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English Godly Art of Dying Manuals, c. 1590-1625

Submitted by Jenny Mayhew for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Five examples of English Art of Dying literature from the period 1590-1625 are examined in this thesis. The rhetorical strategies of these texts are explored in detail, to demonstrate the means by which an activity, of death preparation, and a concept, of ‘good’ or ‘godly’ dying, are invented and made compelling to readers.

An introductory chapter discusses the problems of classifying works in the Art of Dying genre, and the limitations of a strictly historical mode of analysis. Reasons are given for the decision to use rhetorical theory as a central analytical framework.

The first chapter examines an exemplary deathbed narrative. Stubbes’ portrayal of his dying wife in *A Christal Glasse* (1591) helps to establish a Protestant discipline of ‘godly’ dying, which combines elements of exemplary martyrdom with an older tradition of diabolic deathbed drama. The mirror image of Stubbes’ title indicates that godly Art of Dying literature is intended to be used for self-reflection and imitation.

In the central three chapters, the Art of Dying is considered as a godly regimen, created and conducted through printed manuals. Godly divines William Perkins, Nicholas Byfield and Samuel Croke use various rhetorical methods to incite, regulate and suppress readers’ emotions regarding the prospect of death.

A final chapter returns to the use of personal examples in death preparation literature. Ward’s *Faith in Death* (1622) collates the dying words of martyrs from Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* to invite readers’ active contemplation of their own deaths. With ‘lively’ rhetoric, this text narrows the gap between celebrated and ordinary believers. It presents godly dying as an energetic, vocal, demonstrative act of testimony.

In conclusion, the thesis finds that godly Art of Dying literature directs the way readers imagine death and so prompts active, emotional and behavioural responses.

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Introduction

(a) The Art of Dying Genre

This thesis examines a stage in the literary development of a Christian tradition known from its medieval inscription onwards as *Ars Moriendi* or the Art of Dying. To use a definite article in this phrase risks according 'the' Art a unique status that must be qualified at the outset. Christianity provides one of many possible 'arts' of death preparation, and has no exclusive claim on the effort to prescribe, or impart moral value to, the behaviour of the dying.¹ With this proviso, Art of Dying literature may be conveniently, and broadly, defined as a genre of prescriptive writing popular in Christian Europe whose explicit purpose was to urge the living to prepare for death. The genre is named after an anonymous Latin text of the fifteenth century, the *Speculum*, or *Tractatus artis bene moriendi*.² This tract circulated in abridged form as a series of printed woodcuts and accompanying mottos, and became familiar in England with Caxton's translation of 1490, *The Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye*, known alternatively as *The Boke of the crafte of dyenge*. Earlier roots have been identified in the Catholic Church's "Office for the Visitation of the Sick", which gave rise in the early fifteenth century to Jean de Gerson's *De arte moriendi*, a section of that author's *Opus Tripartitum* (c. 1408). Following the practice of other scholars, I use the capitalised Latin term *Ars Moriendi* to refer to editions, abridgements and translations of the anonymous fifteenth century Latin tract; and the collective term *artes moriendi* to refer more broadly to any written works of Christian instruction on death preparation.

Even this brief outline of literary origins demonstrates that the Art of Dying genre has no single, authoritative primogenitor, but is rather a particular idea with various kinds and instances of written expression. To acknowledge its formal and modal variation, I will at times describe the Art as a practice and tradition, as well as a 'genre'. My central intention, however, is to show that Art of Dying books are products of deliberate, calculated rhetorical effort: they are not inevitable elements of cultural tradition that emerge of their own accord from historical circumstances. Each of the works that comprise the Art has been crafted and

¹ Non-Western arts of dying are explored in Stanislav Grof, *Books of the Dead: Manuals for Living and Dying* (London: Thames and Hudston, 1994), p. 339.

² Carlos Eire, "Ars Moriendi," in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Gordon S. Wakefield (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 21-2. Histories of the genre are also provided in Nancy Lee Beaty, *The Craft of Dying: A Study in the Literary Tradition of the Ars Moriendi in England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970); Betty Ann Doeblér, *"Rooted Sorrow": Dying in Early Modern England* (London and Cranbury N.J.: Associated University Press, 1994); Sister Mary O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942).

promoted by an individual author to serve his ideological aims and his readers' interests. The Art of Dying is not merely customary in a Christian society, but is customised by its creators and proponents for specific audiences. It is only by understanding the means and motives of its rhetorical construction that we can fully evaluate the significance of changes in the genre.

My selected dates (c.1590-1625) reflect an increase in English Art of Dying publications at a time of intensified religious book publishing. The five works I have selected experiment with rhetorical tools and print forms found in other types of moral conduct literature of the period.³ With an emphasis on literary craft, this study takes a particular interest in the persuasive strategies and affective mechanics used in Art of Dying publications during a productive literary era. These rhetorical mechanics merit attention for their own sake, I contend: they do not necessarily need to be treated as evidence of broader intellectual developments such as the consequences of the Reformation or the changing nature of early modern subjectivity. My focus on persuasive tactics is prompted by the question of how a peculiarly Christian idea, that to die 'well' requires a person to hold certain unshakeable beliefs regarding the need for 'salvation', could be made so attractive to readers that several books on the same theme were published in several editions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It is relatively easy to see why Protestant divines chose to publish Art of Dying books, especially once other authors had done so. The form proved an effective tool by which to generate 'godly' ways of being and believing, and so to keep congregations active and loyal. Less obvious to modern eyes is how a popular appetite for these books was created and sustained. This is the question I will pursue, at the level of verbal persuasion.

An early inventory of Art of Dying texts is provided in Sister Mary O'Connor's *The Art of Dying Well* (1942). In this overview of the genre, O'Connor briefly describes the style of several dozen English 'how to die books' which followed Caxton's *Arte and Crafte* into print. Although her commentary has in some respects been superseded by half a century of historical scholarship, O'Connor gives appropriate emphasis to the instrumental function of *ars moriendi* literature, describing Caxton's work as 'a popular little conduct book that taught one how to die'.⁴ Her practical labelling reflects the transparent didacticism of such works and their appeal to a broad audience. How-to-die books were written to be bought and used. The nature of the reader's experience, touched on by O'Connor, is central to my inquiry.

³ Thorough accounts of the publishing context are to be found in H S Bennett, *English Books and Readers 1603-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Sandra Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers: Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580-1640* (London: Athlone Press, 1983); Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁴ O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*, p. 1.

Ian Green's comprehensive study of *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (2000) usefully delineates the quantity of religious publishing in this period, and indicates the considerable overlap between genres, forms and themes in pious treatments of death.⁵ The image of a skeletal Death which forms Green's cover illustration suggests both the dominance and mobility of the theme of mortality in Protestant books.⁶ Godly sermons, manuals, prayers, ballads and treatises deploy the idea of Christian dying openly as an emotive spur to piety, and effectively as a promotional tool with which to increase the public appetite for pious literature. Used in various forms, death dominates pious literature not as a static, self-evident presence, but as a persuasive, malleable and continually refined strategy. Authors and publishers exploited the persuasive potential of the Art of Dying, I shall argue, even where they did not explicitly or consciously work within this genre.

Green demonstrates that it was common for preachers such as Nicholas Byfield and Samuel Ward, whose works on death preparation I examine in later chapters, to treat Christian philosophy as a matter for practical application in everyday life. Using the Bible as an encyclopaedic spiritual manual, these authors produced many texts of instruction on various themes. Several such texts by a single author were typically bound, or more accurately packaged together after their initial publication, as a collected series of short guides to piety. A publisher who combined Ward's *The Life of Faith* (1621) and *The Life of Faith in Death* (1622) into one publication, or included Byfield's *The Cure for the Feare of Death* (1618) within *The Marrow of the Oracles of God* (1619) was thereby contributing, consciously or not, to the rhetorical endeavour of godly authors to convince audiences that all aspects of piety were mutually dependent. Presented within one cover, the concepts of living well and dying well appear to be indispensable halves of the single lesson: have faith. Pious authors were thus able to fuse an art of dying with an art of Christian living, and to make the partnership seem self-evident. Whilst promoting a comprehensive system of piety, Art of Dying authors also took advantage of the distinct appeal of their topic, by coining rhetorically purposeful titles to appeal specifically to those facing death. Godly death manuals provide evidence, we might say, of both 'niche' marketing and propagandist expansion.

I will not attempt to reiterate or refine an inventory of Art of Dying works. My conception of the genre is broad and functional, and acknowledges the many literary contexts

⁵ At the outset of this study, Green identifies seven types of religious text. Of these seven types, my selected Art of Dying texts fall most clearly into the fourth category, of 'improving works of a didactic or inspiring kind'; but they are also designed to be used regularly, like the 'functional' aids to meditation in Green's third category; and they combine 'edification with entertainment' in the manner of Green's fifth type. *Print and Protestantism*, p. 2.

⁶ Green, *Print and Protestantism*. The front cover depicts a skeleton with hourglass tapping a compositor on the shoulder; and the back cover has a cadaver with a memento mori inscription for printers. Both images are taken from Richard Day's heavily illustrated *A Booke of Christian Prayers* (1578). My thanks to Professor Green for providing this information.

in which Christian authors persuaded people of the need to die 'well'. It is possible that early moderns learned an Art of Dying from texts which modern scholars do not identify by that name; or conversely, that readers studied for different reasons the texts we consider how-to-die manuals. Moreover, the Art of Dying has a flexible rhetorical repertoire, as indicated in the long titles of works that advertise such varied effects as 'remembrance', 'comfort', 'profit,' 'instruction' and 'cure'. The Art was learned, performed and developed in various social contexts and modes of action beyond the book, as discussed below. Confining ourselves at this point to printed expressions of the theme, we can identify certain features that distinguish, rather than define, Protestant Art of Dying texts: bold titles; portable, practical book sizes; strategies of verbal illustration that appeal to the 'mind's eye'; fantasies of an immortal 'godly' community; and heavy use of rhetorical divisions and devices.

Among several titles which boldly advertise their topic is Robert Sutton's *Disce Mori, or, Learne to Dye* (1600). This work makes no apology for its aim to instruct and incite righteous thought. *The Doctrine of Dying Well, or The godly mans Guide to Glory*, attributed to George Shawe (1628), identifies its pious intentions and pious audience in the title with equal transparency. The appeal to 'godly' readers, found in many of the long titles of Calvinist texts, is designed to foster a particular kind of sensibility and congregational identity.⁷ Shawe's *Guide*, like Sutton's *Learn to Die*, is unambiguously prescriptive. These two examples, among many similar, demonstrate the brevity and directness of Art of Dying literature in Protestant hands. Godly authors waste no time in introducing or disguising their rhetorical objective, but name it at the outset, rousing readers from the first word.

Another instantly remarkable feature of the English *artes moriendi* examined here is their small size. Several are published in octavo; others in smaller editions. These little deathbed books are portable preachers, guides that instruct their readers in particularly intimate ways because they can be carried on the person or kept close at hand. Robert Hill describes his *Direction to Die Well* (1607), published within *The Pathway to Prayer and Pietie* (1613), as 'a little Manuall' which 'may be read over in a few houres'.⁸ Hill's term can be used to distinguish Art of Dying manuals, readable in a single sitting, from longer religious

⁷ The concept of 'godliness', as a certain kind of Calvinist sensibility and sociability, was brought to general attention by Patrick Collinson, "Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism as Forms of Popular Religious Culture," in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, ed. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 32-57; *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983). See also Tom Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁸ Robert Hill, "A Direction to Die Well," in *The Pathway to Prayer and Pietie*, 9th ed. London, 1641, sig. V2r. The quotation is taken from a dedication to the Earl of Exeter, written in 1613. Previously the *Direction*, alternatively named *An Instruction to a Christian Death*, or *An Instruction to Die Well*, had been printed without a dedicated introduction as a section in the *Pathway* in 1607, 1609 and 1610.

treatises or sermons on death. Ian Green describes a ‘manual’ as a work designed to be consulted regularly, which is also true of the texts examined here.⁹ Shawe’s *Guide* (1628), discussed above, is one the smallest works of this kind, and demonstrates that what can be read in a few hours is by no means intended to be read only once. Using margin notes to help readers find and return to key passages, this godly manual lists: ‘Markes to know certainly whether we be ready for Christ, to enter heavens glory at the dissolution of our bodies, divers’.¹⁰ This margin note refers to the ‘marks’ of predestined salvation by which God’s Elect could know they had been chosen. Given the acute importance of this concept to godly Calvinists, it seems certain that faithful readers would use Shawe’s checklist repeatedly in anticipation of death. Introspection is not a once-only activity, particularly where the fate of an individual’s soul is believed to be dependent on a state of certainty or ‘assurance’. Even a tiny guide to soul-searching could prompt repeated, or even incessant, consultation.

First published editions of Protestant Art of Dying books are typically not illustrated; and in the exceptional cases, the design is a small image below the title.¹¹ Leaving aside for a moment the practical and theological reasons for this characteristic plainness, we might briefly consider its effect. A sober and righteous tone is established by unadorned title pages. These do not, however, lack dramatic import. Visual impact is made typographically by titles of different sizes, in which words such as ‘death’ ‘dying’, ‘sick’ and ‘godly’ are prominent. Various rhetorical strategies are used, as I will show, to rouse and control a reader’s visual imagination. The iconographic function served by woodcut images in fifteenth century prints of the *Ars Moriendi* survives to some extent in the vivid or ‘lively’ anecdotes of godly – and reprobate - individuals which pepper the pages of Calvinist manuals, and which form the central part of Samuel Ward’s *The Life of Faith in Death* (1622). These *exempla* are intended to strike a lasting impression on readers, much as a pictorial emblem on the wall would keep pre-Reformation viewers in mind of the urgency, means and models of dying well. Without acknowledging their voyeuristic appeal, godly manuals often luxuriate in the compelling sights of death and encourage readers to bring to mind evocative images of decay.

That these books entertain their readers is an important and overlooked feature of the genre, in my view. Godly manuals scold, excite, inform and direct their audiences, at the same time as providing what modern readers would recognise as consolation. Pastoral care operates in these texts through forms of emotional manipulation which were evidently effective in causing Tudor-Stuart readers to buy third and fourth editions of popular texts like William Perkins’ *A Salve for a Sicke Man* (1595), the subject of a chapter here. It seems apparent that

⁹ Green, *Print and Protestantism* p. 221.

¹⁰ George Shawe, *The Doctrine of Dying-Well* (London, 1628), sig. A6r.

¹¹ An illustrated example is John More, *A Lively Anatomie of Death* (London, 1596). The decorated front matter of Christopher Sutton, *Disce Mori: Learne to Die* (London, 1600), became increasingly elaborate with each subsequent edition through the seventeenth century.

godly Protestants wanted to know how others died, and wanted these examples to be clearly moralised and categorised as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ deaths, from which they could learn. Purchasers of prescriptive books on death were obtaining a medicine that had the potential to affect them in many ways, emotionally and intellectually, as I hope to demonstrate in relation to specific examples. Utility and entertainment are not polar opposites in this context, but mutually reinforcing features of the manuals which help to explain the genre’s popularity.

Art of Dying authors use and combine a variety of literary tools in an effort to instil Christian ideas about dying, as the five manuals examined in this study demonstrate. The writing craft in these texts is sometimes crude and often derivative, but always purposeful. Rhetorical devices are heaped together in an ambitious attempt to induce long-lasting and self-directed godly thinking. These various devices could be said to derive ultimately from dialogue, in that they anticipate and answer common concerns about death, such as: what will happen; and how can one ensure the best outcome? The fifteenth century *Ars Moriendi* distils these concerns into a certain number of ‘temptations’ or doubts voiced by diabolic figures at the deathbed.¹² Sanctified, predictable answers are provided by priests on the other side of the bed, and the dying Moriens struggles to choose between them. In the late Reformed era which is my focus, Protestant manuals greatly expand the number of questions and answers without straying from Scriptural sources. Thomas Becon’s *The Sicke Mans Salve* (1561) takes the form of a moral dialogue or colloquy, in which the dying Epaphroditus discusses his anxieties with the pious Philemon and other friends. Hill’s *Direction to Die*, discussed above, poses a wide range of moral and practical questions about whether death will hurt, whether physicians are to be trusted, and how fears about dying can be controlled. Dispensing with the veil of drama used by Becon, Hill presents his dialogue impersonally as a catechism, responding to each interrogative ‘Question’ with a directly didactic ‘Answer’.

Dialogue is a submerged form in the five texts to be examined here. Philip Stubbes’ *A Christal Glasse for Christian Women* (1591) includes within a third person narrative exchanges between a dying woman and her visitors, notably the unwelcome ‘Satan’. Samuel Ward’s *The Life of Faith in Death* (1622) compiles snatches of dialogue from Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*, alongside two short sermons. In this way, these two texts, which form my first and last chapters, make their appeal to readers partly by vocalising the process of dying. Less dramatically, Perkins’ *Salve* (1595), Byfield’s *The Cure for the Feare of Death* (1618) and Samuel Crooke’s *Death Subdued* (1619) make occasional use of the simple dialogue form of Question-and-Answer within their moral arguments. Where these texts do not report previous or hypothetical dialogue, they nonetheless help to craft prospective dialogues for their users,

¹² D W Atkinson, *The English Ars Moriendi, Renaissance and Baroque Studies and Texts* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1992), Introduction, xi-xv. Beaty, *Craft of Dying*, Chapter 1.

by supplying ready sayings and potted arguments which direct readers what to think and say in anticipation of death. The intention of these manuals is to embolden readers by prescribing definitive answers to a person's doubts and fears. Readers are trained, or at least helped, by such godly books to apply an internalised store of rhetorical resources to their words and thoughts at death, and so to convince their inner demons and fellow witnesses of their assured faith.

The literary forms which communicate a godly Art of Dying to readers also function directly as the material or equipment of death preparation. Rhetorical figures, exegetical commentary and quoted maxims are not stylistic dressing but tools to be used by the dying. Whether the language used has a 'high' or 'low' register is besides the point I am making here; that this language is instrumental, and transferable to the activity of dying.¹³ In the following chapters I shall argue that the methodical, classificatory format of Perkins' *Salve* and Byfield's *Cure* invites a pattern of systematic reading, note-taking, memorising, repeated reference, and quotation; all of which would contribute directly to a believer's attitude and mode of behaviour at death. In a preface to the Christian reader of *The Crowne of Life*, Bartholomew Robertson describes how this process of application should work:

[T]he frame of this Booke is, by short questions to quicken and put edge on thy understanding, and by meditations to make the doctrine thine owne: which thou must haunt frequently, by chewing the cud, and so by the holy Ghost, applying the doctrine more particularly to thy selfe.¹⁴

As Robertson indicates here, the 'haunting', 'chewing' and 'applying' of the language of death manuals is integral to their purpose. Literary form is crafted to a practical end.

One of the most striking aspects of the reading experience invoked in Art of Dying texts is its overtly regimented nature. Lengthy, enumerated divisional headings often combine with rules, lists, and marginal citations throughout the texts to force readers' attention to the mechanics of their own thinking. Such classificatory strategies allow authors to define topics, and also help readers – or more accurately, users – to arrange their own thoughts regarding death. *The Anatomie of Mortalitie*, published by George Strode in 1618, dissects the topic of death with extreme precision, as its title would suggest, under eight rhetorical 'heads':

1. The Certaintie of Death
2. The Meditation on Death
3. The preparation for Death

¹³ Important studies of godly language include Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Debora Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

¹⁴ 'To the Christian reader', in Bartholomew Robertson, *The Crowne of Life. Containing the Combate Betwixt the Flesh and the Spirit* (London: 1618), sig. A1v.

4. The right behaviour in Death.
5. The Comfort at our owne Death.
6. The Comfort against the death of friends.
7. The cases wherin it is unlawful, and wherin lawfull to desire Death.
8. The glorious estate of the Saints after this life.¹⁵

By partitioning the topic in this way, Strode is by his own admission collating and rearranging points of instruction given by others. A lawyer at the Inns of Court, he has constructed his rulebook using material gathered: ‘by constant and diligent hearings of godly sermons... and by addition of some things (sorting with the matter) collected out of my readings’ (sig. A4v). Strode’s *Anatomie* is thus in effect a commonplace book on the Art of Dying. It is studiously and, for the period, typically, derivative; and since its pious author is also a lay reader, we can regard it as evidence of the close proximity of those two roles. Godly students like Strode are effectively makers of the ‘Art’ they study, using other authors’ comments as tools in the construction and mastery of their own thoughts. Preparing to die is a rhetorical discipline, I suggest, comparable to the process of compiling and using commonplace books.¹⁶

Pious readers could shape the genre by direct interaction with authors, by their purchasing choices, by imitation and by participation in the process of transmitting and practising godly conduct. Anne Clifford’s bookshelf, as depicted in an oil painting of 1646 by Jan Van Belcamp, contains a copy of Strode’s *Anatomie of Mortalitie* among other devotional works.¹⁷ Both the reader and her portrait artist, it seems, considered this pious guide to be a proper accessory of a godly Protestant, worthy of display. Art of Dying books could serve as advertisements for the godliness of their readers; hence their very shelf-life can be read as a persuasive element in the rhetorical enterprise of ‘dying well’.

An acute sense of the target audience for Art of Dying books is shown on the title page of Perkins’ *Salve*, where designated readers are classed into three specified groups: mariners going to sea; soldiers going to battle; and women expecting a child.¹⁸ With this blatant advertisement, the book situates itself directly among its audience, as a commodity to be used and defined by those who buy it. The appeal to soldiers going ‘to battle’ carries a figurative sense of adventure beyond its literal denotation. This suggestion of a thrilling or

¹⁵ George Strode, *The Anatomie of Mortalitie* (London: 1618), title page.

¹⁶ The habit of keeping commonplace notebooks, and forming arguments from them, is discussed in Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

¹⁷ The ‘Great Picture’ of the Cliffords, hung at Appleby Castle in Cumbria, depicts Anne in middle age in the right panel with a shelf of books behind her. Other titles on the shelf include another Art of Dying book, More’s *Map of Mortality*, and collected sermons by John Donne and Henry King. Martin Holmes, *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford* (Stroud: Sutton, 2002), pp. 6, 102, 39.

¹⁸ William Perkins, *A Salve for a Sicke Man* (Cambridge, 1595). This book is the subject of my second chapter.

aggrandising prospect accords with common godly metaphors for death, and provides further evidence of the Art's several points of attraction. Purchasers of death manuals were buying a fantasy, I shall argue; and their choices shaped the nature of that fantasy.¹⁹ It is not accidental that godly authors repeatedly drew attention to the 'benefits' of death, such as the opportunity to escape hardship and to be in the company of other members of the righteous Elect.²⁰ The Biblical notion of death as the 'crown of life' appears continually in manuals because, presumably, it proved continually persuasive. Art of Dying rhetoric both commands and responds to its audience. On this basis, I suggest that the regimented style of argumentation found in godly manuals is not necessarily unwelcome to readers, but may rather indicate a desire on the part of readers to have their choices managed, disciplined and limited.

A final characteristic of godly death manuals worthy of note is their endeavour to appear artless whilst constructing an 'art' of dying. We can say with certainty that there is no innate art involved in dying. Death has no given form, no natural boundaries. There is no *res* of death; only *verba*. 'It' must be constructed as a phenomenon by example, analogy, metaphor, personification, logical 'proofs' or other linguistic strategies. Therefore the Art of Dying is necessarily a product of artifice. Godly authors take advantage of death's invisibility and indescribability, using it as a *tabula rasa* on which to paint a collage of ideas, prescriptions and proscriptions. By citing the Scriptural 'truth' of these ideas, however, divines disguise the rhetorical nature of their manoeuvres. When Perkins describes his work as a guide to the 'right' way of dying, I shall argue, he makes a persuasive bid for veracity on the suggestion that what he writes is self-evident and absolute. He crafts an Art of Dying and presents it as a divine edict. In similar ways other Calvinist authors refuse or fail to recognise their inventiveness. By presenting their texts as 'plain', authors in effect present themselves as socially humble and morally pure.²¹ One task of this thesis is to recover the fictive nature of Art of Dying manuals, by showing how these fragmented texts synthesise and formulate material from a common stock of rhetorical devices and Christian ideas.

¹⁹ I use the term 'fantasy' without any intentional derogation to describe the creative, effectively consolatory, and perhaps necessary human habit of inventing scenarios to give meaning to our existence. An early Art of Dying manual describes as a 'wonderfull thyng' the ability of a natural man, who has no Christian learning, to 'rise up in his phantasie above nature, to judge of death farre other wyse than nature teacheth hym...': Thomas Lupset, *A Compendius and a Very Fruteful Treatyse, Teachynge the Waye of Dyenge Well* (London, 1534), sig. Bv.

²⁰ The word 'benefit' is used prominently in several Art of Dying manuals. A subtitle of Robertson's *Crowne* promises to explain to the Christian reader 'the use and benefit of this Booke' (sig. A4v).

²¹ 'Plain' is a persuasive epithet, whose value and utility are demonstrated by the recommendation in a popular rhetorical manual to use 'plaine words, suche as are usually received,' Thomas Wilson and Thomas J. Derrick, *The Arte of Rhetorique* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), p. 25.

Erasmus, frequently cited as the dominant literary authority for Calvinist authors, appears to have been the chief stylist of a 'practical divinity' which appealed to congregations and individuals through relatively simple and emotive language.²² Without disputing the extent to which Protestant death manuals are indebted to Erasmus, I will stress that the appearance of practical, simple guidance is a rhetorical achievement; that 'practical' advice in godly manuals takes the form of productive fantasies, to be used as coping strategies by the fearful at death; that censorship of the imagination is a central objective of these manuals; and that the texts make pervasive use of the strategy of binary organisation which is found throughout classical rhetoric, not only in Christian textbooks. Francis Bacon's comment that 'the persuader's labour is to make things appear good or evil' is reflected in godly Art of Dying literature. Here, 'things' that are neither good nor evil are made to appear so.²³

By highlighting some distinguishing features of godly Art of Dying books, I have tried to create a useful overview without defining the genre too rigidly. The Art is not strictly or solely a literary phenomenon; but is also a motif with varied and elastic modes of expression, which operates within other genres and modes of communication. Books that prepare the reader for death are built from parts of other books, and from other cultural 'texts', including homespun advice, medical regimen, general conduct manuals, chronicles, poems, funerary art and scaffold speeches, 'mirrors' and martyrologies, *memento mori* essays and emblems, and judgement tales, in addition to the more obvious sources: discursive religious tracts, prayer books, and sermons. What survives on the printed page as Art of Dying literature represents a range of activities beyond the book. Members of Tudor-Stuart godly culture displayed wide literacy of death, on the stage, in pulpits and law courts, in their beds and at the bedside of others.²⁴ Heuristic significance was commonly given to actual dying acts of many kinds. The Art of Dying 'genre' might alternatively be seen as a rite, practice, or cultural script.²⁵

²² Patrick Collinson, "A Magazine of Religious Patterns: An Erasmian Topic Transposed in English Protestantism," in *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History*, ed. Derek Baker, *Studies in Church History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), 223-51; Thomas O. Sloane, "Rhetorical Selfhood in Erasmus and Milton," in *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 112-28.

²³ *The Colours of Good and Evil* in Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (London, 1642), sig. 1A1(r).

²⁴ Evidence for what I am calling a culture-wide 'literacy' of death is to be found in Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750*, *Oxford Studies in Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Thomas W Laqueur, "Crowds, Carnival and the State in English Executions, 1604-1868," in *The First Modern Society: Essays in English History in Honour of Lawrence Stone*, ed. A. L. Beier, David Cannadine, and James M. Rosenheim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, The Past and Present Society, 1989), 305-29; Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual C.1500-1800* (London: Reaktion Books, 1991). Michael Andrews, *This Action of Our Death: The Performance of Death in English Renaissance Drama* (1989); Peter Lake and Michael C.

In selecting individual texts to examine, we face the problem of deciding what about them is most significant. Art of Dying books have often been considered from a theological or social-historical perspective, as examples of a Catholic or Protestant Art of Dying. In such a line of inquiry, the derivation and doctrine of texts are important. A sample of works which exemplify the evolution of a particular theology might include sixteenth century translations of Reformed *artes moriendi* by Gulielmus Fullonius and Jean de L'Espine, and Counter-Reformation texts by Petrus de Soto and Juan Polanco.²⁶ Historians have identified Thomas Becon's *The Sicke Mannes Salve* of 1561 as an important and popular example of Calvinist piety which reformed the Catholic *ars moriendi* tradition and established the direction of later Protestant manuals.²⁷ Being rather more curious about the literary construction of a morality of dying than about the development of particular religious doctrines, I will in the next chapter consider Becon's manual specifically, and briefly, for its communicative strategies.

The texts selected for this thesis are 'godly' Protestant texts. To an extent, I regard their godliness as a literary style or device, rather than a matter of Calvinist divinity. To equate the significance of work with its author's doctrinal beliefs might eclipse the reader's

Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002); J A Sharpe, "Last Dying Speeches: Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth Century England," *Past and Present* 107 (1989): 146-67; Robert Watson, *The Rest Is Silence: Death as Annihilation in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1994).

²⁵ By 'cultural script' I mean something like a musical tune which has several inventors, performers and variations, but which contains a recurring pattern recognisable in successive cultures.

²⁶ Jean de L'Espine, *The Sicke-Mans Comfort*, trans. John Eliot (London, 1590). Pedro de Soto, *The Maner to Dye Well*, trans. B.S. (London, 1578). Juan Polanco's *Method for Helping the Dying* of 1582, though not recorded in Pollard and Redgrave's Short Title Catalogue (STC), is discussed, along with other Jesuit works of the genre, in the Preface to John Patrick Donnelly and Roland J. Teske, eds., *Robert Bellarmine: Spiritual Writings, Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989). Other commentaries on Catholic *artes moriendi* include T H Clancy, "Spiritual Publications of English Jesuits 1615-1640," *Recusant History* XIX (1988): 426-40; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992); Alexandra Walsham, "'Domme Preachers'? Post Reformation English Catholicism and the Culture of Print," *Past and Present* 168 (2000): 72-123. On Protestant works, see D W Atkinson, "The English Ars Moriendi: Its Protestant Transformation," *Renaissance and Reformation* 6, no. February (1982): 1-19; David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Ralph Houlbrooke, "The Puritan Death-Bed 1560-1660," in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, ed. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 122-44; Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Danae Tankard, "The Reformation of the Deathbed in Mid-Sixteenth Century England," *Mortality* 8:3 (2003): 251-66. I am indebted to Dr Tankard for the publication details of Gulielmus Fullonius, *A Myrrour or Glasse for Them That Be Sycke*, trans. M Coverdale (Southwark, 1536).

²⁷ Green, *Print and Protestantism*, p. 360; Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, p. 158.

role in defining that book's use. For instance, *The Plain Mans Path-way to Heaven* by Arthur Dent, a popular moral dialogue published many times from 1601 onwards, provides a series of questions and answers on sin, hell's torments, and the issue of predestination, which is articulated boldly in the book's long title: 'Wherein every man can clearly see, whether he shall be saved or damned'.²⁸ The evidence of Dent's interest in election is so apparent that one might classify the book as a Calvinist work and thereby imply that those who bought it shared the author's religious perspective. In fact readers would not need to consider themselves Calvinists in order to be entertained or stirred into action by the *Pathway*'s frequent reminders of death: 'For our life ought to be a continual meditation of death. We should always live as if we should die, or that our bed should be our grave'.²⁹ Such advice is conventional in Christian and pre-Christian literature. Its actual effect on readers is determined by many factors aside from the historical or theological genesis of the concept. These effective factors – of communicative technique and psychological disposition – have received less critical attention than is given to matters of theology in religious texts.

Two substantial literary studies of the genre have used selected Art of Dying texts to demonstrate a historical progression of thought. Nancy Lee Beaty's 1970 study, *The Craft of Dying: A Study of a Literary Tradition*, considers five English books in chronological order, and proposes a clear line of historical development. Treating the fifteenth century *Tractatus* as the primogenitor of the genre, Beaty traces doctrinal and stylistic variations from Caxton's translation to the 'splendid synthesis' of Jeremy Taylor's *Rules & Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651). Within this progression, Beaty identifies four stages of the genre's development, each manifesting particular cultural and religious shifts. 'Pre-Reformation English humanism' is exemplified by Thomas Lupset's *Waye of Dying Well* in 1530. The 'Nascent Calvinism of Tudor England' emerges in *The Sycke Man's Salve* by Thomas Becon, published in 1560 and reissued eleven times before 1600. 'Counter-Reformation devotion' at the turn of the sixteenth-seventeenth century prompted Bunny's English Protestant adaptation of the Catholic *Booke of Christian Exercise* by Robert Parsons. Finally, to Beaty's evident approval, the Art of Dying flowered into devotional maturity with Taylor's *Holy Dying*:

From its inception in the fifteenth century to its culmination in the *Holy Dying*, the growth of this tradition in England was consistent and intelligible. Since death impinges on all life, and a philosophy of death is therefore an integral part of every philosophy of life, the emergent genre was naturally responsive to the richly varied influences of the Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation.³⁰

²⁸ Arthur Dent, *The Plaine Mans Path-Way to Heaven* (London, 1601), title page.

²⁹ Dent, *Plaine Mans Path-Way*, p. 397.

³⁰ Beaty, *Craft of Dying*, p. ix.

It will be clear from the earlier discussion of generic diversity that I do not entirely share Beaty's confidence that the genre developed in a clear, linear progression at the hands of a certain number of identifiable authors. What Beaty sees as a consistent tradition and 'philosophy' is treated here as a theme with various expressions, used to various persuasive ends. Like Beaty, I have selected five printed works and will consider these in a chronological order. Arranged thus, the manuals could be said to demonstrate the growth of a Calvinist sensibility in the Art of Dying genre. It is my contention, however, that these books did not issue from a monolithic, collective religious sensibility that developed of its own accord in the historical culture. They were manufactured by and for a range of sensibilities and emotional needs; only some of which were exclusively religious, or exclusive to the age.

Betty Anne Doebler's *Rooted Sorrow* (1994) analyses a selection of Art of Dying works which are deemed to reflect the cultural imagination of death, as witnessed in Shakespeare's plays. Although Doebler is less concerned with how *ars moriendi* literature changes than what it represents, she takes the somewhat evolutionary view that early modern works became more consoling than was an earlier, cruder *memento mori* tradition.³¹ For Doebler, the Art of Dying is a 'symbolic' entity. She uses the epithet several times, describing the symbolic sensibility of the time; the culture's 'symbolic collection of related narratives' by which it invents life and death; and the function of Art of Dying texts as 'symbolic structures' which embody or contain the master narrative.³² To my mind, this is an intriguing if somewhat static analysis of the literature. Doebler's aim in reading death manuals is to reconstruct the culture's symbols and commonplaces of death and hence to understand Shakespeare's deaths; whereas my interest is in the dynamic process by which such thoughts are made, branded, altered, communicated and used. As a result of this differing focus, my commentary on selected texts – including Perkins' *Salve*, which also features in Doebler's study – treats symbolism dynamically as part of a persuasive exchange between authors and readers, rather than as a container for a society's mind-set.

Taking a slightly different direction from previous critics of the Art of Dying, I have selected five texts with overtly rhetorical intentions and modes of organisation. In each case, the author makes a concerted effort to incite, direct and manage readers' thought processes by a particular arrangement of ideas. These manuals seem to have invited or coerced their original readers into active engagement with the text, effectively functioning as playscripts which prepared readers through various formulations of the Christian drama for what Erasmus calls 'the last part (as it were) of the play'.³³ The Art is not merely recorded in these manuals as a static phenomenon, but emerges from their use. All have a reader-directed focus and

³¹ Doebler, *Rooted Sorrow*, p. 44.

³² Doebler, *Rooted Sorrow*, pp. 19, 26.

³³ Desiderius Erasmus, *Preparation to Deathe* (London, 1538), sig. A2r.

communicate directly to people, only rarely making a devotional address to God. All exhibit a troubled fascination with issues of authenticity and bodily sensation related to the physical act of dying. Without overtly presenting themselves as performance scripts, these godly manuals appeal to an individual's desire for self-expression, social recognition and narrative closure.

The pattern I trace with these selected texts is not one of gradual doctrinal progression, but rather a series of attempts to construct and revise a rhetorical instrument; that is, a tool of persuasion and self-persuasion. The unprecedented number of new titles printed at this historical juncture, representing a continual borrowing, restating, and adapting of the 'die well' theme, suggests to me not the maturation of spiritual thought so much as the reinvention and branding of a utility; an aggressively promoted and appropriated, eclectic product. As suggested by the subtitle to Arnold Stein's *House of Death: Messages from the English Renaissance*, I read Art of Dying books as messages with evident communicative intent. Stein stresses that these messages were used to control their audience and to authorise expectations; an important point which is also emphasised in this study.³⁴ The most powerful effect achieved by godly death manuals is their incitement to action, amounting to a direct influence on performed acts of dying. Samuel Ward's *Faith in Death* (1622), the last manual considered in this thesis, has been selected to demonstrate what Stein calls the genre's 'affinities to a dramatic action'.³⁵ If we are to look for a chronological development within the genre, my selected texts would seem to demonstrate an expansion in the range of cognitive methods by which godly readers are encouraged to imagine, rehearse and reconcile themselves to their deaths. Like all selections, however, these five 'messages', chosen out of many possible examples, could be made to fit many intellectual patterns according to the observer's inclinations. For this reason, I will spend the remainder of this introductory chapter outlining the theoretical perspectives which seem most relevant and productive.

(b) Theoretical Perspectives

Before exploring selected Art of Dying texts in detail, I am interested in the broader philosophical question of why this literature exists at all. Mortals do not need to prepare to die in order to die; so why might they do so, and why through the means of prescriptive literature? Is contemplation of death a naturally occurring human instinct, or a culturally manufactured phenomenon? In other words, do human efforts to die 'well' precede or derive from books that advocate this notion? What brings an 'art' of dying into existence?

³⁴ Arnold Sidney Stein, *The House of Death: Messages from the English Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 9.

³⁵ Stein, *House of Death*, p. 12.

Wishing to acknowledge the interpretative bias resulting from one's position on these questions, I will sketch two broad methodological traditions, as a prelude to my own inquiry into the rhetorical operation of selected texts. In calling these approaches 'historical' and 'psychological', I do not suppose that they are either clear-cut or neatly aligned with separate academic disciplines: most of the scholarship cited here straddles more than one category, and some of it will be discussed under each heading. Within the spectrum of explanations for human endeavour, psychological approaches are taken to be those which emphasise the role of embodied perceptions, and historical approaches those which give causal priority to temporal circumstances and cultural institutions. In what follows I will consider the most relevant historical, and then psychological, approaches to death, piety, and selfhood.

In general, it seems that a historicist perspective currently dominates early modern scholarship. Indeed the term 'early modern' embodies some key assumptions of historical viewpoints. I therefore begin with the idea that dying belongs to the realm of historical action. Considered as a phenomenon of the past, coincident and coterminous with its appearance in print, the Art of Dying is seen historically as a cultural process, whereby a society organised its members' anticipation of death. In this view, individuals were socially conditioned to prepare for death in ways determined by their contemporary culture.

Histories of Death Thought

It is a core understanding of the intellectual history of 'death' that every culture invents its realities. To examine how Tudor-Stuart England invented death in the Art of Dying is to apply a general poststructuralist principle, that reality is a social construct, specifically to a consideration of anticipatory death-thoughts. On the assumption that certain regimes, institutions, social groups and social mechanisms had particular influence over individual attitudes, intellectual histories of death tend to look for the chief agents or inventors of death in prominent institutions. This means that for much of Western history, death is seen to be the invention of the Christian church. Historical analysis presents a compelling case that every religious regime during the period of Christian dominance shaped death in its own image; or more specifically, in the image of the political-ecclesiastical ideal it wished to promote. The history of death-thought in godly England therefore follows in parallel with a history of religion in this period.

One of the most influential figures in the history of European, Christian death-thought is Philip Aries. In two much-cited books of the early 1990s, Aries traced a broad progressive narrative across several centuries, identifying several major turning points in the culture's understanding of death. Of these, the most relevant and troubling for my purposes is Aries' assertion that people did not come to think of their mortality as an individual, personal event

until cultural shifts in the twelfth century made such a concept possible.³⁶ According to this severely chronological view of human consciousness, the notion of a 'personal death', and by extension the personal practice of preparation for death, was a novel invention of the early modern period, inconceivable in a previous era, and in later eras changed beyond recognition.

Aries' periodised view of death in the Christian imagination finds strong reinforcement in Michael Neill's *Issues of Death* (1997). Confined to English Renaissance tragedy and to various visual and literary influences on that genre, Neill's study, like Aries' narrative, traces a historical progression in Renaissance culture's imagining or 'discovery' of death. This argument is well supported, and many points within it bear upon my inquiry. The incessant moral tone of Art of Dying literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reflects Neill's point that the moral didacticism of treatments of death in that era is exceptional.³⁷ It is also possible to see in godly Art of Dying texts some traces of, and anxiety about, the 'secularizing' of death, which according to Neill began in Renaissance tragedies. Less convincingly, to my mind, Neill's book leaves the impression that death changed, clearly and uniformly, in the shared imagination of English populations in identifiable time periods. Like Aries, Neill favours terms which indicate a linear historical progression, such as 'the discovery of death', 'the new death'. Several statements underscore this progressive narrative: 'It is not until the sudden flowering of macabre art towards the end of the fourteenth century that Death begins to...'; '... death is represented differently because it is coming to be experienced differently...'.³⁸ The historical progression traced here relates closely to Aries' idea that consciousness of one's own individual death is a novel development of the medieval period. 'Through a process that is only superficially paradoxical, Death comes to be felt, more acutely than ever before, as a cancellation of personal identity'.³⁹ Such assertions seem to me to equate representations of death too neatly with actual experiences of it. Neill seems to assume that what was expressed in print or image is identical to what was thought.

Also in apparent sympathy with Aries' chronology, Arnold Stein reports that the 'new' genre of *ars moriendi* arose in the fifteenth century in response to a major cultural change: the 'new' acceptance that individual death was a subject worthy of close attention.⁴⁰ Similarly, Betty Anne Doebler's analysis of *ars moriendi* texts and Shakespearean tragedies opens with a restatement of Aries' view that the way a culture faces death is at the centre of

³⁶ Philippe Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (London: Allen Lane, 1981), especially pp. 107-8, p.369. Philippe Aries, *Western Attitudes Towards Death, from the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Patricia M. Ranum (London: Marion Boyars, 1994), p. 26 and throughout.

³⁷ Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 3.

³⁸ Neill, *Issues of Death*, pp. 4-5.

³⁹ Neill, *Issues of Death*, p. 5.

⁴⁰ Stein, *House of Death*, pp. 11-14.

'its' creativity and expression.⁴¹ Doebler accordingly considers the Art of Dying to be authored by a historical collective. In her view the genre records a shared conceptual system. Citing John Donne's poetic anticipation of death as a striking example of a historical phenomenon, Doebler claims that self-fashioning for death was, in this period, 'for the serious Christian the *agon* by which the soul completed or restored its merger with the original creation of the Word, thereby becoming ready for death' .⁴²

It would be possible, though beyond my scope, to argue that Christianity always taught its devotees to imagine death as a fusion with the godhead, and that for this reason alone it is inaccurate to claim that pious self-fashioning was part of a 'new' early modern conception of dying. Medieval scholar David Aers charges New Historicist accounts of 'the allegedly new subjectivity of "Renaissance self-fashioning"' with overstating its novelty.⁴³ The date at which individual introspection was invented is evidently disputable; and some historians would disagree more profoundly with historicist narratives of the cultural invention of human experience. By discussing diverse views under the broad heading of 'historical studies of death' I do not mean to understate their differences. My aim here is rather to indicate how curious it seems, from quite another, anthropological perspective, that so much analysis of Art of Dying literature assumes it to be the record of a *historical* moment, defined in time, rather than a collection of *persuasive* moments, involving cognitive processes, embodied emotions and image schemas that have some atemporal qualities.

Aries, Neill, Doebler and perhaps Stein represent an 'emergent' school in the history of early modern death-thought. In tracing the emergence of a 'new' concept of personal death, these scholars give support to similarly historicised accounts of subjectivity, as discussed below. Whilst benefiting from their observations, I question the idea that an individual's expectation of death derives solely and straightforwardly from time-bound, collective ideas. Histories of death reveal much about a culture's symbols of death; but these symbols are not in my view synonymous with people's cognition of death. Considering the manuals less as reference sources than as persuasive endeavours, I will investigate the rhetorical processes by which thoughts and representations of death affect one another.

Social Histories of Death

Another kind of historical death study, which is not predicated on the idea of radical shifts of consciousness, is the genre represented by Peter Marshall, Ralph Houlbrooke, and David

⁴¹ Doebler, *Rooted Sorrow*, p. 13.

⁴² Doebler, *Rooted Sorrow*, p. 29.

⁴³ David Aers, "A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the "History of the Subject"," in *Culture and History, 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 186-95.

Cressy. Their studies examine changes in the religious organisation of death, paying close attention to particularities of theology, pious discipline and church politics. From these historians of death and the Art of Dying, I take the view that godly Protestantism shaped the prospect of death in particular ways during the 'long Reformation'. Cressy shows how 'the protestant reformation radically revisited the conceptual geography of salvation', and discusses the protestant revival of *ars moriendi* books in this context.⁴⁴ Marshall is interested in the social and doctrinal consequences of the proscription of Purgatory during the Reformation, describing this as 'one of the most audacious attempts at the restructuring of beliefs and values ever attempted in England, a kind of cultural de-programming'.⁴⁵ Houlbrooke gives a comprehensive account of social and attitudinal changes towards death in the wake of the Reformation, on the evidence of sermons, printed tracts, letters, visual images and other records.⁴⁶ These thorough historical investigations of beliefs and practices relating to death have established the importance of dying as a religious discipline and ideological battleground in English culture.⁴⁷ Whilst this thesis will make some use of ahistorical forms of analysis in an attempt to learn how Art of Dying rhetoric persuaded (or persuades) its audiences, the attempt is worthwhile only because historians have shown the phenomenon of Christian death preparation to be remarkable and consequential.

Finally, historical studies of medical approaches in this period discuss the nature and development of what we might call disease-thought, of which death-thought is inevitably a part. Physicians, no less than authors, imagine and invent the parameters of 'death' and 'disease', as demonstrated in the work of Margaret Healy and Stephen Pender.⁴⁸ I will draw on these studies in order to illustrate the fictive nature of the Art of Dying. Preparing readers to die 'well'; diagnosing spiritual conditions; and providing consolatory 'cures' or inflammatory and purgative thoughts: these tasks of godly authors, like the tasks of their contemporary physicians, are essentially rhetorical. Metaphors for death function in godly death manuals as productive, and apparently effective, fantasies. More surprisingly, perhaps, lists of moral definitions, proscriptions and restrictions serve as effective regimens or 'diets', appealing to the godly reader's wish for pastoral supervision and methods of self discipline. Central to the disciplined 'cure' provided by Art of Dying books is the theme of *contemptu mundi*, which as I shall argue demands the pious rejection or denigration of physical life.

⁴⁴ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, Chapter 18.

⁴⁵ Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead*, p. 100.

⁴⁶ Houlbrooke, "The Puritan Death-Bed."; *Death, Religion and the Family*.

⁴⁷ An interesting earlier study of dying in American culture was made by David E Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

⁴⁸ Margaret Healy, *Fictions of Disease in Early Modern England: Bodies, Plagues and Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001). Stephen Pender, "Between Medicine and Rhetoric," *Early Science and Medicine* 10:1 (2005): 36-64.

These manuals are much less interested in the dissolution, preparation or conduct of the dying body than in an imagined antithesis to corporeal life. Godly death-thought, it must be stressed, is the invention of a determinedly disembodied fiction.

Histories of Protestant Piety

If histories of death reveal what past populations imagined death to be, histories of piety reveal the broader cultural context in which such ideas came to dominate. Viewed historically, the godly Art which is my subject is the invention of three overlapping pious cultures: the society of Tudor-Stuart England; the Protestant church, at the peak of Calvinist influence; and the self-defining community of like-minded worshippers whose preferred term of identification was 'the Godly'. Through the 'divines' who were their spokesmen, the Godly produced an identifiable idea of death and, importantly, a thought process for anticipating death. They designed death, on paper and from the pulpit, in ways that stimulated and required preparation. Piety is a useful term denoting the interaction between 'top-down' religious instruction and informally structured, 'bottom-up,' devotional habits. It might be defined as the application of moral values to daily life where none are inherent, and the practice of this mundane moralising. Piety loads the ordinary with spiritual significance. The word's associations reflect something of the disciplinarian flavour of Protestant religion.

From historians specialising in Protestant piety, notably Patrick Collinson, Alexandra Walsham, and Peter Lake, I derive some understanding of the mechanisms and motives of death-construal; not just how the Godly prepared to die, but why and how this discipline of preparation gained importance in the religious culture. Relevant questions to be considered here include: whose interests do Art of Dying texts serve? What values do they convey? What kinds of social organisation do they formulate? Why and to whom does it matter that a person's death be not merely 'good', in broadly Christian terms, but specifically 'godly'? In a detailed reading of selected texts, I will note various pious ideals and rationalisations stamped into the doctrinal content of Art of Dying literature. In these manuals political battles are waged, contemporaries excoriated, domestic habits moralised, social relationships negotiated, inner life regulated, communities agitated, social crises marked. The texts yield clues to the normalising processes of congregational life, in which even the apparently intimate act of preparing to die is brought into a realm of conformity.

In many ways the piety revealed in godly Art of Dying books is distinctively 'godly' and Protestant; but at the same time, it was necessarily derivative. There can be no discrete history of Protestantism, divorced from a broader Christian history, as Eamonn Duffy has

conclusively shown.⁴⁹ To study Protestant piety is to study Catholic piety, and to examine the bitter feuds and stealthy borrowings between them. Theodore Bozeman's extensive study of 'pietism' emphasises the shared heritage of Catholic and Protestant devotion in the Art of Dying and more broadly in the revival of disciplines of meditation.⁵⁰ With the Art of Dying as his specific focus, David Atkinson similarly shows Protestant divines adapted Christian commonplaces and borrowed meditative practices from Ignatius Loyola's *Devotio Moderna* and Thomas a Kempis' *Imitatio Christi*, whilst articulating their own particular concerns over election and assurance. The most significant difference between Catholic and Protestant renditions of the Art of Dying can be illustrated briefly by reference to Petrus Luccensis' *A Dialogue of Dying Wel*, translated into English in 1603 by Richard Verstagen. In this Catholic manual, a wise hermit, in discussion with a doubtful merchant, represents the Art of Dying as a labour necessary for earning salvation, 'without which a man cannot purchase paradise, nor escape the horrible paynes of hel'.⁵¹ The significant word here is 'purchase'. Protestant authors schooled in predestination theology naturally rejected the idea that paradise could be purchased. Godly manuals including Perkins' *Salve* do however insist that death holds many 'benefits' for believers; thereby reforming rather than eradicating the notion of a spiritual economy.⁵² For Protestants faith, not deeds, is rewarded; or rather, is its own reward.

It is not my aim to measure the actual doctrinal similarities or differences between *artes moriendi*, but rather to examine the rhetorical moves by which a godly way was made distinct. Like other forms of Protestant 'counterpoyson', the godly Art of Dying was differentiated with considerable effort from Catholic formulations of the theme.⁵³ Its Protestant advocates, producers and purchasers were under constant pressure from Counter-Reformation authors intent on securing the Art's importance in Catholic sacramental piety. Samuel Ward's frustration with Cardinal Bellarmine, I shall argue, implies the considerable contemporary influence of that rival. The history of the formulation of this pious genre is to some extent a history of prejudice, fear and marketing. The Art of Dying was one part of a long post-Reformation struggle to divorce the new faith from the old. Fearing a national weakening of faith in the face of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, ardent reformed

⁴⁹ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*.

⁵⁰ Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 74 and throughout.

⁵¹ Petrus Luccensis, *A Dialogue of Dying Wel*, trans. Richard Verstagen (Antwerp, 1603), p. 2.

⁵² As noted earlier, this term recurs often in godly death manuals. Five 'worthy benefits' of the death of the righteous are listed in the dedication to Perkins, *Salve*, sig. A (v). The title of Arthur Golding's 1578 translation of Seneca's *On Benefiting* suggests that the concept has a classical derivation.

⁵³ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, p. 77n.

Protestants made death into the pinnacle of spiritual achievement, personal validation and communal resurgence. They did so by reviving a Catholic art and re-branding it.

Beyond issues of inter-faith rivalry, an understanding of godly piety can help us to position the Art within a broader evangelical project, which aimed to increase godliness in society by identifying members of the self-styled Elect and preparing them to die with a 'living faith'. Taking faith as their watchword, godly authors consciously reworked the *ars moriendi* form to guide readers towards faith-driven modes of expression and self-regulation before and beyond the act of death. Books nominally concerned with how to die well were additionally, and perhaps centrally, books about pious living. Any analysis of them must therefore contend with pious concerns that do not seem immediately related to death.

Histories of piety bear upon this study most of all in my attempt to identify the literary characteristics or accents of this prescriptive genre. What I find in selected manuals supports Bozeman's claim that the Protestant 'Reformation of Manners' resulted in writing with a moralising flavour as opposed to a festive flavour; and in 'profuse but schematic' literary forms.⁵⁴ We might say that the Art of Dying helped to introduce lists, prescriptions and moral contrasts into English literature, thereby giving it a pious inflection which is still in evidence centuries later.⁵⁵

Histories of Selfhood

By inviting readers to examine and discipline their godly consciences in preparation for death, Art of Dying literature foregrounds the phenomenon of self-consciousness. Specifically, it trains individuals to discern a spiritual self that exists independently of – or at war with – the body. This process attracts considerable attention from New Historicists who consider subjectivity to be a time-bound social construct. Agreeing that there is a distinct 'early modern' form of self-awareness or selfhood, many of these scholars also insist that the subjectivity they find evidenced in Tudor-Stuart literature is a novel invention of the period. 'Emergence' is a key term in Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-fashioning* and in many subsequent studies of self-concepts of the period. In one such emergent narrative, Michael Neill makes a causal link between a 'new self' and a 'new death':

⁵⁴ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, pp. 15, 64.

⁵⁵ A selection of recent self-improvement manuals is reviewed in James Harkin, "Manual Labours," *Financial Times*, January 6-7 2007. Though it is not possible to build a case here, it seems to me that the prescriptive approach to literature established in an Elizabethan market of conduct books has proved enduring in English publishing.

In a circular and mutually reinforcing fashion, new ways of responding to mortality probably helped to produce new forms of subjectivity, even as new subjectivities must have transformed the experience of dying.⁵⁶

The temporal rigidity of this theory is to my mind unconvincing. Its logical implication is that any self-concept formed before or after the productive historical period must be a qualitatively different phenomenon to the novelty that Neill and others describe. Readers could not have understood appeals for self-scrutiny, in this view, before the 'new' mental construct of the individual self was discovered.

Similarly, Jean Delumeau identifies the 'birth' in the fourteenth century of a 'new fear' which he calls 'the fear of one's self,' suggesting that such an emotion could not have existed previously.⁵⁷ Although it is beyond my scope to gather evidence against this claim, it seems that much could be found in classical drama and early literature to refute it. David Aers offers examples of introspective early Christian literature, including Augustine's *Confessions* and Langland's *Piers Plowman*, to support his argument that: 'There is no reason to think that language and experience of inwardness, of inferiority, of divided selves, of splits between outer realities and inner forms of being were unknown before the seventeenth century...' .⁵⁸ If we step outside the historical debate over when a certain kind of introspection 'began', it seems clear that the prospect of facing death arouses emotions recognisable in art and literature across centuries and is not, *au fond*, unique to any historical period.

Scholars of early modern subjectivity doubt that human beings have innate tendencies which survive across historical periods, and treat notions of personality and motivation with extreme caution. In order to avoid anachronistic assumptions about the minds represented or addressed in self-referential literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, New Historicist scholars tend to deconstruct authors into their constituent cultural parts; in which shape, these authors do indeed appear alien and antique. In her discussion of the pious diary kept by Cambridge divine Samuel Ward, Margo Todd sees her subject as 'a symbolic structure of Elizabethan puritan culture' and as a 'functional product of his culture'.⁵⁹ This definition of the individual as a transparent product of historically bounded forces reduces him to a set of symbols. Ward's diary is not the creation of a man with idiosyncratic urges to motivate, conform or promote himself through writing, as Todd sees it, but rather the repository of historically particular set of religious norms or signifiers.

⁵⁶ Neill, *Issues of Death*, p. 30 n.63.

⁵⁷ Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture 13th-18th Centuries*, trans. Eric Nicholson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. 1.

⁵⁸ Aers, "Whisper in the Ear."

⁵⁹ Margaret Todd, "Puritan Self-Fashioning: The Diary of Samuel Ward," *Journal of British Studies* 31:3 (1992): 236-64. This Samuel Ward is not the author of *The Life of Faith in Death*, examined later in this thesis; but the two divines share several biographical coincidences besides their name.

Believing the self-consciousness of early moderns to be necessarily distinct from our own, less individualised than our own, and obscure to our modern gaze, this vein of scholarship risks simplifying the relationship between social data and the minds which absorb it. Profound scepticism towards psychology narrows the field of inquiry and leaves key questions unanswered. Can we be sure that ‘the personal self’ was new in Renaissance Europe, on the evidence that this idea was newly articulated in print? Can diaries and printed tracts be read as transparent expressions of an emergent ‘personal’ subjectivity; or are these always at one level rhetorical, written with an audience in mind? If early modern culture can be deemed to possess a distinct ‘subjectivity’, on what basis do we divide the many other kinds of subjectivity that are possible? Is the ‘new’ early modern self anything other than a new nominal fallacy? If the Art of Dying reflects an emergent consciousness, different from our own, how then can modern readers recognise it? As G. W. Pigman puts it:

An historicism strong enough to banish Freudian notions from the study of the Renaissance would not be able to explain how we understand the inner life of other people – or, for that matter, how we understand the way we were at earlier ages or in different moods.⁶⁰

While histories of the self often overstate the significance of change across eras, and ignore conceptual changes within a life caused by varying moods, circumstances or influences, these accounts are at their best attractively dynamic. In what follows I note some ways in which Art of Dying rhetoric seeks to bifurcate and unite, depress and elevate, control and deconstruct, the self-concepts of godly readers.

