bosch’s Hell wing of *The Garden of Earthly Delices*, c. 1505). The map’s juxtaposition of the monstrous hybrid body-qua-maw and the hybrid female body might have invoked, subliminally at least, a “monsterization” and feminization of the ocean itself. Thus, the giant Patagonians and cannibal Brazilians as the New-World-monstrous-races signpost the distant land not only as uninhabitable, hence a territory in need of domestication/civilization by the Europeans, but also as the terrestrial counterpart of a monsterized-*cum*-feminized oceanic maw. While Gutiérrez’s map actually predates the Cartesian age of the “masculinization of thought” (Bordo 1996: 640), it does, however, respond to the ancient and medieval European anxieties about corporeality as the realm of the irrational and uncontrollable, imaged cartographically in monstrous terms. Moreover, the Brazilian cannibals are monsterized and feminized also due to the traditional association of food and food processing with the sphere of woman, as if they were only a projection of the male anxiety of being sexually engulfed by the female.

That mine is not as far-fetched a speculation as might appear at first sight, and that in fact it accounts for a general early modern European proclivity to confect a subhuman, monstrous and female, other, is confirmed by the travel narratives of the age purporting to describe the New World. Montrose (1991) argues convincingly that the sixteenth-century protocolonialist discourse of discovery was predicated on the dual move of gendering of the New World as feminine and sexualizing its exploration, conquest and settlement. At a high level of abstraction, Raleigh’s *Discoverie of... Guiana* reveals the substitution of its inhabitants (construed as *masculine* societies) with a feminine gendered land sexed as a virgin. But for the last detail (virginity), the metaphor recurs in various other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century travel accounts of America and Africa: Morgan (1997) amply documents the engendering of a certain horizon of expectations (roughly, the other is monstrous,

savage and subhuman, hence the civilizing role of European colonists and of slave trade) which focused on social–sexual deviance (or irrationality) via the female body. What both Montrose and Morgan fail to address is precisely why the female body presented itself as a more apt metaphor for articulating such concerns: I suspect that the beauty-*cum*-beastliness in European constructs of the woman of America and Africa was firmly rooted in the European collective imagination of woman as other (itself a Christian revaluation of ancient misogyny), yet given a new flavour by Cartesian and mechanistic philosophy (in its turn undergirded by the Renaissance geometrical perspectivism also manifest in the cartographic revolution).

Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (Antwerp, 1570), using the Mercator projection (typified by the cylindrical projection of the 1569 world map), also deploys the “technology of monsterization.” Although Ortelius' map of Russia and Tartaria, for instance, focuses on “natural” features and settlements, the “exotic” other (to European eyes) has been retained, e.g. turbaned Muslims with camels and tents, or a prophet in a tree “saddle” preaching to a group of worshippers (yet on the trees behind him hang men, probably themselves othered). Furthermore, Ortelius' seas are populated by mythological figures, e.g. Europa ravished by the bull (a “statue” whose pedestal gives the map title), Poseidon with a Nereid in the Tyrrhenian Sea, and the Atlantic “Orpheus” whose torso is indistinguishable from the monstrous body it rides or possibly finishes off as a sea centaur. It gradually appears that the atlas maps abide by the trope of the male European body/identity under attack: the Pacific threatens huge whales' attacks on ships north of the Tropic of Cancer and the sirens' to the south (*Fig. 4*). Gutiérrez's north Atlantic monsters here have moved more to the south or even to the Indian Ocean, while a Pacific dragon has relocated in the Mediterranean north of “Barbaria” (Africa).



Fig. 3 Ortelius – the Pacific monsters and sirens

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century maps too deploy an “ethnographic” framing technique, only this time implicating more strongly the Europeans’ civilizing role, whether by means of imagological stereotypes for the indigenous peoples in side border cartouches (Willem Janszoon Blaeu’s *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum sive Atlas novus*, 1645-50) or by insets showing natives who peacefully pursue their lives or rather pose for the engraver (August Gottlieb Boehme’s *Americae mappa generalis*, 1746). Such maps testify to a discursive practice adept at successful colonization and domestication of the other which can gradually elide anything natural from both the world and its mental representations.

