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SACRIFICIAL ACTS: MARTYRDOM AND NATIONHOOD IN SEVENTEENTH-
CENTURY DRAMA

A Dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of English
The University of Mississippi

By

KELLEY KAY HOGUE

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ABSTRACT

Sacrificial Acts: Martyrdom and Nationhood in Seventeenth-Century Drama posits that the importance of sixteenth-century martyrologies in defining England's national identity extends to the seventeenth century through popular representations of martyrdom on the page and stage. I argue that drama functions as a gateway between religious and secular conceptions of martyrdom; thus, this dissertation charts the transformation of martyrological narratives from early modern editions of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* to the execution of the Royal Martyr, Charles I. Specifically, I contend that seventeenth-century plays shaped the secularization of martyrdom in profound ways by staging the sacrificial suffering and deaths of female heroines in a variety of new contexts. In addition to illustrating how the expansion of martyrological rhetoric and imagery revealed numerous channels for female influence, this dissertation asserts that narratives of suffering generated national models for reclaiming the stability and unity that Foxe's martyrs had seemed to inspire

I first analyze John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and Thomas Drue's *The Duchess of Suffolk*, which overlap the vocabularies of martyrdom and motherhood to valorize women's roles in the creation and continuation of the religious and political states. By studying their dramatizations of virgin martyr legends, I consider how playwrights like Thomas Dekker and Phillip Massinger highlight the expediency of narratives of passivity in defining the subject-ruler relationship. In chapter 3, I focus on Caroline debates about anatomical and metaphysical inwardness to argue that martyrologies provide a script for accessing the conscience through interpretations of the material body. My final chapter argues that the self-presentations of

Eleanor Davies and Henrietta Maria establish a necessary link between Foxean models of passive suffering and the militant language of sacrifice used during the Civil War period. These narratives make visible the diffusion of martyrological language and imagery into the multiplicity of spheres—domestic, popular, religious, and political—that comprises communal identity. Moreover, this exploration reveals that popular discourse profoundly engaged and influenced the secularization of that rhetoric and significantly shaped how England continued to define itself in relation to its martyrological past.

DEDICATION

For my husband, Jared

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For the hours of time spent reading my work, for his calming presence, and for the millions of ways that his steadfast love and support help me to become my best self, I am forever grateful to my husband, Jared. Thank you for the joy you bring to my life. It made all the difference.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation on martyrdom fittingly begins with an account from John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. In his dedicatory epistle to Queen Elizabeth, Foxe extols her as "this mild Constantinus, to cease blood, to stay persecution, to refresh his people."¹ He commemorates the "multitude of godly martyrs who were slain" under Mary I, while emphasizing "that ye [the Queen] were entangled yourself" in the persecution of the godly.² In his description of Elizabeth's imprisonment in the Tower, the martyrologist showcases the fortitude with which she endured her own trial of faith. Upon entering the prison, "she called to her Gentlewoman for her booke, desiryng God not to suffer her to build her foundation vpon the sands, but vpon the rocke, wherby ll blastes of blustering weather shoulde haue no power against her."³ She identifies herself explicitly with two of Foxe's famous female martyrs, Anne Askew and Lady Jane Grey, by holding up the Bible in defense of her beliefs.⁴ Foxe notes that when soldiers arrived at the Tower, Elizabeth "demaunded of such as were about her whether the Lady Ianes Scaffold were taken away or no, fearyng by reason of their commyng, lest she should haue

¹ John Foxe. *Acts and Monuments* [...] (1563 edition), [online]. (hriOnline, Sheffield). Available from: <http://www.hrionline.shef.ac.uk/foxe/>. 6.

² Ibid., 6-7.

³ Ibid., 1725.

⁴ On comparisons of Anne Askew, Lady Jane Grey, and Elizabeth I, see Carole Levin, "Lady Jane Grey: Protestant Queen and Martyr," in *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works*, ed. Margaret P. Hannay (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1985), 92-106 and John King, "Fiction and Fact in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*," in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 12-35.

played her part.”⁵ Although she was not called to mount “Lady Ianes Scaffold,” Foxe suggests that Elizabeth shared equally in the sufferings of the Marian martyrs.

Elizabeth’s martyrological tribulations became representative of her reign, which completed the martyrs’ crusade against Mary and her blasphemous Catholic beliefs. This triumph led John Aylmer famously to proclaim that “God is English,” because he fights alongside the nation’s subjects in “defence of hys true religion.”⁶ As commander of this army of subjects, Elizabeth is sure to be victorious for “if he be with her, who can stande against her?...It is as easy for him to saue...by weake as by strong, by woman as by a man.”⁷ Early moderns relied on the same rhetoric they used to praise Elizabeth in describing England itself. In an oration that Foxe reprinted in *Acts and Monuments*, John Hale attests that the nation’s deliverance from these “tormentours, Tyrantes and false Christians” signals divine favor of “our naturall mother England...the most godlye nacion of the earth.”⁸ Beyond the pages of martyrological texts, images of passivity and suffering functioned as powerful motifs in the discourse of nationhood. Whether referring to the heroism of a virgin queen in championing Protestantism, the surrender of loyal subjects to enact the will of their ruler, or the suffering required to uphold godly values in a hostile world, all rely on past models of sacrifice that overlap, intermingle, and evolve to produce a communal identity.

In the first half of the seventeenth century, England yearned for an icon like Elizabeth, whose weakness produced strength and whose example confirmed them as a people united under

⁵ Foxe, 1727.

⁶ John Aylmer, *An Harborowe for faithfull and trewe subiectes* (1559), Qv.

⁷ *Ibid.*, B3r.

⁸ Foxe (1576), 2005.

divine election. For a nation that had in the previous century witnessed enormous bloodshed in the name of religion, England enjoyed a period of relative peace in the first half of the seventeenth century. In stark contrast to the approximately 335 martyrdoms recounted in John Foxe's 1570 edition of *Acts and Monuments*, scholars have identified only 39 potential martyrs during the reigns of James I and Charles I.⁹ During these years of seeming religious peace, however, theatergoers witnessed the martyrdom of *The Virgin Martyr*'s Dorothea; they relived the sufferings of Katherine of Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk as she fled England to escape persecution under Mary I; and they watched as Foxe's horrifying stories of physical torture were reanimated in the dramatic productions of John Ford. Given the decreased visibility of religious persecution, what prompted playwrights to delve so deeply into accounts of past martyrdoms?

Sacrificial Acts: Martyrdom and Nationhood in Seventeenth-Century Drama argues that the link between martyrdom and English nationhood forged by sixteenth-century martyrologies shaped Stuart articulations of religious, political, and national identity in significant ways. This dissertation covers roughly the period between James' ascension to the English throne (1603) and Charles' execution (1649). However, I have relied on texts that range from the history of early Christianity to the end of Charles' reign, following Foxe's example in emphasizing the connectedness of persecuted peoples. The culture's familiarity with and connection to martyrologies, most notably *Acts and Monuments*, allowed seventeenth-century writers to deploy the rhetoric of suffering in new contexts. These narratives rely on diffused conceptions of martyrdom to influence and define shifting perceptions of nationhood. Strikingly, the majority

⁹ Foxe, (1570) 2219. Foxe's history describes the martyrdoms of men and women executed during the reigns of Henry VIII and Mary I. I have relied on the 1570 edition for this count because it includes significantly more entries than the first edition (1563). Unless otherwise indicated, all following quotation from Foxe come from this edition. For a statistical breakdown of the gender, ages and occupations of these martyrs, see Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors: The Story of Martyrdom in the Western World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 186. For a catalog of potential Stuart martyrs, see Richard Stanton's *A Menology of England and Wales* (London: Burns and Oats, 1892), 773. Stanton provides the martyrs' names and the date of their executions.

of these texts focus on female suffering, whether that of real women who faced religious persecution or fictional heroines who are heralded as martyrs though they champion secular causes. For a society mourning the loss of its beloved Queen, these stories likely recall the fortitude of Elizabeth in her defense of Protestantism and the kinship between her mythical legacy and England itself. Indeed, although she was not actually a martyr, Foxe's account of her heroism comprises one of the most memorable and laudatory entries in *Acts and Monuments*.¹⁰ At the same time, the Queen's death resolved the uneasy circumstance of a female ruler with no husband and no clear successor. In this sense, these stories of martyred women offer a comfortable version of female heroism in which the women's defiance is constrained by their passivity and ultimately, their deaths.

However, as the Foxean account of Elizabeth demonstrates, the Queen's supposed weakness served as a powerful image for England's submission to be used by God. While many seventeenth-century narratives celebrate James' and, later, Charles' ascension to the throne, they demonstrate an acute awareness that women and/or the attributes associated with them continued to engage and shape English identity in profound ways. For this reason, my primary focus is not how representations of martyrdom influenced early modern notions of gender; instead, I consider how gendered assumptions were deployed, as in Aylmer's characterization of Elizabeth, to construe new versions of subjectivity and nationhood. I have supplemented my emphasis on dramatic works with male- and female-authored texts that reflect on, adopt, amend, or unsettle Foxe's techniques for crafting a sense of national community based on a shared history of

¹⁰ The editors of the 1632 edition of *Acts and Monuments* identify the reign of Elizabeth as a transitional moment in the history of martyrdom. To her, they attribute the end of persecutions against the true (Protestant) church. The editors title their additions to the Tudor version, "A continuation of the histories of forrein martyrs: from the happy reigne of the most renowned Qu. Elizabeth, to these times." Clearly, there is no need for a "continuation" of the history of English martyrs.

sacrifice. Thus, in addition to illustrating how the expansion of martyrological rhetoric and imagery revealed numerous channels for female influence, this dissertation asserts that narratives of suffering generated national models for reclaiming the stability and unity that Foxe's martyrs had seemed to inspire. In looking for martyrs in their own time, writers produced narratives that imagine and enact new definitions of what it actually means to be a martyr.

Martyrdom and Communal Identity

Although Foxe developed a specifically English history of martyrdom, the tradition was founded on communal principles. The term "martyr" comes from the Greek word *martus* or *μάρτυς*, which means witness or "one whose knowledge derives from personal observation."¹¹ In the early Christian church, this essentially legal term became a religious one: the Romans persecuted ancient Christians for sharing eyewitness accounts of Christ's miracles, and the title of martyr came to describe those who suffered and died for bearing witness to these miraculous occurrences. Believers sought spiritual affirmation and instruction from the recorded trials and persecution of martyrs like Polycarp, who was purportedly a close disciple of the Apostle John, and Justin, a Christian apologist martyred under Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius. Because these men followed Christ's example in their suffering and willingness to die, the Christian community elevated martyrs as models for emulation and placed them on a level with the Apostles themselves.

The Apostles used moments of suffering to further establish the Christian community, and as Tertullian professed, "the blood of martyrs" *did* become "the seed of the church."¹² Through his letters from prison, Paul united Christian communities throughout the Roman

¹¹ C il n Owens, "A literary preamble," in *Martyrdom: The Psychology, Theology, and Politics of Self-Sacrifice*, ed. Rona M. Fields (Westport, C.T.: Praeger, 2004), 3.

¹² Tertullian, *Apologeticus* (197 A.D.), Chapter 50.

Empire. The early Christian martyr Ignatius followed Paul's example by composing letters of encouragement to his parish at Antioch.¹³ Imitating their leader, Bishop Polycarp, who recorded and disseminated his testimony from prison, believers of Smyrna wrote epistles to further spread the story of his heroic martyrdom. Like the martyrs whose blood nurtured the early church, the network of believers who received and shared these stories comprised a fundamental part of the history of Christian martyrdom. Elizabeth Castelli explains, "Martyrdom requires audience (whether real or fictive), retelling, interpretation, and world- and meaning-making activity."¹⁴ Accounts of persecuted believers were legitimized through their links to Christ and his Apostles; at the same time, these stories helped to validate the evolving structure of the Church by positing a tradition through which Christians in all ages could maintain that link.

Augustine's writings on martyrdom helped to define the word for generations of believers who lived after the time of Christ and could not personally "bear witness" to His miracles. Augustine urged Christians instead to bear witness to the miraculous power of God within man, for God is able "to draw mens soules that yet affect visibilities, vnto the worship of his inuisible essence."¹⁵ Similarly, God was responsible for drawing "mens soules" to martyrdom and for endowing His chosen ones with the necessary strength to endure persecution. Augustine de-emphasizes physical pain, instead pronouncing, "It is not the suffering but the cause that makes

¹³ Indeed, Ignatius specifically imagines his death as following in the footsteps of Paul; before death, he cried out, "I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast vouchsafed to honour me with a perfect love towards thee; and hast made me to be put into iron bonds with thy apostle Paul" (Foxe 129).

¹⁴ Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 34.

¹⁵ St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, *Of the citie of God vvith the learned comments of Io. Lod. Viues*, trans. I. H. (1610), 378.

men martyrs.”¹⁶ His valorization of the martyr’s cause paved the way for later generations to endow secular convictions with quasi-religious significance.

In his *Acts and Monuments*, John Foxe attempted to construct a unified narrative of English suffering by comparing the deaths of early Christian martyrs to the persecution of Protestants by Mary I. His detailed descriptions of martyrs’ trials and deaths produced a script that persecuted groups of various sects later adopted and modified. Moreover, the martyrologist posited England’s divinely privileged position in the true church’s genealogy of suffering. With *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation*, William Haller sparked a yet-unresolved critical debate about the nationalist sentiments of *Acts and Monuments*. He argues that Foxe’s influential book

supplied a history of the Church and the nation, seen by the light of what was taken to be the truth of revelation: that is to say, of a conception of the meaning of history which almost everybody who thought about the matter at all took for granted. Thus the Book of Martyrs set moving in English life a body of legend which was thought to make clear how and why the situation in which the nation presently found itself had come about, and so to justify whatever course the nation, as represented by the queen, might take in its own defence and for the accomplishment of its destiny.¹⁷

Subsequent scholars have expressed opposition to Haller’s assertions of election, often agreeing with Katherine Firth’s argument that this version of apocalyptic nationalism postdates Foxe’s authorship.¹⁸ Moreover, Haller’s assertion that the English are “a people set apart from all

¹⁶ Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos* xxxiv. 23.

¹⁷ William Haller, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London: Bedford, 1967), 14. For counterarguments to Haller’s thesis see Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530-1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) and V. Norskov Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973). Like Firth, Olsen comments on the anachronistic elements of Haller’s identification of apocalyptic elements in *Act and Monuments*. Additionally, he timidly suggests that Foxe’s intentions do not necessarily match the influence of his writings, a distinction that current scholars fully accept.

¹⁸ Firth suggests that Haller’s argument is influenced by a nationalistic apocalyptic tradition that did not exist until the seventeenth century. Instead, she locates *Acts and Monuments* in a universal apocalyptic tradition. She insists,

others” runs counter to the martyrologist’s insistence on the universality of the church, which is visible to true believers of any nation.¹⁹ Richard Helgerson revisits critics’ opposition to Haller’s thesis and concludes that aspects of his study should be salvaged.²⁰ He agrees with Firth that “[f]ar from being an ‘apocalyptic nationalist,’ Foxe was ‘adamant in [his] support of a universal meaning’ in church history.”²¹ Nevertheless, he asserts that Foxe “also grants England a quite extraordinary place in the universal scheme.”²² For Helgerson, Foxe’s “invisible church” constitutes an “imagined community” as theorized by Benedict Anderson.²³ He explains, “Its members are readers who imagine themselves in invisible fellowship with thousands of other readers, particularly those who encounter the word [of God] in the same vernacular translation.”²⁴ Helgerson wisely observes that regardless of Foxe’s universal worldview, his special attention to England would have signaled the nation’s exceptionality to its readers: “Through its emphasis on the church in England, it contributes to the making of a specifically

“Foxe explicitly denied that God had elected one church or nation above another; his Church was wherever the true faith was believed” (252).

¹⁹ Haller, 225. Besides Foxe’s frequent assertions of the universality of the true church in *Acts and Monuments*, he also expresses this viewpoint in his commentary on the Book of Revelations.

²⁰ On the re-evaluation of Haller also see Glyn Parry, “‘Elect Church or Elect Nation?’ The Reception of the *Acts and Monuments*,” in *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective* ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 167-81.

²¹ Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 263.

²² *Ibid.*, 263.

²³ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso editions/NLB, 1983). Anderson suggests that any community that does not exist on the basis of face-to-face interaction with its members is an imagined community. He gives the nation as an example of such community and suggests that because it is imagined, it is both sovereign and limited. It is limited because it can only consist of a certain percent of the earth’s billions of inhabitants, but it is sovereign because it provides its members with a sense of non-revocable freedom. Such a community nurtures in its members a deep sense of fraternity that, if need be, they will die for, despite the fact that they may only know a small percentage of the people for whom they are fighting (6-7).

²⁴ Helgerson, 266.

English community of faith. And through its celebration of Constantine and Elizabeth, it enforces England's imperial identity."²⁵

Recent scholars of Foxe have reframed this debate by questioning how the actual practice of reading Foxe contributed to the ongoing process of nation building. Susan Felch explores in more detail how *Acts and Monuments* created an imagined community of its readers. The martyrology

encouraged a transactional hermeneutic in which meaning was understood to result from the encounter of a properly trained and responsive reader with a plain and simple text. Second, the editorial material helped to redefine the group of elect believers as those who shared a strategy of reading and interpretation, rather than as those who shared a geographic location, such as a parish church.²⁶

Critics have long recognized the importance of the *Book of Martyrs*; for example, John Burrows calls it "the greatest single influence on English Protestant thinking of the late Tudor and early Stuart period."²⁷ With the advancement of digitized technology that allows for greater access to the multiple early modern editions of *Acts and Monuments*, we are becoming increasingly aware that many audiences of readers were shaped by and helped to shape these versions.²⁸ Indeed, as the insightful work of scholars like Thomas Freeman, Jesse Landers, Thomas Betteridge, Patrick

²⁵ Ibid., 268.

²⁶ Susan Felch, "Shaping the Reader in the *Acts and Monuments*," in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 55.

²⁷ John Burrow, *A History of Histories* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 296.

²⁸ In discussing the first four editions of *Acts and Monuments* (1563, 1570, 1576, and 1583), I have relied on the Variorum Edition Online, a project spearheaded by Foxian scholar David Loades. This version includes the complete text of all four editions, including woodcuts. For the Stuart editions (1610, 1632, 1641) of *Acts and Monuments*, I am indebted to the University of Texas' Harry Ransom Center, which has these volumes in its holdings. For an insightful scholarly conversation about reading *Act and Monuments* digitally, see the following essays in *Acts of Reading: Interpretation, Reading Practices, and the Idea of the Book in John Foxe's Acts and Monuments*, ed. Thomas P. Anderson and Ryan Netzley (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2010): Thomas P. Anderson's "Transmuting the Book: Derrida's Theory of the Archive and the Search for Origins in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*" (31-50); Richard Cunningham's "Using the New to Counter the Novel: Re-learning to Read with the Online *Acts and Monuments*" (51-68); Erin E. Kelly's "Red Letter Day in the Age of Digital Reproduction" (69-86); and Mark Rankin's "The Pattern of Illustration in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*: Problems and Opportunities" (87-115).

Collinson, and David Loades have shown, *Acts and Monuments* should not be analyzed as a monolithic history of martyrdom authored by a single writer.²⁹ Although Foxe's editorial voice helps readers to navigate and, as Felch observes, correctly interpret the text, the martyrology contains a cacophony of narrative voices, from eyewitness accounts to pertinent letters and official documents, to the self-authored testimonies of the martyrs themselves. Additionally, the 1610 and 1632 editions of Foxe history boast new editorial content that provides updated historical detail and interpretation.

I contend that the polyvocal quality of *Acts and Monuments* requires that we acknowledge its importance as a formative text for adapting and expanding multiple and sometimes contestatory versions of nationhood beyond the sixteenth century. Speaking of early modern culture more generally, Andrew Hadfield argues, "Neither literature' nor 'nation' could be taken as stable entities and were always in the process of being redefined, partly as a result of their interaction and interdependence."³⁰ I have found his observation especially applicable as I examine early modern conceptions of martyrdom, which were quite literally "being redefined" through the multiple editions of Foxe and through the many texts that draw on these volumes for source material. This dissertation traces the varied application of martyrological rhetoric in seventeenth-century England to understand how *Acts and Monuments* continued to play an important role in its exploration of national identity. My project is not meant to provide a complete history of Stuart appropriations of martyrdom. Rather, I concentrate on writers' often

²⁹ See Thomas S. Freeman, "Texts, Lies, and Microfilm: Reading and Misreading Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 30 (1999): 23-46; Jesse Landers, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print, and Literary Culture in Early Modern Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Thomas Betteridge, "Truth and History in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*," in *John Foxe and his World*, ed. Christopher Highley and John N. King (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 145-159; Patrick Collinson, "John Foxe and National Consciousness," in *John Foxe and His World*, 10-34; and David Loades' introduction to *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 1-14

³⁰ Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Politics and National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1.

idiosyncratic evocations of martyrdom in popular and public forums. This exploration reveals that Foxe's history was not simply updated by Stuart editors; it was also revived and transformed by writers who found its language of suffering applicable to the trials of their own time. Although Foxe's martyrology functions as a central text for my inquiry, I interweave my analysis of *Acts and Monuments* with well-known accounts of early Christian martyrdoms and seventeenth-century religious and political texts. Representative of concerns that were shared by kings, politicians, and commoners alike, dramatic texts frame my inquiry. For many cultures, the martyr serves the polity by becoming "a shared icon of a common history," the memory of whom unites a social group by allowing for the "identification with and idealization of values and social norms."³¹ Seventeenth-century playwrights revisit the sacrificial acts that had defined Englishness for the previous generation in search of common ground in an increasingly fraught national landscape. The suffering body—which in their hands becomes the maternal body, the submissive body, the body politic and the warring body—symbolized English subjects' essential connectedness to their history and to one another. In composing their own form of sacrificial acts, these dramatists insist that the theater shares in and even replaces the meaning-making event of the martyrological spectacle.

Enacting Martyrdom in Stuart England

Martyrdom took a variety of forms in the seventeenth century as Stuart appropriations of martyrological rhetoric expanded in applying religious language and imagery to secular contexts. In *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody, Part I* (1603), Thomas Heywood affirms Foxe's conviction that Elizabeth should be valorized as a martyr and national heroine. Before she departs for Westminster to meet with Mary, Heywood's ailing and fearful Elizabeth declares, "If

³¹ Rona M. Fields, "The Psychology and Sociology of Martyrdom," in *Martyrdom: The Psychology, Theology, and Politics of Self-Sacrifice*, ed. Rona M. Fields (Westport, C.N.: Praeger, 2004), 70.

I miscarry, in this enterprise, and aske you why / A Virgine and a Martyr both I dy” (5.341-2). John Ford, John Donne, and Richard Crashaw each imagined what it meant to be “Love’s martyr,” a wonderfully ambiguous title because of its associations with Petrarchan and Christian traditions.³² While Ford’s Penthea of *The Broken Heart* and Donne’s poetic subject in “The Funeral” are wounded by the pangs of romantic love, Crashaw meditates on Saint Teresa of Avila’s self-sacrificing love for God. His description of Teresa’s yearning for a sacrificial death could well apply to one of his contemporaries, Mary Ward, who expressed a similar longing. In her spiritual autobiography, Ward describes how she “was wont also to spend much time in reading the Lives of Saints, particularly Martyrs, which so enflamed her well prepared Hart, as nothing cou’d satisfy her, but a Living or dying Martyrdome.”³³ *Measure for Measure*’s Isabella conjoins her desire for martyrdom with the problems of secular love by translating Angelo’s indelicate proposition (a transgression of the marriage bed) into a desire for death. Of her imagined tortures, she declares, “Th’ impression of keen whips I’d wear as rubies, / And strip myself to death as to a bed / That longing have been sick for” (2.4.101-04).³⁴ In her plea for a deathbed, she yearns for an eternal union with Christ through her sacrificial death; however, her request is answered with the more sanctified (at least in the Protestant imagination) marriage bed.

³² John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and Other Plays*, ed. Marion Lomax (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); John Donne, “The Funeral,” in *The Complete English Poem of John Donne*, ed. Albert James Smith (London: Penguin Books, 1971); and Richard Crashaw, “A Hymn to the Name and Honour of the Admirable Saint Teresa,” in *Seventeenth Century British Poetry, 1603-1660*, ed. John P. Rumrich and Gregory Chaplin (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006).

³³ *A Briefe Relation of the holy Life and happy Death of our dearest Mother, of blessed memory. Mrs. Mary Ward* (written ca. 1645-57), fol. 5b.

³⁴ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Karen Raber (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004).

As these literary examples illustrate, the English were accustomed to the overlapping of religious and political rhetoric, and the turmoil of the seventeenth-century showed that a careful manipulation and adoption of martyrdom could serve as a powerful political tool. Critics of Laudian uniformity praised the heroes of *Acts and Monuments* as “symbols of resistance to the tyranny of a persecuting church.”³⁵ Religious and political critiques of Archbishop Laud were difficult to separate since his powerful position in the Church granted him an active role in the rule of a divinely-appointed monarch. Laud’s dissenters countered his authority by adopting the same rhetoric in claiming God as the source of *their* authority. When William Prynne, John Bastwick, and Henry Burton were charged with sedition because of their criticisms of Laud and his bishops, they fashioned themselves as martyrs in receiving their punishments, though they were not actually executed. Of their plight Bastwick wrote, “God had so highly honoured them, as to call them forth to suffer for his glorious Truth.”³⁶ In his retelling of their trial and punishment, he explicitly pronounces his willingness to die for the true church: “Had I as many lives as I have heires on my head, or dropps of blood in my veines, I would give them all up for this cause.”³⁷ Here Bastwick emphasizes the spiritual value of their sufferings, though the trio’s crusade against Laud had distinctly political purposes as well. By fashioning themselves as sacrificial lambs in a religious sense, the men endowed even their secular charges of governmental corruption with religious implications and persuasive emotional appeal.

³⁵ John Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 135.

³⁶ John Bastwick, *A breife relation of certaine speciall, and most materiall passages, and speeches in the Starre-Chamber occasioned and delivered Iune the 14th. 1637. at the censure of those three worthy gentlemen, Dr. Bastwicke, Mr. Burton, and Mr. Prynne, as it hath beene truely and faithfully gathered from their owne mouthes by one present at the said censure* (Amsterdam: Richt Right Press, 1638), 16.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

While Foxe's original version praised Elizabeth's divinity, the editors of the 1632 edition of *Acts and Monuments* warned that in troubled times, God may grant royal power to "tyrant[s]" in order "to mortifie and tame the pride and rebellion" of true Christians.³⁸ In the years that followed the publication of the portentous Caroline edition, the use of martyrological rhetoric became increasingly adaptable, militant, and political, a transformation that proved both expedient and discomfiting. Although William Prynne fashioned himself as a martyr, he expressed trepidation about competing appropriations of Foxe, arguing that it sullied England's martyrological past. He questioned, "Shall wee repay our blessed Martyrs for all their glorious sufferings, as now to dis-martyr, yea, uncrowne, and tread them underfoot, by disputing, or doubting their theologicall positions, which they have canonized, and sealed to us with their blood?"³⁹ In 1637, Archbishop Laud was sufficiently concerned about the effectiveness of religious appropriations of martyrological narratives that he refused to license a new edition of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. English Catholics and Protestants had long employed martyrologies as a means of emphasizing the triumph of the godly when faced with what they considered evil churches or governments. Laud recognized that martyrologies could similarly encourage dissenters in their struggle with the Church of England and feared the political ramifications of this internal conflict. After the publication of the 1641 edition of *Acts and Monuments*, Laud seized the chance to turn its rhetoric against his opponents. Of the frontispiece which pictured Christ in judgment, the Archbishop charged, "that this 'frontispiece'

³⁸ Foxe, (1632), sig. A2b.

³⁹ William Prynne, *Anti-Arminianisme* (1630), Epistle Dedicatory.

contained ‘as dangerous pictures as have been charged upon me, or any of my chapel windows’ at Lambeth.’⁴⁰

Numerous scholars have commented on the importance of *Acts and Monuments* in seventeenth-century political debate, specifically drawing attention to competing appropriations of Foxian rhetoric from “nonconformists at one extreme and Arminians seeking to establish episcopacy *iure divino* at the other.”⁴¹ In his influential study *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694*, John R. Knott seeks to articulate the Protestant “theology of suffering” presented by Foxe in *Acts and Monuments* and to explore how Stuart separatist writers adopted Foxe’s language and his idea of “Heroic Martyrdom” and applied them to pre-Civil War political struggles.⁴² By looking at multiple editions of *Acts and Monuments*, Thomas Freeman, John King, Jesse Landers, and Damien Nussbaum show how martyrological stories were constantly being revised and re-interpreted by Foxe himself and by later editors and audiences.⁴³

⁴⁰ Margaret Aston and Elizabeth Ingram, “The Iconography of the *Acts and Monuments*,” in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 74.

⁴¹ Knott, 134. Also see William Lamont’s *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion, 1603-60* (London: Macmillan / St. Martin’s Press, 1969) and Susannah Brietz Monta’s *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Lamont and Monta both discuss how Catholic and Protestant conceptions of martyrdom could become conflated, further vexing speakers’ identification of themselves with Foxe’s heroes. Lamont provides this example of the interpretive problems that could result from such appropriations: in accounts of the famous punishment of the Puritan triumvirate of Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton, the men aligned themselves in suffering for the true church with Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley (as Lamont summarizes, “one crop of martyrs had suffered at the hands of Papists, the later crop at the hands of crypto-Papists” [20]). However, the reaction that the men’s punishment elicited from the crowd hints at the Catholic roots of responses to suffering as well. As onlookers “scramble[d] for flappets of ear at the execution,” a Catholic, Kenelm Digby observed, “You may see how Nature leads men to respect relics of martyrs” (20-1).

⁴² Knott, 2.

⁴³ See Freeman’s, “Text, Lies, and Microfilm”; Lander’s chapter on Foxe in *Inventing Polemic*; John King, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Damian Nussbaum, “Appropriating Martyrdom: Fears of Renewed Persecution and the 1632 Edition of *Acts and Monuments*,” in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 178-91. While Nassbaum specifically analyzes the 1610 and 1632 editorial prefaces, King examines the material and paratextual circumstances of all Elizabethan and Stuart editions of Foxe. Both Freeman and Landers insist on the necessity of looking at the many versions as a “family of books” whose influence cannot be attributed to a single edition (Landers, 60).

Through their analyses of the increasingly militant rhetoric of the seventeenth-century editions, these critics suggest that contemporary readers viewed the text as a warning, in King's words, against "persecution by members of the religio-political establishment."⁴⁴ Nussbaum persuasively argues that by the 1630s, invocations of martyrs' suffering in religious and political contexts were plentiful and varied, even though the intended effects of these invocations were vaguely defined. He explains:

By the early 1630s then, the language of martyrdom was invested with a powerful, yet ambiguous, resonance. It could refer to threats from abroad, or it might allude to persecution initiated at home.... If the threat of persecution was external, then at worst it implied an oblique criticism of government foreign policy.... But if the threat was internal, then criticism of the authorities was unambiguous and fundamental.⁴⁵

Each of these studies makes a needed contribution to the growing body of critical literature about martyrdom and, more specifically, to scholarly conversations about the far-reaching effects of Foxe's *Act and Monuments* on England's national, religious, and cultural identity. My project will contribute to literary studies an exploration of dramatic works that is almost entirely missing from the current body of scholarly work on martyrdom. Additionally, my emphasis on Stuart plays will complement the focus of Knott and others on the later editions of Foxe and on the culture's renewed sensitivity to martyrological language in the seventeenth century.⁴⁶ Most significantly, in its selection of literary and historical texts, this dissertation seeks to complicate scholarly conceptions of Stuart culture's definition of martyrdom and their strategies for identifying themselves in relation to it. By exploring physical and metaphorical representations

⁴⁴ King, 150.

⁴⁵ Nussbaum, 189.

⁴⁶ In addition to Nussbaum's "Appropriating Martyrdom," see Thomas Freeman, "'Imitatio Christi with a vengeance': The Politicisation of Martyrdom in Early Modern England," in *Martyrs and Martyrdom in England, c. 1400-1700*, eds. Thomas S. Freeman and Thomas F. Mayer (Rochester, N.Y. : Boydell Press, 2007), 35-69.

of martyrdom, I have sought to move beyond the local circumstances of the original *Acts and Monuments* (1563) to question how seventeenth-century readers thought about, talked about, and remade this popular text. This is not to underestimate the significance of the body of editions that comprise *Acts and Monuments*, for they remind readers of their collective investment in this tradition, a history that continues to link English Protestants directly to Christ. By capitalizing on England's investment in this idea, playwrights who appropriated martyrological language sought to extend that group mentality by annexing an additional link between pre-established religious ideas and their own versions.

The Stage and the Scaffold

In my focus on the theatrical qualities of the martyrological spectacle, I take my cue from the martyrs themselves, who had long imagined themselves as actors on the grand stage of providential history. Andreas Höfele suggests that the spectacle of martyrdom is like extreme theater, a meeting of the martyr, the audience and the “author” of it all: “If all the world’s a stage, then the stage on which the martyrs act out their last scene becomes a kind of ‘abstract and brief chronicle’ of the *theatrum mundi* as a whole, its focal point, where the gaze of the onlooking crowd and that of the all-seeing deity converge with singular intensity.”⁴⁷ Indeed, the Western martyrological tradition was birthed in the Roman public arena through animal and gladiatorial games involving the maiming and killing of early Christians. Martyrs understood the importance of “stage-managing” the details of their deaths, which led to the popularity of special gestures and clothing for the accused. For example, many early martyrs followed Jesus’ example

⁴⁷Andreas Höfele, “Stages of Martyrdom: John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments*,” in *Performances of the Sacred in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. Susanne Rupp and Tobias Döring (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2005), 85. See also “Performing Persecution, Theorizing Martyrdom,” the second chapter of Castelli’s *Martyrdom and Memory*; Brian Wicker, “The Drama of Martyrdom: Christian and Muslim Approaches,” in *Witnesses to Faith? Martyrdom in Christianity and Islam*, ed. Brian Wicker (Aldershot, U. K. : Ashgate, 2006), 105-114; and Sarah Covington’s discussion of the “theater of execution” in *The Trial of Martyrdom: Persecution and Resistance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 156.

in vocally offering forgiveness to their accusers before death. Adhering to New Testament tradition, the martyr's death was lauded as a second wedding day for both men and women, who would wear formal garb appropriate for such a celebratory occasion. Martyrs being burned might even kiss the stake as a display of the anticipation, even ecstasy, with which they approached death. In his critique of popular forms of spectacle, *De spectaculis*, Tertullian urges Christians to shun the “perversity” of displays like the circus, theater, and gladiatorial games and instead focus on “the spectacles that befit Christian men—holy, everlasting, free.”⁴⁸ He directly equates popular spectacle with religious images, illustrating why the audiences' response to godly spectacles edifies their commitment to Christ, a passage forth quoting at length:

Count of these as your circus games, fix your eyes on the courses of the world, the gliding seasons, reckon up the periods of time, long for the goal of the final consummation, defend the societies of the churches, be startled at God's signal, be roused up at the angel's trump, glory in the palms of martyrdom. If the literature of the stage delight you, we have literature in abundance of our own—plenty of verses, sentences, songs, proverbs; and these not fabulous, but true; not tricks of art, but plain realities. Would you have also fightings and wrestlings? Well, of these there is no lacking, and they are not of slight account. Behold unchastity overcome by chastity, perfidy slain by faithfulness, cruelty stricken by compassion, impudence thrown into the shade by modesty: these are the contests we have among us, and in these *we* win our crowns. Would you have something of blood too? You have Christ's.⁴⁹

Here, Tertullian describes not only martyrdom itself as a theatrical moment but also charges that the literature of Christendom contains plenty of dramatic material for the stage, without the need for writers to resort to pagan sources. He invites readers to metaphorize the religious experience as theatrical in nature. Asserting that the “eyes and ears are the immediate attendants on the spirit,” Tertullian positions believers as spectators in a providential drama which angels watch

⁴⁸ Tertullian, *De spectaculis* in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, trans. S. Thelwall (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, Early Church Fathers v. 2.0, www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-03/anf03-09.htm, xxv, xxix.

⁴⁹Ibid., xxix.

and Christians become heroes in by triumphing through martyrdom or by overcoming vice.⁵⁰ Believers should shun the falsity of the devil's "church," as Tertullian characterizes popular spectacles, for the drama of the "courses of the world" as directed by God.⁵¹

Martyrdom likewise provided a unique forum for metaphorizing gender. As female martyrs appropriated traditionally masculine attributes, like the Roman martyr Perpetua, they embraced the opportunity to "play the man." In describing her imagined preparation for the next day's gladiatorial fights in which she would be forced to participate, Perpetua says, "And I was stripped naked, and I became a man."⁵² On the most literal level, of course, Perpetua refers to the gladiators' and spectators' lack of regard for her female modesty in gazing on her naked body. However, her self-description simultaneously reifies the symbolic transformation that female martyrs undergo in regards to gender. Like all who suffer for the Christian cause, female martyrs become men through their identification with Jesus and the male-centered foundations of his Church. Additionally, they take part in a tradition of resolute suffering first associated, through Socrates, with the model stoic man and later, through Biblical stories, with

⁵⁰ Ibid., xvii.

⁵¹ Ibid., xxv, xxix.

⁵² *The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity*, ed. Paul Halsall, [online]. (Internet Medieval Sourcebook, Fordham University). Available from: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/perpetua.html>. 10. Though female martyrs' ability to overcome the weaknesses of their gender was a powerful image that was compared to all martyrs' ability to surmount their natural fears of pain and death, the concept was also a frightening one that had to be countered by martyrologists' frequent reminders that the martyrs were actually women. This anxiety is perhaps expressed in seventeenth century drama by men who worry that women who cannot be controlled or persuaded by men (in a literal and sexual sense), who seem to possess a form of willfulness not unlike that of female martyrs like Perpetua, are acting outside of the boundries of their gender in a way that must be corrected. For example, in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Vindice warns Gratiana of her daughters' fearful unnaturalness in remaining chaste by venturing, "That women is all male, whom none can enter" (2.1.111). Whereas this image is powerful in early Christian martyr stories and virgin martyr legends, the martyrs' eventual unions with Christ in divine marriage eventually contain such genderbending.

“masculinized athleticism and militarism.”⁵³ Perpetua’s imagined transformation offers the possibility for women provisionally to inhabit the heroic role of their male counterparts.

For these reasons, it is easy to see why the “drama” of the scaffold proved a fitting subject for the stage, which not only allowed for the possibility of multiple, contradictory interpretations of martyrdom but exploited the spectacle of death by imagining the many contexts in which martyrdom could be conceived and perceived.⁵⁴ Real-world spectacles and textual or dramatic fantasies about martyrdom in seventeenth-century England were not mutually exclusive. As Höfele explains, the idea that “the theatre of martyrdom extends vertically to the heavens above,” naturally suggests that martyrdom also shares “horizontal links with other contemporary forms of public spectacle.”⁵⁵ Thus, theater provides a fruitful approach to exploring the sacred, which is “so intimately structured, surrounded, and defined by opposition.”⁵⁶ My emphasis on the theatricality of martyrdom on the scaffold and the stage relies on the two-fold nature of “witnessing” as it applies to martyrdom. In addition to the martyr’s bearing witness to the Christian faith, audiences were implicated in the process of witnessing through their observation of the martyr’s death. This interplay identifies martyrdom as a theatrical moment, which makes plays about such occurrences usefully metatheatrical since playgoers’ remove allows them to comment on both forms of witnessing.

⁵³ Castelli, 62.

⁵⁴ On this note, Tobias Döring argues, “Performance and performatives embrace, rather than shun, ambiguities and contradictions because their process plays them out” (“Introduction” to *Performances of the Sacred in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. Susanne Rupp and Tobias Döring [Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2005], 22).

⁵⁵ Höfele, 85.

⁵⁶ Döring, 22.

Daughters of Elizabeth: The Heroic Inheritance of Stuart Women

Finally, this leads me to comment briefly on the uniqueness of Stuart drama in representing martyrdom almost entirely through female characters. Besides the plays that I discuss in some detail, a number of seventeenth-century dramas showcase the endurance of female martyrs. They include: Thomas Dekker and John Webster's lost play *Lady Jane* (1602), Webster's *Sir Thomas Wyatt* (1607),⁵⁷ David Murray's *Sophonisba* (1611), Thomas Heywood's *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody* (1605),⁵⁸ and Thomas Middleton's *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (1611).⁵⁹ We can attribute this trend to both the historical emphasis on female martyrdom and the especial circumstances of the seventeenth century. Though martyrdom proved a great equalizer in regards to gender, the association of women and passivity in the public and domestic spheres offered a natural model for believers' subservience in religious matters.⁶⁰ Authors occasionally comment on the weak nature of women, but these physical

⁵⁷ This play contains the story of Lady Jane Grey's death and includes fragments from the earlier lost play, *Lady Jane*.

⁵⁸ Although not specifically about the death of a female martyr, the play dramatizes the trials of Queen Elizabeth during the reign of her sister Mary. As previously discussed, Foxe praises Elizabeth as a martyr who was delivered by God's providence and as the deliverer of other Christian martyrs who gave themselves up to be persecuted for the Protestant cause. For example, see Foxe's discussion of the deliverance of Richard George and his wife by Queen Elizabeth (2234).

⁵⁹ Anne Lancashire convincingly argues that the main plot of *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* was based on the story of the early Christian martyr Sophronia, whose martyrdom was recorded in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* and in Foxe, which, in addition to a Spanish version of the story, appears to be the source for the dramatist's knowledge of the martyr. See "The Second Maiden's Tragedy: A Jacobean Saint's Life," *The Review of English Studies* 25.99 (1974): 267-79. For an early modern English translation of Eusebius, see *The auncient ecclesiasticall histories of the first six hundred yeares after Christ, wrytten in the Greeke tongue by three learned historiographers, Eusebius, Socrates, and Euagrius* (London, 1577).

⁶⁰ Two pertinent historical studies by Elizabeth A. Castelli and Megan L. Hickerson deal specifically with the history of female martyrdom and are applicable here. In *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*, Castelli argues that stories of Christian martyrdom were instrumental in creating the group's religious identity and illustrates how these stories continue to function as "critical building block[s] of Christian culture" (4). Though Castelli examines accounts of both male and female martyrs, she consistently returns to the theme of gender deviance, explaining that "debates over subjectivity were almost always coded by gender" (5). *Making Women Martyrs in Tudor England* also investigates the identity-making potential of the stories of female martyrs, though Hickerson limits her study to the writings of John Bale and John Foxe. She explains that these authors relied on

shortcomings are mentioned as a means of heightening the drama of the struggles that martyrs overcome through self-sacrifice. For example, in recording the cruelty of Nero towards Roman Christians, Clement of Rome praises men who “have suffered many indignities and tortures and have set a very noble example in our midst.” He similarly praises women who have “suffered terrible and impious indignities” but adds that they, “though weak in body, received a noble reward of honour.”⁶¹

Furthermore, Foxe’s heroic portrayal of Elizabeth as the champion of Protestantism implies England’s indebtedness to a woman for the establishment of a sacred church-state. James I recognized the importance of Elizabeth’s influence on the nation’s communal identity, and the specter of the deceased queen hung over his reign through invocations of her as his royal and spiritual mother. Accordingly, the culture paid increased recognition to the transference of influence through means distinctly feminine. Post-Reformation England placed greater emphasis on women’s authority in the domestic sphere, particularly on their duty to provide spiritual instruction to their children. The genre of mothers’ advice books arose partially in response to this expectation, as women like Dorothy Leigh and Elizabeth Jocelin, fearing that they might die in childbirth, made provisions for their children’s religious upbringing. At the same time, these texts called attention to the dangers that women faced in performing their maternal duties. The early seventeenth century experienced an increase both in maternal and infant mortality rates.⁶²

gendered imagery to describe the true and false churches, respectively conceived of as the bride of Christ and the whore of Babylon, female figures that allowed them “both to express fear of persecution and to define emerging Protestant identity” (*Making Women Martyrs* [Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005], 9).

⁶¹ Clement of Rome. *Stromatesis*, Ch. 6.

⁶² For a concise description of women’s roles in seventeenth-century society, including their maternal experiences, see Patricia M. Crawford and Laura Gowing’s introduction to *Women’s Worlds in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 2000).