Histories of Print

Histories of early modern printing trends are of some use in explaining the formulation of a godly Art of Dying. Elizabeth Eisenstein’s investigation of ‘the cultural metamorphosis produced by printing’ led other scholars to treat print technology as the creative agent of major literary and intellectual developments in the Reformation period.⁶¹ In the wake of Eisenstein’s study, it has become conventional to talk of ‘print,’ or ‘the press,’ as if the technology represented by these metonyms is capable of doing unintentionally what human authors do intentionally; such as producing ideas and changing readers’ techniques of conceptual organisation. A materialist argument could be made that print technology caused –

⁶⁰ G. W. Pigman III, "Limping Examples: Exemplarity, the New Historicism, and Psychoanalysis," in *Creative Imitation: New Essays on Renaissance Literature in Honour of Thomas M. Greene*, ed. D. Quint, et al. (Binghamton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992), 281-95.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change, 2 Vols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 67.

or at least enabled – certain changes in patterns of thinking in the literate godly which in turn inclined them towards a structured, book-based Art of Dying. A similar argument has been made for the technology of anatomical dissection, which according to David Hillman produced a ‘new internal panorama’ and according to Jonathan Sawday caused a ‘new instability’ in people’s sense of themselves.⁶² Pushed to their logical conclusion, these arguments suggest that new forms of technology – of printing, or surgical dissection – are responsible for producing new kinds of consciousness. Godly death preparation literature might be seen as the outcome of such a cultural shift.

In my view, print technology partly – but only partly - explains one of the significant features of the godly Art of Dying, which is the replacement of visual representations of death common in earlier *artes moriendi* woodcuts, Dance of Death tableaux, and carved or painted *memento mori* death-heads, with verbal and typographical devices. Printed books made certain kinds of pious practice and certain abstract, argumentative or itemising habits of thought easier to sustain. In these ways a theoretical perspective that foregrounds the productive role of technological change is helpful in drawing attention to the crafted and circumstantial nature of the Art. However I would resist stronger forms of the argument that print technology caused shifts in the nature of death-thought, making abstract methodical contemplation and inward self-scrutiny possible for the first time. The habit of self-scrutiny pre-dates print technology, as does the connection in Christian logic between contemplation of death and contemplation of the mortal – because sinful – self. So-called ‘technologies of thought’ or ‘technologies of affect’ which are said to have accompanied the advent of print surely shaped the Art of Dying no more than did that older technology: the individual organic brain.

The relationship between print technology and the Art of Dying is not one of simple causality: people did not prepare to die because books of instruction were available and affordable. At the same time, the absence or indescribability of death, noted earlier, makes it amenable to activities that can be readily achieved in print, such as anatomical charts listing the features of death, or puzzling and memorable phrases which evoke an expectation of dying and which can be underlined, copied or quoted. These activities could in turn reinforce the textual pleasures of those literate readers who, as Lori Ann Ferrell points out in a different context, enjoyed the mechanical possibilities of rhetoric, mnemonics, geometry,

⁶² David Hillman, "Visceral Knowledge," in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 81-105. Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 33.

optics and visual perspective.⁶³ Death, which cannot be seen, proves to be an opportunity for godly authors to experiment with ways of showing. For these Calvinist authors, sight is both morally circumscribed and a subject attracting the excited expectation that death will bring revelation. Combining these various points of interest and restriction, how-to-die manuals reveal a complex interaction between godly death-thought and print technology.

Psychological Perspectives

Approached psychologically, Art of Dying manuals are tools of the mind.⁶⁴ Death preparation is mentally and emotionally, as well as culturally, managed. From this vantage point it is the religious mind, as much as the religious society, which prepares to die. This immediately begs a definition of mind. My starting point here is a basic assumption that minds and cultures are different entities, and cannot be treated as synonymous. Cultures do not, in fact, think: people do. Godly minds are not merely expressions of the conventions that shape them, or storehouses of collective wisdom. The mind – any mind – feeds selectively and creatively on cultural stimuli, often responding with stubborn independence to what it is shown or denied.

Art of Dying authors explicitly recognise the unruly nature of the human psyche, and address themselves precisely to this ‘problem’ of variability when trying to regulate thoughts, as I shall argue. These manuals are centrally concerned with the task of persuading minds that respond unpredictably to such attempts. The fact that several manuals were published almost simultaneously in the early 1600s, conveying much the same doctrine to much the same audience, would seem to support the fear of godly authors that their readers were not easily or uniformly converted. Since this tension between individuality and conformity is central to *ars moriendi* texts, it would be inappropriate to read them with the assumption that what they say is just what ‘the godly community’ thought; or to equate the similarity of the manuals’ prescriptions with an actual, unchanging similarity in the belief of all self-styled godly individuals.

My first contention, therefore, is that religious minds differ from one another and remain to some degree independent of the dominant culture even when – perhaps especially when – they make daily and hourly attempts to conform to it. If this were not the case, there would be no Art of Dying genre: a single text or instruction to ‘die like Christ’ would be

⁶³ Lori Ann Ferrell, "Transfiguring Theology: William Perkins and Calvinist Aesthetics," in *John Foxe and His World*, ed. Christopher Highley and John N. King (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 160-79.

⁶⁴ I do not use the term ‘psychological’ to denote any particular discipline or to imply any coherence of views among those who see themselves as psychologists; but rather as a broad descriptive term for forms of analysis with a central interest in mind function. The term ‘psycho-history’ is inadequate because it presupposes that the object of study – the human mind – is to be viewed within a temporal framework, as a sub-branch of history.

sufficient to direct a truly collective godly mind. As it is, we can find considerable evidence that independence of mind was an important factor in the construction and original reception of how-to-die manuals. Indeed, the ability of readers to interpret signs differently is of central concern to godly Art of Dying authors, who respond to this potential freedom with tables, rules, lists and other strategies of containment, as I shall argue.⁶⁵

Jean Delumeau points to a difference in mentality between preachers and their flocks, or between church logic and popular emotional logic, citing Richard Burton as an acute observer of his contemporaries' independent and unauthorised fears of damnation.⁶⁶ This usefully draws attention to a difference of motivation between orators and auditors; a point which will be developed in the following chapters. Delumeau's structural division of mentalities is still too general for my purposes, however. Defining a godly mind is not a matter of ruling some individuals in and others out; nor a matter of establishing different degrees of godliness, since a person's thinking may vary in piety from moment to moment, or at different stages of life. A broad definition of the mentality to be studied here will include those sometime-godly and wavering-godly minds affected by the Art of Dying, and will not restrict its critical focus to the remarkably studious and literate individuals of historical record whose diaries or descriptions have given us a portrait of the representative godly 'type'.⁶⁷

At the same time, I recognise that this genre must have appealed most to the most enthusiastically pious, for whom the best term is – despite its negative connotations – Puritan. Theodore Bozeman defines Puritans as people who 'believed and spoke the language of *sola fides*'.⁶⁸ Responding to the wariness of some historians to use the term 'Puritan' on the grounds that it was a term of insult in the Jacobean period, Bozeman observes that Robert Bolton and several other godly ministers did not object to being called 'puritan' or 'precise'.⁶⁹ These words accurately represented the attempts of such individuals to restore what they saw as a 'purer' truth, and remain convenient epithets.

Starting with an inclusive understanding of godly minds, I will attempt to make a functionally significant distinction between the psychology of author and reader, or preacher and preached-at. For the duration of a persuasive act – here, studying or consulting a manual

⁶⁵ The effort made by authors of godly manuals to minimise variant readings contrasts with the apparent tolerance of such authors as Bacon and Montaigne. In reference to the latter group, Kevin Sharpe argues that 'writers themselves were the first to credit the reader's independence and authority'. This 'authority' of readers is distinctly alarming to Art of Dying authors, it seems to me. Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England*

(New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 41.

⁶⁶ Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*, p. 545.

⁶⁷ I have in mind Lady Margaret Hoby and Mary Gunter, whose self-recorded spiritual regimens are briefly discussed in this study.

⁶⁸ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, pp.3-4.

⁶⁹ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, p. 6.

on dying well – the reader’s mind takes on a role, task, or orientation which is distinct from that of the author. However readily an individual may switch between the two roles on different occasions, it is my understanding that the persuading mind functions, in the moment of persuasion, quite differently than does the tutored, receiving - or resisting - mind. One understands itself to be authoritative; the other is confined to forming responses.⁷⁰ This relational understanding of minds chimes with rhetorical theory and with the notion, made popular by Foucault, that books, texts or speeches are exchanges of power. What is arguably true of all literature is particularly marked in the prescriptive Art of Dying: the didactic author in every case wishes to change readers’ minds, by inciting, re-ordering, reforming or suppressing thoughts relating to the audience’s mortality. Aristotle’s definition of the ‘inartistic’ use of emotion to impose a set of feelings on the audience seems to apply to several of the texts examined here; particularly to Nicholas Byfield’s coercive *Cure*.

This is a study, then, of the transaction of minds in particular rhetorical contexts. When an author promotes a collectivist ideal such as the reunion of the Elect at Judgement Day, I see this as a persuasive tactic, not as evidence of a society-wide conviction. Scholars commonly avoid speculating on the actual effects of such tactics, by using terms such as ‘poetics’ or ‘illocutionary force’ which have no clearly identifiable human agent.⁷¹ However it seems to me legitimate to suggest the likely emotions aroused in a reader, in the moment of persuasion, without assuming that these feelings were evenly experienced or long-lived. In this way I hope to speculate carefully on how the Art of Dying served or exacerbated psychological needs.

Perhaps the most important psychological aspect of godly Art of Dying texts is their attempt to incite and supervise the reader’s mental self-regulation, or self-directed spiritual exercise. Practical theologians, Bozeman tells us, aimed to create a ‘science of praxis’ or behavioural discipline of living (and dying) well.⁷² To this end, Art of Dying books pay special attention to the functioning of the reader’s mind, and deliver godly instruction on self-

⁷⁰ Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* instructs orators to be alert to, and prepared for, the likely states of mind of particular audiences in particular situations, and the specific emotional significance of topics to these audiences. This training sets authors apart from their readers, since the latter do not commonly make a preparatory investigation of the author’s mood before beginning to read. James L. Kastely, "Pathos: Rhetoric and Emotion," in *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 221-38.

⁷¹ ‘Poetics’ seems to be used by literary critics to denote a state of mind effected by and/or reflected in certain kinds of vocabulary. See for example, Michael C Schoenfeldt, "That Spectacle of Too Much Weight': The Poetics of Sacrifice in Donne, Herbert and Milton," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31:3 (2001): 561-84. ‘Illocutionary’ is found throughout John Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). This term is also taken up enthusiastically in Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, 3 Vols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. pp.98-124.

⁷² Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, p. 90.

management of thought processes using a range of psychological concepts, such as the ‘cure’ of words or the ‘benefits’ of self-control. The mind, as much as the deathbed, is the arena in which the act of dying is expected to take place. Given the manuals’ own emphasis on what we would call psychology, it seems reasonable to apply our best analytical tools to the object of their concern, without presuming in advance that the result will inevitably be a misfit. In the interests of balance and simplicity, I will re-consider three of the topics discussed above - death, piety and self- from a psychological perspective.

Psychologies of Death

Observations made by cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker in *The Denial of Death* in 1973 inform much of the subsequent psychological work in this area, and are therefore worth summarising. All human behaviour is motivated at a basic level by fear of death and the desire to control that fear, according to Becker:

[T]he idea of death, the fear of it, haunts the human animal like nothing else; it is a mainspring of human activity – activity designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny for man.⁷³

It is the ‘tragic destiny’ of humankind to seek ‘cosmic significance’ in order to avoid the fact of our mortality, Becker argues. Our route to significance - that is, to the denial of our ultimate insignificance - is symbolic. Being limitless and easy to create, symbols feed man’s yearning for immortality and constitute the staple currency of self esteem. Driven by the primal imperative of fear, we create symbolic social fictions, systems, hierarchies and dualities of meanings, with which to gain self-esteem and illusory death-transcendence and so to defend ourselves from our ends.

Becker’s assertion that our common, biological fear of death prompts symbolic myth-making has been supported by empirical studies in recent years.⁷⁴ When subtly reminded of death, or given the equivalent of a *memento mori* in clinical trials, people of varying age and ethnicity seek to increase their self-esteem by bolstering symbolic fictions of immortality. To simplify the findings of Terror Management theorists, it seems that humans are naturally inclined to resist their mortality in specific ways; many of which are remarkably apparent in Art of Dying manuals. To reduce threatening knowledge, or ‘death-salience’, godly authors and modern clinical subjects alike reinforce their social fiction, identifying strongly with the in-group which will reward and remember them, and condemning the out-group which will not. Moral judgements thus become harsher and more polarised in anticipation of death; and

⁷³ Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Free Press, 1997), Preface, xvii.

⁷⁴ J Greenberg, S L Koole, and Pyszczynski, eds., *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology* (New York: Guilford, 2004).

fantasies of transcendence or immortal life are predictably sharpened. These techniques are so common that some theorists talk of a 'cognitive architecture of terror management' to describe how brains generate structured processes to manage the prospect of death.

Terror Management Theory invites us to see that individuals in all cultures do the same thing, differently. Those aspects of the Art of Dying which seem most specific to an earlier historical period – the congregational tone; the use of polemic to distinguish 'godly from 'ungodly'; the literal belief in life after death – appear, in the light of modern psychology, to fit universal patterns of death-thought. The pious practice of mimesis encouraged in how-to-die manuals seems to me an instance of the 'heroic task' observed by Becker, whereby humans seek to make symbolic heirs of one another in order to strengthen their shelter against death. In psychological terms, the Christian Art of Dying is a project of denial: it requires readers to deny, as a first principle, that they will cease to exist. To convince readers of this, godly manuals expend considerable effort in building and sustaining fantasies of an afterlife. In order to achieve the behavioural and attitudinal reform which is their ultimate goal, Art of Dying texts first address their audience's imaginative and emotional faculties. 'The crucial intermediary between hearing and doing is willing,' Brian Vickers observes, 'and it is no accident that a new stress on the will and voluntaristic psychology accompanied the revival of rhetoric'.⁷⁵

What modern psychological interpretations suggest – and they can never, of course, do more – is that primal and unspoken existential fear may increase our receptiveness to all acts of religious persuasion. In that case, the Art of Dying is an ingenious exploitation of instincts. To be comforting, a symbolic fiction of immortality must be widely held to be true. Therefore it is a natural goal of believers to seek others' conformity to their fiction. Godly authors reinforce their own 'immortality project', to use Becker's term, and disparage others' projects, by delineating the route to regeneration. Deployed in such ways, rhetoric serves not merely as the medium through which a 'solution' to death is promoted, but as an act of death-denying. Art of Dying texts prepare readers for death by denying its finality, insisting that there is transcendent justice and an immortal life of the spirit.

Recognising the organic spurs to death-thought and mortality-denial may help us to capture the emotional impact of Art of Dying literature. These books derived from a creaturely desire to live, and a concomitant hunger for symbolic immortality. Without this primitive motivation, Tudor-Stuart godly culture may not have been captivated to the extent it was by religious propaganda. The psychology of death suggests that all minds are at a basic level 'religious', that the human organism has a natural predisposition to create fantasies of

⁷⁵ Brian Vickers, "Rhetoric and Poetics," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 715-46.

immortality to counter the hard fact of death. We crave significance for our endings, and organise our cultures accordingly to provide this significance. Hamlet's dying wish that his friend 'tell my story' might be seen to present the primal cause, as much as the socio-cultural effect, of Jacobean England's apparent obsession with death.

At a minimum, psychological studies of death-thought broaden the lens through which we read Art of Dying literature. They suggest that how-to-die books belong not just to the shelves of historical self-improvement literature, but to a broader inquiry into the human mind's persistent endeavours to transcend death.

Psychologies of Piety

What characterises the Protestant (or Puritan, or godly) psyche in its anticipation of death? If we view pious mentality as a psycholinguistic process, in which shared narratives and metaphors shape individual cognition, then we must acknowledge that the overwhelming activity in which godly minds are engaged is the maintenance of faith in eternal life. To die 'well', or to prepare to do so, is a matter of reinforcing the psychological mechanics of faith in spite of any and all contrary urges or evidence, including the prospect of one's extinction. As it ceases to exist, the godly mind must believe that it will continue to exist in regenerate form. Instructing readers to achieve, by strenuous mental effort, this paradoxical ideal, Art of Dying literature provides a particularly good vantage point from which to examine godly mentality.

The Calvinist doctrine which unites all five texts examined here presents special challenges or points of pressure to the believer. This peculiarity has caused some scholars to treat it as a distinct mentality or sub-psyche of religious thought. John Stachniewski and other investigators of the Calvinist imagination note its extraordinary commitment to self-investigation. Bozeman refers to the disciplined searching for 'marks' of salvation as 'the ritual of signs', naming Nicholas Byfield as its foremost proponent.⁷⁶ Godly Art of Dying texts exhibit this anxious fascination with signs of election, calling on readers to imagine their spiritual selves in a highly rigorous, forensic manner. The urge to comply with such demands does not necessitate, however, a thoroughly or consciously 'Calvinist' mentality in the reader. Individuals would not need to understand themselves to be Calvinists, much less students of 'experimental predestination', to look for signs that they had been saved.⁷⁷ Personal susceptibility to fear is one obvious psychological factor that might prompt such a train of thought; even, perhaps, against specific advice to the contrary.

⁷⁶ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, pp. 133-4.

⁷⁷ This term is used in R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649, Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), pp. 51-3. I do not dispute it, but merely note the limited ability of such labels to reflect the experience of reading.

Bozeman sees in the devotional aids and spiritual exercises of Puritan pietism a kind of master-mind or controlling psychology which he terms Puritan Depth Psychology.⁷⁸ This refers to the godly impulse for probing and cataloguing sins, and to the Puritan suspicion that the core of the self was a degenerate, self-deceiving heart. Adopting Bozeman's metaphor, we might say that the Art of Dying exercised the desire to plumb one's own spiritual depths before death uncovered them. In an earlier book, Bozeman provides a different but not incompatible model for piety as a habit of internal dramatisation, in which the Bible functions as a lens, projecting a panorama of Scriptural narrative into believers' minds.⁷⁹ I find considerable evidence in support of this view in godly death manuals, which at times appear to function as psycho-dramas, involving readers directly in the rehearsal of their own deaths. The pious mind's relationship to imagined spaces is of particular interest here in two respects: as it bears on the (absent) spectacle of death; and as it relates to proscribed acts of irreligious imagining. I shall argue in relation to Ward's *Faith in Death* that Art of Dying authors distrust the imagination whilst simultaneously relying on it. The only kind of spectacle worthy of godly eyes, they insist, is a morally improving spectacle.

Art of Dying manuals create the prospect of death figuratively in order to determine how audiences imagine it. One representation of dying that appears vividly in godly death manuals is that of the burning martyr. As Alexandra Walsham and Tessa Watt have described, the godly surrounded themselves with portraits and tables of persecutions; and so it should be no surprise that we find martyrs cited throughout Art of Dying literature.⁸⁰ This circumstantial fact leaves open the question of whether the appetite for martyrdom exists only because of the objects that formulate and accentuate it; or whether an impulse to experience suffering lies, to use Bozeman's metaphor, 'deeper' in Protestant psyche than historical accounts suggest.

In the following chapters I will treat the metaphors used by Art of Dying authors as clues to their own preoccupations and to the habits of thought they seek to instil in pious readers. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have shown how metaphors shape minds, demonstrating an integral link between the common rhetorical strategy of figuration and the psycho-physiological mechanisms by which people see and understand the world.⁸¹ Individuals create their own knowledge by the common means of experiencing one thing in

⁷⁸ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, p. 156.

⁷⁹ Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 32-4.

⁸⁰ Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 253; Watt, *Cheap Print*.

⁸¹ This is a simplification of the detailed argument made in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980). Metaphor pervades our normal conceptual system (p.115). We think and function in the terms of systematic metaphors. Metaphor plays an important role in characterising the structure of an experience (p. 118). We use metaphors as guides to action; so the action fits the metaphor; so they are self-fulfilling prophecies (p. 156).

terms of another. Those who share a fund of metaphors – such as the Bible - will develop similar heuristics, and even similar experiences. On this basis, we can propose that there is a productive connection between a manual's figuration of pain or joy in dying, and a reader's imaginative experience of that prospect. From recurring metaphors in the Art of Dying, we might say that the godly knew death – that is, anticipated, and in a way, lived it - as combat, self-division, trial, social separation and reunion, transport, ecstatic conjunction, and rebirth. To adapt Lakoff's title, these are the metaphors by which the Tudor-Stuart godly died.

However, the connection between tropes and psyche is undoubtedly neither direct nor transparent. Does each godly metaphor communicate an emotional experience; and to what extent is that emotion changed in the transfer from author to audience? If an author presents death metaphorically as an embrace between the dying Christian and the living Christ, would a credulous reader anticipate exactly that? Of course there is no certain answer to such questions, but I aim to do more than gesture towards them. To chart in general terms 'the erotics' or 'the poetics' of the Art of Dying would be to tar all authors, readers and texts alike with a broad, all-purpose brush. It seems preferable to me to pay close attention to the rhetorical context and design of each metaphor in order to gauge whether it seems intended to provoke play of mind, puzzle-solving engagement, or mood change. My survey of selected examples suggests that godly manuals, like modern prescriptive handbooks, present a variety of tropes (and schemes) in the full knowledge that some would have greater psychological effect than others. What did not catch the attention of one reader might do so more successfully with another. The variety of figures used in Art of Dying literature seems to me more like a practical composite or toolkit than a set of conceptual components of 'the pious mind'. There is nothing novel or surprising in this observation, but it is worth making in order to avoid portraying piety as a fixed or uniform mindset.

Having briefly discussed some of the deliberate attempts of Art of Dying manuals to manufacture or incite pious mental states, I will consider their unwitting release of what Delumeau calls 'collective psychic discharges'.⁸² I take this term to refer to the potential of homiletic rhetoric to unleash states of mind which are not overtly recognised in the text or sermon, and which would not necessarily be considered legitimate by the preacher who provokes them. At the highpoint of its popularity, in the early seventeenth century, the Art of Dying seems to have functioned as an outlet for many imagined or experienced forms of suffering, and for various associated desires; among them, the pleasures of participation, congregation, segregation, self-scrutiny, self-trial, resistance, distinction, conflict, completion, self-presentation and self-transformation. We might call these the covert operations of Art of Dying literature; and they are as difficult to measure as the overt use of metaphors discussed

⁸² Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*, p. 339.

above. To take one example, godly death manuals show a preoccupation with the human body as an inferior, imprisoning, weak, and degenerate casing for the eternal soul. William Perkins and Nicholas Byfield, in particular, insist that the faithful look forward to liberating themselves from their despicable corporeality. At the same time, and in anticipation of a specific anxiety among readers, the authors promise that souls and bodies will be reunited at the 'second death' or Last Judgement. Regardless of its doctrinal coherence, this apparent contradiction between prescribed disgust for the body and reassurance that it will not be lost forever has the potential to cause confusion or self-loathing in readers.

How is the modern commentator to evaluate the psychological traits encouraged in or by Art of Dying manuals; as excessive, dysfunctional and symptomatic, or as self-regulating and productive of psychic health? Two different evaluations can be found in scholarly literature.

A sympathetic view of the Art's intentions and effects is common among commentators who regard it as an example of pastoral care. Doebler claims that whereas medieval *memento moris* were designed to frighten, Art of Dying manuals provided 'a humane and consolatory answer to such a stimulus'.⁸³ This comment implies progression in the genre towards an increasingly benevolent and therapeutic psychological orientation. Whilst regarding the Art's message as one of optimism, however, Doebler is no apologist for it. She recognises that *ars moriendi* optimism is promoted rather than achieved; and that the more it is promoted, the more anxiety it betrays:

That sermons and devotional books from 1603 to 1630 seemed to echo again and again the old answers indicated not that those answers were fully integrated or fully accepted into the consciousness of the English people, but rather that they needed to be stated again and again in a world where they were not apparent.⁸⁴

Looking at the same texts as 'messages', Stein observes that their capacity to induce fear and thereby promote obedience was part of their appeal to godly divines. Used as a management tool, however, the Art could have uncontrolled side effects:

Remembering death was a practical instrument of control... Thought of uncertainty could loosen related certainties and quicken conscientious doubts behind the rational assurances of personal salvation. The duty of training people how to die always ran the risk of overtraining them.⁸⁵

Equally, certain kinds of anxiety are celebrated within the Christian tradition of dying well, and cannot therefore be dismissed as accidental. Stein notes that Luther saw despair as a

⁸³ Doebler, *Rooted Sorrow*, p. 44.

⁸⁴ Doebler, *Rooted Sorrow*, p. 186.

⁸⁵ Stein, *House of Death*, p. 9.

necessary stage in the reception of saving grace.⁸⁶ The same point is taken up in Stachniewski's *Persecutory Imagination*, which nonetheless views Calvinist habits of mind as having a pathological tendency to swing from assurance of election to psychic disorder and obsession. One of the useful aspects of Stachniewski's study is his vigilance over critical terms. To describe the Art of Dying as a 'ritual' is not entirely neutral, since as Stachniewski explains, the word carries an evaluative connotation of innocuous and possibly therapeutic activity.⁸⁷ A self-managed ritual of dying would require a high degree of certainty, calmness and faith in the individual contemplating his own death; and whereas these qualities of mind are repeatedly promoted in Art of Dying books, they are demanded with such insistent fervour that it might be more accurate to say that this rhetoric seeks to sublimate and regulate a state of inner chaos.

In Robert Watson's view, Jacobean literature displays symptoms of a disturbed mentality amounting to a 'mortality crisis'.⁸⁸ The morbidity Watson detects in plays of the period could equally be identified in *artes moriendi*, and in the fact of their repeated production. To apply Watson's psychological understanding of the function of tragedy to the Art of Dying, preparatory books on death could be said to manifest or 'present' both conscious and unconscious fears, which they regulate and mythologise - and so exacerbate.

In partial support of Watson's analysis, Michael Neill observes that:

... the increasingly strident assertions of Christian confidence that mark the orthodox teaching of the *ars moriendi* in this period can themselves be regarded as evidence of the erosion of ancient certainties and a gathering anxiety about the possibility of 'death as eternal annihilation'.⁸⁹

Here Neill makes a historical contrast, between a prior age of certainty and an emerging age of anxiety, where I would favour a psychological one, between the consolatory activity in which godly authors thought they were engaged, and the actual - though unquantifiable - psychological outcome of these books. Without denying that one function of how-to-die texts is to console, I will argue that this benefit is offered within a broader strategy to recruit and reform members of the church; a strategy we might call the godly immortality project. This project evokes intense and contradictory states of mind in its recruits, ranging from self-censorship to ecstasy.

⁸⁶ Stein, *House of Death*, p. 36.

⁸⁷ John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 234.

⁸⁸ Watson, *The Rest Is Silence*, Introduction. See also Robert Watson, "Tragedy," in *Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, ed. A. R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 301-44.

⁸⁹ Neill, *Issues of Death*, p. 48.

Rhetorical analysis can best help, and be helped by, psychological studies of piety in the marginal areas of Art of Dying literature; the controlling signals, repetitive tics and overemphatic strain. In the manuals' emphasis on self-regulation we can see stealthy mechanisms of control, as authors teach obedience in the guise of self-mastery. The Christian ideal of a soothing 'physic' of words can be contrasted with the godly use of rhetoric to incite and agitate mental states. Wishing to avoid a static or uniform interpretation of the pious mind, I will suggest in relation to particular texts and passages how complex relations are evoked between the reader's godly and recalcitrant selves, and between author and reader; as physic and patient, preacher and congregant, magistrate and plaintive, friend and friend.

Psychology of the Self

Finally, we might consider some alternatives to the strictly historicised accounts of the self discussed above. From a developmental or evolutionary perspective, self-identity is relatively unproblematic. Adult humans know they will die, and this knowledge *is* self-consciousness. I will die, therefore, I am. At some level, 'the personal death' is universally recognised and instinctive. Recognition of mortality and of the self are parts of one instinct that surely pre-dates its early modern 'discovery'.

To suggest that early moderns had self-awareness does not, however, imply that these individuals had any more –or less – integrity than any others. I start with the assumption, not that early moderns had perfectly autonomous selves; but that all humans are 'peopled' or constructed by various influences which we discern unclearly. Similarly, I take self-fashioning to be a universal mechanism, which may produce similarly acculturated individuals but which cannot create identical twins. We are all semi-conscious self-fashioners. The pious self-fashioning taught in Art of Dying manuals provides evidence of an unusually conscious and intensive programme of introspection; but further inferences must be carefully drawn. Godly readers are encouraged by this literature to see themselves in advance of death as parts of a whole, as mirrors to Christ; but this does not mean that such readers saw themselves only in this way. Indeed a strongly individualistic strain runs through the Art of Dying, drawing attention to the rhetorical *ethos*, or persuasive persona, of authors, readers and featured exemplars. Those whose exemplary deaths are reported for the edification of others, as John Knox's final struggle is in Perkins' *Salve*, seem to have courted notice in their dying moments, or at least to have allowed their singular and exceptional faith to be noted. Godly individuals may have experienced a group-self, but the evidence suggests this was achieved with considerable effort.

Given the enormity of this topic of selfhood, and its undeniable relevance to Art of Dying literature, it may be useful to focus on two smaller components. Firstly, the initial

impulse to contemplate one's mortal bodily self has been aligned, in recent scholarship, with the science of anatomy which became popular in the sixteenth century.⁹⁰ This newly emergent form of scientific inquiry provoked, it is suggested, a new form of curiosity in early moderns: the self-directed gaze. Certainly Strode's *Anatomie of Death*, discussed above, and other how-to-die manuals dissect the topic of mortality with a methodical rigour which suggests that these authors had recently and enthusiastically embraced a disciplined mode of self-scrutiny. Unless it is complemented by a psychological perspective, however, this historicist reasoning tends towards the unsatisfying conclusion that human curiosity is dependent on external, social advances; that individuals had no wish to explore their physicality and mortality until anatomists made the exploration meaningful or possible. The appeal of self-directed death preparation literature can only be fully understood, I suggest, if we accept that its original readers were conscious of their own mortality in a visceral, instinctive sense; that they saw a person in the mirror, not an 'early modern subjectivity'. At the same time, I would argue that these books accentuate and interrogate the godly self – and its ungodly shadow – to an extraordinary degree. This may have induced in some readers a heightened or complex sense of themselves unfamiliar to those who were not so tutored. By anticipating death, students of the Art of Dying might come to understand themselves in a mode – or at a level of intensity – other than that in which they ordinarily lived. To die well in godly thinking is to accept the dissolution and insignificance of the self; but in teaching readers to negate the self, Art of Dying manuals ironically make it the topic of greatest interest.

A second aspect of selfhood which has received much scholarly attention is the issue of how 'inner' and 'outer' selves connect in the godly mind. Ramie Targoff, taking issue with Katherine Maus, has argued convincingly that early modern Christians, particularly those at either end of the conformist spectrum, believed their internal will and external behaviour to be inseparable. In prayer, the godly achieved a direct correspondence between inner thought and outward demonstration. As Targoff explains it, prayer was considered 'a performative act whose external persuasiveness determines the worshiper's internal sincerity'.⁹¹ Believers deemed their own transparently demonstrative devotion to be utterly sincere, by contrast with the hypocritical performance of stage actors. Their 'essential' selves, located in the imperceptible stirrings of a faithful heart, were manifested directly as externally visible physical signs, gestures and emotions. Targoff's account, which I have briefly summarised, seems to explain the puzzling theatricality and emotional incontinence of congregationally minded Protestants, in modern and early modern times. I hope to build on it in following

⁹⁰ Hillman, "Visceral Knowledge."; Devon Hodges, *Renaissance Fictions of Anatomy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985); Sawday, *Body Emblazoned*.

⁹¹ Raimie Targoff, "The Performance of Prayer: Sincerity and Theatricality in Early Modern England," *Representations* 60 (1997): 49-65.

chapters with some observations about the psychological function of gestures and speeches at dying, as routes to self-reinforcement.

(c) The Art of Dying & the Art of Rhetoric

If history is better at explaining why the Church invented and promoted an Art of Dying, psychology is better, in my view, at explaining why people listened. It is my hope that an analysis centred on rhetoric will provide a bridge between these two broadly defined critical approaches. Paying attention to the purpose, system and techniques of rhetoric, I aim to establish how godly Art of Dying manuals at once record and invent, formalise and fabricate their readers' desire to die 'well'.

I take my understanding of rhetoric from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and from several of the many Renaissance composition manuals whose influence is apparent in godly death manuals.⁹² Chiefly, I take rhetoric to be the art of persuasion. Occasionally, the term 'rhetoric' is used here more specifically to refer to an identifiable topic which is regularly treated in a rhetorical manner, such as 'the rhetoric of election' or 'the rhetoric of witness'. Among the literary scholars who speak of rhetorics as units, topics or kinds of communication, Kenneth Burke treats martyrdom as 'a' rhetoric.⁹³ By this Burke seems to mean that the promotion – and undertaking – of an act of martyrdom is a structured, explicitly persuasive act of communication designed to affect an audience, even if the audience is God. Similarly, we might say that the ideal of Christian martyrdom is one of several significant *topoi* put to rhetorical use in *artes moriendi*; that it is one rhetorical strategy within the rhetoric of dying well; and that both martyrdom and the 'good death' are Christian 'rhetorics'. In this way, 'rhetoric' can describe parts and wholes, techniques and genres. Its flexible denotation may help to capture the shifting modality of the Art of Dying, which, as suggested above, operates as a body of literature on dying and as a persuasive way of dying.

⁹² It is not certain which particular rhetorical textbooks were used by the authors selected here, but all these authors were well trained in rhetoric. Deploying bold and relatively simple linguistic devices, godly authors have more apparent affinity with proselytising writers such as Erasmus and Thomas Wilson than with poetic and political theorists of rhetoric such as Philip Sidney and Francis Bacon. However, it would be a mistake to draw clear distinctions between any of these rhetorical 'schools' or to assume that 'godly' authors always and only used 'godly' techniques. Approval is not the same as influence. Commentaries on rhetoric which I have found helpful include Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted, eds., *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003); Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁹³ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 222.

It is the foundational principle of rhetoric that words are chosen to affect an audience. The first concern of persuasive authors is to influence the thinking of their readers. On this basis, I suggest that we can discuss authorial motivation in Art of Dying books without committing the ‘intentional fallacy’ feared by many theorists.⁹⁴ If, as I suppose, the primary objective of Art of Dying authors is to influence a reader’s state of mind, then it follows that these authors hold some general assumptions about psychological phenomena. Rhetoric necessitates a theory of mind. The most obvious component of this theory is that other people can be understood and influenced. Preachers who seek to persuade readers to die well suppose that human emotions - by whatever name – can be identified, roused and controlled: I use the present tense here to highlight the timeless nature of this assumption, which is central to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*.⁹⁵ Thomas Wight’s *Passions of the Mind* makes explicit this link between psychological and rhetorical endeavour. The Christian (Catholic) Wright wishes to discover the workings of men’s minds in order that these minds may be moulded into moral shape. Hazards preventing successful persuasion are to be found within the body of a listener; specifically in the imagination, which like a rival orator ‘putteth green spectacles before the eyes of our wit to make it see nothing but green’.⁹⁶

Wright’s study of the mind, its amenability to persuasion and potential for self-sabotage, belongs to a field of inquiry that stretches beyond narrow doctrinal concerns. All Christian Art of Dying authors, whatever their theological orientation, deal more or less consciously with this science of persuasion. The issues of communication encountered in godly attempts to convince readers of the need for, and likelihood of ‘salvation’, seem to me at least as important as the doctrinal interpretations that have traditionally interested scholars. Christian orators seek unapologetically to penetrate their audience’s physical and spiritual receptors in order to suppress, inflame or redirect the passions. Like moralising physicians, they want to make directly affective interventions. Unlike poets or wits who strive for a pleasing style, godly divines aim to bypass the aesthetic of *delectare* and go straight to the matter of *docere*. Under critical examination, Art of Dying manuals constantly reveal the impossibility of their aim to declare a self-evident ‘truth’. Language cannot avoid the figurative, especially when describing death; and these books are filled with metaphors. Aware of their own use of figures, godly authors seem to select them on the basis that what is

⁹⁴ New Critical attacks on ‘the intentional fallacy’ and ‘the affective fallacy’ are discussed in Patricia Waugh, *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 171-2.

⁹⁵ Kastely, "Pathos: Rhetoric and Emotion."; Pender, "Between Medicine and Rhetoric." On Aristotle, see also Eugene Garver, *Aristotle's Rhetoric: An Art of Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁹⁶ Cited and discussed on p. 41 of Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in General [1604]*, ed. Thomas O. Sloan (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971).

most obviously Scriptural and/or homely is most naturally descriptive of the created world; that some metaphors are less metaphorical than others.⁹⁷ By word selection, prescriptive authors can to some extent determine the components of their readers' expectations of dying; but the imaginative 'use' and emotional effects of metaphors cannot be wholly controlled. In an attempt to prevent what Wright calls the 'green spectacles' of the imagination affecting a readers' vision independently of the book's message, godly authors 'paint' the prospect of dying in bold lines, as it were, and so reinforce their artifice. The harder Art of Dying authors try to suppress inventiveness, the more conspicuous their own inventiveness becomes.

Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*, closely derived from Aristotle and known to be influential on godly divines, gives technical advice on how to 'stirre affection' in readers. Recommending Erasmus' places of exhortation, which include such common appeals as 'the expectation of all men' and 'hope of renown', Wilson evidently shares the Aristotelian view that certain universal fears and desires are shared by all humanity, and that common emotions can be expected – and manipulated – in people of a similar age or social status.⁹⁸ Wilson's idea of rhetoric rests on an uncomplicated, literally common-sensical, theory of mind.⁹⁹ The assumption that there is a universal grammar or, to use a linguistic term, 'deep structure' of human emotion which survives in different cultures under a changing 'surface' of language and behaviour remains compelling. Aristotle's observations that young men are impatient, or that old men think often of death, are recognisable after two millennia and for that reason, worthy of consideration. His comment that men fear death above all is patently true of successive generations in diverse cultures.¹⁰⁰ Art of Dying books are still intelligible, and potentially credible to Christian readers, many centuries after their composition. Of all the possible explanations for this, the simplest is that there is a continuity of human nature; that the brains of modern and early modern audiences share common structures. It might be argued that rhetoric is effective precisely, and only, because people have certain intrinsic reactions which can be predictably roused. At least, the ongoing malleability of readers'

⁹⁷ An interesting parallel is found in Lakoff and Johnson's argument that some commonly used metaphors of modern speech, such as those based on spatial prepositions like 'into' or 'up', are more inherent to our human bodily experience than others. These theorists try to make explicit a difference of degree of figuration, by contrast with the unacknowledged assumptions about 'true' and 'false' similitude made in godly Art of Dying texts. Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 18-41; Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, passim.

⁹⁸ Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique*, 2nd ed. (London, 1553), sig. 35v.

⁹⁹ Though I recognise that the notion of 'common sense' is in itself rhetorical.

¹⁰⁰ Cited in Stein, *House of Death*, p. 7. Book II of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* discusses emotions firstly in terms of the situations which arouse them and secondly in terms of the character types affected by them. A convenient online translation is Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (Adelaide: eBooks@Adelaide; <http://etext.library.adelaide.edu>, 2007).

responses warrants an assumption that minds are both encultured and embodied; that bodily feelings are relevant to the issue of what persuades.

My understanding of rhetoric as calculated persuasion means that, by viewing Art of Dying texts as instances of rhetoric, I am inclined towards a psychological interpretation of them. Whereas Stuart Clark, in *Thinking with Demons*, is interested in the history of the early modern mind that convinced itself of the existence of evil, I am interested in the persuadability of godly minds to the notion that there are good and bad ways to die. What Clark sees as evidence of ‘an age of cognitive extremism’, I am inclined to see as evidence of enduring techniques used to produce cognitive extremism. The linguistic features of *ars moriendi* manuals are very similar to those Clark identifies in literature on witchcraft: ‘logical relationships of opposition, metaphors of inversion, schemes of classification, taxonomies, rhetorical strategies and the like’.¹⁰¹ In Clark’s account, these are ‘features of early modern language systems’: here, they are considered features of all prescriptive literature. Though I would not expect to prove that duality is fundamental to human thinking, I hope to show that the construction of binary opposites is a deliberate rhetorical contrivance, exemplified in the Bible, the effectiveness of which is proven by its continued use in pious rhetoric.

Enduring as it is, the system of rhetoric established by Aristotle and formulated in Renaissance manuals demands critical attention to specific historical conditions. The social, political or ecclesiastic circumstances of a particular culture will partly determine what persuades its members. With contextual interpretation, we can understand the anti-Catholic polemic of Art of Dying texts as a manufactured persuasive effect. Responding to cultural pressures of the moment, godly manuals created and clarified doctrinal oppositions where less distinct shapes of opinion previously existed. Authors constructed distinctly Protestant or Catholic modes of dying artificially, on the page, in response to real social divisions and with a genuinely felt effect. These time-sensitive, engineered ‘arts’ or categories of Christian thought seemed to their original readers to be substantive differences, and have arguably hardened into such in the intervening period. By viewing the polarisation of doctrine this way, as a rhetorical process, I hope to reinforce the view that reality is constructed in historically specific ways; and at the same time, to show that a historical trend did not of itself automatically produce a polemical Art of Dying.

Viewing the Art of Dying as a rhetorical enterprise ensures that we note the dynamic qualities of these texts; the extent to which they are animated and made meaningful by a reader’s efforts of interpretation, repetition and enactment. Following chapters will discuss the various forms of ‘voicing’ by which readers are talked into – and talk themselves into – godly states of mind, through imitation of a sacred script or by conversing with inner demons

¹⁰¹ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 8.

or actual friends. One aim here is to correct a too-static view of the Art of Dying as a historical reference source, repository or compendium of symbolic commonplaces of death. An audience shapes the composition of an oration, the masters of rhetoric insist.¹⁰² Authors 'listen' for what will persuade readers to persuade themselves. These interactive qualities of rhetoric are heightened in texts produced by and for godly Protestants, among whom, as Bozeman observes: 'Sacred writ was [...] experienced as kind of living theater'.¹⁰³ Godly manuals aim to arouse more than an attitude towards dying: they urge readers to die in faith, actively and pre-emptively, physically, and mentally. Performance, by another name, is all. The Art's theatricality is not confined to one stage of dying well, I shall argue, but continues throughout the preparatory process. Those who study to die well become proponents of the Art, or orators in their own dying. 'Bold speech' is both a characteristic of godly deaths and a metonym for dying, which godly authors describe as an act of witnessing or giving testimony. In this sense the praxis of dying is itself an art of rhetoric; a rehearsed, self-conscious and affective process, performed by the individual in order to persuade himself and his peers of the power of godly faith.

Ironically, Art of Dying rhetoric constantly reminds readers of what they are meant to forget: the value of their individual, earthly lives. The *memento mori* command – 'remember you shall die' – is extended in these texts from a single persuasive emblem or icon into a book-length reminder that the living reader will die. Again and again these mirror-books force the reader's attention back to his or her own self, insisting that the thought of death must prevent the 'vanity' of self-regard, and so make a fetish of it. The mechanics of contemplating one's non-existence enhance self-fascination. In exploring the self-reflective nature of these texts, I will make frequent reference to a concept central to both rhetorical practice and Christian piety: imitation, or mimesis. Rhetoricians and churchmen insist, in their separate disciplines, that the best of the past should be used as a guide.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, dying can only be known pre-emptively at second hand, and is therefore particularly susceptible to mimetic treatment. Death's indescribability, its peculiar absence, prompts godly authors to improve one another's epithets without straying from Scriptural sources. Imitation-with-variety is the normal process of these texts. None is, or would wish to be, original. The Art imprints moral authority by schooling readers in conformity; specifically, *Imitatio Christi*. A good Christian seeks to match his self to the divine image. A good death is like Christ's death.

¹⁰² In the Aristotelian system, audiences are considered to be *pisteis*, modes of persuasion. Kastely, "Pathos: Rhetoric and Emotion."

¹⁰³ Bozeman, *Ancient Lives*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁴ 'Now, before we use either to write, or speake eloquently, wee must dedicate our myndes wholly, to follow the most wise and learned men, and seeke to fashion as wel their speache and gesturing, as their witte or endyting.' Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, sig. 3(r).

Exploring this parallel between literary and behavioural imitation, I will suggest that the Art of Dying derives some of its popularity from the sameness of its prescriptions. It seems that for godly authors and readers, the notion of 'copying' has none of the negative connotations it carries in modern culture: on the contrary, to achieve a true copy of the Scriptural pattern is held up in these texts as the ideal. Like the ideal of 'plain' language, the aspiration of godly authors to provide a single, true 'pattern' of Christian behaviour in and by their manuals appears, under critical scrutiny, to be self-deluding. Bozeman identifies the aim of Puritan mimesis as: '[to] invoke through reiteration the sacred event' (*Ancient Lives*, p. 49.) The word 'invoke' is interesting here, since acts of invocation were considered dangerously superstitious by reformed Protestants. Bozeman uses it, I think, to suggest that Puritans performed by another name the very conjuring tricks they ascribed to Catholics. Dying in a recognisably, therefore similarly, godly fashion, pious individuals might hope to invoke or, as it were, re-live the deaths of Saints who had gone before. The potential for theatrical or 'papist' interpretations of Christian dying is increased, as it seems to me, by godly attempts to reform the Art of Dying. By constructing a sustained, literary activity of death preparation, godly authors make dying into an act.¹⁰⁵ In doing so, these authors involuntarily prompt questions in the critical reader about authenticity, causality, self-determination and ritual performance of the act. Rhetorical devices of amplification and repetition are used to answer or suppress questions raised by the rhetorical call to die well. Viewed as a persuasive endeavour, the Art of Dying is as remarkable for its self-defeating qualities as it is for its evident appeal to early modern publishers and readers.

Close readings of selected texts are offered in the following chapters to demonstrate how the rhetorical craftsmen of a godly, English Art of Dying created a distinctive model of 'good' dying through their individual choices and combinations of rhetorical devices. The five texts are considered in chronological order, not in an attempt to prove a linear progression of human thought through historical time, but rather to suggest how godly persuaders both innovated and borrowed, repeating elements that seemed effective and adapting those that did not. Examining in detail how this 'art' was made to persuade, I hope to reveal aspects of the genre that have not previously received much critical attention.

¹⁰⁵ Just as there is no inherent need in human beings to prepare to die, so there is no inherent need to view death as an act or event; as something that people 'do'. In Pat Barker's historical novel, *The Ghost Road*, the protagonist Dr W H Rivers describes a community of Solomon Islanders who treat death as a process beginning long before the extinction of 'life' (as measured in Western terms) and lasting well after it.

Chapter 1

A Christal Glasse for Christian Women by Philip Stubbes (1591): An Exemplary Deathbed

I begin with a text which promotes godly behaviour at the deathbed through the example of an ordinary woman's imitable 'pattern'. Philip Stubbes' *A Christal Glasse for Christian Women* was published within a year of the death of the author's wife, Katherine, in 1590.¹⁰⁶ In this short pamphlet, Stubbes tells the story of Katherine's Christian death in markedly didactic and colloquial language, giving contemporary immediacy and other readerly satisfactions to the Art of Dying tradition. That Stubbes does not use the epithet 'Art of Dying' at any point in his narrative should not prevent us from recognising this as a work in the genre, if we define the genre broadly by its functional objectives and actual use. A prospective, reader-directed and instructional work on dying is, in my view, a death preparation manual. From the outset, it is clear that Stubbes' 'glass' is designed not only to commemorate Katherine for the author's personal benefit, but also and more obviously to teach Christian readers how to die well.

The populist nature of this work, which appeals to a broad audience whilst remaining heavily moralistic, is reflected in Alexandra Walsham's observation that: 'Stubbes was earnest, pious, but also a man who inhabited the fringes of a burgeoning and rather disreputable literary underworld'.¹⁰⁷ Stubbes' social position, as a self-appointed Christian instructor with limited pastoral authority and theological sophistication, may have contributed to his determination to influence a wide audience. In this respect, Stubbes' *Glasse* was evidently successful: it captured the attention of many readers in its own time, and of several scholars in ours. Patricia Phillippy's *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England* (2002), which provides the most extensive analysis of recent commentaries on the *Glasse*, reports that it appeared in thirty four editions between 1591 and 1700.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Philip Stubbes, *A Christal Glasse for Christian Women*, 2nd ed. (London, 1591). All subsequent references will appear in brackets in the text.

¹⁰⁷ Walsham, *Providence*, p. 49.

¹⁰⁸ Patricia Phillippy, *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 81. Other commentators, most of whom focus primarily on issues of gender in the *Glasse*, include Kate Aughterson, ed., *Renaissance Women: A Sourcebook. Constructions of Femininity in England* (London: Routledge, 1995); Lucinda Becker, "The Absent Body: Representations of Dying Early Modern Women in a Selection of Seventeenth Century Diaries," *Women's Writing* 8:2 (2001): 250-62; Suzanne Trill, "Religion and the Construction of Femininity," in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500-1700*, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 30-56.

To discover the reasons for the popularity of Stubbes' *Glasse*, we must consider its even more popular predecessor, Thomas Becon's *The Sicke Mans Salve* of 1561.¹⁰⁹ Becon's *Salve* appeared in eleven editions before 1600, and maintained its position in Elizabethan England as the godly man's favourite guide to dying because, according to Ian Green, there was 'no alternative' to it until William Perkins' *Salve* of 1595.¹¹⁰ It may be, however, that Philip Stubbes deliberately or otherwise provided an attractive alternative to Becon's longer work with the *Glasse*, to the benefit of both. By animating a Calvinist approach to dying in familiar language through the persona of Katherine Stubbes, in a few manageable pages of print, the *Glasse* helps to embed the godly model of dying well among a wide range of readers. Stubbes' *Glasse* would surely remind some readers of Becon's *Salve*, if only by fleeting recognition. Behind the pattern of the godly Katherine is the pattern of Becon's *Moriens*, the dying Epaphroditus; and behind that figure is the pattern of the English Protestant martyr, familiar in male and female form, from Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. Just as rhetorical amplification builds its effects by repetition within a text, so I suggest Stubbes' *Glasse* gains emotive force by association with other texts and ideas in the culture. The accumulation in print of model Protestant deaths seems certain to reinforce a perception among readers that there is an established, identifiable and authoritative godly way of dying.

Stubbes' *Glasse* derives rhetorical benefit from its literary forerunners by repeating a proven formula, more succinctly. Like Becon's fictional protagonist Epaphroditus, Katherine Stubbes converses from her deathbed on pious subjects with friends gathered at the bedside. Whereas the exemplary types chosen to voice Becon's godly philosophy are learned characters with Latin names, Philemon and Eusebius, Katherine's environment is more convincingly domestic and familial. Citing his wife's dying exchanges with her son, her nurse and himself, Stubbes presents readers with an intimate portrait of her death and so makes the sequence of pious speeches appear real. From Becon's lengthy philosophical colloquium, Stubbes has apparently derived the idea that believers should testify to their faith at the point of dying by making extensive declarations of pious conviction. From Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," Stubbes has absorbed the idea that ordinary English individuals, belonging to local communities, have died with extraordinary courage on account of the strength of their Protestant faith. The result of these influences in Stubbes' *Glasse* is a persuasive encouragement to godly readers to demonstrate an ardent faith at death, and so die well.

Stubbes' *Glasse* is a vivid example of the endeavour of godly authors to create an artless art of dying. As discussed in the Introduction, this contradictory objective, common to all five manuals studied here, is revealed in the discrepancy between an author's claim to be

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Becon, *The Sicke Mans Salve*, London, 1561.

¹¹⁰ Green, *Print and Protestantism*, p. 360. Becon's *Salve* will be discussed again in relation to Perkins, in Chapter 2.

reporting the plain, self-evident 'truth', and the rhetorical contrivance of a text that combines literary techniques and components designed to achieve particular effects. In his long title, Stubbes claims to have 'set downe' Katherine's dying speech 'worde for worde as she spake it' (title page). Here Stubbes insists that his narrative simply documents the course of Katherine's death without artifice. We are asked to believe that a woman suffering fever after childbirth spoke for several hours or days on exclusively religious matters, with unwavering pious conviction, and that Stubbes recorded each word without error or addition. However implausible it seems, this claim persuasively creates an air of urgency and immediacy. In a variation of the 'modesty *topos*', Stubbes adopts the role of a humble eyewitness reporter or amanuensis in order to convince readers of what is actually, to some extent, his fictional invention. Exaggerating and fabricating the dramatic qualities of Katherine's death, Stubbes gives credibility to what would otherwise be a transparent homily, like Becon's *Salve*. Imposing moral contours on the human frame of his wife of nineteen, Stubbes gives her reported words an idiomatic speech pattern, and so allows readers to feel that they are in the company of a real and ordinary woman, alive not long ago. With a more popular touch than that of Becon's deathbed colloquy, Stubbes' *Glasse* promotes a Calvinist moral programme with artful artlessness. The achievement represented by this manual, from my point of view, is the rhetorically effective construction of a "really" good godly death.

(a) Exemplifying the Art of Dying

A first task of this chapter is to explore the consequences of a turn towards, or favouring of, exemplarity in a genre which previously used sequential images and expository prose to depict a process of sanctioned preparatory behaviour. Examples, as rhetoric manuals of every age emphasise, provide the most effective means of communicating moral principles. Indeed the Bible's survival as a conduct book could be explained by this strategy of using an individual life to encapsulate succinctly and affectively a system of piety.¹¹¹ It is no surprise that exemplarity is a dominant technique of Renaissance and Reformation literature, used by rhetorically trained authors to win readers' loyalty to their version of a religion in flux. The Art of Dying derives from the exemplum of Christ's death, and all written expressions of it make some rhetorical use of human exemplars, both inspiring and cautionary. Erasmus recommends to readers of his *Preparation to Death* the dying words of St Steven and St Paul, and advises that when a sick man is tested by the Devil: 'Ensaumples of holy men muste be

¹¹¹ Collinson, "Religious Patterns." Other relevant discussions of exemplarity include Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990); Sloane, "Rhetorical Selfhood in Erasmus and Milton."

called to mynde, but specially of suche, in whome a notable mercy of the lorde hathe been declared...'.¹¹² The list that follows includes David, Mary Magdalen, Peter, Paul and Cyprian; individuals who were redeemed despite moral failings. By recommending that these Biblical figures be called to mind, Erasmus seems to imply that flawed human exemplars, rather than Christ, provide the best guides to those contemplating their deaths. Stubbes might be said to take this principle a step further in presenting his wife as an epitome of good dying.

Art of Dying books used individual exempla as communicative tools and advertisements for the faith long before Stubbes composed his *Glasse*; but more importantly, I suggest that the Art of Dying existed in popular consciousness throughout the sixteenth century as a collection of exemplary death tales, Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. Before and after the Reformation, the deaths of individual heroes, saints and martyrs both complemented and contributed to the method of dying well formulated in Catholic or Protestant texts. Edward VI's death prayer and Lady Jane Grey's last words are just two of several examples of pious deaths made famous in printed broadsides and other propagandist volumes. John King notes that Jane Grey's death was dramatised 'according to *ars moriendi* conventions as a testimonial to her faith'.¹¹³ The reverse is also true: exemplary death-tales like Grey's shaped the Art of Dying. Those who read, reported or imitated them would not necessarily distinguish between principles and practice, or regard the former as the origin of the latter. Godly Elizabethans formed one another's expectations of a 'good death' from seeing, hearing, reading and performing examples of it. It would be false to describe this informal creative process solely as a product of the Art of Dying, and not as a formative impetus to it.

In presenting the 'rare and wonderfull example of the virtuous life, and Christian death of Mistresse Katherine Stubbes,' Stubbes draws on, and draws the reader's attention to, a broad system of pious instruction. Katherine was a 'Myrrour of womanhood' in life and is in death 'a perfect patterne of true Christianitie' (sig. A2r). These terms, 'example', 'mirror', and 'pattern' are typological and inclusive. They connect Katherine with all the good types who have gone before and imply that the template will remain instructive to all those who come after. To a modern reader, this presentation of the subject as a generic 'pattern' would seem to contradict Stubbes' claim to be documenting 'worde for worde' the specific details of Katherine's death.¹¹⁴ The author wants us to believe that both are true; that Katherine's death was both perfect and actual. He makes, in effect, a double promise to readers who wish

¹¹² Erasmus, *Preparation to Deathe*, sig. G1v.

¹¹³ John N King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 422.

¹¹⁴ A similar tension between hagiographic and historical aims in Protestant literature is discussed in Patrick Collinson, "Truth, Lies, and Fiction in Sixteenth-Century Protestant Historiography," in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain: History, Rhetoric and Fiction 1500-1800*, ed. Donald R Kelley, David Harris Sacks, and Lee H. Hamilton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 37-68.

to believe that there is an ideal way to die, and that this ideal is achievable in ordinary life. Stubbes' boast of his wife's 'wonderfull example' is neither time-specific nor doctrinally specific; and nor is it always necessarily gender-specific.¹¹⁵ Though the 'crystal glass for Christian women' will appeal most, Stubbes recognises, to other women facing the often fatal prospect of childbirth, the significant word in this long title is 'Christian'. Katherine's death is a pattern of true Christianity, we are told; not one of exclusively feminine Christianity. With such a universalising objective, Stubbes would have no reason to limit his influences. His pattern of perfect dying has been formed – however hurriedly or unconsciously – from everything available to a godly pamphleteer in 1591: Christian commentaries and catechisms, including *ars moriendi* books; contemporary expectations and conventions of dying conduct; and the ever-popular Protestant martyrdoms of the *Actes and Monuments*.

