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***“THE TIME IS OUT OF JOINT,”
OR THE CORPOREAL BORDERS OF/ON TIME
IN EARLY MODERN ANATOMICAL ILLUSTRATION***

Keywords: *time metaphors, classicisation, memento mori, social time reversal, truth, Vesalius, Estienne, Casserio, Bidloo*

Abstract: *This paper addresses the nexus of temporality and corporeality which time metaphors in anatomical illustration from the mid-16th to the late 17th century articulated more poignantly than ever before or after, and whereby the very practice of “anatomy” (viz. dissection) was established as the Apollonian purveyor of the truth of the human body. For the sake of clarity, I will distinguish between two typologically related occurrences of time metaphors imbricated in anatomical illustration: on the one hand, the closely intertwined classicisation of the time–space of dissection and the classical memento mori; on the other hand, the reversal of time in social terms, whether staged as the anatomical subject’s engagement in a world of make-believe social prestige or social doom, or rendered, in the case of female anatomy, as always already passively compliant with the male eroticising gaze. Time metaphors could thus confect anatomical exemplarity – hence claim scientific durability – right when their embedding reminded of human transience. Despite the tentative attempts of early modern anatomical illustration to establish itself as a scientific genre whose objective truth was informed by direct observation, the close collaboration between anatomist and artist pointed to the age’s anxieties over defining the proper concerns of art and science.*