Like the acts of spiritually and physically delivering their children, enduring the death of a child was conceived of as a test of the mother's faith.

The century also witnessed great political and religious changes, which highlighted the limitations of and possibilities for female influence. Though during James' reign, the nation enjoyed a period of relative peace, his emphasis on patriarchal authority shifted attention away from female authority, which reached its apex during Elizabeth's reign. Moreover, the king's anxieties about witchcraft prompted a cultural determination to interpret the body as an indicator of demonic influence, a negative inversion of the belief that martyrs' bodies signify the presence of divinity. During Charles' reign, women at court were both celebrated for their part in Henrietta Maria's elaborate masques and criticized for seeming to sympathize or even agree with the Queen's Catholic beliefs. The ecclesiastical upheaval of Caroline England expanded male and female subjects' definitions of religious identity. Puritan emphasis on spiritual interiority provided a model for women's meddling in matters of religion on the basis of their individual connection to the divine.⁶³ Sectarian women like Anna Trapnel and self-proclaimed prophetesses like Eleanor Davies weighed in on religious and political debates, citing their heavenly callings as an unassailable source of authority. By exploring narratives of female heroism, I demonstrate how Stuart women shape and recast England's inheritance of a history of martyrdom.

I begin in chapter 1, "In Praise of 'Honors Wombe': Maternal Influence and the Stuart Martyrological Tradition," by analyzing early modern representations of women that valorize motherhood as a form of martyrdom. A new popular literary genre, mother's advice books,

⁶³ On this topic, see Katherine Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent in the Seventeenth Century: English Women's Writing and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

showcased the sacrifices that women faced in giving birth. Some female authors directly equate the pain of childbirth to martyrological torture, an apt comparison since the continuation of the true church depends on the sufferings of both martyrs and mothers. Humanists ascribed to women the governance of the domestic sphere; thus, during this period, mothers were increasingly charged with the duty of advising their children in spiritual matters. In this respect, mothers shared in the instructive purpose of the martyrological spectacle. I argue that that the link between representations of martyrdom and motherhood prompted new models for describing English nationhood. Plays like *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Duchess of Suffolk* suggest that the future of their societies depends on maternal sacrifice, whether for the continuation of the royal family or that of the Protestant church.

In the absence of the scaffold, these dramas offer an alternate means of advancing Foxe's narrative of suffering as instrumental to national identity. The period's privileging of women's maternal contributions seems to provide reassuring evidence that female influence is confined to the domestic sphere. However, the texts that I examine consider the role of motherhood in relation to political, religious, and culture upheaval. I begin this chapter by tracing the shift in seventeenth-century representations of Mary, Queen of Scots. This introductory section compares texts that laud her as a Catholic martyr to those that praise her as a sacrificial mother whose sufferings allowed for James' peaceful reign. After analyzing dramatic representations of maternal agency, the chapter turns finally to the letters of Brilliana Harley, which evidence the continued importance and adaptability of narratives of motherhood.

Chapter 2, "Princes and Primates: The Passive Self and Subjecthood" examines the overlap in Jacobean representations of martyrdom and witchcraft. Early modern descriptions of both martyrs and witches highlight their positions as passive agents committed to imitating a

higher authority, whether divine or demonic. However, the rhetorical commonality of discussions of martyrdom and witchcraft indicates the need for an authoritative interpreter of these narratives, particularly in the absence of a trusted editor like Foxe. Emphasizing his position as God's earthly representative, James identifies himself as the new standard for rightful imitation. I argue that he advances a model of passive subjecthood by capitalizing on the culture's reverence for martyrological representations of passivity and the confusion wrought by increased concern about witches' satanic imitation. Whereas representations of maternal suffering blur the boundaries between domestic and royal spheres, James' adoption of martyrological rhetoric stresses the necessity of hierarchical difference. Just as martyrs grew Christ's church by following His sacrificial example, subjects advance a Godly agenda in the political sphere by imitating a divinely-appointed earthly king.

With this understanding of Jacobean royal policy, I consider stage plays like *The Virgin Martyr* and *Sophonisba*, which showcase virgin martyrs who submit themselves as self-sacrificing instruments of both secular and sacred kings. By applying the Scriptural notion of "bearing witness" to non-religious contexts, these plays confirm James' suspicion that mimesis can function as a powerful political tool. However, while James dismisses witchcraft as a false version of imitation that he has the power to expose, these plays hint at the dangers of imitation by presenting divine and demonic agents as frequently indistinguishable. Perhaps for this reason, James refers to subjects' imitation of royal authority as "aping," a vocabulary that implies the natural superiority of the monarch. The king successfully deploys the martyrological rhetoric of *imitatio Christi* to construct a narrative of national stability, in which subjects derive their identities from that of their king.

While James capitalized on the language of passive agency in describing the relationship between the monarch and his subjects, he recognized and sought to suppress the potential problems of this rhetoric. Specifically, he reinforced the monarch's importance as an example of and for divine imitation. In my third chapter, "The 'bodie politique' has no 'glasse windowes': The Conscience in Caroline England" I examine Caroline texts that privilege the guidance of the individual conscience. Puritans claimed religious authority on the basis of a personal calling from God, and for this reason, England's ecclesiastical head, Archbishop William Laud, labeled them as a dangerous threat to Charles. In an effort to control this rhetoric of inwardness, Charles deployed a two-fold strategy: first, he sought to create an illusion of royal candor and openness and encouraged his subjects to remain similarly transparent. By publicly expressing their support of the king, they display love of country, and by upholding ecclesiastical rituals and traditions, they evidence their love for God. Additionally, Charles developed the idea of a "common conscience," that is, a national conscience of which the king is the supreme guide.

The popularity of anatomical texts during this period is an important development because these texts supported Royalist claims about the natural organization of the metaphorical body politic. Just as the heart gives life to the body, the king animates the nation. The chapter traces the concurrent fascination with the immaterial conscience and the material body, a dialectic that frequently overlaps and even converges in representations of Charles' martyrdom. Even as a metaphorical tableau, the open body suggests access to some kind of greater truth. The anatomized body begged to be scrutinized, probed, and interpreted. Indeed, martyrologies offer a precedent for understanding and accessing the conscience through the physical body. Martyrs are praised for showcasing the sincerity of their beliefs through the graceful endurance of bodily pain. With these two versions of inwardness in mind, I consider how the plays of John

Ford seek to articulate a strategy for reading the conscience through narratives of physical sacrifice and brokenness.

Chapter 4, “Royal and Religious *Generalissimas*: Women, War, and Militant Christianity,” contends that women’s participation in religious and political debates before and during the Civil War were frequently represented in martial terms. For soldiers and statesmen, the language of combat played a significant role in definitions of heroism. We need only to look to the heroes of classical literature—Aeneas, Achilles, and Odysseus, to name a few—to find examples that set the standard for English ideals of valor. Martyrologies offered an alternate, though no less powerful, version of heroism through their emphasis on martyrs’ courageousness in suffering passively. In contrast to battlefield narratives, which were restricted to men, women shared equally in the culture’s admiration of martyrs. As martyrologists repeatedly point out, accounts of martyrdom evidence women’s abilities to endure suffering with the same fortitude as men. Foxe exalts Anne Askew as “a singuler example of Christen constancie for all men to follow,” illustrating the degree to which women both define and emulate this heroic standard.⁶⁴

In the first half of the seventeenth century, these two models of heroism were increasingly linked as separatist writers defined their religious struggles as a form of holy war. In the years immediately before the Civil War, the language of holy war was frequently applied to political disputes, with Royalists emphasizing the divinity of the King and his opponents, particularly Puritans, asserting the sacredness of their resistance. This chapter offers the most salient example of the multiplicity of texts that comprise *Acts and Monuments* through its examination of the 1632 edition of the martyrology, which contained the most substantial changes of any version since Foxe’s death. As I demonstrate, this edition’s incorporation of

⁶⁴ Foxe, 1420.

martial vocabulary establishes an essential link between the courage necessary to fight *and* to remain passive. In examining examples of women's appropriation of this vocabulary, I shift attention to the ways that the overlap of soldiers and martyrs was exploited and qualified. I argue that the self-presentations of Eleanor Davies and Henrietta Maria re-define the scope of women's participation in secular struggles by relying on spiritual narratives of suffering. However, the women's adoption of martial rhetoric inadvertently foregrounds their gender in some instances, as their identities are also shaped by models of passive heroism and their roles as wives and mothers. By tracing the intertwining of these influences, I argue that although the language of active warfare implies a rhetorical shift from previous models of passive suffering, it actually reveals a discursive link between these heroic traditions.

This dissertation is not intended to be an exhaustive exploration of seventeenth-century representations of martyrdom. Instead, by analyzing how plays represent four versions of Stuart appropriation and adaptation of martyrological rhetoric, I have sought to elucidate the significance of the theater's contribution to the secularization of martyrdom. Through their suffering heroines, these plays highlight the adaptability and continued importance of martyrological narratives.

1. IN PRAISE OF 'HONORS WOMBE': MATERNAL INFLUENCE AND THE STUART MARTYROLOGICAL TRADITION



Scaffold Scene of Beheading Fig. A

Female Attendants at Execution Fig. B

Memorial Portrait (c. 1603)

After Mary Stuart’s execution in February 1587, Elizabeth Curle, who had attended the Queen of Scots on the scaffold, commissioned a memorial portrait of her. In the foreground of the painting is a full-length rendering of Mary as she prepares to face death. The anonymous artist portrays her as the quintessential Catholic martyr—her simple dress is black, the liturgical

color for martyrdom, but her ruff and veil are white, a hue associated with the sacrament of marriage and thus, a reminder that in her martyrdom she welcomes death as an eternal union with Christ. Her only adornment, an *Agnus Dei* hanging around her neck, serves as a powerful reminder that, in *imitatio Christi*, she willingly surrenders her life in offering that neck to the executioner's ax. As Robert Wyngfield's eye-witness account details, the source of this comparison comes from Mary herself who kissed her crucifix as she mounted the scaffold and exclaimed, "Even as thy arms, oh Jesu Christ, were spread here upon the cross, so receive me, so receive me into the arms of mercy."⁶⁵ The engraving of the lamb on the sacred ornament, a symbol of Christ's sacrificial purpose, further denotes Mary's innocence of the charges leveled against her by the wolfish English Protestants. In her right hand she holds a crucifix, another specifically Catholic symbol of the religious significance of her suffering. Lastly, she clutches a small testament in her other hand, one finger stuck between its pages, perhaps marking the place of the psalm that she recited in Latin on the scaffold.

Two smaller pictures that stress the terrible reality of Mary's suffering are juxtaposed to the idealized portrait of the venerable martyress. The drawing on the left (Fig. A) captures the gruesome circumstances of the beheading. Mary's head is on the block and although the executioner holds the ax in mid-swing, the blood rushing from the Queen's neck evidences that she has already endured one blow. In this miniature, the sole onlookers are the Protestant statesmen who secured her death warrant. The other picture (Fig. B) depicts Mary's chief mourners—the two women who attended her on the scaffold, one of whom is Curle. Writing to Henry III of France on the night before her death, Mary requested that her body be bestowed on

⁶⁵ Robert Wyngfield, *A Circumstantial Account of the Execution of Mary Queen of Scots*, in *The Trial of Mary Queen of Scots: A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Jane Elizabeth Lewis (Boston and New York: Bedford / St. Martin's, 1999), 113-20. Lewis notes that although Wyngfield initially wrote the report for Lord Burghley's private use, it became the official account of the execution and was frequently reprinted.

these women for burial preparation, an appeal she echoed on the scaffold.⁶⁶ In addition to caring for Mary's material body, the women would make provisions for her immaterial soul as they shared in the Catholic practice of offering prayer for her spirit's journey in the afterlife.

Elizabeth Curle's most profound demonstration of her loyal servitude to Mary comes, perhaps, in the form of her commissioning of this portrait: through this representation, she offers an enduring pattern for sympathetically interpreting the Queen's death, and she recapitulates the shame of execution as the glory of martyrdom. By coupling an illustration of the actual scene at Fortheringhay with the depiction of Mary as a sacrificial victim, the artist recasts the state's criminalization of the Queen as a tragic misinterpretation of her self-effacing commitment to preserve the religion of her ancestors.⁶⁷ The upper left quadrant of the painting features the Scottish coat of arms, the only outstanding indication of Mary's place as earthly royalty. The overwhelming message of this painting is not one of the Queen's political legacy, but of her inclusion in the Catholic Church's expansive history of persecution.

Clearly, this was not the only interpretation of Mary available to early moderns. Nevertheless, most late-Tudor and early-Stuart depictions of the Queen operated on this embattled axis, with Catholic sympathizers proclaiming Mary a martyr and the Protestant faithful damning her as both a traitor and a heretic.⁶⁸ While such dichotomous representations endured

⁶⁶ The Last Letter of Mary, Queen of Scots (1587). National Library of Scotland: Adv.MS.54.1.1. <http://www.nls.uk/mqs/trans1.html> (accessed February 21, 2010).

⁶⁷ See Michel Foucault's much-cited analysis of displays of state power in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

⁶⁸ One of the most famous early accounts in defense of Mary that sought to establish her as a martyr for the Catholic faith is Adam Blackwood's *The History of Mary Queen of Scots*, originally published in 1587 in France as *Martyre de la royne d'Escosse*. Blackwood was not present at the actual execution, but relied on the servants who attended Mary at her execution as his sources. Thus, his written account stands as a nice companion to the portrait commissioned by Curle. See *The History of Mary Queen of Scots*, in *The Trial of Mary Queen of Scots: A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Jane Elizabeth Lewis (Boston and New York Bedford / St. Martin's, 1999), 120-25.

after James I's accession, another version of Mary arose in response to anxieties about her relationship to England's new king. Like the Memorial Portrait, this emergent characterization of Mary posits her as a sympathetic figure who, though misled by evil advisors, did not seek self-advancement but surrendered her life to uphold her convictions. Instead of focusing on her religious legacy, this new portrayal of Mary absorbs the story of her trial and death into the extended narrative of James' legitimacy and success in uniting the kingdoms of England and Scotland. The switch is surprisingly organic in its logic. For Protestants especially, who eschewed relics and transubstantiation, the martyred body offered physical evidence of a conviction that could not be otherwise materially expressed. For the English nation, the ability to trace a dynastic lineage served a similar purpose—it offered an observable manifestation of divine selection. Mary's martyrdom or treachery, whichever the case may be, is mollified by an emphasis on her maternal connection to James. Of little importance is the fact that no such relationship really existed. Her gender, which had made her bid for the crown of England all the more scandalous or lamentable (she is both the Whore of Babylon and the pitiable object of ambitious male scheming) actually helps to ameliorate the threat her Catholicism represents to James' rule. She retains a suggestive connection to martyrdom, though not in the traditionally religious sense. As we will see, these Stuart depictions recast her death as an act of social benevolence for the re-uniting of kingdoms and self-sacrifice for the advancement of her son.

This chapter suggests that the shift in representations of Mary Stuart is both indicative of and a catalyst for the re-evaluation of maternal legacy in the seventeenth-century religious economy of suffering. Representations of martyrdom and motherhood draw in to sharp focus the corporeal and discursive properties of the gendered “body in pain,” to expand Scarry's phrase

Particularly vitriolic depictions of Mary Stuart include Spenser's Duessa in *The Faerie Queene* and Thomas Dekker's Whore of Babylon in his play of the same name.

beyond the realm of interrogatory or punitive torture.⁶⁹ In both cases, there is a kind of writing on the body that heralds the suffering required of the subject, and in both, the endurance of pain is an indicator of valor. Like the martyred body, the maternal body functions as a trans-generational site for the transmission of religious ideologies. The juncture of maternity and martyrdom creates a unique representational economy for teasing out the transgressive potential for the culture's reliance on familial terms in structuring society and the state. England's king had come to the throne through a version of matrilineal succession, proving that female influence, particularly in its maternal form, can and does extend beyond the domestic sphere. After looking at how this slippage provided for Mary's absorption into England's royal history, we will turn to two plays, John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (c. 1612-14) and Thomas Drue's *The Duchess of Suffolk* (1624), that similarly entertain the possibilities for the performance of maternity, particularly through the domestication of its connection to religious models of sacrifice. I contend that the plays' valorization of suffering through the rhetorical merging of martyrdom and motherhood both advances and expresses discomfort with the blurring of domestic, religious, and national spheres of influence.

Through a shared sense of loss catalogued in the pages of *Acts and Monuments*, John Foxe helped establish Elizabethan England as a unified Protestant nation. At a time of relative peace, Stuart England searched for a way to connect themselves with the heroism of their religious past, and in the absence of the scaffold, they placed increased attention on the home as a site of religious reproduction. The convergence of these traditions was fueled by new articulations in mothers' legacies of women's religious obligation to surrender their lives to their

⁶⁹ In her seminal study, Scarry posits that torture transforms the physical body of the tortured subject into an unwilling canvas for the torturer's agenda. As the one tortured loses his voice in the presence of indescribable pain, his body speaks to the power of the torturer's regime. See *The Body in Pain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

families, whether literally in childbirth or figuratively in providing for their children. In this sanctified space, women were praised as witnesses, warriors of faith, and self-sacrificing vessels. As scholars of early modern women have observed, however, like the martyr, a mother's influence seems to arise from a place of relative disempowerment.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the traditions in which these women participate valorize the historical and cultural significance of their contributions. Female martyrs were privileged to speak because they did so within a revered religious tradition. Pregnant mothers were privileged to write because they performed a role both secular and sacred in the production of children. Like the spectacle of martyrdom, the performance of motherhood—staged posthumously in the case of Mary Stuart—serves as a nexus for the creation of a national identity. In seeking to define, praise, and delimit maternal legacy, the texts that I analyze domesticate the privileged language of martyrologies and unveil an alternate model of English nationhood.

⁷⁰ For scholarly discussions of the issue of empowerment in mothers' writings see Patricia A. Demers *Women's Writing in English: Early Modern England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Pamela Hammons, "Despised Creatures: The Illusion of Maternal Self-Effacement in Seventeenth-Century Child Loss Poetry," *ELH* 66.1 (Spring 1999): 25-49; Kristen Poole, "'The Fittest Closet for All Goodness': Authorial Strategies of Jacobean Mothers' Manuals," *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 35.1 (1995): 69-88; and Wendy Wall, "Dancing in a Net: The Problems of Female Authorship," in *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 279-340.

Influential Mothers: The Queen of Scots and the Duchess of Malfi



The Historie of the Life and Death of Mary Stuart (1624)

The frontispiece to William Camden's *The Historie of the Life and Death of Mary Stuart, Queene of Scotland* (1624) replaces the Catholic symbols of the Memorial Portrait with the iconography of state and sovereignty.⁷¹ In the hand that held the crucifix, a symbolic alignment of her tribulations with Christ's passion, Mary instead wields the royal scepter. A monarchical crown replaces the veil that had earlier signified her marriage to the Catholic Church and commitment to defend its truths against the false doctrines of Protestantism. The Latin testament

⁷¹ William Camden, *The historie of the life and death of Mary Stuart Queene of Scotland* (1624).

of the earlier portrait has disappeared and, in its place, she holds the orb of state, a traditional icon of princely authority. Given Mary's murderous desire to seize the throne from England's beloved and much missed Virgin Queen, this rendering may seem more dangerous than Curle's figurative canonization of her mistress. For example, in her commentary on Peter Brook's 1962 production of *King Lear*, Carol Rutter observes that although the orb symbolizes supreme royal power, it also reminds us that such power, like the structural architecture of the orb itself, is self-contained, able to be granted or seized at will. In Brook's staging of the first scene, Goneril declares her love for Lear while holding the orb of state, "paradoxically...the symbol of what was not yet in her grasp" but which she was scheming to acquire.⁷²

Similarly, it might be tempting to view Mary's orb as an allusion to her ruthless ambition, an inflammatory reminder that, like Goneril, she sought to take that which had not been granted to her. In fact, in his justification of her execution, this is exactly what Richard Crompton claims as the most damning evidence against Mary. The problem, at least theoretically, was not her desire to possess the English throne but that "she was a most impatient competitor" and wanted "not to succéde her Maiestie [Elizabeth], but to enioy her Crowne in possession."⁷³ Mary refused to derive her authority through proper channels, and Crompton asserts that the legacy she left behind was one at odds with the monarchical system. He writes, "She was the onely hope of all discontented subiects, she was the foundation, whereon all the euill disposed did builde, she was the roote from whence all rebellions and trecheries did spring."⁷⁴ To return to the engraving

⁷² Carol Rutter, "Eel Pie and Ugly Sisters in King Lear," in *Lear from Study to Stage, Essays in Criticism*, ed. James Ogden and Arthur Hawley Scouten (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1997), 181.

⁷³ Richard Crompton, *A short declaration of the ende of traytors, and false conspirators against the state & of the duetie of subiectes to theyr soueraigne gouernour: and wythall, howe necessarie, lawes and execution of iustice are, for the preseruation of the prince and common wealth* (1587), C.iii.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, C.iii-iiii.

that precedes Camden's history, the most powerful aspect of that portrait is how it reacts against and reframes damning accounts of Mary's influence on early modern English society. The caption beneath the 1624 portrait reads, "*The most excellent Princesse Mary queene of Scotland and Dowager of France, Mother to our Soueraigne lord James of great Brittain, France and Ireland king.*" The *telos* of Camden's secular representation of Mary is that her Catholicism poses no threat to James' reign. The Tudor obsession with divine cosmology, specifically with the identification of the one true Church, was put to rest with the Elizabethan triumph of Protestantism. Though anxiety about Catholic influence was still prevalent, a fact that would be accentuated in the reign of Charles and his openly Catholic Queen, the Jacobean message was one of reassurance. The Protestant reframing of martyrological narratives affirms this message by presenting the defeat of Catholicism as historical fact. In his editorial additions to the 1610 edition of *Acts and Monuments*, Edward Buckley argues that the age of religious persecution has passed as evidenced by the failure of the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot. In the case of the Armada, England could easily have fallen into the "bloody hands of her [the Catholic church's] followers" if "God in great mercy had not prevailed."⁷⁵ Consequently, the defeat of the "savage, barbarous, and monstrous powder-treason" should "make us mindfull and truly thankfull in glorifying his name."⁷⁶

For many readers of Foxe, these events confirmed the divinity of Protestantism, yet the specter of Mary posed a threat to this fantasy of religious stability. As Camden astutely recognized, the figure of the sacrificing mother offered the culture a means of absorbing the

⁷⁵ Foxe (1610), 1027.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1027.

Scottish queen in that vision. His account of Mary's execution intimates that her death provided for both religious and national unity. Of her beheading he writes:

Out of this lamentable fortune of so great a Prince, the disposition of the diuine providence most euidently appeared (as some wise men haue obserued.) For those things which the Queenes, ELIZABETH and MARY, chiefly wished and studied to procure, by this meanes came to passe. Queene MARY (which also shee said at her death) desired nothing more earnestly, than that the diuided Kingdomes of *England* and *Scotland* might be vnited in the person of her deare sonne. And the other wished for nothing more, than that the Religion by her established in *England*, might be kept and conserued, with the safetie and securitie of the people. And that almightie God did heare their praiers, *England* to her vnexpected felicitie doth now see, and with great ioy acknowledge.⁷⁷

In Camden's revisionist history of her life, Mary's greatest desire is for a Scottish alliance with England, which would ensure her country's continued peace and prosperity. Her ruthless ambition is replaced by her motherly aspirations for James. Instead of signaling religious and political division, Mary and Elizabeth's enmity is refigured as a collaborative effort to establish both the union of England and Scotland and the triumph of Protestantism. Through her sacrificial death, Mary protects the interests of her son and those of her Scottish subjects (at least in Camden's mind). An account from 1656 suggests that the project to maternalize Mary had lasting effects. William Sanderson couples Mary's biography with James' and begins his history by asserting the importance of the Scottish queen's role in giving birth to "her only Son, *James the sixth* (a Peace-maker to all Our World)."⁷⁸ For Sanderson, Mary's longing for continued national harmony is achieved through her son, who inherits her selfless commitment to her subjects.

⁷⁷ Camden, 240.

⁷⁸ William Sanderson, *A compleat history of the lives and reigns of, Mary Queen of Scotland, and of her son and successor, James the Sixth, King of Scotland...*(1656), 7.

Scholars date the authorship of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* to 1612-4, which means that the first performances of the play nearly coincide with James' decision in 1612 to reinter his mother's body in Westminster Abbey. Mary's tomb, constructed directly across from Elizabeth's, architecturally assures her place in the history of English royalty. Like the 1624 frontispiece, the tomb draws attention to Mary's queenliness, and through its spatial congruity to Elizabeth's grave, recognizes and legitimizes her role in the Stuart dynasty. England's continued fascination with the Queen of Scots—another reason for her reburial at Westminster Abbey because it could better accommodate the crowds who flocked to her grave site—has led a few scholars to connect her story with that of Webster's Duchess. Philip D. Collington, for example, reminds us that both were remarried widows who endured the horror of captivity with unwavering fortitude. Webster's Duchess dies with the unforgettable proclamation, "I am the Duchess of Malfi still." In Mary's epistolary declaration, "I am determined to die steadfast" (18 September 1571), she asserts in the spirit of the Duchess that she is "the Queen of Scots still."⁷⁹ Both women are martyrs in the Foxean sense and though the Duchess does not perish for specifically religious reasons, the spirit of ecclesiastical persecution looms over the play in the forms of her psychopathic brothers, one of whom is, fittingly, a Cardinal. The Duchess certainly owes some of her heroic character to the women of Tudor martyrologies who faced death with unwavering fortitude. Furthermore, as we have seen with Mary, Queen of Scots, Stuart England found social and political potential in the expansion of these revered narratives. If we examine *The Duchess of Malfi* in the context of that expansion, we will see that Webster's heroine is not simply a reflection of past models of religious sacrifice. Instead, she partakes in a theatrical

⁷⁹ Philip D. Collington, "Pent-Up Emotions: Pity and Imprisonment in Renaissance Drama," in *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, Vol. 16, ed. John Pitcher (Cranbury, N.J.: Rosemont Publishing and Printing, 2003), 172. Also see Joyce E. Peterson's allegorical reading of the Duchess as Mary in *Curs'd Example: The Duchess of Malfi and Commonwealth Tragedy* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978).

exploration of England's dependency on a theology of suffering for the formation of a national identity.

From antiquity, the figure of the mother has played an important role in the martyrological tradition. Indeed, Tertullian's famous edict, "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church," posits martyrdom as a procreative process in which each generation of believers is born out of the sufferings of the preceding one. From the Apostle Paul to John Foxe to the Catholic martyrologist Robert Persons, writers viewed the spectacle of martyrdom as serving a two-fold purpose: martyrs' endurance of horrific pain leads unbelievers to conversion, and their written and spoken testimonies provide memorable and necessary instruction for all believers. The Jewish story of the Maccabean martyrs is the first account to forge a direct link between motherhood and martyrdom (c. 125 B. C. E.). For surrendering her seven sons to martyrdom, the mother of these men was consequently lauded as the mother of the Jewish people. Her sacrifice provided an imitable example for later generations, and she was praised as "mother of the nation, vindicator of the law and champion of religion."⁸⁰ The story of the Maccabean mother explores "religion as joined with nationality and law, providing a complete picture of what traditionally constituted community. Mothers served to continue that community."⁸¹ This account highlights the mother's importance as physical and spiritual procreator. In childbirth, she provides the male citizens who preserve and protect the Jewish nation. By her moral example, she reproduces the values and beliefs that define Judaism.

As patristic writers of the fourth century increasingly assigned to women the duties of spiritually advising and instructing their children, the martyred mother became symbolic of the

⁸⁰ 4 *Maccabees* 15:29.

⁸¹ Joyce E. Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 88.

sacrifices that all women make in passing on the lessons of the church. One of the earliest recorded female martyrdoms in Christian history, the story of Blandina highlights the instructional purposes of the martyrological spectacle. Martyred alongside the teenaged Ponticus, she is described as “a noble mother, having exhorted her children and sent them before, as Conquerours vnto the Kinge, pondering vvith her selfe all the punishments of her children: hastened after them ioying and triumphing at her ende.”⁸² Though Blandina defies Roman authority, she performs the highest duty of a mother in offering her “child,” Ponticus, to a greater King, a sacrifice she follows with the surrender of her own life. As the “mother of martyrs,” Blandina passed on the seed of the church through Ponticus and through the many sons and daughters who would later be likewise instructed by her example.⁸³ From Blandina onward, the martyred mother served as one of the most enduring models of heroism for Christian women.

Unlike the Maccabean mother, Blandina is not specifically memorialized as a national heroine. Nevertheless, John Bale and John Foxe identify her as a predecessor to female Marian martyrs, a significant comparison for advancing their message that England had been divinely elected as a cornerstone of Christ’s church. Bale establishes a kinship between Anne Askew and Blandina by describing Askew as the mother of English martyrs; this spiritual genealogy is fundamental to Bale and Foxe’s belief that Protestants were the true descendent of the early Christian church. Foxe recounts how martyred women followed the model of Blandina by

⁸² Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, 80.

⁸³ Smith discusses the immediate popularity of Blandina’s story, noting that she “almost instantly became the heroic model for Christian women” (103). Blandina appears to represent the first specifically Christian version of this idea, in that through her suffering and death, she becomes the mother of later generations of martyrs. For a comparative discussion of Blandina and the Maccabean’s mother, see Jan Willem Van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, eds., *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) and Stephanie Cobb, *Dying to be Men: Gender and Language in Early Christian Martyr Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). For examples of early texts discussing women’s instructive duties, see Patricia Cox Miller, ed. *Women in Early Christianity: Translations from Greek Texts* (Washington D.C. : The Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

privileging the spiritual duties of motherhood above earthly concerns. For example, in his account of Ms. Prest's martyrdom, he records that in order to forsake "carnall" things, she gave up her "mortall" children.⁸⁴ Her scaffold speech focuses the language of familial responsibility on her relationship with God; upon death she exclaims, "God is my father, God is my mother, God is my sister, my brother, my kinsman."⁸⁵ Elizabeth Peppers literally sacrificed her child to the Protestant cause: though eleven weeks pregnant, she was burned in 1556. When asked by the woman attending her why she had not made her accusers aware of her state, she answers, "[T]hey know it wel enough" but "no occasiō can stay them frō their mischeuous murderying of the saintes of the Lorde."⁸⁶ These women are important links in Foxe's construction of England's lineage of suffering: "Female Protestant martyrdom was an act of nation building, of social subject formation that depended upon a religious woman's ability to perform devotion in the face of public suffering, but in a way that masked both performance *and* suffering."⁸⁷ As we will see, the Duchess of Malfi's final attempts to retain her political authority while also attending to maternal matters are not at odds with one another, as some readers have suggested. Instead, her dual concerns contribute to the project of "nation building" that is accomplished and validated by her willingness to endure great suffering for both causes.

⁸⁴ Foxe, 2251.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 2252.

⁸⁶ Foxe (1563), 1750.

⁸⁷ Kim Solga, *Violence Against Women in Early Modern Performance: Invisible Acts* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 99.

The seventeenth century saw the emergence of a new literary genre also driven by the increased emphasis on women's roles as spiritual advisors.⁸⁸ While the mother's advice books share the martyrologies' valorization of maternal influence in spiritual matters, they also share its limitations in that the primary justification for female speech is premised on the erasure of the speaker herself. In describing the tenor of seventeenth-century mother's advice books, Marsha Urban summarizes, "All of the mother's advice books are didactic and religious—and all endorse and enact self-sacrifice."⁸⁹ In these narratives, the site of martyrdom quite literally becomes the woman's body, whether she actually dies in childbirth or endures great suffering for the production of a child. Alice Thornton specifically references the tortures suffered by martyrs in her autobiographical account of childbirth. She recounts, "I was upon the racke in bearing my childe with such equisitt torment, as if each lime weare divided from other."⁹⁰ As a result of this ordeal her "body was torne in pieces;" only the "infinitt providence of God" gave her the strength to endure.⁹¹ Mothers continued the labor of childbirth by providing spiritual deliverance for their offspring. In her enormously popular epistle, *The mothers blessing* (1616), Dorothy Leigh asks, "And can any man blame a mother (who indeed brought forth her childe with much paine) though she labour againe till Christ bee formed in them?"⁹² The language of childbirth offers a uniquely feminine perspective from which to understand the earthly struggles and eternal

⁸⁸ Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford identify sixteenth-century stories of female martyrs as important models of "female protest" for seventeenth-century women in their assertion of religious authority beyond the domestic sphere. See *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 388.

⁸⁹ Marsha Urban, *Seventeenth-Century Mother's Advice Books* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 5.

⁹⁰ Alice Thornton, *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton of East Newton, Co. York*, ed. C. Jackson (Edinburgh: Surtees Society, 1875), 95. The memoirs cover Thornton's life from 1629-1668.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁹² Dorothy Leigh, *The mothers blessing* (1616), 11.

reward of following Christ. In her advice book to her son, the Catholic Elizabeth Grymeston urges him to approach life in the same way that an expectant mother faces the dangers of childbirth, with the recognition that death provides a new birth. She writes that an assured Christian “fears not his cold sweats, nor forgoing gripes, but taketh them as throwes in child-bed, by which our soule is brought out of a lothsome body into eternall felicitie.”⁹³ Although few believers are called to martyrdom in seventeenth-century England, these mothers recognize that the continuation of God’s kingdom on earth still requires self-sacrifice.

The Duchess of Malfi investigates the latent potential for rebellion within the tradition of mother’s legacies, whose indebtedness to the martyrological tradition could also maintain some of its defiance within a secular context. Though she is unequivocally the heroine of this tragedy, the Duchess is, in many ways, a deeply ambivalent figure, particularly in comparison to the early modern model of the ideal woman. Ferdinand ridicules his sister by stressing her difference from women in religious vocations in his assertion that if he knew she was determined to take a lover, he “would have thee build / Such a room for him, as our anchorites / To holier use inhabit” (3.2.105-07).⁹⁴ Though a widow, the Duchess refuses to consecrate herself as a “figure cut in alabaster” who “Kneels at [her] husband’s tomb” (1.2.362-63). She similarly rejects her brothers’ attempts to monitor her sexuality, insisting that she will not be “cased up like a holy relic” (3.2.143). The Duchess’ unwillingness to sanctify herself as a memorial to her deceased husband sets the stage for the play’s overlapping of secular and sacred spaces, particularly in regards to marriage. The society of the play struggles to define this church sacrament outside of

⁹³ Elizabeth Grymeston, *Miscelanea Meditations Memoratives* (1604), D2v.

⁹⁴ John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* in *The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays*, ed. René Weis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 109-200. All citations from the play are from this edition; act, scene, and line numbers are provided in parentheses.

traditional religious boundaries. Although she deliberately pursues it, the Duchess expresses trepidation about the “wilderness” that is her and Antonio’s courtship (1.1.350). Alternately, her brothers insist that a secret marriage of her choosing would become “some prison,” into which she was tricked by lust rather than love (1.1.315).

The group’s reliance on spatial metaphors in describing marriage evokes the actual circumstances of the Duchess and Antonio’s secret union, which happen in a place unmatched to the ceremoniousness of the event. In contrast to the secret vows staged in *Romeo and Juliet*, no ecclesiastical presence attends this rite. Instead, the Duchess acts on the advice of “lawyers” who recognize the secular authority of “[p]er verba de presenti” (1.1.468-9) in arranging a marriage to Antonio with Cariola as the sole witness. Though initially unaware of the Duchess’ nuptial plans, Antonio displays a prescient consciousness of the need to make meaning of this “wilderness”—the unfamiliar locale (her private chambers) as well as their unorthodox coupling. He pronounces himself the “constant sanctuary” of the Duchess’ “good name” (450-1), a declaration that initiates the pair’s rhetorical conferring of sacred significance on the province of the ordinary. Removed from a sanctified space that would validate the marital union, Antonio speaks it into being within himself. The Duchess goes a step further by ordaining herself the priestess of this realm and arguing that the church must now derive its authority from the home. She charges, “We now are man and wife, and ‘tis the church / that must but echo this” (1.1.491-2). The “wilderness” of the Duchess’ bedchambers is socialized by the legalisms of marriage and sanctified by the “sacred Gordian” that binds the two lovers. Her pregnancy, which fulfills Antonio’s wish to be “the happy father of a son” (2.3.81), seems to reaffirm a heavenly blessing on their domestic union.

The intimate atmosphere of their marriage ceremony belies the political and national implications of their coupling. Beneath the Duchess and Antonio's witty exchange about her need for a husband lurks the Duchess' concern about her legacy. To draw Antonio into the conversation, she tells him "I am making my will, as 'tis fit princes should" (1.1.367). In fact, the marriage itself constitutes a version of will-making, since it serves as the channel through which the Duchess will bestow her authority on and exercise influence over successive generations. For early modern society, the remarriage of widowed royals ensured that the patrilineal system of succession would remain intact, as the new husband exercised kingly authority until the rightful heir came of age. In the Duchess' case, however, she chooses a mate whose lowly status bars him from ruling in place of her son. With this marriage, she retains possession of her political authority, and she guarantees that she will serve as the physical and social conduit through which royal power is transferred. Although Antonio urges her to give "all" to her husband (1.1.379), her choice of a socially inferior spouse provides assurance that she will not be forced to give "all" to anyone except an heir of her own production. Thus, marriage actually makes possible the matrilineal transmission of power, as she seizes for herself the duty of governing in her child's stead.

Cariola assumes a position that is both paternal and fraternal in this scene. She vows solidarity with the Duchess and promises to keep her secret "As warily as those that trade in poison / Keep poison from their children" (1.1.343-4). Early in the play, Antonio identifies the Duchess' chastity as her "noble virtue" (1.1.192), but the Duchess recognizes that her true nobility lies in her potential for achieving "[a]lmost impossible actions" through a courageous stand against her brothers that will ensure the preservation of her lineage. When Cariola

questions “Whether the spirit of greatness or of woman /Reign most in her” (1.1.496), we must admit that at least some of her “greatness” arises *from* her procreative femaleness.

The Duchess’ marriage to Antonio showcases the strength of the marital bond, but it unsettles other familial relations. Ferdinand positions himself as a kind of surrogate father to the Duchess, determined to shield his sister from the many “suitors [who] do solicit her for marriage” (1.1.245). Indeed, in his threat to murder his sister if she remarries, he wields a symbol of their father’s authority—his “poniard,” which he wants to keep from getting “rusty” (presumably with her blood) since for him, the weapon symbolizes a bond between father and son. However, the Duchess is unfazed by Ferdinand’s threat, scoffing after his exit “Shall this move me?” (1.1.332). She rejects Ferdinand’s parodic display of fatherly protection and commandeers the typically masculine language of battle for herself. Couching her determination to defy her brothers’ prohibition against remarriage in battle terms, she rails:

If all my royal kindred
Lay in my way unto this marriage,
I’d make them my low footsteps; and even now,
Even in this hate, as men in some great battles,
By apprehending danger, have achieved
Almost impossible actions (I have heard soldiers say so)
So I, through frights, and threatenings will assaw
This dangerous venture. (1.1.332-9)

Here, Webster balances the metaphysical preoccupations of the bedchamber with a real sense of the risk that the Duchess takes in marrying Antonio. In his influential study of *The Duchess of Malfi*, Frank Whigham asserts that the Cardinal and Ferdinand’s obsession with the possibility of the Duchess’ remarriage stages early modern anxiety about the maintenance of class purity through the regulation of women’s sexuality through marriage.⁹⁵ The Cardinal explicitly charges

⁹⁵ See Frank Whigham, *Seizures of the Will in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

the Duchess with polluting her family's blood when, upon learning of her illegitimate child, he asks, "Shall our blood, / The royal blood of Aragon and Castile, / Be thus attained?" (3.5.21-23). To protect the duchy, her brothers believe that they must guard the Duchess' body. However, as we can see, they are not the only characters to entertain a fantasy of border security. In the above speech, the Duchess shares her own strategy of defense against the threat that her "royal kindred" represents. Though her brothers are concerned about maintaining aristocratic purity, she undertakes this "dangerous venture" to illustrate that the transmission of power does not depend on their "royal blood," but hers.

Indeed, in the first half of the play, the Duchess' sexual potential to produce a royal heir functions as a source of authority. Through her marriage to Antonio, she usurps from her brothers the authority that will be granted to her son in the future. Like Elizabeth I, she exploits the license granted to her as a marriageable ruler whose own authority depends on her fecundity. Even before the Jacobean project to maternalize Mary, the culture recognized the political advantage that her delivery of James represented. According to an anecdote in James Melville's memoirs, Elizabeth decried her cousin's fertility: "The Queen of Scotland is lighter of a fair son, and I am but a barren stock!"⁹⁶ Though likely an untrue story, the Queen's imagined response highlights the significance of a female ruler's ability to bear children. This issue is at the center of the *Duchess of Malfi*, which relies on both the Elizabethan fascination with sexual potential and on the Jacobean acknowledgement that a female ruler, even a divinely appointed one, serves a greater spiritual purpose in becoming the mother to a king.⁹⁷ Sid Ray contends,

⁹⁶ Sir James Melville, *Memoirs* (1583), 158-9.

⁹⁷ Christine Coch notes that priests elevated Mary Tudor to the highest pentacle of womanhood by comparing her to Christ's mother when they believed her to be pregnant. Echoing the blessing of the angel from the Biblical narrative they praised her, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God" ("Mother of my Contreye": Elizabeth I and Tudor Constructions of Motherhood," in *The Mysteries of Elizabeth I: Selections from English Literary*

The Duchess of Malfi's authority rests on the fact that she has had a child: she rules in her son's stead, the regency only falling to her because her son is still too young to assume the responsibilities of the due. Explicitly, that she has carried her son's body within her own grants the Duchess her son's authority; her pregnancy, a literalization of two-bodies-in-one constructions of governance, has made her the surrogate keeper of the figurative King's two bodies.⁹⁸

In Ray's configuration of the power dynamics of succession, the matrilineal transmission of power excludes the brothers, which renders Ferdinand's bid for his father's authority ineffectual. As we discussed in the previous scene, the Duchess co-opts religious and martial rhetoric to redefine her role in the marriage negotiations; in adopting the roles of beloved, priest, soldier and wife, she occupies a space both masculine and feminine. Her pregnancy allows for a similar form a gender-bending since she derives her authority from the future (male) ruler *within* her, not the patriarchs surrounding her.

With fatherhood made impotent, Ferdinand becomes aligned with a demonic version of motherhood, informed by his association with witchcraft and his manipulation of Bosola.⁹⁹ After he shares his plan for Bosola to infiltrate the court, his would-be spy responds, "It seems you would create me / One of your familiars" (1.1.249-50). When Ferdinand questions what Bosola means by a familiar, he explains that it is "a very quaint invisible devil, in flesh: An intelligencer" (1.1.251-2). Ferdinand worries that his sister's "bastards" (4.1.36) will threaten

Renaissance, ed. Kirby Farrell and Kathleen M. Swaim [Cambridge: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003], 139). As Coch illustrates, this issue was equally important to Protestant subjects: worried about Elizabeth's unwillingness to choose a suitor, Parliament reminded her that childbirth was one of God's "principall benedictions" (138).

⁹⁸ Sid Ray, "'So troubled with the mother': The Politics of Pregnancy in *The Duchess of Malfi*," in *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England*, ed. Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 19.

⁹⁹ Diana Purkiss has shown that as fears about actual witchcraft waned, the witch increasingly became a metaphor for nefarious activities such as spying or secret plotting. For example, she notes that during the Civil War, Denzil Holles charged Oliver Cromwell and his "fellow witches" with carrying out secret plots to overthrow the government. See "Desire and Its Deformities: Fantasies of Witchcraft in the English Civil War" in *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* (1997): 103-32.

the social order when, in fact, fiendish agents of his own creation—first Bosola, then the macabre wax figures that he tortures her with, and finally, the executioners he commissions to strangle her—lead to the “dark deed” that stains this society (4.2.327). But as Bosola observes, “Sometimes the devil doth preach,” which explains Ferdinand’s accusations of witchcraft against his sister. When the Duchess defies her brothers’ wish that she marry, Ferdinand warns her not to be “cunning” since women “whose faces do belie their hearts are witches” who “give the devil suck” (1.1.299-302).¹⁰⁰ Moreover, whereas the Duchess insists that private devotion should validate her marriage to Antonio, her brother dismisses it as “witchcraft...in her rank blood” (3.1.78). Admittedly, like Ferdinand, the Duchess excels in plotting to achieve her own ends. The important difference lies in their response to the unraveling of their plans. When Ferdinand confronts his powerlessness over his sister, he is swept away by a rage that “carries [him], / As men conveyed by witches, through the air / On violent whirlwinds” (2.5.49-51). On the other hand, the Duchess recognizes that whatever empowerment is available to her through the liminal space of her sexuality, its potential is limited.¹⁰¹ From prison, at the point of certain defeat, she rescripts her legacy again.