As a result of this eclectic and reductive common-placing, Katherine Stubbes appears in the *Glasse* to be at once a conservative exemplar, representing traditional notions of piety, and a more radical common-lore saint, or ordinary martyr, who achieves on her bed of pain some of the exceptional resilience that characterises Anne Askew in Foxe's "Book of Martyrs". Developments in post-Reformation thought made it possible for Philip Stubbes, a lay preacher and moralising pamphleteer, to present his young wife in a way that would further narrow the perceived gap between holy men and commoners, and between clerical and lay forms of instruction. 'Unlike the Catholic Saints,' John King observes, 'Protestant martyrs are no different from ordinary laymen and possess no miraculous, intercessory power as a special endowment from God. As exemplary types, they illustrate how true faith enables anyone to be a witness to Christ as an elect saint.'¹¹⁶ It is not my purpose here to measure the historical or theoretical distance between these concepts of saint, martyr, witness and laity; but rather to identify the effects on readers of Stubbes' semi-fictional creation. How did the dying 'Katherine Stubbes' appear to them, and what did she do for them?

Having noted that the *Glasse* is promoted from the outset as an instructive 'mirror' of godly living and dying, I wish to discuss the persuasive effects of this image, which evidently reiterates the 'glass' of the title. With these metaphors, Stubbes tells us that his exemplary tale is a mirror-book, in which Katherine's conduct is shown 'for' – that is, for the benefit of – Christian women. This rhetorical manoeuvre, which declares the text to be intimately beneficial to its readers as a tool of self-reflection, is endemic to the Art of Dying genre. The *Tractatus artis bene moriendi* of the fifteenth century was alternatively known as the *Speculum [de artis bene moriendi]*, meaning 'the mirror of the art of good dying'; and at least one of its early successors, Fullonius' *A Myrrour or Glasse for them that be Sycke* (trans.

¹¹⁵ 'Glass' certainly has a gendered connotation, as a beautifying tool, but Stubbes also stresses the universal moral connotations of this image in his use of 'mirror' and 'pattern'.

¹¹⁶ King, *English Reformation Literature*, p. 438.

1536), took a similar name. Mirror-books and death manuals are so closely related in function and moral philosophy that they might be regarded as two species of a single genus, which is self-improvement literature. The connections between them can help to clarify several aspects of Art of Dying rhetoric, and are therefore worth exploring briefly at this point.

Christian rhetoric uses the term 'mirror' as a trope to express the relationship between human and divine entities. The natural world mirrors its creator. Human nature mirrors God's nature, albeit imperfectly. Calvinist authors like Stubbes seem particularly interested in, and troubled by, what they see as a reflective relationship distorted on one side by flaws and blurred vision. Men cannot see clearly what is clearly manifested in the world.¹¹⁷ This makes the task of looking in the 'mirror' more important, and yet more difficult. Those properly engaged in this task should see themselves as pale reflections of Christ's true image. By continual meditation on the godly self, and by divine grace, believers will be brought closer to that self. 'But we all, with open face *beholding as in a glass* the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord,' Paul instructs in 2 Corinthians 3:18 (my emphasis). In this pious ideal of self-fashioning, as I understand it, success is achieved when the beholding, spectator-self becomes clearly identical to the divine image. Looking at the divine, and reflecting the divine, are parts of the same action. The human self exists in and by the divine Other: therefore, godly self-fashioning is a process of mimetic conformity or *Imitatio Christi*. The ultimate mirror-book, or 'glasse', or conduct manual for Christians is the tale of Christ's life and death.

Christ's followers, being reflections of the divine, can themselves function as mirrors to those less advanced in clarity or godliness. In the closing passage of his *Preparation to Death*, Erasmus reinforces the value of matching the self to those who are similar but better. 'Examples have a great virtue and strength to move mens myndes,' he remarks: 'For they shew *as it were in a glass* what is comely, and what is otherwise' (sig. G2r, my italics). What we might call a role-model is described here as an exemplar on the page, or an image seen in the mirror. The reader or observer is urged to copy directly what is best in that figure. Erasmus even considers it profitable to 'be often present at mens deathes, to thentent that we maye despise that in them we see detestable, and follow that is good and holy' (sig.G2r-G3v). Dying neighbours, like dying heroes in mirror-books, reveal the divine pattern to their observers, and so show what is best (or worst) in ourselves.

But how are readers to see in Katherine Stubbes' death the pattern of their own? Does the *Glasse* invite simple mimicry, or does it attempt to facilitate a deeper process of identification? Timothy Hampton says of exemplary rhetoric of the Renaissance period that: 'The representation of the exemplary figure functions as the occasion for reflection on the

¹¹⁷ Adrian Streete, "Reforming Signs: Semiotics, Calvinism and Clothing in Sixteenth-Century England," *Literature and History* 12: 1 (2003): 1-18.

constitution of the self [...] The history of exemplarity is thus, on one level, a history of figurations of the self'.¹¹⁸ Exemplars provide self-images for the reflective reader: this seems likely to be true of all types of 'moral' or prescriptive tales, since a strong motive for reading such literature is the desire for self-definition. It is evidently true of the many Tudor-Stuart books whose titular references to 'mirror' or 'glass' explicitly recognise the self-directed gaze of their readers, such as: George Whetstone's *A Mirror of Treue Honor and Christian Nobilitie* (1585), John Norden's *The Mirror of Honour* (1597), Robert Ball's *The Mirror of Pure Devotion: Or, the Discovery of Hypocrisie* (1635), and Samuel Clarke's *A Mirrour or Looking-Glasse, Both for Saints, and Sinners* (1648) Whatever the political and teleological intentions of the story collection known as *A Mirror for Magistrates* (recently analysed by Paul Budra from this authorial perspective), its readers are expected to locate in its chronicled figures reflections of themselves.¹¹⁹ History serves in these books as a tool of self-formation. Their reliance on exemplars shifts the problem of imitation, Hampton argues, from one of writing to the level of reading.¹²⁰ When analysing exemplary literature, therefore, we should consider the reader's responses to be an integral part of the rhetoric. Invited to use the tale of Katherine Stubbes as a 'glass' for self-reflection, Stubbes' readers might be said to be engaged in a rhetorical exercise of their own. They are to gather from this example a universal or commonplace 'pattern' of goodness as a basis for their own selfhood; to invent, arrange, and enunciate a godly self out of another's best parts.

To authors and moralists, death seems the rhetorical highpoint of a life; the point at which the 'pattern' of that life is most clearly manifested. Four-fifths of Stubbes' *Glasse* is concerned with Katherine's dying, since it is in the act of death that this exemplar reveals most acutely what she is – and therefore what the godly reader may become. 'In that article of death,' Erasmus says, 'every mans faith appereth what it is, and every mans conscience' (*Preparation*, sig. G3v). Christ's humanity and divinity were demonstrated to the faithful on the cross. Accordingly, the final object of spiritual mirroring is death; or in godly terms Life after death, to which the pious reader's inner vision is continually directed. Death is therefore the usual subject of mirror-books, from *A Mirror for Magistrates* (1559) to Clement Cotton's *The Mirror of Martyrs* (1613, to be discussed in chapter 5). In effect, these mirror-books convey an 'art' of dying. Conversely, early composers of *artes moriendi* reached naturally for the image of a 'speculum' or reflective glass to convey their subject. Death has no face or contours of its own, and can only be represented indirectly, by analogy or by assigning to 'it' a human face. For this reason the skeletal death-heads of medieval art mimic living humans in

¹¹⁸ Hampton, *Writing from History*, xi.

¹¹⁹ See Paul Budra, *A Mirror for Magistrates and the De Casibus Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

¹²⁰ Hampton, *Writing from History*, p. 5.

expression, or in the adoption of particular clothes. Where death is represented more schematically in such images, as an unadorned and unanimated skull, a mirror is often shown beside it, to indicate to spectators that in order to see a dying face, they need only look at their reflections.

Studying death – that is, the self - in the mirror – that is, the example of others - is not an optional or peripheral aspect of pious practice as understood by Stubbes' godly society, but is on the contrary deemed so urgent that the word 'mirror' carries the rhetorical weight of an alarum or call to action. Daniel Featley's *Claris Mystica, or The Passing Bell* of 1634 uses the image to evoke a sense of millennial dread. One of many similar instances, it is worth quoting in order to indicate that the 'glass' of Stubbes' title is not an emotionally neutral symbol:

... O that we in this City here present were wise, then would wee understand this: the spectacle of our nature, this embleme of our frailty, this mirrour of our mortality, and in it consider our later end, which cannot bee farre off.¹²¹

In common with many of his contemporaries, Featley treats the mirror, the human body, and death almost as synonyms: each stands in symbolic relation to the others. As a result, the image that Stubbes deploys has potent and complex significance for his audience. One of its effects is to encourage readers to see themselves as emblematic figures. The 'Christian women' of Stubbes' long title are taught in reading this text to view their dying bodies as moral, not physical, matter. This moral substance demands attention of an intellectual kind, as material to be improved by the study of Katherine's godly example. The reflective discipline Stubbes urges does not amount to an outright denial of human physicality; but it does require an emphatically moralistic and symbolic view of the human form.¹²² Living and dying, godly individuals are to use their bodies to signal their moral worth with obvious symbolic gestures, like woodcut figures in a Foxe narrative. Later in this chapter I will return to the emblematic value of Katherine's facial expressions and gestures, which are neither censored nor simply observed, but rather performed rhetorically as moral signals.

The 'crystal' epithet of this 'Christal Glasse' may point to alternative or additional connotations besides that of a reflective looking-glass. It may suggest that the story is a clear glass pane through which readers will 'see' Katherine; or that in death the woman has been transmuted from bodily form into another substance of crystalline perfection. George Herbert's poem *The Windows* demonstrates that transparent glass was also used in religious writing of the period as a metaphor for spirituality:

¹²¹ Cited in William Engel, *Death and Drama in Renaissance England: Shades of Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 13.

¹²² On the denial of physicality, see Becker, "The Absent Body."

Lord, how can man preach thy eternal word?
He is a brittle crazy glass;
Yet in thy temple thou dost him afford
This glorious and transcendent place,
To be a window, through thy grace.¹²³

I think we can allow for all these possible variations of 'crystal glass' to be present simultaneously in Stubbes' image. The different optical connotations seem to relate to a single process or problem of perception: how are the godly to see their Maker in a defective human world? In Renaissance imagery, the glass or mirror appears to be a tool of transformation, not merely one of static representation.¹²⁴ What it reveals depends on how it is regarded. Astrologers use crystal glasses to conjure 'false' prophecies, and use mirrors to distort what is in nature; nature being itself a mirror of God's works. Instances of magical trickery are condemned by godly divines, as in the case of Dr John Lambe, as demonic, false divinity. For the pious, it is better to look directly through a transparent 'glass' (or book) at vice than it is to look 'cunningly' or mischievously at virtue. Hence some mirror-books, like Robert Ball's *The Mirror of Pure Devotion: Or, the Discovery of Hypocrisie*, reflect bad lives and bad deaths in order to discourage the onlooker from vice. In these cases the onus is on the beholder, or reader, to derive spiritual benefit from the spectacle by looking at it with pure 'sight'.¹²⁵

Moving through the title page, we see how Stubbes and his publisher Richard Jones direct the eye of a prospective reader towards what they consider most salient. Thus we are promised a 'heavenly confession of the Christian faith' made by Katherine before her 'departure', and also 'a wonderfull combate betwixt Sathan and her soule; worthy to be imprinted in letters of golde, and [are] to be engraven in the tables of every Christian heart' (sig Ar). Far from disguising the commodification of Katherine Stubbes, this long title advertises her twofold value, as a source of memorable pious wisdom and enthralling drama. It shows a shrewd understanding of the pious book market, by highlighting the sensational

¹²³ Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, and Jon Stallworthy, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 5th ed. (New York: W W Norton, 2005), p. 373.

¹²⁴ 'Both optics and mirror lore in the period suggested that something was actively passing back and forth in the production of mirror images, that accurate representation depended upon material emanation and exchange.' Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 8.

¹²⁵ The third book of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Canto II, stanzas 17-38, describes a 'wondrous mirror' crafted by Merlin which reveals to the (virtuous) onlooker the true nature of everything in the world, including the secret intentions of friends and foes. Combining magic, morality and practicality, Merlin's 'glassie globe' is built for a reason, to help a king protect his realm, much as Stubbes' *Glasse* is constructed for the purpose of reinforcing the reader's piety. Edmund Spenser, *Poetical Works*, ed. J C Smith and E de Selincourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 149-51.

qualities of Katherine's death as much as its instructive potential. Evidently the *Glasse* was not accidentally popular, but rather astutely shaped to suit the tastes of godly readers.

(b) Final Struggle

Though it forms the last section of Stubbes' text, I will discuss the 'wonderfull combate betwixt Sathan and her soule' next, because it is clearly intended to be the climax of the piece, to which titillated readers are directed (and are likely to turn to) at the start; and because this conflict positions Katherine's death directly in the Art of Dying tradition. In its abbreviated form, the fifteenth century *Ars Moriendi* presented the process of dying as a scene of spiritual combat, in which demons surround a deathbed doing battle with angels or saints for the soul of the dying *Moriens*. This iconography remained popular to and beyond the Reformation in woodcut prints. By promising at the outset to show his readers a Satanic conflict, Stubbes implicitly alludes to the crucial centrepiece of the (Catholic) Art of Dying tradition. It is interesting to note in this regard that its publisher Richard Jones had in 1578 published an English translation of an *ars moriendi* by the Dominican theologian Petrus de Soto, as *The Maner to Dye Well*, the theme of which was presumably sufficiently popular to merit its publication, despite de Soto's role in Cranmer's trial (while occupying the Oxford chair of theology under Mary I). It would seem that Jones knew at first hand that Art of Dying books could sell, and had reason to expect a keen response to Stubbes' godly Protestant version.

The climactic scene opens with Katherine exclaiming from her deathbed: 'How now Satan? What makest thou here? Art thou come to tempt the Lords servant?' (sig. C3v). Positioned at the start of a new section, under a subtitle which reinforces the effect of the long title in advertising 'A most wonderfull conflict betwixt Satath and her soule,' this speech signals a new event or stage in Katherine's dying. In doing so it echoes the prominence of a deathbed conflict in earlier *ars moriendi* illustrations, and encourages readers to see death as an event clearly distinguishable from life, with its own transitions and theatrical highpoints. With the word 'tempt', Katherine refers obliquely to the Biblical origin of the idea that dying begins with a final temptation or spiritual trial. Christ's temptation in the wilderness, structured rhetorically into three points of crisis, and staged in a remote environment as a prelude to his capture and crucifixion, provides an enduring conceptual structure for the anticipated drama of dying. Stubbes accentuates this scenic idea of death in his heavily signalled, dramatic introduction of Katherine's encounter with Satan.

A longer historical survey would most likely show that, over the course of the next century, the deathbed dramaturgy favoured by Stubbes, with its focus on a sharply differentiated last conflict, was to give way in pious death literature to a more gradual concept

of struggle. On the basis of my briefer selected period, I would suggest that the last conflict of a dying individual was increasingly presented not as a unique event so much as an intensification of the ordinary process of Christian living. Christ's resistance of the Devil extended throughout the individual imitator's life. However, it remained a commonplace that demonic activity would increase in the final hours or days of a sickness, causing the dying person's weakened body to become a battleground for opposing spiritual forces and so putting the lessons gained throughout life to the test.¹²⁶ The expectation of such a penultimate struggle, in which ordinary anxieties would escalate to a crisis, endures in the Art of Dying genre under a variety of names, each marking slightly different points of emphasis in the culture's favoured representations of mind, spirit and sin. The 'last combat' is a 'battle' or 'duel' with 'the Enemy'; a diabolical 'temptation' to doubt; a final 'assault'; or for Luther, 'Anfechtung'.¹²⁷ Modern critical literature recognises it as an 'agonistic struggle' or process of *psychomachia*.¹²⁸

As evident from the tone of her greeting, 'How now Satan,' Katherine conducts herself in the encounter with Satan as an assured witness of Christ, and not as a timid handmaiden. Her performance recalls that of Job, brought to despair in sickness by the taunts of Satan. Earlier in the narration, Katherine protests in the impatient manner of Job that she is being kept from an eagerly awaited death: 'oh my good God, why not now? Why not now Good God?' (sig. A4r). If we view the demonic encounter as typological drama, Satan's role is to induce despair in the dying woman with the permission of God, their adjudicator. The contemporary idiom of Stubbes' combat immediately highlights, however, the extent to which Biblical types of good and evil are shaped anew by cultural and linguistic factors in each retelling of a moral story. Katherine greets the visiting Antichrist as if he were a troublesome neighbour, 'What makest thou here?', and regards him in a manner more irritated than awed, her facial expression turning 'angry, sterne, and fierce... as though shee sawe some filthy, ugglesome and displeasent thing' (sig. C3v). This phrasing domesticates the clash of cosmic forces and reduces the potential terror of the scene to the level of quotidian aggravation. Drawing on oral conventions, and perhaps on popular media such as ballads or domestic plays, Stubbes here brings a piece of Biblical high drama into the bedroom and into the ordinary reader's view. With a pamphlet writer's ear for contemporary speech patterns, he

¹²⁶ M C Cross, "The Third Earl of Huntingdon's Deathbed: A Calvinist Example of the *Ars Moriendi*," *Northern History* 21 (1985): 80-107; Doebler, *Rooted Sorrow*, p. 49; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 316; Houlbrooke, "The Puritan Death-Bed."; R Wunderli and G Broce, "The Final Moment before Death in Early Modern England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20:2 (1989): 259-75.

¹²⁷ Stachniewski, *Persecutory Imagination*, p. 18.

¹²⁸ Neill, *Issues of Death*, p.4.

gives us an assertive Elizabethan Job-type, sufficiently confident in her godly learning and domestic status to berate the Devil from the moment he appears.

Although Satan visits Katherine in what is presumably her marriage bed, there is little hint in this encounter of the seductive dynamic which often accompanies godly accounts of the Devil's temptation of women.¹²⁹ What James Truman describes as the 'erotic scripting' of martyrdom can be detected after Katherine's release from the combat, as she stretches her prostate body towards Christ, but during this confrontation it is the dying woman's purity of spirit that is under contention.¹³⁰ Katherine slips readily into the confrontational mode of speech expected of all believers at moments when their faith is threatened, and demonstrated in the 'bold speaking' of legendary martyrs such as Anne Askew.¹³¹ Death for Foxe's heroes is a militant activity, requiring the spiritual warrior to display moments of defiant confrontation in their embattled dying. Katherine's assertive language may therefore be seen as appropriate *elocutio* for this embattled stage of godly dying, which is bearing witness against an opponent. Her ability in this regard is held up for admiration earlier in the text, as during a life of 'fervent zeale' she is said to take every opportunity to defend her faith against Papists and Atheists (sig. A2r). In emphasising this facility for disputation, Stubbes reinforces the idea common to his contemporaries, and later dramatised by Milton, that godly identity is closely aligned with an individual's willingness to rebuff the verbal slights and rhetorical trickery of religious enemies. Well prepared by a life of vocal testimony for this last trial, Katherine challenges each of Satan's charges in a forceful and exact orator's manner: 'But what sayest thou', 'What more?' 'Doest thou say...' 'But it is written...', 'I grant...' (sig.C3r). Thus is the exemplary type of the Lord's faithful servant revised for a disputatious age.

Whereas Katherine berates Satan, her interlocutor is never quoted on the page or apparently heard by others at the bedside. He, or it, is an internal tormentor. Armando Maggi's study of demonology examines how, according to early modern theologians, the Devil insinuates into a victim's mind in a relentless attempt to speak with and through

¹²⁹ As for instance in Henry Goodcole, *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer a Witch Late of Edmonton* (London, 1621).

¹³⁰ This phrase occurs in the abstract of James C W Truman, "John Foxe and the Desires of Reformation Martyrology," *English Literary History* 70:1 (2003): 35-66. Truman sees a strong erotic attraction at work in Protestant persecution stories, and argues that readers of these stories – the 'audience of martyrdom' – can be ensconced in the erotics of suffering without experiencing actual violence.

¹³¹ 'Bold speaking' is a pertinent phrase used of Foxe's martyrs in John Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). On Askew, see also Truman, "Desires of Reformation Martyrology."

humans.¹³² Katherine's confrontation with Satan follows the linguistic pattern of possession, as Maggi describes it, in that she speaks aloud to an enemy which debates silently within her mind. She effectively argues with herself in this debate, her own modes of speaking divided between a pious self and another, disruptive 'speaker(s) of the mind'.¹³³ Brief as it is, this internal dialogue represents a significant battle between two kinds of speech, faithful and fallen language; and between assured and doubting selves. It adds another layer to the complex voicing of the text. If Stubbes ventriloquises Katherine, he also ventriloquises her satanic anti-voice, and presents the resulting internal dispute as an ordinary and distinctly linguistic kind of moral activity. Self-interrogation is a regular feature of the required Christian, and especially Calvinist, routine. Since this episode takes place on Katherine's deathbed, and is experienced by her as a captivating, sensory encounter, it might equally be regarded as an exceptional event akin to temporary demonic possession. In Stubbes' understanding, godly dying involves an act of self-exorcism; a casting out of inner demons. A similarly acute, schizophrenic struggle is played out in the protagonist of Milton's *Paradise Regained*, as described by Thomas Sloane: 'When Satan's temptations are viewed as assaults on Jesus' growing certainty, Satan's identity becomes the spirit of denial within Christ. It is, finally, temptation itself which Christ vanquishes.'¹³⁴

Stubbes' Satan appeared in print at a time of fierce debate over the operation of evil, and so represents a compromise between the emotive figure of medieval lore and a more abstract, internalised concept. What forms can the Devil take? What causes a person to see spirits, and by what means can these visions or embodiments be countered? By 1591 these were vexed questions. Both Jesuit priests and Puritan ministers continued to exorcise demoniacs, as did John Foxe, but the diagnosis of possession did not pass without question, and the means of treating it, whether by Catholic ritual prayer or by the Protestant substitutes of extemporary prayer and fasting, seemed presumptuous to many.¹³⁵ Within two decades of Katherine Stubbes' death, Bishop Bancroft was to outlaw exorcisms whilst the Witchcraft Act made it illegal to consult witches. In this climate, as first the Elizabethan and then the Stuart Church tried to rationalise society in line with preferred modes of Scriptural interpretation and contemporary physiology, it would be contentious for the Protestant Stubbes to depict his exemplary wife in the presence of a clearly delineated demon. He therefore suggests with a

¹³² Armando Maggi, *Satan's Rhetoric: A Study of Renaissance Demonology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

¹³³ Maggi, *Satan's Rhetoric*, p. 2.

¹³⁴ Sloane, "Rhetorical Selfhood in Erasmus and Milton."

¹³⁵ Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England: Contemporary Texts and Their Cultural Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Introduction. A key text for Almond's study is Samuel Harsnet's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603), which criticises the 'papist' enthusiasm shown by Puritans for demonic exorcisms.

conditional clause that Katherine speaks to Satan ‘*as though shee sawe*’ the creature (sig. C3v, my italics). Implicitly, we are made to understand that Satan is not actually present and cannot be heard by anyone but the fevered woman. The unseen, unheard ‘Satan’ functions as a dramatic device, stimulating Katherine’s monologue and involving the audience in her struggle. In the rhetorical law-court of the deathbed, Satan prosecutes on behalf of evil, forcing Katherine to defend her godliness.

To say that Satan operates as a device is not to reflect fully the literary experience that Stubbes creates, however. Katherine’s ironic repetitions and scornful anticipations of the Devil’s logic – ‘What more, Satan?’ – have the effect of animating her opponent and increasing, rather than suppressing, the reader’s inclination to imagine ‘him’. A tirade against the ‘damned Dog’ gives the suggestion of a physical form. ‘I tell thee, thou hell-hound,’ Katherine warns, as if wagging a godly finger at the creature, ‘thou hast no part nor portion in me: nor by the grace of God never shalt have’ (sig. C3v). Asked to describe Satan on the basis of this passage, readers would surely bring to mind the impish demon-dogs of medieval *artes moriendi* which seem to jump up at the deathbed with outstretched claws and with verbal mottoes issuing from their monstrous grins.¹³⁶ Thus Stubbes’ approach to the customary last combat of death hovers between the real and the metaphorical, the miraculous and the mundane. Crediting her opponent ironically with the status of a ‘cowardly souldier’, the anti-type of her Captain Christ, Katherine then shoos him from the room as if were a common mongrel: ‘get thee packing, or else...’ (sig. C3r). This blunt dressing-down of Satan offers a homely method of diminishing fear by giving it a suppressible shape.

Variations on this rite of ‘combat’ were to become more abstract in pious literature over subsequent decades, with the Devil shedding his ‘ugglesome’ physicality to serve as a quality of mind within the dying person, or as a symbol of the logical antithesis to Scriptural ‘truth’. Like Katherine Stubbes, the dying Epaphroditus in Thomas Becon’s *The Sicke Mans Salve* feels assaulted by Satan with thoughts of his own wickedness, though he does not debate with the creature directly. ‘Satan now in this my sicknes doth both so molest & trouble me, that methinke I feele a very hell within my brest’, he says at one point, describing rather than enacting a self-divided state (*Salve*, p. 249). The hell is internal, the conflict indirectly reported: this discursive method, rather than Stubbes’ relatively theatrical approach, is the norm for others examined here. Becon is perhaps more interested than Stubbes in discussing the mental states and processes he represents. Through godly Philemon he suggests that a dying man’s susceptibility to despair has semi-physiological roots. An enervating condition is induced when Satan casts a mist over the dying man’s ‘vision’, thus diminishing his ability to

¹³⁶ For example, see the illustrations in Wynkyn de Worde, *Ars Moriendi*, 2nd ed. (London, 1506). These and many similar images are reprinted in Doebler, *Rooted Sorrow*.

'see' the prospect of salvation (*Salve*, p. 249). Philemon's solution, of prayer and comforting doctrine, is explained and applied with equal thoroughness.

To extrapolate from these two encounters with 'Satan', we might say that in the godly Art of Dying, the challenge of dying well is understood to divide a Christian self in two, forcing an assertive orator to rise to the defence of his or her own godliness by exorcising the insidious, self-accusing inner voice of despair. Whereas in earlier *artes moriendi*, the dying Moriens appears as a prone and mystified spectator in the deathbed battle for his soul, relying on priests, saints and angels to represent him, in the reformed world of *A Christal Glasse* the dying woman must make her own case. Although at one point Katherine claims to see angels coming to her rescue, they do not speak for her, and neither does a priest or other interlocutor. She alone sees and hears the Devil and engages him verbally with sufficient rhetorical force that she is able to declare when the trial is over and the argument won: 'I have fought the good fight and by the might of Christ have won the victory' (sig. C4v). Such comments direct our attention to the processes of self-discipline and self-persuasion. Godly logic equates victory in conscientious struggle with evidence of predestined election, and so instils in its adherents a desire for self-command and concomitant fear of psychological failure. What Stubbes' *Glasse*, and the Art of Dying in general, provides is a script or set of techniques to be used by readers to master their own fears and doubts.

The purpose of Katherine's 'wonderfull conflict' is its triumphant conclusion, the good death; and to achieve this end it is less important *what* the dying Katherine sees than *how* she sees. Like many authors in the Art of Dying tradition, Stubbes foregrounds the action of sight, in relation both to his subject and to his reader. We have seen in relation to his titular image, of a mirror or glass, that there are strong connections between the sense of sight and the prospect of death. Since the entity or event of death is invisible, preparation manuals naturally encounter the questions: what does a dying person see; and, what we can learn from watching another die? Clarified by her feverish proximity to a divine world, the dying Katherine's spiritual inner eye can perceive what her husband's temporal eyes cannot. '[I]f you sawe... as I see,' she tells Philip, marking the difference with a conditional tense, and explaining for his benefit that 'I see infinite millions of Angels attendant upon me...' (sig. B v). Here we are helped to believe that angels and their demonic counterpart are temporarily present in the room, but visible only to Katherine. The process of dying thus imparts supernatural sight exclusively to the dying believer: in death she becomes visionary. By associating death so closely with the advancement of (in)sight, Stubbes appears to view the process of dying in the traditional manner of the *via mystica*, as a progression of *purgatio*, *illuminatio* and *unio*. Having purged herself of the evil spirit, Katherine sees the light. '[D]oe you not see him flie...?' she exclaims on Satan's exit (sig. C4v). At this point Stubbes' crystal glass operates with magical complexity to conjure two distinct levels of Christian 'reality'.

What is transparent to the dying subject is opaque to the observing author and to his earth-bound readers.

(c) Fellowship at the Deathbed

Katherine's death involves a series of valedictions conducted, following *ars moriendi* tradition, in bed amid an attentive domestic community. Whilst waging an individual battle of mind, to bring the various voices of her self into coherence, the dying woman also strives for a model performance in imitation of hallowed predecessors, before her godly friends. To Katherine and her author, the internal and external aspects of dying form a consistent and authentic emotional whole in which, like the performed prayer described by Ramie Targoff, Katherine demonstrates her conviction by an almost involuntary public outpouring of faith.¹³⁷ Despite its holistic, congregational fervour, however, the outpouring of Katherine's faithful heart seems to a modern observer strenuous to the point of being self-induced and hyper-controlled. Kissing her newborn son goodbye, Katherine passes him to her husband with the declaration, 'I bequeath this my child unto you, hee is no longer mine, hee is the Lordes and yours' (sig. Bv). Though affectionate, this command is distinctly and deliberately alienating. By proclaiming the child to be 'no longer mine', Katherine articulates her spiritual removal from those around her, and implicitly alienates her former self from her advancing soul. In the manner of a holy martyr she 'forsakes' the child and condemns the physical world as 'dung' (sig. Bv). The puppy that used to play on her bed is beaten away from this now sacred site with stern self-accusation.

Katherine's farewells thus hinge on act of rejection. It is only by dismissing, on behalf of her spiritual self, the body on the bed and those around the bed, that the dying woman can achieve the fantasy of being transported into Christ's arms. She induces a psychic state of resistance towards her physical being and surroundings. These significant ejections can be seen in Christian terms as the sanctioned performance of *contemptu mundi*, or in psychoanalytical terms as forced suppression of the desire to live by an internalised godly censor. The word 'contempt' is used favourably in an earlier section of the text to describe Katherine's habitual reluctance to participate in her friends' feasting and gossiping, leaving us in no doubt that this attitude is commended by the author (sig. A3v). To use a common motto of death manuals, Katherine effectively 'dies daily' by exercising deliberate disdain for bodily pleasure in life. This effort of self-abnegation continues throughout the last sickness, with Stubbes claiming that his fevered wife 'never shewed any signe' of such irreligious states of mind as discontentment, impatience, desperation, infidelity, mistrust, distrust, doubting or

¹³⁷ Targoff, "Performance of Prayer."

wavering (sig. A4v). To a post-Freudian reader, this catalogue of negatives seems proof of the subject's, if not the author's, struggle to banish proscribed feelings. What we hear at Katherine's deathbed is her certain joy; what we might listen for is the stuttering of uncertainty, as the dying woman's emotions are simultaneously summoned and denied by Stubbes' preaching rhetoric.

An arena for psychological conflict, Katherine's deathbed also functions as a pulpit, and as a site for mutual instruction within a godly bedside community. The emphasis on moral supervision in domestic and neighbourly relations is characteristic of godly handbooks and is justified by the opening statement of *A Christal Glasse*, which defines the purpose of human life as twofold: 'to glorifie God, and to edifie one another in the way of true godlinesse' (sig. A2r). Spouses and neighbours exist to disseminate the Christian story, in this view: they are modes of transmission, whose proper function is to demonstrate and teach the Word. It seems that the changing social habits of Protestant households play some part in shaping this aspect of the good death. Katherine's dying is a congregational, instructive event. Friends do not visit simply to console, but also to teach and learn, while the dying woman exerts a sententious, pastoral influence on them, delivering 'heavenly sentences' and 'golden sentences' from her pillow (sig. A4r). Katherine refers to her friends twice as 'witnesses', reinforcing the overtly pious nature of social relationships in godly circles. Urged by Philip and other unnamed companions to pray for her health, the fevered woman corrects them, directing them instead to pray for her spiritual, not physical, fortitude (sig. A4r). She expounds her faith to them at great length, effectively using her death as an act of testimony to demonstrate her strength of faith and to pass on the wisdom achieved in her spiritual advancement to the godly brethren. Although this is clearly not the case in actual fact, Katherine effectively preaches from her deathbed. Philip indicates that the bedside group contains a number of 'worshipful' ordained ministers, but Katherine is the only quoted speaker. Several socio-historical factors might help to explain the legitimacy of a woman's voice at this late point in Elizabeth's reign. Mutual supervision and self-government at the level of personal, spiritual behaviour were favoured in Calvinist circles, and were seen as areas in which women could, within strict limits, set a pious example. What interests me here however is the possibility that the act of dying is understood by Stubbes' godly society to confer on the actor, regardless of gender or social circumstance, an unusual spiritual authority. Specifically, an individual at the threshold of death is allowed in this society by to speak didactically and persuasively to an audience.

Katherine's life of consummate pious obedience culminates, according to Philip, in an exhaustive 'confession of the Christian faith' which is not a confession of sins but on the contrary, an affirmative creed. Occupying two thirds of *A Christal Glasse*, this monologue is clearly intended to be the pamphlet's centrepiece. I view this testimonial through a literary

lens, as a rhetorically constructed oration. Katherine ‘speaks’ explicitly for the purpose of moving and improving her witnesses: ‘that those (if there be any such here) that are not thoroughly resolved in the truth of God, may heare and learne what the spirit of God hath taught me out of his blessed & alsaving word’ (sig. Br). This prepares us for a godly evangelist’s version of the confessional; a faith-driven declaration designed to incite an audience to greater piety. As introduction, Katherine both asserts and denies her authority to speak, warning her listeners, ‘I would not have you to thinke, that it is I that speak unto you, but the spirit of God which dwelleth in me’ (sig. Br). She gives further details of her possession by the blessed spirit, to reassure hearers that they are listening to the superior not-I that dwells within. On the basis of this internalised supernatural orator, Katherine claims that her words are ‘not the words of flesh and bloud’ but rather divinely inspired words of a higher order, worthy of being ‘imprinted’ on the hearts of the congregation (sig. Br). A similar claim for the authentic language of the soul was to be made by seventeenth century Quaker visionaries.¹³⁸ This divine language is diametrically opposed to the insidious silent language of Satan, and is used to defeat him.

Katherine’s deathbed confession combines a common godly habit of homiletic expression – preaching a sermon when a ‘goodbye’ would do - with the tradition, apparently derived from Greek tragedy, of making a ‘last dying speech’. A social fixture of the Tudor-Stuart period, documented in ballads, pamphlets, sermons, letters and trial reports, the last speech of a dying person seems to have been expected in public and domestic settings. Dying well, in this culture, was achieved in part by speaking well, where in both cases the godly definition of ‘well’ would be ‘with a living faith’. In this most social aspect of the Art of Dying, performers would prepare and pay attention to rhetorical details such as modes of address. Significantly, Katherine’s ‘heavenly confession’ is spoken to those around the bed and not to God. It is a speech, not a prayer; conversational as much as devotional. Each statement is rhetorically framed with an assertion - ‘I do believe and confesse’, ‘for I am assured’, ‘I will tell you’ – calculated to win approval from those reading or listening. Far from disguising the design of the speech, the author draws our attention to it in an opening passage on the difficulty of describing the divine. ‘I will define him unto you,’ Katherine proposes, ‘as the spirit of God shal illuminate my heart’ (sigs. Br-v). This is not man-made rhetoric, we are again asked to believe, but the language of divine insight. As the dying believer nears the light of truth, her command of language is supposedly improved. Thus introduced, the amplifications of Katherine’s confession take on a liturgical rhythm implying a prophetic, near-miraculous delivery of divine truth. To give one of many possible examples, God is described or rather intoned as ‘... might and Majestie, invisible, inaccessible,

¹³⁸ Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Woman: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth Century England* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), Ch. 1.

incomprehensible, and altogether unspeakable' (sig. B2v). Stubbes is at pains here to establish Katherine's proselytising skill, as well as her doctrinal rectitude, in her dying moments. Paraphrasing the Biblical story of creation, she seems to raise her voice like a preacher, seizing the attention of her congregation with a new point: 'And which was more...' (sig. B2v). The dying woman has, at least in Philip's eyes, readily adopted the speaker's role.

Through her speeches to husband, friends, Satan, death and God (and thence to the reader), Katherine does more than approach her death: she dies by a performative utterance, in J. L. Austin's terminology.¹³⁹ Her last oration is effectively the last rite of her death. There are obvious benefits to the pious author in fusing the acts of dying and testifying in this way, so that each appears to be a corollary of the other. Readers of the *Glasse* are encouraged to become imitators and so promoters of Stubbes' piety in their own preparations for an emotive, exhortatory death. Katherine's affective turn of phrase, together with her Calvinist declarations of faithful assurance in salvation, function as linguistic markers to give the speech a distinctly Protestant dialect or accent. This reinforces the manual's utility as a tool of community formation. Among the reasons why readers might collude in the process of moulding their behaviour to community norms at death is the obvious psychological one; that the act of 'testifying' confers a sense of control and personal value in the face of death, especially if the testimony is believed to have a salutary effect on others. For Calvinists, a final confession of faith provides – for confessor and listeners – a valuable external confirmation of assurance. Saying that one is sure of election makes it so. For the unsure, the appeal of a last demonstrative act might appear likely to mitigate – against theological insistence to the contrary – the Calvinist God's preordained verdict. Wunderli and Broce are surely right in their estimation that people's actual belief in the efficacy of the Final Moment continued throughout the Renaissance to fly in the face of all doctrines of salvation.¹⁴⁰ A final potential attraction of Katherine's last confession is that it seems to offer a public hearing to those who are rarely heard, or who feel misunderstood, in life. This may help to explain the popularity of 'last words' among felons and godly women in Stubbes' society.

Katherine's physiology provides an emotional accompaniment to each stage of her death, reassuring observers of her spiritual assurance and guiding them by visual signs to the correct *pronuntiatio* of death. Her moral serenity is indicated with poetic decorum by a 'sweete, lovely and amiable countenance, red as the Rose' (sig. C3v). This expression is abruptly transformed at Satan's entrance, when an angry frown disrupts her features causing her eyebrows to be 'bent' (sig. C3v). As a literary device, this facial alteration signals a shift of genre from comedy to near-tragedy, corresponding with the change in form from testimonial monologue to dialectical confrontation. The woman's dying body is made to

¹³⁹ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, rpt.).

¹⁴⁰ Wunderli and Broce, "The Final Moment."

match and accentuate the moral crisis. Provoked out of her sweetness by the visiting Devil, Katherine ‘burst foorth into these speches following, pronouncing the wordes (as it were) scornefully, and disdainfully,’ to indicate proper ‘contempt of him to whom shee spake’ (sig. C3v). On vanquishing Satan, she falls into another new mood, an ecstasy of ‘sweet smiling laughter’, in which state she finally appears to rise from her deathbed to embrace a vision of Christ, ‘lifting up her whole bodie, and stretching forth both her armes’ (sigs. C4v-r). Stretching gestures have a clear significance in Art of Dying texts, where they indicate the dying person’s wish to reach their heavenly destination. In Catholic tradition, believers are encouraged to reach towards a crucifix held above the bed.¹⁴¹ Presented as a battleground for possession by demonic or holy spirits, Katherine’s stretched form embodies the spiritual ‘leap’ from one to the other. A miraculous transformation appears to be taking place within her, much as Foxe’s martyrs achieve, in the midst of physical torment, a near-miraculous state of ecstasy. What appears to be supernatural passion, however, may be more accurately described as rhetorical stirring; the deliberate and infectious delivery of a godly death, performed for the benefit of actor, author and witnesses alike. Calvinist readers of the *Glasse*, as practised analysts of many signs aside from the printed word, such as the demonstrations of remorse enacted by felons at public executions, would understand and interpret Katherine’s bodily movements as meaningful signals. In the Art of Dying, as in Foxe’s “Book of Martyrs”, these gestures are seen as articulating – not faking – the individual’s faith. Any part of the witness’ body can therefore perform a pedagogic function. David Bevington’s analysis of gesture in the theatre applies equally well to demonstrative godly literature:

The rhetorical analysis of actors’ gestures was in fact a commonplace of the Renaissance; actors were often compared to orators, and their ways of illustrating or ornamenting speech could be described in the language of rhetoric much as music was analyzed in terms of anaphora, antistrophe, antimetabole, etcetera.¹⁴²

Of particular interest to me is the question of how pious gestures could be not only interpreted but also passed on, through conscious and unconscious imitation, becoming apparently instinctive to those who initially observed them. Three decades after Katherine Stubbes’ death, the dying Joan Drake is said to have drawn herself up from her bed towards a vision of Christ as if she would fly away.¹⁴³ The similarity between the final acts of these two women might be explained as auto-suggestibility or learned behaviour. Just as demonic possession is ‘contagious’, to use Philip Almond’s term, with victims inducing the trance-

¹⁴¹ Henry VIII is said to have held his hands up before a crucifix when dying. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 324.

¹⁴² David Bevington, *Action Is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 25.

¹⁴³ John Hart, *Trodden Down Strength, by the God of Strength* (London, 1647) pp. 141-3.

states they see in others, so godly believers could evidently will themselves into a state of delirious dying.¹⁴⁴ This semi-conscious induction might combine, in the reader's experience, with the overt, sanctioned imitation of Katherine's type or 'pattern'. A pattern, as David Norbrook defines it, is an image mediating between God and human.¹⁴⁵ On this definition, Katherine's pattern is super-godly, with an almost saintly power to guide and elevate imitators. The broader implication of her dying gestures or signals is that Art of Dying texts are highly imitative and transferable in a culture receptive to their ideology: they are as it were the 'memes' by which godly behaviour is copied in subsequent generations. Accounts of good dying thus function equally as reports and tools of it, moving readers to do and feel as the exemplary subject has, previously, been persuaded or induced to do and feel.

The intense emotions of dying Protestants are evoked in this and other manuals in order to serve the more particular propagandist aim of differentiating 'true' from 'false' believers by their style of expression. Although moderation is recommended across Christian literature on death, in practice godly Calvinist texts exemplify the Art of Dying through extreme, emphatic displays of faith inspired by Foxe's martyrs, who laugh, clap, sing and cry for joy in symmetrical contrast to the insensibility attributed to their persecutors. To attain a good 'godly' (Protestant) death therefore, dying individuals are obliged to articulate their spiritual distinction through blissful, ardent sighing. Such demonstrative emotion will identify the individual's communal allegiance and strengthen that community by moving the affections of those within it. Differentiation is so crucial to the purpose of *A Christal Glasse* that we might see it as the primary though hidden topic, and death as a secondary theme that adds emotive force to the first. During her last 'confession', Katherine lambastes Papists at least five times, a polemical tick which will seem gratuitous unless we accept that the author's purpose here is not solely to paint a perfect pattern of death, but to distinguish godliness from its opposite. Treating death as the conclusive argument of life, Stubbes' distinctly articulate *Moriens* conducts the argument by demonstrating the difference between her blissful godly self, sure of election, and damned or dangerous others. Her example shows English Protestants how to arrange their deaths (and lives) as they would a dispute, using invention, disposition, style, memory and affective delivery. By preparing to die in this way, godly readers would rehearse the ultimately differentiating logic of Judgement.

In line with predestination theology, Stubbes restrains any suggestion that a well-argued case might influence God's verdict, but nonetheless this impression lingers. 'Now I

¹⁴⁴ Almond, *Demonic Possession*, p. 40.

¹⁴⁵ David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). On p. 33 Norbrook discusses Foxe's theatrical use of the figure Lady Ecclesiastica, who stands on stage in the play *Christus Triumphus*, awaiting her bridegroom. It seems possible that Katherine Stubbes and Joan Drake modelled themselves – and/or were modelled by their biographers – on this allegorical type, as embodiments of the true church.

am happy & blessed for ever,' Katherine declares after her verbal bout with Satan, 'for I have fought the good fight and by the might of Christ have won the victory' (sig. C4v). The suggestion that Katherine wins salvation by effectively defending her faith is partly but not entirely corrected by the idea that she is a revelatory witness, uncovering rather than earning preordained justice. Speaking for the Holy Spirit, as she describes it, Katherine knows by inner conviction that she is among the Elect destined to be saved. Her repeated use of the word 'elect' (sigs. B1r, B3v-r) establishes the text's peculiarly Calvinist vision of the mechanics of death, and underscores its rhetorical intent. At such moments the text reads like the manifesto for a spiritual election campaign, which seeks to unite, reassure and achieve conformity among a godly audience, by offering readers indicative signs of election in their own and others' deaths. This suggests another way of understanding the 'glass' or mirror of the title; as lens through which readers can detect and diagnose their own spiritual status.

The rhetoric of election in *A Christal Glasse* speaks to a specific audience of believers who are assured of their spiritual superiority but need reassurance of their special treatment in the afterlife. Stubbes goes to some lengths to convince readers that their rotten bodies will be repaired and rejoined with their incorruptible souls at the latter day of Judgement, by contrast with those of the reprobate (sigs. B3v-r). This gives an elitist, divisive colouration to a pamphlet which in other respects has homely and popular dramatic appeal. At a psychological level, the election message seems to betray and aggravate the fear it denies. To borrow a Shakespearean insight, Katherine protests her certainty too much. Denied the possibility of fearing damnation, since an expression of such fear would identify her as a reprobate, Katherine transfers her need for reassurance onto her godly brethren in an explicit appeal for social approval. She addresses them 'that none of you should judge that I died not a perfect Christian & a lively member of the mystical body of Jesus christ, & so by your rash judgement might incurre the displeasure of God' (sig. Br). This statement implies that Katherine expects her death to be invigilated by prefects of the community, guardians of a kind of spiritual neighbourhood watch. With this, Stubbes helps to move the Art of Dying further out of the realm of mystical sacrament, into the realm of moralised community discipline. Does he realise that the crystalline perfection of his wife's closely monitored death is liable to heighten as well as soothe readers' spiritual anxieties? I think so, and would suggest that the author is prepared to alarm readers in order to increase their general piety and moral vigilance.

I have suggested that Philip Stubbes animates his wife's dying moments to make of her a living effigy or poster campaign for a godly cult. Formulating her behaviour into a moral 'pattern', he invites readers to conform to it. The title refers us to the Christian project of matching each individual life and death to a pious ideal. Through this glass we can glimpse reflections of the text's intended audience, an intimate, scrutinising moral community

gathered at Katherine's bed. The emotional effects of their pious surveillance can be detected in the occasionally strained descriptions of Katherine's attempts to become purely spiritual in her dying. In this way the pamphlet demonstrates, perhaps more fully than Stubbes intended, the emotive power of Art of Dying rhetoric. Helping to re-brand the *ars moriendi* genre in distinctly Protestant terms, *A Christal Glasse* incites readers by fostering anxiety over spiritual status; opposing the 'good death' with a 'papist' anti-model; and promoting the act of dying as a crucial opportunity to testify to, and win credence from, fellow believers.

Historians indicate that the bedchamber heroine of *A Christal Glasse* continued to provide a model for imitation through godly deathbed accounts and instructive manuals into the Restoration. Alexandra Walsham notes that: 'At least twenty-eight impressions of this pamphlet appeared to 1664 and, an excellent example of the protestant *ars moriendi*, it became one of the most popular chapbooks of the late seventeenth century.'¹⁴⁶ Three decades after its publication, *A Christal Glasse* remained sufficiently popular to earn a reference in Cartright's play *The Ordinary* (c. 1635):

I shall live to see thee
Stand in a Play-house doore with thy long box,
Thy half-crown Library, and cry small Books.
Buy a good godly Sermon Gentlemen –
A judgement shewn upon a Knot of Drunkards –
A pill to purge out Papacy – The life
And death of "Katherin Stubs".¹⁴⁷

Given Stubbes' famous contempt for the stage, it is ironic that 'Katherin Stubs' appears to have been sold at theatres; but the author's censorious morality was evidently matched by a desire to capture a wide audience. Moreover, this exemplary tale reveals some of the complexity of godly Calvinist attitudes towards theatre, and towards the related issues of authenticity, display, performance and mimesis, which have received attention from modern critics.¹⁴⁸ As a well-read lay preacher, Stubbes had access to many arguments and distinctions which would allow him to condemn drama that was 'immorally' produced, performed and received, whilst making a pious 'improving' drama of his wife's death.

Cartwright's description of the peddling of 'Katherin Stubs' helps us to see how it was positioned in the marketplace alongside equally popular kinds of pious literature, namely

¹⁴⁶ Alexandra Walsham, "Stubbes, Philip," in *O.D.N.B.* (2004). See also Watt, *Cheap Print*, p. 183.

¹⁴⁷ Cited in Watt, *Cheap Print*, p. 267.

¹⁴⁸ Bevington, *Action Is Eloquence*; Ritchie Kendall, *The Drama of Dissent: The Radical Poetics of Nonconformity, 1380-1590* (1986); Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Streete, "Reforming Signs."; Targoff, "Performance of Prayer."; Paul Whitfield White, "Theater and Religious Culture," in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 133-51.

'good godly sermon(s)'; judgement tales narrating the divinely ordained deaths of the wicked, and 'pill(s) to purge out Papacy', or anti-Catholic polemic. Stubbes' original publisher, Richard Jones, sold a range of titles which reflects this consumer preference for heavily moralised, somewhat sensational conduct literature. It would seem that the *Glasse* was from the outset a popular work, which moved in the religious mainstream. Like the godly sermons, providential tales and anti-papist pills it resembles, the *Glasse* has a particular theological orientation, or to use a modern marketing term, a clear doctrinal 'brand'. By word choice and association, the author makes his text instantly recognisable to godly Calvinist readers, so that they will know, on hearing the bookseller's cry, what type of Christianity and social philosophy the book espouses, and what section of the population it is designed to attract.

In her study of gendered approaches to death, Patricia Phillippy sees Stubbes' *Glasse* as an exemplum of female dying which had a lasting influence on the conventions and representations of women's deaths. 'Following Stubbes's influential work, a number of eulogistic biographies appeared in print', Phillippy observes, implying that these biographies were at least indebted to, if not directly inspired by, the *Glasse*.¹⁴⁹ This would seem to be the case for Hart's life of Lady Joan Drake in *Trodden Down Strength*, mentioned above. In the opinion of her husband and his circle of godly ministers, Joan Drake suffered for several years from demonic possession, for which she was put under a strenuous programme of exorcism before finally attaining spiritual peace and a godly death. There is a strong resemblance between Drake's and Katherine Stubbes' delirious dying; and also between their interactions with an assaulting devil. Although Katherine's dialogue with Satan occupies just a few lines, while Joan Drake's demonic encounters recur over ten years and occupy many pages of Hart's account, the latter is in some respects an extended version of the former, as if Drake had studied and/or was socialised into the pattern of rhetorical combat established by Stubbes. During her bouts of possession, Drake is said to have used 'the Devills rhetorike... against her selfe,' saying for instance, '[t]hat shee was a damned Reprobate, must needs goe unto Hell to live for ever' (pp. 22-3). In such ways, Hart explains:

... the Devill being a lyar, and the Father of lies, made her thus fiercely and unjustly accuse and charge her selfe in such rigor: for even then shee feared Hell fire, quaking sometimes, and trembling at it, venting her selfe unto friends in private. (*Trodden Down Strength*, p. 25)

Spiritual combat, or the temptation to doubt salvation, is a crucial aspect of dying in Christian tradition, as I have argued; and so instances of struggle like Joan Drake's, which appear to be disconnected from the moment of death, can legitimately be regarded as preparation for it. As godly authors never tire of saying, the believer's life should be a

¹⁴⁹ Phillippy, *Women, Death and Literature*, p. 85.

constant meditation on death, and all life is but daily dying. Joan Drake does daily and for many years what Katherine does in a moment: both women hear and dismiss Satan's dangerous voice of despair. It seems reasonable to suggest on this evidence that Stubbes' *Glasse* helped to keep the devil alive in the Art of Dying and in Protestant literature more broadly; or showed a way of doing so. The significant development from medieval images of demonic assault to the prose accounts of Stubbes and Hart is an increasing emphasis on the rhetorical powers of the assaulted victim. Katherine wrestles confidently with her internal satanic voice, whereas Joan Drake, possessed with the Devil's rhetoric, uses it to defeat several godly divines who dispute with her. When ministers John Dod, John Forbes, and Mr Rogers of Dedham fail in arguments to dispossess the woman of her demonic logic, the godly Robert Bruce provides a script or speech for her to use against Satan. This however fails, leaving Drake in urgent need of an 'able man' capable of defeating 'all her temptations and objections' (p. 116). The last combatant to arrive is Mr Hooker of Cambridge, who brings from the University a 'new answering methode', possibly that of Petrus Ramus, with which Drake is said to be 'mervellously delighted' (p. 120). Happy to engage in 'new disputes and objections' with the logical, skilled disputant Hooker, Drake is 'cured' by his logical 'proofs' from the Scriptures and by constant 'prayer, catechizing, expounding and reading of the word, and singing of Psalms constantly in the family' (p. 127).

I have summarised the process at some length in order to indicate how much rhetorical effort, of persuasion and self-persuasion, goes into the making of Joan Drake's godly death. The exuberant, emotional last speech delivered from Drake's bed to a heavenly vision above her, contains the repeated phrase: 'Oh he is come, he is come' (p. 141). This echoes a late passage in Stubbes' *Glasse*, in which the dying Katherine is reported to have 'lift(ed) up her whole bodie, and stretching forth both her armes, as though she would embrace some glorious and pleasant thing, said: I thanke my good Lord Jesus Christ, he is come, hee is come...' (sig. C4r). The close echo suggests that Hart, if not Drake, internalised Stubbes' script as an exemplary method of godly dying.

The pattern of self-exorcism by which 'Satan', lurking within the dying person, is disproved and defeated, recurs in death manuals and funeral sermons of the seventeenth century. In these texts the Enemy typically manifests few audible or visible attributes. Equated with all kinds of falsehood, 'Satan' seems increasingly to signal the logical antithesis of Scriptural 'truth'. Experienced within the mind, this internalised descendent of the Bible's fallen angels is understood to be a quality of the mind, a sinfulness deriving from the person it assaults. The paradoxical nature of the resulting combat gives rise to a revealing comment in John Barlow's funeral sermon of 1619 for Lady Mary Strode: 'Not long before her death, she said, that she hoped God would give her power against the Enemy: (But alas! We many of us,

cannot tell, what by Enemie, is meant)...¹⁵⁰ While lacking a clear theology for their assailant, dying individuals nonetheless expect to meet it at the last. Thirty days before her 'departure' in 1625, the spiritually afflicted Mary Gunter is said to have asked her husband to pray for her: 'For, now I know, that Satan will shew all his malice, because his time is but short against me, and hee will easily espie my weaknesse, and make his advantage of it...'¹⁵¹

As noted above, most scholarly accounts of *A Christal Glasse* concentrate on questions of gendered conduct and female representation raised by the pamphlet, rather than on its contribution to the Art of Dying.¹⁵² The latter is, for my purposes, the more significant legacy, and one that is not confined to a female audience. While she lived, Katherine was in Stubbes' terms a mirror of womanhood; but her death provided 'a perfect pattern of true Christianitie' (sig. A2r). In 1612, Stubbes' fellow pamphleteer Anthony Nixon took this invitation literally, using Katherine's death as an exact pattern for that of a recently deceased merchant and charitable benefactor in his eulogistic memorial, *Londons Dove* (1612). Robert Dove's last reported speech of several lines is identical in all but personal pronouns to the speech attributed a decade earlier to the dying Katherine Stubbes.¹⁵³ It is notable that Nixon considers her death to be an appropriate model for his male subject. The plagiarism should alert us not only to the dubious credentials of Anthony Nixon, but to the imitative and rhetorical nature of the *Glasse* and of the *ars moriendi* genre to which it belongs. There is no more reason to suppose that Philip Stubbes actually documented his wife's dying speech 'word for word as she spake it' than there is to suppose that Robert Dove died with just the same prayer and calm expression. Both renditions of the good godly death are, in all the ways discussed here, pure rhetoric.

Two aspects of the rhetoric of Stubbes' *Glasse* will be explored in further detail in this study. In chapter five, the use of individual examples to animate a godly way of dying will be extensively discussed in relation to Samuel Ward's *Life of Faith in Death* (1622). I will argue that the Art of Dying is made broadly appealing where, in Ward's manual as in Stubbes', readers are shown how good deaths have been enacted. More immediately, in the next two chapters, I will discuss how the note of congregational intimacy sounded in Stubbes' *Glasse* echoes in the explicit pastoral vigilance of texts by William Perkins and Nicholas

¹⁵⁰ John Barlow, *A True Guide to Glory*, ed. Betty Ann Doebler and Retha M Warnicke, *Funeral Sermons for Women* (Anne Arbor: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, [1619] 2004), p. 50.

¹⁵¹ Thomas Taylor, *Two Treatises: The Pearle of the Gospell, and the Pilgrims Profession*, 2nd ed. (London: 1625), "The Narration", p. 178.

¹⁵² See note 3.

¹⁵³ Anthony Nixon, *Londons Dove* (London, 1612). The plagiarised passage begins 'Oh sweet Death thou art welcome' and continues until the closing description, '... so neither moving hand nor foote, he slept sweetly in the Lorde'. Anthony Parr, "Nixon, Anthony, Fl. 1592-1616," in *O.D.N.B.* (2004).

Byfield. If Stubbes' *Glasse* is remarkable for turning a devotional rite into a matter of pious, domestic supervision, the preparatory manuals of Perkins and Byfield could be said to extend the scope of neighbourly ministry into every aspect of death-thought and deathbed behaviour.