Only a cursory glance at maps commissioned or approved by the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris may help us see the effects of early modern European cartography’s allegiance to scientificity under the twofold bond of monarchic and academic power. In 1613 Pierre de Vaulx’s *Map of the Atlantic* could still deploy the *hic sunt leones* trope: the map retains, though in a rather ludic vein, the sirens (relocating them in the Atlantic, south of the Tropic of Cancer) but elides the explicit depiction of navigational hazards embodied by sea monsters. South America too retains elements familiar from earlier maps (e.g. Brazil’s *les cannibals*), though other scenes come to complete the picture: an earthly paradise with an Adamic couple south of the Tropic of Capricorn, hammocks and love-making under the trees, or naked men dancing around a tree. Nonetheless, what strikes from the outset is not the sheer human presence (viz. the natives’ in an earthly paradise relocated from Asia in the Middle Ages to South America), as the prominence of coats of arms and

legends proclaiming European dominion and quasi-domestication of the New World: “La France antartique” (*sic*) overlaps with “Le Bresil,” while “Noeufues Espaignes” spreads to the north of the Amazon. This latter aspect also underpins Guillaume Delisle’s *Map of South Africa* (1708) which plots the continent’s distinctive kingdoms as dominions of the European ones. By the end of the eighteenth century, the “civilizing” aim of the male cartographer and his male and royal commissioner had been accomplished: on François Le Vaillant’s *Map of South Africa* (1790), marginal and inland insets show the indigenous peoples posing gracefully in front of their tents (the Caffres) or carrying out their domestic chores (the Houswann), while the map title fills an otherwise empty “Pays Inconnu,” thus endorsing the myth of the empty frontier.

Cartographic translations of anxieties about the body and of political claims to far-off places and “nature’s bounty” should be understood in light of the early modern shifts in mentality. The organicist tenor underlying the medieval discourse of analogy (the great chain of being) was progressively undermined by the momentum the *notion* of discovery was gaining, and dealt its fatal blow to by the Cartesian masculinization of epistemology. According to Susan Bordo, the former female, living nature (“she”) was *object*-ified (“it”) and came under the scrutiny of scientific disciplines; the antidote to this “cultural ‘separation anxiety’” (Bordo 1996: 649) could be provided solely by man’s (*sic*) act of self-empowerment, who thus naturalized his claims to the conquest and mastery of nature, manifest both in geographical “discovery” and “lucid” scientific study, especially anatomical.

By the same token, confidence in the ultimate unity of religious and social systems modelled on the human body was shattered: Hillman and Mazzio (1997: xiii-xiv) identify in the “trope of synecdoche” of early modern culture the lingering belief in the possibility of recuperating the part into whole even as the age promoted a new “aesthetic of the part” that obviated reintegration. The late sixteenth-century “pervasive sense of fragmentation” (Hillman and Mazzio 1997: xiii-xiv) was fuelled by more atomistic and individualistic impulses, e.g. socio-politic and economic changes, religious schisms, Copernicus’ debunking of the micro-/macrocosm analogy, or the rise of the “culture of dissection.”

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century anatomy books pursued “a *mechanics* of agency relations” which purportedly explained intention and action as bodily functions: the body appeared as “a locus of self and agency, not merely the instrument of a non-corporeal essence” (Rowe 1997: 287). This rhetoric successfully

mystifies the mechanics of the culture of dissection: cadavers and skeletons pose as often live (painterly) models and sometimes invite the anatomical gaze or obligingly help the anatomist carry out his (*sic*) work of exploration and revelation, as Juan Valverde **de Amusco**'s new Marsyas does (*Anatomia del corpo humano*, Rome, 1559, p. 64, illustrator Gasparo Becerra).