If not specifically Mary Stuart, Webster must have reflected on the legacies of other mothers in portraying the dying Duchess, who performs the greatest act of maternal sacrifice in

¹⁰⁰ As numerous scholars have shown, widows across Europe and beyond were frequently associated with witchcraft because of their age and economic status. Additionally, as sexually experienced unmarried women, they eluded easy categorization particularly if, like the Duchess, they refused to remain chaste to their husband’s memory. See, for example, Pompa Banerjee, *Burning Women: Widows, Witches, and Early Modern European Travelers in India* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Alison Rowlands, “Witchcraft and Old Women in Early Modern Germany,” *Past & Present* 173.1 (2001): 50-89; and Edward Bever, “Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community,” *Journal of Social History* (June 2002): 955-88. Though he relies on it for linguistic effect, Webster subverts the widow/witch association in the Duchess’ case by introducing the old lady whose “shop of witchcraft” (2.1.32) better represents old superstitions about witches. The Duchess and her brothers practice witchcraft as Purkiss describes it through their scheming and conversion of human “familiar” to do their bidding.

¹⁰¹ Anxiety about Elizabeth I’s barrenness, for example, illustrates that because early modern “[s]ociety placed so much weight on female chastity, on one hand, and childbearing on the other, that the maternal body became a sort of book in which a women’s moral status could be read” (Coch, 139).

her concern for her children prior to her death. For most of the play, the children assume a largely symbolic presence as material evidence of the Duchess' defiance of her brothers in marrying Antonio. News from the delivery room shifts our perception, as we discover that the children are not mere by-products of her perceived act of heroism but the source from which she will derive her ultimate greatness. When Delio inquires into the progress of the Duchess' delivery, Antonio responds, "She's exposed / Unto the worst of torture, pain and fear" (2.2.64-5). Although the pain of childbirth is unavoidable, a later scene re-confirms her readiness to sacrifice her life for her children, as she begs Antonio to flee with their eldest son and vows to save their youngest children from her brother, "the tiger" (3.5.86). As in her attendance of the couple's marital ceremony, Cariola serves an important function as witness to the events of the birthing chamber; as authoritative witness to both, she ensures the propriety of the child. When she delivers the news to Antonio, we are reminded that she alone can confirm its legitimacy; she informs him, "Sir, you are the happy father of a son; / Your wife commends him to you" (2.2.81). The Duchess described her marriage as a "dangerous venture," but this scene better showcases her fearlessness. In her difficult delivery, we glimpse the fortitude of character that has defined her heroism for generations of theatergoers.

Theodora Jankowski argues that Webster's "final representation" of the Duchess undermines her significance as a political figure by characterizing her "not as ruler, but as idealized suffering wife/mother/woman."¹⁰² Jankowski fails to historicize the Duchess' legacy by insisting that she represents a romanticized version of femininity. Instead, the Duchess' concern for her children in her final moments ensures the continuation of her political self through uniquely feminine means. The death scene is wonderfully grounded in the minutiae of

¹⁰² Theodora Jankowski, *Women in Power in Early Modern England* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 178-79.

domestic life, which enhances our sense that the Duchess has arrived at the role she was meant to inhabit. Ferdinand's accusations of licentiousness and bastardry have required her to "play a part...against [her] will" (4.1.85) but she seizes control of his "tedious theater" in staging her death. When Bosola visits her cell as the tomb maker, his parodic description of royal tombs suggests that the Duchess will be laid to rest in similar fashion. He jests:

Princes' images on their tombs do no lie, as they were wont, seeming to pray up to heaven, but with their hands under their cheeks, as if they died of the tooth-ache. They are not carvd with their eyes fixed upon the stars, but as their minds were wholly bent upon the world, the selfsame way they seem to turn their faces (4.2.148-53).

Though of royal blood, this is not the legacy that the Duchess will assert; her poignant death highlights her influence as a mother rather than a noblewoman. Far from Bosola's mocking of the self-involved ruler, the dying Duchess instead resembles an early modern maternal monument as described by Chris Laoutaris: "Forever frozen in the dynamic act of nurturing, the motherly effigy 'spoke' of the importance of the deceased's private 'domestical' virtue. Sharing the public space it could visibly stake a claim for the shaping influence of maternity in the cultivation of civic virtue, re-inscribing the domestic sphere as the training-ground of life."¹⁰³ In bequeathing her legacy to her maid Cariola, the Duchess begins, "In my last will I have not much to give" (4.2.192). Thus, what she decrees are instructions for the care of her children, though not in their inheritance of her wealth or position, but in their most basic needs in that moment. She requests of her loyal servant, "I pray thee look thou giv'st my little boy / Some syrup for his

¹⁰³ Chris Laoutaris, "Speaking Stones: Memory and Maternity in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*," in *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England*, ed. Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 166. Also see Patricia Phillippy on women's tombs in *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

cold, and let the girl / Say her prayers, ere she sleep” (4.2.195-7).¹⁰⁴ Through her languishing concern for her children she achieves the greatest legacy that could be ascribed to an early modern mother. In Stephen Denison’s *The Monument or Tomb-stone* (1620), he praises Elizabeth Juxon as a singular model of maternal devotion because even as she lay dying, she found breath “to speak divinely, to instruct her servants and children.”¹⁰⁵ Like Juxon, the Duchess worries for the material care of her children, while displaying no such concern for herself.

When Bosola asks, “Doth not death fright you?” (4.2.202), the Duchess’ reply is issued in the same resolute spirit as her famous proclamation of autonomy. She asks, “Who would be afraid on’t, / Knowing to meet such excellent company / In th’other world?” (4.2.202-4). Much earlier in the play, in response to Ferdinand’s threats to kill her because of her marriage to Antonio, the Duchess declares, “For know, whether I am doomed to live or die, I can do both like a prince” (3.2.70-71). In this scene, we see the completion of that oath. The Duchess accomplishes her earthly duties as the physical and spiritual caretaker of her children, which by extension provides a means of fulfilling her princely obligations to the duchy. By protecting her son, the rightful heir, she hopes to also protect her subjects from the corrupt reign that her brothers would surely represent. With the assurance that her commitment will be rewarded in the afterlife, the Duchess dies with the nobility of a prince. Additionally, in her declaration, “I

¹⁰⁴ Reina Green argues that the Duchess “dies because she would rather listen to Antonio and Bosola than to her brothers” (469) and reads this scene as a counterpart to Antonio’s “sentimental...desire for fatherhood” (467) in imagining his delight at fathering a “prattling” child (1.2.321-2). See “‘Ears Prejucate’ in *Mariam* and *Duchess of Malfi*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 43.2, Tudor and Stuart Drama (Spring 2003): 459-74. While I agree with Green’s assertion that the ideal wife was expected to echo, and thereby validate, her husband’s opinions, I would argue that in this scene, we must read the Duchess primarily as a mother rather than a wife. In her care for her children’s physical and spiritual health, she, perhaps, echoes the patriarchal sentiments expected of her, but they allow her to imagine a vision of heroism that is uniquely feminine.

¹⁰⁵ Stephen Denison, *The Monument or Tomb-Stone: Or a sermon preached...at the funeral of Mrs. Elizabeth Juxon...*(London: 1620), 119.

am the Duchess of Malfi still” (4.2.132), she claims Malfi itself as a reflection of her royal identity. James’ accession to the English throne united the kingdoms of England and Scotland, which led to a debate about what this new nation should be called. In a speech before Parliament on April 25, 1604, a Mr. Percyvall offered a poignant defense that “the Name of our Mother England to be kept.” He continued, “Our desire [is] natural and honorable—she hath nurst, bred, and brought us up to be men.”¹⁰⁶ In a scene focused largely on maternal concerns, the Duchess’ avowal that she remains the ruler of Malfi requires readers to consider how she intertwines her identity as a female ruler with that of the play’s motherland. The Duchess literally nurses the realm’s next ruler; she shares with Percyvall’s England the task of molding the future identity of the nation. By aligning herself with Malfi, the Duchess insists that her legacy will survive through the continued existence of her territory. As a former ruler, she is fundamental to its history, and as a royal mother, she is a reflection of the maternal kinship between Malfi and its subjects. In her posture of death, two facets of the Duchess’ identity coalesce through their reliance on the affective properties of dying well: she posits the mother’s legacy as a sacrifice of self essential to social, sacred, and national identity.

Charles R. Forker conjectures that John Webster may have personally witnessed the martyrdom of a Catholic recusant in 1612.¹⁰⁷ The first Protestant martyr under the reign of Mary I, John Roger’s (1500?-1555), was executed in the playwright’s hometown of Smithfield. The last martyrdom at this historic site was Bartholomew Legate, whose burning was attended by a large audience that could very well have included Webster. Like the martyrologies that were

¹⁰⁶ Ctd. in Claire McEachern, *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590-1612* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 141.

¹⁰⁷ Charles R. Forker, *Skull Beneath the Skin: The Achievement of John Webster* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 16.

certainly familiar to him, the dramatist appeals to the pathos of death in fashioning his Duchess. However, the play concludes with a final indication that her maternal influence extends far beyond the emotional response that her death evokes. Its final lines shift our focus from the martyred mother to the mythological figure of Lady Justice. While not traditionally conceived of as a maternal figure, early moderners certainly associated Justice with the preservation of civil and moral values. A fresco by Italian Renaissance artist Ambrogio Lorenzetti describes Justice's harmonious rule with this caption: "This holy virtue [of Justice] where she rules, induces to unity the many souls [of the citizens], and they, gathered together for such a purpose, make the Common Good their Lord, and he, in order to govern his state, chooses never to turn his eyes from the resplendent faces of the Virtues who sit around him."¹⁰⁸ Christine de Pizan relies on Lady Justice to populate her city with women whom God has given "(just as He has done with men) the constancy and strength to suffer horrible martyrdom for His holy law, women who are crowned in glory and whose fair lives serve as excellent examples for every woman above all other wisdom."¹⁰⁹ Possibly most familiar to Webster's audience, Edward Buckley's additions to the Jacobean edition of *Acts and Monuments* are followed by a woodcut of Blind Justice who stands on a podium surrounded by serious Protestant clergymen on one side and Catholic gluttons, laden with jewels and images, on the other. Lady Justice is blindfolded, and she holds a sword and a pair of scales that are heavily tipped in the direction of the Protestants. In traditional representations, the Lady's blindfold represents her impartiality in meting out legal verdicts. However, by placing her likeness in a religious context, specifically within Foxe's vision of the triumph of Protestantism, Lady Justice's concern is not legal truth, the fallibility of which leads

¹⁰⁸ John T. Paolett and Gary M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2005), 117.

¹⁰⁹ Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (New York: Persea Books, 1982), III.3.1.

to the persecution of Christ's disciples, but spiritual truth, which can only be achieved through the sword of the Spirit, God's word. Her blindness to the things of this world, which in this picture are identifiers of Catholic corruption, ensures that she will recognize the true church, regardless of the pressures of secular governments and the allure of worldly rewards.

The 1610 editor of Foxe perceived of Lady Justice's sword as primarily metaphoric. The legacy of Elizabeth I was the peaceable kingdom that she had passed down to James. The most important sword wielded by Jacobean England was the English Bible, which would become one of the most enduring symbols of James' reign. However, the next generation of Foxe's editors would perceive the need for a call to arms that was not merely symbolic, a shift hinted at in *The Duchess of Malfi*. In this play, Webster adopts the figure of Lady Justice as an emblem of the reverberating affects of the Duchess' suffering, just as the illustration from *Acts and Monuments* symbolizes the preservation of England's Protestant identity through its martyrological history. Bosola realizes that much can be accomplished from a position of seeming disempowerment; he cautions, "The weakest arm is strong enough that strikes / With the sword of justice" (5.2.339-40). In Webster's depiction of the mythical blindfolded Lady, the treachery of Ferdinand and the Cardinal has upset the balance of her scales. Bosola charges, "[W]hen thou killed'st thy sister, / Thou took'st from Justice her most equal balance, / And left her naught but her sword"(5.5.39-40). In the imagination of this playwright, Lady Justice becomes an executrix of maternal authority by symbolically brandishing her weapon in defense of the Duchess' rightful heir. Bosola prophesies that violence will be necessary to repair the damage wrought by the brothers' torture and murder of the Duchess, and indeed, the Duchess' son is restored only by "force" (5.5.110).

A similar premonition of impending conflict must have lurked in the minds of early moderns, even as they relied on maternal fictions to quell certain anxieties. The undercurrent of martyrological rhetoric in relation to maternal suffering not only situates women's travail in a larger tradition of sacrifice, it also sublimates the real influence that mothers exercise over religious or political agenda. Beneath the benign portrait of Mary as the misled, self-sacrificing mother of James, lies the threat that her ambition and religious convictions represented. As England faced a fracturing of religious loyalties that would eventually lead to Civil War, the Jacobean version of maternity would progressively give way to Lady Justice and her sword.

Preserving the Church and State through 'Safe Deliverie'

Much more explicitly than *The Duchess of Malfi*, Thomas Drue's *The Duchess of Suffolk* (1624) intermingles the languages of motherhood and martyrdom, even staging a dramatic slight-of-hand in which one becomes a variant of the other. Set in the reign of Mary Tudor, this play is a fantastic dramatization of Katherine of Willoughby's flight from England to escape the murderous clutches of Foxe's supervillain, Bishop Bonner. Like Webster's *Duchess*, the *Duchess of Suffolk* chooses a mate who is considered socially inferior, though her decision to marry her steward Bertie is not as hotly contested as *Malfi's* matrimonial union with Antonio. Albert Tricomi argues that by pairing the *Duchess's* return to England with Elizabeth I's accession, the play "identifies the *Duchess's* trials with those of Elizabeth and by metonymic transposition [both ascend from prison to throne] represents England's Protestant heritage as maternal, heroic, and productive."¹¹⁰ While I agree with Tricomi that the *Duchess* possesses the maternal attributes that Elizabeth highlights in her rhetorical self-presentation as mother of England, his emphasis on metaphorical mothering is too narrow. We must supplement his

¹¹⁰ Albert H. Tricomi, *Reading Tudor-Stuart Texts Through Cultural Historicism* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 152.

reading of the symbolic capital of motherhood with attention to the play's concurrent focus on the physical and material aspects of childbirth and mothering. In *The Duchess of Malfi*, Webster intermixes the political and the familial, and authorizes the Duchess' defiance by dramatizing her death as an act of maternal and political sacrifice. In *The Duchess of Suffolk*, Foxe's monumental history of the persecuted Church serves as a background to the Duchess' quest to protect her children and husband. Adhering to the tradition of great martyrs, the Duchess ensures the preservation of the true church by displaying courage in the face of death. *The Duchess of Suffolk* literalizes the image of the martyr's blood as ecclesiastical seed by suggesting that the child for whom the Duchess risks her life will be fundamental to the preservation of Protestantism and, by extension, England's future prosperity. Unlike Webster, Drue finds in the languages of persecution and pregnancy a means of granting his Duchess "safe deliuey," a conclusion befitting the play's narrative threads of both persecution and pregnancy, (Act 4).¹¹¹

Drue immediately carves out a place for his play within the Foxean tradition of martyrologies by having the great church historian himself usher the audience into the world of the theater. The fictional Foxe invites playgoers to join the Duchess and "attend her Graces seruice" as she goes abroad to flee religious persecution (Act 1). This introduction establishes the audience as members of the Duchess' entourage, privy not only to that which is unknown to Bonner—the Duchess' whereabouts on the Continent—but also present for the deeply private moments of her marriage and childbirth. For a seventeenth-century audience, the presence of Foxe would also have called up their prior knowledge of the historic Duchess' celebrated escape; thus, from its opening lines, viewers would recognize Katherine as a heroic martyr-figure. Still,

¹¹¹ Thomas Drue, *The Duchess of Suffolk*, 1624. All citations are from this edition; act numbers are provided in parentheses. For Foxe's account of the Duchess' grand adventure and escape, see *Acts and Monuments* (1570), 2283-6.

Drue supplements this imagistic template with domestic imagery much more common to the pages of mother's advice books than to Foxe's tome.

The play's first articulation of heroism relies on the vocabulary of motherhood. In describing the men who would be worthy to marry the widowed Duchess, Bertie imagines that such a man would be birthed in "honors wombe" and "from her would sucke his Nutriment of life" (Act 1). This man's virtue would arise from his "heroicke birth" and nourishment at the breast of Mother Honor (Act 1). Bertie's fantasy of a man who inherits intangible characteristics from an ideological nurse mother extends the early modern belief that the nature of a nursing woman can be transmitted to an infant through her breast milk.¹¹² The Duchess deems Bertie to be the honorable man that he has described. Bertie possesses only a "low foundation," but his union with the Duchess, herself a figure of "honorable love," will allow him to bestow the virtue of his metaphoric mother Honor on his heirs. Northumberland blesses the marriage with this sentiment, "Wishing of heauen to smile vpon your loues, / That from them may grow vp such gallant spirits / As may renoune this land with honor'd merits" (Act 1).

Drue couples Bertie's social advancement with the historic occasion of Mary Tudor's ascension to the English throne. Bonner rejoices that Mary's preferment of him as Lord of London will pave that way for revenge on his enemies, "Ridley and the rest," a group that

¹¹² For more extensive discussions of early modern beliefs about nursing and how the drama of the period investigates and exploits the culture's anxiety about wet nurses, see Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993); Valerie Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles, and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986); and Janet Adelman, "'Born of Woman': Fantasies of Maternal Power in *Macbeth*," in *Shakespearean Tragedy and Gender*, ed. Shirley Nelson Garner and Madelon Sprengnether (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1996). More recent articles that build on the scholarship of these earlier critics include Donna C. Woodford, "Nursing and Influence in *Pandosto* and *The Winter's Tale*," in *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England*, ed. Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 183-95 and Rachel Trubowitz, "'But Blood Whitened': Nursing Mothers and Others in Early Modern Britain," in *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 82-101.

includes the Duchess (Act 1). Naively believing that Mary would wish her no harm “in remembrance of our mothers lous,” the Duchess pledges fidelity to the new Queen, but is shocked to find that the Queen has entrusted Bonner with the task of forcibly converting her to Catholicism (Act 2). The mother of the actual Duchess of Suffolk was Lady Maria Willoughby, a lady of Catherine of Aragon’s court who had accompanied her from her native Spain. Maria Willoughby nursed Catherine during her fatal illness, and “court observers described her as a favorite of the queen.”¹¹³ The friendship of the women was such that the Queen served as godmother to Katherine. An even greater indication of Mary’s treachery emerges when Bertie and the Duchess learn that Princess Elizabeth has been locked in the Tower. In his poetic description of the birth of a worthy man, Bertie judges the subject of his fictive illustration as honorable because he carries on the legacy passed to him through a “heroicke birth.” According to his formula, Mary sullies her maternal inheritance by turning against the communal sisterhood forged by Maria Willoughby and Katherine Parr and in ignoring her familial obligation to her half-sister Elizabeth.

The interspersing of historically significant and domestically focused scenes serves as an important motif throughout the play, suggesting that the private and public spheres are not easily separated. The play’s narrative of nation formation starts on the simplest level, with the Duchess’ soothing of her child. In the melodramatic tale of her escape from England, the Duchess and her child are almost discovered by Bonner’s guards. They slip away undetected because the infant responded to the Duchess’ coaching. She rejoices, “Nature has taught the Child obedience, / Thou hast bin humble to the mothers wish, / Oh let me kisse these dutious lips

¹¹³ Melissa Franklin Harkrider, *Women, Reform and Community in Early Modern England: Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, and Lincolnshire’s Godly Aristocracy, 1519-1580* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2008), 30.

of thine, / that would not kill thy mother with a cry” (Act 2). With the infant child as her only companion, the Duchess laments their poor fortune and admits that her high social estate has not prepared her for her forced pilgrimage. The Duchess’ description of how her “tired feet” are unaccustomed to walking such distances leads her to the realization that her child may be forced to follow in her doomed footsteps. “Ile carry thee / In sorrowes armes to welcome misery, / Custome must steele thy youth with pinching want, / That thy great birth, in age may beare with scant” (Act 3). Just as a child learns to walk with the help of a parent, she vows to train her son in this “pilgrimage of life,” as Bertie later calls the coming-of-age process.

Drue imbeds a scene of intense physical suffering within the persecutory threat that looms over the rest of the play. The heavily pregnant Duchess realizes that she will be forced to give birth in the wilderness, a prospect as potentially dangerous as the Catholic guards that she so narrowly avoided. Her pain and fear are intensified by the conditions in which she labors. She cries, “Sicke I am, heaven knows, / Ready to die, with these my pinching throwes, / It raines, and hailes, and snowes, and blowes at once, / Where Bertie may we hide vs from this storme” (Act 3). Despite Bonner’s deadly intentions, the Duchess’ true act of heroism involves the safe delivery not of herself, but of her child. Desperate for an update on his wife’s condition, Bertie hints at the treacheries of childbirth saying, “the distressed Dutch[ess] / In Child-bed torment is a fresh alarum / Of new sprung care, I cannot be at quiet, / Vntill her safe deliuey be past” (Act 4). Fittingly, this devout Protestant woman finds refuge from the storm in “A wide church-Porch” (Act 3) where she gives birth to “a goodly Boy...in whom already doth appeare, / These signes of Courage, to revenge your wrongs” (Act 4). In Drue’s rendering, the Duchess’ legacy is not simply that she will instruct her son in the teachings of the true church, but in the inherent courageousness that she has transferred to her offspring. One of the most salient articulations of

the connection between children and parents comes in the announcement of the baby's birth: "But by his deeds hereafter time may prooue, / None more adventured for his Countreys love" (Act 4). A witness to the perils of both, Sands imagines that the valor of the Duchess in the dangers of childbirth and religious persecution will manifest itself with national consequences in the person of her son.

Just after the Duchess gives birth, the group gets word that Bonner's men are near. Unable to flee on foot, she and the infant are spirited away in a funeral wagon. On the heels of the delivery scene, this deathly vehicle would certainly have reminded early modern audiences of the perils of childbirth, wherein the womb could easily become a tomb for both mother and child. The portent of death in the escape scene looms over the subsequent discussion between Stephen Gardiner and Bonner about a dream that Gardiner had.¹¹⁴ He describes it thus: "I dreamt my Lord, that Bertie and the Dutches / Were boh advanc't vpon a regall throne / And had their temples wreath'd with glittering gold" (Act 4). The dream readily invites three possible interpretations: that Bertie and the Duchess will rise to actual positions of power bestowed by England's enthroned monarch; that they will be granted the heavenly crown of martyrdom; or, as Bonner fantasizes, that the throne is the "stage of horrid death" (Act 4), and the couple will perish in a dramatic scene that showcases the glittering power of the Catholic state. For the majority of Foxe's martyrs, the heavenly crown represents the highest glory achievable. However, Drue has the gift of historical hindsight, and when he turned to Foxe for a heroine of

¹¹⁴ Gardiner was released from the Tower at Mary I's edict and named Lord Chancellor. His role in the Marian persecutions was much more indirect than Bonner's, and some accounts suggest that no heretics were executed in his diocese until after his death.

his play, he sought a martyr representative of the triumphant Protestant church, a “Phenix” from “ashes come” (Act 5).¹¹⁵

With immediate dangers of childbirth past, the Duchess emerges from the hearse regenerated: “And I that whilom was exceeding weake, / Through my hard travail in this infants birth, / Am now growne strong vpon necessity” (Act 4). If we momentarily return to *The Duchess of Malfi*, we can better understand how the dramatic coupling of Suffolk’s delivery and Gardiner’s dream assert motherhood as a venerable basis for both church and state. After the Duchess bids farewell to Antonio and her oldest son before their attempted escape to Milan, she grieves, “My laurel is withered” (3.5.93). Based on the superstition that a king’s death caused laurels to wither, Weis annotates this line as the Duchess’ lamentation that she has lost her familial king, her husband.¹¹⁶ Weis’ logic can be extended further, because with the departure of the Duchess’ eldest son, the entire province loses their future ruler. In *The Duchess of Suffolk*, the crown imagery certainly evokes the religious valences of the Duchess’ suffering, yet Drue asserts the secular significance of this monarchical symbol as well. The Duchess’ fortitude assures that the “glittering gold” of her son’s future, passed down from her and her husband, will not wither before its time.

To measure the effects of the rhetorical interplay of mothering and martyring, we return to the royal mother with whom we began. Mary Stuart’s problematic association with Catholicism required a secular means of scripting her martyrdom, and the model of piety lauded in mothers’ writings provided a means of doing so. While reading Mary’s death as a sacrifice

¹¹⁵ The Duchess uses the figure of the Phoenix in describing the restoration of Elizabeth, marveling that God “[f]rom the intangling snares of blood and death, / [Had] chang’d her prison, to a royall Throne” (Act 5). The analogy also applies to the Duchess, who emerged from the funeral hearse in a symbolic resurrection and who escaped the snares of Mary’s officials to likewise “enlighten Christendome” (Act 5).

¹¹⁶ Weis, 396 n. 93.

that paved her son's way to the throne does not completely neutralize the more scandalous aspects of her life story, it at least creates a fantasy of legitimacy for James. However, if we flip this logic on its head, we find that entrenched assumptions about motherhood are precisely what made Mary dangerous to James' rule. Regardless of the fact that James had almost no contact with Mary beyond infancy, Protestants worried that the king-in-waiting would return to the religious teachings of his mother. Like *The Duchess of Suffolk's* Bertie, James could inherit the maternal "virtues" of his mother. While critics have read Elizabeth's rhetorical adoption of James in the period after his mother's execution as her attempt to repair the break in matrilineal succession, it simultaneously empowers her to offer maternal instruction, and thereby assert influence beyond her own reign into that of her successor. Thus, James' detractors were right in worrying that he would inherit the religious heritage of his mother, though Elizabeth's crafty self-appointment as James' surrogate mother ensured that the legacy imparted to him would be Protestant.

Mary Stuart was successively transformed from an ambitious traitor to a venerable martyr to a self-effacing mother. This political climate required that Webster recognize the skillful maneuverings of James' adopted mother Elizabeth while also elevating the figure of the mother whose self-effacement paves the way for the rightful male heir. The Duchess wages a symbolic war in seeking to consecrate her marriage and her son's royalty, though not unlike the writers of mother's advice books, she surrenders her autonomy for the advancement of her children. Both Malfi and Suffolk recast the birthing experience as a site of spiritual and patriotic sacrifice, the potential horrors of which must have informed Erasmus' declaration, "There's not a single man who, if he once experienced childbirth, would not prefer standing in a battle line ten times

over.”¹¹⁷ The difference between the maternal portraits of the two Duchesses is that Webster remains entrapped by the past, unable to preserve the procreative potential of a Virgin Queen and unwilling to explore a version of maternal influence that was not otherwise safely idealized. Drue’s Duchess offers Stuart audiences a means of recreating the sense of sacrificial heroism that defined the Marian martyrs without enshrining those narratives as remnants of a lost age but as the foundation for an uncertain future. The Duchess of Suffolk is the ideal seventeenth-century religious heroine because through her, Drue posits a new form of martyrdom predicated not on the confirmation of the true church but on the fortitude still necessary for that church to endure.

Maternal Commander in Chief

Finally, lest we conclude that oscillating fears and fantasies of maternal influence were solely contained in the writings of propagandists and playwrights, we turn briefly to another rebellious mother in seventeenth-century England, Lady Brilliana Harley. Raymond A. Anselment has astutely argued that the extensive collection of Lady Harley’s letters to her son, begun while he was a student at Oxford and ending during his employment as a corporal in the Civil War, can be connected to the tradition of mother’s advice books.¹¹⁸ Indeed, Brilliana returns frequently to the commonplaces of mothers’ legacies, as in her persistent sermonizing to

¹¹⁷ Desiderius Erasmus, “The New Mother,” in *Colloquies, Collected Works of Erasmus* Vol. 39-40, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 594. This statement is issued by Fabuella, the female speaker of Erasmus’ dialogue who elaborates, “Battle doesn’t always reach the stage of hand-to-hand fighting,” whereas women giving birth “must engage death at close quarters” (594).

¹¹⁸ See Raymond A. Anselment, “Katherine Paston and Brilliana Harley: Maternal Letters and the Genre of Mother’s Advice,” *Studies in Philology* 101.4 (Autumn 2004): 431-53. The Harleys were steadfast supporters of parliamentary religious reform, which exposed them to personal and financial hardships even before the Civil War. Several times in her early letters, Brilliana comments on the hostility expressed towards her family and servants by their neighbors. Jacqueline Eales analyzes the correspondence of the Harley family in this local context as well as national conflicts about religious reform that led up to the Civil War. See *Puritans and Roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Edward, whom she affectionately calls Ned.¹¹⁹ In one of her earliest missives, she counsels, “I beseech the Lord to bless you with those choys blessings of his Spirit, which none but his deare ellect are partakers of; that so you may taste the sweetness in Gods saruis which indeed is in it; but the men of this world cannot perseue it.”¹²⁰ In addition to her desire that Ned have a “healthfull soule,” Brilliana worries about his physical wellness. In a letter that recalls the Duchess of Malfi’s request for cough syrup for her son, Brilliana concludes, “I have sent you some juce of licorich, which you may keepe to make vse of, if you should have a coold” (9).

More imperative is how Brilliana’s maternal presence underpins the frequently political tenor of her writings. National instability literally intrudes on the private epistolary exchange in the form of opposition troops whom she fears will intercept the missives. News about Ned’s siblings and father is interspersed with apprehension about how the neighbors will treat their family, whose convictions have marked them a “dispised company” (176). She places the family’s individual struggles into a cosmological framework in which present strife bears witness to the greater struggle of the Church in the world. With a sense of foreboding she advises Ned, “[W]e must remember the warneing, which our Saviour has giuen usm when he had toold his decipels that there must be warse and rumors of wars...greate trubells and wars must be, both to purg his church of ipocrits, and that his enemies at the last may be vtterly destroyed” (10). Later she again warns that a time of divine reckoning “is at hande. Le vs be found morners, that so we

¹¹⁹ Anselment connects the didactic tone of Brilliana’s letters to Betty S. Travitsky’s conception of “the new mother” (Anselment 431). Travitsky argues that the rise of humanism increased women’s individual pursuits of religious and intellectual development. At the same time, mothers were granted more authority in the instruction of their children; thus, the rise of mothers’ advice books is both a product of and reflective of this increased responsibility and learning. For Travitsky’s argument about this new conception of motherhood see “The New Mother of the English Renaissance: Her Writings on Motherhood,” in *The Lost Tradition: Mothers and Daughters in Literature*, ed. Cathy N. Davidson and E.M. Broner (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1980), 33-43.

¹²⁰ Brilliana Harley, *The Letters of The Lady Brilliana Harley, Wife of Sir Robert Harley, of Brampton Bryan, Knight of the Bath*, ed. Thomas Taylor Lewis, Camden Society, vol. 58 (London, 1854), 9. All citations from Harley’s letters are from this edition; hereafter, page numbers are provided in parentheses.

may be marked” (29). This expansive view of current events allows her to collapse the political into the spiritual and familial, which empowers her to advise her son on all three. She urges him, “I hope you and myself will remember for whous caus your father and we are hated. It is for the caus of our God.” (179). Her worldview privileges God and family above the state.

When actual warfare breaks out, and Ned joins combat as a corporal, Brilliana not only encourages her son in the “impoyment” that God had “put into [his] heart,” she imagines that by sending her son into battle, it is as though she, too, has been charged to take up arms. She says, “[M]y dear Ned, you may be confident my very soule goos alonge with you; and becaus I cannot be with you myselfe, I haue sent you one, to be of your troop, and have furnished him with a hors” (199). Not long after Brilliana laments her inability to join her son on the battlefield, she has the opportunity to join the fight on the home front. On Wednesday, July 26, Prince Rupert and Lord Hertford’s Western Army surrounded Brampton Castle where Brilliana resided in the company of her servants and younger children.¹²¹ Drawing on the same sense of familial obligation that she displays in her advice to Ned, Brilliana settles in “by Gods healp to stand it out” (187).

In the letters of Brilliana Harley, we see the ideological conception of the mother’s body as a sacred space extended to the material world of the home. Because she is a mother, her culture requires that she sacrifice herself to the spiritual and physical needs of her husband and children. We have seen that this influence necessarily extends to the world outside, as in Brilliana’s admonishments to her son in his fight for God and country. However, her conviction that the domestic realm is the spiritual basis for secular society also authorizes her, in the guise

¹²¹ For a detailed account of the military occupation of Brampton Bryan, particularly as it involves Brilliana Harley, see Alison Plowden, *Women All on Fire: The Women of the English Civil War* (Stroud, Gloucester: Sutton Publishing, 1998) and Eales’ previously mentioned *Puritans and Roundheads*.

of performing her maternal duties, to rebel against threats to that foundation. When Captain Priam Davies praises Brilliana in his account of the seven-week siege, he speaks not of suffering but of action: “This noble lady who commanded in chief, I may truly say with such a masculine bravery, both for religion, resolution, wisdom, and warlike policy, that her equal I never yet saw.”¹²² Brilliana’s steadfastness in protecting her home focuses on this mother’s commitment to duty rather than just her willingness to die. She personifies William Gouge’s conviction that sacrifice demands not passivity but activity: “There is much comfort in breathing out our last breath in Gods work. It is a kind of Martyrdome.”¹²³

¹²² Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath* Vol. 1, Priam Davies’ narrative (London, 1904), 27.

¹²³ William Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes: Plague, Famine, Sword* (London 1631), 217.

2. PRINCES AND PRIMATES: THE PASSIVE SELF AND SUBJECTHOOD

In aspiring to the ranks of the spiritual greats, Robert Glover was perhaps surprised to find that he had more in common with Aesop's rooster than the heroes of Scripture. Glover was arrested in 1555 on charges of heresy and was burned at the stake in September of that year.¹²⁴ John Foxe's first edition of *Acts and Monuments* (1563) includes a letter from Glover to his wife, Mary, in which he describes his trial and his determination to bear persecution gracefully. With a didacticism that pervades the entire missive, Glover instructs his wife:

Haue now before your eyes the example of them, whiche with inuincible courage dyed in Christes quarrel, fightyng valiantly against theyr enemies: suche as among the olde champions were Stephan, Paule, Daniell, the three Hebrues in the furnace, and suche as in our later dayes were, Anne Asue, Saunders, and Bradford, with many other of that bande, and most faithfull Martyrs of Christe.¹²⁵

Glover compares the "kingdome of heuen" to "a precious iewell" for which he is willing to give up everything in the model of the disciples who forsook their homes and families to follow Christ.¹²⁶ He differentiates himself from "moste men now adayes" who "may be likened to the Cocke in Esopes fables, whiche fyndyng a precious stone had rather haue on Barley corne then al

¹²⁴ Glover was executed one month before his wife's famous uncle, Hugh Latimer, who likely arranged his niece's marriage to Glover (on the arrangement, see Susan Wabuda, "Shunamites and Nurses of the English Reformation: The Activities of Mary Glover Niece of High Latimer," in *Women in the Church*, ed. Diana Webb, Studies in Church History 37 [Oxford, 1990], 335-44). Glover's close connection to this Protestant champion implies a strong evangelical foundation, which makes his crisis of faith more significant. Fiendish doubts can overtake even the spiritually prepared.

¹²⁵ Foxe (1563), 1275.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 1275.

the precious stones in the world.”¹²⁷ This initial account of Glover’s martyrdom ends rather abruptly, with the only editorial commentary being the place and date of the execution.

In the 1570 edition of *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe explains that after the 1563 version went to press, he received a letter from Austen Bernher, a confidante of Glover and witness to his martyrdom. Bernher reveals that the assurance Glover displayed in the letters to his wife faltered in the days before his execution. The condemned man “felt in him selfe no aptnes nor willyngnes, but rather a heuines and dulnes of spirite, full of much discōfort to beare that bitter Crosse of Martyrdome ready now to be layd vpō him.”¹²⁸ Like the men he had disdainfully compared to Aesop’s cock, Glover finds himself unwilling to trade the things of this world for a heavenly jewel. Bernher assures Glover that if he remains steadfast, God will deliver him from despair. Sure enough, when the martyr sees the stake on which he will be burned, he is released from his burden and cries, “Austen, he is come, he is come.” Bernher describes Glover “as one seeming rather to be risen from some deadly daunger, to lberly of life, thn as one passing out of the world by any paines of death.”¹²⁹

This description of Glover’s spiritual transportation provides one of the most memorable elements of the account.¹³⁰ However, the martyr’s story does not end with Bernher’s additions. In April 1602, Mary Glover, Robert’s fourteen-year-old granddaughter, began to suffer from violent fits. According to Stephen Bradwell, she was afflicted with the illness following a

¹²⁷ Ibid., 1275.

¹²⁸ Foxe (1570), 1891.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 1891.

¹³⁰ See, for example, Cotton Clement’s *The mirror of martyrs* (1613), Edward Leigh’s *The saints encouragement in evil times* (1648) and Samuel Clarke’s *A mirroure or looking-glasse both for saints and sinners* (1654), all of which highlight the martyr’s transcendence of doubt to a place of spiritual peace.

disagreement with Elizabeth Jackson, “a Charewoman, dwellinge in the same parrish.”¹³¹ The quarrel began when Mary told Jackson’s mistress of her “subtile and importunate begging.”¹³² Jackson retaliated by countering that Mary had meddled with her daughter’s clothing and cursed the young girl saying, “My daughter shall have clothes when thou art dead and rotten.”¹³³ Although a neighbor reported that Mary looked sickly after the heated encounter, the girl seemed to have recovered until Jackson came to the Glover’s shop the next week. Jackson asked to speak with Mrs. Glover, and left when Mary informed her that her mother was unavailable. Upon Jackson’s departure, Mary tried to resume eating her posset but now found her throat “locked up.”¹³⁴ She ran to a neighbor’s house for help, and by the time she arrived, she was struck blind and dumb.

Bradwell reports that Mary suffered from similar convulsions three or four times a day for the next eighteen days. Strikingly, although her illness prevented her from eating except by injection or force, “she was nothing impaired neither in flesh nor strength.”¹³⁵ Following the recommendation of her physician, the Glovers initially believed that their daughter’s outbursts

¹³¹ Stephen Bradwell, *Mary Glovers Late Woeful Case, Together with her Joyfull Deliverance*, in *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London*, ed. Michael MacDonald (London and New York: Tavistock / Routledge, 1991), 3. Although Bradwell provides the most detailed account of this story, it’s important to be mindful of his authorial bias. At the trial, he testified as a medical expert on Elizabeth Jackson’s behalf and argued that Mary’s fits were the result of the “suffocation of the mother,” or womb, which resulted in hysteria.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4. While Bradwell offers a medical explanation for Mary’s condition, he also proposes that the girl could be counterfeiting her attacks as a means of taking revenge on Jackson. His inclusion of this detail was likely an expression of incredulity that although she claimed to be unable to eat, she did not suffer from malnourishment. However, religious authorities could also cite her continued physical health as a sign of spiritual affliction. Caroline Walker Bynum has shown in exhaustive detail how divine sustenance of the body functioned as an important commonplace in medieval accounts of holy women (see *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987]). While Protestants eschewed stories of miraculous preservation as popish, their martyrologies continued to emphasize feats of physical endurance.

were the result of hysteria. However, as Mary's condition worsened, the devoutly Puritan family began to worry that some instrument of Satan had taken possession of her. In December 1602, Elizabeth Jackson was brought to trial on charges of witchcraft, where she was convicted and sentenced to one year's confinement, with four standings in the public pillory.¹³⁶ Mary Glover's fate was likewise speedily determined. During a daylong prayer session by Puritan leaders, punctuated by Mary's increasingly violent fits, the troubled girl felt an evil spirit depart from her body. The theatrics of the exorcism concluded with a final dramatic turn: "And herein her lot as made like to her grandfathers, in necessitie of Comfort, and receaving it in due time; but her testimonie the verie same; *The comforter is come. He is come. He is come.*"¹³⁷

Puritan authors seized on Mary's repetition of her grandfather's dying words to situate her in a tradition of religious persecution and to celebrate the power of the laymen who cast out her demon.¹³⁸ Her "testimonie" absorbs debates about demonic possession into the struggles of the true church as exemplified by Foxian martyrs like her grandfather. Successive emphasis on Mary's familial, spiritual, and rhetorical kinship to a Marian martyr supports Susannah Brietz Monta's assertion that "martyrological habits of reading the world continued to shape the ways that the religiously implicated conflicts of the seventeenth century were understood."¹³⁹ Moreover, these accounts illustrate that martyrological rhetoric could function as a powerful tool for provisionally containing the threat of witchcraft. The reliance of both narratives on the

¹³⁶ Michael Macdonald explains that witchcraft did not become a capital offense until 1604, so imprisonment for one year was the maximum punishment allowed for a first offense (xviii-xix).

¹³⁷ Bradwell, 115.

¹³⁸ Puritan author John Swan provides a laudatory description of Mary's suffering in *A True and Breife Report, of Mary Glouers Vexation, and of Her Deliuerance by the Meanes of Fasting and Prayer* (London, 1603).

¹³⁹ Monta, 194.

language of possession—whether divine or demonic—provides for the transformation of a cautionary tale about satanic insinuation into a heroic narrative that showcases the providence of God.

The texts examined in this chapter address many of the issues that arise when we overlap the histories of Mary and her grandfather. By highlighting the rhetorical commonality of demonic and spiritual possession, the plays illustrate the increasing instability of martyrological language in a world where martyrdoms don't happen in their traditional religious context. The titular character of Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr* (1620) is alternately accused of bewitchment and praised as a paragon of Christian heroism. Supernatural agents, Harpax and Angelo, personify doubt, demonism, certitude, and holiness; they make visible the anxieties about possession circulating in early modern culture. In John Marston's *Sophonisba* (1605), the virgin and the witch represent opposing moral viewpoints, though this distinction breaks down when the witch's bawdy trickery allows for the preservation of Sophonisba's virtue. Numerous literary scholars and historians have shown how early moderns described both martyrdom and bewitchment in terms of corporeal violation, with a particular emphasis on the female body.¹⁴⁰ Despite this similarity, however, critics have not explored the link between the two. By analyzing their simultaneous invocation of both vocabularies, I illustrate the importance of these understudied plays to Jacobean political discourse. *The Virgin Martyr* and *Sophonisba* partake of this martyrological vocabulary by paralleling the virgin's sexual inviolability with her physical vulnerability; additionally, they engage this focal point of

¹⁴⁰ See Maureen A. Tilley, "The Ascetic Body and the (Un)Making of the World of the Martyr," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59.3 (1990): 467-79; James C. W. Truman, "John Foxe and the Desires of Reformation Martyrology," *ELH* 70 (2003): 35-66; Karen Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Thomas Freeman and Sarah Wall, "Racking the Body, Shaping the Text: The Account of Anne Askew in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 1165-96; Karen Bamford, *Sexual Violence on the Jacobean Stage* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000).

witchcraft debates by staging the loss of bodily control associated with demonic possession. By mediating the stories of Dorothea and Sophonisba's martyrdoms through the language of witchcraft, the plays share in the culture's nervous awareness that the religious and social disorder of witchcraft could be disguised as the sanctified rebellion of martyrdom.

Still, as the plays illustrate, new contexts for martyrdom require new interpretive tools for identifying imposters. Martyrologists tried to solve this dilemma for the Elizabethan populace by scripting a theological formula for reading martyrological spectacles. Nevertheless, despite the authors' "confidence in the self-authenticating nature of true texts—both scriptural and extra-scriptural—anxiety remained regarding the issue of interpretive coherence."¹⁴¹ Thus, editors like Foxe stressed the contingency of readers' salvation on their ability to recognize truth in the texts, a religious expansion of the Ciceronian truism that virtue recognizes virtue. Authors of witchcraft manuals provide exhaustive descriptions of the physical characteristics and speech of demoniacs. Moreover, these writers, particularly James I, emphasize the interpretive superiority of their handbooks, which are meant "to be effectual, in arming al them that reades" against "the trappings of the devil."¹⁴² In both martyrologies and witchcraft manuals, the texts endorse a standard for evaluating and shaping the reader, not vice versa.