Chapter 2

A Salve for a Sicke Man by William Perkins (1595): Godly Rhetoric

By contrast with Stubbes' *Glasse*, the influence of William Perkins' guide to godly dying of 1595 is well recognised in critical studies of the Art of Dying. Ralph Houlbrooke observes: 'If there is a single work whose stamp upon subsequent accounts of puritan deaths can be discerned more readily than all others, it is *A Salve for a Sicke Man*'.¹⁵⁴ Historians agree that Perkins was one of the most prominent Calvinists of the Elizabethan era, and for Theodore Bozeman, he was 'Puritan pietism's greatest publicist'.¹⁵⁵ Those critics who have paid particular attention to the *Salve* have tended to regard it as a piece of doctrine, however; not as an example of persuasive publicity. Betty Ann Doebler discusses the manual's themes of election, suffering, self-fashioning and inward obedience, while David Atkinson focuses more narrowly on Covenant theology within the *Salve*, tracing Perkins' attempts to reconcile the doctrine of predestination with the role of individual conscience.¹⁵⁶

My aim in re-examining this relatively well-known work is to explore more fully its persuasive strategies. Perkins' rhetoric marks a shift in the literary form of the genre, from the fictive deathbed dialogue popular earlier in the sixteenth century, to the overtly regimented, categorical and dialectical method of instruction propounded by the Protestant scholar Petrus Ramus.¹⁵⁷ Whilst Ramist method is a product of university learning, and would be most familiar to educated readers, it is used here to make the godly message of faith at death plainly apparent to a popular audience. Published four years after Stubbes' popular *Glasse*, Perkins' *Salve* is designed like that pamphlet to convert the broadest possible readership to the idea of dying 'well', and to instil Calvinist principles into the minds of this audience. The intention behind the two works is similar, but their rhetorical styles vary significantly. Whereas the *Glasse* preaches somewhat indirectly at readers through the voice of the dying Katherine, the *Salve* is directly pedagogical. Perkins' didacticism leaves no room for individual interpretation. Indeed, the short gap between publication dates may indicate that the *Salve* was issued both to capitalise on, and to achieve tighter pastoral control of, the popular market for godly Art of Dying books that Stubbes had done much to create. I will first discuss what we might learn in this regard from the title-page.

¹⁵⁴ Houlbrooke, "The Puritan Death-Bed."

¹⁵⁵ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, p. 68.

¹⁵⁶ Doebler, *Rooted Sorrow*, pp. 90-100. D W Atkinson, "A Salve for a Sicke Man: William Perkins' Contribution to the *Ars Moriendi*," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 46 (1977): 409-18.

¹⁵⁷ The general decline in popularity of the pedagogic dialogue form in this period is indicated in the title of Walter J. Ong, *Peter Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason*, New ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

Perkins' title, *A Salve for a Sicke Man*, clearly pays homage to Thomas Becon's *The Sicke Mannes Salve* of 1561, and so confirms the ongoing familiarity of the older work, still a household name three decades after its first publication. Apparently the term 'salve' had current value for readers in 1595, and perhaps denoted to them a specific type or genre of manual, adjacent to the mirror-book genre previously discussed. Choosing to re-use Becon's title, Perkins and his printer John Legatt - whose status as 'printer to the University of Cambridge' is boldly advertised on the title page - apparently wished to benefit from the association.¹⁵⁸ It seems likely that they anticipated, and even hoped, that their title might be informally confused with Becon's. Those who purchased a 'salve' to cure their own existential fears were less interested, we can assume, in the book's particular authorship than in its reputation and effect, and would therefore pay more readily for a known brand.

(a) Prescribing to the Godly

Perkins delivers emotive appeal with this metaphoric representation of a book as medical 'salve' or cure; a notion which derives from the pervasive Christian trope that God is the original physician, and that his Word has the healing power of physic.¹⁵⁹ The book-as-salve was therefore a familiar and attractive notion to Perkins' godly contemporaries. Some indication of the generic appeal of sick men's salves can be seen in a passage of Jonson and Chapman's *Eastward Ho!* (1604), in which Quicksilver, a converted rake, is described thus by his jailer: "He is so well given, and has such good gifts! He can tell you almost all the stories of the *Book Of Martyrs* and speak you all the *Sick Man's Salve* without book..."¹⁶⁰ Here, familiarity with the *Salve* (probably Becon's, though possibly confused with Perkins', which was reprinted for the fifth time in 1603) is not seen exclusively as a means of preparing for death, but as a general mark and measure of individual piety. The sorts of people who study Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" are the same as those who use a spiritual 'salve', Jonson and Chapman imply. In the jailer's mind, and presumably in the audience's, Becon's (or Perkins') *Salve* shares with Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* an almost Biblical authority. This close association between a Protestant death manual and the central Protestant martyrology supports the suggestion, made elsewhere in this thesis, that the godly Art of Dying was in effect - and in the imagination of its students and readers - an art of popular martyrdom. Foxe is explicitly named at one point in Perkins' *Salve*, and his influence is apparent in the catalogues of

¹⁵⁸ Perkins, *Salve*. Subsequent references will be given in brackets in the text. Legatt, also spelled Legat or Legate, printed several of Perkins' works.

¹⁵⁹ For example, the 'great Physician God' is said to prescribe the medicine of faith in Thomas More, *A Dialogue of Cumfort against Tribulation* (Antwerp, 1534), sig. A7v.

¹⁶⁰ Cited in: Lake and Questier, *Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, p. 402.

exemplary good and bad deaths given towards the end of the manual. The inclusion of familiar tales of the deaths of martyrs and persecutors might be seen as a device to sweeten the pill of godly doctrine and so to attract more readers; but it also indicates that the boundaries between popular anecdotes and learned literature, and between exceptional and ordinary pious practice, are more porous than Perkins' dialectical method suggests.

That the fictional Quicksilver, and by implication the godly converts he purports to represent, could recite 'all the Sick Man's Salve without book' tells us something significant about the communicative nature of 'salves'. These were books to be used frequently, memorised, and recited to others. What is true of Becon's work is equally true of Perkins', which declares itself in the long title to be: 'A treatise containing the nature, differences, and kindes of death; as also *the right manner of dying well*' (title page, original italics). Whereas Stubbes' long title tantalised readers with the promise of a dying woman's encounter with Satan, Perkins sells his customers the comforting promise of definitive, ordered and applicable knowledge. His blunt, practical emphasis on the 'right manner of dying well' has a distinctly Protestant inflection. By contrast with the more ritualistic, and to Protestant eyes more superficial, Catholic method of learning by rote or catechism, Perkins sets out to inform readers of the 'nature, differences, and kindes' of death and so that they will become comprehending, reasoned practitioners. In this manifestation, the godly Art of Dying seems more reducible to a single 'right' way, and more concerned with readers' actual take-up of its principles, than does any previous expression of the theme.

As noted in the Introduction, the *Salve* summons its readers in a direct, prescriptive manner, offering spiritual instruction for three types of people: mariners going to sea, soldiers going to battle, and women approaching childbirth. This enumerated list, displayed prominently on the title page, seeks a broad audience including those sectors of society least likely to be literate. It seems that Perkins expected his message to be conveyed beyond the printed page, and that he, or the publisher responsible for the title page, hoped and contrived for the *Salve* to become popular lore. On the evidence of the cited passage from *Eastward Ho!*, the text did indeed circulate in common places, alongside popular adaptations of Foxe's "Book of Martyrs".¹⁶¹

If the *Salve* aims at the broad base of the godly market, it also and simultaneously appeals to the high point of the social pyramid in a dedication to Lady Lucy Harrington, who

¹⁶¹ Four editions of the *Acts and Monuments* appeared in Foxe's lifetime, and others in 1596, 1610, 1632, 1641 and 1684. Their circulation in courts and prisons, and their changing reception, are discussed in Damian Nussbaum, "Appropriating Martyrdom: Fears of Renewed Persecutions and the 1632 Edition of *Acts and Monuments*," in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997). Shorter adaptations are discussed in David Kastan, "Little Foxes," in *John Foxe and His World*, ed. Christopher Highley and John N. King (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

in 1595 was aged fourteen. This dedication reflects the sincerity of Perkins' insistence that all believers, regardless of age, should look forward to death. It also underscores the message that all sorts of people, not least women of child-bearing age, are vulnerable. Later becoming the Countess of Bedford, Lady Lucy has been described by Barbara Lewalski as 'a major patroness at the center of Jacobean society' with 'an important, if indirect, influence on literature and culture'.¹⁶² Known for her Calvinist leanings and support for international Protestantism, Lady Lucy was to number among her literary clients Ben Jonson, John Donne and Samuel Daniel, the leading poets of the age. This apparently bifurcated target audience presents a rhetorical challenge to an author trained, as Perkins was, in Aristotelian technique. To persuade his listeners, an orator must address himself to their particular shared concerns, in terms that appeal to their common sense of what is probable and just. Given the likely disparity in education and opinion between the mariners, soldiers and expectant women of the *Salve's* title-page, the literary young noblewoman addressed in the dedication, and the heads of households, magistrates, ministers and physicians who are given specific instructions regarding death within the manual, how was Perkins to persuade all these readers alike?

Ramist method provides Perkins with a means to instruct both learned and unlearned readers in the 'right manner of dying', by proceeding from statements of general principle to advice on particular situations. An important factor in Ramus' revision of classical rhetoric, and in the subsequent popularity of his method among Protestant pedagogues, is relative simplicity.¹⁶³ Taking as his text Solomon's claim that the day of death is better than the day of birth, Perkins interprets this counter-intuitive principle in three stages; firstly expounding what death is, in broad definitive terms; secondly, showing by contrastive statements how death is preferable to life; and thirdly, detailing in what particular respects death is better. This programmatic logic allows Perkins to explain gradually, or at least to appear to 'prove', item by item, the more complex aspects of death in Calvinist theology. By logical progression, the author also controls his readers' comprehension, ensuring that key spiritual principles are expounded before concerns of a more individual, practical or immediate nature are explored. This is the Ramist 'plain style', as described by Walter Ong: diagrammatic in conceptualisation, it avoids 'flowery' oratory, copiousness, and amplification in order to provide a purely didactic, tabular scheme of ideas.¹⁶⁴ By contrast with the affective techniques of classical rhetoric, the *Salve's* overtly structured method does not appeal to the distinct emotions or prejudices of a specific audience. On the contrary, Perkins assumes that his argument will appear equally reasonable to all reasoning minds. Definitive statements which

¹⁶² Barbara Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 103.

¹⁶³ Ong, *Ramus*, passim; Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge, 1966), p. 232 and passim. See also Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 703.

¹⁶⁴ I am drawing here from several parts of Ong's study, particularly chapters IX and XII.

have the appearance of neutrality, and topical divisions which seem to favour no particular preferences, are used instead of emotive appeals. The resulting conclusions appear to belong to an order of truth superior to, and insulated from, human responses. It has been said that Ramist logic entirely 'precluded any considerations of audience'; and to an extent Perkins solves the problem of having a diverse audience by ignoring it.¹⁶⁵

But while the *Salve* creates the illusion of rational objectivity, we should not conclude that its author is indifferent to the emotional responses of his readers. Dialectic is used here as a means of persuasion, not as an alternative to it. Perkins guides readers closely to the desired responses, using explicit directions to control their interpretations, as with the phrase 'we must distinguish...' (p. 10). Alternative explanations are framed and contained by an acknowledgement; 'it may be objected...' (p.4.); only to be answered with a conclusive statement; 'thus it appears...' (p. 6). Arguing on both sides of the question, *in utramque partem*, is for Perkins as for all rhetoricians a means of anticipating, limiting and controlling debate and thereby strengthening the attraction of his own conclusions. Much as Katherine Stubbes argues with an unheard Devil in the *Glasse*, so Perkins conducts an exchange of contrary principles, or of questions and answers, as if adjudicating a legal case, while in fact he has determined its outcome. In such ways the *Salve*'s dialectic steers, even coerces, readers into the 'right' frame of mind. Additional control is exercised through the systematic inventory of topics and subtopics, which requires a reader's active involvement in counting and registering logical items.

The interpretative control gained by authors using Ramist logic is a major attraction for Protestant divines seeking non-sacramental ways of guiding their flocks. Perkins guides the reader through a world of signs, in order to replace unchristian thoughts with 'right' godly thoughts on various topics, and so to improve spiritual 'health'. He seeks to limit not only the particular intuitions of readers but also, more fundamentally, their mode of thinking. By avoiding figurative language which might excite readers' imaginations, Perkins steers them firmly away from meditative imagery towards what is, in his mind, the plain 'truth'. In fact this effort could be said to replace one type of figure with another; that of 'inwardness' or plainness. As Frances Yates observes: 'The extraordinary success of Ramism... in Protestant countries like England may perhaps be partly accounted for by the fact that it provided a kind of inner iconoclasm, corresponding to the outer iconoclasm'.¹⁶⁶ The avoidance (or substitution) of rhetorical images is a deliberate rejection of the devotion to images favoured in classical humanism and Catholicism, and considered dangerous by iconoclastic Calvinists. As a result, the language of the *Salve* is relatively economical and unimaginative, or 'aseptic',

¹⁶⁵ John D. Schaeffer, "Commonplaces: Sensus Communis," in *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 278-94.

¹⁶⁶ Yates, *The Art of Memory*, p. 234.

to use Yates' term. Virtually all allusions are taken from the Scriptures, in order to avoid the kind of 'superstitious' readings that Perkins distrusts. Florid metaphors are avoided within the manual for the same reason that sacramental ritual, amulets, charms, astrological figures and other imaginative aids to worship or healing are condemned: 'Fo[r] words can doe no more but signifie, and figures can doe no more but represent' (p.75). Imagery is both inadequate and morally dubious, to Perkins' mind, because it presents signifiers as if these possess a natural and exact correspondence with what is signified. Such directed representation of the created world is presumptuous, and fails to acknowledge the gap between *res* and *verba* in the divine order. Ordinary, fallen men should not think they can directly apprehend the nature of things, much less command or meddle with things, as do magicians and ungodly artists.

Perkins' assertion that 'words can doe no more but signifie' betrays an ambiguous attitude towards his own endeavour. It seems that this godly author wants to convince without persuading; to use the tools of Sidney's 'art of poesie' selectively, only to teach, not to delight. I shall later comment on the anecdotes which crowd the *Salve*'s final pages in a somewhat haphazard attempt at amplification. These diverting tales may incite in readers, and reflect in the author, imaginative activities that Perkins would not wittingly condone.¹⁶⁷ For most of the manual, Perkins seems determined not to charm readers but to 'cure' them by means of close pastoral guidance and relatively simple, memorable dialectical principles.

(b) Teaching Readers to Judge

Order informs Perkins' *Salve* at all levels; as a spiritual concept, as a method for reforming daily life, and as a rhetorical tool used to facilitate the comprehension and retention of religious doctrine. The central ordering principle is a binary opposition between two categories: virtue and vice, inner and outer, godly and natural, true and false. This structural device of bifurcating topics, common to Ramist works, is used so pervasively throughout the manual that it seems to indicate an unshakeable habit of mind. To Perkins, everything in the world – and in other worlds - is either moral or immoral; pre- or post-lapsarian; divinely ordained, or a corrupt double. His symbolic universe, consisting at every level of good and bad things, or of true and false ways of being, is similar to the allegorical fairy world created by the Protestant poet Edmund Spenser. In Perkins' *Salve*, as in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, it is the task of a godly believer to distinguish between vice and virtue in every situation.

To explore Perkins' categories in turn, we might start with the book itself, advertised as a guide to 'the right manner of dying well' by implicit contrast with a false art of dying.

¹⁶⁷ On the aesthetic qualities of Perkins' *Golden Chaine*, see Ferrell, "Transfiguring Theology."

This 'right' method is everywhere opposed to the 'wrongful' teaching of unreformed Catholics. Introducing the *Salve's* central section, on the preparation for death at a time of sickness, Perkins makes this contrast explicit, dismissing Catholic ritual as 'popish order and practise' and declaring: 'here first of all I will shew what is the doctrine of the Papists, and then afterward the truth' (p. 48). By reducing Catholic theory and practice of dying to three elements - sacramental confession, the Eucharist and extreme unction - Perkins constructs a simplified model of the 'false' art which he then proceeds to demolish in methodical fashion. His critique is fiercely anti-ritualistic: the obligation on dying Catholics to take the Eucharist is unwarranted in scripture and 'but a superstitious practise' (p. 53); likewise, extreme unction, or 'anoiling of the sicke', is 'but a dotage of mans braine' (p. 53). Perkins' objection to structured confession is the most revealing of the three lines of attack, as it involves a discussion of the nature of priestly authority – including, by implication, his own:

It is false which they say that priestes are judges, having power to examine and take knowledge of mens sinnes, and jurisdiction whereby they can properly absolve and pardon or retaine them. For Gods word hath given no more to man, but a *ministerie of reconciliation*, wherby in the name of God, and according to his word, he doth preach, declare, and pronounce, that god doth pardon or not pardon mens sinnes. (*Salve*, p. 50).

In this distinction, Perkins implies that reformed ministers claim less authority over people's souls than do Catholic priests. However, the 'ministerie of reconciliation,' as it is described here, evidently has a broad remit which allows and obliges Perkins to take a central role in people's spiritual lives, mediating between men and God, interpreting God's word, and adjudicating what God 'doth... and doth not pardon'. The sum total of these roles is an intimate, involved, interpretative style of authorship – and ministry - which in its own fashion presumes more comprehensive authority over people's lives, thoughts and spiritual experience than does the more strictly liturgical, hierarchical Catholic priesthood. What Perkins presents as the moderate, mediating Protestant method of dying well is also, in its way, highly authoritarian. Every line of instruction in the *Salve* rests on the assumption that Perkins is licensed to steer and involve himself in the daily decisions of his readers.

There are, according to Perkins, good and bad ways of meditating on death, the former being exemplified by Bilney the Martyr. A well known image from Foxe's "Book of Martyrs", Bilney's testing of the candle flame is described in the *Salve* in order to persuade readers to rehearse for death repeatedly by habitual mental effort, and to endure or even seek out life's afflictions, in order to lessen the pain of dying:

This point Bilney the martyr well considered, who oftentimes before he was burned, put his finger into the flame of the candle, not onely to make triall of his abilitie in

suffering, but also to arme and strengthen himself against greater torments in death' (pp. 47-8).

In this example we are shown that authentic suffering, used as a test of personal fortitude, is highly valued by the Calvinist author. He sees active meditation on death as an opportunity for a desirable 'trial' of individual character, and urges the same attention to pious practice more broadly. By showing readers how to prepare for death like Bilney, the *Salve* also teaches them to be active, self-disciplined practitioners of faith in everyday life. Historical evidence suggests that Perkins was influential in this respect, contributing to a trend of self-regulated spiritual discipline in godly households. One of his devoted readers, the Yorkshire gentlewoman Lady Margaret Hoby reveals in a typical diary entry of 1599 the routine dedication she applies to Perkins' texts. There is even a hint of Bilney's self-inflicted suffering in her rigorous regime of study and introspection:

After privat praers I did eat my breakfast, then I wrought and reed of the bible till dinner time: after, I wrought and did my deutie in the house till almost 6 a clock, and then I praied privately and examined my selfe, then I went to supper: after, I discharged household billes and, after, praied: then reed a whill of perkins, and so went to bed.¹⁶⁸

Such dedication to spiritual discipline suggests that the *Salve*'s practitioners expected their efforts to be rewarded at death, despite the Calvinist teaching that grace is given not earned, and that salvation is foreordained. Atkinson explains the doctrinal 'compromise' made by Perkins, whereby the potential Elect are offered a divine Covenant which they can ignore at their peril or accept with gratitude, fulfilling their end of the contract with good works, humility and repentance: these acts of piety will in turn produce indicative signs of a person's elect status.¹⁶⁹ The *Salve*'s 'right way of dying well' is not presented as a means of procuring a good end, as the 'art' of Catholic tradition might imply, but as a way of enabling, demonstrating and submitting to one's preordained role. It seems to me however that no amount of theoretical finessing could prevent readers from making an informal causal connection between discipline and deserving. In a study of popular attitudes towards the "Final Moment", Wunderli and Boce find a common belief in individual determinacy lasting after the Reformation. Though it runs 'counter to any Christian theology of death', the most intuitive and enduring belief about death encountered in ballads, deathbed tales and *artes moriendi* is that the dying man's state of mind before and at death would determine his salvation or damnation. It is: 'an attitude of radical individualism because an individual could

¹⁶⁸ Margaret Dakins Hoby and Dorothy May Meads, *Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, 1599-1605, Broadway Diaries, Memoirs & Letters* (London: Routledge, 1930), p. 86.

¹⁶⁹ Atkinson, "William Perkins' Contribution."

control, by mental concentration, his own death and salvation'.¹⁷⁰ Perkins' efforts to eradicate this popular belief through godly exercises of preparation might instead reinforce it: such is the discrepancy between an author's and an audience's use of godly rhetoric. To account for the *Salve*'s popularity, we must allow for the possibility that readers hoped, despite all they were told by godly divines, that such manuals could effectively heal sins and prevent damnation.

Predestination theology underlies Perkins' division of the human world into two sorts of people: godly and ungodly. His readers are designated throughout the manual as 'people of God' (p. 21), 'them that are in Christ' (p.19), 'members of Christ', 'fellow members', 'children of God', and so on. This conspicuously familial nomenclature for the Protestant faithful creates a strong sense of godly community throughout the *Salve*, helping to explain its appeal. Godly readers, moreover, are offered special incentives and benefits along with the rules of dying well. The first of these is reputation, as Perkins implies on the first page by elucidating a saying of Solomon's: '*a good name is better then a pretious ointment: that is, a name gotten and maintained by godly conversation, is a special blessing of God*' (p.1). By 'godly conversation' Perkins alludes to, and encourages, the practice of mutual pious instruction within a community of believers. He heightens the appeal of this congregational notion by drawing a sharp contrast between the 'two sorts of men: one, that live and die in their sinnes without repentance: the other, which unfaignedly repent and beleeve in Christ' (p. 9). The reference to 'feigning' here alerts readers to the possibility of false doubles among them, and underscores the importance Perkins attaches to the process of distinguishing true from false, and inward faith from outward expression, in all aspects of pious life. Death assists this process of sorting believers and non-believers into their respective categories, since in Perkins' outlook the godly are particularly distinguished, identified and preferred in the act of dying. It is by dying that the godly 'sort' truly come into being. To them God grants the gift of inner resilience, described as 'an inward & unspeakable comfort of the spirit', at the moment of death (p. 69). This resilience is genuine because it is experienced internally, or 'inward': the word marks an important, and in fact figurative, Protestant equation between interiority and truth, a defining principle which affects all other distinctions in the *Salve*, and which has been traced in detail by Katherine Eisemann Maus.¹⁷¹

Death sets the godly apart from their ungodly neighbours, and allows them even to rejoice in their tribulations, as did the early persecuted Christians and more recent martyrs of the Reformation. At the deathbed, the godly are assailed by the opposing ungodly forces of the 'devil and his angels', and are given special help in this dying struggle by God and his good Angels (p. 70). This prosaic rendition of the 'last combat' of *ars moriendi* imagery

¹⁷⁰ Wunderli and Broce, "The Final Moment."

¹⁷¹ Maus, *Inwardness and Theater*.

maintains a strict symmetry between the hierarchies of good and evil forces. Imagining God's angels on one side of the deathbed to be matched by Satan's bad angels on the other, Perkins extends his categorising method to the superhuman universe: here too, every godly thing has a deceptive double. The *Salve*'s 'right way of dying well' is thus an essentially segregated art, which creates an exclusive sense of kinship among the godly, and emphasises the hazards of failing to recognise and secure the special benefits of faith: the word 'benefit' is used several times in the dedication. Perkins notes that the people of God will be freed by death from wicked neighbours who in this life live among them 'as sheepe are mingled with goats which strike them, annoy their pasture, & muddy their water' (p. 22). At death, God's hand will 'sort and single out those that be the servants of God from all ungodly men in this most wretched world' (p. 22). These differentiated scenarios of death promise that the godly will escape their ungodly neighbours and be embraced into a timeless apostolic community in which the Lord is ever-present among, and especially helpful to, his faithful disciples. Sensitive to what would now be called status anxiety, Perkins pre-empts readers' fears that they will lose their place in the godly community once their bodies have disintegrated or 'drowned in the sea', reassuring them that even a rotten or burned body – of a believer – will 'rise to eternall glory' at Judgement (p. 25).

As I have indicated, the *Salve* is an interpretative guide to the correct significance, from a godly Protestant perspective, of everything within the sick man's world. It is crucial to Perkins that the generic sick man of the title understands, as he considers death, that outward signs are not reliable guides to internal truth. This concern is endemic to the writing of reforming Protestants, as David Norbrook explains. Alarmed by the reverence paid to Catholic mediators and their symbols, or 'natural signs': 'The reformers mounted a frontal attack on this system of "natural signs", or, as they saw it, idolatrous confusion between sign and thing signified'.¹⁷² In this spirit of iconoclasm, Perkins repeatedly tries to disabuse readers of common misperceptions surrounding the external manifestations of death. When men die 'despairing, some raving and blaspheming, some strangely tormented', as if they are being dragged into hell, Perkins explains that the true cause of their behaviour is likely to be sickness or fever (p. 13). Similarly, writhing, cramps and convulsions, which look like signs of witchcraft or possession, may be caused by the humour-induced condition of melancholy or by burning fevers which 'send the choler shooting up to the braine' (p.16). The physiological aspects of dying are not straightforward indicators of spiritual condition, the *Salve* insists. Therefore, witnesses of apparent bad deaths should not draw sinister conclusions from them. Indeed Perkins is so troubled by the power of common opinion to mislead on this issue that he seeks to rescue the much-reviled bishop Edmund Bonner from the popular

¹⁷² Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics*, p. 31.

mythology surrounding his death in 1569, by pointing out that blackened skin can appear on corpses, as it did on Bonner's, as a result of bruising, black jaundice or putrefaction of the liver: 'it doth not always argue some extraordinary judgement of God' (p.16).

What seems to worry Perkins here is not any particular misdiagnosis or injured reputation, but the potential of ordinary people to misread the paradoxical and hidden, though perfectly regulated, divine order of universe. To live well, individuals must be good interpreters, trained by books like the *Salve* to distinguish surface appearance from essential nature, 'popish' doctrine from scriptural law, false displays of repentance from genuine urgings, signs of assurance from false pride, and unredeemed despair from momentary or uncontrollable lapses of the body or mind. To die well, the faithful must be able to continue their disciplined and discriminating scrutiny in all of these areas during sickness and fever, without succumbing to disordered, false, ungodly lapses of judgement. Mis-readings of death, resulting from spiritual ignorance or neglect, are damaging to the godly community. '[W]e must judge a man not by his death, but by his life', Perkins insists; and 'we must learne to reforme our judgements of such as lie at the point of death' (p. 17). Such misinterpretations are also directly damaging to health, since by misunderstanding the processes of death, sick individuals may exacerbate their own condition and drive themselves to despair. To diseased minds, pain that looks and feels like hell is mistaken for hell itself: 'they feele themselves as it were to be in hell, and to apprehend the very pangs and torments thereof' (p. 14). By distinguishing the physiological mechanism behind this illusion from the spiritual 'truth' that God will save the children 'most deare to him' even in such a state of despair, Perkins seeks to contain his readers' anxious fantasies and so fortify them to face death gladly.

In addition to interpreting the visible signs of death correctly, readers of the *Salve* are taught another heuristic activity by way of preparation for death, which is to select and appraise critically the evidence of their physical senses:

We must not judge of our graves, as they appeare to the bodily eye, but we must looke upon them by the eye of faith, and consider them as they are altered & changed by the death & burial of Christ, who [...] perfumed our graves, & made them of stinking and lothsome cabbines, to become princely palaces, and beddes of most sweet and happie rest, farre more excellent then beddes of downe. (*Salve*, p. 25)

Here the 'bodily eye', corresponding to ordinary physical experience, is deemed superficial and erroneous, whereas the 'eye of faith' is a potent mode of apprehension, available to the faithful, which transforms what it looks upon in the same way that Christ transformed the earthly life he lived. In the Christian story, Christ functions as an agent of change, turning bread into wine, and death into resurrected life; as a result, Perkins' logic seems to imply, those who comprehend the story faithfully are blessed with a super-sense, an eye of faith,

which allows them to transform bad expectations into good. Using this inner eye, as opposed to the falsifying bodily eye, the sick man will see the Christian grave, as opposed to unredeemed grave, and will thereby be prepared for the 'happie rest' of spiritual death. With this passage the *Salve* moves from a reasoned debunking of popular death-bed folklore to a more psychological exploration of mental or spiritual technique, in an attempt to address individual fears of dying. For Perkins, as for Byfield (examined in the next chapter), fear of death is a natural instinct, 'bred in the bone' (p. 63), but problematic and sinful when allowed to rule the passions unchecked. Reducing fear entails changing one's perception:

He that is to passe over some great and deepe river, must not look downward to the stream of the water; but if he would prevent feare, he must set his foote fore & cast his eye to the banke on the further side & so must he that drawes nere death, as it were, looke over the waves of death, & directly fixe the eye of his faith upon eternall life. (*Salve*, p. 64.)

This analogy suggests a method of self-directed mental conditioning, whereby the fearful sick man should re-focus his inner eye upon the distant goal of eternal life and so distract himself from the immediate prospect of dying. Perkins the Ramist is careful here to avoid figurative images which could be idolised in the manner of Catholic iconography, choosing for his simile an object without shape or dimension. The 'waves of death' image is not, I think, meant to be objectified in the reader's mind, but is on the contrary chosen for its abstract quality. Such a figure is acceptable to Perkins on the basis of the Pauline principle elucidated by Erasmus:

The things that be sene (sayth Paule) be temporall, and tho that be not sene be eternall. And this is a great part of the christen philosophie, which prepareth us to deth, that by the contemplation of thinges eternall and heavenly, we maye lerne the despising of thinges temporall and earthly' (*Preparation to Death*, sig. A6v)

It is notable in this passage that Erasmus specifies the purpose of sensory self-censorship as being the 'despising' of temporal life. The attitude of rejection exemplified by Katherine Stubbes' ejection of her puppy continues in Perkins' prescribed mode of contemplation.

Thus Perkins' rhetoric directs the reader to see certain things and not others; to look inwardly and not outwardly. It is a distinction he makes repeatedly, in relation to different topics or types of activity. We may watch a man die, but we cannot see into that person's soul to judge his elect status: 'we must not judge of the estate of any man before God by outward things' (p. 13). Ever anxious to control the sick man's vision, or mechanism of moral judgement, Perkins explicitly seeks to limit its scope, prescribing not only what readers may and may not 'see', but also where they look:

The second practise is to looke upon death in the glasse of the gospel, and not in the glasse of the lawes, that is, wee must consider death not as it is propounded in the law, and look upon that terrible face which the law giveth unto it; but as it is set forth in the Gospell. (*Salve*, p. 64)

Here Perkins contrasts, typically, two types of Scriptural instruction or ‘glass’; one of which shows death as a punishment, while the other depicts it as changed by Christ into peaceful sleep. Directing readers to look only at the Gospel metaphors, and not at the Old Testament depiction of death as a curse, Perkins implicitly distances himself from the terrorising aspects of medieval teaching and *ars moriendi* illustrations.¹⁷³ He presents himself by contrast as a pastoral guide and quasi-physician, helping readers to conduct their own spiritual regimen. His rhetoric of self-help is at once neighbourly and intrusive, intimate and authoritarian. There is no clear division for Perkins between areas within his authorial control and matters for individual self-control; nor between realms of physical or mental conduct requiring regulation. What seems most personal to a modern reader is of most interest to Perkins, since as we see repeatedly in the *Salve*, the ‘heart of man’ is deemed to be the locus of divine truth, and is therefore the part of life most deserving of a minister’s attention and direction (p. 2).

The *Salve*’s extension of dialectical argument into every aspect of the sick man’s bodily and spiritual experience has a precedent in the work of Petrus Ramus, himself a keen student of medicine, and especially of Galen. Physical regulation and thought regulation, or medicine and rhetoric, were closely intertwined for Ramus and his followers. Walter Ong explains that medical practice of the period was ‘deeply committed to the use and interpretation of symbols, and to the study of psychological processes such as memory (itself considered a part of traditional rhetoric)’.¹⁷⁴ Thus the action of preparing people for death, or allaying their fear, was a matter of guiding them through the symbolic significance of their thoughts and bodily symptoms. Margaret Healy has identified a number of popular medical books or ‘regimens’ of the late sixteenth century which provide this semiotic instruction at behavioural, psychological, physical and supernatural levels. In an age characterised by a conspicuous ‘moralization of the environment’ and by the ‘overt intrusion of religion into the medical domain’, Healy explains that for Perkins and his godly contemporaries: ‘regimen is a Christian obligation [which] has particular implications for behaviour – imbalance leads to sin – and thus for the healthful maintenance, or degeneration, of the soul’.¹⁷⁵ Perkins’ *Salve* shows how this obligation extends to the sick man’s vigilance towards his dying body.

Having argued at the start of the book that death is preferable to life, and having used Bilney’s example to urge readers to ‘exercise and inure our selves in dying by little and litle’,

¹⁷³ Peter Marshall’s useful epithet is ‘graphic medieval vision literature’, *Beliefs and the Dead*, p. 192.

¹⁷⁴ Ong, *Ramus*, pp. 226-56.

¹⁷⁵ Healy, *Fictions of Disease*, p. 34.

through constant meditation on death (p. 46), Perkins establishes a rationale for the conscientious maintenance of bodily life by insisting, on the authority of St. Paul, that 'all sick persons must be carefull to preserve health and life till God do take it away' (p. 70). The objective of such maintenance is not the lengthening of a man's lifespan or the postponement of his death, both of which are predetermined, but a preservation of the ordained period of his life. The 'little lampe of corporall life' should thus be helped to burn 'till it goes out of it selfe' (p. 78). This pious approval of physical self-government is matched in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* by a moral antithesis contrasting the body 'kept in sober government' which is the most 'faire and excellent' of all God's works, with the monstrous, 'fowle and indecent' body which is 'distempered through misrule and passions bace'.¹⁷⁶

As with every other topic considered in the *Salve*, medicine exists for Perkins in two forms, good and bad, godly and illegitimate. A Calvinist outlook, favouring Galenic ideas of balance and moderation in the humoral body, is presented as true, godly medicine; and rival interpretations of health or corruption are thoroughly disparaged. Perkins prescribes 'good and wholesom phisicke', with a Calvinist emphasis on naturally derived remedies. King Ezekias's boil was cured by the application of dry figs, we are told, as proof of the divine sanction of 'naturall and ordinary medicine' (p. 71). Perkins' preference here is typical of learned Protestants, and is indicated by margin citations which give Galen the authority of a Scriptural passage. Galen's remedies, being derived from the natural world, are supposed to reflect the essential balance and inner truth of that world. Wolf dung tied to the body is effective against colic, and white peonies hung from the neck are able to prevent the falling sickness, because of the innate properties or '*inward vertue*' of these organic treatments (p. 75, my italics). This reverence for Galenic natural philosophy is one of the more conservative aspects of the *Salve*, aligning the manual with the learned practice of licensed physicians as opposed to the increasingly popular chemical medicine of Paracelsus or astrological interventions. Acutely conscious that these alternative, and to his mind unnatural, types of medical practice are available, Perkins treats them as moral opposites in order to guide or enforce the reader's disapproval of them. In common with many godly divines, he considers uroscopy, or 'judgement by the urine' to be 'deceitfull' (p. 73). Detailed observations on this practice convey a degree of technical, diagnostic authority, and indicate that the author has personally witnessed the procedure. Perkins is an intimate presence in this passage, standing as it were between the reader-patient and the physician, peering into the bowl of urine. Sick men should be careful, he advises with revealing sensitivity, 'to make choice of meet physicians to whome they might commend the care of their health, as they are carefull to make choise of lawyers for their worldly suits, and Divines for cases of conscience' (p. 75).

¹⁷⁶ Spenser, *Poetical Works*, p. 112. Book II, Canto IX, verse 1.

This comment illustrates the competitive nature of the professional marketplace in which Perkins himself is implicated, and in which the *Salve*'s readers are acknowledged to be customers, possessing and exercising the power of choice.

Rival practices are most dangerous in Perkins view when they involve an actual remedial object or device hung on the body, since these 'amulets and ligatures' derive from superstitious human agency rather than from the Scriptures or creation. Practitioners who offer charms, spells, or amulets are dismissed along with their 'unlawfull and absurd' cures (p. 76). This condemnation is again concerned with the process of interpretation in a textual or semiotic world. Some signs correspond to the innate truth of the Scriptural Word, while other symbols, objects, actions and incantations are extra-scriptural and therefore invalid. Moreover, it is a crime in godly Protestantism to attempt to predict or influence the divine will; and astrology could be said to do both. The *Salve* prepares people for death, but does not predict the time or outcome of death. Perkins uses an allegorical fable, of a man pursued by a unicorn falling into a dungeon, to reinforce his repeated point that men do not have the right to select or predict a time for their preparation, but must repent now. This story is an illustration of the 'correct' godly way of interpretation, which is to read always and only for the moral, and not to mistake the unicorn for an actual unicorn. 'Now this Unicorn is death,' Perkins explains, with pedestrian emphasis, 'the man that flyeth is every one of us, and every living man: the pit over which he hangeth is hell...' and so on (p. 32). The plain-style mentality evident here helps to explain Perkins' unequivocal disapproval of the reading of star-signs. It is better to diagnose sickness according the nature of the disease than to so by the constellation of stars, he reasons, again making a value judgement in favour of what is interior, natural or hidden (pp. 74-5). Outward signs – stars or urine – do not simply manifest the inward condition of a man. As if to acknowledge that his audience may not be entirely convinced by his proofs against astrology, however, Perkins briefly abandons his dialectical argument for an anecdote about the Old Testament figure Achazia, who sought a forecast for his recovery from sickness from Baalzabub, the false god of Ekron, and was punished with death for his dabbling. This example, intended to clinch Perkin's attack on the false science of sorcery, also indicates the significance of the perceived threat, since it implies that contemporary 'enchanters', like the ancient Baalzabub, wield some effective power - if only to cause harm.

What Perkins fears in these ungodly practices is their provision of alternative ways of reading the universe. They seem to him kinds of hyper-rhetoric which trick audiences into mistaking good things for evil things, or appearances for substance. The pious rationality

underlying this objection is in itself somewhat magical, as Keith Thomas has demonstrated.¹⁷⁷ When Perkins defines 'material evil' as an originally good part of creation turned poisonous 'by reason of mans fall' (p. 5), such as wolfbane or hemlock, he is attributing an extraordinary, transformative power to 'sin'. Similarly, his paradoxical conception of a God who 'gives life not by life, but by death' and whose works 'are done in and by their contraries' (p. 14), conveys the sense that God is a divine magician, twisting and toying with his creations, and hiding their true nature from his audience. The effort which Perkins expends on distinguishing godly from ungodly physic, in his self-appointed role of universal interpreter, indicates the scale of his anxiety, I suggest. This is not merely a professional anxiety at the presence of rivals, but a fear that other systems of interpretation besides Perkins' Protestant version are in current use. As 'vehicles of meaning', popular healing rites threaten the Christian symbolic monopoly which the *Salve* is intended to maintain.¹⁷⁸

The *Salve* distinguishes itself from the sorcery of non-godly medicine by maintaining a practical, familiar tone, and by stressing the need for repentance as the first stage of spiritual cure. A repentant 'humbling' of the soul must precede any intake of medicine, Perkins warns: without such an act of submission to God, no medicine will work (p. 77). This idea is illustrated through a husbandry metaphor in which the 'root' of sickness, which is sin, should 'first of all be stocked up, that the branches might more easily die (p. 61, p. 77). A useful argument from Perkins' own point of view, since it gives repentance the central, enabling role in any therapeutic process, this rationale for spiritual groundwork also has a compelling practicality. Gardening provides a domestic (and in godly terms, safe) analogy for spiritual economy or mental health. Individuals are thereby encouraged to exercise discipline over their bodies in the manner of guardians or household managers of temporary estates. Perkins uses a similar strategy of familiar imagery when, discussing the afterlife, he assures his readers that 'the bodies of men have their winter' and like winter vegetation, they will be revived at the final reunion (p. 27). In line with this domesticated approach to the psychology of dying, Perkins concludes his medical discussion with brief advice to physicians. Appealing directly to his fellow 'member of Christ', Perkins urges the professionally-interested reader to reform his usual practice in two ways; firstly, by reminding sick patients of their sins, and

¹⁷⁷ 'Although theologians drew a firm line between religion and superstition, their concept of "superstition" always had a certain elasticity about it.' Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 56. The arbitrariness of the distinction between religion and magic is made evident throughout Thomas' study, particularly in chapters 3, 4, and 9.

¹⁷⁸ Astrology was popular with the sick because it 'sold meaning' to its customers and so 'rationalized the ill person's profoundly egocentric experience of disease and related it to the physical and social context in which it occurred, indeed to the whole pattern of motion, change and events in the world'. Michael Macdonald, "The Career of Astrological Medicine in England," in *Religio Medici: Medicine and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 62-90.

secondly by giving candid warnings to those who are about to die (p. 79). Despite the respectful tone in which this advice is offered, it indicates the author's frustration at what he sees as a lack of honesty and spiritual rigour in contemporary medical practice; a situation which informs the reformist agenda and the urgency of his *Salve*.

Just as there are good and bad medical practices, so in Perkins' prescription there are healthy and unhealthy types of social relationship. Dying well in the reformed faith is to some extent a communal experience, an extension of the daily monitoring, guidance and education of dependents or brethren that Perkins expects his readers to practise as a matter of course. Given the well documented patterns of godly vigilance, or what we might call neighbourhood morality, during this period, it is not surprising that the *Salve* should prescribe specific types of interaction between dying individuals and their neighbours, including the practice of lay ministry:

'[W]hen sick men can not alone by themselves do the good duties to which they are bound, they must borrow help from their fellow members; who are partly by their counsel to put to their helping hand, & partly by their praier to present them unto God, & to bring them into the presence of Christ' (*Salve*, pp. 58-59).

In this respect, the *Salve*'s method of dying well also functions an art of mutual, godly counselling. Although it is the first duty of ministers to visit and comfort the sick, Perkins argues, this duty is shared by those who 'have knowledge of Gods word, and the gift of praier' (p. 59). Perkins has high expectations of those who attend the sick, warning them not to 'spend the time either in silence, gazing, and looking on; or in uttering words to little or no purpose': such is the false, hypocritical show of fellowship (p. 60). Visitors to the sick bed must educate and prepare themselves thoroughly so they are ready to supply appropriate words of comfort, praying with and for the sick man in his presence. People should pray over each other, Perkins says, 'that we might the better stirre up our affection in praier, and our compassion to the sicke...' (p. 62). Praying is a legitimate form of emotional stimulation in this view, a method of 'stirring' up impassioned sympathy in oneself. There is a striking similarity in Perkins' and Stubbes' view that godly brethren must be one another's moral guardians at the sick bed, and in the affective nature of that neighbourly communication as depicted in the *Glasse* and the *Salve*. The godly community imagined in both texts is one defined by an emotional dialect; by members who emote in similar ways. Death is the event at which this demonstrative, Calvinist style of emoting is most apparent and influential.

(c) Good and Bad Deaths

Inward emotion has a privileged moral role in all the speeches and actions to be conducted, with Perkins' approval, in and beside a dying man's bed. To die well by the *Salve*, the sick man must admit his guilt to any neighbours or brethren he has wronged; but if these moral creditors cannot be reached in time, the debtor's sincere but silent intention to be forgiven will be effective, Perkins claims: 'a will and desire to be reconciled, is reconciliation it selfe' (p. 81). This is a significant restatement of the point made in different ways throughout the *Salve*; that a man's conscience must be his first and last guide. It is the heartfelt desire to be pardoned, not the external articulation of that desire, which God monitors. Inward spiritual joy at the prospect of death is similarly praised over its opposite: contemptible love of material life. During the final 'pang of death', Perkins predicts that 'then true faith maketh us to go wholly out of ourselves', by which he seems to mean that the soul escapes its outer body, 'and [maketh us] to despaire of comfort & salvation in respect of any earthly thing; and with all the power & strength of the heart to rest on the pure mercy of God (p. 88). This despair of earthly life, and its resulting emotional dependency on the divine will, is a desirable sensation for Perkins. His ideal of a joyful transition from heartfelt *contemptu mundi* to equally heartfelt subjugation to God reflects the stages of dying exemplified by Katherine Stubbes. In both cases the inferior outward world of the senses is gladly rejected by a purely spiritual self that longs for 'conjunction' with Christ (p. 68).

Given this emphasis on inaudible, invisible emotion, it is perhaps surprising that the first of several 'special actions' Perkins prescribes to the dying individual is that of 'invocation', or righteous utterance, whereby 'either praier or thanksgiving is directed unto God' (p. 89). An unintentionally comic example of a godly invocation is given in the story of Job, whose wife, 'in the midst of his affliction said unto [Job] to very good purpose, *Bless God and die*' (p. 89). Troubled by what he sees as common mistranslations of the woman's outcry, Perkins goes to some effort to explain what she meant. This instance of re-interpretation, in a text which makes many such 'corrections' of common wisdom, suggests the popularity of Job's story among Perkins' contemporaries. Job is used throughout the *ars moriendi* tradition, as an example of a man who suffers and – importantly – questions his own fate. The pedagogic value of Job's spiritual struggle is intensified by the dramatic value of his vocal protests.¹⁷⁹ It seems to have been read by godly Elizabethans as, in part, a story about the effective – and affective – power of speech. Job's initial complaint against his pain is a common misuse of 'invocation', whereas his wife's plea for acceptance is godly, in Perkins'

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Becon uses Job's dialogue with his comforters as a "lively scholemaster" in *The Sicke Mannes Salve* according to Beaty, *Craft of Dying*, p. 114.

reasoning. Expecting God to alleviate one's condition on the basis of a persuasive plea is false oratory: demonstrating to God the assurance of one's heart is, by contrast, a 'righteous' utterance. If a dying man has lost his faculty of speech, he may still invoke God, Perkins insists, once again stressing the primacy of internal conviction over outward performance. Feelings, in this conscience-driven, artless art of dying, count for more than actual words:

The very sighes, sobs, & grones of a repentant and believing heart are praier before God, even as effectuall as if they were uttered by the best voice in the world. Praier stands in the affection of the hart, the voice is but an outward messenger thereof. God lookes not upon the speech but upon the heart. (*Salve*, p. 90)

This preference for spontaneous expression over pre-scripted, ritualistic forms of prayer anticipates the charismatic tradition which was to develop later in English Protestantism. It also conveys the sense that the *Salve's* right way of dying is much like puritanical preaching style: emotive and instrumental, not consciously artful or 'witty'.¹⁸⁰ The God of the *Salve* is a discriminating judge who measures a person's sincerity according to the 'sighes & grones of the spirit'; the phrase 'sighs and groans' (or 'sighs, sobs and groans') is used three times in the manual (pp. 56, 90, 110). This offers the sick man a degree of liberation from the rulebook at the point of dying, so that he is free to improvise an invocation within the bounds of sincerity, and in the confidence that the all-knowing God will not mistake his conviction. Particular forms of elocution for this final performance are not prescribed, but the last words of eighteen Christian prophets or martyrs are offered 'for instructions sake and for imitation' (p. 90). These speeches are presented for the most part as direct quotations, in the order in which the speakers died. Calvin's dying speech is summarised in three sentences, producing a somewhat cryptic précis: 'Of Calvin, 1. *I held my tongue, because the Lord hast done it.* 2. *I mourned as a dove.* 3. *Lord thou grindest me to powder, but it sufficeth me because it is thine hand*' (p. 94). Thus the godly ideal of patient endurance in suffering is distilled into a sequence of mottos or catchphrases (in rhetorical terminology, *chreia*) for the reformed faith, which could be easily learned and imitated.¹⁸¹

Perkins acknowledges the limited relevance of these exemplary speeches to his audience by posing the question: what happens if a person fails to make an excellent speech and instead dies with 'idle talke' (p. 96)? His answer is practical and tolerant: violent sickness can deprive some of their ability to be articulate or self-controlled, causing them to die with 'unseemly motions and gestures' (p. 96). By directing readers' sympathy towards those who die in such a fevered state, the *Salve* shifts its focus from the public oratory of famous Christian martyrs to a semi-private encounter with death which is the more common, and

¹⁸⁰ William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 19.

¹⁸¹ Chreia is a 'brief recollection of something that someone did or said aptly', Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 32.

distressing, experience of its readers. This shift of register, from a structured list of martyrs' deaths to the relatively informal discussion of dying in contemporary reality, characterises the *Salve's* tonal contribution to the how-to-die genre in this period. As Ralph Houlbrooke notes of the Puritan deathbed in general: 'There was no script for this last act, no prescriptive ritual framework, but rather various ingredients, which might be put together as circumstances and individual choice dictated.'¹⁸² As a result, the modes of conduct specifically recommended at dying, such as Perkins' act of invocation, have an experimental, sometimes contradictory, feel. What the dying man does matters less than what his conscience intends, Perkins repeatedly indicates. The same perhaps goes for a godly author's writing, which in the case of this manual seems somewhat unpolished, as if the components have been hastily combined.

The second and more abstract stage direction, or 'special action', to be undertaken when dying is: 'to die in obedience' (p. 96). In this act of spiritual prostration, the dying person answers God's call willingly and submissively, 'without murmuring or repining' (p. 96). Having given vent to his heart's repentant 'sobs, sighs and groans', the sick man is apparently required to perform this act of obedience in silence. By becoming utterly submissive at the last, the godly will make themselves 'free-will offerings' (p. 97). This striking phrase, which is also attributed to the dying martyr John Bland in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*,¹⁸³ neatly expresses – though it does not resolve – the paradox of Perkins' instruction on dying: is the sick man free or compelled to die; willing himself or willed by God? Behind these questions lies the doctrinal debate over free will and grace which preoccupied the English Church throughout Perkins' career. His compromise is to suggest that the individual is a self-sacrificing lamb which offers itself willingly for slaughter; an independent creature who voluntarily returns this loaned gift of independence to the Maker at death. Almost an oxymoron, 'free-will offerings' raises many questions which Perkins veils with rhetoric, eliding voluntary and involuntary actions: 'Wee are *commanded to present our selves* unto God *as free-will offerings*' (p. 97, my italics). It is this same paradox of subjugation which fascinates Donne in his Holy Sonnets and Devotions. Without elaborating as Donne does on the troubling and thrilling implications of the notion of self-sacrifice, Perkins does seem to offer it as a source of satisfaction. To take pleasure in subjugation is consistent with the pattern of godly piety, in which individual witnesses are taught to assert their faith in torment and thereby to be tested and validated. There are benefits, to use

¹⁸² Houlbrooke, "The Puritan Death-Bed."

¹⁸³ Bland's speech is cited in Janel M Mueller, "Pain, Persecution and the Construction of Selfhood in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*," in *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England*, ed. Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 161-85.

Perkins' term, to be gained from suffering if believers submit to, and die defending, the mystery of God's Providence.¹⁸⁴

Ending this list of exemplary sacrifices with Christ, Steven and David, Perkins narrows the focus of his argument in accordance with the Ramist method, from general definitions of death to particular instruction on the last words to be said at dying. Is the *Salve* more persuasive for its broad audience at this practical, particular level? In some obvious ways I would suggest so. Readers preparing for an imminent death, and wishing to know what exactly to do, might follow Stephen's example and expect to die imitating 'the verie same words that Christ uttered' (p. 97). At the same time, Perkins' regimented cataloguing of the 'nature, differences, and kindes of death' earlier in the text, and his clarification of moral differences in social and domestic life, also provide useful and therapeutic effects to readers of an obedient inclination. For such readers, Perkin's method of plain and relatively artless rhetoric, which takes its figures from contemporary domestic life, creates a sense of familiarity and order. The world imagined in the *Salve* is clearly divided and arranged into good and bad things: it has an easily apprehended moral structure. Perhaps the most persuasive aspect of the manual is its direct engagement with contemporary society, and with the immediate conflicts and choices confronting ordinary people in their daily lives. Perkins addresses his own community, giving specific advice on will-making to heads of households, for example, and often addressing readers by social group or in the first person. His prescriptions - and complaints - are concerned with social relationships, and show marked approval for communal godly activities, as in the claim that confession can be made 'by one man to another mutually' (p. 62). This emphasis gives the *Art of Dying* tradition a current and congregational sensibility, and helps to embed godly Protestant ideals in everyday life.

The *Salve's* measured approach has a certain advantage for the author, I have suggested, in allowing him to achieve a monopoly of explanation. By seeming to anticipate and contend with objections via the 'Answer' function (the word is printed at several points in the text), Perkins gives the impression of making a comprehensive and conclusive argument. One such 'answer', dismissing the idea that men can save their repentance until their final hour like the thief on the cross, warns: 'Now it is not good for men to make an ordinarie rule of an extraordinary example' (p. 34). If Perkins is aware that this is precisely his own method - deriving general principles for every aspect of human existence from the one, Christian story - the contradiction does not trouble him. As a learned divine, he considers his own interpretations of the world to be skilled and legitimate by contrast with the amateur divinity of ordinary men. Claiming the authority of a Scriptural translator, he does not alert the reader to his many unsupported assertions or points of contradiction, such as the uneasy fit between

¹⁸⁴ A detailed exploration of this mentality is given in John Knott, "John Foxe and the Joy of Suffering," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27:3 (1996): 721-34.

God's paradoxical action, which is 'contrary' to the nature of man (p. 14), and Galen's discovery of natural correspondences between internal ills and external cures. Challenges to logic are easily refuted in the dialectical method by making further contracts as necessary between right and wrong actions or interpretations.

For Perkins as for other Art of Dying authors, the topic of death, being exceptionally emotive, is a useful organising principle and incentive to draw readers' attention to a wide range of pious concerns and thereby direct and regulate their spiritual 'health' comprehensively. To prevent misunderstanding, misuse or neglect of his instructions, Perkins devotes several pages towards the end of the *Salve* to the task of regulating the reader's comprehension of them. Specifically, he wants to prevent people from underestimating and therefore postponing the effort required to die well:

Let no man deceive himselfe by any false perswasion, thinking with himselfe that the practise of the aforesaid duties is a matter of ease: for ordinarily they are not, neither can they be performed in death, unlesse there be much preparation in the life before.
(*Salve*, p. 98)

In this warning there is an implicit contrast between the author's properly persuasive rhetoric and the 'false persuasion' by which people ordinarily comfort themselves. The time for gentle paternal coaxing is over, it seems: Perkins is now determined to dictate moral reform. A sentence containing the word 'obedience' three times, as well as 'disobedience', 'judge' and 'sergeant of the Lord' functions as a tool of verbal policing (p. 99). The *Salve* which earlier guided readers through the medical marketplace has now become a programme for moral conformity, with severe penalties for non-compliance. Assurance of salvation, the *sine qua non* of the Calvinist faith, is not automatically available to the sick man; yet, without this essential conviction that he is 'redeemed, justified, sanctioned by Christ, and shall be glorified,' the individual '*dare* not render up and present his soule unto God' (p. 99, my italics). Here Perkins evokes a state of fear that will affect his readers emotionally and perhaps escalate their speed of response. It is a call to action, and Perkins says as much, drawing attention to his own homiletic rhetoric in a direct appeal: 'I doe againe renew my former exhortation, beseeching you that ye would practice the duties of preparation in the course of your lives...' (p. 100).

To concentrate the reader's mind further on the consequences of inaction, Perkins provides a list of bad deaths, or 'wretched and miserable ends', which progresses chronologically from the Flood, and the fable of Sodom and Gomorrah, to recent examples of terrifying providential justice familiar to readers of Thomas Beard's *Theatre of Divine Judgement* and Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. Similar in length to Perkins' catalogue of saintly last speeches, these briskly narrated cautionary anecdotes demonstrate the particularly

compelling, emotive power of bad endings. Herod was eaten up by worms, we learn. Arius the heretic died 'upon the stoole scouring forth his very entrails' (p.101). For the more recent bad deaths, Perkins specifies the circumstances of divine punishment, often lingering on the dying man's emotional agony and despairing speech. Thus one Hoffmeister, 'a great papist', whilst going to dispute with Gospellers at the Council of Rathbone, was struck by the hand of God and died 'with horrible roaring and crying out' (p. 101). The learned Guarlacus died in similarly effusive desperation, aware that his great sins were unforgivable; and Jacobus Latromus died in the middle of giving an oration:

In his publike lecture hee fell into open madnesse, uttering such wordes of desperation and blasphemous impietie, that other divines which were present, were faine to carry him away as he was raving... (*Salve*, p. 102)

Likewise Bishop Steven Gardiner, a figure much reviled in the Foxe legend and the last in Perkins' list of bad deaths, is shown to be destroyed by his deceitful speech:

Steven Gardiner, when a certaine Bishop came unto him and put him in mind of Peter denying his Master, answered againe that he had denyed with Peter, but never repented with Peter, and so (to use M. Foxes words) stinkingly and unrepentantly died. (*Salve*, p. 103)¹⁸⁵

The emphasis on false speech in these examples is interesting as it underscores the importance of faithful speech in the process of godly dying. Damnable deaths are mirror-images of good Christian deaths, Perkins shows us, thereby crystallising his symmetrical argument in a series of vivid tableaux. By using moral parallelism throughout the book, he has prepared the way for a credulous or at least earnest reception of these bad death tales. Readers who have been shown repeatedly the binary pattern of God's created world are conditioned to accept that pattern as readily as post-Enlightenment readers would accept gravity as a law of nature. The universe Perkins presents is comprised of moral symbols which teach observers, or those possessed of an eye of faith, to love virtue and hate vice. His rhetoric of mirror opposites is designed to serve the natural didacticism of creation. In these bad death exempla, readers are shown that death is a tool of the two-handed action of Providence, used as spiritual punishment for the wicked just as it is used to reward the faithful. Alexandra Walsham notes that judgement tales are: 'characterised by a telescoped time-frame between evil deed and heavenly revenge, by the systematic excision of superfluous circumstantial detail, and by a suspicious degree of correspondence between

¹⁸⁵ It has been argued that Foxe invented Gardiner's dying words. Stachniewski, *Persecutory Imagination*, p. 29.

punishment and crime'.¹⁸⁶ Used in this late, cautionary section of the *Salve*, such tales function as extremely persuasive tools, which demonise disobedient acts and encourage readers, by forewarning them, to avoid the fate of the wicked. Even sinners can discover the truth of their salvation at death, Perkins insists, if they bring themselves to a state of true repentance.¹⁸⁷

Positioned at the conclusion of the book, this catalogue of horror stories is clearly intended to be taken seriously as moral instruction and cannot be dismissed as a concession to popular appetite, or as a conscious dilution of Protestant theology. However much the tales appeal to common prejudice rather than reason, they are of a piece with the *Salve*'s logical divisions, and consistent with its allegorical symbolic universe. Bad deaths are as significant, as full of cautionary instructive meaning, as good deaths; and both belong to the Protestant universe or psychological theatre imagined by Perkins, Beard, Foxe and Spenser. In this providential 'primordium', every good attitude or action has a wicked opposite.¹⁸⁸ The doubles, or anti-selves, are traps to be avoided by a constant, vigilant and authoritatively guided reading of signs throughout the Christian life. Perkins' strategy of alarming readers with tales of divine vengeance is a legitimate and effectively curative measure, according to Erasmus' understanding of Scriptural rhetoric:

For upon these two thinges in maner al the bokes of the prophetes do renne, heapinge up unto them that turne away from god, the vengeance of god: and agayne amplyfyenge the mercye of god to theym that be converted to repentaunce. Either of these medicines is holsome, if it be taken wisely and in place.' (*Preparation to Death*, sig. G1v-r)

In its concluding pages, the *Salve* shifts from practical handbook to cautionary sermon with an increased use of homiletic rhetoric to alarm and incite readers:

Now marke, as death leaves a man, so shall the last judgement find him: and therefore if death take him away unprepared, eternall damnation follows without recoverie [...] In this case we are as felons or theeves: for we are every day going to the barre of gods judgement, there is no stay or standing in the way, even as the ship in the sea continues on his course day and night whether the mariners be sleeping or waking: therefore let us all prepare our selves and amend our lives betime, that in death we make make a blessed end.' (*Salve*, p. 103).