No novelty in the Renaissance, dissection, unlike previously, started to *inform* anatomical illustrations – with **Andreas Vesalius** at the forefront: his illustrations in *De humane corporis fabrica* (1543, contemporary with Copernicus' heliocentric theory) set a new standard for accuracy. At the same time, however, they drew on a variety of contemporary genres of visual representation (naturalism, classicism, metaphor, landscape, death imagery and monstrosity), for their authorship lay with painters: Vesalius' illustrations are now attributed to **Stephen van Calcar and the Workshop of Titian**. On the other hand, the anatomical illustration of 1500-1750 coincided with a new obsession with self-fashioning and individuality *performed* in the public sphere, which anatomical books dramatized, travestied, beautified and moralized.

Title pages and frontispieces of anatomy books “functioned as a visual synopsis of the science and art of anatomy, a place where artists could playfully represent the poetics of dissection” (*Dream Anatomy*). Vesalius' frontispiece sets the tenor: his *demonstratio* before an audience of fellow anatomists and (behind a rail) townspeople plays up the self-assured anatomist's teacherly pose to and confrontation of the viewer. The figures in the *anatomical theatre* embody the observer position: leaning out of the gallery or perched on architectural “pedestals” at ground level, they stare with interest at the dissection (of a woman) as the latest amusement and curiosity of the age.

Before pursuing the thematization of the observer and observed positions in anatomical illustrations proper, it is important to pause to consider the very purpose of early modern public dissections. At first sight, they were intended to cater for both the scholarly needs of medical students and the general public's curiosity (the latter on a par with the European exploratory thrust that *ravished* the New World – in both senses of the word). Nonetheless, as Egmond (2003) aptly remarks, dissections in the anatomical theatre could hardly have afforded the public – or the medical students, at that – a real opportunity for learning, given the distance separating the cadaver and the spectators; provisions were actually made for the medical students to attend private autopsies performed in a much smaller room. What the anatomical

theatre did provide, however, was a scholarly display of knowledge by the physician, hence prestige enhancement for him and his profession (despite his literally keeping his hands clean, for the “dirty work” was usually carried out by his assistants), and an opportunity for carnivalesque entertainment for the “lay” audience.

A significant dimension of the dissection and its illustration in early modern anatomy books is dramatizing the interplay of powerful gaze and disempowered eyes: Charles Estienne’s *De dissectione partium corporis* (Paris, 1546) often incorporates and regulates the observer position. The monumentally voyeuristic mise-en-scène of an illustration of the uterus, plate 275 (*Fig. 5*) is ostensibly in keeping with the notion of anatomical *theatre* launched by Vesalius’ frontispiece, yet in thematizing hierarchy (based on learning and prestige) it parallels the judicial “theatre” (cf. Egmond 2003). A bespectacled elderly physician in the balcony of a house (duplicated in the corbel), gazes – *from a distance* and *above* – onto a female model seated on a sky-scraping throne, her robe/veil pulled to the back. She props her right foot up on a stone carved legend (whose top shape echoes her genitalia); the “flap” of her belly has been rolled down, displaying the foetus. The semblance of pupils in the two males’ eyes renders them alive; her blank eyeballs prevent her head from confronting the male voyeurs, though her mouth might be about to utter something or to scream – yet the woman has been muted by the very representational medium. Even more compellingly judicial, though by totally disempowering the eyes of the anatomical model through the sheer positioning of his head, appears plate 242 (*Fig. 6*) which presents a cross-section of the brain: the elderly anatomist and his young pupil observe from atop a fanciful parapet (viz. again from a distance and above) the dissected brain of a man with his upper torso bent over the dissection table as if in the stocks, fainted, sleepy or dead. His right hand holds the caption-frame-*cum*-death-sentence-tablet, which uncannily recalls his likely station in life: a convicted criminal. Some of Estienne’s illustrations were taken from non-anatomical books to cut costs: he replaced the middle of the woodblock with an insert that depicted the body’s interior, which may explain in part the weird or inappropriately elegant settings, yet I find it hard to overlook the (un)intended sarcasm on the “model.” The voyeuristic mise-en-scène of both plates implicates that the anatomist’s gaze is there also to shade light on the “curiosity” of both male-qua-human criminality and female generativity, as other plates’ poses endorse only too easily with either judicial settings for the male model (plates 236, 237, 239, 241), which strike a penological note, or intimations of sexual promiscuity in the

Venus/courtesan posture of the female model, presumably a prostitute (plates 267, 271, 279, 281, 285).