With this generic likeness in mind, we return to the history of the Glovers and the conviction of Elizabeth Jackson. Although the jury was convinced by Lord Anderson's accusations of witchery, James I was evidently intrigued by Edward Jorden's medical explanation for Mary's illness. Shortly after Jackson's sentencing, the king issued a royal pardon for her release. His decision to call on Jorden's expertise again in the 1605 possession case of

¹⁴¹ Felch, 62.

¹⁴² James I, *Demonologie* (1597), xv.

Anne Gunter suggests that he maintained his belief in Jackson's innocence. Diane Purkiss theorizes the logic of James' intervention:

In his pamphlet on Mary Glover's "possession," Jorden presents Glover's hysterical body and speech as an object of the knowing eye and ear of empiricism. Such stagings appealed to James; they offered an even more powerful means of defining the observer as the possessor of knowledge and interpretive skill than the discourse of Continental demonology.¹⁴³

What Purkiss fails to emphasize is that "the possessor of knowledge and interpretive skill" is not just any "observer" but a king who insists on his mediatory role in accomplishing the will of God through his subjects. To better understand this aspect of James' monarchical persona, we turn to the theater, which Jonathan Goldberg identifies as "the public forum in which the royal style could be most fully displayed."¹⁴⁴ *The Virgin Martyr* and *Sophonisba* engage the political potential of drama by representing the ideal subject as a self-sacrificing agent whose empowerment reflects the rightful authority of the king himself. The overlap of witchcraft and martyrdom showcase the (male) ruler's superior judgment, which further authenticates his communion with God. By presenting their virgins as uncorrupted vessels through which the power of secular and sacred princes might be displayed, *The Virgin Martyr* and *Sophonisba* create a model of subjecthood that both advances and challenges Stuart ideals of sacral kingship.

Furthermore, these dramas illustrate that the same interpretive structures responsible for religious stability can serve a unifying social purpose. In this chapter, I analyze how Stuart interpretations of virgin martyr legends engage the secular potential for the language of passivity

¹⁴³ Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), 201. On James' intervention, also see Michael MacDonald's introduction to *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London* (London and New York: Tavistock / Routledge, 1991) and Henry Paul's *The Royal Play of Macbeth* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 98-103.

¹⁴⁴ Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), xiii.

traditionally associated with martyrdom. This vocabulary defined Christians' submission to God for many generations of believers; my focal texts advance the secularization of that rhetoric by identifying it as the basis of Jacobean social policy. The plays that I examine appropriate the martyrological notion of "bearing witness" to highlight the importance of mimesis in non-religious categories. The transmission of authority through the rungs of the cosmological hierarchy, from God to King to subject, depends on the culture's investment in modeling as an important tool for the trans-generational preservation of spiritual truths. By simultaneously invoking the language of demonic possession, the plays consider the dangers of "counterfeiting," in early modern terms, and dramatic closure depends on divine intervention in the form of a prince or husband. In *Basilikon Doron*, James describes princes as "mixed...betwixt the ecclesiastical and civil estate."¹⁴⁵ *The Virgin Martyr's* collapses these distinctions by idealizing its prince as an angelic being who banishes evil by revealing his divine calling. *Sophonisba* also romanticizes the power of imitation through its presentation of an exemplary wife whose virtue is attributed to that of her husband. However, Sophonisba plays her part so well that she assumes the authoritative position of her spouse, which he only partially regains after her death.

Goddess or Sorceress? Demonic and Divine Possession in *The Virgin Martyr*

Before turning to the playtexts, we should briefly examine how the witch and the martyr represent competing versions of the passive self for seventeenth-century England. Stephen Greenblatt concludes *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* with an admission of his "overwhelming need to sustain the illusion that I am the principle maker of my own identity."¹⁴⁶ Throughout his study, Greenblatt locates a similar anxiety in his early modern subjects, which, in Scott Paul

¹⁴⁵ James I, *Basilikon Doron* (Edinburgh, 1599), 130.

¹⁴⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 257.

Gordon's view, has led critics to assume that "every loss of self-possession brings a corresponding anxiety or alienation."¹⁴⁷ This assumption proves accurate in discussions of witchcraft, since early moderns conceived of demonic possession as a negative erasure of self.

Francis Dolan explains,

Witches were thus understood as persons separate from or outside of their victims, yet simultaneously inside of them. Like our conception of the virus, alien but inside, hostile but included, the construction of the witch attempted to describe a threat perceived as not precisely locatable, a consequence of the unfixed boundary between self and other.¹⁴⁸

James offers a similar description in explaining why those of "infirm and weake faith" are most susceptible to demonic advances. Witches are "like the Pest, which smites these sickarest, that flies it farthest, and apprehends deepliest the perrell thereof."¹⁴⁹ Bewitchment leads to a crisis of identity because its presence within the self leads to an annihilation of the individual's celestial spark. This dark version of possession empowers its victims in a negative sense. Like Lucifer in his defiance of God, those who are controlled by hellish fiends threaten to topple the divine structure on which Creation depends. As a parasitic enemy of the body politic, witchcraft was linked literally and metaphorically to social instability as well.¹⁵⁰

Even so, Gordon argues that quite different from our own society, many early moderns actually viewed personal autonomy as undesirable and, in some cases, heretical. Locating the origin of this "passivity trope" in Christian writings, he explains: "These writers desire not to be

¹⁴⁷ Scott Paul Gordon, *The Power of the Passive Self in English Literature, 1640-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 21.

¹⁴⁸ Frances E. Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England 1550-1700* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 184.

¹⁴⁹ *Demonologie*, 50.

¹⁵⁰ Stuart Clark argues that discussions of witchcraft helped to establish "a vocabulary of misrule" for identifying and condemning political and social threats. See "Inversion, Misrule, and the Meaning of Witchcraft," *Past and Present* 87 (1980): 98-127.

a self-determining agent but rather to be an agent of another: abandoning the assertion of free will, they desire to believe their actions have been prompted by another force” (21). Although we usually associate narratives of possession with demonic influence, in the martyrological tradition, divine possession serves as one of the markers of a true martyr. A surrender of the self “to be shaped by another power” allows for a truer sense of freedom.¹⁵¹ For example, in Foxe’s account of Robert Glover, the martyr is released from paralyzing doubt only when he surrenders his earthly self to the arms of the Comforter. The prideful self-possession that he displays in the letter to his wife proves limited, whereas the “liberty” that he finds in surrendering himself completely to God’s will allows him to accomplish extra-human feats of endurance. Likewise, Mary Glover’s release from demonic possession is achieved by the reaffirming of God’s presence in her body, as signified by her relief that “The comfort is come.” Whereas witchcraft causes an erosion of the self, spiritual surrender, of which martyrdom is the highest form, heightens its potential by its fusion of humanity and divinity.

In her final speech, the titular character of Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger’s *The Virgin Martyr* (1620), Dorothea, displays an acute awareness that just as she transcends death by fully embracing a spiritual afterlife, so oral and written accounts of her martyrdom will preserve her exemplary constancy beyond her execution. She declares:

Hereafter when my story shall be read,
As they were present now, the hearers shall
Say this of Dorothea with wet eyes
She liu'd a virgin, and a virgin dies. (4.3.176-79)¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Gordon, 22.

¹⁵² Thomas Dekker and Phillip Massinger, *The Virgin Martyr in The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, 4 vols. ed., Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 376-463. All further citations from the play are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text by act, scene, and line number.

Dorothea's story, like those of martyrs throughout history, is first spread through "the hearers" who "were present" at the event itself. She expects that these observers will rightly interpret the chaste heroism of her death when her "story shall be read," and through her self-authored eulogy, she seeks to model the proper transference of its moral. Despite the nostalgic tone of the speech, which perhaps evokes the recent memory of England's virgin queen, the play is heavily invested in the concerns of its own time. As we shall see, its dramatic force is not its memorialization of Dorothea in the manner of Tudor martyrologies but its inquiry into how representations of martyrdom function in the Jacobean political arena.

Although it has garnered sparse critical attention, *The Virgin Martyr* holds the distinction of being the last Catholic saint's play staged in early modern England.¹⁵³ Its performance history indicates that early modern audiences were drawn to Dekker and Massinger's anomalous adaptation of hagiographical material: after its initial performance, an expanded version of the play was re-licensed in 1624. Likewise, its many quarto printings (1622, 1631, 1651, and 1661) attest to the drama's popularity. In our time, most scholarly attention to *The Virgin Martyr* has focused on its vexed presentation of a Catholic martyr who was anachronistically claimed for Protestants by sixteenth-century martyrologists. Critics have scoured the play for evidence of the dramatists' religious affiliations, a long-standing debate that has resulted in no real consensus.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ A number of Jacobean plays stage the martyrological sufferings of Protestant heroes; they include Thomas Heywood's *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody* (1605), John Marston's *Sophonisba* (1605), Webster's *Sir Thomas Wyatt* (1607), Cyril Tourneur's *Atheist's Tragedy* (1609), Thomas Middleton's *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (1611), and David Murray's *Sophonisba* (1611).

¹⁵⁴ Critics who emphasize the play's Catholic elements include: Louise Clubb, "The Virgin Martyr and the Tragedia Sacra," *Renaissance Drama* 7 (1964): 103-26; Cyrus Hoy, *Introductions, notes, and commentaries to texts in The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); and Walter Cohen, *Drama of a Nation: Public Theater in Renaissance England and Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 1985), 375. For discussion of the play's Protestant elements, see Julia Gaspar, "The Virgin Martyr and the War in Germany," in *The Dragon and the Dove: The Plays of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) and Larry Champion, "Disaster With My So Many Joys: Structure and Perspective in Massinger and Dekker's *The Virgin Martyr*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 1 (1984): 199-209. Monta explores how the play rhetorically borrows from both Catholic and Protestant martyrologies but ultimately functions as "militant Protestant propaganda" (194).

Although the legends of Dorothea and Agnes were based on Catholic histories (*The Golden Legend* and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*), John Foxe unapologetically resurrects them from the pages of these source materials in establishing a Protestant ancestry of religious persecution in *Acts and Monuments* (1563).¹⁵⁵ The majority of scholarship about *The Virgin Martyr* illustrates how tempting it is to search for a hidden post-Reformation agenda in its lines and scenes.

Critical determination to situate the play within a Catholic/Protestant binary has left little room for considering its contribution to more timely debates. However, the possession case of Mary Glover reveals that by the seventeenth century, narratives of persecution easily traversed the porous boundaries of secular and sacred and, indeed, even bridged them. Unlike its martyrological sources, *The Virgin Martyr* is unconcerned with identifying true and false martyrs but relies on the audience's previous knowledge of the story to recognize Dorothea as God's agent. Still, the very interpretive habits that taught early modern audiences to recognize martyrs could be redeployed to confuse their allegiance.¹⁵⁶ By staging the transference of divine authority via a female mediator, the play explores the potential for and dangers of a version of

¹⁵⁵ Julia Gaspar argues that in addition to this Foxean version, Massinger and Dekker consulted at least three Catholic sources: *Flos Sanctorum* (1609), Caxton's *The Golden Legend* (1483), and *De Probatiss Sanctorum Historiis* (1570). For her detailed discussion of the variations in these sources, see "The Sources of *The Virgin Martyr*," *Review of English Studies* 42.165 (1991): 17-31.

¹⁵⁶ Indeed, Foxe acknowledges the slipperiness of the terms "martyr" and "witch" when he defends himself against accusations that he has made a martyr of a witch. In recounting the 1441 martyrdoms of Ladies Eleanor and Yong, Foxe concludes that Yong's mother joined her daughter through a martyr's death in 1490. Readers charged that Yong's mother was actually Margaret Jordeman, a woman executed for witchcraft, and that in his narrative Foxe had sought to recast her execution as a noble death. He defends his text:

Fourthly, as concerning Margaret Iordeman, whom ye call the witch of Eye, ye offer me herein great wrong, to say that I make her a martyr, which was a wyche: when as I here professe, confesse, and ascertain both you and all English men, both present and all posteritie hereafter to come, that this Margarete Iourdeman I neuer spake of, neuer thought of, neuer dreamed of, nor did euer heare of, before you named her in your booke your selfe. So farre is it of, that I either with my will, or agaynst my will, made any Martyr of her (831).

subjecthood predicated on the imitation of a higher power. The playwrights intermingle the language of divine right with vocabularies of demonic and divine possession to expose the ideological vulnerability of the body politic.¹⁵⁷ Dorothea's virginity indicates both complete spiritual surrender and the dangerous misuse of female influence. Further confounding her characterization, the verbal eloquence that she displays is praised in virgin martyr legends and condemned in witchcraft records. Ironically, by adopting the patriarchal discourse of Jacobean politics, *The Virgin Martyr* champions the power of passivity associated with female martyrs. Although its resolution depends on the interpretive authority of the prince, the play carves out a significant role for the seemingly disempowered in the transmission of that authority.

The relative obscurity of the play necessitates a brief summary. In the reigns of Dioclesian and Maximinus, emperors of pagan Rome, in the town of Caesarea, a Christian named Dorothea attracts the attention of authorities when the governor's son, Antoninus, falls in love with her. Although Dorothea rejects Antoninus's overtures, he continues to pursue her, thereby incurring the wrath of Artemia, daughter of the emperor and Antoninus' betrothed bride. The governor, Sapritius, has Dorothea arrested and seeks the help of his deputy, Theophilus, in punishing her heresy. Theophilus successfully persuades his own daughters to denounce Christianity, so he sends them to convince Dorothea of the merits of paganism. In an ironic twist, Dorothea actually re-converts the two women to Christianity. Enraged, Theophilus martyrs his own daughters and vows that Dorothea will suffer the same fate. When Antoninus becomes deathly lovesick for want of Dorothea, Sapritius brings her to his chamber and demands

¹⁵⁷ Critical attention has generally focused on the vulnerability of Dorothea's physical body rather than the society that is so heavily influenced by her insinuations. See especially Jane Hwang Degenhardt, "Catholic Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martir* and the Early Modern Threat of 'Turning Turk,'" *ELH* 73 (2006): 83-117; Nova Myhill, "Making Death a Miracle: Audience and the Genres of Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr*," *Early Theatre* 7.2 (2004): 9-31; and Theodora Jankowski's reading of Dorothea's avowed virginity as highly subversive for Protestant audiences in *Pure Resistance: Queer Virginity in Early Modern English Drama* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2000).

that he rape her, thinking this will satisfy his son's longings. Antoninus refuses, and instead, Dorothea is condemned to death. After she is beheaded, Antoninus converts to Christianity and also becomes a martyr. In the play's final scene, Angelo, Dorothea's faithful servant, delivers fruit and flowers to Theophilus, sent by the martyress from the bounty of gardens of heaven. Angelo's visit convinces Theophilus, who swiftly converts to Christianity and is himself martyred. Generic remnants of the morality tradition persist in the characters of Angelo and Harpax. Throughout the play, Dorothea benefits from Angelo's advice and encouragement, who early reveals himself to the audience as her guardian angel. By contrast, Angelo's demonic counterpart, Harpax, provides evil and increasingly more destructive counsel to Theophilus.

In *Demonologie's* dialogue about bewitchment, Philomathes asks Epistemon, "But what is their power against the Magistrate?" Epistemon answers by explaining that magistrates must remain vigilant against demonic influence:

Lesse or greater, according as he deales with them. For if he be slouthfull towards them, God is verie able to make them instrumentes to waken & punish his slouth. But if he be the contrarie, he according to the iust law of God, and allowable law of all Nationes, will be diligent in examining and punishing of them: GOD will not permit their master to trouble or hinder so good a woorke.¹⁵⁸

The opening scene of *The Virgin Martyr* highlights the potential problems of Epistemon's logic by showcasing a magistrate who is both "diligent in examining and punishing" threats to the state *and* a demoniac used "to waken & punish" an ungodly nation, as his eventual conversion suggests. Theophilus is an attendant of Sapritius, the governor of Caesaria and a zealous persecutor of Christians.¹⁵⁹ His description of the delight he takes in killing believers initially marks him as a ranting madman. He looks "without a sigh" on

¹⁵⁸ *Demonologie*, 50.

¹⁵⁹ For Deghardt, Dorothea's tale of resistance parallels seventeenth-century England's efforts to fend off the Ottoman threat, which was frequently conceived of in terms of physical contamination. This emphasis leads her to

Babes torne by violence from their mothers brests
To feed the fire, and with them make one flame:
Old men as beasts, in beasts skins torne by dogs:
Virgins and matrons tire the executioners,
Yet I vnsatisfied thinke their torments easie. (1.1.60-65)

However, readers quickly learn that Theophilus's self-appointment as "strongest champion of the Pagan gods / And rooter out of Christians" provides him a position of real and necessary authority (1.1.71-72). The state of Caesaria has been upended by the Christians' refusal to bow to the gods of Rome, a refusal that equates to the rejection of its royal authorities as well.

Theophilus's especial attention to the most pitiable victims—babes, very old men, virgins and matrons—evidences his own cruelty but also underscores the pathos of such dramatic spectacles.

The first scene couples Theophilus's condemnation of Christians with an announcement of the emperor's triumphant entrance into the city, a significant pairing of storylines.

Theophilus's "zeal and duty" in accomplishing his office is compared to the "glorious victory" of the "conquering army," for both preserve the city's "state and wealth" (1.1.92, 111, 113). The maintenance of this social foundation depends on the power of paternal transference, a concept with accentuated political importance in Jacobean England. In *Basilikon Doron*, James instructs his son in the art of kingship by emphasizing modeling as an essential aspect of the monarch's influence. He exhorts Henry:

BVT as ye are clothed with two callings, so must ye be alike careful for the discharge of them both: that as yee are a good Christian, so yee may be a good King, discharging your Office (as I shewed before) in the points, of Iustice and Equitie: which in two sundrie waies ye must doe: the one, in establishing and executing, (which is the life of the Law) good Lawes among your people:/2 the other, by your behauiour in your owne person, and with your seruants, to teach

connect Theophilus with the cartoonishly murderous sultan of some early modern Turkish plays (see "Catholic Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martir*"). Additionally, however, we must acknowledge Theophilus's possible English roots in Foxe's portrayal of Bishop Bonner, who similarly relished his role as persecutor.

your people by your example:/3 for people are naturally inclined *to counterfaite*
(*like apes*) *their Princes manners*.¹⁶⁰

James finds an appropriate means of expressing difference in comparing his subjects to apes. Early moderners were well aware of the similarities between humans and primates, which provided material for comical fodder and sincere anxiety. When Alessandro Magno visited London's Bear Garden in 1562, he first marveled that an ape was able to sit upright on horseback like a man. However, the monkey's primal screeches soon shattered the illusion that beast could behave as civilized human. Referring to Magno's reaction, Erica Fudge explains, "At the moment of sameness difference is revealed and the disturbing spectacle of the screaming monkey on horseback becomes a reminder of the superiority of humanity. The monkey can only ever achieve a comic imitation of the human" (12).¹⁶¹ James is likewise assured that common subjects can only provide a dim representation of royalty; nevertheless, he recognizes the potential for even imperfect imitation. The prince's royal and divine "calling" separates him from ordinary subjects, yet James' mission to teach his son through his "owne person" (if one textually crafted) suggests that princes possess ape-like qualities as well. In both cases, James identifies imitation as an asset to the monarch because he trusts that both his son and his subjects will recognize his merits and aspire to his likeness.

In *The Virgin Martyr*, royal heirs are likewise identified as the first tier of social stability and reproduction. When informing Sapritius of the Emperor's victorious return to Caesaria, Harpax flatters the governor that because his son fought valiantly, "in this glorious victory my Lord, / You have an ample share" (1.1.92-93). Of equal importance, Theophilus's crowning

¹⁶⁰ *Basilikon Doron*, 27-28. Italics added for emphasis.

¹⁶¹ Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 1999), 12.

achievement is his success in rescuing his daughters from the clutches of Christianity. As temple vestals who “teach their teachers with their depth of judgment” (1.1.46), they are a testament to “the power and the authority of a father” (1.1.34). In addition to the spiritual importance of the daughters’ obedience, Sapritius confirms its significance as a manifestation of Theophilus’s service to the state. To honor Theophilus, he presents the daughters “in their sweet conversion as a mirror / [To] Express your zeale and duty” (1.1.117-18). The Bible describes God as the divine Potter who shapes believers in His own image. Similarly, the earthly father’s molding of his children ensures the promulgation of his policies.

The supremacy of the father is divinely bestowed and thus reflects and is a reflection of royal sovereignty. Dioclesian praises Theophilus’s harsh methods of converting his daughters as an extension of “that power / Heauen has conferd vpon me” (1.1.202-03). His deputy’s persecutory nature reflects his own attitude toward nation-building; he acknowledges, “In all growing Empires / Eu’n cruelty is vsefull, some must suffer / And be set vp examples to strike terror / In others” (1.1.236-39). The power to exercise cruelty, however, likewise grants the emperor the authority to grant mercy. While Theophilus’s daughters faced painful chastisement for their infidelity, Dioclesian pardons two kings who had taken up arms against him. The emperor recognizes in the men the “courage of Princes” and “the power of noble valour” that he, as royalty, also possesses (1.1.251, 255). By offering the men their freedom, the Emperor “teach[es]” them to surrender rightfully. In gratitude, they declare themselves “faithfull Vassals / To Dioclesian and the power of Rome” (1.1.262-63). Theophilus and Dioclesian prosper because they successfully instruct their inferiors in the art of mimesis, an easier task in the case of the offending princes whose royalty better equips them to recognize the emperor’s divinity.

While the ape-like nature of humans can benefit the monarch, James is nevertheless cautiously aware of the dangers of imitation. In discussing the devil's strategy for influencing humans, the king again makes a comparison with primates: "To the effect that they may performe such seruices of their Master, as he employes them in, the deuill as Gods Ape, counterfeites in his seruantes this seruice & forme of adoration, that God prescribed and made his seruantes to practice."¹⁶² James cautions that satanic and holy agents are difficult to recognize because they depend on the same principles of passive subjecthood. Both demonic and divine servants rely on supernatural forces to compel action. Describing the influence of the Holy Spirit, John Cotton offers a pithy summary of the surrender of self-possession; he pronounces, "Acted upon, we act." Even before we are introduced to Caesaria's "witch" Dorothea, we recognize the endemic threat of her appeal to a higher power in justifying civil insubordination. Indeed, the first half of the play depends on theatergoers' foreknowledge of its sources to repudiate the virgin who otherwise appears a menace to society. Ironically, the most disorderly characters, clownish beggars named Spungius and Hircius, best describe the chaos that Dorothea's rebelliousness causes. In grumbling about how severe his hunger pangs have grown, Spungius declares, "All the members of my bodie are in rebellion one against another" (3.3.45). Spungius's complaints about his unsettled stomach fittingly shift the men's discussion to social disarray. This is a world turned upside down: "Old Honor goes on crutches, beggry rides caroched, / honest men mae feastes, knaues sit at tables, cowards are lapt in veluet, souldiers (as wee) in rages"(3.3.69-71). Of course, this line is all the more humorous because these two are on level with a Falstaff in their possession of martial prowess and thus, even their own assessment of the social condition is faulty.

¹⁶² *Demonologie*, 35.

Dorothea inspires other characters to “counterfeit,” to employ James’ term, which initially condemns her as a devil and later identifies her as a religious heroine. Antoninus misreads her virtuousness as proof that she would make a submissive wife, which fuels his courtship of her. After his victorious entry into Caesaria, the emperor offers his daughter Artemia, her pick of a husband. She defends her choice of Antoninus, her social inferior, by maintaining “a prou’d soldier / Is fellow to a king” (1.1.345-46) or, in her case, an empress-in-waiting. When Antoninus expresses his desire to prevent the match, Macrinus is dumbfounded, reminding his friend that marriage to the princess ensures “honour, greatnesse, / Respect, wealth, fauour, the whole world for a dower, / And with a Princesse, whose excelling forme / Exceedes her fortune (1.1.417-20). Antoninus waxes poetic about his love for Dorothea and inability to transfer his affection to another, yet we learn that he also fears that a match with Artemia would upset the social hierarchy, resulting in his demotion. Like Hircius and Spungius, he is fearful of a world turned upside down. He confesses to Macrinus, “For any man to match aboue his ranke, / Is but to sell his liberty; with Artemia / I still must live a servant” (1.1.450-52). By contrast, with Dorothea, he declares, “I shall rule, / Rule as becomes a husband” (1.1.453-54). Antoninus’s assessment of the merits of a marriage to Dorothea seems appropriate. In fact, his reasoning draws on James’ familiar characterization of the domestic realm as a micro-kingdom that structurally mirrors the political sphere. However, as a reminder that subjects are first beholden to God’s earthly minister, his Prince, Angelo exposes the limitations of spousal power.

Antoninus tries to fit Dorothea to his expectations by idealistically exalting his feelings for her. Courtly love poetry popularized the use of martyrological rhetoric in describing the sufferings of the beloved, and *The Virgin Martyr* merges the two languages in Antoninus’s praise for Dorothea. Antoninus complains that he is “scorched / With fire” in his unrequited love for

his “deity” and “goddesse” Dorothea (1.1.423-24, 463, 469). He even privileges his vow to her over his patriotic duty by insisting that he acts on her behalf “in the way of sacrifice, not service” (1.1.468). Dorothea is likewise possessed by an all-consuming love, though she is “ravisht with a more celestiall sound” than the wooings of Antoninus. Adopting the same language as Antoninus, she describes her heavenly ravishment; her “most chaste bosome” burns “with no wanton fire / But with a holy flame” (2.1.199-200). Antoninus is right in asserting that Dorothea will be ruled by her husband, but hers will not be an earthly union. In the medieval legend of the virgin martyr Agnes, on whom the character of Dorothea is partially based, the description of her execution concludes: “Thus, Christ married this holy, innocent maiden, so cruelly martyred for his sake.”¹⁶³ Dekker and Massinger employ the trope of divine marriage even before her death in characterizing Dorothea’s commitment to Angelo.¹⁶⁴ Before Angelo reveals himself as Dorothea’s spiritual guide, she pledges her fidelity to him: “I would leaue Kingdomes, were I Queene of some, / To dwell with thy good father, for the sonne / Bewitching me so deeply with his presence” (2.1.205-7). Although she recognizes her humble status, Dorothea asserts the riches and worth of her king over Antoninus, who is a “slave” in comparison (2.3.85).

Dorothea’s commitment to a heavenly spouse perturbs Antoninus because it supercedes his own source of authority as a successful, marriageable, and valiant soldier in Caesaria’s patriarchal culture. In an attempt to reconcile her refusal to his own worldview, Antoninus ignores her talk of an illusive heavenly spouse and seizes on her vow of chastity as the real

¹⁶³ Osbern Bokenham, “Agnes” in Karen Winstead, *Chaste Passions: Medieval English Virgin Martyr Legends* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 108. Dekker and Massinger meld the medieval stories of the virgins Dorothea and Agnes in constructing their titular character.

¹⁶⁴ See also the ancient narrative of Perpetua, the medieval story of St. Katherine and the spiritual autobiography of Margery Kempe. Protestant martyrs likewise employ this imagery, despite a doctrinal emphasis on the importance of an earthly family. For example, Anne Askew and Joyce Lewes forsake their Catholic husbands and by suffering martyrdom to uphold their beliefs, consummate a heavenly marriage to Christ.

problem. Virgin martyr legends emphasize the women's belief that although both punitive torture and sexual abuse constitute invasions of the body, the former allows for spiritual triumph whereas the latter portends certain spiritual peril.¹⁶⁵ *The Golden Legend's* exaltation of female chastity has led Caroline Walker Bynum to conclude, "[T]he major achievement of holy women is dying in defense of their virginity."¹⁶⁶ Conversely, post-Reformation Protestants stressed virginity as a temporary state that young women leave behind to marry and fulfill the Biblical command of procreation. Theatergoers were conditioned to be skeptical towards militant defenses of female chastity despite their knowledge of Dorothea's heroic origins. In *All's Well that Ends Well*, Parolles issues a vitriolic critique of virginity, which he describes as "peevisish, proud, idle, made of self-love, the most inhibited sin in the canon" (1.1.145). Antoninus espouses a similar sentiment in urging Dorothea to abandon the "self-loue of a vowed Virginitie" (2.3.75). This viewpoint would have resonated with a largely Protestant audience who valued marriage as a necessary component of social stability through its preservation of gender roles. Even with its emphasis on religious piety, virginity seems to allow for a version of female autonomy incongruent with the natural order stressed by James.

While Antoninus attributes Dorothea's unwillingness to marry to a misguided pursuit of independence, Sapritius expresses certitude that she is under the control of darker forces. He rails about her to Theophilus:

She's a Witch,
A sorceresse Theophilus, my sonne

¹⁶⁵ In analyzing the tribulations of the Roman martyr Margaret, Maud Burnett McInerney argues that Margaret describes the emperor's advances "not as a double assault on her virginity and her faith, but as a single assault on her virginity *as* faith" ("Rhetoric, Power, and Integrity in the Passion of the Virgin Martyr," in *Menacing Virgins: Representing Virginity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Marina Leslie [Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999], 51).

¹⁶⁶ Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Female Body and Religious Practice in Later Middle Ages," in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body I*, ed. Michael Feher, Ramona Naddaff, and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone, 1989), 175.

Is charm'd by her enticing eyes, an like
An image made of waxe, her beames of beauty
Melt him to nothing; all my hope in him,
And all his gotten honours finde their graue
In his strange dotage on her. (3.1.2-8)

Antoninus's bewailing of the entrapment of unrequited love is replaced by Sapritius's conviction that his son has fallen under the inescapable spell of a witch. In particular, Sapritius and Theophilus blame her false eloquence—she is a “lying Sorceresse” and a “Blasphemer”—as her means of misleading Antoninus and, later, Theophilus's daughters (2.3.91, 3.2.79). To return momentarily to the story of Mary Glover, we should consider the close connection between female speech and witchcraft in early modern England. In the conviction of Elizabeth Jackson, the jury cites her own words as the most damning evidence against her:

When they are full of cursing, use their tongue to speake mischeevously, and it falls out accordingly, what greater presumption can you have a Witch? This woman hath that property: She is full of Cursings, she threatens and prophesies, and still it takes effect: she must of necessitie be a Prophet or a Witch.¹⁶⁷

In a similar fashion, Alexander Robert's *Treatise of Witchcraft* (1616) seizes on his culture's discomfort with speaking women to describe the warning signs that a woman is a witch. Chief among these indicators is the woman's “slippery tongue” which is always “full of words.”¹⁶⁸ Rebellious female speech was problematic for a culture that depended on women's submissiveness and docility, and accusations of witchcraft became one means of policing the female tongue.

For our purposes, the cosmological implications of demonic female speech are even more threatening. The disciple John begins his gospel, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word

¹⁶⁷ Jorden, 29. According to *Demonologie*, James would have agreed with this argument, at least in theory. The third book puts forth the argument “[T]hat since all Prophecies and visiones are nowe ceased, all spirites that appears in these formes are euill” (62).

¹⁶⁸ Alexander Roberts, *A Treatise on Witchcraft* (1616), 43.

was with God, and the Word was God,” thereby inextricably linking speech with the Christian *primum movens*.¹⁶⁹ James depends on this doctrinal cornerstone in absorbing the crime of witchcraft in his metaphysical ordering of the cosmos, which is founded on God as the “first cause.”¹⁷⁰ In another Dekker play, *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621), the fiend Dog is conjured by the curse: “*Sanctificetur nomen tuum.*” The repetition of the Lord’s Prayer invokes Christ through its memorializing of his crucifixion; Dog’s corruption of these words appropriates its power for darker purposes. Although *Edmonton*’s Mother Sawyer is a pitiful folk woman who is mocked by Dog, the machinations of *Macbeth*’s prophesying witches and malevolent Lady Macbeth provide vivid representations of the state’s vulnerability to demonic influence. In *Demonologie*, James is particularly attuned to this issue and decrees that as a betrayal of God, witchcraft by extension constitutes “treason against the Prince,” God’s earthly representative. Thus, Sapritius and Theophilus are right in identifying Dorothea’s verbal prowess as a cause for concern. Through an appropriation of language, witches “set themselves up ostensibly in positions of command and subverted the institutions of God’s order; their powers to effect evil depended fundamentally on the manipulation of speech.”¹⁷¹ Initially, the problem of Dorothea’s rebellion can be ideologically contained by male speech, through Theophilus’s imagined threats of punishment and Antoninus’s projected authority as her future husband. Her usurpation of rhetorical control destabilizes this balance of power and cause much greater social and political upheaval.

¹⁶⁹ John 1:1, KJV.

¹⁷⁰ *Demonologie*, xiv.

¹⁷¹ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 132.

Antoninus's failure to "rule" Dorothea as her husband or to fashion her into a romanticized ideal leads to a crisis of masculinity. Act four opens with Sapritius, Macrinus, and a physician keeping vigil over Antoninus's sickbed. When the doctor voices his "feare / [that] The grave must mocke our labours," Macrinus questions his treatment of the illness (4.1.15-16). Instead of a doctor, he declares, "It is a Midwife must deliver him" (4.1.20). Incredulous, the physician exclaims in return, "Is he with child, a Midwife!" (4.1.21). Macrinus answers affirmatively, explaining that his friend will die, "if by a Woman / He is not brought to bed (4.1.22-23). The bawdy implications of his solution notwithstanding, Macrinus's request for a midwife implicitly evokes an early modern superstition that the devil could cause monstrous births by implanting his seed in women. James expresses skepticism about this belief, suggesting that the women display merely the physical signs of pregnancy but that no such spawn actually exists. Instead, at the time of delivery, fiends "slippe in the Mid-wiues handes, stockes, stones, or some monstrous barne brought from some other place."¹⁷² In either case, the midwife delivers the women of a demonic burden. Obviously, Antoninus is not literally in the travails of a monstrous birth; nevertheless, the melancholy from which he craves delivery proves effeminizing, particularly when he discovers his inability to force it from himself. A sexual encounter with Dorothea would re-establish his dominance by allowing him to physically possess her. Macrinus identifies the transgression of Dorothea's virgin body as a fitting counter to her psychological violation of Antoninus.

When Antoninus rouses, his mad ramblings confirm Macrinus's diagnosis. He confesses that he is "bewitched" by a woman and cries, "Thou kilst me Dorothea, oh Dorothea" (4.1.44, 38). Sapritius believes that if he can return Antoninus to his former identity of martial hero, he

¹⁷² *Demonologie*, 68.

will be healed. Appealing to his son's skill in battle, he encourages him to conquer Dorothea like a city: "Force it, imagine thou assaultst a towne, / Weake wall, too't, tis thine owne, beat but this downe" (4.1.77-78). Antoninus's refusal to rape Dorothea signals his social and moral divergence from the values of Roman culture. Though once a decorated soldier, his father warns that he will "Dye a slave" because he has lost the conqueror's spirit (4.1.109). Antoninus's willingness to believe Dorothea's warning that "if you play the Rauisher, there is / a Hell to swallow you" (4.1.100-01) further signifies his weakness. Such passivity is unmanly, criticized by Sapritius as "Phlegmatike," and characteristic of "geldings" (4.1.112, 111). Indeed, with his conversion, Antoninus fashions himself in Dorothea's image, replacing his fiery lust with a holy flame. His submissiveness to her counsel subverts social and gender hierarchies, which disconcerts the other men, who grow increasingly desperate to preserve autonomous influence.

Exasperated with his son's helplessness, Sapritius calls for slaves to rape Dorothea. She enthralls them, and they refuse to assault her. Unable to find any recourse against her, he falls down "bewitch'd" (4.1.182). Antoninus intercedes on his father's and begs Dorothea to release his father from "[t]hese fearefull terrors" (4.1.173). Dorothea's assertion, "I can no myracles worke," signals a departure from the play's Catholic sources, which must certainly have mollified the concerns of its largely Protestant audience (4.1.178). Furthermore, it locates her source of influence over the men as beyond her control. In her acknowledgement that she can "[p]ray to those powers I serue" Dorothea exemplifies the fundamental tenet of Protestantism's reliance on the Word (4.1.179). Her offer to pray disproves Sapritius's assertion that her summoning of evil spirits provokes chaos. Although prayers and curses are all the same to these pagan rulers, Dorothea's emphasis on the divine authority of her speech would have confirmed her sanctity for Jacobean audiences.

At the same time that Elizabeth Jackson's "cursings" convicted her, Mary Glover's repetition of her grandfather's last words displayed her spiritual endurance. In a culture that associated a loose female tongue with equally loose morals, martyrologists faced the challenge of justifying women's speech while preserving their chastity. For example, medieval authors praise St. Katherine for her ability to argue the validity of a supreme God and the teachings of his Scriptures against the Roman emperor and a group of pagan scholars. Like Dorothea, she asserts the truth of Christian speech above its devilish adaptations. Describing Katherine to the scholars, the emperor says, "She seems amazingly wise, for whoever argues with her is left speechless. Worst of all, she claims not only that worshipping our gods is vain but also that our gods themselves are devilish counterfeits."¹⁷³ Foxe's account of Henrician martyr Anne Askew reveals his ambivalence about female martyrs whose defiant speech could make them seem more like men than proper women. To counteract this characterization, Foxe emphasizes Askew's gender through a separately published verse elegy that focuses on the torturers' abuse of her *female* body and through his editorial commentary in *Acts and Monuments*. These descriptions of Askew's martyrdom create a horrific counterpart to the praiseworthy self-possession of the martyr as her "limbs are forced apart" and her "bones are broken, severed from their joints."¹⁷⁴ Despite Foxe's emphasis on her female body, Askew's eloquent defense in response to authorial pressure to repudiate her beliefs endured as a paradigm for Christian men and women.

Like Askew, Dorothea is given the opportunity to recant but uses it instead as a platform to launch a persuasive defense of her beliefs. Theophilus speculates that exposing the false beliefs of "this Apostata" would bring "greater honor than her death" and offers his daughters to

¹⁷³ Winstead, 139.

¹⁷⁴ John Foxe, "Epitaph in Sapphic Verse Upon the Tomb of the Most Steadfast Woman and Martyr," in *The Examinations of Anne Askew*, ed. Elaine V. Beilin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 194.

visit her in prison. When the women ask Angelo to leave them alone with her, Dorothea protests, “He must not leaue me, without him I fall, / in this life he is my servant, in the other / A wished companion” (3.1.62-65). In return, Angelo exhorts her, “Tis not in the diuell, / Nor all his wicked arts to shake such goodnesse” (3.1.65-66). The princesses Caliste and Christeta offer themselves as replacements for Angelo, “good Angels” come to bring her comfort (3.1.74). However, they quickly reveal their nefarious purposes in counseling Dorothea to embrace the pagan gods and “[I]earne to be happy, the Christian yokes too heauy” (3.1.94). Unlike the men of Caesarian society, Dorothea is equipped to recognize true demonic influence; she counterattacks, “Haue you not clouen fete? are you not diuels?” (3.1.101). Indirectly, the “wicked arts” of the devil are behind the daughters’ pleas, for they act as agents of Theophilus who is under the control of the beast Harpax.

Although it has not been identified as a source for *The Virgin Martyr*, the sisters’ prison visit recalls a unique detail of the legend of St. Margaret. *Seinte Margarete*, a thirteenth-century English text, recounts the tortures of the virgin martyr Margaret under the rule of the Roman prefect Olibrius. The beginning of Margaret’s story is pretty standard: Olibrius sees her, desires her, and, upon being rejected because she has committed herself to Christ, vows to oversee her slow and painful death. The unusual aspect of the story is that as Margaret is being tortured, she does not pray to see Christ’s face, but that of her true torturer, the devil. In a potentially alarming twist to the usual tale, Margaret is visited in prison by a demon. The narrative’s description of his appearance could easily have come from a seventeenth-century tract on witchcraft:

His hair and his long beard shone all of gold, and his terrifying teeth seemed to be of black iron. His two eyes shone brighter than the stars and the jewels, broad as basins in his horned head on either side of his high, hooked nose. From his horrible mouth fire sparkled out, and from his noustrils poured suffocating smoke,

most horrible of fumes, and he stretched his tongue out so far that he swung it about his neck.¹⁷⁵

Margaret responds to the creature's appearance with a prayer that emphasizes the authority of God. She marvels that even "the snakes and the wild bests of the woods follow the law you have decreed for them."¹⁷⁶ Margaret's ability to defeat the demon arises from her own submission to the same natural law. In addition to sacrificing her body to immense physical pain, the virgin relies on a related version of submissiveness in fashioning herself as a speaking agent of the omnipotent lawgiver.

The Virgin Martyr revises this narrative by illustrating that the devils of seventeenth-century England are not so easily identifiable. The fiend Harpax ridicules fantastical descriptions like that of Margaret's dragon: "How? The diuell! Ile tell you what now of the diuell, / He's no such horrid creature, clouen footed, / Black saucer-eyed, his nostrils breathing fire, / As these lying Christians make him (3.3.55-58). Instead, devilish familiars materialize in the guise of the familiar, of Caliste and Christeta, who were once Dorothea's sisters in faith. Dorothea claims the same form of passive agency as Margaret to authorize the "virtuous and religious anger" of her verbal attack against the "deuils" who visit her (3.1.103). She defends herself:

Now to put on a Virgin modesty,
Or maiden silence, when his power is question'd
That is omnipotent, were a greater crime,
Then in a bad cause to be impudent. (3.1.104-07)

Dorothea converts Caliste and Christeta to Christianity by convincing them that the wantonness and greed of pagan gods signifies "human weaknesse" not divinity (3.1.147). The sisters vow

¹⁷⁵ *Seinte Margaret*, in *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 58.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 58.

to forsake their pagan father and turn to Dorothea as their spiritual advisor. This *locus* of maternal authority, exemplified by the Duchesses of my previous chapter, links our heroine to a proper female role that maintains her position as a conveyor of God's will. Dorothea fashions herself as a surrogate parent, remarking of the women's conversion, "neuer mother had / so happy a birth" (3.1.199-200). Humanist author Juan Luis Vives writes that women require an education "for her children, that she may teach them and make them good."¹⁷⁷ He stresses the mother's influence: "For that age can do nothing itself, but counterfeit and follow others, and...taketh her first conditions and information of mind by such as she heareth or seeth by her mother."¹⁷⁸ As newborns in the faith, Caliste and Christeta require exemplary instruction from their spiritual mother, Dorothea. While much of the play emphasizes the genderbending potential of Dorothea's fealty to heavenly authority, this scene asserts the importance of spiritual duties traditionally gendered female as well.

In memoriam of Elizabeth I, Thomas Dekker wrote, "Thus you see that both in her life and death, she was appointed to be the mirror of her time."¹⁷⁹ In Dorothea, he and Massinger create a female character that is to be similarly admired. For most of the play, Dorothea's ability to influence other characters leads to accusations of witchcraft because it subverts God-ordained channels of authority. Her death corrects this wrongful interpretation. In the manner of her historical predecessors in martyrdom, Dorothea rhetorically exerts the power of her King over the Roman state in re-scripting her execution as her "coronation day" (4.2.137). Furthermore,

¹⁷⁷ Juan Luis Vives, *Instruction of a Christian Woman* (1523), 124.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Dekker, "The Wonderful Year: 1603" (1603), n.p.

she re-defines instruments of torture as necessary tools for accomplishing her spiritual ambitions.

She taunts Artemia:

The visage of a hangman frights not me;
The sight of whips, rackes, gibbet, axes, fires
Are scaffoldings, by which my soule climbs vp
To an Eternall habitation. (2.3.166-70)

Antoninus marvels at her constancy, particularly noting that “[s]he smiles” in the face of certain death (4.3.66). Our recognition of her death as a martyrdom reconciles the disparate and sometimes troubling aspects of Dorothea’s self-representation by affirming her complete surrender to a heavenly King. She represents a positive version of aping, one that focuses more on aspiration to an ideal rather than vulgar imitation. Although less popular than derisive portraits of apes’ attempts to resemble humans, this form of aping would have been familiar to early moderns. Boccaccio adopts primate imagery as a means of explaining *imitatio Christi*, declaring that it would be best if we could “all be made apes of Jesus Christ.”¹⁸⁰ However, even as a divinely inspired ape, Dorothea is unable to set the kingdom aright. Through her verbal skill, she converts Caliste, Christeta, and Antoninus, yet she is unable to vanquish Harpax and thereby prevent his further corruption of Caesarian society.