¹⁸⁶ Alexandra Walsham, "Reformed Folklore? Cautionary Tales and Oral Tradition in Early Modern England," in *The Spoken Word: Oral Culture in Britain, 1500-1850*, ed. Adam Fox and Daniel Woolf (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 173-96.

¹⁸⁷ Perkins was so convinced of this that he physically took hold of a condemned felon on the scaffold, just before execution, and terrified him into a proper fear of hell before helping him to see Christ's saving grace. Lake and Questier, *Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, p. 264.

¹⁸⁸ Biblical 'primordium' is Bozeman's term for the Puritan mindscape. *Ancient Lives*, p. 32.

This warning mixes two metaphors to evoke the criminal nature of mankind and the unstoppable motion of divine judgement. The figurative language continues to intensify with a reference to the five foolish virgins, who preferred the 'blazing lamps of a bare profession' to the 'horne of lasting oyle of true and lively faith' (p. 105). It seems in this unusual concentration of rhetorical imagery and amplification – 'Alas, alas', Perkins wails at one point - as if the author is rushing towards the end of his book, and perhaps also of his life. (He was to die within a decade of the *Salve*'s publication, in 1602.)

Such personal preoccupation with finitude might help to explain the unexpected addition of an appendix, added after the work's conclusion, of a story with particular relevance to Perkins. Under the printed word 'Finis', a new subtitle introduces: 'An addition, of things that came to my minde afterward' (p. 109). It is revealing that on finishing his 'treatise' on death and the right way of dying, the author found himself thinking about, and impelled to record as a postscript or 'addition', the death of a near-contemporary and fellow divine, the Scottish reformer John Knox. An outspoken figure much admired by radical Protestants – Doebler calls him a 'Puritan Saint' - Knox died in 1572, after an embattled life in the church.¹⁸⁹ The story of his last spiritual temptation at death seems to hold an emotive charge for Perkins, perhaps because of their biographical overlap as leading Calvinists. Perkins had reason to be especially alert to the prospect of diabolic temptation if, as rumoured, his early years at Cambridge were marked by recklessness and drunken impropriety.¹⁹⁰ This reputation has not been confirmed by historians, but seems consistent with the homiletic tone of the *Salve*, which carries the evangelical zeal of a convert.

Whatever its personal salience for Perkins, the story of Knox's deathbed struggle indicates that the author of an enumerated catalogue of godly prescriptions and prohibitions was moved to resist his own formal method at this point in order to animate the 'right way' of dying by example. The anecdote is introduced by the striking and alarming statement that: 'The last combate with the devil in the pang of death, is oftentimes most dangerous of all' (p. 109). As we have seen in Stubbes' *Glasse* and Becon's *Salve*, the potential for spiritual destruction at the moment of dying continues to fascinate reformed Protestants in this period, even though their perception of Satan's nature and processes differs somewhat from earlier accounts. For Perkins, the Devil's final assaults are psychologically subtle:

For then he will not urge men to desperation, knowing that by this means he shall stirre them up to resist him: but he labours with them that they would not resist him when he assaules them, & by this meanes he indeavours to extinguish hope. (*Salve*, p 109.)

¹⁸⁹Doebler, *Rooted Sorrow*, p. 95.

¹⁹⁰Michael Jinkins, "Perkins, William (1558-1602)," in *O.D.N.B.* (2004).

Thus at death, 'the devils temptation is, not to resist his temptations', and this breaking down of resistance is 'most deceitfull of all', since it weakens the vital and self-defining power of a godly individual to withstand opposition to the faith. Perkins' expectation of the last combat differs from that of early *ars moriendi* tradition in that his imagined Devil does not openly challenge the dying man to 'fight' but more insidiously 'disswades us from it' (p. 110). With this prospect, Perkins invites readers to be suspicious of their slightest change of mood, or of any lessening of spiritual defensiveness. The danger, as he sees it, lies in the abatement of that state of militant piety which is always ready to reject physical temptations or spiritual doubt.

Exemplifying this danger, John Knox 'lay on his death bedde silent for the space of foure houres, very often giving great sighes, sobbes, & grones,' Perkins tells us (p. 110). Echoing the portrayal of godly emotion in other parts of the *Salve*, the phrase 'sighs, sobs and groans' functions here as a metonym for the believer's disposition at death. It indicates that Knox's faithful heart was pumping out genuine protests and declarations of belief under pressure from an external temptation to doubt. The visible and audible issues of this inward passion served to communicate the situation to observers, so that: 'the standers by well perceived that he was troubled with some grievous temptation' (p. 110). Questioned on the reason for his sighs, Knox replied that 'in his life he had indured many combates and conflicts with Satan', during which the 'roaring lyon' had often urged him to despair of his sins, and at other times 'laboured to intangle me with the delites of the world' (p. 110). These assaults in life were defeated by Knox's use of the holy Word. At the point of death however, the assaults were different, and worse: 'for the wily serpent would perswade me that I shall merit eternall life for my fidelity in my ministerie'. Spiritual pride is the final danger encountered by Knox, and considered by Perkins, in this deathbed tale. It is presented as a particular danger for ministers, conscious of having served the church with lives of exceptional public godliness. At this point, the anecdote seems to warn Perkins of his own authorial ambition and self-righteousness. To combat the risk of over-certainty of election, objectified as 'the fiery darts of the devil', Knox is said to have brought to mind Scriptural passages reminding him that he was nothing but by the grace of God. With this mental rendition of humility, the vanquished devil departed (*Salve* p. 110).

In this dying scenario or *psychomachia*, the author seems content to let literally-inclined readers think that Knox saw with his physical eyes an external devil; although readers familiar with contemporary theories of melancholy and the mutating effects of guilt might see Knox's devil as the product of his inner doubt, something akin to the dagger that floats before Macbeth's eyes. Discussing psychology of the period, Macdonald notes: 'The border between the maladies of the mind and spiritual assault was notoriously indistinct'.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Macdonald, "Astrological Medicine."

Both interpretations are supported by Perkins' language, which mixes the visible and dynamic ('roaring lyon'... 'fiery darts of the devil') with the abstract and internal ('desperation'... 'worde of the spirit'... 'worde of God'... 'perswade me'). Perkins has no wish to undermine his clear purpose with unresolved detail, and so the literal and figurative possibilities of Satan's appearance in this story are maintained in parallel to reinforce the warning; that even the godliest of individuals is susceptible to spiritual distress in the final pang of death.¹⁹²

Thus the deathbed temptation of *ars moriendi* tradition appears here as a relatively unstructured and disturbing existential crisis. Ironically this deathbed anecdote, added to the end of a manual which promises consolation to the dying in the form of a balm or 'salve', serves to demonstrate how difficult Protestant dying could be, and how limited the forms of effectual assistance. In traditional *ars moriendi* texts, the structured five-part deathbed temptation is followed by an equally structured interrogation by the Catholic priest, leading to a formal, final confession. These ritualistic remedies are utterly rejected in Perkins' *Salve*. Moreover, Perkins explicitly denies readers the reassuring – to him complacent – assumption that effective repentance is in their control: 'For it is not in the power of man to repent when he himself will; when God will he may. It is not in him that willeth or runneth, but in god that hath mercy' (p. 33). The hazard of sinful pride is compounded by the state of self-righteous assurance required in Calvinist theology and promoted vigorously by Perkins as an essential condition of God-given salvation. The Elect must recognise their blessed estate in order to receive it, and yet they must know that they have done nothing to deserve it. Paradoxically, the assured sick man must not be too assured. An interior struggle is the frequent and expected result, as Perkins acknowledges at an earlier point in the manual, warning that: 'it is a very hel for a man that hath but a spark of grace, to be exercised, turmoiled, & tempted with the inborne corruptions & rebellions of his own heart' (p. 21). This concern for the problem of the heart's 'inborn corruptions' aligns the *Salve* with psychological treatises like Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and Daniel Dyke's *The Mystery of Self Deceiving*. Dying well involves an inescapable struggle with one's own demons, or resistant thoughts and instincts, Knox's anecdote suggests.

There is, however, a psychological reward implicit in the story of Knox's suffering. Those like Knox, and presumably Perkins, who feel most certain of their godliness, are most likely to find their confidence turning to pride and despair. In the anecdote, Perkins presents this deathbed transition as a special phenomenon affecting the most especially righteous; as a distinctive and therefore perversely desirable condition of godliness. The story of a devil at the bedside helps to differentiate and dramatise Knox's lonely crisis, giving it echoes of

¹⁹² Interestingly, it seems that Perkins himself 'died in what appears to have a state of clinical depression'. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided, 1490-1700* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 390.

Christ's temptation in the wilderness. In the reformed Protestant theatre of dying, God is seen to reserve his most challenging roles and testing scenes for his most able performers. The final act of dying in Perkins' book is a matter of discovering and confirming – though not deserving - divine grace. Dying is a diagnostic tool, which identifies and thereby reinforces and finalises, an individual's godly status.

Anticipating his readers' desire to perform the very final act of dying in the right manner, Perkins closes the Knox postscript, and thus the manual, with an applicable 'stage' direction and a specific form of words to be used in a moment of deadly spiritual crisis. Whoever is tempted by Satan and 'sees no way to escape' should 'close up thine eyes, and answer nothing, but commend thy cause to God' (p. 111). If argument fails, and if there is no spontaneous exhalation of godly 'sighs, sobs and groans', then silent, inward prayer is also effective as a preservative against spiritual assault. We will meet this point again in Ward's *Faith in Death* (the subject of chapter 5). Perkins recommends the standard Christian exit line, used by Stephen and Luther in imitation of Christ: *Lord Jesus into thy hands I commend my spirit*' (p. 111). This simple reiteration of a well-known formula suggests that the *Salve*'s rhetoric is, finally, practical and consoling. The ability to train oneself to suffer in silence and even to enjoy that suffering, using the tools of self-discipline promoted in the *Salve*, was useful to Knox in an environment of religious upheaval, and could be similarly useful to Perkins' readers in disputes with religious rivals or against their own stray thoughts. In preparing godly readers for death, Perkins also chides, directs, exhorts, alarms, steers and inspires them to live a disciplined life of faith.

Having begun this chapter with a promise to explore Perkins' persuasive strategies, I end with an admission that they do not persuade me. It is perhaps easier for a modern observer to appreciate what a godly minister might gain in writing a manual of this kind than to understand why the *Salve*'s comprehensive mode of prescription attracted readers in significant numbers, as it evidently did.¹⁹³ We must assume that the text's original readers did not find it coercive or intrusive; or that they did not mind being firmly directed. The tales of bad deaths, and of Knox's almost-bad but finally good death, are accessible and potentially entertaining. Perkins' medical judgements, in favour of Galen and against astrology, offer clarity and certainty to patients faced with a choice of treatments. The application of 'case morality' to the diagnosis of other people's deaths might communicate Perkins' conscientious

¹⁹³ The *Salve* seems to have been published at least nine times within my study period, 1590-1625. The sales figures for Perkins' works are noted with emphasis in many commentaries, including: Patrick Collinson, Arnold Hunt, and Alexandra Walsham, "Religious Publishing in England, 1557-1640," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain 1557-1695 Vol. 4*, ed. John Barnard and D. F McKenzie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 29-67; Ferrell, "Transfiguring Theology."; Green, *Print and Protestantism*; Houlbrooke, "The Puritan Death-Bed."; Jinkins, "Perkins, William (1558-1602)." The *Salve* seems to have been published at least nine times from 1590-1625.

approach to pastoral care. The structured patterns of Ramist rhetoric offer a kind of satisfaction to a kind of reader. Most substantially, perhaps, the *Salve*'s 'right way' of dying rewards readers for their spirited and faithful intention, or *voluntas*, rather than for their actual accomplishment of specific rules, or *scriptum*, in preparation for death. With these benefits in mind, I turn to a manual by another author of 'practical' divinity, Nicholas Byfield.

Chapter 3

The Cure of the Feare of Death by Nicholas Byfield (1618): Regulating Fear

Turning from Perkins' *Salve* of 1595 to a godly 'Cure' published over two decades later allows us to examine the legacy of Perkins' contribution to death preparation literature. Nicholas Byfield's *The Cure of the Feare of Death* is in many ways indebted to its godly predecessor, and signals this debt in its title. Like Perkins' *Salve*, this *Cure* is presented as a quasi-medical regimen which promises to restore the psychic health of those disturbed by fear of death, thereby inducing the proper godly attitude of joyful expectation. Among many points of continuity, Byfield's *Cure* shares the *Salve*'s methodical, categorical approach to topics as a means of disciplining the reader's thoughts. Its polarising rhetoric divides the world into moral opposites, prescribing what is godly and condemning what is not with homiletic certainty. Building on Perkins' Ramist 'plain style' with a broader range of Scriptural figures, Byfield directs his efforts to the same evangelical end of inciting faith. This persuasive endeavour is intensified by an awareness of rival schemes of understanding in contemporary society. Mid-Jacobean conflicts make their presence felt in the *Cure*'s imagery, much as late-Elizabethan conflicts emerge in Perkins' prescriptions for godly physic in the *Salve*. Presented with rival poles of faith and sin, Byfield's readers are taught to purge themselves of false thoughts and fears and to fix the eye of faith on the everlasting Crown.

A Middlesex clergyman of Calvinist convictions and, like Perkins, a 'puritan leader of some influence', Nicholas Byfield showed a notable enthusiasm for preaching, both from the pulpit and in print.¹⁹⁴ He published at least seventeen books of godly piety, and numbered among his regular audience Sir Thomas and Lady Margaret Hoby; the latter a devotee of William Perkins, as previously noted. In addition to the general intellectual sympathy with Perkins evident in his writing, Byfield echoes his forebear by dedicating the *Cure* to Lady Anne Harrington, mother of Lady Lucy Russell, née Harrington, Countess of Bedford, to whom Perkins dedicated his *Salve* in 1595. In 1618, Lady Anne was sixty-two and living in the Palatinate as a companion to James I's daughter Elizabeth, soon to be Queen of Bohemia. The remarkable influence of this Calvinist family, and the relative old age of Lady Anne, combined with her proximity to the international religious tensions explored later in this chapter, make the dedication an apt one. Byfield evidently chose his patron with the intention of disseminating his *Cure* through a highly influential godly household.

One further biographical detail which is relevant to the persuasive purpose of this manual is Byfield's own poor health. For the last fifteen years of his life, the author suffered

¹⁹⁴ Bryan W. Ball, "Byfield, Nicholas (1578/9-1622)," in *O.D.N.B.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

from an 'enormous torturing stone' which killed him in 1622, within five years of completing the *Cure*.¹⁹⁵ The pain which undoubtedly inflicted Byfield throughout this period can be assumed to have informed his prescriptions for fear of death. His certain, moralised diagnosis of psychological conditions and his insistent prescription of the cure of faith may be symptoms of the very fear he condemns. If there is an element of self-reinforcement in this manual, it could be another point of similarity with Perkins' *Salve*, which appears to derive its reformist zeal from a personal struggle with what would now be considered alcoholism and depression.¹⁹⁶ Byfield's stone provides a useful reminder that Art of Dying literature is not immune from the human experience which, in Protestant hands, it tries to regulate and reform. On the contrary, despite the efforts of godly authors to expunge their own and their readers' 'base' instincts, these instinctive anxieties and appetites seem to spill from the page.

The main point of interest for this study in Byfield's *Cure* is not its repetition of conventional Calvinist themes, familiar to Perkins' readers, but rather its direct identification of fear as the primary motivating force behind death preparation. In the Epistle to Anne Harrington, Byfield explains this choice of topic:

I was vehemently inclined to study the Cure of the Feare of Death; both because it may be usually observed, that the most men are in bondage to these feares; as also because I am assured, that our lives wil become more sweet; yea, and more holy too, when the feare of death is removed: And the rather I was incited hereunto, because I have observed some defect about this point in the most that have written about Death.¹⁹⁷

Three reasons are given here for focusing specifically on fear of death: it is a common terror, which keeps most people in emotional 'bondage'; its elimination will make a substantial improvement to the contentment and piety of ordinary lives; and the problem has been given insufficient attention in previous writing on death. It is striking that in this introductory statement, Byfield is emphatically persuasive; not just inclined towards this topic, but 'vehemently' so; not merely moved, but 'incited'. His contemporaries are not merely troubled by fear of death, but are, in a phrase from Hebrews, 'in bondage' to it. This hyperbolic tone suggests that Byfield is competing for his reader's attention alongside other pious themes or modes of instruction. With the word 'defect', he directs strong criticism at his forerunners in the *ars moriendi* genre, in order to justify the *Cure* as a supplement to their works. We have the sense of a print market crowded with books on death, but not yet saturated. There is still,

¹⁹⁵ The stone, said to be thirteen inches long and weighing thirty three ounces, was the focus of William Gouge's scrutiny at the autopsy, and featured in a post-mortem portrait of Byfield. Ball, "Byfield."

¹⁹⁶ See previous chapter, p. 95 note 188, and p. 96, note 190.

¹⁹⁷ Nicholas Byfield, *The Cure of the Feare of Death*, 2nd ed. (London: 1618), sig. A4r. Subsequent references will be given in brackets in the text.

from Byfield's perspective, a pressing need to solve the common problem of how to approach death without fear. By solving it, the author hopes to 'do service unto GODS Church in releeving such Christians herein, as are not furnished with better helps...' (sig. A4v). Fear is the means by which Byfield means to distinguish his manual from others, and make himself a purifier of the genre. In diagnosing and treating this spiritual ailment, he expects at the same time to provide a greater public service of protection or reinforcement of the one, true Church. The capital letters given to 'GODS Church' indicate the extent of the author's ambition for his *Cure*. Writing it is a spiritual mission, in which he enlists the help of Anne Harrington, but for which he is answerable to his divine patron.

(a) The Diagnosis of Fear

Byfield is not entirely correct in saying that fear of death is a neglected topic in pious literature on death. It is discussed at length in Erasmus' *Preparation to Death*. Describing fear of death and fear of God almost interchangeably, Erasmus implies that to fear one is to fear the other; and so, syllogistically, to love one would be to love the other. While promoting the conventional Christian idea that faith cures fear, he acknowledges the paradox that:

... one and the same faith, both causeth fere, and overcometh fere: it causeth, shewyng how great he is, whom we offende in many thinges: it overcometh, shewing unto us Christ, whose charitie purgeth our synnes, and grace supplyeth that our imperfecnes lacketh. (*Preparation*, sig. E3r)

Belief in an omniscient divinity at once causes the believer to tremble and releases the trembler from fear, Erasmus explains here, anticipating John Donne's labyrinthine explorations of these different processes. Erasmus sees the release from fear as a purging action, a notion that is to appear repeatedly in Byfield's *Cure*. Godly faith purges the believer's body of natural impurities; namely sin and the consequent fear of punishment. For both writers there is a humoral basis to fear which may obstruct, or be mistaken for, spiritual awe. Erasmus insists, in contradiction to an implicit widespread belief, that fear of death is not always a sign of an evil conscience: it might rather be the natural affection to which some, particularly female, bodies are prone (*Preparation*, sig. E3r). Spiritual physic must therefore begin by diagnosing the causes and kinds of fear. From this passage in Erasmus' manual of 1534, it is apparent that pious authors were concerned with fear of death, at several levels of analysis, long before Byfield's rhetorical claim to be redressing a 'defect' in the literature.

Before discussing the *Cure*'s rhetorical use of fear of death, I will briefly draw attention to the considerable body of modern critical literature on this subject. Jean Delumeau's *Sin and Fear: the Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture* was translated into

English in 1990, in the wake of Philip Aries' influential *The Hour of Our Death*, with which it shares much common ground. Both works assume that fear is a historical phenomenon, produced by cultures, manifested in a collective (un)conscious, and subject to total reinvention by subsequent generations or cultures. Aries' claim that at a certain historical point (in the late twelfth century), Christian culture invented a notion of 'personal death' inconceivable in previous ages has provoked or reinforced a scholarly interest in emergent accounts of human emotion, as indicated in Delumeau's subtitle: 'The *Emergence* of a Western Guilt Culture' (my italics). Guilt, sin, fear and other associated emotions have historical origins in a specific institutional culture and point in time, according to this analytical tradition. The translator's preface to *Sin and Fear* locates the origin of Delumeau's critical assumption not in Aries' work but in Freud's notion of neurotic civilisations in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, and further back, in Richard Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, where guilt is discussed as a cultural phenomenon. From the first page, Delumeau adopts the now-conventional language of intellectual history, speaking of the 'birth' of a 'new fear' in the fourteenth century which was the 'fear of oneself'.¹⁹⁸ This fear of the self, which we might call self-disgust or self-sabotage, is traced historically in Delumeau's study as a cultural invention of Catholic and Protestant churches.

Starting from a similar critical position, the collection *Fear in Early Modern Society*, edited by Naphy and Roberts, conveys in its title the assumption that fear is primarily a social experience, and that the significant differences in that experience are to be found between cultures and time periods, not between individuals. 'Most importantly,' the editors explain, 'we are concerned with dealing with fear as an historical phenomenon, not as a psychological or instinctual condition'.¹⁹⁹

As indicated in the introduction, I do not share the assumption that all human phenomena are essentially products of history. Studies of fear which take this position risk simplifying the multi-dimensional nature of their subject, obscuring the extent of individual variation in experiences of fear, and overlooking the role of rhetorical acts in shaping these experiences. In order to examine these factors, Delumeau's *Sin and Fear* is certainly replete with pertinent observations; notably the general but important point that horror and desire of death are both aroused, simultaneously, by Christian philosophy. To fear punishment for sin, and to desire to escape the vale of tears, are parts of the same attitude, as Delumeau explains.²⁰⁰ Another way of putting this is to say that the story told by Christian authors produces twofold excitement in their audiences: the catalytic event of 'the Fall' must horrify

¹⁹⁸ Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*.

¹⁹⁹ William G. Naphy and Penny Roberts, *Fear in Early Modern Society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 2.

²⁰⁰ Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*, p. 353.

believers if they are to look forward to the thrilling rescue of ‘salvation’. Fear of sin is necessary to the success of the fiction of immortality. It is not accidental but inevitable that, as Delumeau observes: ‘If preaching spread pessimism, pessimism also motivated preaching. In fact, neither ceased influencing the other.’²⁰¹ If it were not for this circular production of fear, preachers like Byfield would not have found much appetite for their fantastical cures. This self-perpetuating phenomenon is in my view a fact of persuasion, not of history. Rhetoric works on and through emotions, and it is therefore usually expedient for an orator to heighten the feelings of the crowd, producing more of what he seeks to ‘cure’. Byfield does this with his particular rendition of the theme of *contemptu mundi*, or ‘the accusation of man and the world’.²⁰² He excites a mistrust of human nature which is useful for his regulatory project and productive of amenable, manipulable desires in his readers.

John Stachniewski’s *Persecutory Imagination*, a study of the ‘prescribed paranoia’ of Byfield’s Protestant contemporaries, argues that religious despair is closely entwined with certain kinds of satisfaction, or even pleasure. Luther’s own example effectively individualised the doctrine that deathbed fears or ‘despair prior to salvation, based on the recognition of impotence, [was] the condition of the reception of grace’.²⁰³ Despair was a necessary stage of dying, in Luther’s understanding, since grace could not be received until this psychological humbling had taken place. ‘Only in the state of abject terror, which he called *Anfechtung*, could the gratuitousness of God’s gift be sincerely apprehended and so appropriated by faith alone.’ An individual in a state of ‘*anfechtung*’ would sigh, Stachniewski explains, like the dying John Knox in Perkins’ *Salve*, in the belief that he was uniquely sinful and tested by God. Similarly, I will show how Byfield expresses – in elevated terms - a desire to be uniquely tested and so validated by temporary anxieties. We might think of this as the secret pleasure or benefit of Protestant despair; that it is expected to inflict those who are most favoured by God.

Stachniewski’s description of Calvinist introspection also provides a useful starting point for studying the mechanics, as distinct from the content, of Protestant fears. Examining their consciences in order to confirm their ‘assuredness of faith’, and to excoriate signs of ‘careless confidence of the flesh’, Calvinists were thereby prone, Stachniewski finds, to swing violently between moods.²⁰⁴ This finding suggests that the activity of self-examination might be enough to generate fears, regardless of the conclusions of that activity. Merely by concentrating on their consciences, Byfield’s readers increase their susceptibility to fear of death and its corresponding desires. The implication here for the Art of Dying genre, and for

²⁰¹ Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*, p. 4.

²⁰² Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*, p. 27.

²⁰³ Stachniewski, *Persecutory Imagination*, p. 18.

²⁰⁴ Stachniewski, *Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 22-27.

prescriptive literature more generally, is that a reader's desire to find maxims or logo-therapy to 'cure' spiritual failings is bound to bring more perceived symptoms to light.

To complete this discussion of relevant critical literature on fear, it is worth considering the recent growth of interest among psychologists in the cognitive and behavioural consequences of 'death-thought', or anticipation of death. For reasons noted in the Introduction, it is rare to find any form of psychological analysis in the work of early modern scholars, who largely agree that human thought is produced by specific historical cultures and that 'early modern' minds cannot therefore be appreciated by modern observers unless the latter adopt the historically focused methods and assumptions embedded in the term "psychohistory". If however we allow the possibility that Art of Dying literature may reflect ahistorical aspects of human experience, then our critical responses to it may be enriched by a wider range of intellectual connections than is currently investigated in early modern studies. The following brief sketch of contemporary studies of mortal fear does not offer a comprehensive scheme of explanation for the effectiveness of godly rhetoric; but it does indicate one of many possible avenues of inquiry that could prove fruitful in a theoretically inclusive study of death preparation literature or other religious literature.

The influence of Ernest Becker's *The Denial of Death* (1973), discussed in the Introduction, seems to have been partly responsible for stimulating recent experimental and theoretical studies of the fear of death. Becker makes the case that fear of death drives everything humans do, and that everything we do is ultimately an art of death-denying. Fear of death is deep-rooted in the organism whose biological task is to fight for its own survival. This fear gives rise to a myth-making, transcendence-seeking, broadly 'religious' urge in all individuals regardless of culture. On this basis, we might propose that Byfield's *Cure* is a relatively transparent and explicit example of the defensive strategies, or 'immortality projects', which are universally and subconsciously adopted by people who know that they are mortal. To illustrate the similarities between this godly text of 1618 and the strategies Becker identifies as global, I would point to the recent studies in social psychology which have sought to identify what people do or think when subtly reminded of the inevitability of their death.²⁰⁵ People's responses to triggers of 'mortality salience', the modern equivalent of

²⁰⁵ Jamie Arndt, Alison Cook, and Clay Routledge, "The Blueprint of Terror Management: Understanding the Cognitive Architecture of Psychological Defense against Awareness of Death," in *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology*, ed. J Greenberg, T Pyszczynski, and S L Koole (New York: Guilford, 2004), 35-53; H McGregor, J Lieberman, and J Greenberg, "Terror Management and Aggression: Evidence That Mortality Salience Motivates Aggression against Worldview Threatening Others," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74 (1998): 590-605; T Pyszczynski, J Greenberg, and S Solomon, "Why Do We Need What We Need? A Terror Management Perspective on the Roots of Human Social Motivation," *Psychological Inquiry* 8:1 (1997): 1-21. Becker's *Denial of Death* is regularly cited in the bibliographies of these works, and sometimes in the body text.

the *memento mori* reminder, are regarded by psychologists as subconscious defences against existential terror; and for this reason the body of explanations is known as Terror Management Theory. According to the proponents of this theory, people of varying culture and ethnicity structure their thoughts in similar ways in anticipation of death, reacting with increased loyalty to people and ideas that validate their own worldviews, and with increased aggression to whatever threatens or transgresses their worldview. In these studies, as in Byfield's *Cure*, fear of death intensifies fear of otherness.

From these critical perspectives, I adopt the idea that fear of death is an incipient or denied desire (for immortality), and that preachers like Byfield arouse it in order to 'cure' it, for they cannot sell the solution without reinforcing the problem. Byfield is surely right to identify fear as a topic worthy of consideration, although as pastoral healer, he takes a 'practical', prescriptive approach to the topic, rather than an analytical one. The *Cure*'s rhetorical treatment of - and rhetorical deployment of - fear allows us to suggest how, in turn, godly readers are both persuaded of, and out of, their fears of dying. Byfield's efforts of persuasion in this text might be seen as evidence that, in calculated and unconscious ways, fear of death brings the Art of Dying into existence; and vice versa. If death were not a feared - or at least significant - prospect, there would be little need to prepare the mind for it. As it is, Byfield constructs great significance for his readers' deaths, and so capitalises on their instinctive desire to find such significance.²⁰⁶ Stephen Pender has observed that 'rhetoric makes the absent present'.²⁰⁷ In the *Cure*, Byfield makes the absent prospect of death into a thrilling, present challenge.

(b) A Curative Method

Promising in his long title to show 'the course Christians may take to bee delivered from these feares about death, which are found in the hearts of the most', Byfield indicates that his approach to fear is practical and instrumental. It is a 'treatise of singular use for all sorts'; the key word being 'use' (title-page). Taking fear of death to be an unexceptional occurrence, 'found in the hearts of most', Byfield wastes little time on definition. His economic style accords with material form of the *Cure*, which is a tiny book (barely 13 x 7cm), designed to fit in a pocket and so be readily available for frequent 'use'. Given the book's straightforward intention, the complexity of its Table of Contents comes as some surprise. In this section

²⁰⁶ Few individuals seem able to regard their own deaths as insignificant, to the frustration of Charles Darwin, who thought the religiosity of his contemporaries sprang from a narcissistic fear of extinction. His attractive and improbable ideal was that people should give no regard whatsoever to their own deaths. Adam Phillips, *Darwin's Worms* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999).

²⁰⁷ Pender, "Between Medicine and Rhetoric."

Byfield dissects his subject – the cure, that is, not the fear - into an elaborate scheme of heads and subheads, each carefully enumerated. He advertises ‘Seventeen Priviledges of a Christian in death’, for example; lists ‘sixe things, which every godly man wants, while he lives’; and counts ‘Fifteen manifest defects and blemishes in the greatest seeming felicities of the world’. This detailed anatomising introduces us to Byfield’s therapeutic method, which is to translate the emotion of fear into a series of argumentative points or logical statements, and to provide an equal or greater number of contradictory proofs. Fear is treated as a dialectical process; a type of (false) logic that can be reasoned out of existence by (true) godly counter-arguments.

There is a disparity for the modern reader between this rational logo-therapy and the notion of fear as a physical passion, embodied in the ‘hearts of most’. For Byfield however, there is a direct connection between the natural substance that fills the fearful heart and the physic-al words that purge it. From the contents page, readers are meant to see at a glance that their fear will be effectively eliminated in a certain number of steps. To reinforce their confidence, Byfield declares that: ‘to live without feare of death, is a thing may bee obtained; one may be delivered from it as certainly, as a sick man may bee cured of an ordinary disease’ (p. 3). Fear of death can be reasoned away, as bad humors can be purged and rebalanced in the body. ‘If our heads & hearts were filled with arguments that shew us our happinesse by Death, we would not be so sencelesse as to tremble at the thought of dying’ (p. 33). In this assertion Byfield seems to offer ‘arguments’ as a kind of, not as a metaphor for, curative medicine. He wishes readers to believe that words are directly effective on fearful hearts.

Byfield’s practical objective is from the start strongly evaluative and moralistic. To treat fear is to judge it as something unwarranted or dangerous to ‘health’; itself a normative, and here a thoroughly moralised, concept. Promising in the opening sentence to show ‘how a godly man might order himselfe against the feare of death’ (p. 1), Byfield indicates that fear is a disorder, imbalance or excess. The godly man’s task is to reorder and regulate stray thoughts. This is arguably a metaphor, though the author would presumably see it as a literal representation. Declaring ‘how uncomely a thing it is for a Christian to bee afraid of death,’ Byfield reveals his outright disapproval of the condition he treats (p. 3). The word ‘uncomely’ denotes an improper, dishonourable, ignoble state of mind. Later in the manual, Byfield reinforces this condemnation by giving fifteen reasons why it is uncomely to be afraid to die. Fear is despicable, from this godly viewpoint, because it turns men into slaves. ‘And shal wee voluntarily make our selves Vassales?’ Byfield asks, using one of many rhetorical questions to arouse pride in his readers, and so incite their self-criticism: ‘Or shall we be like slaves, that dare not come in our Masters sight?’ (pp. 17-18). With this image, readers are threatened with the prospect of becoming passive cowards, unable to withstand divine scrutiny or to demonstrate stoic fortitude. The bondage figure, from Hebrews 2:15, is used repeatedly in the *Cure*’s wide-ranging attacks on the abject nature of sinners. Men are kept in ‘thraldom’ by

their fears of losing worldly goods, status or 'preferment' (p. 163). 'There is little difference between thee and a prisoner', Byfield warns the fearful reader: 'save that the prisoner hath fetters of iron, and thine are of gold; and that his fetters binde his body, and thine thy mind' (p. 164). The equation of fear and bondage is clearly intended to be alarming, and is made so by a constant coupling together of different types of fear and sin. Every man's mind is 'infinitely prone to swarmes of evil thoughts' (p. 56), and his numerous corruptions have 'subdued thy life to their vassalage, so as thou art in continuall slavery to them' (p. 59).

Fearing death, men are effectively enslaved by their own thoughts and by their despicable appetite-driven flesh, a 'domesticall Rebel' which is the 'ill companion of our lives', often causing 'mutiny' in our own hearts (p. 117). Here Byfield presents the rebellious flesh as an entity distinct from, and at war with, the true 'self'. By heaping up associations in this way, the *Cure* conflates sinfulness and fear, and inflates both, keeping readers both fearful of sin and alert to the sin of fear. A consequence of man's fall from perfection, fear of death is the sign and substance of his depravity; the ultimate enemy within. This contempt for fear is of course a fear in itself. While the *Cure* assumes fear of death to be a specific, distinctly recognisable fear needing little definition, this distinctive fear is also made to represent a range of other fears. Some of these fears - of servitude, cowardice and physical appetite, implicit in the slavery images cited above - are evident to the author. Others, such as Byfield's conscientious fears about his own salvation, or his fear of losing ideological control of the audience, can be inferred from his rhetorical figures and methods.

In an attempt to identify more specifically the fears that are addressed, generated, transformed or denied in this manual, I will abandon Byfield's own organisational scheme for a simpler one, by which we can consider the named fear, of death, at three levels of analysis. Psychologist Victor Florian has classified fears of death into the categories 'intrapersonal', 'interpersonal' and 'transpersonal'. As he explains it:

Fear of death may be due to the expected impact on mind and body. It may be due to the expected impact on one's own social identity and loved persons. It may also arise from beliefs concerning the transcendental nature of the self and punishment in the hereafter.²⁰⁸

While there is much overlap between them, these distinctions can help to refine our understanding of Byfield's topic and prevent us from treating existential fear as a uni-dimensional phenomenon.

Intrapersonal fear of death is the fear of non-existence, disintegration, oblivion, body decay, or cessation of activities. For Byfield, the common fears of individuals seem to cluster

²⁰⁸ Victor Florian and Mario Mikulincer, "Fear of Death and the Judgment of Social Transgressions: A Multidimensional Test of Terror Management Theory," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 73:2 (1997): 369-80.

around bodily loss, 'the paine of dying', and the 'difficulty of the passage' (p. 125). He anticipates the reader's self-directed anxiety with a rhetorical exclamation: 'Oh! But in death a man is destroyed, he loseth his body, and it must bee rotted in the earth' (pp. 133-4). The expressive 'oh' here alerts us to an ironic distance between the author and his assertion. He imitates the predictable sigh of a complainant prior to dismissing it with nine points of refutation. Fear of physical dissolution is like other fears treated here as a logical problem, of common but falsely conceived 'objections' to death which can be systematically 'removed' by counterarguments. Using the polarising method of Perkins' *Salve* to contrast the desirable qualities of eternal life with the despicable nature of bodily life, Byfield reduces the latter to a series of repellent images. 'The staine of leprosie hangs on fast upon thy nature', he warns, using a striking metaphor for sin (p. 55). Every mind is 'infinitely prone to swarmes of evil thoughts', he continues, representing mental activity as a plague of internal locusts (p.56). These two Biblical images, of leprosy and swarming insects, are used as tropes for the human condition in order to invoke self-disgust in the reader. Men have a terminal disease, Byfield seems to be saying. We are dying of sin, and have been dying of this 'leprosy' since birth.

The *Cure*'s censorious focus on the sinful self displaces fear of death by fear of life. Purporting to 'solve' fears of physical dissolution Byfield demonstrates a marked fear of physical existence. Bodily decay is, for this godly author, a present concern, not merely an anticipatory one. Insisting that we are decayed *now*, he seeks to shift the reader's fear from the future prospect of death to the immediate problem – as it is represented – of everyday living. He demonises the problem of human susceptibility to fear quite literally, warning: 'The Divels have within thee strong holds, and live entrenched in thy thoughts' (p. 61). Fear of death is everywhere symptomatic and symbolic of other fears; of disorder, disobedience and ungodliness. 'There lyeth upon us a very necessity of sinning,' Byfield warns, indicating that he distrusts his readers because human nature is not to be trusted: 'wee cannot but offend' (p. 116). Self-sabotage is an ever-present possibility in human life, because every man is capable of damning his own soul by 'too much liking' of the wrong things (p. 105).

My reading of the *Cure* in this respect fits more easily with Stachniewski's account of morbid psychopathology than with Eamon Duffy's picture of Christians in the Reformation era expressing, through and despite morbid images, a 'vigorous relish for life'.²⁰⁹ There is relish in pious introspection, but it does not in my view derive from straightforward or natural exuberance. Fear of life and fear of death reinforce each other in Byfield's text: the one impulse calls up and strengthens the other. The *Cure* instigates habits of self-scrutiny, leading readers to be fearful of, and fascinated by, their sinful selves and their self-loss. Theodore Bozeman demonstrates, similarly, how the godly John Preston positively recommended a

²⁰⁹ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 303.

hyper-cautious attitude to one's self, claiming that the truly regenerate person should be 'afraide of every sin,... afraid of vain thoughts, [afraid] to be vaine in his speeches and to give way to the least wickedness, afraid of every inordinate affection, afraid how he spent the time from morning till night,' and so on.²¹⁰ This litany of proper fear makes disciplined use of anaphora, repeating the word 'afraid' at the start of each phrase as a kind of measure or regular drumbeat to direct the godly activity of introspection.

By contrast with Preston's practice of fear, John Donne's exploration of this concept in the *Devotions* makes tentative use of repetition, drawing new connotations from each rendition of the word 'fear' for his own delight, and not to regulate a reader's thoughts:

I know not what fear is, nor I know not what it is that I fear now; I feare not the hastening of my death, and yet I do fear the increase of the disease; I should belie Nature, if I should deny that I feard this, and if I should say that I feared death, I should belye God.²¹¹

Byfield's approach to intrapersonal fear seems closer to Preston's regulatory mind drill than to Donne's contemplative mind play. Though common and natural, fears for loss of bodily life are in the author's view regrettable, if not despicable. Ignoring the knowledge that they will die, 'natural' unreformed men are surprised by it and therefore afraid of it. If they were to expect death, these individuals would not fear it. With this logic, Byfield gives a rendition of the classic *memento mori* exercise; a therapeutic mind technique based on the principle that familiarity with the prospect of death breeds resignation not fear. He claims with a pragmatic eye on the Scriptures that God fed and clothed the first humans with animal flesh and skin specifically as a reminder of death; so 'that as often as wee eate of slaine beasts, we might remember our owne end' (p. 27). Everything that goes into and onto the living human body exists to remind the person of death, Byfield indicates. With this image, he figuratively swamps his readers with an inescapable awareness of their mortality. It is an example of Puritan rhetoric being at once severely iconoclastic and somewhat fetishising. The reader's imagination is steered away from 'sinful' images of bodily appetite and supplied with alternative, moralised images, so that a plate of food will appear to the observer as an emblem of mortality. In trying to regulate against the vanity of self-regard in such passages, Byfield surely magnifies the self-directed gaze of his readers and intensifies both their fear of their selves and their fear for their selves.

Interpersonal fears of dying are, in Florian's definition cited above, those which relate to disruption in social relationships. Fearing death in this sense means being 'troubled to part

²¹⁰ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, p. 6. I have made brief extract from the cited passage, which continues for several more lines in this vein.

²¹¹ 'Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions,' no. 6, in Neil Rhodes, ed., *John Donne: Selected Prose* (London: Penguin, 1987).

with friends', as Byfield recognises (p. 153). To dread death is to dread the loss of others and the loss of one's place among others. Anticipating the reader's 'lothes to leave his honours, or high place in the world', the author asks his imagined patient to 'consider how small thy preferment is, or can be' in this world (p. 162). Here again Byfield reveals a distinct interest in the disorder he treats; in this case social position. He explains to the honour-obsessed reader that the potential for promotion in this life is extremely limited, since:

The whole earth is, but as the full point or center, in comparison with the circumference of the whole world besides. Now in true judgement, it is almost impossible to discern, how a man should rise higher in a Center. If thou hadst all the earth, thou wert no more exalted, then to the possession of a full point: a little spot in comparison, and therefore how extremely vaine is thy nature, to be affected with the possession of lesse, then the thousand thousand part of a little spot or point? (*Cure*, pp. 162-3).

This cartographic or cosmographic analogy aims at rhetorical diminution (*abbaser*), showing readers that the world they fear to lose is a mere pin-prick in the divine scale. Like Donne's 'dull sublunary lovers' in *A Valediction forbidding Mourning*, Byfield's worldly readers are stupidly concerned with the minute society they inhabit, and blind to the 'whole world besides'.²¹² They are 'vaine' to care about honours and preferment in this tiny 'spot' of earth. This conventional godly castigation of worldliness is complicated, however, by the author's fascination with size, scale and expansive possibilities in what is, for this book, a relatively elaborate conceit. His repeated use of the word 'possession' has additional force if we consider the enthusiasm with which English Puritans were colonising the New World at the time of the *Cure*'s publication. In 1615, Lewis Hughes urged newcomers in *A letter sent into England* to 'leave their sins behinde them, and come hither as it were into a new world, to lead a new life'.²¹³ In 1610 William Crashaw reinforced the missionary justification for colonisation by criticising 'unsanctified' men who dragged their heels to Virginia.²¹⁴ By 1618, it seems that approval for possession of the New World on spiritual grounds was universal among English Protestants of Byfield's godly persuasion. The prospect of moving from a 'little spot' of familiar territory to a vastly bigger land across the ocean was evidently both frightening and appealing to the godly. So too was death. Byfield implicitly presents the prospect of dying in the cited passage as an opportunity for better possession and preferment; not as a total abolishment of these pleasures. According to the comparison he establishes, readers can expect to 'rise higher' in the heavenly sphere than they do in its central point. The

²¹² A J Smith, ed., *John Donne: The Complete English Poems* (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 84.

²¹³ John Parkes, *Books to Build an Empire: A Bibliographical History of English Overseas Interests to 1620* (New Israel: Amsterdam, 1965), p. 207.

²¹⁴ Parkes, *Books to Build an Empire: A Bibliographical History of English Overseas Interests to 1620*, p. 1610.

'Kingdom of Glory' is a point of interest elsewhere in the text, in relation to the Lord's Prayer: 'Now in that wee are taught to pray for the Kingdome, it shewes wee should desire it...' (p. 9). Similarly, the term 'possession' is used at least twice more; as Byfield looks forward to being 'possessed of a place of matchlesse rest' (p. 20); and when he compares death to the Old Testament Jubilee, which gave exiled Jews 'possession of all again' (p. 50). While these references are not transparent evidence of Byfield's covert worldly ambition, they do indicate a wish to continue a semblance of earthly life after death, by contrast perhaps with the Roman stoics' resignation to total annihilation.

Given the *Cure*'s extensive, though indirect, treatment of social positioning, it may be useful to sketch the historical context in which these interpersonal fears and fantasies developed. Like Perkins' *Salve*, the *Cure* is ostensibly aimed at a broad market, being 'of singular use for all sorts' (title-page), but is effectively directed more precisely at the self-consciously godly. The fears of this godly 'sort' are dominant in the author's attention. He states his intention as 'chiefely to perswade with godly men, & not with naturall men' (p. 66). Near the start, Byfield declares: 'there is virtue in the death of Christ, to cure this feare of death in any of the Elect, if they will use the meanes' (p. 5). Although he does not stress the exclusive condition, it is clearly present. The *Cure* will be effective only for members of the predestined Elect. It is a common strategy of Calvinist divines to give readers the benefit of the doubt with regard to their salvation, when encouraging 'all sorts' to read the book. The severe mathematical fact of predestination theology, that only a small minority were to be saved, is strategically as well as necessarily avoided. No-one in this perceptual category of the Elect could be certain who the members were, as God alone held the invitation list. But though a person's membership status could not certainly be known until death, yet this membership would only be activated by certain belief. If the prospective member did not feel fully assured of his or her belonging, it was a sign that she or he did not indeed belong.

The psychological basis of membership of the godly Elect (that is, the fact of inclusion being dependent on personal faith) was itself a source of fearful fascination, as contemporary biographies repeatedly attest. Stephen Denison's 'monument' to Elizabeth Juxon, published after Juxon's funeral in 1620, records in detail the woman's daily search for 'marks' of election. Before death, Elizabeth Juxon is said to have told her children to 'be carefull to reade and consider the markes which were in your mother, and labour to find the like in your selves'.²¹⁵ Her diary, as quoted or extracted by Denison, lists twenty distinct

²¹⁵ Stephen Denison, *The Monument or Tombe-Stone: A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Mrs Elizabeth Juxon [1620]*, ed. Retha M Warnicke and Betty Ann Doebler (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1996). This quotation from Denison's preface, sig. A3r, precedes the 'monument' or 'tombstone' which is printed to commemorate – to mark, in the eyes of the world – Juxon's piety. Combining instruction to readers with extracts from Juxon's

marks of elect status, each of which is analysed in the first person: 'I desired to be exercised in the word day and night...' (first mark); 'I find fervencie and frequencie in prayer, in secret' (forth mark); 'I find a striving against the most secret corruptions of nature' (fifth mark); 'I find a dislike of sinne in all, even in them that are most deare unto me' (sixth mark), and so on. The marks are socially attuned, in the sense that Juxon is conscious while noting her own emotional pattern, of how she identifies with, distinguishes herself from, and is perceived by, her fellows. At one point she breaks the first-person introspective format to tell her 'deare brethren' that 'there is no surer evidence of a good estate, then universall obedience' (Denison, *Monument*, p. 46). Juxon's tenth mark of assurance is that she loves 'all Gods children' (p. 52); and yet her thirteenth mark, the ability to pray for her enemies, implies that some are more loved than others. What we see here is a process of relative social positioning, conducted and recorded by one of the godly 'sort' to whom Byfield's *Cure* is addressed. Juxon's search for 'marks' is in part a search for social identification. It reveals her desire to compare herself with brethren, exemplars and spiritual inferiors. This desire for social relatedness and distinction is to the modern observer a blatant mark of anxiety. Juxon fears that she may fail to meet the mark in some respect; hence the insistent noting and measuring of her success. The nineteenth mark sounds to post-Freudian ears like the unconscious denial of a conscious, disciplined, institutionalised denial: 'I find an utter denial of my self, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, abideth nothing which is good' (p. 61). Celebrating her self-loathing, she inadvertently reveals her self-longing, and vice versa.

What I mean to indicate by this digression to another text is that belief in salvation, or rather belief in the belief that one has been chosen to be saved, is not only a theological issue for Byfield's readers. It is a pervasive psychological condition affecting every aspect of pious introspection and social identification. Byfield's readers were inevitably preoccupied by the question: am I one of the Elect for whom Christ died? This preoccupation was inevitable because the society was structured and regulated by Christian dichotomies. Equally, people's psychological preoccupation with this question ensured its utility as an ideological organising principle in the culture. Byfield's chosen topic of fear of death allows him an intimate audience with readers whose imaginative lives, domestic and social relationships, and cultural or national identities are shaped by the productive myth of salvation.

own introspective spiritual diary, Denison's monument is didactic at several levels. He instructs readers to study Juxon's 'Markes' for their own benefit, as examples of the 'signs' of election they should identify in themselves (p. 43). At the same time, Juxon's analysis of her own 'marks' (pp. 44-62) is evidently written in part to demonstrate her godliness to others and to inspire her children to imitation. It is this kind of textual density which has led me to question in this thesis whether the *Art of Dying* is a discrete and contained literary genre, or rather a cultural script to which many individuals contribute, in more and less obvious ways.

In 1618, Byfield's target audience of English Protestants had reason to feel more than usually anxious. During the summer in which the *Cure's* dedication was written, German Protestants collided with the Catholic Habsburg Archduke Ferdinand, ejecting his ministers from a window in Prague. In 1619, James I's son-in-law, the German Elector Palatine Friedrich was to take the throne of Bohemia and help the crisis escalate into continental war.²¹⁶ Byfield's patron Lady Anne Harrington, living in Bohemia as companion to Friedrich's wife, Princess Elizabeth, would soon be in the eye of that storm.²¹⁷ Byfield denies that Harrington's 'absence in a place so farre remote' is the reason for presenting her with this death manual (sig. A5); but there is a distinctly embattled quality to the *Cure's* imagery which reflects a wider social movement towards militarization in political and religious discourse. 'Death is like an armed man with whom we must once fight', Byfield challenges, encouraging in his readers a pious desire to fight - metaphorically- for their own salvation, and by implication for a wider Church Triumphant (p. 24). A traditional Christian metaphor used by Erasmus in his *Preparation to Death* of 1534, the idea that dying is a 'last fyghte with the enemye' finds new favour in Byfield's manual of 1618, in newly fraught historical circumstances.²¹⁸

The Bohemian crisis set aflame a range of anxieties that were troubling English Puritans. Anti-Catholic feelings were running high over the rumoured 'Spanish Match' between England's Prince Charles and Spain's Catholic princess. Many Protestants, notably the Ipswich divine Samuel Ward, whose how-to-die manual is the subject of a later chapter in this study, were dissatisfied when King James decided to pursue negotiations with Spain rather than take military action for the Protestant cause. A sense of providential excitement which embraces these topical fears alongside local and everyday concerns is evident in publications of the period. William Cowper's *A Defiance to Death* (1616) and Thomas Taylor's *Christes Combate* (1618) are among a number of religious tracts which present death as an occasion of spiritual conflict, or as the emblematic enemy within an ongoing conflict. The combative imagery of these titles helps to aggrandise the moral positions of their authors. By militarising the prospect of death, godly divines presented themselves as heralds of a momentous crisis, calling Christ's soldiers to arm themselves with the weapons of faith.

Art of Dying texts like Cowper's *Defiance* and Byfield's *Cure* are not necessarily recruiting manuals for an anticipated war, but they do look forward to a militarised Church.

²¹⁶ Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of the War, 1621-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Peter Lake, "Constitutional Consensus and Puritan Opposition in the 1620s: Thomas Scott and the Spanish Match," *Historical Journal* 25 (1982): 805-25; MacCulloch, *Reformation*.

²¹⁷ Lady Anne was to die in 1620, just before Friedrich's household fled to Holland after the defeat of White Mountain.

²¹⁸ Erasmus, *Preparation to Deathe*, sig. A2r.

Byfield's fear of the uncomeliness of fear echoes his contemporaries' fear of moral effeminacy. In *Londons Artillery* of 1616, Richard Niccols praises martial exercise by questioning the strength of urban citizens:

...can your cittie people tender bred,
who in the lap of ease are dayly fed,
like souldiers, who to no afflictions yield,
Brooke the sharpe brunts of warre in bloody field?²¹⁹

The implicit answer to this rhetorical question is a shamed and reluctant 'no': the pampered city sort are not ready to withstand affliction. Making reference to Machiavelli's *De arte Bellum*, Niccols' poem shows an admiration for military practice that corresponds to Byfield's ideal of pious discipline.²²⁰ For Byfield, repeated and methodical reading of the Scriptures will exorcise fear, in the same way that, for Niccols:

.. manly exercise, like holesome foode,
which after sicknesse doth augment the blood,
Doth by degrees adde strength to strength so long,
Till weaknesse waxeth vigorous and strong...' (*Londons Artillery*, p. 37)

The parallel between spiritual preparation for death, through pious exercise, and physical preparation for war, through martial exercise, is clearly made in John Everard's *Arriereban*, published in the same year as *Byfield Cure*. A lecturer at St Martin's in the Fields, Everard seems to have published this sermon for two reasons: firstly, to help London's militia-men, 'the company of the military yarde' at St Andrew's Church in Holborn, to prepare for holy war; and secondly, to promote an invigorated, militarised form of Christian faith to the reading public. 'Arriereban' is a military call-up, or summons to assemble, and the text summons its readers to arm themselves with Christian fortitude.²²¹ Alluding wistfully to a golden age of Roman stoicism, Everard says that: 'The time hath beene when a well ordered campe, was accounted a *School of Vertue*, where was profest and taught, preparation to death, continence, vigilance, obedience, hardnesse, and frugalitie both in meat and apparel' (p. 27). In this lost world of Everard's classical-humanist imagination, discipline was the defining feature of military and civic life, so that a military camp was effectively a school of virtue, and 'preparation to death' was effectively an art of soldiering. By contrast, Everard regrets

²¹⁹ Richard Niccols, *Londons Artillery, Briefly Containing the Noble Practise of That Worthy Societie* (London, 1616), p. 11.

²²⁰ See Niccols, *Londons Artillery*, pp. 20, 39.

²²¹ Ian Lancaster, *The Early Modern English Dictionaries Database* (University of Toronto, 1999 [cited 2007]); available from www.chass.utoronto.ca/english/emed/emedd.html. Among several entries for 'arriereban' in this online collection of dictionaries is one from Cotgrave 1611, which begins: 'A Proclamation, whereby those that hold of the king by a mesne tenure, are summoned to assemble, and serve him in his warres'.

that the present 'effeminate age' has neglected the art of good, that is manly, dying: 'wee have turned *Memento mori*, the meditation of death, into *Vive bodie*, an Epicurean and sensuall life'. As a result, 'the neglect of the Lesons, hath brought & wrought the contempt and disgrace of the Schoole' (pp. 27-8). For Everard, the practice of fearless and disciplined 'meditation of death' epitomises the ideal character of a soldier and of a society. The 'Schoole' to which he refers represents at one level, the local Holborn training ground, and at another, the godly community. *Memento mori* is the *Arriereban*'s symbol or metonym for Christian life, and this characteristic quality of godly piety is endangered by the 'effeminate' fears of Everard's Jacobean contemporaries.²²²

Everard's fears of his community's fearfulness are echoed in Byfield's attacks on 'uncomely' fear of death. Like his godly colleague, Byfield seems to believe that members of the Protestant community, or godly Elect, should be defined by their prospective certainty and daily, disciplined courage. 'Feare of Death is always joined with a weak faith', he warns, equating instinctive fears with a dilution of spiritual strength (p. 181). The weakness which Byfield assigns to, and laments on behalf of, his godly community is alarming to him at a time of increased activity in the Counter-Reformation movement. Jean Delumeau notes that between 1600 and 1624, no less than twenty-six new 'preparations for death' were issued from Catholic printing presses in Europe, some of which circulated among English recusants.²²³ In 1618, the year of the *Cure*'s publication, Ignatius Loyola's *Manual of Devout Meditations and Exercises* was published, spawning a mass of small devotional paperbacks and intensifying the 'brawles' between Catholic and Protestant authorities in print.²²⁴ To those aware of this battle of the books, it would seem that Catholic rhetoric was gaining hold over Christian audiences and steeling them to die with courage based on a Jesuitical version of the faith.

Byfield makes just one explicit reference to his Catholic rivals, but it is revealing. He claims that to fear death is to 'shame our Religion,' reinforcing the impression given throughout this manual that fearlessness is an important mark of self-identification for

²²² There are indications that Everard's sermon was directed at King James, in references to Solomon, and in an allegorical passage about a 'Tyrant' and 'pygmies'. Besides showing a reluctance to engage in hostile relations with Catholic Spain, James also refused to call a Parliament between 1614 and 1621. This left many militant Christians like Everard feeling silenced. Byfield's *Cure* is not obviously a vehicle for political resentment, but its readers would undoubtedly include some who shared Everard's opinions on how the national faith should be defended. Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution*, Ch. 1.