Fig. 4 Estienne – plate 275

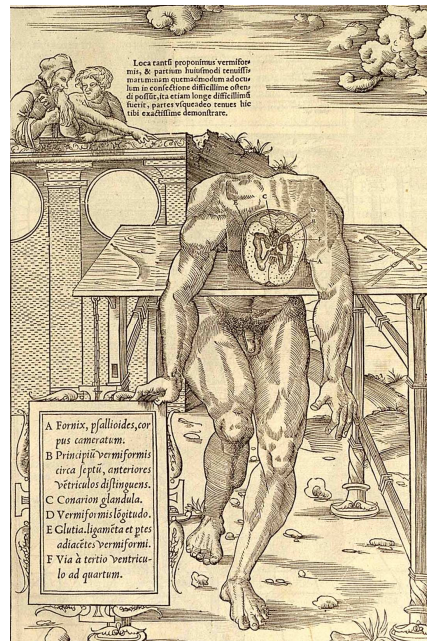


Fig. 5 Estienne – plate 242



Fig. 6 Estienne – detail plate 271

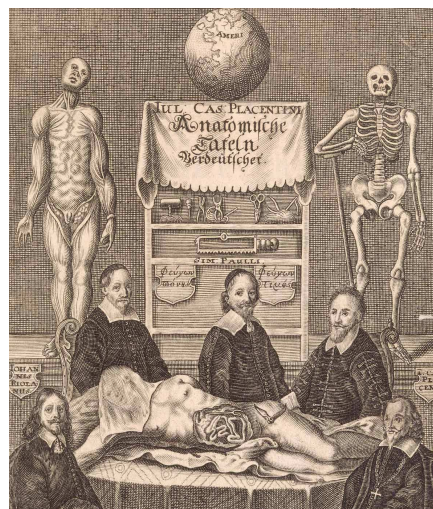


Fig. 7 Casserio – 1656 frontispiece

The Vesalian rhetoric of anatomical discipline-*cum*-mastery underlies Giulio Casserio's posthumous German edition, *Anatomische Tafeln* (1656): *memento mori* elements (the skeleton), medical self-assurance (the five anatomists seated around the dissecting table as if for an academic debate yet posing for the viewer) and the penchant for discovery (the America-centred globe atop the shelves displaying *dissection* instruments), co-occur on the frontispiece (Fig. 8) to make academically palatable the rhetoric of mastery. Such rhetoric suppresses its lethal effects (cf. the echoing of the globe in the tilted round head of the *écorché* and the skull of the *skeleton*) on those held legally impotent, e.g. women (the cadaver with veiled face in a Venus posture), the poor, the "savage" of America or Africa. The *New World* in the guise of a veiled *young woman* laid bare for *exploratory dissection* (of the lower torso) translates a view of the *other* as essentially *body*. It moreover accounts for the unprecedented status anatomy gained in early modernity: a powerful metaphor for research and discovery in general, anatomy's proclivity for "uncovering the hidden, inner truths" unwittingly epitomized the "violent and extreme" underside of curiosity (Egmond and Zwijnenberg 2003: 5).

How does the early modern culture of dissection relate to its contemporary cartographic monsterization-*cum*-feminization of the other and of nature? The reconceptualization of the earth as no longer *Mutter Erde* in Christian guise but a mere globe to be subjected by the *mostly male* Heads of State or a planet always already visible to the *always male* scientific gaze is paralleled by trends in dissection "portraiture." Furthermore, the subject of dissection was often the *abject* social subject (convicts, prostitutes, the poor): for centuries after Vesalius' time the only legal source of bodies was the gallows, hence only grave-robbery could fully meet the anatomists' needs. In an age when dissection was generally considered a wonder and attended with curiosity, it nevertheless carried a social stigma that touched especially the deceased: erasing his/her identity as a Christian merged with the abjection attached to the person.