On the occasion of James’ coronation, Dekker celebrates the new king as the “[m]ost blisfull Monarch of all earthen powers” and places him in the company of “blisfull Angels and tried Martyrs”¹⁸¹ In *The Virgin Martyr*’s masque-like denouement, the heavenly prince Angelo intercedes, like James, to teach these subjects “to be effectual, in arming al them that reades the same, against these aboue mentioned errorrs,” the trappings of the devil.¹⁸² The play’s heaven-

¹⁸⁰ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Genealogies* XIV, 17.

¹⁸¹ Dekker, *Wonderful Year*, n.p.

¹⁸² *Demonologie*, xv.

sent Prince corrects the legal and religious verdict of Dorothea's witchery by asserting his divine calling as proof of his rhetorical and interpretive supremacy. The stage directions after Dorothea's death read: "Loud Musicke, exit Angelo having first laid his hand vpon their [the spectators] mouthes" (4.3). After his departure, the onlookers mock the spectacle. Sapritius sarcastically remarks on the "heavenly music," and Theophilus dismisses the sound as yet another indicator of Dorothea's treachery. He disavows the sound as "illusions of the Diuell / Wrought by some one of her Religion, / That faine would make her death a miracle" (4.3.187-90). Angelo's departing gesture of laying his hand on their mouths seems ineffectual until the following scene, when he visits Theophilus with a gift sent by Dorothea. From Heaven her servant brings "[s]ome of that Garden fruit and flowers" (5.1.52, 53). Initially, Theophilus reads the deliver as further proof of Dorothea's demonic nature; he rails that the fruit is "Sent from that Witch to mock me" (5.1.78). Harpax encourages his skepticism in urging the enraged ruler to "cast thou downe/ that Basket" and "take a drinke / Which I shall giue thee" (5.1.129-30, 131-32). The characters' battle over what Theophilus eats signifies a larger conflict over which belief system he will absorb and, in turn, reenact. When Theophilus consumes the fruit, he discovers the truth of Angelo's testimony. He fashions himself in Angelo's image by declaring that he will hereafter serve as "Embassie from heauen" who will "speake, and speake againe, and boldly" on behalf of the Christian God (5.2.102, 147). The character who championed physical torture as a visible impression of his superiority surrenders himself to be a servant of the powers he once opposed, proving that demonic counterfeiting cannot persist in the realm of a divine ruler.

'Behold me Massinissa, like thyself a king and a soldier'

The Virgin Martyr elucidates the problems of interpretation involved in transmitting divine authority through human agents. The play's reliance on Angelo for its dramatic resolution

must certainly have appealed to a king who similarly intervened to sort out the rhetorical confusion of Mary Glover's martyrdom and Elizabeth Jackson's devilry. *Sophonisba* stages a localized exploration of subjecthood by concentrating on domestic applications of James' political theology. Again, martyrdom and witchcraft are discursively connected through competing representations of possession, though this play tricks its audience into assuming that divine and demonic are easily distinguished. In its presentation of a witch who uses her powers for good, *Sophonisba* insists that things are not always what they seem, and thereby reveals the inadequacies of a social formula that heavily relies on mimesis. Sophonisba's death advances this argument by illustrating that sometimes things are exactly what they seem, that imitation allows for the possibility that passive agents can out-perform their masters.

John Marston's *The Tragedy of Sophonisba* (1605) begins on the wedding night of two Carthaginians, Massinissa and Sophonisba. Before the couple is able to consummate their marriage, Rome invades Carthage, forcing Massinissa to leave his bed for the battlefield. After the Roman invasion of the city, Sophonisba is given as a prize of war to Syphax, a rival to Massinissa and traitor to Carthage. When Syphax discovers that Sophonisba is determined to maintain her chastity, he turns to a witch, Erictho, for help, but she assumes the form of Sophonisba and tricks him into sleeping with her. Sophonisba and Massinissa are reunited after Massinissa defeats Syphax in hand-to-hand combat. However, because of Syphax's praise of her virtue, the leader of the Roman forces, Scipio, claims her as a prize of war. Unwilling to submit herself to "Roman bondage," the maiden kills herself, and Massinissa eulogizes her as "Women's right wonder" (5.4.78, 5.1.60).

Although an early Jacobean play, *Sophonisba* shares an interest in Stoicism with Caroline plays like Massinger's *The Roman Actor* (1629) and John Ford's *The Broken Heart* (1633). This

emphasis has captured the attention of critics like Charles Osborne McDonald and Philip J. Finkelpearl, who analyze the play's use of Senecan language and plot devices.¹⁸³ More recent scholars have found two new critical contexts for the play, both of which are pertinent to this discussion. One modern critical edition groups it with Thomas Dekker's *The Witch of Edmonton* and Thomas Middleton's *The Witch* to highlight Marston's anomalous dramatization of classical sources in portraying his witch.¹⁸⁴ In the only new article focused on *Sophonisba*, Thomas Rist compares Sophonisba's efforts to protect her virginity to the challenges of preserving the medieval cult of the Virgin in post-Reformation England.¹⁸⁵ An examination of the play through the lens of Jacobean conceptions of agency reveals a striking link between these analyses. Corbin and Sedge focus on Erictho's difference from Sophonisba, yet like the drama's heroine, she actually avails herself to be used as a divine handmaiden. Although Erictho's Marian resemblances are still quite murky, her deliverance of Sophonisba from certain physical peril paves the way for our heroine's sacrificial death.

Before further analyzing Marston's complicated portrayal of Erictho, we should consider the competing versions of subjecthood voiced by the play's inhabitants. *The Virgin Martyr* adopts James' comparison of paternal influence to the king's molding of his subjects. The king's influence on public discourse is similarly recognizable in *Sophonisba*'s mixing of political and marital imagery. To return to Dekker's description of the king's entrance into London, we see

¹⁸³ Charles Osborne McDonald, *The Rhetoric of Tragedy: Form in Stuart Drama* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1966) and Philip J. Finkelpearl, *John Marston of the Middle Temple* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

¹⁸⁴ Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, *Three Jacobean Witchcraft Plays: Sophonisba, The Witch, The Witch of Edmonton* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

¹⁸⁵ Thomas Rist, "The Wonder of Women: Virginity, Sexuality and Religio-Politics in Marston's *The Tragedy of Sophonisba*," in *Marian Moments in Early Modern British Drama*, ed. Regina Buccola and Lisa Hopkins (Aldershot, U.K. and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 111-125.

that in addition to claiming James's place in the divine company of angels and martyrs, the playwright provides an earthly metaphor for monarchical authority. He imagines England's new monarch as a bridegroom, and "his coronation is the solemn wedding day," thus reinforcing an imagistic tableau frequently appropriated by James.¹⁸⁶ The marital union of husband and wife provides an apt metaphor for the relationship between king and country as conceived by Stuart political theology. Just as two become one in Christ through the nuptial ceremony, the monarch is divinely fused to the body politic as its head. The application of domestic imagery to both public and private spheres produces a chiasmic intertwining of the two, in which each serves as a model for the other. Thus, marriage manuals relied on Jacobean political imagery to ensure familial order in asserting, "The man must be taken for Gods immediate officer in the house, and as it were the King in the family; the woman must account herselfe his deputy, and officer substituted to him."¹⁸⁷ This formula seeks to limit female agency by asserting their natural inferiority to men. Nevertheless, it implies that women are more than reflections of their husband's authority; they are necessary tools for his exercise of power.

The marriage of Sophonisba and Massinissa provides a model version of the domestic kingdom as described by early modern writings on marriage. The play opens with "loud resoundings of nuptial pomp" on the couple's wedding night (Prologue, 15). As the celebrations come to a close, Sophonisba and her maid commence elaborate preparations for the consummation of the marriage. Sophonisba muses about the falsity of the night's rituals, wondering why women must play coy in the bridal chamber and "still seem to fly what we most

¹⁸⁶ Dekker, *Wonderful Year*, n.p.

¹⁸⁷ William Whately, *A bride-bush* (London, 1617), 16.

seek” (1.2.13). Zanthia explains that the wedding night performance signifies the superficiality of wives’ social identities:

We things called women, only made for show
And pleasure, created to bear children
And play at shuttlecock, we imperfect mixtures,
Without respective ceremony used,
And ever complement, alas, what are we?

Sophonisba rejects Zanthia’s assessment of women’s uselessness in marriage and instead argues that wives share in the glory of their husbands. She explains, “By Massinissa Sophonisba speaks, / Worthy as his wife” (1.1.210-11). Any victory that Massinissa achieves likewise honors “a soldier’s wife” (1.1.217). Sophonisba’s public identity is contingent on that of her husband, but their relationship is not limited to his influence on her. Her worthiness both attests to and contributes to his own capacity for greatness. She explains that “[a] modest silence” is often assumed to be a “virgin’s beauty and her highest honour” (1.2.43-44) but confesses, “What I dare think I boldly speak” (1.2.47). Far from condemning her, this desire to speak her mind showcases her inner merit, for “[w]here virtue prompts, thought, word, act never blusheth” (1.2.50). At the same time, her verbal assertiveness manifests her husband’s worth, for it is her position as his wife that authorizes her to speak.

Although Sophonisba defines herself in terms of marital submission, her comments on passive agency provide a suitable vocabulary for analyzing male subjecthood as well. After Charles I’s execution, poet John Cleveland mourned the nation’s loss of that which “gives us motion.”¹⁸⁸ He parallels the loss of the king with the loss of his own identity, questioning, “And can I, / Who want *my self* write *Him* an elegie.”¹⁸⁹ In the way that Cleveland would describe his

¹⁸⁸ John Cleveland, “Caroli,” in *Monumentum Regale* (1649), 21.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

connection to Charles, Massinissa's sense of self depends on the propelling force of a higher power. He dedicates himself as a vessel for carrying out the wills of God and his country. Recognizing his own frailty as an individual, he declares that "faint man" is "[f]ramed to have his weakness made heavens' glory" (3.2.54-55). In asserting his legitimacy, James generally focuses on the difference between subjects and rulers on the basis of king's divine calling. Massinissa articulates a necessary counterpart to that emphasis in his reminder that without God's influence, kings are indistinguishable from the lowest of men.

Both *The Virgin Martyr* and *Sophonisba* champion the power of the king and, in turn, the empowerment of the subjects who serve that king; however, *Sophonisba* stresses that gods and kings are not synonymous, that sacral kingship depends on the ruler's own submission to a greater authority. Two minor characters in *Sophonisba*, Gelloso and Carthalo, debate the limits of subjects' responsibility to their kings. Carthalo argues that "men sprout in courts" by blindly following their ruler: "Such slaves must act commands, and not dispute, / Knowing foul deeds with danger do begin, / But with rewards do end" (2.1.45-47). These "slaves" are responsible for "saving nations" since "State shapes are soldered up with base, nay faulty, / Yet necessary functions" (2.1.59, 60-61). This arrangement safeguards the authority of the monarch as well, since he can "break given faith" with the subjects who do his dirty work and "ascribe that vile necessity / Unto heaven's wrath" (2.1.65, 66-67). For Carthalo, the language of sacral kingship does not describe the divinity of the king; instead, it functions as an empty rhetorical framework through which kings justify any actions necessary to maintain power.

Marston at least perfunctorily rejects Carthalo's criticisms of divine right by punishing characters who are faithless to spiritual and secular authority. Even before she is betrayed by her maid Zanthia, Sophonisba offers this prescient warning: "But above all, O fear a servant's tongue

/ Like such as only for their gain do serve” (3.1.110-11). True servants seek their lord’s gain, whereas for traitors, “[t]heir lord’s their gain” (3.1.114). In marked contrast to Massinissa and Sophonisba’s belief that subjecthood requires willing servitude, Syphax vows allegiance to no one but himself. Whereas Massinissa believes that faithful subjects function as extensions of their ruler, Syphax argues that selfless disinterestedness is impossible; thus, “Kings’ glory is their force” (3.1.4). Confidence in his own sovereignty provokes him to challenge the God-ordained institution of marriage in his pursuit of Sophonisba.

Unlike *The Virgin Martyr*, *Sophonisba* quite clearly identifies its witch, a sorceress skilled in necromancy, driven by lust, and fallen from “a once glorious temple reared to Jove” (4.1.144). Erictho “bursts up tombs” and uses the bodies of the dead for her “black rites,” which Syphax recognizes as markers of her devilry (4.1.110, 112). Still, upon a closer look at Syphax, this distinction breaks down since he possesses equally monstrous and profane qualities. When Sophonisba threatens to kill herself to avoid sexual defilement, Syphax brazenly urges her, “Do, strike thy breast” (4.1.58). He threatens to abuse her dead body if she commits suicide:

Know, being dead, I’ll use
With highest lust of sense thy senseless flesh,
And even then thy vexéd soul shall see,
Without resistance, thy trunk prostitute
Unto our appetite. (4.1.58-62)

His necromantic fantasy connects him with Erictho and the classical sources on which she is based. A much more frightening association with demonism emerges in his amended ruminations on the nature of kingship. He asserts,

Kings’ glory is their wrong.
He that may only do just acts’ a slave.
My god’s my arm, my life my heaven, my grave
To me all end. (5.2.38-41)

Like the Biblical Prince of Darkness, Syphax “grows black” with discontent and turns traitor to his religion and his countrymen (Prologue, 14). His selfish ambition leads him to deny any authority beyond his own desires. Thus, he conjures Erictho not because he is willing to submit to her, but because he falsely believes he will likewise control a supernatural presence that is spoken into being at his command.

In Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, the primary source for the character Erictho, she is an underworld prophetess who foretells the defeat of Pompey’s forces and the ruin of his family.¹⁹⁰ Lucan’s Erictho reanimates a dead male soldier, through whom she delivers her vision. Marston’s Erictho, on the other hand, is not simply a messenger, but relies on a female form to bring about the downfall of a king. Her method of punishing Syphax has led Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge to describe her as “the play’s most potent emblem of lust and appetite in action.”¹⁹¹ Yet, Erictho is a much more ambivalent figure than Corbin and Sedge’s estimation allows. Whereas Sophonisba confirms the virtues of married women, Erictho substantiates the charge that women who fail to marry are more likely to “turn to the help and protection of devils...either for the sake of vengeance by bewitching those lovers or the wives they married, or for the sake of giving themselves up to every sort of lechery.”¹⁹² Through her deception of Syphax, Erictho is the ultimate fulfillment of early moderns’ fears about the deviant sexuality of witches and their ability to transgress the boundaries of human’s minds and bodies. She emerges a creature of terror, from the “infernal music” that announces her entrance, to her “yellow leanness,” “long,

¹⁹⁰ On Marston’s adaptation of source materials, see George L. Geckle, *John Marston’s Drama: Themes, Images, Sources* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Press, 1980).

¹⁹¹ Corbin and Sedge, 12-13.

¹⁹² Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Montague Summers (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 97-98. This text maintained its position throughout the seventeenth-century as one of the most authoritative manuals on witchcraft as evidenced by the sixteen new editions that were published between 1576-1670.

unkempt hair,” and “black tongue” (4.1.102, 109, 120). Nevertheless, her trickery preserves Sophonisba’s virginity by allowing her to escape from Syphax. Her lustiness actually safeguards the mores of Carthaginian society by serving as a corrective to Syphax’s predatory sexuality.

Marston’s complicated portrayal of Erictho signals a departure from his classical sources. For this reason, I suggest that cultural discomfort with a controversial Biblical figure, the Witch of Endor, may also have influenced the playwright’s characterization of his own diabolic female. According to I Samuel 28, Saul grew tired of waiting for instructions from God’s prophets about war with the Philistines, so he contracted a witch to summon the spirit of the deceased prophet Samuel. The woman of Endor successfully contacts Samuel, who berates Saul for his lack of faith and prophesies the destruction of the king’s forces. When Samuel’s prediction comes to pass, a disgraced Saul commits suicide. From patristic writers onward, this passage became a site of anxiety as readers wrestled with the implications of its use of necromancy as a conduit for divine communication.

In the early seventeenth century, John Cotta referenced the story as proof of the devil’s crafty use of ventriloquy and disguise. He questions, “Did not Saul see the vision raised by her or at least speak thereto, and receive answer therefrom, I. Sam. 28.8? Were not then his eyes and eares (those two outward senses) certain witnesses of her Sorcerie?”¹⁹³ The fears that Cotta voices are the very ones that Erictho embodies. First, the devil is able to enter human bodies, a threat literalized by Erictho’s violation of Syphax. Additionally, the devil can turn the human body against itself by confusing the senses and robbing onlookers of their interpretive powers. Reginald Scot’s refutation of the witch of Endor’s prophetic power soothes anxieties about supernatural interference by transferring blame to a villain more easily identified: scheming

¹⁹³ John Cotta, *The Infallible True and Assured Witch* (London, 1625), 32.

women. He maintains, “Let us confesse that *Samuell* was not raised...and see whether this illusion may not be contrived by the art and cunning of a woman, without anie of these supernaturall devices.”¹⁹⁴ Because Erictho is modeled on a classical source, we as readers are quick to attribute her trickery of Syphax to satanic forces. However, by her own admission, we learn that supernatural intervention is ineffectual in matters of love. When Erictho reveals herself to Syphax, she ridicules his attempt to force Sophonisba to consummate his desires. She asks, “Why, fool of kings, could thy weak soul imagine / That ‘tis within the grasp of heaven or hell / To enforce love?” (5.1.4-6). She stresses that even the gods lack this power and confesses that although she has long lusted after Syphax, “philters or hell’s charms” were ineffectual in forcing his affections (5.1.16). Reginald Scot’s warning about the “art and cunning of a woman” applies here, for Erictho is perhaps guilty only of deceiving Syphax’s senses. Erictho thwarts Syphax’s mission to conform Sophonisba to his desires by inhibiting his ability to distinguish her from her malevolent twin; similarly, Marston confounds our inclination to praise her as a divine instrument, dismiss her as a demonic agent, or reconcile our contradictory perceptions of her by concluding that she is merely a cunning counterfeiter of both.

Although Sophonisba escapes Syphax’s clutches, this virgin bride remains a captive of Rome. In her final scene, she abandons her glorification of female agency as deriving from the husband’s natural superiority and seizes his authoritative position for herself. Speaking of all-female tribal cultures, seventeenth-century Frenchman Pierre de Bourdeilles writes “[T]he woman...which doth counterfeit the man, may well be reputed to be more valorous and courageous than another, as in truth I have known some such to be, as well in body as in

¹⁹⁴ Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584).

spirit.”¹⁹⁵ This version of imitation has a martyrological precedent as well. In one of the most revered martyrological texts, *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, a voice from heaven urges Polycarp to “play the man” which “begins a tradition whereby the martyr’s endurance comes to be linked explicitly with masculinity.”¹⁹⁶ However, Elizabeth Castelli cautions against sweeping assumptions that this version of masculinity occurs more naturally in men than women since the example of Polycarp implies that it “must be exhorted, called into being, bolstered up.”¹⁹⁷ Mary Glover was not a martyr in the traditional sense, but she fashioned herself as one by claiming communion with the God of her revered grandfather. Sophonisba also relies on the powers of rhetorical mimesis, by speaking the masculine component of her identity into being. She declares, “Behold me Massinissa, like thyself, A king and a soldier” (5.4.93-94). *The Virgin Martyr* restores Dorothea to a properly feminine role by comparing her influence over the emperor’s daughters to the maternal prerogative of providing spiritual instruction for her children. *Sophonisba* problematizes this resolution by exalting its heroine above her husband as the divine mediator in both political and spiritual matters. Her Stoic suicide “[g]ives help to all” by assuring “[f]rom Rome so rest we free” (5.3.85-86). After her death, Massinissa praises Sophonisba as “Women’s right wonder, and just shame of men” (5.1.60). His eulogy implies that Sophonisba achieves a masculine version of heroism only because the men of Carthage were unwilling to make the ultimate sacrifice of self. Massinissa cannot fully reclaim his dominant spousal position because Sophonisba has replaced him as the model for emulation.

¹⁹⁵ Pierre de Bourbeilles, Seigneur De Brantôme, From *Lives of Gallant Ladies*, in *The Literature of Lesbianism: A Historical Anthology from Ariosto to Stonewall*, ed. Terry Castle (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 167.

¹⁹⁶ Castelli, 62.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

The political theology of Jacobean England effectively marshaled the language of passivity that was already an important basis for the nation's religious identity. *The Virgin Martyr* and *Sophonisba* exalt the national and domestic stability achieved by the culture's investment in this rhetorical framework, while also uncovering its potential weaknesses. The resolution of each play depends on the interpretive powers of a patriarchal ruler, whether prince or husband. However, the real entertainment of the plays comes from their exploration of possible threats to this order, particularly the malevolent counterfeiting of its divine representatives.

In the second edition of *A bride-bush* (1619), William Whately popularizes James' notion of the domestic sphere as a "little kingdom." Whately's emphasis on the husband's rightful dominion over this realm reaffirms the king's God-given authority. However, although he concedes the positive effects of monarchical leadership, he disagrees that the king possesses a higher calling than his subjects to interpret God's will. Instead, he asserts the supremacy of the individual, arguing that the Christian's conscience is "Gods immediate officer" which "overweigh[s] the authoritie of all other commanders."¹⁹⁸ He claims divine agency for all believers in arguing, "[C]onscience is the supreamist commander of man next under God, and hath the highest and most soveraigne authoritie over mens actions."¹⁹⁹ The texts examined in this chapter at least symbolically preserve James' conviction that the prince functions as an essential intermediary between royal subjects and the divine. Whatley's questioning of this tenet of sacral kingship apparently did not go unnoticed by state authorities, since he was called before the High Commissioner in 1621 to defend his book. His privileging of the conscience combines Jacobean

¹⁹⁸ Whately, 116-17.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 118.

philosophies of kingship with Protestantism's emphasis on direct communion with God. In *Sophonisba*, Gelloso describes the result of this merging:

Our vow, our faith, our oath, why they're ourselves,
And he that's faithless to his proper self
May be excused if he break faith with princes.
The gods assist just hearts, and states that trust
Plots before Providence are tossed like dust. (2.1.83-87)

Gelloso argues that subjects can dispatch the same principles used to authorize the king's powers to limit them. Long before Charles Darwin posited his scientific theory, England experienced the stirrings of a political evolution. For James, the ape-like counterfeiting of his subjects confirms his divinity; however, an advancement of this logic reveals that mimetic skill eventually breaks down such distinctions. Indeed, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton ascribes Satan's power to his "god-like imitated state." As the scaffolding of Stuart political thought collapses in on itself, the difference between monkeys and princes, men and Providence, proves disconcertingly slight.

3. THE 'BODIE POLITIQUE' HAS NO 'GLASSE WINDOWES': DESCRIBING THE CONSCIENCE IN CAROLINE ENGLAND

When John Ford wrote his three great tragedies—*'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *Love's Sacrifice*, and *The Broken Heart*—the culture had already begun to seriously engage William Whatley's contention that the "conscience is the supreamist commander of man next under God."²⁰⁰ Like his father, Charles I recognized the threat represented by subjects' privileging of the conscience, and he sought a strategy for incorporating his own version of royal inwardness into the political theology that he had inherited from James. As Charles struggled to contain cultural representations of metaphysical inwardness, his subjects were bombarded with images of and theories about the interior of the physical body. Anatomical texts provided early moderns with knowledge of the inner-workings of man's vital organs; furthermore, they offered a metaphorical language for better articulating the internal functions of the body politic. In this chapter, I argue that attention to these coinciding explorations of inwardness prompted the development of a political rhetoric founded on Charles' assertion of a common national conscience, of which the king is the "supreamist commander," to borrow Whatley's phrasing. *Acts and Monuments* depends on overlapping vocabularies of inwardness in identifying its community of elect believers as those who inherently recognize the martyr's truth of conviction through bodily suffering. Likewise, by linking metaphysical inwardness to scientific and symbolic representations of the physical body, seventeenth-century texts seek to naturalize the conscience's function in the divine cosmology on which the monarchy depends. Although

²⁰⁰ Whately, 118.

Ford's plays have often been likened to Jacobean revenge tragedies, I propose that in staging the brutal violation of his heroines, the playwright directly engages Caroline debates about the conscience by connecting them to martyrological excavations of the body.²⁰¹ By fashioning his tragic heroines as martyrs, Ford expresses nostalgia for the truth that martyrdom seemed to provide, which the unstable linking of the conscience and the body politic made difficult to reclaim.

'There is one above, that well knoweth and seeth all things'



Before examining Stuart texts, I want to consider a gruesome account from *Acts and Monuments* that into the seventeenth-century remained a model for interpreting the body's

²⁰¹ On Ford's indebtedness to the Elizabeth and Jacobean traditions of revenge tragedy, see Wendy Griswold, *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre, 1576-1980* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) and Verna Foster's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore as City Tragedy* (which posits the play as a merging of revenge tragedy and city comedy) and Martin Butler's "Love's Sacrifice: Ford's Metatheatrical Tragedy" in *John Ford: Critical Re-Visions*, ed. Michael Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), respectively 181-200 and 201-232.

physical *and* metaphysical secrets. In recounting the martyrdoms of three women on the Isle of Garnesey, Foxe promises a “faithfull relation” of the deaths of a widow, Katherine, and her two daughters, Guillemine and Perrotine, who was heavily pregnant.²⁰² For the initial description of the event, the martyrologist defers to the written testimony of Katherine’s brother Mathew, who attests that “in all thinges [the women] submitted them selues obediently to the lawes then in force” (2129). Given Katherine’s willingness to submit to Mary Tudor’s ecclesiastical policies, the brother blames her “murther” entirely on the “crueltie” of the Isle’s dean (2129). Mathew’s avowal of his sister and nieces’ innocence might be unremarkable if not for the gruesome details that follow. As evidence of the “malicious hatred” of the dean, he offers this ghastly description of the execution:

whilest the sayd persons did cosume with violent fire, the wombe of the sayd Perrotine being burned, there did issue from her a goodly man child, which by the Officers was taken vp and handled, and after in a most despightfull maner, throwne into the fire, and there also with the sely mother most cruelly burnt.
(2129)

Further underscoring the horror of this event is the accompanying woodcut, which depicts the expulsion of the child from his mother’s womb. Perrotine is shown tied to the stake naked so that when her stomach bursts, her intestines are exposed to the fire and the reader. Interestingly, in this detail, the illustration differs from the written account, which notes that Perrotine fell on her side into the fire before giving birth. In the woodcut, the fully formed infant bursts through the womb, exposing its naked mother in the most literal way.

Lest the reader conclude, however, that the women died as a result of a judicial aberration rather than because of religious corruption, Foxe adds his editorial voice to the brother’s. He charges that although the “Catholicke Clergie” professes a “Gospell of peace an charitie,” this

²⁰² Foxe (1563), 2129.

terrible story reveals that they act “contrary, not only to all Christian charitie & mansuetude, but also against all order of equitie or humanitie” (2131). Unable to verify accusations of heresy against the women, the authorities charge Perrotine with “whoredome and murder,” and accuse her mother and sister of complicity to her crimes (2131). Catholic officials insist that her execution verifies these charges because Perrotine provides no evidence of the infant’s paternity, and she neglects her maternal duties in sacrificing her child.

In response to inquiries into the baby’s paternity, Foxe asserts such details as secondary to the martyrologist’s divine calling. He argues that detractors focused on the identity of the father behave

As though Historiographers being occupied in setting forth the persecution of Gods people suffering death for Religion and doctrine of Christ, were bound or had nothing els to do but play the Sumner, and to bring forth, who were husbandes to the wiues and fathers to their children. (2131)

He also defends Perrotine against charges of infanticide, first condemning the act as “a double abomination” and she who commits it “more than a monster, so farre disagreeing from all nature” (2131). He manages to sneak in an anti-Catholic barb in his list of ways that women commit infanticide, noting that a few nunneries in England have grown trees with the specific purpose of using their produce to induce abortion. The larger purpose of this list is to show that Perrotine did not contribute to her child’s death of her own volition. As to claims that Perrotine could have stayed her execution by confessing to her pregnancy, Foxe suggests that she may have been ignorant of the law’s provision for expectant mothers. Additionally, the martyrologist notes that Perrotine was almost full term and had not previously sought to conceal her condition; thus, it is illogical to conclude that she hid her pregnancy out of shame and denied maternal instincts to preserve the life of her child.

Foxe concludes his account by returning to the real “Truth” of the matter. The women’s deaths were not the result of “theft, whoredom, nor murder, but onely and merely for Religio” (2133). Catholic authorities tried to deflect their own culpability by seeking to determine secrets that only Perrotine, as a woman, could hold the answer to—the paternity of their children and the physical bond between mother and child. Foxe invokes a higher power noting that “there is one aboue, that well knoweth and seeth all things, be they neuer so secret to man, and most certainly will pay home at length with fier and brimstone when he seeth his time” (2134). He adopts the image of infanticide to describe the matter really at stake, the persecution of the true Protestant church, and urges the Bishop to “exhorte these spirituall fathers first to cease fro murdering of their own children, to spare the bloude of innocents, and not to persecute Christ so cruelly in his members” (2134).

Perrotine’s exposed body sparks a debate about those things “secret to man,” which exemplifies Jonathan Sawday’s contention that the “image of the body as a book, a text there to be opened, read, interpreted, and, indeed, rewritten, was a persuasive one to the early explorers of the human frame.”²⁰³ Martyrologies like *Acts and Monuments* participate in the act of rewriting anatomical interpretation through pictorial and descriptive images of torture, which are accompanied by editorial instructions for reading the textual body. Literary anatomization seemed to offer early moderns the necessary tools “to strip away false appearances and expose

²⁰³ Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995), 129. Other important texts on early modern interest in physical and metaphysical bodies include: Jonathan Gil Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Florike Egmond and Robert Zwijnenberg, *Bodily Extremities: Preoccupations with the Human Body in Early Modern Culture* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2003); Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); and Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

the truth.”²⁰⁴ For example, the martyr’s dismembered body, as Foxe explains in the case of Perrotine, reveals the true “doctrine of Christ” as represented by the Protestant church. The language of dissection provided a metaphorical vocabulary for excavating the soul and psyche as well. Foxe urges believers, “Looke therefore nowe what is written in the booke of thy conscyence whyle thou art here, and if thou finde any thing contrary to Christes lyfe and teaching, scrape it out wyth the knyfe of repentance and wryte it better, euermore thinkynge that thou shalt geue a reckninge.”²⁰⁵ Into the seventeenth-century, writers like Robert Burton continue to espouse the belief that the conscience is a “great ledgier book” that provides spiritual insight.

We cannot know if Ford was familiar with the story of Perrotine Massey, though the account was certainly memorable for many of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, the playwright’s frequent memorializing of his heroines as martyrs indicates that he found in the pages of martyrologies a vocabulary for writing and reading the “text,” in Sawday’s terms, of the sacrificed body. Although Perrotine’s fleshly insides are completely exposed, Foxe concentrates primarily on those things that God “well knoweth and seeth” though “be they neuer so secret to man” (2134). Throughout his career as a dramatist, Ford exhibits a comparable preoccupation with “A heart in which is writ the truth,” as he imagines it in *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore* (1.2.207).²⁰⁶ Suffused with images of literal and metaphorical searches for truth, Ford’s plays dramatize Foxe’s injunction that believers “read the booke of thy conscience” by “scrap[ing] it

²⁰⁴ Devon L. Hodges, *Renaissance Fictions of Anatomy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985), 1.

²⁰⁵ Foxe, 182.

²⁰⁶ John Ford, *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, in *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore and Other Plays*, ed. Marion Lomax (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). All other quotations from the play are from this edition and cited in parentheses by act, scene, and line number.

out wyth the knyfe of repentance.” The dramatist and the martyrologist do not, however, reach the same conclusion from their readings of the body. Foxe ultimately expresses an assurance that the suffering body “enacted a far-reaching truth” by reproducing the martyr’s inner convictions in the observer.²⁰⁷ Conversely, though his characters obsessively interpret, imagine, and explore the anatomized body, Ford seems unconvinced that the corporeal texts of his society provide any stable answers.

Foxe’s certitude is based on his belief that the martyred body reflects and sustains the truth of Christ’s earthly body, the Protestant Church. In the writings of the Apostle Paul, the metaphoric body served as a powerful unifier for the early Christian church. He offers this description of the *corpus mysticum* to the believers at Corinth:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body: so also is Christ...there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ.²⁰⁸

In the martyrological tradition, martyrs’ bodies function as imagistic tools for instructing subsequent believers. In many cases, martyrs use their final words to remind audiences of the reason for their death, thereby instructing them about the appropriate context in which to place their executions.²⁰⁹ The methods of interpretation encouraged by Foxe advance his goal of

²⁰⁷ Castelli, 132.

²⁰⁸ I Corinthians 12: 12, 27.

²⁰⁹ Of course, particularly in the case of female martyrs, we must qualify our assessment of the effectiveness of instruction from the scaffold. Although female martyrs are licensed to share their testimonies, in many accounts, martyrologists provide the ‘final word’ by glossing over the rebelliousness of the women’s words and even the actions that led to their punishment. Francis Dolan astutely observes that the tradition of dying speeches “licenses and records women’s speech while downplaying the occasions of that speech, their bodily sufferings and deaths” (see “‘Gentlemen I Have One Thing More to Say’: Women on Scaffolds in England, 1563-1680,” *Modern Philology* 92.2 [November 1994], 158). More generally on the topic of scaffold speeches, also see J. A. Sharpe, “Last Dying Speeches’: Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England,” *Past and Present* 107 (May 1985): 144-67.

establishing a strong community of like-minded Protestant readers. His audience's recognition of the truth of the bodies *in* the text and the body *of* the text confirms their own positions as God's elect. As Foxe attests, "For what man reading the miserie of these godly persons, may not therein as in a glasse behold his owne case, whether he by godly or godless."²¹⁰ The woodcuts' graphic representations of the martyrological spectacle provide another facet of witnessing:

Foxe's martyrs are conduits for meaning as they "speak" God's truth by means of the visual spectacle of their deaths. God's truth becomes apparent through their suffering, whether the martyrs remain mute, speak eloquently, or inarticulately, and the elect reader recognizes that truth, while other readers remain immune to it.²¹¹

These texts taught that one's internal conviction "should yield a correct reading of a martyr's sacrifice and of the doctrines that sacrifice was to confirm."²¹² Illustrations of suffering, like the woodcut of Perrotine Massey and family, contribute to the inter-relatedness of the multiple "bodies" involved: those of the martyr, the text, and the reader.²¹³ They allow the reader to re-enact the truth-revealing and soul-searching experience of witnessing martyrdom.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ Foxe, 11.

²¹¹ Liz Koblyk, "The Reader's Object in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*," in *Acts of Reading: Interpretation, Reading Practices, and the Idea of the Book in John Foxe's Actes and Monuments*, ed. Thomas P. Anderson and Ryan Netzley (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2010), 245. Specifically referencing the Massey woodcut, Koblyk remarks that these figures are "far from any contemporary model of persuasive orator" in that they do not "explicate their beliefs for the edification or approval of the reader" (244, 243). Foxe's decision not to include a scrip of the women's questioning by Catholic officials stands in notable contrast to many other accounts, like that of Anne Askew, which includes an extensive record of her testimony.

²¹² Monta, 13.

²¹³ Thomas Betteridge offers an astute analysis of this relationship. He observes that Foxe "stresses the absolute reality of the corporeal, material burning of the Marian martyrs, while at the same time arguing that the 'truth' of the martyrs' experience was directly related to their membership of the invisible body of the 'true church.'" See "Truth and History in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*" in *John Foxe and His World*, ed. Christopher Highley and John N. King (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 147.

²¹⁴ Drawing on Freudian and Lacanian philosophy, Martin J. Gliserman eloquently articulates the interactions of these bodies; he says, "The body in-forms the text; the text embodies its writer; the reading-reader embodies the body of the text" (*Psychoanalysis, Language, and the Body of the Text* [Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1996], 11).

The sixteenth-century melding of Protestant theology and political philosophy profoundly influenced seventeenth-century images of “the booke of the conscience.” Stuart writers followed Foxe’s lead in adopting the indelible image of the martyrdom of Perrotine and her infant son as a metaphorical mirror through which believers might confirm their own spiritual certitude. In a sermon published in 1623, Thomas Playfere recalls this account and eulogizes the infant as a Christ-like figure. He declares:

O blessed babe! Because there is no roome for him in the inne, as soone as hee is borne, hee is laid in a maunger. Nay, because there is no roome for him in any one corner of all the world, by and by he is baptized with the holy Ghost, and with fire...Before thou are lapped in swaddling clothes, thou art crowned with martytdome.²¹⁵

Although “the crueltie of man” incites him to “thrust some into hel before they are borne, Playfere assures his readers that God has already made spiritual provisions for the infant, as he does for all true believers.²¹⁶ He promises, “God hath predestinated vs. And not only before we were borne, but also before the world was created, hath chosen vs in Christ.”²¹⁷ This assurance allows Christians to accomplish magnificent feats, like that of Perrotine, for “what can man doe against vs? what before we liue? what while we liue? what after we liue? If God be with vs, who can be against vs?”²¹⁸ Playfere compares Catholics to foreign and savage “Canibals” and, like Foxe, claims for English Protestants the election and protection of God, who is “his protector, his tutor, his defendour in the world.”²¹⁹ However, not all commentators trust that their readers will

²¹⁵ Thomas Playfere, *The whole sermons of that eloquent diuine, of famous memory; Thomas Playfere, Doctor in Diuinitie Gathered into one vollume* (1623), 58.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 58, 62.

remember Perrotine's martyrdom as evidence of God's providence. William Harrison attests that like the women's accusers, more recent Catholic have spread "slanderous Libels" against Perrotine, lies which those who witnessed her death would have been unable to believe.²²⁰ He renews Foxe's desire that God reveal what is "secret to man" and "open their eyes that they may see his truth."²²¹

Like Foxe's original account of Perrotine's martyrdom, these seventeenth-century reflections struggle to reconcile observable details—her pregnancy and bodily suffering—with knowledge that is invisible to man. She thwarts easy interpretation of her pregnancy by providing no verbal confirmation of the infant's paternity, a problem Foxe seeks to correct by shifting the debate to religious certitude as exemplified by her own birth by fire.²²² This rhetorical stance was a powerful one: "The claim that a martyr's words and behavior reveal his/her conscience functions as an epistemological trump card, the ultimate guarantor of martyrological testimony."²²³

²²⁰ William Harrison, *Deaths aduantage little regarded, and The soules solave against sorrow* (1602), 3.

²²¹ Foxe, 2134 and Harrison, 4.

²²² Male and female martyrs often celebrated their execution as a spiritual birthday or wedding day. For example, in *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (c.1592-95), the fictionalized More calls on this metaphor in his last words: "No eye salute my trun with a sad tear; / Our birth to heaven must be thus: void of fear" (5.4.117-18). An early account of female martyrdom provides an even more comparable use of the birthing metaphor. In *The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity* (C.E. 202), Felicity, a servant woman who was martyred with her mistress Perpetua and who had just given birth, began lactating in view of the crowd. The author of the text connects the birth of Felicity's child to her re-birth through death for Christ. The writer notes that she "came now from blood to blood, from the midwife to the gladiator, to wash after her travail in a second baptism" (*The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity*, ed. Paul Halsall, [online]. [Internet Medieval Sourcebook, Fordham University]. Available from: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/perpetua.html>. 18).

²²³ Monta, 13.

The Secrets of the Body Politic

Critics have identified a “religious sub-text” in Ford’s writings, of which his appropriation of martyrological imagery seems to be representative.²²⁴ For the dramatist, as for Foxe, the body functions as both a literal and metaphorical site of excavation. At the same time, Ford emphasizes secular applications of anatomical rhetoric that are secondary for Foxe. As the account of Perrotine’s martyrdom illustrates, the *corpus mysticum* is inextricably connected to the body politic, which in that story is represented by Catholic officials who pass moral and legal judgment. Edward Forset attests that man’s impulse to uncover the physical and spiritual interior extends to the political:

The bodie politique as the naturall, is whole and close chested, there is not in his brest (no more than in the others) any glasse windowes...Such as haue an itching desire to peere within the curtaine of those vndiscouerable secrets, besides their offensive and vmannerly sawcinesse, against the reuerend and sage Senators of the State, do apparantly detect themselues to be but babling and seducing newes tellers.²²⁵

In the absence of a rightful authority, either religious or political, Foxe provides the official interpretation of Perrotine’s body. The body politic requires an authoritative guide who, like the martyrs of *Acts and Monuments*, functions as a model for and mirror of the polity’s values and beliefs. In Forset’s mapping of the political anatomy, the monarch inhabits this central role. He provides the heart as an image of the ruler’s essentiality and authority; this organ

Is of all other the firmest flesh, yet not fed with bloud by any vaynes; and from it all other flesh deriveth by veynes his borrowed living. I have heard it argued, that a King in like sort is alone formerly and absolute stated, in and to the lands of his

²²⁴ Lisa Hopkins, *John Ford’s Political Theater* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 172. On Ford’s interest in religious subject matters, see Mark Stavig, *John Ford and the Traditional Moral Order* (Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968); Ian Robson’s *The Moral World of John Ford’s Drama* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik and Amerikanistik, 1983); Bruce Boehrer, “‘Nice Philosophy:’ ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore and the Two Books of God,” *Studies in English Literature* 24 (1984): 355-71; and Lisa Hopkins, “Speaking Sweat: Emblems in the Plays of John Ford,” *Comparative Drama* 29.1 (1995): 133-46.

²²⁵ Edward Forset, *A Comparatiue Discourse of the Bodies Natural and Politique* (London, 1606), 98.

realme, and that all other owners take from him by the veynes and conveyances which he passeth to them.²²⁶

Supporters of Charles drew on treatises like Forset's in identifying the king's natural place as the center of the kingdom. For example, William Harvey praises Charles as "the sun of their microcosm, that upon which all growth depends, from which all power proceeds...the heart of the republic."²²⁷ In the masque *Britannia Triumphans* (1638), William Davenant relies on sensory images to express the centrality of Charles' identity to that of his people. The Chorus proclaims, "His person fills our eyes, his name our ears, / His virtue every drooping spirit cheers...And he moved first to mover you in each sphere" (2.550-551, 560). The king himself interlaced the convictions of the royal heart with those of his individual subjects. In a 1629 proclamation to Parliament, he posits that an "examination of their own hearts" would reveal "the happiness of this nation" and "their own blessedness."²²⁸ In praising those who sacrifice their lives in defense of England, he again collapses the distinction between his royal body and the body politic in declaring, "The heart of a Prince is kept warme with the blood of his subjects."²²⁹ The heart of the Prince must be preserved because it produces the lifeblood of the nation.

Thus, the heart serves as a rich image for Stuart kingship, which stressed subjects' material and spiritual indebtedness to the monarch. Justin Champion argues that post-Reformation England constitutes a Protestant "Church-State" in that its "social power" was built

²²⁶ Ibid., 30.

²²⁷ William Harvey, *The Circulation of Blood* (New York: Cosimo, 2006), 3.

²²⁸ Charles I, "Proclamation to Parliament, March 1629," in *The Letters, Speeches and Proclamations of King Charles I*, ed. Sir Charles Petrie (London: Cassell and Co., 1935), 78.

²²⁹ Charles I, *The Kings Maiesties Speech, As It was Delivered the Second of November...* (Oxford, 1642), 5.

on a religious “infrastructure of confessional identity and allegiance.”²³⁰ In this power structure, “claims of authority and conscience were united in the person of a Protestant sovereign.”²³¹ Champion astutely observes that appeals to the conscience were woven into the fabric of both political empowerment and opposition: “Discussions were not simply about the rights of the conscience against the state, but ultimately about how the state functioned: in order to think clearly about the place of the conscience in the period it is important then to explore not only how conscience came into conflict with authority, but also how conscience constituted authority.”²³² James I imparted to his son an extraordinary testament to the political expediency of the rhetoric of inwardness. Throughout his reign, he expressed his desire “that there were a crystal window in my breast wherein all my people might see the secretest thoughts of my heart.”²³³ Charles heeded his father’s example in continually stating his hope “That the cleernesse and candor of his Royall heart may appear to all his Subjects, especially in those great and publike Matters of State, that have relation to the weal and safetie of his People, and the honour of his Royall person and government.”²³⁴ Perhaps because he faced more social and ecclesiastical opposition than his father and confronted the problems of balancing numerous

²³⁰ Justin A. I. Champion, “Willing to Suffer: Law and Religious Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England,” in *Religious Conscience, the State and the Law*, ed. John McLaren and Harold Coward (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 16.