²²³ Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*, p. 348. The distribution of Counter-Reformation literature is discussed in Clancy, "Spiritual Publications of English Jesuits 1615-1640."; Lisa McClain, *Lest We Be Damned: Practical Innovation and Lived Experience among Catholics in Protestant England, 1559-1642* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004); Walsham, "Domme Preachers."

²²⁴ Walsham, "Domme Preachers."

Christian communities (p. 13). 'Let Papists tremble at death,' he continues aggressively, 'who are taught that no man ordinarily can be sure he shal go to heaven when he dies' (p. 13). Here Byfield implies that Catholics have good reason to fear death because the outcome is undecided, whereas the Calvinist godly know by internal evidence that they will be saved. This assertion does not stand up to logical scrutiny, but of course it is intended to be used, not critically analysed.²²⁵ The manual offers dozens or hundreds of similarly brief assertions, designed to elicit an instant, affirmative response. Byfield's claim against Catholic fear is followed by a similar charge other ungodly types: 'Let them feare death, that know not a better life. Shall we be like wicked men? Their death is compelled. Shall ours bee too?' (p. 15). The device of *epiopsis* is used here to provoke an emotive judgement. By asking readers if they wish to be like other, ungodly sorts – slaves, children, madmen, Pagans, or wicked men – Byfield destabilises their sense of identity in order to incite them to reclaim that identity more assertively: 'And shall we Christians [...] be more fearfull then they were?' (p. 15). This chastising rhetoric trains readers for combative participation in the process of godly living and dying. Answering back, even silently, to Byfield's questions is one way for readers to make their faith known, to themselves and others. The 'cure' for fear is a process of building an inner resilience which can help the faithful to think and die with especial courage.

Social fears emerge vividly but indirectly in the *Cure*'s language, which is infused with a general sense of endangerment. Contrasting his fallen contemporaries with a prelapsarian state of innocent anxiety, Byfield explains that Adam had never seen a man die and was therefore reasonably afraid of it, whereas: 'for us to bee affrighted with Death, that see thousands die at our right hand, and ten thousand at our left, and that daily, is an inexcusable distemper' (p. 21). The rhetorical hyperbole of 'thousands' dying every day may refer to the accumulation of deaths in human history, or to more recent deaths in the plague, or to no particular event. This lack of specificity helps to give the claim an emotive quality, creating a mortality crisis of epidemic proportions in the minds of readers. Having manufactured a fearful situation, the author can more easily mobilise his audience against it.

In the category of interpersonal fears of dying, I have discussed fears – and desires – of relative spiritual-social status, which I suggest would affect all Byfield's readers, and fears of communal weakness, which would concern militant Protestants especially. A final type of social anxiety I wish to highlight is that of the special relationship between God and his chosen nation or people. As with other fears, this one is clearly related to a desire. The desire

²²⁵ The (perceived and rhetorical) differences between Catholic and Protestant fears of death are discussed in Peter Marshall, "Fear, Purgatory and Polemic in Reformation England," in *Fear in Early Modern Society*, ed. William G. Naphy and Penny Roberts, *Studies in Early Modern European History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 150-66.

to be especially beloved by the Almighty entails the fear of mistaking or losing that love. Byfield treats the fear of loss by evoking the fantasy of a special relationship in vivid terms; and thereby increases his readers' hopes and fears that they are (or are not) the chosen ones. This fear, which we might call the special relationship complex, magnifies into a national myth the individual's anxiety regarding election. During pious self-investigation of the kind practised by Elizabeth Juxon, for example, the practitioner's concentration is on her own individual 'marks' of godliness. When invited by the *Cure*'s imagery to consider herself as a new Israelite, however, the pious reader's concentration shifts to the group, into which she must absorb herself in order to share the special blessing accorded to it.

Byfield encourages readers to imagine the godly community's historical course and providential future in Biblical terms, thereby according mythical significance to their domestic lives and deaths. A sense of congregational purpose supplies what individuals have 'lost' through sin, in this narrative strategy. 'Gods Elect' is one of several phrases denoting a specially favoured collective, which is elsewhere evoked by references to Israel and Syon. 'In this life wee are like the poore men of Israel,' Byfield declares, 'that have lost our inheritance, and live in a manner and condition every way straightened' (p. 50). This comparison is both anxiety-inducing and stimulating. The pronoun 'we' binds author and readers together in an imagined community which is especially precious to, and especially tested by, God. Like favoured or eldest sons, the godly can expect a rightful 'inheritance' from their father, but must endure the poverty of earthly life before receiving it. Another analogy similarly elevates the prospect of dying to the status of an archetypal journey from prison to palace, war to peace, slavery in Egypt to the land of milk and honey:

Yea, the *Church*, that is separate from the world, can finde it no better than a *Barren Wilderness*. And what is *Heaven*, but a spiritual *Canaan*? And what can Death be more, than to *passé over Jordan*; and victoriously overcoming all enemies, to bee possessed of a place of matchlesse rest (p. 20, original italics).

These similes foment a belief in the special calling of God's chosen people, that is, the godly English, who share with the tribe of Israel a paradoxically desirable embattled situation, in which vulnerability confirms exclusivity. Sion, the fortified citadel of Jerusalem, is used symbolically to represent the inner strength of the godly and their spiritual destination. Byfield claims that a man's heart, once free of fear, is 'like Mount Zion' (p. 2.), and echoes the Psalms in wishing: 'O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Syon' (p. 11). With this image, he sharpens readers' appetites for the temporary suffering that brings eternal reward.²²⁶ Because the notion of estrangement has positive value in many Biblical stories, where the wandering exile, pilgrim or son is rewarded by a reunion with God the Father, the

²²⁶ Everard also calls on readers to 'lift our eyes to the hill of Sion' in the *Arriereban*, p. 61.

Cure's readers may be comforted by the claim: 'Thou art a stranger and a pilgrim' (p. 108). Setting out to the Promised Land of Canaan, or Death, Byfield's readers can look backwards in time, casting themselves in the role of the migrating Israelites, and forward, as new colonists ready to be 'possessed' of a better world. In this connection, it is noteworthy that Elizabeth Juxon learned to write letters in Hebrew, 'the very language of Canaan', as her biographer explains.²²⁷ Her Hebrew writing, like Byfield's Old Testament allusions, is a means to sustain the perceived relationship between a divine father and his Israelite children.

Since Byfield uses the Israelite simile (we are 'like' the men of Israel) to express the optimistic idea that death is a Jubilee, it would be reasonable to question whether it addresses a genuine fear. I suggest that it does this and more, legitimising and intensifying a fear-fantasy that some communities are dearer to God than others. Each element of Byfield's 'cure' reinforces the significance of the symptoms it addresses. Assuring godly readers that death will release them into the arms of a loving father, and into the ranks of the highest heavenly community, Byfield gives validity to all the assumptions underlying this idea. In this respect, the *Cure* does what all Christian Art of Dying texts do: it builds elaborate images of death, taken from the confined repository of the Scriptures, on the foundational Christian principle of 'sin'. Images of salvation presuppose that humanity needs 'saving'. Every rhetorical figure which amplifies the notion of salvation further obscures the metaphorical or suppositional basis of that notion. Put simply, the more Byfield assures readers they will be saved, the more these readers will be conscious of their impotent dependency. Convinced of their inherent 'sin', the *Cure*'s readers have every reason to identify themselves with a group that seems divinely favoured, and to fear any sign of exclusion from that symbolic family. Fear of authority, and specifically of paternal authority, is written into the Protestant script of dying well. Who, Byfield asks, 'would live to offend God? Or grieve his Spirit in any way to make him angry?' (p. 76). Like Perkins' *Salve*, the *Cure* here makes use of a favoured godly metaphor relating God the father to his disobedient human children, which intentionally and precisely infantilises the manual's readers.

In response to this genuine and self-perpetuating fear, the *Cure*'s rhetoric of exile provides readers with specific aids for private role-play. The rhetorical figures discussed above are tools by which readers can perform an act of dying in the mind and thus imaginatively reconfigure their external circumstances. Seeing death as a pilgrimage through Biblical time and space, readers are able to enact an endless mythic drama in which they wander as 'Strangers in a far Countrey', always dying, perpetually exiled by their sin, but ever anticipating the promised homecoming (p. 36).

²²⁷ Denison, *Monument or Tombe-Stone*, p. 61. Other instances of godly identification with the Old Testament tribe of Israel are discussed in Michael McGiffert, "God's Controversy with Jacobean England," *American Historical Review* 88 (1983): 1151-76.

Byfield continues to engineer his readers' desire for, and anxiety towards, a special relationship with God in two references to the Saints. Shall we, the godly, fear to face death, he asks rhetorically, when this 'enemy' has already been 'overcome hand to hand, & beaten by Christ, and thousands of the Saints?' (pp. 27-8). As we have seen in another context, Byfield uses the word 'thousands' to conjure a massive and undefined collective force. By contrast with the Catholic idea of unique saints, Byfield's militarised and somewhat normalised image of sainthood provides strength in numbers. Like godly troops, the Protestant Saints evoked here have been in the field, we are to imagine. They have blunted death's sword, making it easier for ordinary Christian soldiers follow. In a later and very different image, Byfield seems to blur or elide the conventional distinction between 'the Godly' and 'the Saints' in order to reassure fearful readers that their fate at death is identical:

Why brethren; what are our bodies, but like the best grain? The bodies of the Saints are Gods choicest come. And what doth Death more unto Gods Graine, then cast it into the earth? Do we not believe, our bodies shall rise like the graine, better than ever they were sowed? (p. 47)

The difference between ordinary believers and saints at death, according to this (Scriptural, so sanctioned) metaphor, is the difference between two grades of corn. Doctrinal exactitude is less important to Byfield, it seems here, than rhetorical effect. Whatever is likely to move the reader to believe is used with emphasis. Byfield follows his favourite device, the series of rhetorical questions, with a concluding sentence or *epitasis* whose sole purpose is to reinforce what has been said: 'and are wee still afraid?' (p. 47). As on every page of this short book, the cogs of persuasive machinery can be seen turning. Byfield never stops trying to 'cure' readers by manipulating their fears and desires.

Given the relentless use of rhetorical technique throughout this text, it would be simplistic to conclude that the *Cure* documents the collective fears of an early modern group-self. Byfield exploits a basic, usually unarticulated, fear common to his audience (as to every audience) in order to manufacture specific aspirations and anxieties which accord with his godly Protestant version of Christian faith and with the language and topical concerns of his Jacobean culture. I have so far considered two categories of fear, intrapersonal and interpersonal, produced by this process. Before turning to the third and last category, of transcendental fear, I should reiterate that this classification is used merely for convenience, and because there seems to me an intriguing match between the *Cure's* creative, religious responses to the fact of mortality and similarly creative (or delusive) responses found in modern psychological experiments. We cannot of course know, let alone separate or classify, the actual emotions of Byfield's godly readers. His elaborate, enumerated organisational scheme is instrumental, as I have said. It itemises the 'objections' which Byfield has chosen

to answer; and in the process, it inadvertently reveals the constructed, calculated, productive nature of his project. If the author had chosen to find three instead of eight ‘apparent miseries from the world’, for example, then his audience would have been made aware of three, instead of the given eight, types of misery. Godly fears do not precede their invention, but are shaped, articulated and so experienced as a result of persuasive schemes such as this.

Transpersonal fear of death derives from ‘beliefs concerning the transcendental nature of the self and punishment in the hereafter’.²²⁸ Christianity systematically produces, as a natural outcome of its central story, fears of failing a spiritual test and of being punished by divine forces. Art of Dying literature is consequently pervaded by representations of dying as a trial or Last Combat in which final doubts must be overcome. For the Calvinist Byfield, fearing failure in this context means something quite distinctive. It is not the fear of being found wanting, since, as he repeatedly insists, all mankind is wanting. It is rather the dreaded prospect of losing assurance of salvation; of succumbing to permanent despair. Contributing to his readers’ perception that they must sustain certainty within themselves, Byfield says: ‘wee should get the assurance first of Gods favour, and our own calling and election’ (p. 180, my emphasis); ‘we should labour to get a particular knowledge and assurance of our happiness in death’ (p. 181); and, ‘We should study to this end, the Arguments that shews our felicitie in death’ (p. 182). Believers are required to eradicate doubts of election, knowing that doubt is cowardly and dangerous; a likely sign of reprobation. To use a medical analogy suggested by the *Cure*’s title, it is as if readers are being taught to check daily that they are free of cancerous signs, and that doubt or hesitancy is a sign of cancer. As a result, they surely become afraid of the symptom itself, fearing to fear. Byfield’s disciplinary insistence on combating fear with faith now, in daily invigilation, intensifies the ‘transpersonal’ or prospective fear of what will happen after death.

The *Cure* awakens and transforms this kind of fear by glorifying a sense of present suffering, and by making death appear by contrast to be an escape into an alternative existence. This world is ‘a very Golgotha, a place of dead men’ where ‘we live amongst the graves,’ Byfield declares, relishing the ironic reversal of his metaphor: life is a graveyard, and death is life (p. 91). Continuing the allusion to Golgotha, he exclaims: ‘Are wee not crucified to the world?’ (p. 92). The verb ‘crucified’ here externalises sinfulness into a persecuting enemy and so allows readers to feel passive in the face of overwhelming punishment. Sin tortures them. Byfield seems to envisage his readers within a Biblical setting, surrounded like the crucified Christ by ‘malefactors’ and so longing for escape. Fear, once again, is close kin to desire. Inviting readers to feel disenchanting with their lives, Byfield allows them to take satisfaction in the endangered status, or collective vulnerability, of the godly. ‘We must learne

²²⁸ Florian and Mikulincer, "Fear of Death."

of *Moses*, who brought himself to it willingly, to forsake the pleasures of Egypt, and to chuse rather to suffer affliction with Gods people, then to be called the sonne of *Pharohs* daughter' (p. 175). Having evoked a persecuted state of mind, Byfield offers death as a badge and reward for suffering. 'We should desire death,' he reasons, 'even to be delivered from the feare of giving occasion to the World to triumph, or blaspheme in respect of us' (p. 94). By conjuring an abstract enemy, the World, whose scorn gives the godly cause to fear, Byfield once again aligns himself with readers in an imaged community which has a special relationship with fear. Its members are especially subject to, and marked out by, the fear of those who 'triumph or blasheme' over them: they are justified in this fear, indeed honoured by it, since to be an object of blasphemy, one must be somewhat saintly.

'The World loves her owne,' Byfield explains, 'but us it cannot love, because we are not of this world' (p. 93). To say that the *Cure's* readers are 'not of this world' is a strong claim to the exclusivity of the pious community. It brings the special relationship myth, as I have called it, to a transcendental climax. Readers might imagine themselves on the basis of this sentiment to be other-worldly spirits in waiting, wandering the desert of the earth before being allowed home. The godly have no reason to want to delay their worldly life, as the future here is dangerous for them, Byfield explains: 'We know not what fearefull alterations may come, either in out outward estate, or in matters of Religion' (p. 83). By indulging its readers' sense of present affliction, the *Cure* effectively turns their prospective fear of death into a prospective longing for escape. It exploits the dramatic potential of the transition from corrupt to spiritual life with idealistic but abstract symbolism. Whereas Stubbes and Perkins project onto their subjects a moment of intense but controlled, and finally vanquished, fear, Byfield builds a sustained fantasy of depravation and distinction around the mythic homebound journey of God's chosen people. Instead of staging a scene of last-minute doubt and reversal, he continuously evokes, condemns and ritualises fear throughout his manual.

These three overlapping, and mutually reinforcing, fears of death are to an extent the manufactured products of Byfield's rhetoric. The *Cure* addresses a reader's instinctive and internal experience of fear, but also socialises that experience, giving it a normative structure and common vocabulary. James Kasteley explains in general terms how this process works:

When rhetoric invents or discovers the *logos* appropriate to the *pathos* of a situation, it helps guide an audience to a decision by offering concepts that allow an audience to have a more fully organized idea of what their feelings sought to express.²²⁹

²²⁹ James L. Kasteley, "Pathos: Rhetoric and Emotion," in *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 221-38.

In Byfield's conspicuously organised manual, readers are treated as members of an audience, and are accordingly coaxed and directed to feel in certain ways. Their fears are neither solitary experiences, unique to each reader, nor uniformly and collectively experienced communal phenomena: rather, these emotions shift with the rhetorical moment, taking shape around certain salient rhetorical figures. To adopt the title of Lakoff and Johnson's 1980 book *Metaphors We Live By*, the *Cure* shows us several vivid metaphors by which the Jacobean godly lived and died. These metaphors did more than simply name a pre-existing fear: they also shaped the experience of it. The language and emotion of fear invent one another in this text.

Is the *Cure*'s medical metaphor simply conventional, a generic title used to attract readers of Perkins' *Salve*; or is this text effectively consoling? I have suggested that fear is both the condition and the outcome of this manual; that Byfield prescribes a 'receipt' of pious introspection which generates further fear. He invites self-diagnosis of spiritual status. He conjures an opponent, 'sin,' that must be beaten down in order for the Elect to achieve assurance. Supplying metaphorical material for this psychic combat, Byfield 'ministers to the anxiety' in his readers and exacerbates neuroses of persecution, depravity and distinction.²³⁰ Accusing the Elect of being 'sluggish' and slow to extract virtue from Christ's death (p. 4.), the author rouses their fears ostensibly to purge these fears, but also to excite them. In 'the discourse of the medicine' (p. 30), readers are made to drink the bitter medicine of their carnality so that they will be sickened of it and will long for the merciful release of death.

Betty Ann Doebler sees *ars moriendi* manuals as 'humane and consolatory', by contrast with earlier terrifying *memento moris*, and speaks of the power of rituals to 'order and integrate a life'.²³¹ I doubt that Byfield aims to cure readers in quite this soothing way. The *Cure*'s goal of increased piety involves sought-out suffering, agitation of the passions, and induced self-disgust. Byfield's ideal godly reader will anticipate death by casting off the bodily self in what Michael Schoenfeldt calls a 'poetics of suffering' and I would call psychological denial.²³² The cure is not one of simple consolation. Byfield's polarising rhetoric is symptomatic of a fear of disorder which has a wide, shifting target. The elaborate scheme of enumerated proofs by which he organises this concern would seem to contribute to the problem by amplifying it; drawing attention to the scale of the 'argument' against death.

However, Byfield's faith in the purgative power of the Word is genuine; and to the faithful it would, almost by definition, be effective. The *Cure* perpetuates belief, alongside

²³⁰ Stachniewski, *Persecutory Imagination*, p. 26.

²³¹ Doebler, *Rooted Sorrow*, p. 44, p. 77.

²³² 'Where we imagine selfhood to reside in the experiences, memories, and desires that produce the quirks we call personality, early seventeenth century English writers imagine such quirks as encrustations that must be purged if true selfhood is to emerge.' Schoenfeldt, "Poetics of Sacrifice," p. 566.

(and comprising) fear; and belief is what consoles believers. Audiences convinced by the Fall will be easily persuaded of the Resurrection. Believing fear of death to be a fact of fallen human nature, Byfield applies his rhetorical tools to transform that nature. He aims not to pacify but to convert the fearful physical man to a man of fearless faith. Ideas or 'contemplations' can, Byfield insists, 'worke a strange alteration in our harts' (p. 32). He facilitates this 'alteration' by simultaneously inciting and regulating the reader's imagination, in order to reinforce the godly ideal of immortality and excise stray thoughts that do not conform to this mental picture.

The *Cure*'s imagery indicates why readers would be receptive to this manipulation, since in each of the terrors discussed above there is a distinct psychological or spiritual reward. The appealing challenge of facing up to the threat of 'Death' will be explored again in the next chapter. By imagining his death as the arrival of an external enemy, the godly individual could feel released from affliction and passivity, turning inner resistance into an attitude of outward attack. Moreover, Byfield persuades readers that they have a special potential to fulfil in death, and a special ability to approach it without fear. He urges readers to take heart from 'the example of the Martyrs in all Ages, that accounted it a singular glory to die' (p. 11). This implicitly refers to the heroes of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, who turned fear into demonstrative joy. The *Cure* invites readers to make a similarly empowering use of fear. By 'knowing', that is apprehending and believing, that Christ overcame death, Christians 'should be so farre from fearing death, that they should treade upon him, and insult over him: *O Death, where is they Sting?*' (p. 8). Death elicits and validates aggression, in this image of holy insulting. 'It' appears not so much the Christian soldier's enemy as a sparring partner and spur to greater acts of faith. One of the satisfying elements of this idea is that the 'fight' of death can be won preventatively, by inward preparation: 'In this combate every Christian may triumph before the victory' (p. 28). Aided by the *Cure*, readers can accomplish the 'art' of dying in advance of the point of death, by internal godly rehearsal.

With a mixture of concrete and abstract, homely and elevated figures, Byfield's readers are given a variety of ways to anticipate the experience of death. This variety allows them to use the prospect of dying imaginatively as a surrogate action for other activities, social situations or mythic narratives from which they might derive psychological comfort. At its most pragmatic, the *Cure* offers 'the weary labourer' a rest in death, promising: 'The day of Death, is the day of receiving wages, wherin God paies to every godly man his penny' (pp. 34-5). At the other extreme, Byfield images death to be an intangible process of change or transportation: 'our translation thither' (p. 9). In different ways, all the *Cure*'s tropes for death offer the potential for self-elevation or spiritual promotion, and so sharpen a believer's appetite for dying. 'Let all the godly hold up their heads, because the day of their redemption draweth nigh' (p. 16). I have been particularly struck by separatist fantasies of the godly

Elect, which conjure the prospect of community resurgence at death. In the next life, those persecuted on earth will be rewarded with 'endlesse applause' (p. 49). According to Corinthians, they will be clothed in 'the glorious robes of salvation; more rich than the robes of the greatest Monarch' (p. 43). With this image, Byfield seems to draw his readers' aspirations towards the apocalyptic vision of Revelations 6:11, where white robes are given at doomsday to those 'killed for the sake of the Word of God'. Boldly, given the historical circumstances outlined above, Byfield claims: 'Death is the day of our Coronation; wee are heires apparent to the Crowne in this life: yea, wee are Kings Elect, but cannot bee crowned, till death' (p. 51). If these various images are considered in chronological order, according to Christianity's projected narrative, the final outcome of dying will occur at the resurrection of graces, when, Byfield promises: 'Our gifts shall shine, as the Starres in the Firmament' (p. 38). There is alchemy here, of a sort: the godly are to be so refined by the process of death that their talent will gleam from the heavens. This image is the polar opposite of the slavish physical man whose mind, in Byfield's description, is fettered with chains of fear. Readers are invited to take an imaginative journey from one moral pole to the other.

One aspect of the Art of Dying which I have tried to bring to attention in this chapter is the effort that goes into its construction. By rhetorical and cognitive effort, authors and readers 'invent' death and their relation to it. Byfield talks of the 'worke of Preparation' (p. 2). This 'work' of preparation should not be underestimated, I think. The sermon text from Hebrews convinces Byfield that 'there is virtue in the death of Christ, to cure this feare of death in any of the Elect if they will use the means' (p. 5). The 'if' is important here. Readers are seen as active contributors to their own cure, and are expected to put effort into the process. As its small size indicates, the *Cure* is not to be taken as a single dose, but applied regularly as affective, inferential therapy. By regarding the Art in this way as a persuasive process, rather than as a store of doctrine or symbols, it is easier to understand how it benefits its users; both readers and author alike. Like all prescriptive 'self-help' literature, Byfield's manual is openly and stealthily authoritative. It preaches at the reader and encourages readers to repeat this action of supervised thought-management. Self-suggestion and indoctrination are integrated. As we have seen with previous examples, books that rouse death-thought rouse the urge for moral vigilance, and so serve as authoritarian tools. Byfield's *Cure* shapes the expectations of its audience to conform to a Calvinist view of the battle-ready Protestant church. Within a decade, several other Art of Dying manuals, including the two to be examined in the following chapters, were to reinforce and intensify this effect.

Chapter 4

***Death Subdued* by Samuel Crooke (1619): The Art of Dying as Mental Combat**

The fear of death identified in Byfield's *Cure*, and the militant and separatist language by which this fear is addressed, remain prominent components of godly Art of Dying literature throughout the Jacobean era. One reason for turning to Crooke's *Death Subdued* of 1619 is to examine the intensification of 'last combat' rhetoric in a text whose aggressive title is matched by an equally pugnacious subtitle; 'The Death of Death'. With a number of works on the topic published in the same decade as Crooke's, I have selected this one in view of its several points of particular interest. Originally a funeral sermon, preached on death of James I's wife, Queen Anne, Crooke's manual of death preparation demonstrates the adaptability of the Art of Dying theme. This is not a fixed, discrete genre confined to one mode of devotional expression, but rather a cultural script which authors adapt to different circumstances. By 'cultural script' I mean to indicate, as discussed in the Introduction, a theme that recurs in successive generations, or in more than one historical era, in form that is recognisable yet also inflected by cultural peculiarities. Each author's or performer's rendition of it has some elements in common with the others, but is unique in its particular rhetorical formulation.

In transposing his spoken word to the printed page, Crooke widens his intended audience and offers a sustained, systematic mode of 'daily dying'; a prolonged way of thinking about one's own approaching death. *Death Subdued* perpetuates the moral categories and fantasies of spiritual promotion seen in Byfield's, Perkins' and Stubbes' works; but it also, more explicitly than its predecessors, draws attention to the use of language in death preparation. Sharing the iconoclastic tendencies of his fellow divines, Crooke uses rhetorical techniques to implement the kinds of mind change traditionally achieved by visual art, religious ritual, or theatre. *Death Subdued* is an explicitly literate rendition of the Art of Dying, designed to inculcate in its readers a disciplined attitude through the use of Scriptural metaphors, paradoxes and antitheses. The duel to which Crooke's title alludes is a cognitive battle, to be fought in the godly reader's mind with the aid of bookish, abstract weapons.

(a) A Printed *Memento Mori*

A modern reader who expects to find commemorative and biographical remarks in funeral orations may be surprised that the occasion of Queen Anne's death in March 1619 produced, from one of her regular chaplains, a duodecimo pocketbook on the subject of preparing for death, which makes no reference to the life or character of the recently deceased individual. Initially therefore, I wish to suggest how this retrospective, commemorative sermon became a prospective, instrumental manual. Educated at Cambridge, and a disciple of William Perkins,

Samuel Crooke was inclined by faith and training to godly notions of pious discipline which gave rise to – and were reinforced by – Art of Dying literature, as we have seen. During his career as a ‘near-legendary Puritan patriarch’, Crooke applied his rhetorical efforts to two different congregations, evangelising to his parish in Somerset, and serving as ordinary chaplain to the Queen and her favoured circle of friends, the ‘Essex group’.²³³ It is to the latter audience that *Death Subdued* is explicitly directed. The opening pages greet Sir Robert Sidney and other ‘much honoured and worthy friends’ of the Queen who are ‘members together of the same house of mourning’.²³⁴ It is soon apparent, however, that the book’s purpose is not to bemoan a regrettable loss of life, but rather to promote among mourners and general readers the active, godly ‘minding of Death’, however ‘untoothsome’ this may be (sig. A5r). Although he does not enjoy acting as ‘the Scritch-owle, a messenger of death’ (sig. A7v), Crooke has ‘laide hold on the opportunity of this mournfull season, that wee may learne both by example, and by instruction to die in the Lord’ (sigs. A7r-A8r). This is a clear statement of the opportunistic and productive nature of many Art of Dying texts. Like Philip Stubbes, Crooke uses the event of an actual woman’s death as the ‘opportunity’ or *kairos* for an exercise in godly instruction.

In the context of Calvinist belief and Jacobean pedagogy, this didactic use of the Queen’s death is entirely conventional. Praising a dead person smacked of ‘popery’ to many Protestants, and was not in 1619 a staple element of funeral sermons. A sermon on ‘The Praise of Mourning,’ printed in a collection of funeral sermons by various Protestant divines under the title *Threnoikos* (1640) makes this point clearly: ‘Funeral sermons are not intended for the praise of the dead, but for the comfort of the living’.²³⁵ The absence or exclusion of praise for Anne (such material may have been present in Crooke’s sermon in March and removed before publication in May) is not an oversight on the author’s part; nor does it necessarily imply a suspicion of the Queen’s religious loyalties. *Death Subdued* repeatedly

²³³ Peter E. McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Ch. 4, esp. pp.172-3. McCullough demonstrates how Queen Anne’s ‘church papistry’ could co-exist with a conformist and even strongly evangelical court chaplaincy. Also Vivienne Larminie, “Crooke, Samuel (1575-1649),” in *O.D.N.B.* (2004).

²³⁴ Samuel Crooke, *Death Subdued, or, the Death of Death*, 2nd ed. (London, 1619), sigs. A4r, A5v. Subsequent references will be given in brackets in the text.

²³⁵ Daniel Featly et al., *Threnoikos: The House of Mourning*, 2nd ed. (London, 1640), p. 52. The instructional use of printed funeral sermons for women is discussed in the introduction to Barlow, *A True Guide to Glory*. Barlow’s text, published in the same year as Crooke’s, is evidence that godly reservations about eulogising the dead were overlooked when a woman of notable piety was deemed to have provided, by her patient dying, an exemplary model for imitation. Doebler and Warnicke see this in historical terms as a ‘new’ emphasis on the function of the dead as guides for the living. For my purposes, the more important point is what literary and rhetorical effects could be created by treating funerals as forms of incitement to pious preparation for death.

praises the general usefulness of the dead to the living as godly guides and exemplars. In conformity with Protestant doctrine, Crooke attributes this utility to God, not to the dead individual. People die at God's will in order to teach the living how to follow; and it is this divine gift or 'benefit', rather than any unique virtue in the deceased, which Crooke celebrates (sig. A8v). Like Katherine Stubbes, discussed in the first chapter, Queen Anne is useful to her godly author because of a universal quality: her mortality. A commoner in death, Anne is no more than the nominal incident of this manual; a signifier in the divine plan for humanity.

The egalitarian implications of Crooke's utilisation of the dead Queen as commonplace subject should not be overstated, however. Crooke makes the sociological observation that rich people hate to be reminded of death because they have the most to lose by it (sig. A5); but the point is a conventional one in pious literature, and is made without any satirical overtone. Crooke treats his readers with evident respect, and is far less prone than Byfield or Perkins to chastise them directly. Polite phrases, such as 'give me leave to recommend...', indicate his deference to the courtly members of his audience (sig. B12v).

The didactic nature of Protestant piety thus helps to explain how a royal death could result in an instructional, portable handbook for godly readers. Similarly, the militarization of pious rhetoric in the mid-Jacobean years can help to explain Crooke's choice to figure dying, in the title and throughout the manual, as a form of fighting. Calvinist authors of the early seventeenth century seem particularly attracted to the confrontational possibilities of the Christian story, for reasons previously noted. By 1619 many factors had prepared readers for the idea that the day of death is a day of battle; an opportunity for the faithful to assert their strength of faith in suffering. The mining of Scriptural sources to support an active, if not belligerent, approach to religion was common in godly literature. Exiled anti-papist author Thomas Scott, presenting himself as the 'voice of the people', contributed as Peter Lake has argued to the formation of an idea of 'active citizenship'.²³⁶ In the heightened emotional climate surrounding negotiations for the Spanish Match, Anne's death of 1619, following the death of Prince Henry six years earlier and the exile of his beloved sister, Princess Elizabeth, further diminished the royal family and compounded fears of national vulnerability. 'God hath *contended* with our Royal *Vine*', as Crooke sees it, 'but (blessed be his name) in the *branches*, not in the *roote*' (sig. B9r). The root, the King, was – despite earlier attempts on his life – alive, but many Protestant divines feared the apparent weakness of his spiritual leadership. Deaths in the royal family could be perceived as cautionary symbols of declining national vigour, reinforcing the prospective, invigorating tone of Crooke's manual.

When Crooke invites readers in the title of his manual to 'subdue' death, he is not calling them to war but urging them to take a certain devotional attitude, of unshakeable faith.

²³⁶ Lake, "Constitutional Consensus."

This ideal disposition has an indirect relation to the actual, current social situation. Nothing in the human world is explicitly denoted by the phrases ‘death subdued’ and ‘the death of death’; yet in these abstract images readers could find, or impose, any number of associations. To see death ‘subdued’ might mean, for some readers, to see the suppression of people or practices antithetical to the English Protestant church. Crooke’s abstract challenge lends itself to the sectarian notion, evident in Byfield’s *Cure* and suggested at points in *Death Subdued*, that the godly faithful are united by a God-given courage granted exclusively to them and not to their religious opponents.²³⁷ Catholics could and did make use of similar vocabulary to brand the Reformed faith a kind of death-in-life.²³⁸ Martial imagery easily reinforces, even where it does not directly allude to, communal and divisive modes of self-identification. So the dramatic promise of Crooke’s title might hold a distinct appeal to those Protestants who in 1619 yearned for a conclusive conflict with the Catholic enemy, or with an enemy one could grasp. More obliquely, the metaphor of embattled dying serves to arouse and legitimise a range of ordinary anxieties and desires, such as the wish to be – and to be thought – fearless, or the wish to ‘conquer’ circumstances and avoid being subjugated. In his choice of title, Crooke seems to recognise these ordinary psychological impulses and the advantage, for his evangelical project, of recruiting readers into an abstract campaign against the ‘enemy’ of death.

‘The Enemy’ is given prominence in Crooke’s organisational scheme, forming the first of two parts of the treatise; the second of which is headed, ‘The Overthrow’ (sig. A10v). In the table of contents, the subjugation metaphor is used consistently as a means to structure the imagined encounter between readers and their ends. Firstly, readers are to be introduced to their enemy in two respects, learning that Death is a ‘Generall and Just’ threat, and also a ‘Dreadfull’ opponent. Secondly, they will be shown how Death is ‘disabled’ and then ‘reconciled’ (sig. A10v). Like Byfield, Crooke is conscious of the importance of fear, which he treats both as a problem to be solved in his manual and as a necessary spur to reform. His list of ‘Nine Terrors attending on Death’ makes a progression from personal to social to transcendental fears; distinctions which I found pertinent to Byfield’s *Cure*:²³⁹

- 1 Paine and other harbingers.
- 2 Dissolution.
- 3 Putrefaction.

²³⁷ Ongoing debates over purgatory, for instance, opened the way for broader disputes over social and ecclesiastical arrangements. Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead*, p. 141.

²³⁸ Surveying the work of Robert Persons and other English Catholic authors, John Evans explains that to these authors, ‘the Church militant and the forces of darkness are locked in martial combat, so that every Christian must put on the armour of salvation and die for Christ’ J X Evans, “The Art of Rhetoric and the Art of Dying in Tudor Recusant Prose,” *Recusant History* 10 (1970): 247-72.

²³⁹ See chapter 3, note 178, on ‘intrapersonal,’ ‘interpersonal’ and ‘transpersonal’ fears.

- 4 Solitarinesse.
- 5 Vacation from Service.
- 6 Privation of Pleasures, &c.
- 7 Uncertaintie of the condition of the dead.
- 8 Death a reward for Sinne.
- 9 Death attended by Judgement. (sigs. A10r-11v)

Later in the manual, Crooke reinforces his initial categorisation of death as 'the enemy' by interpreting Paul's explanation of death's role within Satan's diabolic troops:

It is not every enemy, but the *last enemy* saith the Apostle. Sathan is politique enough to order his forces. Hee placeth not death in the *forlorne hope*, to attach the battle, as other lighter afflictions: but keeps him *inter Triarios*, as his chiefe Champion, in whom *Sathan* himself either foileth, or is foiled. (sigs. D2r-3v).

What interests me here is not the doctrinal basis for this hierarchical conception of evil so much as its effect on readers of a death preparation manual. Crooke creates for such readers an imagined universe, in which their own future deaths are presented symbolically as battle scenes involving clearly labelled moral ogres. As with allegories and fairy tales, the comfort produced by this militant fantasy is not diminished by the sense of danger it evokes. Instead, it is the structured, predictable nature of the outcome which assures readers that they will act as conquering champions in this scene, provided they have armed themselves in advance with the prescribed godly thoughts. To this end, Crooke equips the fearful with a short, enumerated book of godly words which would function, for believers, as a guide to the spiritual landscape, a plan of action, and, perhaps, as a reformed kind of totem or amulet.

In the Epistle Dedicatory, Crooke offers his reasons for making broadly prescriptive use of the Biblical story of Christ's duel with death:

I have represented herein the Duell with Death: first fought by Christ for us; but so as we every one must fight it hand to hand in our owne persons and times; for else we have no part in his victory. Hee fought not to excuse us from fighting: hee died (the bodily death) not to excuse us from dying: but to prepare and animate us unto this conflict. (sig. A8r)

The striking quality of Crooke's language here is its prospective, utilitarian tone. He uses the Christian narrative not for admiration, but for activation; 'so as we every one must fight it'. His emphasis is not on the uniqueness of Christ's suffering but on the universally enabling, catalytic action of Christ's death, designed to 'to prepare and animate us'. *We* complete the act of Christ's death, which will be concluded once 'every one' has played a part in it. The Captain's victory over death, like Satan's mobilisation of death, provides an episode in the imagined drama which Crooke presents to his readers for their private, mental re-enactment. In this cited passage, we learn that Crooke has chosen his central metaphor for rhetorical, not

purely theological, reasons. This version of the Christian story, by contrast with more passive accounts of the crucifixion, prepares and 'animate(s)' the audience (my underline).

Crooke's justification of this method demonstrates that the human attainability of Christ-like dying is crucial to the utility and rationale of Protestant 'how-to-die' literature. By presenting Christ's death as a rehearsal for man's death, Crooke makes his readers the primary actors, agents and determiners of the 'duel'. This Duel is seen in active terms, through Protestant eyes, as a sequential tournament in which every Christian warrior, following his Captain's lead, will take a turn.²⁴⁰ In its dynamic, even 'activist' outlook, *Death Subdued* is typically Calvinist. John Knott finds that Puritans 'saw the dynamism of the Word as requiring a dynamic response from the individual, and [...] used Scripture to reinforce various kinds of exhortation to action'.²⁴¹ Crooke's title is accordingly a puzzle, promise and challenge. Who has subdued, or will subdue, Death; and how? The phrase creates a sense of impending though unspecific drama, while the alternative title, *The Death of Death*, points to a climactic obliteration of 'the enemy'. Ordinary readers are being invited to follow Christ into the arena, to face their own deaths bravely and thereby achieve the paradoxical 'death of Death' in their own sphere of action.

Crooke's titular promise to subjugate death also carries associations of territorial and medical conquest. Two contemporary Art of Dying manuals, John Moore's *A Mappe of Mans Mortalitie* (1617) and George Strode's *Anatomie of Mortalitie* (1618) are similarly suggestive of the urge to subject the mysterious, vulnerable human form to the tools of human reason; and thereby to conquer the fear that results from unknown causes of decay. Although none of these texts has what we would recognise as a medical concern to understand mechanisms of the human body by observation, they share an evident desire to 'map' or anatomise mortality as a moral category. Jonathan Sawday has charted the growth in this period of a 'dissective culture' in which the 'new science' of anatomical dissection produced competing 'regimes of knowledge'.²⁴² Calvinists who were for doctrinal reasons given to moral self-examination or

²⁴⁰ It is tempting to speculate that Crooke's interest in the concept of a holy duel may have been reinforced by the controversial fashion for duelling in his own society. The prospect of proving one's honour and virility by the sword proved so attractive to English gentleman that a duelling 'crisis' prompted Francis Bacon to legislate against the activity in 1613, just a few years before Crooke's publication. Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness and Honour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 88.

²⁴¹ John Knott, *The Sword of the Spirit: Puritan Responses to the Bible* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 11.

²⁴² Sawday, *Body Emblazoned* pp. 16, 22, 41. It will be clear from the discussion that I am indebted to this book for many insights, phrases and points of comparison. However, I am unconvinced by its central historical claim, that Descartes invented the divided self. 'The creation of "Cartesian Man," at some point in the early seventeenth century, was also the moment at which an alienated human subject was born' (p.159). It seems to me that such alienation was 'born' with the story of the Fall, and that all subsequent Christian literature

self-dissection took up the ‘language of partition’ with enthusiasm.²⁴³ Determined to achieve mastery over the body, the godly were equally determined to preserve the idea that an essential soul inhabited and animated their flesh. In this respect it is interesting that Samuel Crooke’s brother was Dr Helkiah Crooke, author of the recently published popular anatomy manual, *Microcosmographia* (1615).²⁴⁴ Combining old and new anatomical theories, *Microcosmographia* views the body through a moralised and rhetorical lens as kind of material to be improved. ‘Anatomy is as it were a most certaine and sure guide to the admirable and most excellent knowledge of our selves, that is of our owne proper nature,’ in the confident opinion of Dr (Helkiah) Crooke.²⁴⁵

Sharing his brother’s desire to gain improving knowledge from (dead) bodies, Samuel Crooke urges readers to treat the deaths of friends as occasions for self-instruction:

Nay, let the examples of mortalitie in others be as the onely true Mummie, making the dead medicinable, and soveraigne for the good of the living: Let the meditation of death be as the dead hand upon the navel, to cure the dropsie of worldly love... (sig. C2v-r).

In this striking image, we are invited to think of the corpses of our fellows as medical remedies or preservative mummies. The touch of a dead hand will ‘cure’ us of the disease of love for life. This paradox, by which death is a preservative agent or tonic with the potential to enrich spiritual health, has some precedent in the Art of Dying genre. A manual by Catholic author Petrus Luccensis, translated into English in 1603 as *A Dialogue of Dying Wel*, tells the story of a bereaved hermit who, suffering from continual lust for his dead lover, dug up the young woman’s body and licked it to cure himself.²⁴⁶ The hermit’s use of a corpse as cure or prophylactic smacks of a mystical, and to modern eyes perverse, style of adoration, against which Crooke’s didacticism seems more plainly authoritarian and regulatory, if not actually pragmatic. For the Protestant Crooke, a corpse is to be made explicable and useful by

encourages individuals to distinguish a spiritual self from a fallen physical self, and to distrust the latter.

²⁴³ Sawday, *Body Emblazoned*, p. 44. Queen Anne’s body, the ‘document’ that inspired Crooke’s *Death Subdued*, was disembowelled, embalmed and leaded prior to being interred two months later. The viscera were buried separately, following an old tradition. Jennifer Woodward, *The Theatre of Death: The Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in Renaissance England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997) pp. 166-72.

²⁴⁴ In April 1619, Helkiah Crooke was appointed Keeper of Bethlehem Hospital, where he seems to have dedicated more time to private medical and anatomical research than to care of his patients. With a reputation for ruthless ambition, Crooke was sacked from Bedlam for embezzlement in 1632. C. D. O’Malley, “Helkiah Crooke, M.D., F.R.C.P., 1576-1648,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 42:1 (1968): 1-18.

²⁴⁵ Cited in Hillman, “Visceral Knowledge.”

²⁴⁶ Luccensis, *A Dialogue of Dying Wel*, sig. B5r. It is worth noting, in relation to the development of *memento mori* imagery discussed elsewhere in this chapter, that Verstagen’s translation carries an image of a skull and bone on the title page.

cognitive effort. By thinking of dead friends as pedagogic ‘examples’, as parts of a legible scheme of understanding, Christians can probe these exempla for moral lessons. In this way *Death Subdued* prescribes a highly abstract kind of anatomical plundering, akin to topical argument, whereby people are treated as rhetorical heads or commonplaces and their moral significance is extracted in the form of universally applicable moral *sententiae*.

Crooke presents himself as the learned guide and interpreter to death’s curative action, ready to disclose the meaning behind its every manifestation. In the rest of this chapter I will explore the various ways in which his rhetoric animates and interprets the prospect of death for readers and activates their participation in the ‘duel’. Crooke’s general aim to engage and direct readers’ attention to their mortality continues from the title throughout the manual, following a structured arrangement of ideas shown in the table of rhetorical heads.

In addition to its explicit topical structure, the book seems to have a wider procedural objective, which is to control or reform the way readers think. Crooke holds his book up to the inner eye, seeking in various ways to prolong a reader’s concentration on the written word. Every aspect of this publication, from its material form and typography to its rhetorical figures, is designed to present an extensive, enduring, supervised style of thought. This logocentric didacticism can be seen as a product of the shift from an old religious culture of Catholic ritual to new Protestant habits. At the same time, it can be seen as a form of variation or experimentation within oratorical tradition. Combining the classical tools of a speech-maker with an interest in the possibilities of the printed book, Crooke shapes his argument in a way that will persist in the audience’s mind well beyond the duration of a spoken sermon. In order to prompt a lasting determination in his readers, the author transfers to them some of the techniques of persuasion, in addition to the conclusions of his argument. He teaches them how to persuade themselves. Regardless of its specific doctrinal foundations, this text can be read as an extension of oratory into the realm of self-help. Crooke makes his book thoroughly and repeatedly influential by enlisting readers as participants in their own indoctrination.

Crooke’s desire to effect spiritual change through paradox and other peculiarly literary forms of symbolism seems to be motivated in part, but not simply, by Protestant iconoclasm. Suspicious of visual images, which can too easily be used ritualistically, as idols, or atheistically, to represent secular worldly pleasures, Crooke prefers to animate readers solely through verbal concepts derived from the Scriptures. This censorious approach is complicated, however, by an evident fascination with symbols and signification. Crooke’s method is to replicate and imitate, rather than abolish, the psychological function of visual icons. He presents his small duodecimo volume as a *memento mori* in print; a form of contact with ‘Death’ which is intended to have instrumental force on the reader. On a plain, un-illustrated title page, the words of the long title, *Death Subdued, or, THE DEATH of Death*, are visibly arresting. Before anything else has been said, these bold invocations capture the

reader's attention, thereby demonstrating at a simple graphic level death's power to animate. Crooke's sermon on the death of Anne, we learn on the title-page, is now 'published and enlarged, to arme all men against *so common and dreadfull an Enemy*'. With italicised print, the dreaded fact of mortality is thrust into view, alarming readers into a renewed realisation of the inevitability of death, much in the way that a skull kept on a nobleman's desk, or a death's head image encountered in a painting, surprises the onlooker.

Death Subdued is a sustained version of the effect created in other media by actual, painted or carved skulls and personified death-figures. The rhetorical value of the *memento mori* message - remember you will die - is extended by repetition and amplification throughout the text. Reappearing in different form on every page, the reminder cannot be dismissed, as a visual image might be, in the blink of an onlooker's eye. A graphic *memento mori* is for Crooke preferable to a pictorial one because it requires active mental engagement and so puts the reader in control of the 'subduing' of death. Moreover, Crooke does not merely issue a warning, but teaches readers to seek out their own. 'When death approacheth and summoneth by sicknesse, age, or any other Apparitor of his,' he instructs, then is it time to looke about' (sig. C9r-10v). People are to read the world for signs and apparitions of death. Rather than wait for a warning to strike, they should 'looke about'. The verbs 'approacheth' and 'summoneth', and the capitalised noun, 'Apparitor', suggest that Crooke has in mind the beckoning, mischievous, personified Death depicted in much Medieval and Renaissance visual art. The "Dance of Death" motif, in which the character of Death is seen snatching, mocking and dancing with various social types, was in 1619 to be found in the Continent on church walls and in etched drawings, such as the Basel Totentanz and Holbein's famous series of prints.²⁴⁷ Protestant England had however obliterated, under Elizabeth, its most prominent version of this motif: a wall painting in St Paul's cloisters, copied from a cemetery in Paris with accompanying mottos translated by Lydgate.²⁴⁸ By scrubbing "Dance of Death" images from certain walls, English reformers apparently contributed to the tendency of later

²⁴⁷ The Holbein series is reproduced in Francis Douce and Hans Holbein, *The Dance of Death; Painted by H. Holbein, and Engraved by W. Hollar* (London: 1794). Various "Dance of Death" or "Danse Macabre" pictorial narratives are discussed in William Engel, *Mapping Mortality: The Persistence of Memory and Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), pp. 145-79; Llewellyn, *Art of Death*, pp. 19-25; Neill, *Issues of Death*, pp. 5-108.

²⁴⁸ A fifteenth century mural painting in the cemetery of Les Innocents, the first recorded "Dance of Death," was a series of illustrations with verbal mottoes on a single theme, subsequently imitated in the cloisters of St Paul's in London and adapted by various artists and writers. Fuller accounts are given in: Samuel Schoenbaum, "The Revenger's Tragedy: Jacobean Dance of Death," *Modern Language Quarterly* 15:3 (1954): 201-07. Harry Morris, "The Dance-of-Death Motif in Shakespeare," *Papers on Language and Literature* 20:1 (1984): 15-28; Neill, *Issues of Death*, pp. 51-63.

Protestant authors to represent death's summons in abstract, verbal, Biblical terms. They did not however destroy the habit of imagining death as a dynamic, skeletal persona.²⁴⁹

Translating artists' conceptions of mortality into verbal imagery, Crooke internalises the imagined encounter between people and their ends. He asks: 'what is our life, but a taking acquaintance with Death; or our body, but an house of dust, a walking sepulcher?' (sig. B6v). This rhetorical question prompts readers to see their bodies as walking tombs, containers of the corruption which is already in process within each human form. It retains a sense of movement and urgency which is an important effect of "Dance of Death" imagery, but represents this 'dance' as an invisible drama, taking place within each living being. The difference might be illustrated by comparison with a scene in Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1610). In the fourth Act, the play's central protagonist, Charlemont, hides in a charnel house from pursuers who mean to kill him. A stage direction reads: 'To get into the charnel house he takes hold of a death's head; it slips and staggers him'.²⁵⁰ The action is clearly emblematic and ironic, signalling to the audience the vulnerability of this man's life, and by implication all lives. Charlemont, who has been taken for dead and commemorated in the same graveyard, earlier in the play, makes the interpretation explicit, exclaiming: 'Death's head, deceiv'st my hold?/ Such is the trust to all mortality' (4.3.78-9). A *memento mori* lesson is enacted here for the edification of spectators who watch and hear death's warning. What Crooke aims to do in his manual is to apply this lesson more directly and inwardly in the reader's imagination. Avoiding staged spectacles, which might be interpreted or enjoyed in ungodly ways, Crooke encourages readers instead to notice the signs of mortality in their own sinful lives; to reconfigure their own bodies imaginatively as houses of dust.²⁵¹

Crooke's attempts to direct and regulate the reader's spiritual 'inner eye' reinforce the strategies of control seen in other godly Art of Dying manuals. *Death Subdued*, like Perkins's *Salve*, instructs readers to look at their lives through a particular kind of interpretative lens or moral gaze. From this perspective, everything and everyone is a significant token of God's purpose or judgement. The death of a fellow human is a sign of the divine will operating in the world to remind men of their mortality:

²⁴⁹ *Death Subdued* was printed by 'W.I' for Edmund Weaver, and sold at Weaver's shop in Saint Paul's churchyard. It is interesting that this churchyard, previously the site of "Dance of Death" images, was in the Jacobean period a marketplace for many guidebooks on death.

²⁵⁰ Katharine Eisaman Maus, ed., *Four Revenge Tragedies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), Act 4 sc. 3, p. 306.

²⁵¹ Charlemont fails in *The Atheist's Tragedy* to understand correctly the signs and symbols of his world; and this failure is itself a sign to the audience of his atheism. Huston Diehl, "'Reduce Thy Understanding to Thine Eye": Seeing and Interpreting in the Atheist's Tragedy," *Studies in Philology* 78:1 (1981): 47-60.

God makes every house, one time or other (as now this Princely Palace is) an house of mourning: that men, without stepping out of doores, may have the documents of mortalitie before their eyes. (sig. C4r)

A corpse is a heaven-sent *memento mori*, in other words; a message or 'document' inscribed with providential meaning. Seeking to turn his audience's grief for Queen Anne into godly action, Crooke claims that her death, like every other, is an opportunity for mourners to see and apply the lesson of mortality for themselves, in the convenience of their own homes. Death is a perfect opportunity for developing household piety. God sends it 'that' men can learn: it is specifically intended, Crooke implies, to serve as a pedagogic tool. While a 'document' could in 1619 denote any form of instruction or warning, in this context Crooke seems to have a printed text in mind.²⁵² The 'document' is to be kept 'before their eyes': it is instruction in a material form, to be studied thoroughly by the eyes, as a book would be.

Other Art of Dying authors made similarly conscious efforts to internalise and extend the *memento mori* instructional theme in their books.²⁵³ Crooke's contemporary John Warren, a minister in Essex, prefaced his *Domus Ordinata* in 1618 with an anthropological discussion of the ways in which earlier societies reminded themselves of death:

Amongst the Nobles of Egypt whiles they banqueted, was carried the picture of death, and these words spoken: Looke upon this, and so eate and reioice, as that you remember your selfe shall once be such.²⁵⁴

Having told readers how the 'picture of death' served such societies, Warren appeals for his own handbook, which like Crooke's is a printed adaptation of a recent funeral sermon, to be used as a *memento mori*, but – significantly – over a long period of time:

Even in young yeares then, let this booke be as Philip of Macedon his boy, saying *Memento Philippe, quod homo es*, Remember, you are mortall. (*Domus Ordinata*, sig. A1v-r)

Readers should contemplate their mortality throughout their lives, starting in 'young years': this point is often made in Art of Dying books, and helps to explain the publication of funeral

²⁵² Early modern dictionary entries for 'document' consistently equate it with 'lesson', 'admonition', 'warning' or 'example'. It is also, in Florio's translation of 1598, a 'token or signe to remember by'. (*E.M.D.D.*)

²⁵³ While Protestant how-to-die texts are rarely illustrated in the early seventeenth century, the *memento mori* skull motif appears in More, *A Lively Anatomie*, and James Cole, *Of Death a True Description* (London, 1629). The overlap between godly handbooks on death and godly emblem books, which carry moral instruction alongside *memento mori* images, presents another challenge to the generic classification of Art of Dying literature. At what point does an emblematic representation of death become rhetorical, stimulating *ars moriendi* preparation? Engel, *Death and Drama*, p. 14, and Clayton Mackenzie, "Renaissance Emblems of Death and Shakespeare's *King John*," *English Studies* 79: 5 (1998): 425-29.

²⁵⁴ John Warren, *Domus Ordinata* (London: 1618), sig. A1v.

sermons like Crooke's and Warren's. While spoken sermons and visual mementos make a fleeting impression, the printed page enables prolonged attention to the prospect of dying. Objectifying his book still further, Warren recommends it to readers as a kind of skull, which can be repeatedly used and applied 'line by line' as a mental stimulus:

That it may now bring forth fruit in thee (Reader,) let it bee in thy hands, as a Deaths head, to remember thy end: take it as the clock striketh, as thou thinkest upon thy worldly store, and as thou remembrest thy conscience; apply it line by line: and then as *David* stood triumphing with the head of dead *Goliath* in his hand: so when the time of thy dissolution commeth (although others at the like time, are either senselesse, or else yell and houle; thou shalt dye as joyfully, as if death had no venom, crying out triumphantly in the midst of the pangs of death, *O death where is thy sting?* (*Domus Ordinata*, sig. A3v)

By the rigorous endeavour of detailed ('line by line') exegetical interpretation, the reader can make himself a spiritual victor, Warren promises. Holding (a token of) 'death' in his hands, the reader will pacify 'it' just as David gripped the giant Goliath's severed head.

Crooke shares Warren's objective to provoke in his readers a prolonged and strenuous 'minding of Death' (sig. A5r). This cerebral activity is so crucial to godly death preparation that it is difficult to distinguish categorically between *memento mori* and *ars moriendi* instruction. The former is an essential prelude to the latter, since no-one would make a considered approach to death without first recognising its inevitability. It might therefore be appropriate to see the *memento mori* reminder as the motivating introduction to Art of Dying rhetoric. In *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Vindice holds the skull of his former mistress in his hands, and muses on its effect to rouse moral fear in an onlooker: 'Methinkes this mouth should make a swearer tremble'.²⁵⁵ The Art of Dying is perhaps whatever consideration follows from the use of such an emotive reminder. Crooke urges readers to 'Study and exercise daily the Art of dying,' and reinforces this prompt with the claim that 'the Christians chiefest care is how to die well out of this world' (sig. C4v). From these comments we can suppose that, for Crooke, the Art is an exercise conducted in order to induce the spiritual disposition of *contemptu mundi*. The prepared Christian will, by practice, be utterly and gladly ready to 'die well out of this world'. This idea or definition of the Art of Dying is elaborated in the symmetrical, punning language which characterises the manual:

Hee cannot die ill, that lives well: hee cannot live ill, that practiceth to *die daily*. He may with comfort thinke of life in death, that hath seriously thought of death in the time of life. The thought of death, prevents the feare of death. (sig. C4v)

²⁵⁵ This speech is viewed as a sermon in Schoenbaum, *Revenger's Tragedy*, p. 203 n.11.

Delighting in rhetorical schemes of balance and inversion, this passage equates the Art of Dying with the paradoxical notion of dying daily. To die well is to die before death; that is, to die in the mind every day. Crooke uses reversals such as 'life in death... death in life' to signal to his readers the kind of mental exercise he requires of them. Parallelism, chiasmus, and paradox are the means by which Crooke conveys his notion of cognitive duelling, and the means by which he expects readers to prepare to die. It is in grappling with the lessons of the Scriptures and reconciling apparent contraries, that Crooke's students of dying are to win the 'duel'. 'The thought of death, prevents the feare of death': this statement can only be tested by practice, and so may lure even reluctant readers to consider it.

(b) The Exercise of Daily Dying

Word play is central to Crooke's homiletic rhetoric. In the Dedication, he declares:

The victorie, whereby we overcome the world, is our faith: the victory whereby we overcome Death, is to die in faith. We can never die in faith, unlesse we live by faith. But if we now learn by faith to weep as if we wept not, and rejoyce as if we rejoiced not, we shall in our time die as if we died not. (sig. A9v-r)

Readers alert to rhetorical schemes and poetic rhythm would derive satisfaction from the progressive repetitions of 'victory' and 'faith', 'faith' and 'weep', 'weep' and 'rejoice', noting that 'to die in faith' is half of a balanced proposition, which is only completed if 'we live by faith'. Crooke demonstrates with a climactic structure that logical objections can dissolve, and emotional impulses be reversed, in the act of attentive reading or listening. The final sentence of this passage does not need to be understood in any particular way to be effective, since the three successive clauses build an impression of accumulated proof, concluding in a triumphant statement which at least provokes stimulated attention. Assured that the faithful shall 'die as if we died not', readers are prompted to solve the puzzle for themselves; to interpret how they will 'weep as if we wept not' or take pleasure from what they previously dreaded. Readers' active engagement in the rhetorical process is rewarded by the opportunity to re-order their internal experience. They make sense, quite literally, of the contradictions of their faith, by taking a leap of faith. Trusting in the intelligible but paradoxical wisdom of the Scriptures, faithful readers are enabled to free themselves from paralysing fear of the unknown. 'Subduing' logical problems with the force of accepting belief, they subdue their own capacity to doubt. The riddle of death is 'disabled' by the riddle of faith (sig. B4r).