Giulio Casserio's *De formato foetu liber singularis* had its plates printed after his death in works attributed to him and his pupil Adriaan van Spiegel (Frankfurt, 1631). The illustration in table 4 (Fig. 9) by Titian's student **Odoardo Fialetti** translates an overtly floral/idyllic view of female generativity: posing, head tilted and eyes averted modestly, the young woman *covers* her sex with a flower and holds a flower or fruit in her left hand, while *displaying* her foetus amidst tissue

layers spreading out like petals in a literalization of the “fruit-of-her-womb” metaphor. Her open right palm invites examination of the mystery of life – or death, for, aestheticization apart, this represents the *dissection of a cadaver*.

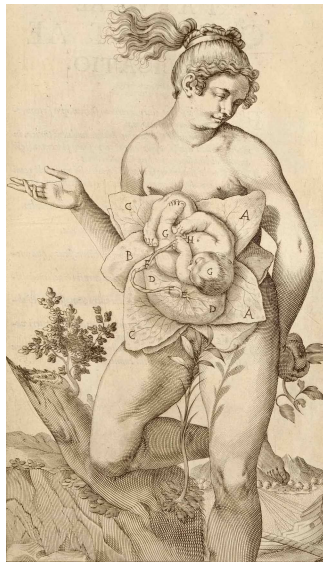


Figure 8 Casserio – table 4

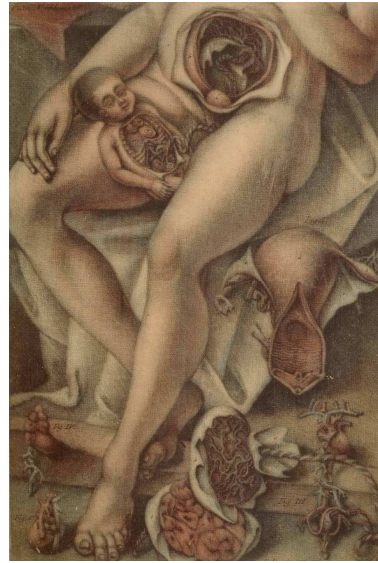


Fig. 9 D'Agoty – mother and foetus

More obviously partaking of the culture of dissection, in a coloured mezzotint in *Anatomie des parties de la génération de l'homme et de la femme* (Paris, 1773), Jacques Fabien Gautier D'Agoty as both anatomist and painter spells out the rhetoric of male control and masterful fragmentation of the female body (Fig. 10): a foetus has been ripped off from an open womb and replicates the maternal tear in its own dissected body; the umbilical cord still connects the two, as does the foetus' position on its mother's lap, grim mise-en-scène of a tender mother-child relation. At the mother's legs lie bits and pieces that were once part of organic wholes: broken skulls with half brains, bony pieces and prosthetic paraphernalia.

Such representations of pregnant bodies comply with the scopic imperatives of (the) anatomic discipline; their monstrosity only emerges when considering the interplay between the essentialist notion of womanhood-as-compulsive-maternity and graceful or obliging postures in the context of dissection, i.e. in view of what has happened to the female “models” of often low social standing. Besides, the interest in revealing the mystery of generativity (which poses woman's as biologically

deviant from man's normative body) is coterminous with the interest in successfully domesticating the hardly known inner processes (implicitly coded female) that defy male rational control: another *terra incognita* is now *terra inhabitata*.

The gradually more "scientifically rigorous" view of the human body in general and the potentially pregnant female body in particular parallels the cartographic abstract representation of space as a grid of parallels and meridians: both are predicated on the *disciplinary* (in Foucauldian terms) zeal of modernity, which often successfully suppresses the workings of its rhetoric. The always male and privileged (European) vantage point of early modern maps of the New World contributed a form of distortion at once mental and cartographic; in the "process of civilization" it ghettoized and abjected the other as grossly bodily, female, irrational and monstrous, hence subhuman and deviant. So did the always male and privileged ("sovereign") anatomical gaze in its avowed capacity to assert a difference between the dissected body's materiality and the disembodied, abstract gaze that translates it into knowledge.

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