²³¹ Ibid., 16. Andrew R. Murphy also engages the issue of how “traditional notions of *religious* uniformity” were adopted and reformulated to articulate “the notion of *political* or civic unity.” See *Conscience and Community: Revisiting Toleration and Religious Dissent in Early Modern England and America* (University Park, P.A.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 4. Finally, on the religious roots of the century’s “secular right of conscience” see Victoria Kahn’s *Wayward Contracts: The Crisis of Political Obligation in England, 1640-1674* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

²³² Champion, 16.

²³³ James I, *Political Works of James I*, vol. I, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), 285.

²³⁴ Charles I, *His Majesties declaration: to all his loving subjects, of the causes which moved him to dissolve the last Parliament* (London, 1640), 2.

religious factions, Charles recognized the expediency of connecting his inner convictions directly to “the weal and safetie of his People.” As Kevin Sharpe asserts, the king persisted in believing that the language of inwardness could salve the country’s unrest: “Charles adhered to the concept of a shared national conscience, even as the realm fragmented and divided into civil war. Like the law, conscience was a shared code for conduct across the commonwealth.”²³⁵ Thus, as Puritans like William Prynne, John Bastwick, and Henry Burton fashioned themselves as martyrs on the basis of individual convictions, Charles sought to nationalize vocabularies of inwardness by capitalizing on images of the body, specifically the heart, as a window to and reflection of the truth.

Surgeons of the Soul and Open Heart Surgery

In *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633), John Ford adopts the anatomized pregnant body to explore contested definitions of love and desire. Like Perrotine, his heroine is condemned (fittingly, by Catholic clergy) for the vexed paternity of her child. Though Annabella’s brother and lover, Giovanni, warns that “The schoolmen teach that this globe of earth / Shall be consumed to ashes in a minute,” her immediate destruction arises from a different fiery source, that of Giovanni’s jealous rage (5.5.30-31). Annabella’s marriage to a nobleman named Soranzo seems to avert the potential damages of her incestuous relationship until he discovers that his expectant wife bears her brother’s child. Though she eventually seeks penitence from the Friar, Annabella’s change of heart comes too late to save her marriage or her life. In a scene as unforgettable as Foxe’s shocking account of Perrotine’s martyrdom, Giovanni describes how he “ploughed up / [Annabella’s] fruitful womb” (5.6.31-32) and in the same moment provided their

²³⁵ Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 181.

unborn child with “a cradle and a grave (5.5.96).”²³⁶ The play ends with the Cardinal’s condemnation of Annabella in which he famously laments, “’Tis pity she’s a whore” (V.vi.160).

Giovanni acknowledges that his incestuous relationship with Annabella violates the “laws of conscience and of civil use” (5.1.70). Early modern texts accentuate the link between these two forms of “law” by highlighting the importance of the conscience in both spiritual and civic governance. Though Edward Forset remarks on the absence of a “windowe” into the body politic, Henry Peacham insists on the possibility of personal and national transparency. He argues, “God...hath opened the mouth of man, as the mouth of a plentifull fountaine, both to powre forth the inward passions of his heart, and also...to shew foorth (by the shining beames of speech) the priuie thoughts and secret conceites of his mind...to rule the world with counsell, prouinces with lawes, cities with policy, & multitudes with persuasion.”²³⁷ Charles similarly intertwines these two versions of inwardness as a means of suppressing oppositional rhetoric about the supremacy of the individual conscience. His insistence on ecclesiastical uniformity and conformity allowed him to both acknowledge and oversee the spiritual inner-workings of his subjects. As the king, he recognized his duty to instill these principles in church officials throughout the nation, and he believed that his commitment to do so exemplified his own beliefs. Defending his policies in 1640, he declares “that his heart and conscience went together with the Religion established in the Church of *England*, and he would give order to his Archbishops and Bishops, that no innovation in matter of Religion should creep in.”²³⁸ Ford’s plays evidence a

²³⁶ Giovanni indicates that Annabella’s pregnancy was nearly full-term since he enjoyed their secret affair “For nine months’ space” (5.6.43). The tryst was “too soon bewrayed” by her “too fruitful womb,” and she married Soranzo to account for her expectant state (5.6.48).

²³⁷ Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (London, 1593), sig. A B3r.

²³⁸ Charles I, *His Majesties declaration* (1640), 18-19. The term innovation, or novelty, had negative connotations in both religious and political contexts; see Conal Condren, *The Language of Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, 1994), 27-56.

similar concern that appeals to the conscience can endanger religious and national stability and therefore, must be regulated. Although Giovanni's dissection of Annabella seems to be the defining moment of *'Tis Pity*, the scene is emblematic of the play only in what it lacks. The transparency on which Charles insists is absent here, as Cardinals scheme and citizens manipulate marital, familial and social bonds. The play's bloody conclusion rewrites the martyrological narrative by replacing the revelation of truth through suffering with a senseless sacrifice that reveals nothing.

From the beginning, Annabella and Giovanni are associated with problematic images of the physical and metaphysical body. As Annabella bids Giovanni farewell at the end of the fateful encounter in which they consummate their loves for one another, she says, "Go where thou wilt, in mind I'll keep thee here / And where thou art, I know I shall be there" (2.1.39-40). During one of the couples' intimate encounters, Annabella conceived a child by her brother, resulting in the literal presence of Giovanni within her body. More dangerous are the ways that Annabella keeps her brother "in mind" as her civic and spiritual guide. Giovanni admits that their relationship defies the laws of their society, yet he asserts the eminence of their personal desires:

The law of conscience and of civil use
May justly blame us, yet when they but know
Our loves, that love will wipe away that rigour
Which would in other incests be abhorred. (5.1.70-73)

Later, he boasts about his usurpation of authority that should belong to God and king, claiming that their secret couplings made him "a happy monarch of her heart and her" (5.6.46). The dramatic embodiment of Charles' apprehension about assertions of conscience, Giovanni privileges his own justification of their illicit affair above the ordinances of the church and the laws on which social stability depends.

Though he quickly rejects it, Giovanni initially seeks ecclesiastical validation of his relationship with his sister from his tutor, Friar Bonaventura. In the argument that he launches in defense of their affair, he rewrites the natural laws that form the basis of civic and religious arguments against incest. He reasons with the friar:

Say that we had one father, say one womb
(Curse to my joys) gave us life and birth;
Are we not therefore each to other bound
So much the more by nature, by the links
Of blood, of reason—nay, if you will have't,
Even of religion—to be ever one,
One soul, one flesh, one love, one heart, one all? (1.1.28-34)

Giovanni asserts that their union is actually sanctified by nature, and he extends their blood relation as brother and sister to the metaphysical connectedness of hearts and souls. Bruce Boehrer argues, “[F]rom the beginning he seeks to legitimize his love within the setting of a religious ethical system, and he is willing to bend the system to its breaking-point in order to accommodate his aims.”²³⁹ Giovanni refuses to heed the Friar’s clear warning to repent and express “sorrow for this sin” (1.1.43). Beyond disregarding the authority of a churchman, the Friar cautions Giovanni that he has “moved a Majesty above / With thy unranked blasphemy” (1.1.44-45). In addition to its implications about Giovanni’s spiritual disobedience, this statement remind us of his transgressions against church and state in (re)moving the “Majesty above” from Annabella’s heart by hailing himself as its supreme ruler.

While Giovanni renounces all authority but his own, he lacks the knowledge and self-restraint to rule effectively the “monarchy” of Annabella, which leads to the destruction of the self-contained sphere they have created. As we have seen, metaphors of the body politic relied on heart imagery to describe the centrality of the king as the head of church and state.

²³⁹ Boehrer, 356.

Additionally, the monarch's ability to control in himself and his subjects the impulses housed there define his effectiveness as a ruler. Forset argues, "The heart is the dwelling place of the affections and inclinations of the mind, whereof (as of his owne trayne, family, or houshold, he alone is to haue the gouernment) if they bee let loose with scope to follow their disordered desires, not only the heart it selfe is subdued and trampled vpon by their turbulent passions, but the whole bodie also fareth the worse, and taketh no small harme thereby."²⁴⁰ After confessing his love for Annabella, Giovanni implores her to "[r]ip up my bosom, there thou shalt behold / A heart in which is writ the truth I speak" (1.2.207). His lines obviously foreshadow the play's dreadful conclusion; more importantly, they explain his unhealthy desire to possess his sister's heart. For Giovanni, "the heart is not just the vital spot, the seat of sentiment, but is also supreme as the seat of truth, thus becoming a tell-tale heart, as it were, which may be read as easily as a book."²⁴¹ Unfortunately, Annabella's heart is not an open book, which leads Giovanni to doubt the surety of his claims that individual desires will prevail over other spheres of governance like the church. The reasoning on which he depends is unstable; he realizes that the physical signs on which he bases Annabella's commitment—namely, impassioned declarations of love and intimate physical interactions—do not necessarily reveal the truth written on *her* heart. For Ford, the problem with metaphorizing the heart as the seat of truth is that attempts to access it physically are always defeated by the act itself.

Friar Bonaventura possesses skills for reading Annabella's heart that Giovanni lacks, namely the ability to dissect her inward thoughts and feelings. William Allen describes confessors as

²⁴⁰ Forset, *A comparatiue discourse*, 30-31.

²⁴¹ Dennis Gauer, "Heart and Blood: Nature and Culture in *'Tis Pity She's Whore*," *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 31 (1987): 51.

surgeons of our soules as to whom the serching, the cutting, the burning, the harde griping, the opening or the closing of euerie of oure woundes, and sores of conscience doth aperteine.²⁴²

Though Gillan Woods relies on Allen's treatise to describe Giovanni as "brutal confessor" in the play's final scene, this description of confession perfectly captures the Foxean notion that suffering accompanies and validates professions of truth.²⁴³ Giovanni recognizes Friar Bonaventura's expertise in surgical soul-searching; after all, he has already "[e]mptied the storehouse of my thoughts and heart" to the churchman (1.1.14). He attempts to secure a similar unveiling of secrets from Annabella, which she seems eager to grant. At first, she is complicit in her brother's wrongful elevation of individual desire; her heart mirrors the script of her brother's. He begs her to "live to me, and to no other," to which Annabella replies, "By both our loves I dare, for didst thou know, / My Giovanni, how all suitors seem / To my eyes hateful, thou wouldst trust me then" (2.1.27, 28-30). When she confesses to Soranzo that she is pregnant by another man but refuses to disclose the name of the father, Soranzo retorts, "I'll rip up thy heart, / And find it [the father's name] there" (4.3.53-54). Like Giovanni, he desires the knowledge that confessors are privy to, but which he can only imagine in physical terms. As in the case of Perrotine, "[e]ven a pregnant body does not tell all its own secrets."²⁴⁴ Annabella's reply to Soranzo of "Do, do!" reveals a fundamental difference between herself and her brother and husband: she recognizes that her metaphorical heart, i.e. that part of her capable of love and

²⁴² William Allen, *A treatise made in defence of the laful power and authoritie of priesthod to remitte sinnes of the peoples duetie for confession of their sinnes to Gods ministers* (1567), 220.

²⁴³ Gillan Woods, "New Directions: The Confessional Identities of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*," in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Critical Guide*, ed. Lisa Hopkins (London and New York: Continuum, 2010), 131.

²⁴⁴ Susan J. Wiseman, "'Tis Pity She's a Whore: Representations of the Incestuous Body," in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure English Culture c. 1540-1640*, ed. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion, 1990), 184.

secrecy, rather than the blood-pumping vessel in her chest, has the truth writ upon it. The body signifies nothing to those who lack the ability to peer into its metaphysical interior.

Friar Bonaventura calls Annabella “wretched, miserably wretched, / Almost condemn’d alive” (3.6.8-9) and censures Giovanni in calling him “a wretch, a worm, a nothing” (1.1.76). He urges brother and sister alike to pray and assures them that “Heaven is merciful, / And offers grace even now” (3.7.34-35). Neither the marriage nor the unexpected pregnancy moves Giovanni to violent action. Instead, when he discovers that Annabella has accepted the Friar’s offer of mercy and that she will no longer engage in their incestuous affair, his breakdown occurs. Donald K. Anderson suggests that Giovanni’s refusal to repent causes a “tension that many observers or readers probably have found more disconcerting than the physical violence of the several murders”²⁴⁵ Indeed, one thing on which all Caroline assertions of the conscience depended was a certitude that such claims reflect the yearnings of a heart ready to accept and execute God’s truth. Giovanni embraces no such authority.

In the *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), a text that greatly popularized corporeal metaphors, Robert Burton writes, “Our own conscience doth dictate so much unto us, we know there is a God, and nature doth inform us.”²⁴⁶ The same inward conviction leads subjects to recognize divine authority on earth as well. The stirrings that inform us of “our duties in Morall actions, the same, as it was written by the finger of God, in the heart of man” instill “an expresse commandement, of honor and obedience to gouernors that must remaine fixed in our hearts.”²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Donald K. Anderson, *John Ford* (New York: Twayne, 1972), 98.

²⁴⁶ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London: J. Cundee, 1800), 505.

²⁴⁷ Edward Forset, *A Defence of the Right of Kings* (1624), 25. Richard Hooker addresses this matter in *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie* (1604). He argues in regard to “Ecclesiasticall lawes,” that “vnlesse wee will bee authors of confusion in the Church, our priuate discretion, which otherwise might guide vs a contrary way, must here submit it selfe to bee that way guided, which the publike iudgement of the Church hath thought better (93).

In *'Tis Pity*, the Friar represents the only uncorrupted source of official authority, and the person that Annabella turns to when she finally concedes, “My conscience now stands up against my lust” (5.1.9). She discovers that physical beauty, the attribute for which Giovanni had granted her so much praise, means very little in the face of divine judgment. She says, “Beauty that clothes the outside of the face / Is cursed if it be not cloth’d with grace” (5.1.11-12). Annabella realizes that the only action she can take is to “sadly vow/ Repentance, and a leaving of that life / I long have died in” (5.1.35-37). She begs the Friar to deliver to Giovanni a letter signed in her own blood explaining her decision to leave their sinful life behind. Nathaniel Strout pinpoints this scene and the one that follows it as the moments in which she is successfully established as a tragic heroine. He contends, “Annabella arouses pity because she does repent and yet that final repentance—felt so strongly that she writes it out in her own blood—does not, as even today we half hope it might...save her from being killed by the man she loves.”²⁴⁸ Her martyrdom inverts the traditional narrative. No bloody sacrifice is required to substantiate her spiritual commitment; instead, Giovanni kills her in a futile effort to replace her claims of conscience with some physical proof of her continued devotion to him.

With the Friar’s departure from Parma, “the symbol of true religion leaves the city, corruption and hypocrisy go unchallenged, and the powerful Cardinal is made a kind of symbol of the society’s venality.”²⁴⁹ After he delivers Annabella’s letter, Giovanni wonders what “religion masked sorceries” the clergyman had performed to convince his sister to take such extreme actions (5.3.28). Shortly thereafter, Giovanni arranges a visit with her to determine what had “chang’d so soon” (5.4.1). In an emotional exchange between the siblings, Giovanni

²⁴⁸ Nathaniel Strout, “The Tragedy of Annabella in *'Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, in *Traditions and Innovations*, ed. D. G. Allen and R. A. White (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 174.

²⁴⁹ Mark Stavig, *John Ford and the Traditional Moral Order* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 120.

feigns spiritual repentance and begs his sister to forgive him. Annabella answers, “With my heart” (5.5.78). Giovanni’s all-consuming need to literalize his sister’s vow destroys them both. The dialogue just before Annabella’s murder conveys his dangerous preoccupation with physicality above the spiritual assurance offered by the Friar. Annabella tries to comfort her brother by promising him that it is “most certain” that there is a Heaven (5.5.35). Giovanni answers that if such a place exists, he and his sister “should know one another” in that world (5.5.37). Although Annabella interprets his words to mean that they will be together in spirit, Giovanni actually wants to know if they will be able to “kiss one another, prate or laugh” after death (5.5.35-40). To the end, he insists “on the transcendence of his fleshly love.”²⁵⁰ Giovanni is unwilling to relinquish his sister to any world where he will not have physical control over her, for he believes this is the only way he is capable of knowing her. Because “[t]he private, self-absorbed world created by Giovanni and Annabella cannot last,” he chooses death as his only alternative.²⁵¹

Annabella’s confession and repentance dissolve the tension between physicality and spirituality produced by her relationship with Giovanni. Prior to his execution, Marian martyr William Bradford claimed a similar ease of body and soul: “Let vs, I say, do on this sort, that is hartely repēt vs of our former euil life, and vnthākfull gospellyng past, cōuert and tourne to god wyth our whole hearts...Inwardly we shal fele peace of conscience betwene god and vs, which peace passeth all vnderstandinge, and outwardlye we shal fele much mitigation of these miseries, yf not an vtter takyng of thē away.”²⁵² Like Bradford, Annabella transcends her physical nature;

²⁵⁰ Ronald Huebert, *John Ford, Baroque English Dramatist* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1977), 89.

²⁵¹ Laurel Amtower, “‘This Idol Thou Ador’st’: The Iconography of *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*,” *Papers on Language and Literature* 34.2 (1998): 204.

²⁵² FoXe, 1181.

by contrast, in murdering his sister, Giovanni destroys himself and his chances of salvation. As Giovanni carries her heart out of the bedroom, he taunts Annabella's husband, saying "Soranzo, thou hast miss'd thy aim in this" (5.5.99). Huebert claims, "He flaunts Annabella's heart on his dagger, because for him death is the final triumphant point of unity between his soul and hers."²⁵³ However, what Giovanni does not seem to realize is that he, like Soranzo, has also missed his aim. He refers to the heart that he dug from his sister's breast as "Annabella's heart" (5.4.31). This is all that he can say of it, for there are no secrets written on the bloody organ. Robert Burton quotes Ariosto in describing the "violent passion" of jealousy as "a martyrdom, a mirth-marring monster."²⁵⁴ Giovanni, who is aptly referred to as an "Incestuous villain"(5.4.51), "Cursed man" (5.6.62) and a "Monster of children" (5.6.64) commits the most archetypal of sins in killing his sister. He rejects the divine authority that his sister has submitted herself to in order to enact godly revenge himself. Banerjee calls Giovanni both "the sacrificer and the angry god who must be placated."²⁵⁵ However, as a human whose powers are limited to the physical world, the only revenge he can enact is tragic and fatal. The Cardinal concluding pronouncement, "'Tis pity she's a whore" exposes the society's inability to correctly interpret Annabella's martyred body. This play cautions that martyrdom is an empty term when it implies the destructive exaltation of self-serving desires above divine truth.

Myocardial Fractures in the Body Politic

In *'Tis Pity*, Ford showcases the dangers of replacing divinely sanctioned religious authority with the stirrings of the individual conscience. In *The Broken Heart* (1633), the

²⁵³ Huebert, 55.

²⁵⁴ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) (Philadelphia: J.W. Moore, 1857), 566.

²⁵⁵ Pompa Banerjee, "The Gift: Economies of Kinship and Sacrifice in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*," *Studies in the Humanities* 29.2 (2002): 145.

playwright reflects on the social function of the conscience and through its heroine, Penthea, he stresses the necessity of an imitable guide in the body politic.²⁵⁶ Kevin Sharpe argues that for Charles, “[t]he king’s role was to expose the pretenders, to develop the residual sense of right and wrong in all, and to protect and defend the common conscience of the realm until the misguided came to see the light or were defeated and saw God’s own displeasure.”²⁵⁷ Whether or not Ford was confident in Charles’ ability to provide that moral center, *The Broken Heart* espouses a similar view of the need for a “common conscience.” In contrast to *’Tis Pity*, the characters of this play make no real effort to dissect the physical body, believing instead that “Our eyes can never pierce into the thoughts, / For they are lodged too inward” (4.1.17-18). *The Broken Heart* explores the variety of moral states through the characters’ competing and conflicting definitions of honor, and that exploration reveals how much Penthea’s values are in opposition to those of her society. Recognizing the inherent flaws in a system that sanctions the breaking of betrothal vows and effectively legitimizes rape by championing enforced marriages, Penthea commits to establishing and upholding her own code of honor. She discovers the impossibility of sustaining her values in an oppressive world and accepts death as the only viable solution. A man who likewise faced death to maintain his principles, Charles fashioned himself in the model of Foxe’s martyrs’ by praying that “God will give Me such a measure of Constancy, as to feare him more than man: and to love the inward peace of My Conscience, before any outward tranquility.”²⁵⁸ Ford’s exploration of the suffering required to sustain claims of conscience reveals the culture’s perceptiveness to the high stakes of this rhetoric. Over a decade

²⁵⁶ John Ford, *The Broken Heart*, ed. Donald K. Anderson, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968). All other quotations from the play are from this edition and cited in parentheses by act, scene, and line number.

²⁵⁷ Sharpe, 182.

²⁵⁸ Charles I, *Eikon basilike, The pourtraicture of His Sacred Majestie in his solitudes and sufferings* (1648), 54.

before Charles' execution, the dramatist calculates the cost of his privileging "the inward peace of [the] Conscience."

Pentheia's sad story is at the center of the *The Broken Heart*. She is forced by her brother Ithocles to marry Bassanes, a jealous man whom she does not love. She was previously betrothed to Orgilus, but after she is contracted to Bassanes, she relinquishes any hope of being reunited with Orgilus. Grieving for the loss of her true love, Penthea starves herself to death. Determined to avenge Penthea's tragic fate, Orgilus kills Ithocles; shortly thereafter, he is executed for the crime. The titular "broken heart" does not belong to either Penthea or Orgilus, though Penthea declares her heart "divided" and "lost." Instead, it applies to Calantha, who has been left to rule the country of Sparta after the death of her father. Upon hearing of the terrible deaths of Penthea, Orgilus, and Ithocles, Calantha herself dies of a self-prescribed broken heart, thus ending the reign of her family in Sparta. The Epilogue, which expresses hope that "the BROKEN HEART may be piec'd up again," (14) seems a trite remedy for the heartache and bloodshed of the preceding events.

Malcolm Smuts describes seventeenth-century discussions of divine rights as "exercises in political casuistry, treating the obligations that kings and subjects owed to each other as well as to God, and the dangers caused when false claims of conscience shaped political behaviour."²⁵⁹ Charles' Puritan opponents effectively employed claims of individual right by arguing that personal communion with God required no royal intercessor, especially one whose policies seem to oppose sacred beliefs. For example, William Prynne defended his *Histriomastix* (1633) by arguing that because of his conviction that the King "governed without any

²⁵⁹ Malcolm Smuts, "Force, love and authority in Caroline political culture," in *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary essays on culture and politics in the Caroline Era*, ed. Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), 35.

controul,” he “took the better to shew my conscience and courage, to oppose that power which was the highest” in defense of godly principles.²⁶⁰ Richard Hooker responds to these arguments by insisting on the necessary separation of private and public. He offers the objection that “by following the law of priuate reason, where the law of publique should take place, they [Puritans] breede disturbance.”²⁶¹ As Hooker and other supporters of the monarchy objected, “[c]onscience could be no defence for contesting with authority in church or state.”²⁶² The characters of *The Broken Heart* rely on individual conceptions of honor to fashion their identities as secular and sacred subjects, which collapses the distinction between private reason and public law that Hooker demands. Hopkins points out, “One of the key terms representing the moral code by which the characters live their lives [i.e. honor] proves to be a word about whose meaning most of them are unclear.”²⁶³ Instead, they struggle to define and distinguish between various definitions of the term in a way that legitimizes their beliefs.

Orgilus naively believes that true honor will always shine through false accusations. He says, “Time can never / On the white table of unguilty faith / write counterfeit dishonor” (2.3.25-27). His understanding of honor is couched in religious language: it requires “faith”; it is a “fire” that is “perfum’d with vows”; it is fed by “virgins’ tears” (2.3.26, 28, 29, 31). He wrongly believes that truth needs no champion, that fate will right the wrongs done to Penthea and himself. After Penthea’s death, Orgilus forsakes honor altogether; the only “fate” that will bring about retribution is “steel”—a dagger—(4.4.38), which he uses to murder Ithocles.

²⁶⁰ William Prynne, *His Defence of Stage-Plays, or, A Retraction of a former Book of his called Histrio-Mastix* (Greenwich, CN: Literary Collector Press, 1905), 6.

²⁶¹ Hooker, 93.

²⁶² Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 732.

²⁶³ Hopkins, 110.

As is to be expected, the prophet Tecnicus espouses a providential view of the importance of honor in human society and concludes that the gods alone can determine what actions are honorable. He says, “But let the gods be moderators still, / No human power can prevent their will” (3.1.57-58). Less naïve than Orgilus, the prophet makes a distinction between real honor, which survives suffering and triumphs, and false honor, which applies only to outward appearances. He says,

[R]eal honor
Is the reward of virtue, and acquir’d
By justice or by valour, which for bases
Hath justice to uphold it. (3.1.37-40)

For Tecnicus, the upholding of honor requires steadfastness and a commitment to civic duty. However, he defends only “just laws” that are “preserv’d by justice” (3.1.43, 44); he does not condemn those, like Penthea, who fight against corrupt social orders to preserve their own integrity.

Ithocles certainly possesses civic honor, a quality highly valued by the residents of Sparta. His military feats mark him as a man of courage and valor, and his eloquence and performance of humility fool Calantha herself. His initial characterization as a model of Stoic virtue would have fulfilled audiences’ expectations of a noble Spartan soldier. Ithocles possesses “moderation, / Calmness of nature, measure, bounds, and limits / Of thankfulness and joy” (1.2.35-37). The nobleman Prophilus praises Ithocles because “He hath served his country, / And thinks ’twas but his duty” (1.2.46-47), a “debt of service” (1.2.77). The skilled soldier shines as a “star” in the “firmament of honor” (1.2.43, 44), a godlike conqueror who deserves a “temple” (1.2.18), and a classical hero crowned with “provincial garland” that is “Deserv’d, not purchas’d” (1.2.66, 68). Gordon Braden explains why Ithocles’ virtue is assumed, rather than constantly under surveillance like that of other characters: “Self-control is widely exalted as a

proper object of untroubled pride and an important source of the warrior's inner confidence and serenity, and the alliance between Stoicism and combative aspiration lodges deep in the Renaissance mind."²⁶⁴ Ithocles falls short of this ideal, however, since his interior is not as untroubled as his exterior. Paradoxically, he fulfills his social duty in the same moment that he neglects his personal ones by betrothing Penthea to Bassanes rather than to Orgilus. Ithocles does not possess "real honor" as Tecnicus defines it; nevertheless, it is unsurprising that in a play in which appearances are so important, he is the only character who is consistently thought honorable.

As in the case of Ithocles, however, public action does not always correctly identify personal nobility. *The Broken Heart* dramatizes the problems that result when an individual's moral code is in conflict with that of his or her society. The characters define honor in a variety of ways, yet collectively, they use the term quite narrowly to refer to outward appearances. They maintain social stability by agreeing on a limited, absolute definition of honor. The fracturing of her society's worldview from her own moral standards leads Penthea to question the existence of "real honor" (3.1.37).²⁶⁵ Geoffrey Miles observes:

[Honor] is a straightforward concept only so long as it is agreed that moral standards are absolute, that right reason leads infallibly to correct moral judgments, and that the standards of one's society are identical with these moral absolutes. As soon as these certainties are questioned, ...then 'honor' becomes problematic.²⁶⁶

Penthea's faith in civic justice is betrayed by the "laws of ceremonious wedlock" (2.3.54), which have forced a "Divorce betwixt my body and my heart" (2.3.57). Returning to the scene of

²⁶⁴ Gordon Braden, *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 74.

²⁶⁵ See Lisa Hopkins' *John Ford's Political Theatre* and Ian Robeson's *The Moral World of John Ford's Drama*.

²⁶⁶ Geoffrey Miles, *Shakespeare and the Constant Romans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 77.

Penthea's farewell to Orgilus, we can read her eloquent description of the painful "divorce" between her heart's desires and society's expectations as a commentary on the uneasy place of honor in her culture.

Orgilus: Penthea is the wife to Orgilus,
And ever shall be.
Penthea: Never shall nor will.
Orgilus: How!
Penthea: Hear me; in a word I'll tell thee why.
The virgin-dowry which my birth bestow'd
Is ravish'd by another. My true love
Abhors to think that Orgilus deserv'd
No better favours than a second bed. (2.3.95-102).

Although Penthea believes she has found "true love" in Orgilus, she realizes that she can never be legitimately known as "the wife to Orgilus" since she has already been forced to marry Bassanes. Penthea is unable to accept the notion that contracts not based on true feeling are meaningful in her society, but that vows shared between two lovers are worthless. After she rejects Orgilus, she exclaims, "Honor, / How much we fight with weakness to preserve thee" (2.3.130-31).

In remarkable contrast to Giovanni, the characters of this play covet no window to the soul; Penthea alone expresses contempt for the lack of a moral code that extends beyond appearances. Emblematic of the society's simplistic equation of inward and outward, an overly jealous Bassanes covers the windows of his house so that Penthea can neither see nor be seen by people on the street. He happily declares, "That light shall be damm'd up" (2.1.7). The darkened house *should* represent the complete extinguishing of Penthea's will, her inner "light," by her paranoid husband. However, Penthea subverts this popular trope by initiating a damming up of her own mind and body against the outside world. To resist Bassanes and what he represents, Penthea removes herself physically from all outside influence and abuse. The

Scriptures' exhortation that spiritually, Christians should be not of this world finds tangible meaning in Penthea's retreat.²⁶⁷ She tells Bassanes, "In vain we labour in this course of life / To piece our journey out at length, or crave / Respite of breath. Our home is in the grave" (2.3.146-48). Due to the absence of a leader whose values evidence divine law, she vows to prove virtuous and honorable before herself and before the gods to whom she will eventually "make account" (2.3.151).

In characterizing his heroine as a martyr, Ford draws on the tradition's sanctioning and valorization of rebellion against dishonorable social systems. However, *Acts and Monuments* places clear limits on acts of defiance by emphasizing the importance of obeying royal authority that is divinely granted. Marian martyr Hugh Latimer relies on the words of early churchman Bishop Polycarp in addressing this topic; he quotes the Bishop, "[W]e are taught (sayeth he) to geue honour vnto princes, & those powers which be of God: but such honor as is not contrary to gods religion."²⁶⁸ According to Polycarp's explanation, more than an act of defiance, martyrdom should be read as a willingness to sacrifice the self in seeking to obey "those powers which be of God." The circumstances of the 1630s altered this formula as separatist "martyrs" faced religious persecution that did not require them to surrender their lives. Instead, the bodies of activists like William Prynne bore physical inscriptions of their subservience to the state through brands that served as public reminders of their disobedience.²⁶⁹ In response to Archbishop Laud's fervor in persecuting dissidents, Puritans like Roger Williams and Henry Vane pursued

²⁶⁷ Romans 12:2 urges Christians: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (*KJV*).

²⁶⁸ Foxe, 1293.

²⁶⁹ Prynne was famously branded with the letters S.L., which abbreviated his crime of Seditious Libel.

another channel of spiritual retreat by fleeing to America where they could establish a truly godly state.²⁷⁰

Pentheia partakes of both traditions of martyrological retreat. Though she will eventually surrender her life, Ford dramatizes the prior act of forsaking a society whose corruption she cannot condone. The will that she dictates to Calantha testifies to her discontentment, for she gives away those things that she has completely lost faith in—youth, love, and her brother. Ronald Huebert specifically identifies the symbolic bequeathing of her youth as “her paradoxical way of expressing a desire to return to the life of innocence which experience has taken from her,”²⁷¹ although this claim could be made for each item mentioned in her will. Pentheia’s cloistering of herself and preparation for death constitute necessary elements in her identification of herself as a martyr. Imprisoned martyrs like Thomas More recorded their sufferings to impart the “truth” about their life and trials to later generations. Modeling themselves after Paul, religious prisoners sought to unite, encourage, and instruct Christian communities. By closing herself up in Calantha’s chambers, Pentheia certainly turns her back on her former life. This enclosure is not, however, a convent for spiritual retreat but a self-imposed prison where she awaits death. No warden will escort her to meet her end; instead, she receives the “summons of departure” from an “inward messenger” (3.5.12,11). Pentheia insists that the story of her struggle to reclaim her innocence be committed “To memory, and time’s old daughter, truth” (3.5.62). She hopes that “virgin wives” and “married maids” will cling to the “honorable issue in their

²⁷⁰ On this topic see Andrew Murphy’s, *Conscience and Community*. He surmises, “The Puritan migration to New England was greatly influenced by the resurgence of heavy-handed Anglican ceremonialism under Charles I and Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud; and the hostility to Puritan ideas within the Church of England in the late 1620s and 1630s played a crucial role in spurring that migration” (10). On the state’s punishment of Puritans during this decade, see Andrew McRae, “Stigmatizing Prynne: Seditious Libel, Political Satire and the Construction of the Opposition,” in *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary Essays on Culture and Politics in the Caroline Era*, ed. Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 171-188.

²⁷¹ Huebert, 137.

virtues” above the “flattery of delights by marriage” (3.5.52, 56, 57, 58). Her only reference to the present is her request for a benevolent inversion of what her brother did to her: she intercedes on Ithocles’ behalf, hoping to “wish my brother some advantage here” by arranging his marriage to Calantha (3.5.97). Penthea ends her will, “My reckonings are made even. Death or fate / Can now nor strike too soon, nor force too late” (4.1.111-112). She welcomes death as the end of her earthly protest and the means to achieve a transcendent legacy.

When Penthea next appears on stage, she has fallen into a hunger- and grief-induced frenzy. Of his sister, Ithocles remarks, “Poor soul, how idly / Her fancies guide her tongue” (4.2.122-23). Yet Shakespeare’s Ophelia suggests that mad ramblings can harbor valuable modicum of truth. In hers, Penthea publicly indicts Ithocles who robbed her of her “pretty prattling babes” (4.2.88), the offspring of a happy marriage chosen by her father. She declares that any children resulting from her marriage to Bassanes would be “bastards” (4.2.92). Gone is the poetic language of the will she shared with Calantha. Despite her apparent state of disarray, Penthea clearly summarizes her complaint:

O my wrack’d honor, ruin’d by those tyrants,
A cruel brother and a desperate dotage!
There is no peace left for a ravish’d wife
Widow’d by lawless marriage. (4.2.144-47)

Penthea faints upon issuing this charge, which alerts the group to the extremity of her refusal to eat. Her collapse distracts them from the stern allegations in her disconnected monologue, and Ithocles uses the diversion to direct blame back at his sister. He calls her a “monster” (4.2.156) and a “murd’ress” (159) and berates her for refusing “the only ordinary means / Which are ordain’d for life” (157-58). Though he seems to pay little attention to Penthea’s words, he admits to Armostes that her persistent recounting of his treachery has unhinged him. He confesses, “On my soul / Lies such an infinite clog of massy dullness” (4.2.174-75). Whereas

Pentheia finds release through inward retreat, Ithocles is “haunted” (4.2.178) by his guilt. He discovers too late that public opinion is an inadequate barometer for measuring Pentheia’s virtue or his own. His alternating accusations and feelings of guilt are largely irrelevant at this point; Ithocles has lost whatever control he had over Pentheia. Just as she rejects her “lawless marriage” to become a widow, she rejects her brother-as-father to become a *femme sole* who dictates the symbolic inheritance of her death.

Although she is called “*Love’s martyr*” (4.3.152), Pentheia does not give “all for love” in the spirit of doomed lovers like Romeo and Juliet; long before her death, she disentangles herself from such an association by characterizing her marriage to Bassanes as a rape and by refusing the secret advances of Orgilus. Seventeenth-century writers imagined that “[i]f love wounded the heart, grief broke it, and broke the self that accompanied it.”²⁷² Pentheia’s martyrdom results from this interpretation of the titular broken heart; she grieves for the loss of Orgilus but also for the truth that should accompany proclamations of love and honor. Thomas Watson preached, “Gods eye is principally upon the heart; An humble heart, a broken heart... God lookes there most where we look least.”²⁷³ By Watson’s formulation, Pentheia’s brokenness prepares her to fully embrace her inward convictions, which requires a disavowal of self. Elaine Scarry explains how the intense pain suffered by torture victims causes people to separate the self from the body: “For what the process of torture does is to split the human being into two, to make emphatic the ever-present but, except in the extremity of sickness and death, only latent distinction between a self and body.”²⁷⁴ The goal of torturers in making this split is to rob their subjects of a voice,

²⁷² Sarah Covington, *Wounds, Flesh, and Metaphors in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 140.

²⁷³ Thomas Watson, *Gods Anatomy upon Man’s Heart* (1649), 10.

²⁷⁴ Scarry, 24.

which is the veritable “embodiment” of the self.²⁷⁵ Maureen A. Tilley applies Scarry’s explanation of torture to the sufferings of martyrs, who sought to avoid a loss of voice by preparing for unavoidable suffering through the adoption of ascetic practices, which “taught them to reconfigure” the meaning of pain.²⁷⁶ Thus, the experiencing of pain reinforced the martyrs’ beliefs in the certitude of their cause.

Similarly, Penthea’s self-starvation allows her to preserve her voice while enduring the pain of a broken heart, a sullied reputation, and a loss of faith. She reconfigures her emaciated body as that “voice,” as a testament to the “sterile and life-denying” qualities of “the established male order.”²⁷⁷ Upon her determination that the only means of transcending this suffocating order is through death, Penthea’s body is again re-imagined, this time by Ithocles. He tells her that she will be heralded as

A deity, my sister, and be worshipp’d
For thy resolved martyrdom. Wrong’d maids
And married wives shall to thy hallowed shrine
Offer their orisons, and sacrifice
Pure turtles, crown’d with myrtle. (3.2.83-87)

Though in this passage Ithocles idealizes the prospect of his sister’s future glory, he succinctly describes the martyrological nature of Penthea’s suffering and the personal resolve that gives meaning, moreover, to her pain. More importantly, he describes her indomitable spirit as transcending death. Foxe’s adulation for the martyrs of his book applies to Penthea; she “declare[s] to the worlde what true fortitude is, and a waye to conquer, which standeth not in the

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 25.

²⁷⁶ Tilley, 473.

²⁷⁷ Nancy Gutierrez, “*Shall she famish then?*”: *Female Food Refusal in Early Modern England* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 77.

power of man, but in hope of the resurrection, to come.”²⁷⁸ Her spirit is metaphorically removed from her weak body to a symbolic placement in an indestructible and “hallowed shrine,” a site of pilgrimage for “Wrong’d maids” and “married wives.” In Ithocles’ imagination, Penthea achieves the greatest possible recognition of her death. She is remembered and even deified as a martyr.

As the head of Sparta’s social, martial, and political power structures, Calantha is charged with the duty of restoring the kingdom from the havoc wrought by Penthea’s death. Her adherence to civic duty is not without sacrifice, as Gutierrez observes: “[W]hile the violence in the play is ultimately contained by Calantha’s subjugation of her anguish and her vigilant dispensing of justice and good government, order is restored at the expense of her own life.”²⁷⁹ Calantha endures the news of her father’s and Penthea’s deaths and of Ithocles’ murder and Orgilus’ crime with an unmoved countenance. She maintains this firmness of spirit even in the face of her own death, which causes her courtiers to marvel at her “masculine spirit” and absence of “female pity” (5.2.95). Before Calantha dies, she orders the affairs of her kingdom: she sentences Orgilus to death for Ithocles’ murder, she provides for Penthea’s maids, and she even chooses the song to be played at her “end” (5.3.80). She declares, “Let me die smiling” (5.3.76). Her deathly smile seems to be a testimony to her inward serenity, despite the tragedies of her final hours.

While Calantha’s death has been praised as a triumph of personal fortitude, when we historicize it in the context of Caroline anxieties about assertions of the individual conscience, her willfulness implies the neglect of her duties as a ruler. This queen engenders no spirit of

²⁷⁸ Foxe, 15.

²⁷⁹ Gutierrez, 54.

collective unity through which the tarnished mores of Sparta might be restored; rather, she acts on her individual desires for Ithocles and dies of a broken heart, not for her country but for her beloved. Of the royal office, Charles wrote,

God may honour a King, not only with the Scepter and government of Realms, but also with the suffering many indignities, and an untimely death for them, while he studies to preserve the rights of the Church, the power of his Lawes, the honour of his Crown, the priviledges of Parliaments, the liberties of his People, and his own Conscience, which is dearer to him than a thousand kingdoms.²⁸⁰

Calantha's praiseworthy Stoicism might easily be censured as a disavowal of the responsibilities that Charles enumerates. The monarch's "own Conscience" is inextricably bound to the other components of royal identity, chiefly, the welfare of his subjects. While Calantha dies from the sadness of an emotionally "broken heart," she forsakes her calling to nourish the commonwealth by bridling her personal feelings in favor of asserting a national conscience. A shattered society who has lost its center, Sparta suffers the most enduring heartbreak of the play.

A Schism within Itself: The Troubled Marriage of Head and Body

Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake provide this useful summary of Charles political theology: "In both Church and state Charles sought to impose order and decorum on his subjects, to suppress dispute and inculcate unity and obedience through the repetition of ceremonies of order, hierarchy and worship."²⁸¹ *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *The Broken Heart* reaffirm Charles' certainty that religious and social stability depend on subjects' submission to a communal conscience that is represented by these institutions. Ford invokes England's martyrological past to sort out the confusion wrought by competing appeals to the conscience but

²⁸⁰ *Effata regalia. Aphorismes divine, moral, politick. Scattered in the books, speeches, letters, &c. of Charles the First, King of Great Britain, &c. / Now faithfully collected and published by Robert Watson* (London: 1661), 124.

²⁸¹ Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, "The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I," in *The Early Stuart Church: 1603-1641*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 48.

his heroines' martyrdoms portend social destruction instead of unification. In *Love's Sacrifice*, Ford shifts his focus from the people's need for a common spiritual and political guide to the monarch's struggle to uphold and impart the values that he professes. The central plot of *Love's Sacrifice* revolves around the marriage of Duke Philipo and his new wife Bianca. Early on, readers must sense that the subject of the play will not be marital bliss, for the Duke seems too anxious to prove to the court (and perhaps to himself) that Bianca is a worthy choice for a wife and duchess.²⁸² The play's villains, D'Avolos, a trusted servant of the Duke, and Fiormonda, the Duke's sister, are not as easily identifiable as *Othello's* Iago, but they certainly employ rhetorical tactics similar to those of Shakespeare's famous monster. They plant doubts in the mind of the easily-influenced Duke, not only about the fidelity of his new bride, but also about his ability to effectively rule the state. They position the two central tenets of the Duke's identity—those of husband and ruler—as contingent upon one another. Thus, as the Duke's marriage begins to fail, his kingdom falls apart as well, and his loss of identity results in madness.

Fears that the monarch's divided nature will fracture the body politic permeate *Love's Sacrifice* (1633).²⁸³ For early moderns, kingship was not only a symbol of but also a nexus for national unity. Fifteenth-century political theorist John Fortescue argued that "just as in natural things, what is left over after decapitation is not a body, but what we call a trunk, so in political things a community without a head is not by any means a body."²⁸⁴ As seventeenth-century

²⁸² There seems to be a parallel between the marriage of Philipo and Bianca to the marriage of Charles I and Henrietta Maria. Although Charles I's advisors objected to his marriage to Henrietta due to her religious rather than social status, the reasoning for the unions are strikingly similar—both Charles and Philipo were attracted by the beauty of their future spouses; Philipo's courtier, Petruchio says, "He saw her, lov'd her, woo'd her. Won her, match'd her; / No counsel could divert him" (12).

²⁸³ John Ford, *Love's Sacrifice*, ed. A.T. Moore (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002). All other quotations from the play are from this edition and cited in parentheses by act, scene, and line number.

²⁸⁴ John Fortescue, *On the Laws and Governance of England*, ed. Shelley Lockwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 20.