In common with many other Renaissance writers, Crooke enjoys 'cryptic designs', but only if they are derived from Scriptural sources and can be solved by the universal

Christian remedy of faith.²⁵⁶ Opening with Hosea's paradox - 'O Death I will be thy death' – Crooke encourages readers with a succession of cryptic statements to overturn ingrained thoughts and view the end of life as its beginning. 'Death is in part subdued in *life*: but by *dying* it is abolished for ever' (sig. G11v). 'Death is not the *devourer* but the *refiner* of life' (sig. G11r). 'Death is a birth into a larger and better world' (sig. H3v). There is a distinct irony in the suggestion that death, the product of sin, is 'a meanes to *transforme us into the similitude of our Saviour*' (sig. H3r). Similarly: 'The *dissolution* of death perfects our mysticall *conjunction* with Christ' (sig. H4r). Imitating the rhetorical strategies of the Scriptures, Crooke seems to be demonstrating that if every emotion or state of being is understood verbally, then these experiences can be infinitely reconfigured in the mind. Playing with words, within strict constraints, is morally improving. A Christian should '*die for the better, and better himselfe by dying*' (sig. H5v). Death is '*a way and meanes unto everlasting and most glorious life*' (sig. H8r). What Crooke provides the devotional student here is not so much a series of metaphors as a thought process; the process of antithesis, or contradiction.

Why must the devotional apprentice of death think antithetically? At one level, the answer is a matter of cultural convention. Christian and humanist influences on English education in the early seventeenth century ensured that many aspects of social and personal life were commonly treated as dialectical topics to be decided by debate. Crooke says that death 'takes away all dispute among men,' indicating that 'dispute' is central to his outlook on human affairs (sig. A4r). Elsewhere he commends the wisdom of those 'brought up in the *school* of God', construing religious faith as an educative practice (sig. D10, my italics). Given their polemical and didactic social customs, Crooke's educated godly readers could perhaps be readily persuaded to seek to win an 'argument' over death, if only against their doubting and fearful selves. Contrast is moreover a powerful tool of rhetoric regardless of the specific historical circumstances in which it is used. The credibility of the idea that death is not death to believers is strengthened by the existence of an opposing argument, that death is the end for all. 'Proving' by reference to Christ's action that the latter is 'wrong' is a means to strengthen assurance in one's own faith. To this end, Crooke provides arguments for an 'Orator' in an imagined dispute over the unexpected nature of death: 'if any complaine of deaths unlooked for approach: we may answer...' (sig. B11r). He pays explicit attention to the dialectical process, showing readers how to evaluate lines of argument. Positing a Stoical question - 'why mourne you for that you cannot helpe?' - Crooke supplies the common

²⁵⁶ Engel suggests that 'cryptic designs' form the core of cultural and literary forms of knowledge in the Renaissance, *Death and Drama*, p. 29.

answer, 'I mourne because I cannot helpe it', before discussing the inadequacy of this logic (sig. G2v). In such ways, the manual prompts active, critical judgement in its readers.

The logical oppositions found throughout *Death Subdued* share with the rhetoric of other godly Art of Dying manuals a socially divisive implication. Apparent truths, applying to the unreformed (for whom death is indeed death), are contrasted with paradoxical truths, which apply to the regenerate godly (for whom death has been transformed into new life). 'Nay they onely may *insultare damnate morti*, set their foote in the necke of damned Death; of which the name onely remaines to them; *Non mors, sed aliquid mortis*' (sig. F11v, my underline). Only Christians, with their positive belief in a better life, can overcome death. With a sectarian sensibility characteristic of the genre, Crooke sees the godly method of preparing for death as exclusive to Protestants and so envied by Catholics that:

... even Papists in the agony of death will be Protestants (to witte, in the maine point of Justification by the alone merits of Christ) and advise their schollers so to be. Hypocrites! That teach one doctrine for life, and another for death; live by one faith, and die by another, and that quite contrary. (sig. C12r)

This contrast between hypocritical Catholics and faithful Protestants emphasises a qualitative difference in the mental approach of the two Christian groups. Papists teach one thing and do another, in Crooke's view, whereas Protestants are consistent in internal and external piety.²⁵⁷ Reinforcing the distinction, Crooke praises earnest individuals who approach death 'not with *custome*, but with *conscience*; not with *prejudice*, but with *reason*' (sig. Dv). Here he lays claim to reasoned, conscientious, internalised piety as the exclusive domain of godly Protestants. It is Crooke's propagandist strategy to treat the techniques of dialectical reasoning as the "trademarked" tools of godly religion. This helps to explain why he devotes so much of the text to paradoxical statement and exegesis. By encouraging readers to appreciate the vocabulary of 'conscience', *Death Subdued* reinforces the Scriptural literacy which is in Crooke's society a mark of affiliation and identification. Protestants are people who "do" paradoxes; or so the author indicates. Linguistic facility is part of the godly dialect.

Crooke's understanding of death as a discriminating event is confirmed in a passage in praise of the 'Saints true comfort,' in which three successive sentences begin with the phrases, 'Only the righteous...', or 'Onely they...' (sigs. G2r-G3v). Here we learn that the righteous – and only they – are held in everlasting remembrance after death by being 'recorded in the Register of God' (sig. G3v). To be in heaven is to be inscribed on a list, the image implies, appealing to the bookish godly. A similar appeal to readers' textual

²⁵⁷ In *The White Devil*, Flamieno asks the ghost of Brachiano 'what religion's best/For a man to die in' (Act V, sc. 4). The question is a signal to the audience of both characters' expedient hypocrisy. John Webster and John Ford, *Webster and Ford: Selected Plays* (London: J M Dent & Sons, 1961), p. 84.

inclinations is made in a Scottish Art of Dying manual, published a year before Crooke's *Death Subdued*. Bartholemew Robertson's *The Crowne of Life* (1618) shares with the latter a distinctly Protestant delight in Scriptural exegesis. Insisting that only 'one comfortable word' is effective in consoling the fearful at death, the Calvinist Robertson advises readers to commit essential Scriptural phrases to memory in advance of the final sickness: 'picke thou out some remarkable sentences, and learne to understand them, to the ende that in time of death thou mayst wrappe thy soule therein'.²⁵⁸ This prescription evokes a remarkable image of dying Protestants 'wrapping' themselves for protection in the sentences of their sacred texts.

It seems from various metaphors of this sort in Art of Dying manuals that the godly expect to distinguish themselves in death, as in life, by being discerning readers and legible, signifying 'texts'. 'In obedience wee cannot better *signifie* our readinesse to subscribe to the wil of God, then by receiving, willingly and patiently, the sentence of death,' Crooke says (sig. C10r, my italics). Dying is a significant, demonstrative, even rhetorical activity in *Death Subdued*. It includes an exegetical action, of finding and revealing the godly self that lies within: 'Proportionably there is in every member of Christ a *godly nature*, not subject to death or dissolution' (sig. F4r). At death, this spiritual self splits away from its sinful body to join a collective exodus. Liberated from the '*infection* of lewde companions', the faithful dead depart from the living as if being evacuated from the plague (sig. G9r). Death seems to cause division at two levels simultaneously, in Crooke's view, separating an individual's opposing selves and on a larger scale, creating a 'progresse' of the godly from the earth (sig. G9r). It might be more accurate to see death as the object rather than the subject of this twofold separation. Crooke uses death as a rhetorical opportunity for people to demonstrate the validity of divisions – within and between themselves - created in pious literature.

Having discussed how Crooke uses language to create moralised social contrasts and to incite and regulate readers' attention in the process of daily dying, I will indicate some further ways in which he explores its potential to deepen the 'minding' of death. Interpreting the Psalms, he declares that the living walk in a shadow, and that even the 'best state' of man is 'altogether vanitie' (sig. D4v). The following sentences extend this conventional statement of life as *vanitas*, not by elaborating the shadow trope but by using Latin terms to suggest the linguistic composition of thought. 'We may well say, *tanquam viventes, et ecce morimur; as living, and behold we die*'. With the clause, 'we may well say,' Crooke signals that he is providing an alternative expression, according to the method of *copia*: if one style of phrasing does not convince, the point should be restated in different terms. He offers Latin words which might have a greater impact than their vernacular equivalents on literate readers.

²⁵⁸ Robertson, *Crowne of Life*, sig. Qr.

Glossing the Latin, he continues: '*Life* is but a *tanquam*; but *death* hath an *ecce*' (sig. D4v). Here it is striking that Crooke uses the grammatical function of certain words as meaningful denotations. Life is 'a *tanquem*'; that is, 'a "just as"', a similitude for a greater reality. Death has the faculty of 'an *ecce*'; that is, 'a "here and now"', or 'a "lo and behold''. This makes rich use of the components of language as tools of a contemplative method. Evocation is not only achieved by vivid metaphors. Readers are prompted to remember, with threefold repetition of the noun, that Christ died 'not to be a Conqueror, but to *make us Conquerours*, and *more* then conquerors' (sig. B3v). A semi-ritualistic mantra is used here to encourage readers to experience exhilaration at the prospect of death without visualising the scene of the Passion. Even the phrase 'death of death', in Crooke's alternative title, evokes through a repeated sound and cryptic syntax the process of Christ's death being replayed in the reader's mind.

In a revealing passage, Crooke explains the psychological benefits of pre-emptive, self-directed efforts to 'subdue' death by cognitive-linguistic means. We should, he says:

... now strive to be partakers of saving knowledge, that wee may not neede to bee catechised on our death bed: now labour for peace of conscience, that we may not be to agree with our adversary, when we are arrested: now submit our selves to the regiment of the spirit, that wee may not be to be broken and tamed, when the Lord hath neede of us. (sig. C7r-v)

Striving to learn is vastly better in Crooke's view than being taught or 'catechised'. Through the conscientious 'labour' of self-betterment, a pious individual can avoid the dreaded prospect of involuntary submission to mortality; of being 'arrested' by death, or 'broken and tamed' by fear of it. Submitting to 'the regiment of the spirit' is a way to grow inner resilience and, paradoxically, to achieve independence. This sentiment seems designed to appeal to godly readers who are encouraged by books like Byfield's *Cure* to see fear of death as 'uncomely' and damaging to their personal integrity. Such individuals might want to seize the initiative and think of what they dread in order not to be caught out, by their fellows or by God's all-seeing eye, in a state of mental weakness. The urge to 'die', actually or in some degree, by one's own choice has long attracted writers of Christian and classical humanist literature. It appears in the Augustinian instruction to die preventatively, to the world, in order to avoid dying passively, as a result of sin: *moriar ne moriar*. This philosophy could however be taken to suicidal and reckless extremes, as Milton's Satan would later demonstrate.²⁵⁹ In Webster's *White Devil* (1612), the anti-hero Flamineo, fatally wounded at his own instigation and tied to a pillar in an absurd parody of Christian martyrdom, defies the humiliation of his

²⁵⁹ Satan's declaration that it is 'better to reign in hell/Than serve in heaven' is clearly presented as an immoral expression of defiance, but the fact remains that this godless aggressor earns Milton's poetic attention, and so enthralls readers, almost to the exclusion of other characters in *Paradise Lost*.

position, insisting: 'We cease to grieve, cease to be fortune's slaves,/ Nay, cease to die by dying' (V.vi, line 251-3).²⁶⁰ To Protestant eyes, Flamineo's embrace of death is a desperate misuse of Stoic fortitude. Yet Stoic fortitude attracts godly and ungodly individuals for the same reason, providing an expression of personal courage, comportment and self-control.

Crooke uses a number of controlling mechanisms to maintain a distinction between godly courage and ungodly cowardice in the act of anticipating death. He warns against increasing one's 'doubtfull' fears with thoughts of hell, but recommends using the same topic in a different frame of mind, as part of a 'carefull' wish to prepare for Judgement (sig. F10r). Like Byfield and Perkins before him, Crooke is explicitly concerned with the right way of reading, and closely monitors the likely response to his text. His strategies of supervision and interpretation should prevent us from seeing Crooke's 'regiment of the spirit' as an entirely reader-led practice. While readers are urged to partake of knowledge at their own initiative, their understanding is vigilantly directed. It is the manual, designed to be kept in a reader's pocket or to be otherwise available for frequent prompting, that reminds us how 'the wormes shall devoure both our skin and our body,' in the grave, and that 'crawling vermine shall be strawed as a matteresse under us,' (sig. D6v). Global repugnance towards the bodily self is roused in order that the reader's efforts of spiritual reform can be closely managed.

Together and separately, author and audience of *Death Subdued* expend considerable effort on the task of animating Christian notions of death in order to banish fear of death. The material form of the printed book facilitates this, to a greater degree than would the original spoken sermon, by allowing readers to summon their own 'enemy' as they turn the page. Of many rhetorical devices used, personifications most readily help readers to 'mind' or imagine, and so to seize control of, an enemy with distinct features. Death is a 'very Goliath' armed and ready to fight (sig. B2v); a 'Beare' who kills mothers in order to devour their infants (sig. B5r); the unborn child of Sin (sig. B8r); Satan's 'chiefe Champion' (sig. D2r); a 'Basilisk' (sig. Fr); and a prison warden or sergeant (sigs. F12v-r, G6r). By mastering these figures, Crooke believes that readers will master their fear. Habituation to the imagined prospect will diminish its terror: 'wee [should] *knowe* what manner of enemy, wee have to deale withal: that the Feare of Death being removed, we might after with more courage and confidence abide the conflict' (sig. Fv). By regular mental exercise, readers are promised they will find it easier to 'see the face & countenance of this our enemy' (sig. D3v). Those who succeed will 'not onely disarme Death as an enemy; but also shake hands with him as a friend' (sig. G3v).

In the early pages, death appears as an ominous adversary, 'no meane enemy' (sig. B2v). The imagined dynamic between 'Death' and the reader is then changed by stages, with each figured action and response suggesting the cut and thrust of a psychological duel. The

²⁶⁰ Cited in Rowland Wymer, *Suicide and Despair in the Jacobean Drama* (Brighton: Prentice Hall and Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1986), p. 140.

progressive imagery turns 'Death Assailant' into 'Death Subdued,' and by implication guides the student of dying from a pose of militant aggressor to that of generous victor, shaking death's hand (sig. G3v). Finally, the victor will be rewarded – not merely for dying bravely, but for the spiritual reform represented by this 'duel' - with the Crown of eternal life. The manual's last two folios advertise death's regenerative potential by depicting it as a process of transformation. Godly Saints pass 'through the entra[i]ls of death' to become purified (sig. G12v).²⁶¹ Improved by death, the blind sinners of this life will have '*sight* instead of *faith*' in the next (sig. Hr). Through death, the reader's 'tabernacle' of earthly life will become a 'temple': 'Then shall the *Arke* of Gods *image* bee at home, & rest in us, never to remove' (sig. H8v). By absorbing God's image within himself, the sanctified individual will be made pregnant by death with new life. 'Christ's image is [then] perfectly stamped on us' (sig. H3v). Some of these promises of transformation verge on being mysterious; even alchemical. By contrast with their spiritual enemies, the godly are expected to merge materially at death with the divine presence, so that their very 'carcasse' or bodily 'dust' becomes immortal (sig. F5v). They will be '*bettered* by resurrection (sig. F6) and immortalised in the community, where '*in name and memory* [they] shall remaine among the better sort of the living' (sig. F7v).

To recall the distinctions used previously of fear of death, we might view these images of improvement, preferment and regeneration as persuasive methods of addressing intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal fears respectively. Like Byfield's *Cure*, and arguably like all rhetorical literature, *Death Subdued* aims to transport readers from one affective state to another. Starting with an assumption of the audience's general fear and indifference towards death, Crooke uses all the rhetorical tools at his disposal to arouse moral dread, moral discrimination, verbal delight, pleasurable anticipation, defiance and prospective yearning. These persuasive elements are used in progression in order to satisfy a reader's appetite for meaningful structure. Triggering death-anxiety by means of textual *memento mori* devices, the author harnesses this concern to gain intensified allegiance to the godly cause, calling on believers to deplore sin and live in faith; to revere godly governors, and to travel like the 'host of Israel' toward an eternity in new Jerusalem (sigs. B2r, C5r).

As a proselytiser, Crooke uses the animating power of death to enhance his own authorial control. He presents Death as an authority and agent of reform in order to disguise somewhat his own agency. Claiming that death provides the lesson or 'document of mortalitie' embodied in the corpse of Queen Anne allows Crooke merely to signal to what is, as he claims, already available for interpretation. Supplied with tools of self-suggestion with which to pursue the godly route to immortal glory, readers are helped in *Death Subdued* to

²⁶¹ See Mueller's discussion of this image as a Protestant adaptation of transubstantiation. In godly eyes, 'God makes of the bodies of Christians in this world the members of his own body in the next', "Pain and Persecution", p. 173.

achieve self-reform. At the same time, these tools of self-improvement ironically help the author to gain more involvement in his readers' internal experience. The printed form allows Crooke to decide not just what reaches the ears of auditors, but what lingers in the inner eye and what expressions are to be habitually 'minded'. Alluring, validating, death-defying metaphors help him to penetrate the private devotional terrain and to steer readers to the godly interpretation of every sign. Death-on-the-page, Crooke seems to have recognised, could be used as a kind of Calvinist missionary, to carry the Church's message into the interior and teach the godly faith in more intimate, thorough and prolonged ways than were achievable through pictures or spoken sermons

Though it is of course difficult to measure the actual effects of Crooke's strategies, we can gain some indication of how the manual might have been used from the diary of Lady Grace Mildmay. In this diary, Mildmay recommends to her children her own practice of reading the entire Bible in daily sections, together with regular study of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*:

... whereby our faith may be increased and strengthened and our hearts encouraged manfully to suffer death and to give our lives for the testimony of the truth of God wherein wee are thus confirmed and sealed by the death and blood of Christ.²⁶²

Vigorous reading is a route to 'manful' dying, in Mildmay's experience. With the phrase 'to give our lives', the diarist seems to regard her exercise of faith as a kind of sacrifice, or gesture of martyrdom. Such a self-perception would undoubtedly reinforce the satisfaction afforded by Crooke's method of cognitive duelling. The readers of *Death Subdued* are taught to apply its lessons with the kind of energetic determination demonstrated by Grace Mildmay. Her opinion of the benefits of pious reading supports Crooke's view that readers can, by engaging the feared object or topic of death with foresight and initiative, become victors instead of victims of the anticipated experience:

It is good fighting with an enemy, already soiled and out of heart. If now thou set upon him, hee will flye before thee: but if thou tarry till he set upon thee, he will eyther devoure, or greatly endanger thee (sig. I2r)

Crooke's language here and elsewhere in the manual has an exercising quality. It prompts an active, almost muscular response from readers which is the textual equivalent of ritualistic action or prayer. In describing how spiritual exercise results in the 'enuring' of a person's mind to the fact of mortality, Crooke portrays it as an almost physical process:

²⁶² Linda Pollock, *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman, Lady Grace Mildmay, 1552-1620* (London: Collins and Brown, 1993), p. 23.

First wee must endure *little deaths*, beare small crosses, forbear small comforts [...] and every day, in one exercise of mortification or other, *beare about in thy body the dying of the Lord Jesus* (sig. C5v).

Godly contemplation is a form of ‘mortification’, he recognises, during which the sufferer will ‘beare about in thy body’ the experience of Christ’s suffering. This stress on the active embodiment of death-thought, made by repetition of the verbs ‘bear’ and ‘forbear’, raises the final point of interest which I wish consider here. I started this chapter by noting how Crooke makes markedly literary and textual use of the *memento mori* theme, treating ‘dead friends’ as lessons in mortality. Briefly, I will conclude with the suggestion that Crooke not only animates death for the reader: he also animates the reader as an actor of Christian dying.

Among its cryptic and pedagogical instructions, the manual at several points evokes pleasures of physical performance and seems to invite readers to participate in a drama of the mind. At the start of the book, Crooke introduces his topics as if they were characters on a stage: ‘Wee have here a Duel between...’ (sig. B2v). Using rhetorical exclamation in the way a teacher might point a finger, or as a prologue character might gesture at the stage, he declares: ‘But loe Christ, as *David*, steps forth and sayes...’ (sig. B2r). A verb in the present tense here animates Christ before the readers’ eyes so that he appears as a human figure, stepping into the arena to a fight a duel. Switching briefly to the past tense, to recapitulate the familiar story, Crooke notes in abrupt, vivid prose how: ‘*Dying*, he overthrew him: *Rising* againe; he spoyled and disarmed him; *ascending*, he triumphed and captivated him (sig. B2r). The last of these three active verbs, all of which are italicised for emphasis, renders the Biblical story of Ascension as the ordinary action of a fallen swordsman getting to his feet to strike again. With the triple rhythm that is rife in prepared oratory, Crooke raises an empathetic, if silent, cheer from receptive readers. By the third page of this tiny volume, godly readers are imaginatively involved in the evoked scene of Death’s duel which, I have previously noted, is presented as the prelude for their own performance.

Beyond setting the scene for his readers’ deaths, and supplying certain abstract or stock figures (Death, the Captain, Satan) to incite and direct their visualisation of the ‘last combat’, Crooke does not give actual directions for the words and gestures to be used in godly dying. In the next chapter, I shall consider a manual which explicitly provides the means by which to enact a good death, going beyond Crooke’s selective use of drama. Though limited, the manual’s animation of the reader as an actor of his or her own death is nonetheless significant for two lines of critical inquiry highlighted in this thesis. Firstly, it supports Bozeman’s claim that godly Puritans embedded themselves, through pious literature, in a ‘living spectacle’ or ‘recapturable mythic drama’ derived from the Old and New Testaments. The *Art of Dying* is a mechanism used by Crooke and his godly readers to facilitate internal dramatic piety. Secondly, the device of imaginative role-play used by

Crooke and expanded - as the next chapter will show - by Samuel Ward, seems to build on a common and instinctive response to the prospect of mortality. Reminders of death have been shown in psychological tests to increase people's drive for conformity and for the shelter provided by collective social fictions: 'By comparing ourselves with cultural standards and working to make sure that our behaviour conforms to them, we safely embed ourselves in the cultural drama and ensure that we are protected from our deep existential fears'.²⁶³ Just as Byfield's *Cure* identifies a fear with complex roots, so in my opinion does Crooke's *Death Subdued* address a multifaceted desire for the immortality achieved in cultural belonging.

In the next and last chapter, I will continue to argue that Art of Dying manuals are the generators, rather than merely the products, of godly beliefs, customs and emotional states regarding death. Nowhere is this more evident than in a pocketbook of quotations from Foxe's dying martyrs, used to animate the faithful vocally and physically to subdue death.

²⁶³ Pyszczynski, Greenberg, and Solomon, "Why Do We Need What We Need?"

Chapter 5

The Life of Faith in Death by Samuel Ward (1622): Ordinary Martyrdom

The final work to be examined in this thesis, Samuel Ward's *The Life of Faith in Death* (1622), manifests in vivid language the righteous, demonstrative, congregational qualities that are latent in other Protestant Art of Dying books. Of the text's many remarkable features, the most striking is evident in the long title, which promises to show the ideal way of death 'Exemplified in the Living Speeches of Dying Christians'.²⁶⁴ As this phrase suggests, the book contains, by way of central instructive material, a compilation of last speeches taken largely from Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. What makes Ward's selection of dying words distinct from other "little Foxes" or miniature books of martyrdom is that he presents it explicitly as a template for spiritual action, to be used directly by ordinary readers, including the author's own sick mother.²⁶⁵ In the manner of a theatrical prologue, and using abundant metaphors of sight and revelation, Ward summons the 'lively testimonies' of a 'whole skye of witnesses' to present death as the climatic fulfilment of a faithful life and of the godly community's providential purpose (p. 8). Fusing the history of Christian persecution with the art of godly death preparation, Ward's manual makes what would now be called a market proposition: an accessible form of martyr's death achievable at home by ordinary individuals.

Despite its slim size and derivative content – indeed, partly because of these qualities – *Faith in Death* holds significant implications for our understanding of the scope and appeal of prescriptive literature on death. Combining a performance script of martyrs' speeches with an apocalyptic commentary on the Book of Revelation, Ward makes the common prospect of death both meaningful and attractive. He locates the formula of godly dying in stories of active, emotive posturing at death, and so provides readers with a quality of faith to emulate rather than a series of rites to follow. The book's short, quotable format invites an immediate response. Ward's readers are encouraged to read the 'Living Speeches of Dying Christians' aloud, on or by the bedside, and so helped to imagine themselves as martyrs – that, is, as witnesses – in the making.²⁶⁶ An ideal of dying 'well' is so thoroughly integrated here with the vocabulary of martyrdom that they seem in the author's mind to be one and the same. To die well is to venture one's life for the truth, and vice versa. By assimilating Foxean mythology and John's apocalyptic dream-vision within a handbook of practical exhortation, *Faith in Death* seems to wrench the Art of Dying genre from its roots in ritualistic, consolatory

²⁶⁴ Hereafter abbreviated to *Faith in Death*, to distinguish it from Samuel Ward, *The Life of Faith*, 2nd ed. (London, 1621).

²⁶⁵ Abbreviated versions of *Acts and Monuments* are discussed in Kastan, "Little Foxes."

²⁶⁶ In Minisheu's dictionary of 1599, a martyr is defined as 'a witness, one that ventureth his life in testimonies of truth'; and in Bullokar's dictionary of 1616 as 'a witsesse: one that dyeth for the testimony of a good conscience'. *E.M.D.D.*

deathbed literature and give it a more theatrical shape. In his attempt to 'move beyond word to flesh', Ward establishes the martyr's death as the exemplary model of Protestant dying.²⁶⁷

My first question relates to the author's intentions: why did Ward choose narrative exempla, in preference to discursive argument, as a means to tell readers how to live the life of faith at the point of death? This question can be answered to a degree by reiterating the preferences of Calvinist authors in the Art of Dying genre, who share, as we have seen, a determination to incite godly behaviour in every aspect of life, by imposing a model of good character; a suspicion of conspicuously poetic or artistic endeavour; and a taste for practical modes of devotion and clearly demonstrative, affective styles of communication. Like his fellow divines Crooke, Byfield and Perkins, Samuel Ward was educated at Cambridge and there undoubtedly absorbed the advice of Erasmus to inspire audiences with passionate rhetoric rather than with scholastic debate.²⁶⁸ With their similar schooling and religious orientation, all these authors make vivid, though censorious, use of persuasive methods. Perkins' urge to animate the ideal of piety, seen in the final deathbed anecdote which disrupts the formal method of his *Salve*, is considerably magnified in Ward's work. Influenced by his Puritan predecessors, Ward also wrote under the shadow of his revered stepfather Richard Rogers, whose devotional works set the standard for books of applicable practical divinity.²⁶⁹

Prior to Ward's *Faith in Death*, however, no Protestant author had so transparently explicated the Art of Dying as a series of exemplary anecdotes. Even Stubbes' narrative of his wife's godly death is diluted with lengthy passages of doctrinal statement. Ward recognises, more explicitly than his godly forerunners or contemporaries, that:

The Art of dying well is easier learned by examples then by directions. These chalk the way more plainely, these encourage more heartily, these perswade more powerfully, these chide unbeleefe with more authoritie: if some work not, others may: some will affect some, some another (pp. 9-10).

The first point to note here is that Ward places his text squarely in the Art of Dying genre, so there can be no doubt that he intends the following compilation of martyrs' speeches to serve as *ars moriendi* instruction. A margin note lists the names of four prominent Calvinist authors with whom Ward apparently wishes to be associated: Beza, Perkins, Hall and Byfield. As these figures were known for their sermons, rather than for their story-telling per se, I take

²⁶⁷ Hampton, *Writing from History*, p. 3. The phrase is used in a secular context by Hampton, to describe the Renaissance practice of treating ancient history as a model for action.

²⁶⁸ This Samuel Ward (1577-1640) became town preacher of Ipswich, and is not the Cambridge theologian Samuel Ward (1572- 1643) whose notebooks are discussed in Todd, "Puritan Self-Fashioning."

²⁶⁹ The influence of Rogers' *Seven Treatises* is discussed in Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, pp. 67-77; Webster, *Godly Clergy*, p. 122.

this list to be Ward's classification of godly shapers of the Protestant Art of Dying.²⁷⁰ It is apt that Ward treats this methodological point as a rhetorical opportunity, using incremental phrases of parallel syntax to anticipate the desired effect of examples to 'chalk... plainely,' 'encourage... heartily,' 'perswade... powerfully,' and 'chide... with authoritie'. A similarly climactic rhythm is achieved by the exemplary speeches, which are thrown out one after another, for thirty octavo pages, without any comment between them. This breathless sequence of one-liners has a jocular structure, as Ward almost acknowledges in the passage cited above: 'if some work not, others may' (p. 10). Some of his rhetorical arrows will strike the target, while others miss. Accuracy, or theological subtlety, is irrelevant to Ward's objective of arousing an emotional response – at least in some readers, at some moments. The overall rhetorical strategy of *Faith in Death* is one of blatant amplification; and to this end, the more martyrs, the merrier.

(a) Martyrs as Models for Imitation

Ward gives the impression that he has spent great effort in compiling the choicest 'last Speeches, and Apothegems' of dying Christians from a wide range of sources: 'ancient Stories, and later Matryologies, English, Dutch, and French' (p. 9). The majority of his examples seem, however, to be abbreviated death scenes from Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. Compressing the "Book of Martyrs" into brief printed abridgements was, by 1622, a popular practice. Since Timothy Bright's summary of 1589, several other abridgements had appeared in print, of which Clement Cotton's *The Mirror of Martyrs* (1613) appears to have been the most popular.²⁷¹ The 'mirror' of Cotton's title indicates how his collection of exemplary martyrdoms is to be used, as a self-reflective instrument by which godly readers may see and perfect their own potential sainthood. Christ's reflection is perceptible in the martyrs' examples to those who look into the *Mirror* 'with a Spirituall eye'.²⁷² While Cotton's *Mirror* highlights the dying moments of martyrs, as opposed to their lives or trials, the reduction of these stories to their last words is made most starkly apparent in Ward's abridgement. By extracting only the most dramatic death-cries, Ward galvanises Cotton's rather more static pedagogic method. Both writers contribute to a shift in the martyrology genre from historical

²⁷⁰ The third name would seem to be Joseph Hall, a Suffolk neighbour of Ward's, author of the influential *Arte of Divine Meditation* (1606) and 'one of the most noted, and imitated, preachers of the century'. Richard A McCabe, "Hall, Joseph (1574-1656), Bishop of Norwich, Religious Writer, and Satirist," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004). To compare the works of the four authorities cited by Ward would require a discussion of theological differences which is of secondary interest in this study of rhetorical strategies and readership involvement in the Art.

²⁷¹ Clement Cotton, *The Mirror of Martyrs* (London: 1613).

²⁷² See author's Preamble, sig. A6r.

chronicle to present instruction; or from record to application.²⁷³ Damian Nussbaum shows how Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* changed emphasis, under different editors, in the early seventeenth century, with the 1632 edition containing 'for the first time an explicit exhortation to readers to prepare themselves for affliction'.²⁷⁴ Contributing to this development, *Faith in Death* could be said to mark an innovation in the abridged martyrology genre by concentrating exclusively on the martyrs' dying words. What interests me here, however, is how Ward innovates the Art of Dying genre, by condensing the act of death to a final speech and by replacing rules with a compilation of celebrated examples.

To understand Ward's enthusiasm for the mini-martyrology format, it is helpful to consider his personal circumstances and inclinations as a publicist for the faith. A popular and non-conforming town preacher of Ipswich, Samuel Ward had by 1622 forged an evangelical style of writing which is apparent from first glance in many of his publications. *The Happinesse of Practice* (1621) indicates in its title the emotional tenor of Ward's Protestant faith. The book urges readers to feel and enact, not merely understand, the godly way of life; to be 'Doers, of what you have beene Hearers'.²⁷⁵ *A Coale from Altar* (1618) carries a flaming illustration on the title page in order to reinforce the text's emotive intent, 'to Kindle the Fire of Holy Zeal'. The illustration is Ward's own design, evidence of a visual and emblematic imagination which the author-artist deployed on other publications. Under the title of the lambasting *Woe to Drunkards* (1622) is a full-page illustration contrasting of the virtuous virility of former times with the pampered debauchery of the present age. The former is represented by a spurred horse-riding boot, drawn from the knee down; a soldier's armour-plated forearm holding a weapon or flag; and between these two, a book, presumably the Bible. The current corruption of these pious, martial activities is depicted in parallel by the stockinged and be-ribboned leg of a court dandy; an arm holding a wine cup and a smoking pipe; and between them, cards and dice. As an engraver, Ward favoured visual-aids of a clearly symbolic, morally delineated kind. His preaching rhetoric is the verbal equivalent of this style: lucid, emblematic, and uncompromising in its binary moral judgements.

Given his propensity for graphic sermonising, it stands to reason that Ward would conceive of Christian dying as a series of iconic, exemplary moments, as portrayed in the *Acts and Monuments* and its popular woodcut illustrations. Death for Ward is an event to be seen and vividly conveyed. For reasons of cost, speed or generic convention, *Faith in Death* carries

²⁷³ *Faith in Death* relates to another literary genre, the *de casibus* tragic tradition of the fall of princes, which is not explored here. For simplicity, I use Ward's term, 'martyrolog [y]', to describe his list of dying speeches and their sources, and 'manual' to denote the overall nature and function of the text.

²⁷⁴ Nussbaum, "Appropriating Martyrdom."

²⁷⁵ Samuel Ward, *The Happinesse of Practice* (London, 1621), sig. A4r.

no design.²⁷⁶ Yet the book does what pictures of dying martyrs do, by other means. After a short introduction, Ward's brisk compilation of one-line speeches achieves the effect of a visual montage, showing how the faithful die by forcing readers to see and hear – internally or by vocal rendition – their last words. Ward is confident of the effectiveness of this approach: 'What dullards and non-proficients are we? if such a cloud of examples work not in us a cheerfull abilitie to expect and counter the same adversary, so often folyed before our eyes' (p. 45). Somewhat reluctantly, he continues: 'Yet least any should complaine, that examples without Rules, are but a dumbe and lame helpe: I will annexe unto them a payre of Funerall Sermons...' (p. 45). Evidently, the two short sermons which follow the book's 'cloud of examples' are no more than appendices to this central montage, and are added by Ward from a sense of pedagogic duty. His first instinct is to illustrate and animate, not to reason.

The most infamous image in Ward's oeuvre suggests a more polemical reason for his decision to exemplify Christian dying as martyrdom. In 1621, as the Protestant-Catholic conflict later to be known as the Thirty Years War intensified on the continent, and as Puritan anxieties continued to rise in England over James' negotiations with Spain, Samuel Ward of Ipswich was tried for the production, in Holland, of a triptych depicting, in one panel, the Spanish Ambassador Gondomar in conversation with the Pope and the Devil, and in the other panels, two crimes for which this diabolical trio is implicitly held responsible: the Armada and the Gunpowder Plot. Ward did not deny his authorship of the image, which offended Gondomar during his residence in London, but claimed that he meant nothing impertinent by it. Jailed for several months, Ward seems to have been released early in 1622, and to have published several sermons including *Faith in Death* within the year. His prison experience did not diminish his anti-Catholic stance, but on the contrary, seems to have contributed to his conception of death as a public stance or act of testimony which distinguishes the true believer from Papist detractors.²⁷⁷ To judge from Nussbaum's account, it is likely that Ward would have had access to a copy of *Acts and Monuments* whilst in the Fleet;²⁷⁸ so perhaps he did his research for *Faith in Death* as an inmate, noting down the martyrs' last speeches whilst in the heat of a personal rage about the Spanish Match, the threat of a Counter-Reformation, and his own punishment.

²⁷⁶ An additional reason for the lack of illustration on *Faith in Death* is Ward's troubled relationship with ecclesiastical authorities, discussed in the following note and paragraph. Examined by the Privy Council in 1621 for one controversial engraving, Ward promised to be more cautious in future; and so, we can assume, he refrained from using images which might give offence. J M Blatchly, "Ward, Samuel (1577-1640)," in *O.D.N.B.* (2004).

²⁷⁷ Ward's brush with the law, and his subsequent preaching in celebration of Prince Charles' return from Spain, are noted in Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution*, p. 9, p. 27.

²⁷⁸ 'Acts and Monuments became a regular prison visitor in the mid-seventeenth century...' Nussbaum, "Appropriating Martyrdom."

Adept at exploiting the popular inferences of symbols, Ward uses the instantly recognisable figure of a dying martyr to represent all the Protestant virtues and qualities associated with this stereotype. A hand in the flames suggests, to English Protestants raised on Foxe's propaganda, more than individual courage: it functions as a form of shorthand or metonym to represent the beleaguered but defiant faith. Several of the figures Ward has chosen to cite, including Saunders, Bradford, Rogers and Taylor, are shown in woodcut illustrations of the *Acts and Monuments* with their last words enclosed in a banner close to their faces, not unlike the 'thought-bubble' of a modern cartoon strip.²⁷⁹ The analogy seems less anachronistic if we hold in mind Ward's taste for graphic representation. Like a caricaturist or modern animator, Ward relishes the heroic comportment of his subjects, their iconic movements and their game-playing, ironic defiance of persecutors. For readers already familiar with these Christian superheroes, Ward provides the service of reducing each one to a single key phrase or sentence, and so sharpening his or her moral contours.²⁸⁰ His compilation of 'Living Speeches of Dying Christians' makes new use of well-known source material, to a twofold end: it functions as a succinct user's guide to a good death, and propagates the mythic pattern of history favoured by Protestant writers.

With characteristic directness, Ward tells readers how to use the quoted speeches: 'Read them over to a sicke or dying Christian...' (p.10). This instruction is a great deal more explicit than either the preamble to Cotton's *Mirror* or the abstract prescriptions for Christian imitation in Crooke's *Death Subdued*. Ward's readers are urged not merely to admire the martyrs, but to articulate their words to fellow witnesses. It is a dynamic, if not theatrical, proposal. Ward sets the scene and provides the rehearsal script for a homely play of dying. With a dedication to his 'deare and loving mother', signed from 'your Sonne in all dutie...', (sigs. A3r, A5r), Ward achieves an intimate tone despite the heroic stature of his exemplars and the portentous, apocalyptic exegesis which follows their dying words. By contrast with the aristocratic dedications of other Art of Dying manuals, *Faith in Death* is presented as a 'Posie gathered out of olde and new Gardens' to a woman who is, presumably, in a condition of sickness or advanced age (sig. A4r). The agitating nature of the work may strike a modern reader as inappropriate to this audience, but for Ward there is no contradiction between an ageing woman's wish to die in peace and the drama provided by 'the whole skye of witnesses' who 'in the very point and Article of Death have lived, and expressed lively testimonies of this their life...' (p. 8). If death is seen as an opportunity to provide a 'lively

²⁷⁹ See the list of illustrations, with accompanying commentary, in the "Apparatus" section of Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, Varorium, www.hrionline.ac.uk/foxe.

²⁸⁰ Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate the parallels, I think such early examples of graphic morality, quotation-based philosophy and religious campaigning could usefully be compared with similar uses of rhetoric in modern media (advertising, business literature, etc.).

testimon(y)' of the faith, then a bedridden individual and a burning martyr may be considered equally capable of accomplishing it, in spirit, providing their faith is strong.

The notion that dying is an act of testifying is not unique to *Faith in Death*, but is a pivotal idea within it. Dying martyrs perform 'lively testimonies' with their last breath, in Ward's view, not as an expressive accompaniment to death but as the essential performance of it. Testifying is what the dying do; it is how they enact death. With a similar understanding, reformers under the Marian regime furtively published the last 'testimonial' of Lady Jane Grey, relating how she bore witness at death, and thereby implying that her death was an act of testimony.²⁸¹ A legal term denoting the declaration of truth by a sworn witness, 'testimony' conveys the sense that the act of dying is revelatory. Ward's exemplary dying Christians tell the truth at and by their deaths. This connotation helps to make sense of Ward's choice of the Book of Revelation as a sermon text by which to explicate the martyrs' deaths. "Come and See," he urges repeatedly in the appended sermons, drawing attention both to his revelatory method and to the revealed truths that are exposed in the act of dying.

For readers, the idea of bearing witness at death holds several points of appeal; especially so, perhaps, to those godly Jacobean who felt that their warnings about the Counter-Reformation were overlooked. The attraction of making oneself heard is not confined to individuals who face actual threats, since as John Knott notes, the language of suffering survived in godly culture well beyond the actual fact; 'many could not let the image go'.²⁸² Suffering in their own perception, godly would-be martyrs had much to gain from the prospect of 'proving' their faith with last, lively testimonies. At one level, they could expect the personal satisfaction of validating and fashioning their own existence, by presenting themselves as they would like to be seen. At another level, they could present their deaths as instruments of good citizenship, helping to strengthen the Christian Commonwealth by testifying to the 'truth' of faith, and swelling the chorus of voices – past and present – who testified likewise. Sociability was of central importance in godly living, as Tom Webster has shown, both as a means to individual improvement, and as a measure of godliness.²⁸³

These personal and social desires are heightened, I suggest, by seeing death metaphorically as a trial. Legal witnesses performed a valued role in the maintenance of the early modern social fabric. The evidence of dying witnesses was considered especially valuable because it was felt that these individuals acted under divine compulsion. As Malcolm Gaskill explains: 'The last words of any person *in extremis* had strong evidentiary status in

²⁸¹ King, *English Reformation Literature*, p. 422.

²⁸² Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, p. 104.

²⁸³ Webster, *Godly Clergy*, pp. 129-40.

law on the assumption that those about to be judged by God were unlikely to lie.’²⁸⁴ At death, the truth will out. John of Gaunt declares in *Richard II* that the dying ‘breathe truth’:

O, but they say the tongues of dying men
Enforce attention, like deep harmony.
Where words are scarce they are seldom spent in vain,
For they breathe truth that breathe their words in pain. (2.1.5-7)²⁸⁵

Ward’s metaphoric conception of dying as an act of testifying combines the attraction of active citizenship with the sense that the words of the dying are inherently worthy of attention. The appeal of making ‘lively testimonies’ is evident in monumental art of the period; particularly in those inscriptions on godly tombs which depict the deceased as pious figures ready to stand up and be counted at the call of the Last Trumpet.²⁸⁶ Early religious autobiography likewise attests to the fact that godly individuals longed to bear public witness to their faith alongside fellow witnesses, and saw death as fulfilment of this longing.²⁸⁷ By using their deaths to ‘testify’ to God, the faithful rehearsed for the Day of Judgement at which, it was widely believed, mankind’s history would terminate.²⁸⁸ A sense of millennial anticipation courses through Ward’s *Faith in Death*, underscoring the idea that death is a defining moment for the community of believers. The ‘living speeches of dying Christians’ are anticipatory acts that herald and facilitate the unfolding of providential judgement. Seen in this apocalyptic framework, the structure of Ward’s manual has a progressive rationale: first he shows readers how to die on this earth, and then he unmask the plot of the afterlife, when God will lift the seals to reveal who shall be saved, and who damned. Encouraged to see her first death as a testimonial, Ward’s mother is led to expect still more drama at the second.

²⁸⁴ Malcolm Gaskill, "Reporting Murder: Fiction in the Archives in Early Modern England," *Social History* 23:1 (1998): 1-30.

²⁸⁵ All quotations from Shakespeare’s work are taken from Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, eds., *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

²⁸⁶ One of many striking examples is the monument to Sir Geoffrey and Lady Palmer, who are revealed, standing and shrouded, as the doors of their tomb burst open. Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral since 1450* (London: Robert Hale, 2002), p. 68.

²⁸⁷ It is possible to see much of John Donne’s devotional writing as an attempt to testify to his faith, and likewise his decision to pose in life for the effigy that now stands at St Paul’s.

²⁸⁸ See C. A. Patrides and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents and Repercussions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). Peter Toon, *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel* (Cambridge and London: James Clarke, 1970).

(b) The Drama of Dying

Having examined Ward's reasons for choosing to exemplify the Art of Dying by 'lively testimonies', I wish now to explore more fully the experience he creates for readers. To appreciate the value, for readers, of the words and gestures assigned to dying exemplars, it is useful to consider the theatrical nature of the religious worldview in which these acts are given significance. *Faith in Death* presents us with a predestined universe, in which God's comprehensive but inscrutable plan for humankind is foreshadowed in the Bible, legible in the pattern of worldly events, and finally revealed in two moments of discovery: the bodily death of each individual, followed after an undefined period by a second and divisive death of Judgement. For Ward, the prophecy of Revelation is an actual programme of future events, to be taken literally. He warns that John's vision of a final battle with the Basilisk, Satan's creature Death, is 'no conceited Story, but a serious truth' (p. 49). The remark confirms that Ward's concept of death is imbued with what Adrian Street calls the 'theatrical basis' of 'Calvinist metaphysics'.²⁸⁹ Like Crooke, Ward anticipates death as a sequence of confrontations and victories, culminating in the release of the Saints from their slumber under the altar (p. 94).

Ward's belief in a macrocosmic divine law that determines human existence lends itself to an architectural conception of the world as space enclosed, like a theatre, by God's design. The manual suggests a spatially defined and regulated arena of human action. If the sea were not 'bounded by providence', Ward argues at one point, it would overwhelm the earth (p. 55). This offers readers the comforting thought that God's laws, like cliffs or walls, constrain and protect us. Every event within these bounds is controlled, as theatrical action is controlled, by a providential designer. This is true even of the timing of every reader's death, Ward maintains: 'In a word, men dye not by chance, course of Nature, influence of Starres, but then, and therefore because it is appointed' (p. 55). Such unequivocal dependence on a divine master-plan might seem disabling to some readers. If 'all falls out as God determines and disposeth' (p. 56), how can an individual practitioner effectively prepare to die well? Ward treats this potential problem as an advantage, using the fundamental mystery of divine operation to create dramatic tension around his apocalyptic idea of death. God's omnipotence provides a simple plan for action – obedience – whilst exciting readers with the possibility that failure or disinclination to perform their given role may be a sign of their doom. Aaron acts patiently in response to his son's sudden death, Ward tells us, 'knowing what God hath sealed, *shall be and must bee*' (pp. 60-1, my italics). The ideal Christian acts, ultimately, as he is made to do. Obedience to the divine will is a central component of the life of faith.

²⁸⁹ Streete, "Reforming Signs."

The smooth operation of providence is threatened, in Ward's view, when 'fools' fail to accept its deep inexplicability, and try instead to predict or influence the time of their deaths by astrology, that 'blacke and senseless Art' (p. 56). While this dismissal of the predictive powers of horoscopes shares the blunt, demystifying tone of Perkins' similar critique in *A Salve for a Sicke Man*, it also betrays Ward's uncompromising mystification of divinity. What lies under 'Gods privy Signet' is unknown to the living (p. 56). Man's earthly life is a 'sealed lease' with an illegible expiry date (p. 59). The concept of divine secrecy infuses this text with a dramatic sense of mystery. Even as Ward condemns the kind of hubristic astrological meddling brought to public attention in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, he is a sensational demonstrator of the Christian magic of resurrection. We may not wish to see the Biblical prophecy unfold, Ward warns portentously; 'yet see it wee must, and see it wee shall, never the lesse, never the sooner, never the later' (p. 48). This linguistic showmanship, which casts the author in the role of an exhorting moral Prologue, matches his instinct for creating dramatic contrasts through providential ideas and moral anecdotes.

Ward's conceptual scaffolding is evidently influenced by Thomas Beard's *The Theatre of Gods Judgements*, which magnificently demonstrates the Calvinist providential scheme by explaining each human death as a clear indication of God's justice.²⁹⁰ Like actors on stage, the unregenerate characters in Beard's propagandist tales perform under the roof of the heavens in the sight of an all-seeing God, whose 'mighty and puissant hand' they cannot escape (Beard's *Theatre*, p. 6). Similarly, Ward dramatises the Calvinist dogma of predestination, using biblical imagery like a scenic backdrop to show how the dead will be flung in one of two directions; into the divine embrace, or the pit of hell. Calling readers in a phrase from Revelation to 'Come and See', Ward seems to steer their gaze over a sequence of visual images, rendering John's dream-vision as a kind of pictorial series or pageant:

Behold, First the Seale opened.
Secondly, the Horse issuing out.
Thirdly, the Colour of the Horse.
Fourthly, the Rider and his Followers, *Death and Hell...*' (p. 54).

The suspenseful pause between each image directs our attention to each of the central agents of divine justice, as they appear in the Bible story. Ward seems to have in mind Dürer's or Holbein's etchings as he signals to the procession of Death and its attending page, Hell: 'Oh,

²⁹⁰ A specific borrowing from this book is the cautionary tale of Cardinal Crescentius' morbid fear of a black dog, retold by Ward on p. 79. Thomas Beard, *The Theatre of Gods Judgements*, 2nd ed. (London, 1612), p. 56.

but heeres yet a more fearefull Spectacle behind, then all that hath yet come in sight' (p. 70).²⁹¹

Underlying this effort to present Biblical images of death as moving pictures is a distinct ambiguity about the moral value of public spectacle, however. Sharing the moral agoraphobia of his anti-theatrical colleagues, Ward is suspicious of the corrupting effects of public theatre and civic pageants.²⁹² He warns that a 'company of Players, riding through a Market' is a 'vaine sight' (p. 47). Only a vulgar crowd, in Ward's view, takes delight in such shows, running towards the sound of a drum or trumpet to see 'Mordecay riding on the kings Horse in pompe with the Royall Furniture', whilst remaining deaf to the true spectacle of the Word (pp. 47-8). Although Mordecai is an Old Testament character, Ward evidently considers his extravagant representation in a procession unseemly. To draw men away from 'infinite and vaine spectacles, with which the eye is never glutted', Ward seeks to bring the Biblical drama of the Apocalypse to life before their blind, scaled, spittle-filled eyes (p. 47, p. 51). In doing so, ironically, he makes an extravagant rhetorical performance of his own.

Equally enthusiastic in his horror for impious spectacle, and in his determination to provide the pious and authoritative alternative, Ward recognises the difficulty of his task. The Book of Revelation is a naturally horrifying vision filled with 'odious Voyces', and it will take the strength of a 'Boanerges', or 'son of thunder', combined with divine intervention, to 'perswade the hearts of men to Come and see' this improving Scriptural prophecy (p. 48).²⁹³ It is revealing to note here that Ward, by 1622 a vehement critic of the King's conciliatory foreign policy towards Catholic Spain, sees his role as that of an angry Boanerges, obliged to bring the message of Revelation to a recalcitrant English audience.²⁹⁴ The allusion suggests that the manual's pastoral aim is never far removed from its political one, of saving the Elect nation – or the godly believers within it – from looming catastrophe. By his own description Ward is a holy wanderer in a spiritual wasteland, a 'Cryer in the Wildernesse' who 'is willed to cry this Theme aloud in the deafe eares of men' (p. 48). This cry comes just a year after Ward's imprisonment for the controversial 'emblem' discussed earlier, and seems to provide

²⁹¹ Duhner's prints of the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse are included in the useful selection by Clifton C. Olds, Ralph G. Williams, and William R. Levin, *Images of Love and Death in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Museum of Art, 1975).

²⁹² I have in mind especially Phillip Stubbes, *Anatomy of the Abuses in England* (London, 1583). It is interesting to note that some church and city corporation funds previously used for plays were diverted to fund preaching in the Elizabethan era. As a very well paid town preacher, Samuel Ward might have felt obliged to provide value for money in the form of entertaining moral instruction. See White, "Theater and Religious Culture", p. 139.

²⁹³ Angry apostles James and John are the original *Boanerges* or 'sons of thunder': "Oxford Guide to People and Places of the Bible," in *Oxford Reference Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

²⁹⁴ Blatchly, "Ward, Samuel (1577-1640)."

evidence of his hostility to James' pacific foreign policy, even if combined with loyalty to the crown.²⁹⁵ Although Ward is unable, given Bishop Laud's powers of censorship, to draw explicit parallels between Biblical prophecy and contemporary events, we can infer from his tone and choice of material, and from his ongoing involvement in religious disputes, that he sees the onset of the Last Days unfolding in the current political situation.

At points in the two sermons, a reader's attention is drawn indirectly to the social imperatives that spring from the Biblical vision of Apocalypse. The forces of the (Popish) Antichrist must be encountered, and the Beast (of Rome) slain, before New Jerusalem will be established under the rule of the Saints.²⁹⁶ To extrapolate, God's plot necessitates action. Those who avoid confrontation, such as the King and his Privy Council, and so fail to risk lives for the faith, may prevent those martyrs who have died for the faith, and those who ordinarily die in the faith, from achieving the eternal reward allocated to the Elect in the divine story. Seeking to recruit disciples to his church, or strengthen the vigour of those who consider themselves Christian soldiers, Ward offers the example of 'but an handful of Christs Campe Royall', individuals who lived and died not for their earthly master, but for the eternal King (p. 44). Drawing his readers into this spiritual camp or theatre of the (true) King's Men, Ward urges them to know the strength of their enemy. Death, the 'King of Feare', tramples on earthly kings as easily as Tamburlaine overcame the Turkish horsemen or Joshua faced up to the demands of Rabshakeh (pp. 63-3). Whether or not these allusions are to be understood politically, they are at a minimum emotionally rousing.

The narrative of death conveyed in *Faith in Death* leads to a congregational gathering of faithful Christian witness, united 'at the last day, when the number of their brethren shall be accomplished' (p. 95). This prospect inspires a sense of solidarity among Ward's godly audience. Isolated on earth, the faithful will be rewarded with a communal resurrection. Their separateness from the ungodly is underscored by the suggestion that Christ and his Angels will meet the faithful dead 'halfe way in the clouds' and help to avenge their enemies and 'such as have insulted over them' (p. 114). Careful not to arouse ungodly vindictiveness, Ward stresses that this righteous justice will be achieved 'without any malignity of envy, anger, or appetite of revenge' (p. 114). He nevertheless looks forward to the time when 'the number of all [the] brethren being consummate, God shal openly acquit & applaud them, condemne and confound their opposites' (p. 114). A properly divisive event, on this

²⁹⁵ He later joined a chorus of Puritanical celebration in print, when Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham returned from Spain without the anticipated marriage agreement. See Samuel Ward, *A Peace-Offering to God for the Blessings We Enjoy under His Majesties Reigne* (London, 1624).

²⁹⁶ That El Greco painted the opening of the Fifth Seal for a church in Toledo in c.1610 indicates the evocative power of apocalyptic imagery in both Catholic and Protestant Europe on the eve of the Thirty Years War. El Greco, *The Vision of Saint John (Oil on Canvas)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; www.netmuseum.org, 1608-14).

description, the trial of death appears to offer a kind of social reorganisation unavailable in this world, or at least in late Jacobean England. It is significant that in the decade following the manual's publication, as the Laudian church became increasingly anti-Calvinist, Ward was held directly responsible for inciting two hundred parishioners to leave Ipswich for the New World.²⁹⁷ Whether or not those boarding ships were directly encouraged by their much-admired town preacher, it seems reasonable to suppose that some had read *Faith in Death* and perhaps took a copy of this portable book to embolden them on the hazardous journey.

By considering certain aspects of Ward's two sermons on Revelation before examining the exemplary Living Speeches, I have tried to show how the social context and the overarching cosmology of the manual give these last words a particular resonance for godly readers. The Living Speeches issue from suffering and celebrate the rewards of suffering, including the strengthening of social bonds. It seems possible that Ward planned or wrote the text in the Fleet, taking inspiration from the confinement which earlier martyrs endured, and which Boethius had turned into an art form with his prison text, *The Consolation of Philosophy*. When Ward compares hell, conventionally, to a 'loathsome prison', it is a reminder – calculated or not – of his experience, which surely reinforced his identification with the historical community of previously imprisoned Christians (p. 83). This fact of the author's experience would be well known to his regular readers and parishioners, and may have contributed to their sense of identification with the book's message.

Like the presenter of a sermon-drama, Ward steers readers' attention to the last words of dying martyrs with neighbourly but relentlessly moralistic directness.²⁹⁸ In the dedication to his mother, he declares the 'use', 'fruit' and 'benefit' of Christian *exempla* to the sick and aged (sigs. A3v-A5v). To all readers, he advises; 'Read them over...', claiming that if an individual has even 'the least sparke' of faith, 'these will kindle it' (p. 10). This instruction to watch and learn might be compared with the pastoral practice inscribed in a pre-Reformation preaching play such as *Everyman*, which guides readers to pious choices via a representative protagonist. Whereas *Everyman* performs a number of discrete acts in order to make a 'sure reckoning',²⁹⁹ however, Ward's readers are presented with a series of spirited examples from

²⁹⁷ The accusation was made by a commissioner of Suffolk, who reported to Archbishop Laud in 1634 that Ward was stirring up religious discontent, causing 'swarms' to board ships for New England. John Bruce, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, in the Reign of King Charles I, 1633-4* (HMSO, 1863), p. 450. Ward's defence is described briefly in N W Bawcutt, "Samuel Ward, William Prynne, and George Herbert's 'the Church Militant'," *Notes and Queries* 51:4 (2004): 353-4. Following my observation in an earlier chapter that the godly fantasy of death is of a piece with an evangelical outlook towards the New World, it is also worth noting that Samuel Ward's brother, Nathaniel Ward, became a clergyman and law-maker in Massachusetts.

²⁹⁸ The role of a 'presenter-figure' in Medieval preaching plays is discussed in Neill, *Issues of Death*, p. 65.