England faced internal conflicts of political and ecclesiastical loyalty, many worried that internal divisions could dismember the body despite its head. On the eve of the Civil War, Henry Ferne would argue, “As the naturall body defends itself against an outward force, but strives not by a schisme or contention within it self, so may the body politick against an outward power, but not as now by one part of it set against the Head and another of the same paper; for that tends to the dissolution of the whole.”²⁸⁵ To guard against internal conflicts premised on declarations of conscience, Charles predicated his authority on the assertion that his policies as the royal Head were defined by the spiritual urgings of his heart. A public prayer concerning the king instructs his subjects to pray: “rule the heart of thy chosen servant CHARLES, our king and Gouvernour, that he knowing whose Minster he is, may above all things seeke thy honour and glory: and that we his subjects duly considering whose authority he hath may faithfully serve, honour, and humbly obey him, in thee and for thee.”²⁸⁶ Charles based the ruler-subject relationship on a contract of mutual desires to obey godly authority. His prayer adopts his father’s rhetoric of kings’ divine appointment while also making use of the rhetoric of conviction that dominates religious texts like martyrologies. By offering subjects a window into the “cleernesse and candor of his Royall heart,” he believed that they would rightly identify the sacred source of his power and in their submission to him, mirror his obedience to God.²⁸⁷

Love’s Sacrifice localizes Charles’ notion of social contracts through its explorations of monarchical identity as it relates to marriage and friendship. The making and taking of vows in

²⁸⁵ Henry Ferne, *The Resolving of Conscience upon this Question* (Cambridge, 1642), sig. A4v.

²⁸⁶ *A forme of common prayer, together with an order of fasting: for the auerting of Gods heauy visitation vpon many places of this kingdome, and for the drawing downe of his blessings vpon vs, and our armies by sea and land* (1625), sig., I2.

²⁸⁷ McIlwain, 285.

this play is analogous to the pursuit of honor in *The Broken Heart*, particularly because these actions become a site where the spiritual and political might coalesce. As in Ford's other tragedies, this melding proves problematic. Seventeenth-century religion, with its emphasis on sin, salvation, and divine judgment, complicated any harmonious relationship between religion and absolute monarchy that may have previously existed. Puritan theology emphasized the elements of instability, of humanity, and of fallibility that exist in man, thereby denying any form of absolute control that is humanly instituted. Many of Charles' ecclesiastical reforms were aimed at ameliorating the resultant tension between individual and royal claims to divine right. Just as confession served as one means of making the conscience visible, the traditions and rituals of the church provided confirmation of internal loyalty. In Charles mind, "[b]elieving that external manifestations expressed and shaped sensibilities and beliefs he was committed to the maintenance of the fabric of the church and its ceremonies."²⁸⁸ In political matters, Charles maintained a similar belief in the visible contract between a monarch and his subjects. He insists, "For as we well maintain our subjects in their just liberties, so we do and will expect that they yield as much submission and duty to our royal prerogatives, and as ready obedience to our authority and commandments."²⁸⁹

Love's Sacrifice engages Charles' commentary on the reciprocal nature of the ruler-subject contract through its dramatization of marriage. Victoria Kahn asserts that "because marriage in the seventeenth-century was understood to be a natural political relationship involving the sovereignty of the husband over wife, the marriage contract was an important

²⁸⁸ Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 279.

²⁸⁹ Charles I, "Proclamation to Parliament, March 1629," 77.

ideological weapon in Stuart propaganda.”²⁹⁰ In marrying Caraffa, Duke of Pavy, Bianca makes a vow to be a chaste and obedient wife. However, when her husband’s best friend Fernando woos her, she fears that she will be unable to keep this vow, for she claims to truly love him. Unable to reconcile her commitment to maintaining sacred marital oaths and her desire for Fernando, Bianca claims that she will kill herself—her own brand of “love’s sacrifice” if she consummates the relationship. Her desires will remain secret; the truth will be written only on her heart.²⁹¹ She tells Fernando, “When I am dead, rip up my heart, and read / With constant eyes, what now my tongue defines, / Fernando’s name carved out in bloody lines” (2.4.93-95). As she struggles to contain her lust for Fernando, Bianca wishes that she could “[a]s well dispense with conscience as renounce / The outside of my titles” (5.1.9-10). Unfortunately, affronts to the conscience are as ineradicable as testaments to it. In terms characteristic of Ford, Robert Burton writes, “Our conscience, which is a great ledgier book, where in are written all our offenses, a register to lay them up...makes us reflect upon, accuse and condemn our own selves.”²⁹² Though she would forsake her royal position, Bianca will not allow herself to sully vows made before God.

²⁹⁰ Victoria Kahn, “Margaret Cavendish and the Romance of Contract,” in *Feminism and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Lorna Hutson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 290. Also see Constance Jordan, “The Household and the State: Transformations in the Representation of an Analogy from Aristotle to James I,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 54 (1993): 307-26.

²⁹¹ The idea of writing on the heart is a classic Fordian trope that is used in numerous plays other than *Love’s Sacrifice*. As we have seen, writing on the heart takes on a similar meaning in *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore* and occurs in lesser degrees in *The Broken Heart* and a play not discussed in the chapter, *The Lover’s Melancholy*.

²⁹² Burton, 569.

Ford intimates that Bianca's conflicted loyalties are the result of her husband's uncertainty of his own identities as a husband and king.²⁹³ Many scholars identify a causal link between John Felton's assassination of the Duke of Buckingham and the beginning of Charles' "personal rule."²⁹⁴ The Duke's relationship with Fernando perhaps recalls Charles' similarly disconcerting closeness to his favorite, Buckingham. Though for a long time he was jealous that Buckingham "took the place in the king's [James'] affections that was more naturally due to the prince," Charles eventually accepted him as an extension of the monarchy, arguing that an attack on Buckingham "directly wound[s] the honor and judgment of himself and his father."²⁹⁵ Nevertheless, many citizens, like Sir Edward Coke, believed Buckingham himself injurious to the body politic. Coke fervently protested that "a kingdom can never be well governed where unskillful and unfitting men are placed in great offices."²⁹⁶ Even in state trials against him in 1625, the Duke insisted that "he spoke for the king," an assertion of familiarity that many members of Parliament found unnerving.²⁹⁷ Ford's Duke shares a similarly complicated bond with his statesman, Ferdnando. Upon introducing Fernando to Bianca, the Duke unwisely offers his friend as a sort of surrogate husband minus to his new bride. He says,

²⁹³ Duke Philipppo's downfall, like Othello's, is aided by a trusted friend's insinuations; the fact that the two villains could simply plant doubt without actually condemning Desdemona and Bianca illustrates the powerlessness that the two husbands felt in determining their wives' true feelings.

²⁹⁴ See Ian Atherton and Julie Sander's introduction to *The 1630s*, 2; Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 49; and L. J. Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 37.

²⁹⁵ Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 5 and ctd. in Sarah Covington, *Wounds, Flesh, and Metaphor*, 27. Sharpe and Covington each emphasize the idea that "[b]ecause Buckingham and Charles were inseparable, attacks on Buckingham were, for Charles, threats to the monarch" (Sharpe 48).

²⁹⁶ *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, vol. 1, ed. Maija Jansson and William B. Bidwell (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1987), 403.

²⁹⁷ William Corbett, ed. *Corbett's Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and Other Crims and Misdemeanors* (London: T. C. Hansard, 1809), 734.

Of partner in my dukedom in my heart,
As freely as the privilege of blood
Hath made them mine, Philippo and Fernando
Shall be without distinction—Look Bianca,
On this good man; in all respects to him
Be as to me, only the name of husband,
And reverent observance of you bed,
Shall differ us in persons, else in soul
We are all one. (1.1.141-49)

His statements to Fernando confuse the hierarchical bond established between man and woman in a marriage ceremony. James counseled Charles that he should regard his wife as “the half of your selfe,” yet remember that “Ye are the head, she is your body: it is your office to command and hers to obey.”²⁹⁸ The Duke’s inclusion of Fernando in the marital union mystifies the Scriptural claim that two shall become one in the sacrament of marriage. The Duke’s domestic and royal identities are further compromised by his exaltation of Fernando rather than Bianca as the “partner” of his “dukedom,” as well as his “heart” and “soul.” Ian Robson argues that this speech is the Duke’s attempt to define “the type of behavior he expects from his wife and friend.”²⁹⁹ In much the same way that Charles outlines his expectations of his subjects, the Duke tries to establish the identities of his wife and friend as dependent on him, an endeavor at which he fails miserably. In response to the Duke’s request that Bianca treat Fernando like she does the Duke himself, she answers, “I will strive to be inward with him” (1.2.80). Her acceptance of Fernando as a model for imitation and a moral guide effectively neutralizes her husband’s supremacy in either relationship.

²⁹⁸ James I, *Basilikon Doron* (1599) in *Political Works*, 36.

²⁹⁹ Robson, 111.

The disjunction between the Duke's managing of his royal and marital identities and his expectations of his wife and friend creates the tragic situation in *Love's Sacrifice*. Ronald Huebert argues,

Fernando cannot fulfill his vows of love without violating his vows of friendship. Biancha's [sic] oath of married chastity must break the moment she exchanges an oath of love. Caraffa's [Philippo] vows of marriage and friendship are not contradictory in principle, but in practice they become contraries: through his ardent love and trusting friendship Caraffa places Biancha and Fernando into volatile intimacy.³⁰⁰

Believing Bianca guilty of cuckolding him with Fernando, the Duke kills her, but as she dies, she says that he will "[I]ve to repent too late" (5.1.175). Already convinced that he has been betrayed by those closest to him, now the Duke must grapple with the certainty of his own convictions. He commits suicide because he is unable to handle the confusion that Bianca's words incite. The confident character who, at the beginning of the play, was so quick to say, "What we have done / We are onely debtor to heaven for" (1.1.196-97), cannot now handle the fulfillment of his statement. Even Bianca's death brings no vindication; afterwards, he is plagued with alternating assertions and refutations of her guilt. His inability to officially and concretely condemn Bianca eventually drives him mad. Despite the Duke's attempts to perform a "sacrifice for wrong" in killing Bianca, he is unable to ensure the sacrificiality of the slaying, for it is not within his power to enact divine justice. His attempts to enact a sacrifice through the slaying of a mortal body only serve to highlight his limited powers, for he cannot reverse the consequences of his (self) righteous anger. In forgetting his duties to Bianca and Fernando and acting on personal whims, the Duke forfeits the love that he owes to and expects from his wife and friend.

³⁰⁰ Huebert, 93.

The mid-century martyrdom of Charles I bears out Ford's doubt that individual and national claims to the conscience might easily co-exist. Kevin Sharpe argues that even as "circumstance fractured Charles' moral universe to present a stark choice between political compromise and moral principles," the king "continued to claim their harmony: 'the best rule of policy,' he argued, 'is to prefer...the peace of conscience before the preservation of kingdoms.'"³⁰¹ In describing the cause of his death to his daughter Elizabeth, Charles attested to the religious *and* political implications of martyrdom. He declared that it would be a "glorious Death that He should die, it being for the Laws and Liberties of this Land, and for maintaining the true Protestant Religion."³⁰² Like earlier religious martyrs, Charles provided instruction and encouragement to the Protestant community and rejoiced in the heavenly rewards awaiting him. He abdicated his "corruptible" kingship in exchange for a heavenly "incorruptible Crown."³⁰³ Equally important, Charles highlighted his position as a national leader and propagated a vision of himself as a royal martyr. On the scaffold, Charles championed the people's desire for liberty and freedom, and he explicitly identified himself as a martyr to these political causes:

For the *People*; And truly I desire their Liberty and Freedom as much as any body whomsoever: but I must tell you, that their Liberty and Freedom consists in having of Government, those Laws by which their Life and their Goods may be most their own.... Sirs, It was for this that now I am come here: If I would have given way to an Arbitrary way, for to have all Laws changed according to the power of the Sword, I needed not to have come here; and therefore I tell you, (and I pray God it be not laid to your charge) that I am the *Martyr of the People*.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England*, 179.

³⁰² Charles I, *Basiliká the works of King Charles the martyr* (1687), 206.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 210.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 209.

Throughout his reign, Charles relied on the rhetoric of a common conscience as a means of uniting his subjects in matters both religious and political. In his death, he achieved that which he could only do metaphorically as king: through physical suffering he provides proof of his claims to inner convictions. He attests, “I see it a bad exchange to wound a mans owne Conscience, thereby to salve State sores; to calme the stormes of popular discontentes, by stirring up a tempest in a mans owne bosome.” Instead, his bodily wounds provide a means of preserving the integrity of his metaphysical interiority.

The long-standing tradition of Christian martyrdom testifies to the expediency of vocabularies of inwardness. To return to the narrative with which we began, the sacrifice of Perrotine’s infant ironically provided for the deliverance of English Protestants. As a unifying symbol for those who recognized the truth of her convictions, her mutilated body signified the wholeness of the Church’s body. In contrast, because he had instantiated himself as the source of truth, the heart, of the body politic, Charles’ removal from it proved devastating. Of the king’s execution, Fabian Phillips writes that his accusers “have not only slaine the King who was their Father, but like Nero *rip’t up the belly of the Common-Wealth which was their Mother.*”³⁰⁵ With no heart at its center, this maternal body is desolate of truth.

³⁰⁵ Fabian Phillips, *The royall martyr* (1660), 125. Italics added for emphasis.

4. ROYAL AND RELIGIOUS *GENERALISSIMAS*: WOMEN, WAR, AND MILITANT CHRISTIANITY

In 1627, when Henrietta Maria sought foreknowledge of her life as England's queen, she welcomed the hardships of pregnancies that were yet to be conceived. Certainly, she could not have imagined that the burden of producing royal heirs would pale in comparison to the sacrifices required from the wife of the royal martyr. Nevertheless, the early days of her marriage were not untroubled; while the French queen missed her family and home, Charles had become her country's adversary in a quest for English control of the seas. Perhaps because of the unrest between her husband and her homeland, Henrietta Maria sought a glimpse of future happiness from a self-proclaimed prophet named Eleanor Davies.³⁰⁶ Their exchange is preserved through Davies' recollections of the meeting. She writes that when Henrietta asked, "*When she should be with Childe?*" I answered, "O portet habere tempus."³⁰⁷ Carlisle translates the prophet's answer as "soon, or in a short time." The queen also inquired about Charles' efforts in France, which were under the command of his favorite, the Duke of Buckingham. Davies predicts that Buckingham "as for his honor, of that he would not bring home much, but his person should return in safety with no little speed."³⁰⁸ Perhaps sensing Henrietta Maria's trepidation about her

³⁰⁶ The meeting took place in the company of Lord Carlisle, who was escorting the Queen from the evening service on All Saints' Day.

³⁰⁷ Eleanor Davies, *The Lady Eleanor, Her Appeal* (1646), in *Prophetic Writings of Lady Eleanor Davies*, ed. Esther S. Cope (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 187. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Davies' writings are from this edition, cited by title and page number.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 187. Indeed, as Alison Plowden notes, "As far as Buckingham was concerned Eleanor Davys proved to have been only too accurate" (*Henrietta Maria: Charles I's Indomitable Queen* [Phoenix Mill, U.K.: Sutton Publishing, 2001], 66). The English army was in dire straits by October when, due to a lack of supplies and

life as England's queen, Davies assures her that "for a time she should be happy." This tidbit was not enough for Henrietta. "*But how long said she?* I told her sixteen years, that was long enough."³⁰⁹ Indeed, as Davies had predicated, the Queen delivered a son with a year, though the child died soon after.

The prophetess offers this exchange as evidence of her credibility as God's messenger; she is capable of advising even the queen herself. The account is couched within a larger narrative of the persecution that Davies suffered in her quest to communicate divinely inspired prophecies. She describes the "Martyrdom" of her books, a loss that she equates with the death of a child. By the time that Davies transcribes this conversation she has lost all sympathy for Henrietta Maria and lacks the introspection necessary to recognize the similarities between her sufferings and those of the queen she had once advised. Indeed, Davies' scathing condemnation of the Catholic queen in other treatises has diverted critical attention from the unlikely association suggested by this anecdote.³¹⁰ Each woman experiences great opposition to her interference in religious and political matters, each endures persecution in the upholding of her beliefs, and each struggles to reconcile gender constraints with her divinely bestowed position of authority. Although neither woman is actually martyred, each turns to Biblical and martyrological narratives of female suffering to understand and represent her own tribulations. At the same time, the women's self-presentations are infused with the revolutionary spirit that fueled social debates, which alters their appropriation of traditional models of female heroism.

weapons and troops weakened by disease, they failed to overtake St. Martin's Fort. Thereafter, Buckingham was forced to order a retreat to their ships.

³⁰⁹ Davies, *Her Appeal*, 188.

³¹⁰ For example in *Woe to the House* (1633) and *From the Lady Eleanor, Her Blessing* (1644), Davies characterizes Henrietta Maria as a new Jezebel, "a bloodthirsty Mistress of *Charmes* and *Spells*" (*Her Blessing*, 120). In *The Restitution of Prophecy* (1651), she likens Charles' queen to Bloody Mary and identifies her as the executrix of future persecution of Protestants.

Davies' wielding of "a PEN razed like" and "Liquid Sword"³¹¹ and Henrietta Maria's brandishing of "the sword that God has placed in [the king's] hands"³¹² differentiate these women from female predecessors whose empty hands can only be clasped in prayer.

I argue that mid-seventeenth century texts that represent women's taking up arms—whether the metaphorical sword of the Spirit or the material weapons of civil war—rely on venerated narratives of female sacrifice to establish a culturally recognizable script for evaluating their interference in traditionally masculine spheres. However, by identifying the battlefield as a site of spiritual sacrifice, pre-Civil War writings reveal and enact a new vocabulary of suffering that displaces an emphasis on passivity typified by Tudor martyrologies. In fact, even Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* was transformed through an editorial reframing in 1632 that emphasizes spiritual militancy in the face of persecution, a message befitting the pre-war years. This emerging conception of martyrdom fuses traditional attributes of Christian martyrdom with an increased focus on sacrifice driven by nationalism and patriotism. In providing Biblical and martyrological narratives as a solution for their insistent participation in the spiritual and social economies of war, the life-stories of Eleanor Davies and Henrietta Maria make visible the opportunities for national female influence afforded by this shift in rhetoric, despite their absence from the battlefield. They re-script the teleology of female martyrdom by incorporating martyred women into critical debates about preaching, warfare, and soldiery. Dramatists like William Davenant and Henry Shirley move this reinvention beyond the realm of self-fashioning by infusing their heroines with the revolutionary spirit that animates Davies and Henrietta Maria, while also grappling with the fundamental problem of militant conceptions of suffering—

³¹¹ *The Bill of Excommunication* (1646), 296.

³¹² *The King's Cabinet Opened* (1645), 563.

specifically, that they thwart the imagined restraint of female influence imposed by traditional martyrologies' emphasis on passivity.

Preparation for Persecution

In a culture irrevocably scarred by the bloodshed of the previous century, authors voiced a fear of imminent persecution even before the outbreak of war, and they promoted a proactive response to future violence. The editors of a new version of the martyrological tract *Vox piscis* (1627) warned English Christians against complacency brought on by seeming religious peace.³¹³ They admitted that though “there now blow no windes amongst vs to kindle the fire of sacrifice of Martyrs bodies, though our streetes doe not streame with the bloud of innocents massacred for the profession of the truth,” believers must be prepared.³¹⁴ The editors of the 1632 edition of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* echo the concerns of the *Vox piscis* publishers. Of the five editions published in the century after Foxe’s death, this one included by far the most substantial revisions.³¹⁵ Unlike the publisher of the Jacobean edition, who primarily concentrated on the significance of events that happened in Foxe’s lifetime, the anonymous editors of the 1632 edition provide their readers with a guide for understanding earlier material in the context of present and future events. The martyrs are not simply commemorated as monuments or memorials to a problematic religious history that was resolved through the bravery of the faithful, nor are they considered unifiers of a divided nation whose sacrifice paved

³¹³ *Vox piscis* (The Bookfish), which was composed of three religious treatises believed to have been written by Henrician martyr John Firth, was found in the belly of a codfish at Cambridge Market in 1626.

³¹⁴ *VOX PISCIS: OR, THE BOOKFISH*. (London: Printed for James Boler and Robert Milbovrne, 1627), 21.

³¹⁵ These additions include updated historical content and a new treatise, written in the style of Foxe’s earlier prefaces, addressed to contemporary readers. Though Edward Buckley revised *Acts and Monuments* in 1610 to include the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot, the 1632 version resituates Buckley’s revisions within this new material. The treatise was titled *A treatise of afflictions and persecutions of the faithfull, preparing them with patience to suffer martyrdom*.

the way for a Protestant Queen. Instead, the editors exhort readers to view the text as another kind of monument, “a thing that gives warning, a portent,”³¹⁶ that looks forward in cautioning Christians about the inevitability of future suffering. In their *Treatise of afflictions and persecutions*, the editors immediately set the tone of the volumes by stating “that it is impossible to live godly and not suffer persecution” (A2). The message of the entire treatise is the need for preparation, intimating that the reading of *Acts and Monuments* comprises a fundamental step in the process of arming one’s self for the battles ahead. Because persecution is inevitable, Christians must adopt a readiness to endure hardships as a natural response to living in a seemingly peaceful world, just as does “the sillie Ant” who instinctively labors “in summer to store vp food against the cold and stormie Winter of Affliction” (A2).

The stories of previous martyrs thus provide imitable examples for seventeenth-century Christians who must prepare themselves “with patience to suffer martyrdom.”³¹⁷ In describing the kinds of martyrdom that readers could face, the editors include both the possibility of death and the endurance of lesser forms of persecution. Damian Nussbaum contends that the editors of the 1632 edition change the tone of Buckley’s revisions by presenting the Armada and the Gunpowder Plot as singular victories in a larger, continental fight against Catholicism. He notes, “In the continuing contest with Rome, England was part of a pan-European movement, and successes at home were more than matched by persecution abroad. For English Protestants, the

³¹⁶ “Monument,” n., OED. Spenser relies on this meaning of monument in *The Faerie Queene* when describing the knight Verdant’s shield; he writes, “His warlike armes, the idle instruments / Of sleeping praise, were hong vpon a tree, / His brave shield, full of old moniments, / Was fowly ras’t, that none the signes might see” (II.xii.80). John Guillory writes that “the implicit argument of the erased moniments” is that Verdant is “cut off from his especial origins,” that is, his sources of honor and duty as a warrior; see *Poetic Authority: Spenser, Milton, and Literary History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 39. Guillory continues, “Loss of origin is analogous to the blankness of of the shield, from which the memory signs are erased” (40). The 1632 editors of Foxe stress that readers must constantly renew their mental image of previous martyrs lest they be seduced by a false sense of complacency. Unlike Verdant, they must not let the weapons of their faith lie “idle.”

³¹⁷ Foxe, (1632), 8Z3.

war was far from won.”³¹⁸ This edition aligns Biblical martyrs with English heroes like Lady Jane Grey and Archbishop Cranmer, and by extension, it aligns the Marian martyrs with Stuart readers, since all could potentially partake of a tradition of suffering that defines the true church. On a level affecting readers’ involvement with the entire text, “the figure of the martyr, at the heart of Foxe’s narrative, was being transformed.”³¹⁹ *The treatise of afflictions and persecutions* revisits three major commonplaces of the martyrological tradition: the martyrs’ imitation of Christ, their constancy in approaching death, and their reliance on familial ties to God and his son. However, the editors’ discussion of these aspects is strikingly different from Foxe’s description of them in preceding accounts. In most of *Acts and Monuments*, these strengths are divinely granted to martyrs; in the 1632 editors’ *Treatise*, they are characterized as skills that can be acquired through proper preparation and instruction. More than previous martyrologies, this version presents an active conception of martyrdom, one which stresses believers’ training for a militant defense of their cause.

The editors follow their emphasis on the need for preparation in times of peace with an exhortation that *all* believers should ready themselves for the possibility of martyrdom. They argue, “[L]et not the great ones of the world thinke to bee exempted out of this ranke,” since they, like Lady Jane Grey, might be “put to death, even then when they might seeme most to have flourished in the world” (A3). In the *Treatise*, Protestants’ likeness to Christ through martyrdom serves as the great equalizer and unifier of all believers:

Seeing then that neither age, sex, power nor place can secure vs from sufferings, which are every where foretold in the holy Scriptures to abide vs, whether we are high or low, let vs in the name and fear of God prepare to take vp the crosse of Christ. (A3)

³¹⁸ Nussbaum, 186.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 185.

The editors ascribe new “ranke” to all believers by emphasizing their positions as “good souldiers of Jesus Christ,” thereby allegorizing the Christian life in terms of duty and involvement in an elite form of soldiering. They do not conceive of *imitatio Christi* as a humble acceptance of suffering but as “spiritual warefare unto the death” in which Christians are called to “fight the good fight of faith” (B3, A4). Though clearly drawing on New Testament images of spiritual battle, the 1632 editors also appear indebted to Erasmus’ portrait of the Christian soldier in *Enchiridion* (1533). In this handbook for the Christian soldier, Erasmus warns against complacency by urging readers to view life, like Job did, as “a certayne perpetuall exercyse of warre.”³²⁰ Though in earthly warfare soldiers may have periods of ease, Christ’s soldiers “must euer stande afore the tentes & make watche for our aduersary is neuer ydle.”³²¹ Like the authors of the *Treatise*, Erasmus underscores awareness and preparation as key in combating Satans advances, exhorting each believer to make “thy fyrst care be that thy mynde be not vnarmed.”³²² The editors of *Vox piscis* similarly employ soldiering imagery in arguing, “It behooueth vs therefore to be aduised as by ciuil prouidence to prepare for war in time of peace, so by spirituall prudence in the midst of supposed security, to arme our selves against ghostly dangers which may and doe on ever side besiege vs.”³²³

The *Treatise* stresses the importance of Christians’ reading and knowledge of Scripture for readying themselves to suffer persecution. The editors’ identification of “invincible patience and constancie of faith” as the “principal glorie” of martyrs perhaps reveals the century’s

³²⁰ Desiderius Erasmus, *Enchiridion militis christiani* (London, 1533), Aii.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, Bii.

³²² *Ibid.*, Bii.

³²³ *VOX PISCIS*, 22.

renewed interest in the values of classical philosophy (A4). The Protestant version of Stoic indifference in the face of death can be achieved by “committing to memory some select and choice sentences of holy Scriptures concerning the crosse” (A4). Believers must “regulate all [their] persuasions and resolutions” by “the word” of God rather than “by sense” (A4). Erasmus similarly emphasizes the importance of spiritual education, noting that “prayer & knowlege otherwyse called lernynge Paule wolde we sholde be euer armed whiche byddeth vs pray continually without stop.”³²⁴ In addition to comprising a necessary part of Christians’ training to face persecution, Scripture also figures into the editors’ conception of their defensive stance. The editors compare the valor of pagan heroes like Alexander and Scipio in warring against “threats, gibbets, fires, yea against death itself” to Christians’ fight against the devil (A4). Like these great soldiers, who won worldly battles with spears and swords, Christians are victorious in spiritual warfare by skillfully donning their weapon, “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (A4).

This epistemological shift in martyrological rhetoric coincided with great social changes that led early moderners to re-evaluate their understanding of sacrifice. The era witnessed a new sacrificial pyre, “the long conceived flame of civill warre,” as Lucy Hutchinson describes it.³²⁵ In the minds of many English men and women, the war demonstrated the inter-relatedness of spiritual battles and human conflict as stressed by the Caroline editors of *Vox piscis* and *Acts and Monuments*. Martyrologies outlined a doctrine for understanding and accepting the material threats of spiritual battle. Especially in the North, English Protestants feared a return to the bloody days of Mary Tudor wrought by the hands of their Irish Catholic neighbors. John Adair

³²⁴ Erasmus, Bii.

³²⁵ Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, eds. Lucy Apsley Hutchinson and Julius Hutchinson (T. Bensley: London, 1808), 50.

explains, “Puritan families knew what to expect from the graphic woodcuts of martyrdom in Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, by far the most popular book in England after the Bible.”³²⁶ From these same texts, mid-century writers gleaned justification for believers’ active response to persecutory threats, thereby enacting the interpretive shift in conceptions of martyrdom suggested by Foxe’s seventeenth-century editors. In particular, Puritan authors seized on a literal interpretation of the Erasmian soldier by advocating that the battlefield is a site of holy warfare, that *imitatio Christi* includes *militia Christi*.³²⁷ Alexander Leighton appropriates the Augustinian tradition that “It is not the suffering but the cause that makes men martyrs” in his explanation of the conditions for God’s intervention in earthly conflicts.³²⁸ Although a war can be supported by a just cause, God will intercede only if that cause is also holy. Leighton maintains, “Such warres are Gods warres, the battles of the Lord which he can and will prosper.”³²⁹ Field commanders adopted the language of these authors to impress upon their men the seriousness of their mission. Sergeant-Major-General Philip Skipton counseled his battalion of Parliamentarian soldiers to “[r]emember the cause is for God.”³³⁰ Of his summons to fight for the king in the Scottish wars, Sir Bevil Grenville writes,

I cannot contain myself within my doors when the King of England’s standard waves in the field upon so just an occasion, the cause being such as must

³²⁶ John Adair, *By the Sword Divided: Eyewitness Accounts of the English Civil War* (Stroud, U.K.: Sutton Publishing, 1998), 12.

³²⁷ See Thomas Adams, *The Souldier’s Honour* (1617); Thomas Barnes, *Vox Belli; or, an alarm to warre* (1626); William Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes: Plague, Famine, Sword* (1631); Alexander Leighton *Speculum belli sacri; or the looking-glasse of the holy warre* (1624); and Thomas Sutton, *The Good Fight of Faith* (1624).

³²⁸ Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos xxxiv.* 23.

³²⁹ Leighton, 290.

³³⁰ Ctd. in Adair, 56.

make all those that die in it little inferior to martyrs. And for mine own part, I desire to acquire an honest name or an honorable grave.³³¹

Largely absent from the battlefield, women have frequently been on the outskirts of modern scholarship about stories of heroic sacrifice from the civil war period.³³² Yet, Eleanor Davies and Henrietta Maria produce narratives that demonstrate their perspectives on the link between soldiering and martyrdom and their lived experiences as women who believed that their divine callings as a prophetess and a queen required the strength both to endure *and* to fight.

Prophetic Power and Liquid Swords

Recent scholarship has rescued Eleanor Davies' literary reputation from the dismissals of early twentieth-century critics who described her dense prose as nonsensical and impenetrable.³³³ Scholars like Teresa Feroli, Esther Cope, and Diane Watt have highlighted Davies' contributions to the history of female prophecy and mysticism and have usefully compared her treatises to those of Margery Kempe, Anna Trapnel, Margaret Fell Fox and others.³³⁴ In volume alone, the contributions of these visionaries to mid-seventeenth century literary culture is astounding: Teresa Feroli estimates that between 1641 and 1660 approximately fifty female prophets

³³¹ "Bevill Grenville to to Sir John Trelawny," in *The History of the Grenville Family*, ed. Roger Grenville (William Pollord, 1895), 213.

³³² Alison Plowden's *Women All of Fire* has helped to correct this oversight by providing a wealth of stories about women's participation in the war. Furthermore, the papers of Brilliana Hartley have recently received greater critical recognition by scholars like Raymond A. Anselment and Jacqueline Eales.

³³³ Dismissing Davies in much the same terms that her own society did, one literary scholar attributes her obscure style to "a definite mental weakness" (See S.G. Wright's "Dougle Fooleries," *Bodleian Quarterly Record* 7 [1932-34]: 95-98). More recently, Esther Cope has re-evaluated the technical and structural qualities of Davies' texts. She argues that Davies valued complexity in her writings as evidence of its divine source and believed that attempts to explicate its meaning detracted from the inspired qualities of her message. See "Dame Eleanor Davies Never Soe Mad a Ladie?" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 50.2 (Spring 1987): 133-144.

³³⁴ See Teresa Feroli's *Political Speaking Justified: Women Prophets and the English Revolution* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006); Esther Cope's *Handmaid of the Holy Spirit: Dame Eleanor Davies, Never Soe Mad a Ladies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992); and Diane Watt's *Secretaries of God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997).

produced around 156 published works.³³⁵ As Feroli explains, the breadth of subject matters addressed by these writers is equally remarkable. She elaborates that “a prophecy could represent an inspired reading of Scripture or a direct communication from God,” which allowed for the frequently political overtones of the women’s pronouncements.³³⁶ Feroli heralds these prophetesses as “the first major group of women to insist on their right to participate in political discourse” and insists on the “seriousness with which the ruling authorities regarded these women’s pronouncements on matters of nation importance.”³³⁷

By carving out a space for Davies in the canon of early modern women’s writings, Feroli and others have laid the groundwork for evaluating her treatises in the context of other literary sub-cultures.³³⁸ The scholars mentioned above have adequately traced Davies’ involvement in a community of female religious writers; here, I explore how Davies participates in the more expansive history of political preaching by manipulating the tropes of male speech to authorize her spiritual activism. The Apostolic tradition of *imitatio Christi* stressed believers’ willingness to suffer affliction in spreading the teachings of Christ, which became an important part of the history of martyrdom. This tradition was particularly powerful for Foxe’s Protestant martyrs, who relied on Scripture as a source of outward validation and inward courage.³³⁹ Susan Wabuda

³³⁵ Feroli, 19.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

³³⁸ See, for instance, Megan Matchinske’s analysis of Davies’ oeuvre in the context of seventeenth century apocalyptic literature: “Holy Hatred: Formations of the Gendered Subject in English Apocalyptic Writing, 1625-51,” *ELH* 60 (1993): 349-77.

³³⁹ Indeed, Foxe explicitly connects English preachers to the Apostles through both groups’ commitment to spreading the Gospel. Before recounting the martyrdoms of the apostles Stephen and James, Foxe interrupts his account of the persecutions of the early Church with a brief description of the persecutions faced by the English and “prophets” who had been raised up to lead their countrymen back to the truth. Like the preachers of Biblical times,

explains, “The impressive scriptural history of ‘preaching Christ’ is part of the heritage of the Church across all ages and all times.”³⁴⁰ From Paul, who endured many hardships to establish and support the early Church, to St. Stephen, who became the first Christian martyr for his unwillingness to stop preaching, the Gospels record the faithfulness of the early Apostles in disseminating Christian doctrine.

By employing the vocabulary of martyrdom, which was so intimately associated with the bloody reign of Mary and the deliverance of Protestantism by Elizabeth, separatist writers and speakers unsettled their audiences’ faith in a unified Anglican church.³⁴¹ Their appropriation of martyrological rhetoric, even in circumstances more political than religious, allowed them to exploit the culture’s reverence for Foxe. Using a language that the public was familiar with, they could reignite fears about long-standing religious divisions between Protestants and Catholics while at the same time warning their readers about new intra-doctrinal divisions between Arminians, Laudians, and Puritans. Arminian Archbishop William Laud appropriated the vocabulary of martyrdom at his trial in 1645 to authenticate the validity of his ecclesiastical reforms and to refute secular claims against him. In the trials and writings of Alexander Leighton (1630), William Prynne, John Bastwick and Henry Burton (1637), and John Lilburne

the teachings of the reformers, men like Anthony Parson and John Firth, were rejected; “they themselves were condemned and burnt as heretics, and their books condemned and burnt as heretical.” (39).

³⁴⁰ Susan Wabuda, *Preaching During the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 81.

³⁴¹ Although this polemic became especially evident in the seventeenth century, the fracturing of Anglicanism began much earlier as evidenced by the first public puritan manifesto, *Admonition to the Parliament* (1572). In this call for political and ecclesiastical reform, the authors argue that the need for purification is dire: “Either must we have a right ministrie of God & a right government of his church, according to the scriptures sette up (both whiche we lacke) or else there can be no right religion, nor yet for contempt thereof can Gods plagues be from us any while differred” (Rev. W. H. Frere and Rev. C. E. Douglas, ed. *Puritan Manifestoes: A Study of the Origin of the Puritan Revolt* [New York: Burt Franklin, 1972], 6). Frere and Douglas argue that the *Admonition*’s comparison of the persecuted puritans to martyrs made their treatise especially attractive to a sympathetic populace. As we shall see, later puritans certainly continued to capitalize on the success of this comparison.

(1638, 1653), the men fashion themselves as martyrs of the present age, thus answering the call to suffering in the 1632 version of Foxe. For example, Lilburne defends himself against charges of treason with a sermon about the sacrifices of the early Christians, with whom he claims a shared lineage of suffering. He declares:

And just so they dealt with the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord, as maybe seen Acts 4, and throughout the whole body of the Scriptures: and as Heb. 11. 37, were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, wandered about in sheep-skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy... And thus in every age ever since has it been, as witnesses all the volumes of the books of Martyrs and the Chronicles of almost every nation.³⁴²

Like these authors, Eleanor Davies anxiously awaited the torments of the present age, a concern she expressed even before the editorial call to action in *Acts and Monuments*. In her first treatise, *A Warning to the Dragon* (1625), she cautions:

Sathan the olde Serpent shall be loosed a little season, as Prisoners are set at libertie when they goe to the place of Execution to receive his finall sentence of everlasting Damnation; yet hoping in his vaine imagination and hart that cannot repent to deceive the Nations that are at rest, to take a prey, to goe up to the Citie that is in safetie that needs no Wall, neither the light of the Sunne of the Moone, &c.³⁴³

God provides a method of defense against Satan's scheming by sending "Prophets to give the Nations warning."³⁴⁴ Like the king of Egypt in Joseph's time who ignored the teachings of Elias and Moses and "suffer[ed] their Bodies to lye dead in the streets in an unknowne Tongue," many rulers will disregard divine counsel.³⁴⁵ Such a king leaves his nation vulnerable to the attacks of

³⁴² John Lilburn, *The Just Defence of John Lilburne, Against Such as charge him with Turbulency of the Spirit* (1653), 2.

³⁴³ Davies, *Warning to the Dragon* (1625), 49.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

that greatest of rivals, “Prince Sathan,” which causes God to revoke his favor. Davies warns the newly crowned Charles that if he does not protect England against the threat of Satan’s Catholic army, God will assert “the sword of his Mouth”—his prophet—to overrule the king’s authority.³⁴⁶ From this early point in her career, Davies asserts her prophetic vision as instrumental to the preservation of the English nation. With her “PEN razed like” and “Liquid Sword,”³⁴⁷ she wields the sword of the Spirit with as much authority as her male contemporaries, and without regard to gender, she claims an affinity with her Biblical forerunners as persuasively as Lilburne. More interesting, however, are the ways in which Davies identifies with the sacrifices of her female predecessors. As we have already seen, early modern narratives of motherhood and virginity exemplified and influenced the shifting role of martyrdom in England’s construction of national identity. Davies creates a shared history of adversity with the exemplary women of the Bible and *Acts and Monuments*, which she uses to authorize her problematic role as a female prophet and preacher whose pronouncements encourage political consequences.

Although not a member of the court, as the fifth daughter of Gerorge Touchet the first earl of Castlehaven, Davies enjoyed the privileges of aristocratic roots. At the age of nineteen, she married royal attorney Sir John Davies, with whom she had one daughter named Lucy. Neither of these occasions proved as transformational as the events of July 28, 1625. Davies continuously cites this date as the day on which she first heard the voice of Daniel and accepted God’s invitation to continue the prophetic work that this Old Testament seer had begun. Her

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 31.

³⁴⁷ Davies, *The Bill of Excommunication* (1646), 296.

career spanned from 1625-1652, during which she wrote roughly 60 treatises.³⁴⁸ In 1627, when Davies warned Henrietta Maria about the hardships of her future, she was perhaps aware that her greatest suffering lay ahead as well. Over her twenty-seven year career, Davies was shunned by the royal court, dismissed by her husbands, imprisoned by censorship officers, and ridiculed by her society.³⁴⁹

Feroli makes the astute argument that Davies validates her prophetic identity by likening herself to Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, and extending the royal “power and privilege associated with her patronymic” to herself, the daughter of a nobleman.³⁵⁰ To apply Feroli’s terms to Davies’ religious identity, the prophetess claims the rights of her spiritual patronymic by identifying with women whose boldness is sanctioned by their sacred inheritance. Davies deploys the same tactics as Anne Askew in asserting a kinship with the Virgin Mary, thereby integrating herself into revered Foxean and Biblical catalogs of admirable women. Askew attributes her determination to record an account of her trial to a divine source, “the secret

³⁴⁸ Esther Cope separates Davies’ career into three significant periods: 1625-33, during which Davies vied for recognition of her prophetic insight from the royal court, endured the loss of two husbands and faced a family scandal when her brother was accused of sodomy; 1633-40, during which she was imprisoned as the result of increased censorship of her writings; and 1640-52, when the execution of Archbishop Laud (whose death she had predicted) reinforced her faith in the profound importance of her prophetic mission. See Cope’s *Prophetic Writings of Lady Eleanor Davies*, xv-xvii.

³⁴⁹ Davies initially sought favor with Charles by dedicating her first treatise, *Warning to the Dragon* (1625), to the king. As she became increasingly outraged by Charles’ lenience towards Catholics and grew more and more defiant of the patriarchal authority of her king, his officials, and her husbands, Charles distanced himself from her. Both of her husbands burned her writings, which led to her fiery proclamations about their premature demises. Furthermore, Archbishop Laud burned her writings, and she was imprisoned for violating censorship ordinances. In an infamous affront to her dignity, one of her contemporaries, Sir John Lambe, created the anagram “Never soe Mad a Ladie” from “Dame Eleanor Davies.”

³⁵⁰ Feroli, *Political Speaking*, 37. Feroli explains that in her earliest tracts, Davies links her prophetic mission to that of the prophet-king, James through her mourning of his death. When Davies determines that Charles has refused his spiritual inheritance as the champion of Protestantism, she transfers his birthright to James’ daughter, Elizabeth of Bohemia. By claiming a kinship with Elizabeth, Davies “confers the capacity to share in the power of the father’s name on the broad category of daughters as well as the daughters of kings” (37). On the importance of James’ memory to Davies’ prophetic identity, also see Feroli’s “The Sexual Politics of Mourning in the Prophecies of Eleanor Davies,” *Criticism* 36.3 (Summer 1994): 359-82.

mocyon of God.”³⁵¹ Like the virgin martyrs of the previous chapter, Askew surrenders herself as an undefiled conduit through which the message of God might be delivered. In particular, Askew’s testimony and John Bale’s editorial commentary establish a kinship between the martyr and the Virgin Mary, who was likewise summoned by a heavenly voice to surrender her body for the fulfillment of God’s will. Bale authorizes Askew’s autobiography by suggesting that she follows in the footsteps of Christ’s mother, who “retayned all that was afterwarde written of him.”³⁵² With Mary, Askew is integrated into the tradition of *imitatio Christi* through her exemplary preaching of his teachings. Askew subverts the dynamics of her interrogation, which position her as the disempowered victim of her accusers, by refashioning herself as an authoritative speaker with the Scriptural knowledge necessary to instruct her ignorant inquisitors in the truth.

Mary adamantly maintained the impossible claim that she was a virgin with child. Bale reverses the miracle of Christ’s conception by asserting that although Askew has a husband and children, she can reclaim her virginal identity. Bale depicts virginity as essential rather than physical, and he describes Askew as spiritually chaste: “A vyrgyne was she in that behalf, redemed from the earthe & folowyng the lambe, & hauynge in her fore head the fathers name written.”³⁵³ Here, Bale alludes to the 144,000 virgins of the Book of Revelations, each of whom has “his Father’s name written in their foreheads.”³⁵⁴ The author of Revelations continues, “These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which

³⁵¹ *The first examinacyon of Anne Askew, lately martyred in Smythfelde* (Wesel, 1546), A1v.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, B2v.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, E5v.

³⁵⁴ Revelations 14:1 (KJV).

follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.”³⁵⁵ By incorporating Askew into this illustrious crowd of witnesses, Bale extends the apostolic traditions of preaching and prophesying to the saints of the Reformation.

Like Askew, Eleanor Davies attributes her prophetic calling to the audible command of God. She retells the events of this initial encounter throughout her career, with increasing emphasis on the perceptible manifestation of the divine. In *The Lady Eleanor, Her Appeal* (1641), she remembers that “early in the Morning” on 28 July 1625, she heard “a Voice from Heaven, speaking as through a Trumpet these words; *There is Nineteen years and an half to the Judgement day, and be you as the meek Virgin.*”³⁵⁶ By the date of her annunciation, Davies, like Askew, was already married and not actually a virgin. Indeed, perhaps because she had a daughter of her own, Davies most often defines her prophetic experience in maternal terms. Nevertheless, in identifying herself as God’s “handmaiden,” she explicitly invokes the angel Gabriel’s commission to Mary and her acceptance of the holy union from which the Savior would be born. Davies celebrates her own communion with the audible materialization of the divine as her “Wedding Day,” and she shares in the miracle of the virgin birth in rejoicing that God impregnated her with the Word that had become a man through Mary.

Moreover, by numbering herself among the 144,000 virgins of Revelation, Davies employs Bale’s logic to discount her earthly marriages and reclaim her virginity. As Feroli points out, she exploits the privileges of having a noble father, whose name is written on her

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 14:4.

³⁵⁶ Davies, *The Lady Eleanor, Her Appeal* (1641), 184. Davies had previously recorded an account of her calling in *All the kings of the earth shall prayse thee* (1633), and she relates the story again in *The Dragons Blasphemous Charge against her* (1651).

textual “forehead.”³⁵⁷ She justifies the publication of her treatises by appealing to this familial bond: “ELEANOR DAVIES, handmayden of the most high GOD of Heaven, this Booke brought forth by Her fifth Daughter GEORGE, Lord of CASTLEHAVEN, Lord AUDELEY, and Tutchet. NO inferior PEERE of this Land, in Ireland the fifth EARLE.”³⁵⁸ Having already watched two husbands burn her manuscripts, Davies recognizes that marriage provides no lasting source of protection. In a treatise dedicated to her daughter, she warns, “[B]irths PREROGATIVE *surmounts* or *goes before that gain’d by Marriage as descent and blood*, a Character not to be blotted out, where with follows the state of VIRGINITY, the presidence theirs, *Not in subjection as others.*”³⁵⁹ An even more powerful identifier than her father’s title is her spiritual birthright. As heir to the mantle of divine prophecy, she assumes a new identity, “Derived from his own, namely, A. & O. Letters of no mean Latitude.”³⁶⁰ In this system of sacred coverture, Davies is protected by her heavenly Father and “Armed beside with his sword.”³⁶¹ She outlines the privileges of her inheritance again in another treatise, where she declares:

I am A. and O. first and last, both beginning and ending by whom all things were done: Not without her anything done or made...And so for this without contradiction, she his Executor, *Made like unto the Son of God*, the ancient of days likeness.³⁶²

³⁵⁷ Feroli, 56.

³⁵⁸ Davies, *Her Appeal to the High Court of Parliament* (1641), 79.

³⁵⁹ Davies, *The Lady Eleanor, Her Blessing* (1644), 120.

³⁶⁰ Davies, *Benediction* (1651), 342.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 342.

³⁶² Davies, *The Appearance or Presence of the Son of Man* (1650), 311.

Here, Davies surpasses Askew and even Mary in describing herself as one divinely favored. As His chosen vessels, these women are metaphorically stamped with the imprint of the Father like the virgins of Revelations who bear his name on their foreheads. By contrast, Davies emphasizes the chiasmic nature of her relationship with God: he cannot accomplish his will without her, even through her gift of prophecy flows from him. She compares herself to Christ who physically embodied his Father “without contradiction.” The Word is again made flesh through her inspired body of work.

In *The Restitution of Prophecy*, Davies most fully adopts her role as the second Mary, that of a chosen vessel through whom the Son of God can be made manifest. Whereas earlier in her prophetic career she identified with the teenaged Mary who was visited by the angel Gabriel, here she stands as Mary beneath the cross, keenly aware of the sacrifices of her calling. Unlike the mothers of my earlier chapter, Davies does not associate the act of childbirth with martyrdom; rather, she eulogizes her metaphorical offspring as martyrs. In her address “To the Reader,” Davies presents “this *Babe*” who like the crucified Christ was “object to their scorn, for speaking the truth.”³⁶³ As an unlicensed publication with no private benefactor, Davies’ textual child is likewise bound by “plain *Swathe-bands*.”³⁶⁴ In bringing forth this “Son of peace,” she claims for Mary and, by extension, herself an essential place in the fulfillment of old prophecies and the establishment of a new age. She declares, “*O ye Prophets, saith your God, Tell her, That her Travel is at an end...He first of the new Prophet; so his and hers both: She the last of the old. Confesseth likewise, or beareth record of his presence, Born in the flesh; of whose Kingdom no*

³⁶³ Davies, *The Restitution of Prophecy* (1651), 344.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 344.

end.”³⁶⁵ Esther Gilman Richey identifies this passage as a paraphrasing of Isaiah 40:2, the first half of which originally reads, “Cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.”³⁶⁶ Davies reconfigures “warfare” as the uniquely feminine struggles or “travail” of childbirth. Because only a woman could deliver Christ, the “new Prophet,” Davies claims childbirth as a more suitable metaphor than masculine combat for the work of bringing forth prophetic divination. She professes that although her book was “not in a Stable brought forth,” it was written in equally humble quarters, her cell at the Fleet prison. In *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe presents the Reformation as a bridge between the Apostolic church and modern-day English Protestants. Davies employs a similar technique in overlaying Biblical genealogy and England’s spiritual lineage with herself as the necessary link.

In *Her Appeal*, Davies bewails the many injustices enacted against her inspired writings. Her description of the book burned by her first husband reads like an entry from a sixteenth-century martyrology. With her first husband in the role of the bloodthirsty persecutor, she recalls, “[T]his Book of mine was sacrificed by my first Husbands hand, thrown into the fire.”³⁶⁷ Later in the text, she explicitly equates the destruction of her prophetic words to the sacrifices of earlier preachers and prophets. She mourns the loss of “those papers of mine a Saint *James* [that] received Martyrdom” and personifies the doomed manuscripts in Christ-like fashion as “killed,” “crucifi’d,” and “buried.”³⁶⁸ Nevertheless, she persists in the belief that like “the Prophet Ezekiel to that rebellious Age,” God will grant her the ability “to speak without a

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 344.

³⁶⁶ Esther Gilman Richey, *The Politics of Revelation in the English Renaissance* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 188.

³⁶⁷ Davies, *The Lady Eleanor Her Appeal* (1646), 186.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 194, 195.

Tongue sometime.”³⁶⁹ The martyrdom of her papers proved to be the first of many injustices she would suffer in seeking to fulfill her divine mission.

In 1633, Davies was brought to trial for employing Amsterdam publisher J.F. Stam to illegally print her interpretations of the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelations.³⁷⁰ The prophetess was found guilty of disseminating seditious writings and was fined £3000 and imprisoned. Imploring Charles to grant her a royal pardon and license the pamphlets, she writes:

The B: BEAST ascended out of the Bottomlesse pitt: having seven Heads, &c. seven Yeares, viz., making Warre hath overcome, and killed them: Bookes sealed by the Prophets. By the Bishop of Lambeth horned like the Lambe, harted like a Wolfe, are condemned to be burned at Pauls-Crosse, where our Lord crucified &c. This is the third Day, that their dead Bodies *shrowded* in loose sheets of paper. Lye in the streets of the Great Citie &c. more cruell and hard harted, then other tongues and Nations, who will not suffer them so to be buried. If your Highnesse please speake the word of the spirit of life will enter into them they will stand upon their feet, &c.³⁷¹

This passage describes what was in Davies’ eyes perhaps the most brutal penalty for her violation of censorship laws, the burning of her books by Archbishop Laud. Davies extends her prophetic inheritance to Charles by insisting that if he “speake the word of the spirit of life,” he can resurrect the dead in the manner of Elijah and Elisha. Although Davies compares herself to Christ in the aforementioned passage from *The Restitution of Prophecy*, she makes the careful distinction that she is not modeled after him but “*made like unto the Son of God.*” Each physically embodies a different aspect of the divine. Christ came to be the sacrificial Lamb, a role that Davies’ papers inhabit but one that she rejects for herself. When Peter sought

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 190.

³⁷⁰ In *A Warning to the Dragon* (1625), Davies identifies James as her protector and the earthly source of her prophetic authority. In this same pamphlet, she expresses a desire that like his father and herself, Charles will prove an outspoken opponent of Catholic forces seeking to encroach on England. By 1633, Davies had become disillusioned with the king and instead turned to Elizabeth of Bohemia for protection.

³⁷¹ Eleanor Davies, *As not unknown, ... this petition* (1645), 141. Davies provides another brief account of the 1633 trial in *Her Appeal* (1641), 193-4.

retaliation against Christ's accusers, Jesus rebuked him and repaired the wound caused by his blow; this model of passive resistance served as a paradigm for subsequent martyrs. Like Peter, Davies identifies her present age as a time for "making war" and calls for vengeance. In a broadsheet published shortly after Laud's execution, which the prophetess had predicted in 1633, she rejoices that the Lord has "cut asunder that false Prophet" who persecuted his true "Servant."³⁷² Davies interprets this turn of events as evidence that the time for retributive justice had come. The sword of Peter would no longer be stayed.

As much as any of her male contemporaries, Davies persists in the belief that the wicked deserved to perish in the name of holy warfare. She relishes the opportunity to predict the deaths of her enemies as she did not only with Laud, but also with Buckingham, Charles, and the first husband who burned her manuscripts. Yet, she recognizes that although God's prophets are defenders of his Word, the sword of his spirit is primarily a tool to unite his people, not a weapon to divide them. In a prophecy dedicated to her daughter Lucy, Davies references I Kings 3, which tells the story of two women who each believe that the other's child has died and her own child has been stolen by the grieving mother. When they implore King Solomon to pass judgment on the dispute, he calls for a sword, that the child in question might be equally divided. One mother offers to surrender the child to the other woman if he will spare its life. Her concern for the child above her own desires leads King Solomon to declare that she is its true mother. Davies presents the passage as a parable for the war-torn English nation, which threatens to be destroyed by political and ecclesiastical disputes. In her version, the false mother is personified by Henrietta Maria, though she also represents the feminized Catholic Church, so often condemned by Protestant writers as the Whore of Babylon. This anti-maternal figure advances

³⁷² Ibid., 139.

her own agenda with no concern for the well-being of her “child”: “*Mother not of the Living Child*, but of Divisions and Massacres, *where inclusive the ador’d sacrament called the MASSE*: Thus uttered Her voice, *Let it be neither Thine nor Mine*, but devide it: destroy it utterly.”³⁷³ Like the prophets of the Old Testament who suffered persecution to deliver the news of Christ’s coming and like the preachers of the New Testament who faced martyrdom to spread the story of his resurrection, Davies hazards her life to defend the Child at the center of the conflict. She contends that this role is “most proper to be performed by that sex a Woman by whom death came to be the Messenger of Life.”³⁷⁴ Although Davies learned the arts of preaching the holy word and engaging in holy war from her male predecessors, from the uniquely feminine perspective of motherhood, she finds a balance between the two that seems to elude her male contemporaries.

Her She-Majesty Generalissima, the Amazonian Queen

While Davies feared that Henrietta Maria would revive the bloodthirsty agenda of Mary Tudor, the newly crowned Catholic queen could not help but remember the persecution of her religious predecessors. Marie de Medici entreated her daughter to remember her duty “first to God and her religion, then to her husband” by guiding Charles back “into the religion for which his grandmother (Mary, Queen of Scots) died.”³⁷⁵ Not long after her arrival to England, Henrietta Maria and her French gentlewomen supposedly walked barefoot to Tyburn, thereby

³⁷³ Davies, *From the Lady Eleanor, Her Blessing* (1644), 118.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 128.

³⁷⁵ Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 76.

symbolically re-enacting the Christ-like trek of humbled martyrs to their place of execution.³⁷⁶

The one state source that recounts this journey records that on the afternoon of 26 July 1626, Henrietta Maria and five of her servants walked from St. James's Palace and "kneeld before Tibourne gallows and prayed the space of five minutes."³⁷⁷ Some Protestants viewed the Queen's journey to the site as a subversive means of memorializing Catholic martyrs who were hanged there. Others defended her commitment to Charles and England and protested that her enemies had wrongly interpreted the incident.³⁷⁸ Regardless, because of public opinion against the controversial symbolism of the Queen's actions, after defending his bride as simply naïve, Charles put an end to her treks to Tyburn and summarily dismissed her French companions.

The martyred heroines available to Davies as a Protestant are unsuitable for the Catholic queen; additionally, most of her subjects viewed the women of Catholic martyrologies as criminals who had been justly executed. In the Biblical heroine Esther, Henrietta Maria finds a model who can justify her intercession on behalf of English Catholics and who can serve as the inspiration for future political involvement, even to the hazard of her life. Foxe praises Esther alongside the Maccabbean mother for her willingness to "suffer persecution for righteousness

³⁷⁶ The Oratorian priests of Henrietta's French household reportedly encouraged this sojourn. Malcolm Smuts notes that the French maintained that no such quest had ever taken place. See "Religion, European Politics, and Henrietta Maria's Circle, 1625-41," in *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics and Patronage*, ed. Erin Griffey (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2008), 16.

³⁷⁷ Ctd. in Michelle A. White's *Henrietta Maria and the English Civil Wars* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 24.

³⁷⁸ The most common sources for this anecdote are Royalist authors who seek to place the blame for the incident onto Henrietta Maria's French companions (who were dismissed from the court following this incident). In a letter from a Mr. Pory to Joseph Mead, Pory writes, "No longer agone then upon St. James *his day last*, those hypocritical dogges made the pore Queen to walke a foot (some add barefoot) from her house at St. James to the gallowes at Tyborne, *thereby to honour the Saint of the day* in visiting that holy place where so many martyrs (forsooth) had shed their bloud in defense of the Catholique cause. . . . Yea, they have made her to go barefoot, to spin, to eat her meat out of tryne (wooden) dishes, to waite at the table and serve her servants, with many other ridiculous and absurd penances" (July 5, 1626).

sake.”³⁷⁹ He urges English Protestants to “[S]et their examples before your eyes, and feare nothing.”³⁸⁰ Susan Wiseman describes the appeal of the story of Esther for both early modern men and women: “Here a woman acts (almost) like a political subject as Esther (almost) appropriates for herself a mantle of citizenship while also—as the story emphasizes—trembling before the overwhelming authority of the king.”³⁸¹ In *The Choyse of Jewels* (1607), Ludovic Lloyd marvels at Esther’s willingness to do God’s “appointed” will to save “all the Iewes her country-men” even at “the daunger of her owne life.”³⁸² For recusant Catholics who hoped that the Queen would serve as a balm to soften intolerant Protestants, Esther provided a suitable model for Henrietta Maria. Antonie Batt offers this supplication: “[M]ove your Majestie, like a second Hester...after her imitation, as hitherto you have done, reconcile his favour and mercie to youre poore afflicted subjects the Catholiques of England”³⁸³ The queen’s godfather, Pope Urban VIII, describes her as “the Esther of her oppressed people, the Clotilda who subdued to Christ her victorious husband, the Aldebirga whose nuptials brought religion into Britain.”³⁸⁴ In response to the Pope’s adulation, Henrietta Maria shrewdly evokes the contradictory aspects of Esther’s portrayal as a submissive wife who nevertheless challenges her husband’s royal decree. She promises her godfather, “I will not choose any but Catholics to nurse or educate the children

³⁷⁹ Foxe, 2022.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 2022.

³⁸¹ Susan Wiseman, “Exemplarity, Women and Political Rhetoric,” in *Rhetoric, Women, and Politics in Early Modern England*, eds. Jennifer Richards and Alison Thorne (Abingdon, U.K.: Routledge, 1997), 133.

³⁸² Ludovic Lloyd, *The Choyse of Jewels* (London: T. Purfoot, 1607), B2r.

³⁸³ Reverend Father Antonie Batt, trans., *A Hive of Honie-Combes* (1631), sig. 3.

³⁸⁴ Ctd. in Veevers, 76.

who shall be born, or do any other service for them.”³⁸⁵ By concentrating on her children’s upbringing, Henrietta limits her authority to the proper sphere for female influence. Yet, as we have already seen, the consequences of maternal instruction can be astonishingly far-reaching.

Esther offers a Biblical precedent for Henrietta Maria’s political interference, which caused anxiety among English Protestants, especially Puritans, who sought to reclaim her as a symbol of their own struggles. For Henry Burton, Esther is not a story about *female* courage but about the willingness of God’s servants to endanger their lives in preserving His people.

Because he believes that the Queen’s Catholic beliefs are counter to the mission of the true Church, he appropriates this comparison for himself. He fashions himself as “the noble Queene *Hester*” who “feared to hazard her person into the Presence *uncalled*” but preferred “death rather, than not to discharge the duty she owed to Gods people, now destinated , and doomed to destruction.”³⁸⁶ In her willingness to sacrifice her life for her people, Esther seems little different from Foxe’s martyrs. However, Burton is disturbed by and seeks to control the implications of Esther’s “*uncalled*” audience with the King. The intercessory work of Esther too nearly resembles that of the revolutionaries, who actively assert their “duty” to “Gods people” above the king’s prerogative.

Burton was right to worry about the implications of Henrietta Maria’s identification with Esther. Although she had previously demurred on her power to sway her husband in political matters, the queen exercised increasing influence over public policy. To the chagrin of radical Protestants, she persuaded her husband to relax royal policies concerning his Catholic subjects.

³⁸⁵ Henrietta Maria, *Letters of Queen Henrietta Maria, Including Her Private Correspondence with Charles the First*, Mary Anne Everett Green, ed. (London: Richard Bentley, 1857), 9. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Henrietta Maria’s letters are from this edition and are cited by addressee, date, and page number.

³⁸⁶ Henry Burton, *Baiting of the Popes Bull: Or An Unmasking of the Mystery of Iniquity* (London: 1627), sig. 1r.

Her efforts produced a ripple affect among the women in her circle, which prompted Pope Urban VIII to call the conclave of Catholic women at the royal court “amazons...who do day and night employ their utmost endeavours for the dignity of the apostolic see.”³⁸⁷ Early in her marriage, the queen had jealously observed her husband’s closeness with Buckingham; with the duke’s death and the faltering support of his subjects, Henrietta finds the partnership that she had craved within her grasp.



Salmacida Spolia (1640)
Illustration and Costumes by Inigo Jones

In 1643, a Parliamentarian commentator reported that Henrietta Maria “styles herself generalissima” in overseeing Royalist efforts in the North.³⁸⁸ The last court masque produced before the outbreak of civil war, William Davenant’s *Salmacida Spolia* (1640) presents a striking dramatization of the Queen’s *generalissima* persona in its nascence. As its heroine, Henrietta Maria emerges as “an Esther in Amazon costume,” a role she would make a reality in subsequent

³⁸⁷ Qtd. in Smuts, “Religion, European Politics,” 29.

³⁸⁸ *Letters*, 222.

years.³⁸⁹ The masque opens on a fantastical kingdom over which Discord has established her dominion. A valorous king, played by Charles, defeats the troublesome queen and her furies and dispels the chaos caused by her reign. Following his triumph, Henrietta Maria, dressed as the queen of the Amazons, appears with her “martial ladies” to reward the king for “reducing the threat’ning storm into the following calm.”³⁹⁰ The production holds the distinction of being the only masque in which Charles and his queen appear onstage together. As a precursor to Charles’ summons of the Long Parliament, the masque has traditionally been read as the king’s plea for reconciliation and “a gesture of royal willingness to build bridges to moderate opinion.”³⁹¹ In fact, the controlling image of the masque’s title—the Salmacis fountain, which was believed to calm and civilize the barbarians who drank from it—suggests a peaceful conclusion.³⁹²

However, as Karen Britland argues, readings that focus on Charles’ increasingly precarious rule can downplay the significance of Henrietta Maria’s triumphant entry as Amazonian Queen and Marie de Médici’s appearance as dedicatee.³⁹³ Perhaps more significant than Charles’ desire to influence his subjects with this production is Davenant’s prescient recognition of how important

³⁸⁹ Rebecca A. Bailey, *Staging the Old Faith: Henrietta Maria and the Theatre of Caroline England* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), 197.

³⁹⁰ William Davenant, *Salmacida Spolia*, in *The Dramatic Works of Sir William D’Avenant*, vol. 2, ed. William Hugh Logan (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1873), 308. All quotations from *Salmacida Spolia* are from this edition and are cited by page number in parenthetical references.

³⁹¹ Martin Butler, “Politics and the Masque: *Salmacida Spolia*,” in *Literature and the English Civil War*, ed. Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 66.

³⁹² Davenant provides a history of the fountain at the beginning of the masque. The fountain was erected on a hill bordering the city Halicarnassus, whose inhabitants were being robbed and attacked by barbaric mountain-dwelling tribes. When these barbarians drank from the Salmacis fountain, their “fierce and cruel natures” were “reduced of their own accord to the sweetness of the Grecian customs” (311). Also see Karen Britland’s discussion of the masque’s source material in *Drama at Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 188-90.

³⁹³ Britland augments Butler’s analysis of the masque’s sensitivity to political unrest by identifying a secondary tension in its representation of Marie de Médici’s “political intriguing” which threatened further “disruption within Charles’s kingdom” (177).

the queen's influence on her husband would prove. An anonymous account of the siege of Chester in 1645 reads, "Our women are all on fire, striving through a gallant emulation to outdoe our men and will make good our yielding walls or loose their lives."³⁹⁴ *Salmacida Spolia* inverts this popular formula for justifying women's participation in the war efforts by attributing the king's victories to the queen's exemplary model. She inspires him to martial valor.

The fears expressed by the Caroline editors of Foxe and echoed by Davies resurface in Davenant's anti-masque. The destructive goddess Discord "having already put most of the world into disorder, endeavors to disturb these parts, envying the blessing and tranquility we have long enjoyed" (308). In Discord's opening incantation, she vows to "displace the good" by calling up furies to infest "thy full body (over-grown with peace)" (312-13). Last in her catalog of ways to create turmoil, she resolves to "make religion to become their vice, / Nam'd to disguise ambitious avarice"(313). The realm that Discord presides over is contrasted to the land of "corn fields and pleasant trees, sustaining vines fraught with grapes" (313) where the Genius of Great Britain rules. Despite these indications of a thriving kingdom, the Genius fears that Concord will leave and begs him to stay by appealing to his sympathy for the king, Philogenes, who must "rule in adverse times" (315). The Genius and Concord praise Philogene's patience towards an ungracious populace and his commitment to exercising his authority through diplomacy rather than force. With its characterization of Philogenes, whose name translates "lover of the people," the masque seems to be an appeal for its audience's support and a pledge from Charles that he will return their good faith in him. Although the Genius' kingdom experiences the rumblings of discontent, the people must unite against the greater enemy of Discord. Likewise, the masque

³⁹⁴ Ctd. in Plowden, *Women All on Fire*, xiii.

suggests that Charles and his subjects must put aside their differences to stand united against the Scots, who pose a more dangerous threat.

A parade of anti-masquers interrupts the Genius and Concord's discussion, after which the scene changes to a steep tunnel of "craggy rocks and inaccessible mountains" (319). This rocky climb represents the difficult journey that heroes must undertake to reach the throne of honor. The Genius and Concord's admiration of Philogenes' forbearance has already suggested that the king is well equipped to withstand such a test, so it is unsurprising that he successfully scales the mountainous terrain. More unexpected are the spoils of war piled beneath his throne: "captives bound in several postures," and "trophies of armours, shields, and antique weapons" (321). The masque champions the king's reconciliatory attitude, yet these accessories of battle seem at odds with that message. Ignoring this contradiction, the song praises Philogene's "kingly patience," which helped him to outlast "those storms the people's giddy fury raise" (322). As the Chorus sings, the queen and her "martial ladies" appear in a cloud of "transparent brightness of thin exhalations, such as the gods are feigned to descend in" (323). The women's Amazonian costumes had little in common with classical illustrations of these legendary female warriors. Inigo Jones's extant sketch of Henrietta's as Amazonian queen shows the masquer in a modest, high-collared dress in accordance with the fashions of the day. The women could just as easily be guests at court as participants in a theatrical production, if not for their plumed hats and the swords at their waists.³⁹⁵ Because of their otherwise unspectacular apparel, the women's appearance in such martial decorations must have proved all the more striking. The effect of this

³⁹⁵ In addition to Jones's sketch, the published text includes Davenant's description of the costumes. He notes, "The Queen's majesty and her ladies were in Amazonian habits of carnation, embroidered with silver, with plumed helmets, baldrics with antique swords hanging by their sides, all as rich as might be; but the strangeness of the habits was most admired" (Davenant, 323).

contrast leaves the players and audience suspended somewhere between the mythical world of the Amazons and the fraught realities of the Caroline court.

Despite her military garb, the appearance of Henrietta Maria actually minimizes the possible threat of the weapons beneath Charles' throne. Her antique sword is merely a prop in comparison to the moral force of her good influence. Britland observes, "Although Charles appeared on the masquing stage surrounded by the trappings of physical combat, his victories were represented primarily as spiritual ones; inspired by his virtuous wife, he was shown to reform malevolent discord through educative example."³⁹⁶ As the Amazonian Queen, Henrietta Maria is praised:

And with its beams, she doth survey
Our growth in virtue, or decay;
Still lighting us in honour's way!
All that are good she did inspire!
Lovers are chaste, because they know
It is her will they should be so;
The valiant take from her their fire! (324)

Henrietta Maria's appearance ensures that the confusion birthed by Discord "from the troubled womb of Earth" has been displaced by the "brightness" of a queen descended from "the upper part of the heavens" (312, 323). The recurrence of gestation imagery reinforces the queen's mission to nurture and protect the "full body" of the nation (313). Interestingly, when the masque was staged, the queen was actually heavily pregnant, which perhaps unintentionally symbolized the extension of her influence to present and future kings. In the conclusion of other masques, the king's appearance signals the triumph of moral good and social order. In *Salmacida Spolia*, in which Charles and Henrietta close the production standing side-by-side, the queen's presence is fundamental to the completion of this work.

³⁹⁶ Britland, 186.

Davenant recognizes that the weapons of war are still an available means for subduing the “giddy fury” of Charles’ people, though the prevailing theme of his masque is that Charles will continue to bear the peaceable arms of its Amazonian queen—virtue, honor, chastity, and valor. In championing the importance of the queen’s moral authority, *Salmacida Spolia* fails to acknowledge that the weapons beneath “honors throne” are at her disposal as well. The playwright perhaps forgets that Esther’s petition led her king to wage war and that the Amazons, though praised for their virtue, are known by feats of martial courage.³⁹⁷ In letters written by Henrietta Maria during the Civil War years, we can trace her development from the “Esther in Amazon costume” who presides over *Salmacida Spolia* to a militant heroine who petitions for the salvation of her people while fighting alongside them. When Charles summoned the Long Parliament in 1640, the fragile truce enjoyed by denominational factions in the early years of the king’s reign had already begun to unravel. The queen’s chapel at Somerset House, completed in 1636, taunted radical Protestants as a monument to her majesty’s popish beliefs and the king’s tacit acceptance of them. After its assemblage in November 1640, Parliament decreed a day of prayer and fasting, which Puritan preachers used to ignite their congregants fear of and hostility towards Catholicism. The next Sunday, the Protestant faithful flocked to the queen’s chapel and “proceeded to attack members of the congregation with stones and weapons as they emerged after mass.”³⁹⁸ Though Henrietta Maria had sought a kinship to Catholic martyrs in her infamous

³⁹⁷ It is not my intention to cover all aspects of Henrietta Maria’s involvement in the Civil War. Rather, I hope to chart a rough path of her increased activism on behalf of Charles and the Royalist cause. Many critical inquiries provide more comprehensive understandings of her life and influence. See, for example, Plowden’s *Henrietta Maria: Charles Indomitable Queen* (Phoenix Mill, U.K.: Sutton Publishing, 2001); Elizabeth Hamilton’s *Henrietta Maria* (London: H. Hamilton, 1976); Michelle Anne White’s *Henrietta Maria and the English Civil Wars* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); and Erin Griffey’s (ed.) *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics, and Patronage* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

³⁹⁸ Plowden, *Women All on Fire*, 3.

trek to Tyburn, she found the reality of religious persecution more difficult to suffer patiently. In 1641, she wrote to her sister Christine,

Imagine what I feel to see the King's power taken from him, the Catholics persecuted, the priests hanged, the people faithful to us sent away and pursued for their lives because they serve the King. As for myself, I am kept like a prisoner, so that they will not even allow me to follow the King who is going to Scotland, and with no one in the world to whom I can confide my troubles.³⁹⁹

The attack on the chapel at Somerset presaged Parliament's aggressive attempts to purge England of the queen's Catholic influence. She writes to Madame St. George about other acts of violence carried out by religious activists, "such as coming to my house, whilst I was at chapel, bursting open my doors, and threatening to kill everybody."⁴⁰⁰ As they had been in 1625, her Catholic household was dismissed, and Parliament commenced strident revisions and stricter enforcement of penal laws regarding recusants.

In May 1643, the condition of Somerset chapel again matched the circumstances of its queen. The few Capuchin monks who had remained as its protectors were sent back to France, and the chapel stood vandalized and empty. Likewise, Henrietta Maria found herself at the mercy of a parliament who threatened to impeach her. Knowing the response expected of her, she wrote to Charles: "When I see you, and can tell you all this, you will say that I am a good little creature, and very patient; but I declare to you that being patient is killing me, and were it not for love of you, I would with the greatest truth rather put myself into a convent than live in this manner."⁴⁰¹ She reiterates this sentiment in another letter in which she admits, "[A]s to my

³⁹⁹ Ctd. in Plowden, 7.

⁴⁰⁰ Henrietta to Madame St. George, May 1641, 72.

⁴⁰¹ Henrietta to Charles, May 1643, 201.

private self, I would rather live out of the world than suffer all that I have suffered in it.”⁴⁰²

Henrietta Maria recognizes the sacrifices required of her as Charles’ wife and England’s queen, and in these dire circumstances, she rises to the occasion. Like the heroine of *Salmacida Spolia*, she seeks to instill in Charles the attributes of greatness; she asserts that a strong spiritual constitution must serve as the foundation for his efforts on the battlefield. On one occasion she counsels him, “[I] hope that you are constant in your resolutions; you have already learned to your cost, that want of perseverance in your designs has ruined you.”⁴⁰³ Henrietta Maria especially worries about Charles’ resolve to accomplish justice, specifically in opposition to the power of Parliament. In many letters, she warns him against surrender, arguing, “[T]here is something about disbanding armies, which I do not like. I will say to you, en passant, that if you do it before the perpetual Parliament is finished, all is lost.”⁴⁰⁴

In 1643, Parliament discovered what Davenant could not have predicted in 1640; concerning Henrietta Maria, they found evidence of “not only her aiding and assisting the present war, but actual performance in the same.”⁴⁰⁵ Numerous letters describe her “aiding and assisting” of Royalist efforts through the acquisition of artillery, weapons, and financial support. In one letter, she cryptically assures Charles that she “will do my very utmost to give you satisfaction thereupon, thinking the thing very useful for the king’s services.”⁴⁰⁶ Furthermore, she often interferes with military appointments, as she did in providing her recommendations for

⁴⁰² Henrietta to Charles, April 1643, 185.

⁴⁰³ Henrietta to Charles, March 1642, 55.

⁴⁰⁴ Henrietta to Charles, April 1643, 184.

⁴⁰⁵ “The Perfect Diurnal of 29th May” in *Letters of Henrietta Maria*, 214.

⁴⁰⁶ Henrietta to the Earl of Newcastle, October 1642, 121.

a suitable master of artillery to the Earl of Newcastle. In regard to her “actual performance” of duties, Henrietta was so involved with Royalist forces in the North that although the Earl of Newcastle commanded them, they were often referred to as the Queen’s Army or the Catholic Army. While the title was somewhat honorific, she asserts that her leadership abilities rival and even surpass those of the unit’s official commander. She tells Charles, “This army is called the queen’s army, but I have little power over it, and I assure you that if I had, all would go better than it does.”⁴⁰⁷ Besides being equipped with the moral fortitude to withstand the war, Henrietta Maria possesses practical knowledge of military strategy. In a letter before the taking of Leeds, she reports, “Our army consists (without reckoning the garrisons) of seven thousand foot, and sixty-nine troops of horse.”⁴⁰⁸ A later report reads:

Our army is gone to Leeds, and at this time are beating down the town. God send us good success: our affairs are in very good condition in this country;-- besides eleven garrisons that we have in Yorkshire, our army marches seven thousand effective foot men, two thousand five hundred horse, and one thousand dragoons, all very resolute; twelve pieces of cannon, and two mortars.⁴⁰⁹

She insists on the necessity of her knowledge of the army’s provisions and operations the occasion could arise in which “I must act the captain, though a little low in stature, myself.”⁴¹⁰ Indeed, one might argue that she had already gone beyond the role of “acting” commander to fully embrace her call to be England’s moral and physical protectress.

Eleanor Davies’ spiritual sword could not protect her from the suffering caused by earthly resistance to her message. Similarly, the Queen did not escape the tribulations that

⁴⁰⁷ Henrietta to Charles, May 1643, 200.

⁴⁰⁸ Henrietta to the Duke of Hamilton, May 1643, 215.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 184.

⁴¹⁰ Henrietta to Charles, February 1643, 167.

accompany holy warfare, even battles waged in protection of king and country. Though it became clear that the Royalists would fail, Henrietta's support of her husband never abated. When she left England for France in 1644, she was deathly ill. Nevertheless, as Parliamentarians had feared, when her health improved, she began to seek Catholic and French support for Charles' army. Even from this distance, she continued to offer advice on military strategy and to encourage her husband to maintain his resolve. In a letter to her son, Henrietta Maria laments that she was unable to share with the king in his final act of sacrifice for his country. The royal couple, "[s]o united in life, would have mutually rejoiced to pass united into another life."⁴¹¹ Instead, Henrietta would live for 20 more years, during which time she would suffer the deaths of three more children (Princess Elisabeth died in 1651 and Prince Henry and Princess Mary died of smallpox in 1660). Her death was much quieter than Charles'; after a long illness, she died in her sleep in September 1669. Of course, as history records, the king shifted from the language of soldiery to one of passive suffering when parliamentary forces captured him: as he vowed in a letter to his daughter Elisabeth written before his execution, "He should die a Martyr."⁴¹² The cult of royal martyrdom that emerged after the king's execution seemed to legitimize his sacrificial death. With its illustration of Charles wearing a thorn crown, the frontispiece to *Eikon Basilike* offers a powerful and enduring interpretation of his death as imitative of Christ. Less memorable is the queen's crown of thorns, granted to her not because she died in Christ's likeness, but because she continued to actively follow His example. In his letter of dedication to

⁴¹¹ Henrietta Maria to Charles II, 1649, 352.

⁴¹² Charles I, King of England, *Basiliká the works of King Charles the martyr : with a collection of declarations, treaties, and other papers concerning the differences betwixt His said Majesty and his two houses of Parliament : with the history of his life : as also of his tryal and martyrdome* (1687), 206.

a book of devotional essays, Walter Montagu claims a living version of martyrdom for his queen.

He writes:

So, as in respect of Your Person, I may rejoyce likewise in all Your tribulations since every Thorn in Your present *Crown* hath been a kinde of pensil, the sharpest touches whereof have drawn You the nearer that *original Head*, crowned with Thorns, whose resemblance ought to be Your principal intendment: And if what You have lost of the likeness of a Terrestrial Prince, hath That all the present Breaches which Your *Crosses* have made in Your Temporal state, will prove in Your Eternal like the wounds of our great *King* of the *Cross*, which are turned into the most glorious and resplendent parts of his Body.⁴¹³

By her honorable example, Henrietta Maria embodies an alternative version of *imitatio Christi* to that presented in *Eikon Basilike*. The resurrected Christ showed his wounds to Thomas as proof of his divinity; likewise, Henrietta Maria's tribulations—metaphorically represented by Montagu as a thorn crown and bodily wounds—reveal that the true source of her royal identity is derived from a heavenly King.

Eleanor Davies and Henrietta Maria adopt evolving vocabularies of soldiery and warfare in identifying themselves as women who wield metaphorical and literal swords with national consequences. In their self-presentations, the women encroach on an emerging discourse that borrows conceptions of suffering from England's martyrological past and elevates fallen (male) soldiers and revolutionaries to the status of martyrs. An understudied play by Henry Shirley, *The Martyr'd Soldier* (1638) best dramatizes the tension caused by the melding of passive martyrdom and active sacrifice. The tragedy stages the heroic deaths of Bellizarius, a general of the Vandals, and his wife, Victoria. Bellizarius is introduced as a brave warrior, decorated for his successes in conquering and expelling rival Christian peoples. When an angel visits him, he is convinced of the falsity of his pagan beliefs and along with his wife and daughter, Bellina,

⁴¹³ Walter Montagu, *Miscellanea spiritualia: or, Devout essaies* (1648), Epistle Dedicatory.

converts to Christianity. The king considers his conversion an act of treason, and he and his family are executed for the offense.

The first half of *The Martyr'd Soldier* depends on the fantasy that *Salmacida Spolia* provisionally disrupts, which is that female nobility reflects the valor of noble male leaders. Through the men's comical attempts to confirm their social worth, we immediately recognize that the problem with this fantasy is the need for quantifiable indicators of heroism. Thus, the men are preoccupied with preserving the memory of feats accomplished on the battlefield. The prince Henerick praises the Ciceronian quality of Bellizarius's example, which incites courage in mere onlookers: "When I aloft stood wondering at those Acts / Thy sword writ in the battaile, which were such, / Would make a man a souldier but to read 'em" (8). Hubert, a young commander, is rebuffed when he attempts to join this exchange of social capital. In response, he protests, "[S]ince you draw one another, / I will turne Painter too, and draw myself" (9). Through a clever allusion to Foxe's great tome, this scene opened with the pagan king relishing the tortures suffered by Christians in "that Monument of Martyrdomes" (3).⁴¹⁴ In the men's discussion of martial bravery, Shirley again seems to subtly reference the more well known *Acts* of his time, the reading of which was believed to inspire heroism in believers.

By inviting a comparison between his soldiers and the Marian martyrs, Shirley inadvertently highlights a problem with linking these two figures. Martyrologists wrestled with the problem that believers might seek out martyrdom for personal glory rather than heavenly gain. Still, the passive nature of martyrdom removes control from its subjects and ensures that even if their deaths are self-serving, they will not live to celebrate that fame. As a soldier, Hubert recognizes the possibility of death, even reciting his culture's truism, "A Souldier though

⁴¹⁴ Henry Shirley, *The Martyr'd Soldier* (1638).

he falls in the Field, lives crown'd" (52). Nevertheless, Hubert does not fully surrender himself to his profession, for he intends to be subject of and audience to the "acts" of his bravery. He declares, "[T]o the Volume / My Sword in bloody Letters shall text downe, / No Name must stand but mine...whilst I creepe on the earth" (51). *The Martyr'd Soldier* questions whether the ambitions of martyrs and soldiers—even soldiers engaged in holy warfare—can be so easily reconciled.

Whereas the men's worth is measured on the battlefield, the women are judged by their domestic skills. There is no *generalissima* in the manner of Henrietta Maria in *The Martyr'd Soldier*. Certainly the drama partakes of contemporary uses of martyrological rhetoric in valorizing soldiers but maintains a strict definition of war as the business of male rulers, statesmen, and warriors. The women appear to have no effect on national politics; instead, as the men go to war, they patiently await their husbands' homecomings by using the time to "read, or sing / Stanzaes of chaste love, of love purifi'd / From desires drossie blacknesse" (41). Victoria and Bellina organize a party to celebrate Bellizarius' return, before which Victoria reminds her daughter that their thoughtful preparations reflect their commitments as wife and daughter to Bellizarius. She emphasizes, "Let all our loves and duties be exprest / In our most diligent and active care" (12). Victoria rightly assesses Bellizarius' expectations of her; he praises her upon arriving home, but when she attempts to discuss the implications of Christians' justification of civil insubordination by their deference to a heavenly ruler, he rebukes her. He warns Victoria not to let female "pitty / Turne to passions" by expressing "sorrow" for their undeserving enemy (14). Nevertheless, Bellizarius is unsettled by Victoria's observations, and he marvels, "What power is that can fortifie a man / To joy I death" (14). Even more disconcerting, his wife's remarks destabilize his society's standards for measuring bravery. He admits, "In all our rigours

and afflicting tortures, / We cannot say that we the men subdu'd / Because their joy was louder than our conquest" (13).

Whereas Bellizarius' wife prompts his reflections, his daughter indirectly provides an answer to them. When Henerick praises Bellizarius as the model soldier, the king charges Hubert to become his scholar so that he may share in the bravery of his teacher. Actually, Bellina offers the most salient instruction in matters of true heroism to Hubert. Whether he fights in defense of his country or his personal beliefs, she insists that his mission must be bulwarked by a higher purpose. She protests:

Say thou shouldst kill ten thousand Christians,
They goe but as Embassadors to Heaven
To tell thy cruelties, and on you Battlements
They will all stand in rowes, laughing to see
Thee fall into a pit as bottomless,
As the Heavens are in extension infinite. (53).

Belliana reveals that her society's measures for evaluating male valor are backed by a thirst for personal glory rather than a sincere desire to defend their country. Through her selfless love for Hubert, she demonstrates to him that real heroism is accompanied by sacrifice more often than fame. Although Bellina is not attired in martial garb like Henrietta Maria in *Salmacida Spolia*, she arms Hubert with the moral weapons of honor and selflessness. Hubert's impulse to fight in the name of protecting his country is tempered by her reminder that there is equal valor in a leader's refusal to act if that action destroys the values he seeks to preserve.

Hubert summarizes the play's proposition that the weapons of war do not easily co-exist with the sword of the Word. He becomes king at the command of the Oracle, "a voice from above," an authoritative source whose message the Vandals heed (80). In praising the collective power of individuals to realize the Oracle's prediction, Shirley seems to launch a republican

argument in support of the people's ability to govern. Actually, he emphasizes the influential role of the people in the king's ability to rule. He explains:

[F]or the people's tongues,
When they pronounce good things, are ty'd to chaines
Of twenty thousand linkes; which chaines are held
By one supernal hand and cannot speake,
But what that hand will suffer. (80).

From a character who began the play convinced that his own abilities would determine his fate, Hubert's speech signifies a profound shift in the governing ideology of this world. At its conclusion, *The Martyr'd Soldier* distances itself from its earlier exaltation of the soldier as the ideal civic and spiritual model. Of his kingship, Hubert continues:

I have it then as well by voice as sword
For should you hold it backe it would be mine:
I claime it then by conquest, fields are wonne
By yielding as by stroakes (80).

In making this dramatic shift, Shirley implies that his culture should also temper its embrace of the sword of war. The rhetoric of holy warfare grew out of the martyrological tradition of self-sacrifice, yet *The Martyr'd Soldier* suggests how easily that rhetoric can become empty justification for self-advancement.

For women like Eleanor Davies and Henrietta Maria, their involvement in religious and political activism required that they constantly return to narratives of suffering as justification for female defiance. In doing so, they amend the rhetoric of active sacrifice by emphasizing the importance of spiritual and material swords as tools for the preservation of sacred and honorable ideals, not weapons of destruction. By evaluating holy warfare from perspectives shaped by their roles as daughters, wives, and mothers, the prophetess and the queen illustrate that the boldness of the Christian soldier must be balanced by the passive attributes of love and

selflessness. In a letter of encouragement to Charles, Henrietta Maria reminds him that he will prevail if he remains on the side of Justice:

Always take care that we have her on our side: she is a good army, and one which will at last conquer all the world, and which has no fear. Although perhaps for a time she hides herself, it is only to strengthen herself to return with greater force. She is with you, and therefore you should not fear: you will both come out together, and appear more glorious than ever. I am very sure of it.⁴¹⁵

The Duchess of Malfi predicted that the future would require Lady Justice to unsheathe her sword, yet Henrietta's assuring words might remind us that Justice is not the only famously blind figure in early modern mythology. Henrietta Maria and Eleanor Davies are motivated by an enduring love for religion, king, and country; theirs are not the fickle affections sometimes associated with Cupid. As Richard Crashaw would attest, "'Tis love, not years or limbs that can / Make the martyr, or the man."⁴¹⁶ As much as the upheaval of the early seventeenth century transformed ideas of martyrdom as a national identifier, Augustine's definition holds steadfast: the cause, not the suffering, makes men (and women) martyrs.

⁴¹⁵ Henrietta to Charles, August/September 1642, 109.

⁴¹⁶ Richard Crashaw, "A Hymn to the Name and Honour of the Admirable Saint Teresa" in *Seventeenth-Century British Poetry, 1603-1660*, ed. John P. Rumrich and Gregory Chaplin (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 468.

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