²⁹⁹ A C Cawley, ed., *Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays* (London: Dent, 1984), p. 209.

which they are to extract a common pattern of good dying. An alternative comparison might be made between the format of *Faith in Death* and that of a commonplace book, used by educated readers to collate a private store of useful knowledge.³⁰⁰ Presented as a notebook might be, with quotations and phrases related to the designated topic, Ward's manual helps readers to gather the verbal resources needed in preparation for death. Thus equipped, his readers would have a mental armoury of examples on which to draw at the point of dying. In an increasingly literate culture, no godly witness would wish to be speechless in death, and there is evidence that even those dying without the power of speech, like Queen Elizabeth, made use of a prepared internal storehouse of prayers and pious gestures.³⁰¹

(c) Last Words and Actions

The Dying Christians process onto the page, as it were, in chronological order; the first group from ancient Rome, the second from Marian England, and the third from Catholic Europe. 'Old Simeons Swannes Song,' Ward announces for the first figure, using only punctuation to signal Simeon's speech: '*Lord let thy servant depart in peace, &c.*' (p. 11). The '&c.' indicates that this swan-song is so well known to Ward's audience that he does not need to relate it all. Familiarity, rather than originality, forms the basis of this Art of Dying. Next in the list is: 'The good *Theefe*, the first Confessor. *Lord remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdome*' (p. 11). Third is '*Steven* the first Martyr, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit, forgive them &c.*' Again the abbreviation underscores Ward's brisk approach: particularities do not interest him so much as the general spirit of faithfulness found in these speeches. Those martyrs who receive several lines, such as Polycarpus, Ambrose, Vincentius, and Marcus of Arethusa, in the examples from ancient history, are arguably the most entertaining; their retorts to persecutors, in the midst of agony, being remarkably witty, confrontational, and emotionally extravagant. Theodosius reverses the usual understanding of social hierarchy with his defiant claim: '*I thank God more for that I have beene a member of Christ, then an Emperour of the world*' (p. 13). Hung in a high basket, and coated with honey to attract stinging wasps and bees, Marcus seems elated, jesting: '*How am I advanced, despising you that are below on earth*' (p. 16). The attraction of these perversely gleeful, defiant performances to one of Ward's graphic imagination seems clear.

³⁰⁰ Commonplace books were intended to be functional and improving, used by scholars to 'apply textual information to the development of their discursive skills and, more broadly, to the management of their lives'. William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), p. 62.

³⁰¹ The queen's death, as described by William Camden and Francis Bacon, is discussed in Stein, *House of Death*, pp. 21-2.

The second part of the anthology of dying speeches starts with King Edward VI and gives relatively extensive treatment to the English figures likely to be most familiar to Ward's audience from Foxe's narrative: Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, Rogers and Bradford, together with many more. If viewed as a second 'Act' in Ward's sermon-drama, this section seems to develop the strategy of witty subversion invented by the early martyrs to an exaggerated, almost hysterical degree. These English Tudor Christians seem not merely content to die, but yearning for it, as an opportunity to prove their enemies wrong. 'Baynam, *Behold you Papists that looke for miracles, I feele no more paine in the fire, then if I were in a bed of Downe, it is as sweet to me as a bed of Roses*' (p. 20). With this provocation, Baynam seems to represent his death as at once miraculous and anti-miraculous. His faith transforms pain into a joyful sensation at the opposite end of the experiential spectrum; yet the ease with which an ordinary Protestant believer achieves this transformation makes mockery of the exclusive arts of miracle-working ascribed to Catholic Saints.

The contemporary speech patterns of martyrs quoted in this second section gives their dying words immediacy and a homely quality. Several refer to their companions as 'brothers,' make reference to local geography, or use food as the source of figurative tropes. Adam Damlip explains his 'cheerfull supping and behaviour' before death with a quip about his surroundings: '*why (quoth he) thinke you I have beene so long in the Marshallsea, and have not learned to dye?*' (p. 21). This comment might remind Ward's audience, and modern critics, that the Art of Dying is not an esoteric theological matter, but a common human activity. Prison provides ideal training in the Art, Damlip implies, since it provides the time to contemplate death and the certain opportunity of putting preparation into practice.³⁰²

In the third and final section of Living Speeches, we are presented with variously surprising, inventive and assertive dying words from continental Protestants including Pico Mirandula, Peter Berger, 'John Mallot a Souldier', Annus Burgius, Giles Tilman, 'Marion the wife of Adrian,' Dionysius Peloquine, and 'Lewis Marsake, Knight'. As their epithets indicate, nobles and commoners are mixed together to provide a parade of Christian sentiment. The motley selection is deliberate, as we have already seen: Ward provides a range of exempla so that 'if some worke not, others may' (pp. 9-10). Some readers would appreciate the answer of 'Anonymous, on his death-bed, to a Friend of his that willed him to have his thoughts on heaven: *I am there already*' (p. 27). Other readers might prefer the less mystical, but possibly more inspiring courage of Marion, who, 'seeing the Coffin hoped with Iron, wherin shee was to bee buried alive. *Have you provided this Pasty-crust to bake my flesh in*' (pp. 39-40). All of these exemplars proved, Ward states in conclusion, an ability to keep 'their

³⁰² Prisoners seem to have been visited often by ordinaries determined to teach them how to die. Lake and Questier, "Antichrist's Lewd Hat," pp. 156, 208, 218-224, and 264.

Faith fresh and lively in the face of this grand enemy' (p. 44). Ironically, it is this quality of 'lively' energy that seems most essential to a good death, in Ward's view.

Whilst I do not wish to overstate the political nature of this compilation, it is hard to ignore the note of opposition sounded by the responses of these persecuted individuals to their persecutors. Refusing to submit to the command of authorities, Ward's selected martyrs perform acts of brotherly guidance, mutual support and celebration which reinforce the quality of protest in their deaths. The selection indicates a somewhat radical enthusiasm for congregational worship which corresponds with Ward's recorded objections to ceremonial gestures such as bowing in the name of Jesus, and similar 'innovations'.³⁰³

How are readers to derive a formula for good dying from this eclectic list of last speeches? The consummate words of a dying Christian are of course those attributed by Luke to Christ: 'into thy hands I commit my spirit'. Yet Ward's anthology shows that there is no single, authorised way to adhere to the *imitatio Christi* imperative. Even those imitators who die in persecution like their Lord do not always repeat his words, but make various interpretations. There is more than one mirror in which to fashion the Christ-like self: this is both a problem and an opportunity for Ward, who supplies approximately seventy examples in the expectation that 'some will affect some, some another' (p. 10). We learn in the following sermon that the author hopes to discover his own essential Christ-likeness at the final apocalypse, when he will see Christ directly, and find him 'most admirable to behold, and my selfe like unto him in my degree' (p. 69). With this notable phrase, 'my selfe like unto him in my degree', Ward indicates a curiosity over his own spiritual status which readers would surely share. Believers are being offered the prospect here of discovering, after death, the figure that they have tried to imitate in life, and whose pale reflections they are.

Ward's advice to read the martyrs' words aloud to a sick friend is a remarkably direct solution to the challenge of *Imitatio Christi* devotion, which had spawned numerous books of a more theoretical nature in previous decades.³⁰⁴ Quite simply, a dying individual such as Ward's mother might hear or recite the dying words of Ignatius or Bishop Ridley and empathise with the subject's attitude. Being female is not seen by Ward as a hindrance to effective imitation: on the contrary, it is surely because godly women prove particularly adept at fashioning their lives on pious models that they are admired by male divines as illustrative living exemplars.³⁰⁵ Imagining death to be a cruel Fury wielding racks, fires, strappadoes and

³⁰³ Blatchly, "Ward, Samuel (1577-1640)."

³⁰⁴ The influence of Thomas a Kempis' work on Protestant and Catholic devotional guides of the early seventeenth century is noted by many religious historians, including Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, pp. 74-8; Walsham, "Domme Preachers."

³⁰⁵ Cotton's *Mirror* is dedicated in 1612 to Princess Elizabeth, and in 1625 to Lady Lucy, Countess of Bedford, in memory of her late deceased mother, Lady Anne Harrington. These women were the recipients of other pious how-to-die manuals, including Perkins' *Salve* and

wild beasts, Ward claims the strength of faith will enable even 'a woman, or a childe to make sport with her' (p. 6). Courage is a product of individual belief, not of individual circumstances. Even bed-bound, Susan Ward could achieve a martyr-like state of godliness through mimesis since, as the 'living speeches' seem to show, martyrdom is to some extent a state of mind. This point is made, albeit in a different context, by Ward's fellow divine Henry King in a sermon preached at Paul's Cross in 1621, the year before *Faith in Death's* publication. Defending his recently deceased father, Bishop John King, against the 'crackt opinions' of critics that he died in apostasy using Catholic ceremony, the younger King rails against the slander suffered by his father:

'Persecution of the body, and affliction of the mind [...] it is not the sword alone, nor the fire which makes a Martyr. There is *Martyrium fama*, Martydrome of fame, as well as vite, or life. A man may bee a Martyr without bloodshed...' ³⁰⁶

If they agreed with this claim, those listening to King's sermon might have taken up Ward's manual the following year with some confidence of following the Christian martyrs of ancient and recent history to an exemplary death. King's detailed defence of his father's dying demonstrates, at least, the importance attributed by Ward's society to the nature of a person's faith in death.

Courage, defiance, and exuberance emerge from Ward's 'lively testimonies' as hallmarks of a good death.³⁰⁷ These qualities of action would gain increased moral value at a time when commitment to military action becomes a test of every citizen's religious identity in a Protestant state tentatively involved in continental warfare. Ward's impatience with spiritual inaction is thus overlaid with a broader sociological impatience. He is for a war-mongering spirit in life, and approves active dying, even in bed. By contrast with the complacent sort who 'hang up their Armour a rusting', true believers are like 'people that live in perpetuall hazard of war, [and] have all things in a daily readiness for service at halfe an howres warning, upon the least Alarum' (p. 59). The wise Christian acts in a state of high-alert, ready to leap at death's call, as if 'hee hath no morrow' (p.65). It is perhaps no accident that the last word of this short book is 'quickly'; 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly' (p. 125). Godly dying, on the evidence of Ward's verbs, is a matter of running, physically or metaphorically, to meet death. Thomas Sampal, offered a reprieve whilst in the fire, is reluctant to be delayed, and chooses to finish the 'race' to eternity unaided (p. 25). Rowland Taylor is described 'fetching a leape or two' of delighted anticipation as he nears Hadley

Byfield's *Cure*, making them surely the best-trained candidates for a 'good death' in early modern England.

³⁰⁶ Henry King, *Sermon at Paule's Crosse* (London, 1621), p. 46.

³⁰⁷ The modern term 'passive-aggressive' applies remarkably well to Ward's selected martyrs, who torment their tormenters with an overt and extreme display of patience in suffering.

churchyard, and his death (p. 21). Speed expresses a godly person's enthusiasm for salvation, and is therefore to be understood as a direct indication or mark of godliness. A similar use of swift action to indicate true spirituality is made in *The Atheist's Tragedy*, where the pious Charlemont 'leaps up the scaffold':

In expectation of the victory
Whose honour lies beyond this exigent,
Through mortal danger, with an active spirit,
Thus I aspire to undergo my death. (Act 5.sc 2, lines 126-9)³⁰⁸

The motor of such urgent, voluntary and demonstrative anticipatory acts is 'Faith fresh and lively', that dynamic substance which generates enthusiasm in every part of the segregate and congregate body, allowing the 'Spirits, Wits, and Tongues' of martyrs to function 'undismayed' (p. 44). Ward seems to imagine 'faith' almost as a humoral fluid which inhabits ancient and contemporary Christians alike, uniting the godly community across generations like a kind of blood pedigree. Since the purest faith is understood to produce an active desire for martyrdom, examples of this desire can be read as proof of kinship between dead and living witnesses. Explaining that the first persecuted Christian bishops 'did more ambitiously desire the glory of Martyrdome, then others did Praelected and Preferments,' Ward implicitly gives his readers a code by which to distinguish their true spiritual kin, as those who lust for death, from unrelated neighbours who prefer earthly power (p. 44.). Of course this implied pedigree of faith is equally available to Catholic writers as a means to prove their kinship with the early Christian martyrs. What makes Ward's claim recognisably godly and apparently exclusive to this community is its accent; the direct, familiar and exhorting, 'lively' vocabulary with which he signals fellowship. Like a modern advertisement, the manual reinforces a linguistic community by using words with a certain emotional range to capture the empathy of the likeminded. Recognising their feelings in the description of 'fresh and lively' faith, readers are drawn into a kind of club of similarly emoted worshippers.

A chivalric sensibility seeps into some of Ward's examples and prescriptions. Like a 'valiant horseman', the good spiritual warrior does not avoid the summons of death, but rather 'addresseth himselfe for the encounter' (p. 64). His protective uniform, apparently derived from Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, includes a 'Helmet of Salvation' and 'Shield of Faith' (p. 64). Thus armed with spiritual conviction, the faithful knight will make 'true heroical & Christian resolutions against the feare of Death and Hell', Ward promises, with a sideways glance at non-Biblical epic literature (p. 115). Fredericke Anvill of Bearne is said to have defied his persecutors with the dying cry: '*Thine O Lord is the Kingdome, thine is the power and glory*

³⁰⁸ Maus, ed., *Four Revenge Tragedies*, p. 325.

for ever and ever; Let's fight, Let's fight. Avaunt Sathan, Avaunt.' (p. 35). Here the litany of Lord's prayer, the Church's official devotional 'script', breaks apart under the pressure of vehement faith, the rhythm of 'for ever and ever' becoming a marching song, 'Let's fight, Let's fight', which the martyr repeated 'three times', we are told. Ward seems to be showing us that the action of faith speaks louder than words, pushing believers beyond ritual towards an all-encompassing kind of assertive activity.

The controlled fearlessness of the Spenserian Red Cross Knight, which Ward seems to have in mind at some points in the text, conflicts to some extent with the delirious, outspoken and ecstatic varieties of courage displayed by Foxe's martyrs at others. Chivalry and martyrdom are an imperfect fit, and Ward's martial allusions do not map exactly onto his saintly examples. Christ's victory over death, which left Him master of 'the key and seale of Death' is in Ward's opinion a comforting, '*ordinary* notion' (p.61, my italics): yet the catalogue of Dying Christians records extraordinary acts performed in unusually grim circumstances. A knight called Lewis Marsake envied his fellow prisoners, we are told, because they were made to wear halters around their necks while he was exempt on account of his nobility. Imitating Christ's deliberate humility and disregard for social hierarchy, the knight asked to be allowed to wear this same mark of persecution, the 'Badge, and ornament of so excellent an order' (p. 42). An ambivalent view of social rank can be detected here in the knight's desire to share the spiritual exceptionalism of his brethren, whilst ignoring his noble title. If a Christian does not attain true knighthood and nobility until death, then the use of a chivalric code in the approach to death is limited to its metaphoric value: the reader should aspire to be like a good soldier, but know that he is not one.

In their assertive courage, the Dying Christians are potential spurs to reckless imitation, as Ward seems to recognise. He condemns the 'pitifull' and drunken bravery of 'our Duellists' whose 'Prodigall' behaviour is a misplaced attempt to demonstrate courage in dying (p. 74-5). The man who thinks he can conquer death in a bout of armed combat is warned that Death will be followed by his worse attendant, Hell, a 'blacke Fellow, a terrible monster' (p. 75-6). Thus Ward seeks to counteract the 'false' martial spectacle of a duel with the 'true' chivalric pageant of heavenly Judgement, replacing a classical model of heroism that has proved too exciting with one he knows to be terrifying. Aware that without such a brake, the reader may extemporise the role of a Christian knight too freely, Ward intervenes to direct the action, as it were explaining how the Shield of Faith is to be used, and insisting that the reader's mental scenery be not a classical backdrop but a Biblical dream-vision.

This agitating but controlling churchman wants readers to make monuments of their deaths, but only according to his model of faithful conduct. The possibility that readers might extemporise too far, or imitate ungodly models, informs the text's theme of sight, to which I now turn. Like the Doctor's moral summation in *Everyman*, Ward's two appended sermons

on Revelation seek to reduce the preceding dramatic action of the Living Speeches to a clear, unambiguous moral lesson. What his dramatic method unleashes, this sermon commentary tries in the same text to direct, contain and control. Ward uses the metaphor of death as discovery to control both what readers 'see' or understand on the page, and more broadly how they exercise their powers of perception in preparation for death. In other words, sight concerns Ward here both as *ars* and as *dogma*. His preoccupation extends the concern shown in other Art of Dying manuals, such as Perkins' *Salve*, over the task of reforming and controlling readers' perceptions.

Doctrinally, the vision metaphor rests on an assumption that mortals, blinded by Adam's sin, live in a state of clouded understanding and will recover full vision only at death. To help the faithful perceive what is hidden (the divine will), whilst bearing witness to what is known (their strength of faith), Ward trains them to sharpen their spiritual eyesight in preparation for death. He insists, like Crooke, on pre-emptive contemplation or 'praevision' of death (p. 49.) Echoing the psychological duel theory of Crooke's *Death Subdued*, Ward presents this art of training the eye in adversarial terms. By a process of mental combat or *psychomachia*, readers are to 'see' the fearsome Basilisk pre-emptively, before being 'seen' by it, in order to reduce its 'deadly poison' (p. 49). Godly vision is thus confrontational: it looks directly at what is feared. The reader is given two rules of praxis to achieve this: 'The first is to worke in his minde a settled and undoubted certaintie: and the second a lively and frequent representation of them [Death and Hell]' (p. 115). Conviction and visualisation are assumed to be mutually supporting activities, both requiring the kind of extensive effort that we might call self-hypnosis. Conjured in the mind, the adversary Death responds by showing one of two faces to the combatant, depending on that individual's moral courage, so that those contemplating death with an unblinking gaze will see Death differently than 'other the sonnes of Adam do' (p. 50). The spectacle of death reflects the moral status of the onlooker, Ward seems to suggest here, appearing fearsome to the fearful, and blissful to the assured. In this discriminating fable, the untrained eye can expect to see the ugly face of death as certainly the godly eye will see bliss. Conversely, those who have blissful visions of heaven can take this 'true' sight as proof of their election. Thus Ward trains readers to select from an internal kaleidoscope of Biblical imagery only the reassuring sights. The 'Enemy' so feared in Art of Dying literature is perhaps whatever tempts a person to look astray.

No-one can escape the fateful symmetry of good and bad vision by dismissing notions of hell as 'Hobgoblins spirits, or old Wives tales', the author warns: such a person will 'rush into Death, and chop into Hell *blindling*' (pp. 71-2, my italics). Blindness, in Ward's logic, is the just punishment for a refusal to see precisely. Scepticism about the objective existence of hell appals the literalist Ward because it implies that some of the Bible's statements are not to be taken on faith; whereas, in his view, there is no false spectacle

in God's ordained universe, but only false sight. Those who view hell as a fiction are not seeing in the right way: 'these Monsters wilfully shut their eyes, deface and obliterate these stamps, and principles of nature, and so dance hood-winke into perdition' (p. 73). To such quibbling 'Phylosophie', Ward prefers the instinctive belief of those unlettered people 'lesse soiled with Art' who have a natural faith in heaven and hell (p. 73). Seeking to reinforce the instinctive, unquestioning faith of the artless, Ward encourages readers to look where he directs them to look, and no further, trusting the preacher's better-trained eye:

The best course is well to ponder what wee that are Gods Ministers report of [hell], out of Moses, the Prophets, Christ, and the Apostle's descriptions. And if God meane thee any good, our warning may doe thee some good. (p. 82).

Faithful looking is for Ward part of the whole condition of faithful being, of which the person's emotions are significant indicators. Although the manual makes no explicit statement to this effect, both its narrative examples and its commentary suggest a link between certain kinds of emotional state and genuine (or 'inner') belief. Ward expects the 'hearts' of the faithful to perform in ways that are recognisable to fellow witnesses as indicative of sincere faith. As a measure, this expectation is inevitably subjective and expedient, allowing the beholder to judge who dies with a 'true' faith. Ward's notion of authentic emotion is inseparable from his rhetorical endeavour, in two respects. To diagnose the sincerity of Protestant martyrs (and the insincerity of Catholic martyrs), he makes a tactical selection and interpretation of signs which could be used to prove the opposite. Similarly, in expressing his own faith, Ward uses his body strategically as a persuasive medium. His commentary on hell is interrupted, for instance, by the fulsome evangelical cry: 'Alacke, alacke, Oh that my head were a Fountaine of teares...' (p71). This draws attention to the emotional function of the author's eyes, which flow with godliness as well as receiving visions of it. Eyes and heart are supposed to be directly linked in Ward's pious body, so that what he feels triggers what he expresses; but what he expresses here is a prepared exercise of *pathopoeia*; a conventional, learned, rhetorical stratagem.

In order to stimulate a flow of passion in readers, Ward impresses emotive images upon their minds. This strategy, far from being disguised, is a technique recommended for self-use as means to rouse and invigorate faith. If the 'affection' is properly stirred with thoughts of mortality, Ward argues, these will leave a lasting 'impression in the memory' and 'produce some effects' in the lives of those affected (p. 52). Here, the memory is seen as a kind of wax into which stirring sights of martyrdom may be sealed. By impressing such images onto its readers, exemplary literature mirrors the providential operation of nature, which stamps on savage souls a 'divine impression' of the certainty of heaven and hell (p. 73). This pressing or imprinting action is used again to describe how belief in eternity is 'an

indelible principle stamped on the souls of men by the finger of God' (p. 96). The author's finger mirrors the action of God's finger, it seems, pushing right thoughts and images into the reader's mind. What is true of his preaching and publishing activities is surely also true of his graphic illustrations: Ward is determined to press his message home by all available media.

Faithful activity has a circular effect, stirring godly witnesses who are thereby moved to demonstrate their resulting emotion to others. This demonstrative temperament is illustrated by a homely yet sensational anecdote from Foxe, about the burning of a Protestant, 'Austo', at Smithfield.³⁰⁹ A spectator at the burning, one Mr Rough, a minister, tells an old acquaintance on his return that he has been 'where I would not but have been, for one of my eyes... I have been to learne the way' (pp. 44-5). So inspired is Mr Rough by the edifying sight of a martyr's death, that he values the experience as highly as he would his own eye. Ward approves the minister's ability to feel elated in pity, and reports that Mr Rough soon 'made good' the lesson learned by being burned himself, thus performing 'the same kind of death' as the one he had watched (p. 45). Readers are left to conclude that, if viewed through the eye of faith, even the horrifying sight of a fellow Christian in flames is heartening. Though death is not inherently celebratory, a godly onlooker can make it so; such is the transformative power of pious vision. This anecdote suggests, moreover, that right seeing and its attendant joy is passed from one spectator to another. The man who sees well dies well, in the case of Mr Rough, becoming an exemplary text which others read and copy. His passionate witness is reported by others, who in their godly retelling become performers, and so on. Godly seeing tends towards the making of new spectacle.

Ward's confidence in the improving function of a spectator's emotion is central to the text's utility. Bringing the art of devotional mimesis into the ordinary bedchamber, Ward insists that a rendition of martyrs' dying speeches to a sick friend will be physically effective: 'if they quicken not, if they comfort not, it is because there is no life of Faith in them' (p. 10). This is a strong claim for the medicinal, even miraculous, power of belief. Faith can 'comfort' and 'quicken' in the manner of a dynamic and fluid impulse that moves between people, involving the believer's whole body in an act of worship and inspiring other bodies to similarly euphoric acts: 'Faith turneth feares into hopes, sighings and groanings, into wishings and longings, shaking and trembling into leaping and clapping of hands' (p. 4). Ward seems to suggest here, as a point of consolation, that the godly actor's body will perform in a certain way without any calculated effort because of the fire of zeal within.³¹⁰ If God's witnesses are sincere, they cannot contain the 'lively' sighs and groans that will spill from them in a kind of

³⁰⁹ Austo's story is related in John Foxe, "Acts and Monuments," (Sheffield: hriOnline, 2004), 1563, p. 662.

³¹⁰ The image of fire is used elsewhere in Ward's work to denote a desirably intensity of faith, as in the illustrated title-page of Samuel Ward, *A Coal from the Altar, to Kindle the Fire of Holy Zeale* (London: 1618).

sanctified emotional incontinence. The truth will out; the faith will out. Ward's description of the transformative action of faith here seems to forge the gap which many of his contemporaries perceive between the 'unexpressed interior' and the 'theatricalized exterior'.³¹¹

A private deathbed reading of *Faith in Death* seems to provide effective consolation by offering on a small scale what Neill identifies as the effect of tragedies, which is to 'contain the fear of death by staging fantasies of ending in which the moment of dying [is] transformed, by the arts of performance, to a supreme demonstration of distinction'.³¹² Ward himself would of course object to the term 'arts of performance' since, as we have seen, he regards Art as a corrupting or 'soiling' activity (p. 73). Stage performance evidently seems fraudulent, licentious and dangerous to this godly author, as to all Puritans, on the grounds that it 'impiously subverts one's God-given identity and place in the sexual and social order and counters the biblical mandate to imitate Christ in all things', as Paul Whitfield White explains.³¹³ Although Ward considers devotion and performance to be diametrically opposed - the first an act of pious patterning, the second a matter of impious presumption - it is debatable whether he succeeds in maintaining this distinction for readers, in practice. Encouraging a conformist type of devotional role-play in the manual, Ward only narrowly avoids contradicting his disapproval of play-acting, in my view.

The manual attempts to create an artless Art of Dying, in which true actors are distinguished from false by their 'palpably' cheerful mode of expression, arising from a 'lively' faith within: 'when it comes to the point of Death, then the speech, the behaviour, the countenance palpably distinguish the dull patience perforce of the worldling from the cheerfull welcome of the Christian' (p. 5). Authenticity is established in the act of dying by a 'palpable' intensity of faith, Ward claims here. True performers, as distinct from worldlings, exude a kind of spiritual heat. The authenticity of Ward's exemplars is accordingly indicated, in part, by aspects of posture or physique which communicate this heat: its symptoms can be seen, its temperature felt, in the impassioned blush of a dying martyr. Joyce Lewis typifies the excited, semi-erotic state of those martyrs who 'looked as fresh and cheerly at the houre of death, as at their marriage' (p. 67). The arousal of the dying individual cannot be faked, Ward insists. God can detect the 'cold heart' of a pretender, by contrast with that of a true Christian made 'warne' by faith (p. 67). Here, bodily heat is expressly equated with spiritual ardency; and this preference for the hotter humors can be detected throughout. A 'colde' reasoned thought has value but does not sustain the courage of a fool (p. 79).

³¹¹ These terms are taken from Maus, *Inwardness and Theater*, p. 2.

³¹² Neill, *Issues of Death*, p.32.

³¹³ White, "Theater and Religious Culture."

Hand-clapping is a significant gesture in Ward's extracts, used to indicate the intense enthusiasm of martyrs in the moment of dying. Ward creates dramatic tension in a brief report that Thomas Hawkes agreed before execution to give his friends a 'signe' that he could tolerate the flames, and eventually 'after all expectation was past, hee lift up his hands half burned, and being on a light fire, with great rejoicing, striketh them three times together' (p. 23). Abbreviating the story from Foxe, Ward omits the qualification 'as it seemed' after the word 'rejoicing', so fixing with greater certainty Foxe's evidence that Protestants die gladly. Hawkes' perverse elation in pain epitomises the affective style of martyrdom to which the godly aspire. Transcribed into words, the gesture would mean something like 'to the utmost': the signaller is as glad as he can possibly be. It is an expression of emphasis, rather than spontaneity. Like Robert Logan, one of the Earl of Gowrie's co-conspirators, who during his execution in 1609, 'lifted up his hands a good height, and clapped them together aloud three several times, to the great wonder and admiration of all the beholders', Hawkes prepares to make a readable 'signe' which he performs with stage-managed convention, repeating it 'three times'.³¹⁴ In this case, the calculated nature of this martyr's action is meant to be seen as a manifestation of his essential joy, rather than a contradiction of it. A planned effort can be an authentic one, Ward seems to imply, if it is made in order to communicate genuine feeling. The particular difficulty of clapping half burned hands signals Hawkes' particular determination to show his sincere equanimity. It is only because he is genuinely resigned to die, we are invited to think, that he is able to perform this extraordinary demonstration. By exaggeration, we might say, the dying actor proves his true godliness; and by exaggeration, reporters of the event prove their participation in it. The hand-clapping gesture is a shared act, completed by those who recognise its meaning and (re)create its ideal pattern, so that the community takes collective responsibility for making the individual's good death.

Several of Ward's selected martyrs articulate the extremity of their pious emotion by kissing the stake (Lawrence Saunders, p. 19, Elizabeth Foulkes, p. 24), or by 'embracing the Reeds and Faggots' (John Bradford, p. 19). This literal embrace of death is provocative, suggesting that the persecuted can change the significance of their enemies' weapons by force of will. Under the guise of supreme resignation, such posturing conveys a proud and satirical intent to enrage persecutors with a show of quiet contentment. As a way to outperform fear by reversing the intended significance of a torturer's weapon, this gesture might be seen as evidence of the Calvinist 'fear of fear', as defined by Phoebe Spinrad.³¹⁵ Kissing the stake is an outward demonstration of the ideal of death-defiance expounded in Byfield's *Cure* and Crooke's *Death Subdued*. By using examples of it in his instructional book, Ward makes the

³¹⁴ Logan's dying gesture is cited in Maus, *Inwardness and Theater*, p. 6.

³¹⁵ Phoebe S. Spinrad, *The Summons of Death on the Medieval and Renaissance English Stage* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), p. 37.

gesture prescriptive. No longer an action confined to the heroic past and performed exclusively by martyrs of Christian history, the embrace of death is presented here as an attitude which all dying Christians should, in their own ways, imitate.

The rituals of dying Protestant martyrs are acts of witness, Knott observes.³¹⁶ Replayed in *Faith in Death*, they provide a repertoire of actions which ordinary readers can study in anticipation of performing their own dying testimonials. Reminded by Ward that felons blanch when their death sentence is pronounced, turning 'white as cloth' and proving unable 'to looke it in the face, with the bloud in their cheeks', readers are persuaded by contrast to die not just courageously, but assertively so (p. 66). Whereas the cowardly 'gulls and gallants' whom Ward despises 'slight off Death with a jest, when they think it is out of hearing', brave Christian soldiers like the martyr Saunders laugh directly in the face of their tormentor (p. 66). The ideal posture to be taken at death, on the basis of this exemplary pattern, is one of unflinching hyper-bravery.

By their actions and physiology, godly witnesses signal their fortitude to one another; but their spiritual heat also seems capable of performing a kind of alchemy, refining and preserving their souls in parallel with the 'rotting and mouldring' of the body (p. 67). In the moment of dying, spiritual essence separates from physical dross. Until this point, the invisible substance of the soul, a 'particle of divine breath' inspired into the flesh at birth, is said to constitute it like an 'elder and more excellent sister to the body inmixt and seperable' (p. 101). The physical symptoms of a dying martyr are therefore to be read, I think, as indicative of the separation of physical and spiritual selves, and distillation of the latter. In godly bodies, this separation is expected to be painless, after a penultimate struggle with the Enemy. The martyr Baynam induces a 'sweet' sensation by comparing the pains of his fire to a bed of down or roses (p. 19). In dying, the faithful will be released from their outer casing and rise above it until they are almost disembodied beings, 'spirits without flesh' who can be comfortable in torment and unaffected by the pangs of physical death (p. 97). Wanting to be separated from the flesh is a godly desire, according to Ward: the Saints 'sigh to be unclothed' (p. 104). By contrast with the quiet sighs of satisfaction with which godly souls are released, Ward imagines the division of the ungodly to be violent: 'I wonder how the soules of wicked men and unbelievers goe not out of their bodies, as the Divels out of demoniaks, rending, raging, tearing and foaming' (p.88). It evidently offends his sense of moral symmetry that bodies do not always signal their spiritual content so clearly.

Ward thus fosters two kinds of desire regarding the dying body: a social wish to demonstrate conformity through godly expressiveness; and a pious wish to transcend and become other than one's body. In my view the first desire is communicated with more success

³¹⁶ Foxe's account of Robert Smith, who clapped the raw stumps of his arms together while burning to death, testifies to the martyr's composure in extremity. Knott, "Joy of Suffering."

in *Faith in Death*, making this manual one of the more physical of Protestant Art of Dying texts. Ward shares the anti-corporeal bias of Platonic Christianity, advocating a spiritual form of self-anatomy designed to wean the reader away from love of his body, but inevitably the direction to stop caring about bodily life (and its loss) acknowledges the strength of that bond. In the example of Tankerfield, we see this process and its attendant anxiety played out as a dialogue between the burning, shrinking 'Flesh' and the Christ-minded 'Spirit' (p. 25). The martyr's painful inner conflict is nothing if not dramatic. So well does the man divide himself in two, by means of pious self-denial, that he is able to perform each role silently and with such conviction that the unspoken words are somehow communicated to subsequent writers.³¹⁷

Through the example of Julius Palmer, Ward urges the practice of self-division:

To them that have the minde linked to the body, as a theeves foot to a payre of stockes, it is hard to dye indeed; but if one be able to separate soule and body, then by the helpe of Gods spirit it is no more mastery for such a one, then for mee to drinke this Cup (p. 23).

For those convinced, like Palmer, that their true selves are spiritual, death should be no harder than swallowing.³¹⁸ Yet Ward's seventy brief examples linger on the last moments of human speech and action, reinforcing a reader's fascination with all things 'lively'. In the two sermons that follow, Ward's pious fantasy of disembodied eternal life relies on bodily metaphors, such as nakedness. Dying is imagined as a radical purification whereby, stripped of misleading individual beauty and vain attire by the gift of death, the spiritually naked become recognisable to like-minded brethren, and cannot be mistaken for those false Christians who embody their falsehood and 'whose belly is their God' (p. 68). The much anticipated 'White robes', which clothe the souls under the altar represent a changed state which Ward cannot represent other than by analogy with corporeal life (p. 93). '[W]hite apparel hath ever been an Emblem and Symbole in Divine and Humane heraldry, a cloathing of Princes in their great solemnities...', and so it pleases Ward to note that in the Apocalypse vision, long white robes are given to 'every one' of the liberated souls (pp. 108-9). Given the temper of contemporary debate on clerical vestments, it seems probable that Ward's readers

³¹⁷ This internal debate reportedly took place on the eve of Tankerfield's death, in the Cross Keys Inn, St Alban's, whilst the man was warming his feet by a fire. Scalded, he withdrew his foot, 'shewing', Foxe says, 'how the flesh did persuade him one way and the Spirit another'. The author's commentary simply elides into a transcription of the presumed debate: 'The flesh sayd...' John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments [1583 Edition]*, Varorium [online] ed. (Sheffield: hriOnline, 2004), p. 1690.

³¹⁸ Ward changes the comparison from 'this peece of bread' to 'this Cup', but otherwise quotes exactly from Foxe, 1576 edition, p. 1830. In support of the idea that the disembodied self rises from the body at death, I note that this martyr is said to be 'thorow the element of fyer... exalted above the elements'. Foxe, "Acts and Monuments," p.1541.

would draw an egalitarian or at least low-church message from this imagery, to the effect that all the saintly will be rewarded in the next life with a uniform of visible fellowship and distinction. Indeed it is possible that this figure does not seem to Ward to be a metaphor, but rather an actual prediction; in which case, he describes only a temporary loss of the body, to be followed by its physical revival and actual redressing. In this way, his use of Revelation might be said to disguise rather than eradicate love of the flesh.

I have traced the ways in which *Faith in Death* inspires readers to die demonstrating their belief, and will now consider how the text contributes to the development of a godly Art of Dying genre. By selection, abbreviation and emphasis, Ward intensifies the aggressive cheerfulness of Foxe's dying martyrs and so makes more pronounced the distinct 'brand' of Protestant dying. He makes this distinction explicitly and competitively, contrasting his chosen exemplars with two rival philosophies: classical humanism and Roman Catholicism.

To take these in order, it is important to note that Ward stresses early in the manual that he is exemplifying a holy, Christian way of dying by contrast with that of 'Pagans' and 'Philosophers'. His first priority, it seems, is to discredit a non-Christian view of death, which regards dying as the climactic encapsulation of a heroic personality. So sensitive is he to the influence of this view, that he mocks it in the opening pages: 'Alas what doe they tell us of their Socrates, their Cato, their Seneca, and a few such thinne examples which a breathe will rehearse, a fewe lines containe their poore ragged handfull...' (p. 6). Competitively determined to show that 'our Legions' of Christian converts provide better exemplary material than does classical literature, Ward continues the comparison for several lines, heaping up phrases of contempt for the 'few choyce men of heroycall spirits' given to 'windy vaine-glory', by contrast with ordinary Christians of all sorts, 'strong in the Faith' (pp. 6-7).

This invective masks the fact that early Christian martyrs belonged to Roman culture, and that Art of Dying literature is influenced by its rhetorical tradition, civic ideals and heroic exempla. Thomas Lupset's *The Waye of Dyenge Well* (1534) opens with an admiring treatment of Cato's suicide and Canius's witty, dangerous retorts to Caligula. Lupset's delight in the defiant raillery shown by Roman individuals in the face of death is obvious, and is echoed by Ward's delight in the similar performances of Christian martyrs. Consciously or not, godly authors build their model of pious dying on this secular inheritance. It seems possible that Francis Bacon's short essay *On Death*, which cites the dying words of five Roman emperors to indicate how they achieved constancy of emotion at death, remaining 'the same men till the last instant', might even have prompted Ward to compile his role-call of

Dying Christians.³¹⁹ Ward is however conscious only of rejecting the impious tradition of dying well. Two of the Roman exemplars who earn Bacon's cautious admiration, Augustus and Tiberius, disgust Ward by how 'boldly and blindly they think and venture on Death' (p. 73). 'If the Dreames of a blind fatall necessity could quiet Heathens,' Ward challenges in a characteristically competitive spirit, 'how much more should a Christian be chearfull at the disposal of a wise and loving keeper of the Seale' (p. 61). The revealing word here is 'more': believers need to show more conviction, to attain more joy, than the unconverted.

Despite Ward's claims to the contrary, part of the attraction of the martyrs' examples for readers is their evocation of the humanist, pre-Christian pleasure of representing oneself as an admirable character in the final act of life. Choosing to make 'Heathens' the first point of contrast with his godly ideal, Ward effectively confirms the popular appeal of individual accomplishment at death. Like other Art of Dying books, *Faith in Death* appropriates non-Christian ideas about death without acknowledging the debt. In the sermon that follows his catalogue of last words, Ward approves Plato's philosophy as 'true Divinite,' in that it holds the 'Commentation of Death' as the purpose and 'whole summe' of a wise man's life (p. 51). This praise, confined to Plato's meditative priority, does not extend to the consequent tendency to use death as a self-perfecting, autobiographical performance. Yet it seems evident that the Christian lives Ward celebrates are compressed into a revelatory final moment which encapsulates their individual characters; and that the opportunity to epitomise themselves likewise in a last soliloquy would be attractive to readers. It is revealing that Cotton refers to his collection of martyr stories as an 'Epitome', using a rhetorical term to indicate the persuasive and crafted nature of these holy endings.³²⁰

The metaphorical conception of life as a stage with death as its final scene, common to many types of Renaissance literature, saturates Ward's and other pious works as if it were an exclusively Scriptural invention. In *Disce Mori* (1600), Christopher Sutton states without moral reproach: 'All are actors of severall parts: they which are gone, have played their parts, and we which remaine, are yet acting ours: only our Epilogue is yet for to end'.³²¹ Charles Fitz-Geffrey considers similarly that 'the end is the Crowne of the whole work, and the last Act (if any) carrieth away the Applause'; however he adds with pious caution that while men 'of this world' may find satisfaction in turning their lives into an Epigram, God 'seeth not as man seeth; Hee lookes not so much to the last period, as to the whole cause of life'.³²² Ward

³¹⁹ John Pitcher, ed., *Francis Bacon: The Essays* (London and New York: Penguin, 1985), p. 65.

³²⁰ Cotton, *Mirror*, sig. A10v.

³²¹ Christopher Sutton, *Disce Mori. Learne to Die* (London, 1600), p. 27.

³²² Charles Fitz-Geffrey, *Deaths Sermon Unto the Living [1620]*, ed. Retha M Warnicke and Betty Ann Doebler, *Funeral Sermons for Women* (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1999), p. 29.

and his godly contemporaries claim that only faith can produce a good death, but the dying performances of exemplary Christians satisfy and inspire readers, I suggest, by demonstrating such long-admired traits of the human character as bravery in death.

Ward's criticism of 'vaine spectacles, with which the eye is never glutted' (p. 51), discussed earlier, may have its foundation in the knowledge that contemporary playwrights were making creative, and morally ambiguous, use of the dramatic potential of death as an individual's last scene. At the climax of Webster's *White Devil* (1612), the anti-martyr Flamineo is tied to a pillar from which he mocks his opponents with brave wit and urges his executioner to 'search my wound deeper'.³²³ The villain's resistance is attractive despite his unrepentant atheism, and so puts into question the Christian claim to exclusivity in good dying. More dangerously from Ward's perspective, this scene offers audiences the opportunity to laugh at the conventions of pious martyrdom. While there is nothing to suggest that *Faith in Death* is a direct response to any particular non-godly play-text, the social and intellectual environment of 1622 provokes from Ward an energetic attempt to galvanise audiences in specifically Christian preparation, and to dissuade them from any other kind.

The obvious rival to Ward's model of godly dying is not humanism, however, but Catholicism. A 'Popish' *ars morendi* is the stated target of Ward's invective at one point in the manual, and seems to inspire his determination to establish the specifically Protestant nature of 'faith in death' unequivocally throughout. The visual and theatrical aspects of *Faith in Death* appear to be conscious attempts to out-do an older method of saintly dying; and it is with this goal in mind, I think, that Ward combines the most thrilling episodes of Protestant history with the most dramatic sequence of the Bible. Used as commentary on scenes from the "Book of Martyrs", as if it were written as a companion volume to Foxe, the Book of Revelation emerges from Ward's manual as a distinctly godly prophecy about the resurrection of Elect (Protestant) godly saints. Apocalypse is, in a sense, Ward's answer to Purgatory: it lures readers into a vividly imagined afterlife in which they progress to bliss not by sacramental stages, but by God's sudden lifting of the Seal.

Ward shows significant sensitivity to the work of his chief rival in the Art of Dying genre, scoffing: '*Bellarmino* is of opinion, that...' (p. 81). This is a reference to Cardinal Bellarmine, whose book *The Art of Dying Well*, composed in Latin in 1620, was translated into English in 1621 by Edward Coffin and distributed to recusants in this country by illicit means from the St Omer Press. A second English edition of 1622 is appended with a detailed eulogy by Coffin describing the saintliness of Bellarmine's own death, which occurred that

³²³ Act V, scene 6; p.92 in Webster and Ford, *Webster and Ford: Selected Plays*.

year.³²⁴ Since Ward's comments in *Faith in Death* refer to Bellarmine in the present tense and make no mention of the Cardinal's death, it may be that he was unaware of it at the time of writing. Coffin's biographical appendix is an application of the Jesuitical Art of Dying, demonstrating neat continuity between formula and practice. If Ward was aware of it, this exemplary death-tale of a famous Catholic contemporary must undoubtedly have intensified his determination to provide a correspondingly coherent and persuasive Protestant text. Coffin's publication confirms the importance of Bellarmine, and of a Catholic Art of Dying, to English recusant readers – and indeed to Protestant readers – in this period. Widely revered throughout the recusant community and beyond as a main author of Counter-Reformation doctrine, spokesman for Rome, and correspondent of King James, Bellarmine was a worthy object of his rival's attention, as influential as Ward feared him to be.³²⁵

Ward's first line of attack is to condemn Bellarmine's representations of death as facile. According to Ward, Bellarmine considers 'one glimpse of Hell' sufficient to turn a man into a sober Christian anchorite (p. 81). This encourages a 'superfluous, superstitious' interest in the external nature of hell instead of promoting the sustained, Spirit-led 'thorow meditation' that Ward aims to provide. Condemning the descriptions penned by such 'Popish writers' as both too bold and too cursory, and therefore suggestive and seductive to the imagination, Ward reveals the nature of his fear. The poisonous trickle of Counter-Reformation texts entering England from Catholic presses in St Omer and Douai, and issuing from illicit presses in London, presents a threat to Ward's susceptible countrymen, as he sees it.³²⁶ Recusant books do not only contain dangerous doctrine, in Ward's view, but are dangerous to the imagination, conjuring images too freely in readers' minds, with too few interpretative guidelines. Seeing himself as a genuinely authorised interpreter of God's Word, by contrast with the Jesuit Bellarmine, Ward does not wholly reject the internal visual theatre of the imagination, but rather claims that Scriptural images have an exclusive right within it. His method of meditation is not just 'thorough', but thoroughly monitored, regulated, and confined to approved godly sources.

Competing with Bellarmine on the same thematic territory, using a shared stock of Christian material, Ward labours to refine the differences in their methods. Deriding the

³²⁴ Roberto Francesco R. Bellarmine, *The Art of Dying Well*, trans. Edward Coffin, 2nd ed. (Saint-Omer: English College Press, 1622). My references, given in brackets after each citation, are taken from this combined edition.

³²⁵ My understanding of Bellarmine's prominence is gleaned from several sources; among them: Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Collinson, Hunt, and Walsham, "Religious Publishing."; Helen White, *English Devotional Literature <Prose> 1600-1640* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1931), p. 136.

³²⁶ The activity of Catholic printers and booksellers in Jacobean London is described in Collinson, Hunt, and Walsham, "Religious Publishing."

Catholic author for making a bold display of images or 'Maps' of heaven and hell, Ward claims to prefer a more indirect approach, using the 'shadows and parables' of the Scriptures to mould readers' insight or 'conjecture' and to 'worke on [their] affections' (p. 82). In theory, this strict and spirited exegetical method would require godly readers to decode the text with more discrimination than their recusant counterparts might apply to Bellarmine's 'many frivolous and tedious rules' (p. 115). In practice, despite his stated preference for an interpretative reading of the afterlife, Ward deploys sensational imagery to convey a vivid picture of the 'howling, scratching and gnashing of teeth' of reprobate spirits, whose pain is worse than the 'pangs of childbirth, burnings of materiall fire and brimstone, gnawing of chest-wormes, drinckes of Gall and Wormwood' (pp. 84-5). This image of hell is hardly more oblique than Bellarmine's: 'The place is depth; the tyme eternity; the manner without measure' (*Art of Dying*, p.205). Replacing a diagram of hell with an evocation of the pain of the damned, Ward shows his preference for sensation over doctrine, and rapture over ritual.

While each author denounces the practice of religious rivals, Bellarmine condemning 'Heretikes, Calvinists, Anabaptists and the like' to the flames of hell (*Art of Dying* p. 194), both share the same concern over how to train the Christian reader's spiritual eye in preparation for death. For Bellarmine, the five senses are 'gates' by which sin enters the soul, lechery entering through the eyes; and so, individuals must be their own gatekeepers, restraining their vision by occasional voluntary blindness (*Art of Dying*, pp.154-7). This appears to be a rather more ascetic, Jesuitical solution to the problem which Ward solves by training readers to look always through the impassioned eye of faith, a prism of Scriptural images which shows every aspect of life in Biblical, moralistic terms. Bellarmine's choice of moving images or *exempla* similarly indicates that he reveres the solitary monastic discipline exercised by Eleazarus, St Olio, Theodorus and Climacus' hermit in response to diabolic visions (pp. 187, 267, 274, 287). By contrast, Ward's role models are often vociferously demonstrative and congregational, evoking the collective vision of an anticipated community of Saints to counter the threat of death.

The difference between these two ways of 'seeing' or preparing for death is significant but subtle, I think. While both manuals use images to stir the emotions and incite readers to action, they do so to different ends, producing rather different *artes* or kinds of religious theatre. Ward excites his readers' imagination so that they will recognise their own latent moral character in the Scriptural mirror and perform acts of devotion habitually and voluntarily in order to fulfil this God-given role. His 'art' is thus demonstrative and reformist rather than ritualistic and progressively rewarding. Bellarmine's affective images provoke the reader instead to perform introspective, confessional and charitable acts in order that 'we should merit the same heavenly inheritance, that is, everlasting blessednesse, by our owne good workes proceeding from his grace, and our owne free will' (*Art of Dying*, p. 103). In

both texts, seeing well leads to dying well, but in Ward's Calvinist imagination, spiritual vision can only manifest, not cause, the individual's ultimate enlightenment at death.

Bellarmino's own act of death, consciously performed and undoubtedly perfected in the retelling by the English Jesuit Edward Coffin, puts into practice the sixteen traditional sacramental precepts of the first book of the *Art*, and exhibits his ascetic, dramatic conception of death, as conveyed through the *exempla* of the second book, as a struggle of holy resistance against personal doubt. Dying in quiet, still contentment, Bellarmine made himself – and was simultaneously made into – 'the mirrour, and Splendour of that Order [in which] he had lived' (Coffin, *Relation*, p. 334). His deathbed became a ceremonial site during his last days, with visitors arriving to 'touch his body with their bookes, their beads, handkerchiefs, Crosses, Medalls and other like things, and that very reverently on their knees' (*Relation*, p. 369). After death, Bellarmine's blood was kept as a relic and used to perform healing miracles, while Coffin joined the relic-hunters by taking a piece of the saint's skull. Like the anecdotes about hermits contained within Bellarmine's *Art*, this description of the author's own saintly death in 1622 seems to belong to the older and more remote world of medieval hagiography, by comparison with Ward's or Foxe's contemporised model of ordinary martyrdom.

Although this particular account of saint-making appears to have reached England too late in 1622 to earn a specific reference in *Faith in Death*, it shows that a highly visual, mystical and moving Art of Dying was in practice in Catholic Europe at this time; and this inevitably intensified the search for an equally dramatic Protestant response. If Catholic authors could offer readers a transformative rite of passage at death and a visible, emotionally involving process by which good Christians are seen to attain Sainthood, to the benefit of those still living, then godly divines knew they had to provide an experience of death – not merely a doctrine – to satisfy the same expectations.

With this in mind, we might regard Ward's concern with ways of seeing as an attempt to provide a devotional method to rival the Ignatian technique, by encouraging the godly to focus their attention on the legitimate, semi-sacred image of death. Death's 'face', despite or because of its lack of specific contours, can aid concentration and is worthy, in the author's view, of sustained visual attention. In a rare moment of humanist enthusiasm, Ward praises Socrates' ability to 'fasten his eyes' on a single object for hours without weariness, and claims that such focused concentration, if applied to mortality, could 'bring a man to immortalitie' (p. 52). The trained spiritual eye can transform or actualise the immortal godliness of the beholder, he implies. As proof of this mystical effect, Ward cites the example of a young rake or 'Prodigall' who utterly reformed himself by contemplating a death's-head ring for an hour daily over seven sequential days (p. 52). With this example, Ward evidently approves the contemporary habit of giving and wearing *memento mori* rings, which feature a skull and

motto, to aid meditation on death.³²⁷ Aligning the devotional tasks of seeing and rehearsing for death, he seems to recommend that readers contemplate with sacramental regularity a tangible object bearing the skull motif, using its 'face' as other Christians might use Christ's face, as an icon that can change the onlooker. Death's power to transform the beholder is suggested on *memento mori* objects by the juxtaposition of healthy human figures (a baby, or rosy-cheeked woman) with the skeletons to which they will inevitably be reduced. *Faith in Death* reiterates this warning of death's destructive power and advertises the regenerative power of true vision, which can 'bring a man to immortalite' through a semi-ritualised and magical way of looking.

By putting the words of dying Christians into the mouths of readers, and images of death - both emblematic and dynamic - into their minds and hands, *Faith in Death* exhibits to a degree the iconographic tendency it decries in Catholicism. Material preparation for death in the form of tomb sculptures inspires Ward's Puritanical comment that a 'painted sepulchre' cannot save the rich from putrefaction, and that only 'the superstitious sort' want to be buried 'in a Fryeres Cowle, or under an Altar of stone' (p. 118). Books, on the other hand, are considered to be valid tools of spiritual preparation and transformation: 'Write, O Christ, these Meditations in our hearts, imprint these Patternes so fast in our memories, that wee may all the dayes of our lives have frequent fore-thoughts of our appointed change...' (p. 125). Viewed from an anthropological perspective, Ward's impressionistic scenes of dying martyrs might be seen as iconographic texts, or new Saints' 'relics', imparting to users some of the stimulating power of the *Acts and Monuments*.

Setting itself against pagan philosophy and Catholic devotion, *Faith in Death* reforms the *ars moriendi* tradition by stimulating and coercing readers' sensations through a novel combination of literary sources. Ward interprets the Book of Revelation as a call to action:

This Text, mee thinkes speakes to every sicke man bound on his bedde with the Cords of Death, as Dalilath to Sampson: up and arise, for the Philistines are at hand: Death is at the doore, and behind the doore, the Fiends waight to fetch away thy soule (p. 81).

'Up and arise' is the resounding note of Ward's godly Art of Dying, and is echoed in other Calvinist books of the period. The third rule of John Barlow's capsule guide to godly living

³²⁷ Post-Reformation death's-head rings typically bear the inscriptions 'Behold the End', 'Memento Mori', 'Memorarere Novissima' (Remember the Last Things), 'Dye to Live' or 'Nosse te Ipsum' (Know Thyself). Protestants known to have worn them include Martin Luther, Lancelot Andrewes, Edward Goodman, John Evelyn, Sir Richard Gresham. Charles Chichele Oman, *British Rings, 800-1914* (London: Batsford, 1974), pp. 56-71; Diana Scarisbrick, *Rings: Symbols of Wealth, Power and Affection* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1993), pp. 52-3. The meditative use of death's-head objects is recommended in Robert Greene, *Greenes Farewell to Folly*, 2nd ed. (London: 1591), sig. B3v; John Jackson, *Ecclesiastes: The Worthy Church-Man* (London: 1628), p. 5.

demands: 'Up and be doing'.³²⁸ The fear that propels these godly writers seems to be a fear of that apathy or emotional paralysis which causes the dying, in Ward's description, to 'become as insensate as stocks and stones' (p. 77). Stony indifference to the prospect of death is alarming to Ward because he wants to rouse a unified chorus of faithful voices to join the 'whole skye of witnesses' represented in his compilation of exemplary deaths. To prevent such indifference, he imbues the manual with a sense of urgency through terse, truncated use of the Foxe and Revelation narratives. The fires of past martyrs are brought alight on the page, as it were, to bring readers closer to the spectacle of imminent apocalypse. Exceptional beacons of godly zeal combine with the common emphasis on necessary haste which is found throughout Renaissance literature, in images of the hourglass or wings of Time, to convey an imperative to hurry in anticipation of death.³²⁹ Saint Augustine, the named inspiration for *Faith in Death*, defined the aim of rhetoric as inducement to action.³³⁰ Ward sees his task accordingly as that of a provocateur, inflaming the spiritually idle to do what they have neglected, and the godly to do as they are destined with the fullest conviction.

The manual's brief octavo format is well suited to this imperative, supplying the reader with key points and sayings to use when there is no time to study the whole Bible or the monumental "Book of Martyrs". Advertising the pocketbook's particular utility as a weapon of salvation against fast-approaching death, Hill's *A Direction to Die Well* (1607) ends by praising a young lawyer who kept 'certaine propheticall verses' on death in his pocket, and was thus well prepared, by 'thinking ever of sodaine death', for his own sudden death in Milford Lane on September 1st, 1604.³³¹ The convenience of Ward's manual, like Hill's, is intended to encourage life-long, intensive anticipation of death in which the present moment is critical. Reform and repentance must begin now, before death strikes.

This small book makes a radical departure from earlier Art of Dying books by allowing readers to select, in their favourite examples, those aspects of the Christian pattern of dying that most attract them. These readers, as much as the martyrs they imitate, are responsible for developing the impassioned inflection of traditional Christian virtues that is the godly way of dying. Ward insists, in the final and prominent word of his dedication, that the manual is for 'use' (sig. A5r). He invites friends of the sick to read the martyrs' speeches aloud (p. 10). These apparently innocuous remarks have the significant effect of putting

³²⁸ Barlow, *A True Guide to Glory*. Given as a funeral sermon for Lady Mary Strode, this text is clearly intended to function as a godly conduct manual.

³²⁹ A rich source of such images is George Wither, *A Collection of Emblemes* (Aldershot: Scholar, 1989), p. 235. See also Samuel Rowlands, *A Terrible Battell Betweene the Two Consumers of the Whole World: Time and Death* (London: 1606).

³³⁰ The dedication opens 'I honour Augustine much...', sig. A3r. Hampton, *Writing from History*, p. 4.

³³¹ Hill gives the date and address of the young man's death to stress its realism, relevance and immediacy to London readers. *A Direction to Die Well*, p. 603.

exceptional speeches into ordinary hands and mouths, so that Ward's readers become didactic speaking texts. His devotional theatre of death spills out beyond the church into any space in which one godly actor edifies another. Such activity was already well established in godly 'conventicles', and in the practice of household catechising and 'conceived prayer', as described by Patrick Collinson; but here Ward harnesses it to the universal act of dying.³³² Designed to promote and unify the brethren, his model of faithful dying is one of resistant activity. It conveys a sectarian sense of godly purpose through millenarian rhetoric.

Far from being unregulated, *Faith in Death* remains a heavily regimented didactic exercise, in which the author patrols the imaginative 'field' with words designed to stimulate and others intended to repulse. By perpetuating the consensus of a spiritual 'communion' via emotive language calculated to appeal to a popular market, the text instils conformity and appears to be one of the most effectively propagandistic how-to-die manuals. Ward uses the *Art of Dying* to teach readers how to understand and express themselves, and how to relate to one another in demonstrative, congregational, didactic and mimetic ways. This ideological programme, conducted in print, is made attractive by a vocabulary rich in passion and a symmetrical rhythm which balances cautionary and inspiring points. Training readers to use an internalised script, it prepares them to be articulate at death within prescribed bounds.

³³² For example, in Collinson, *Godly People*, p. 537.

Conclusion

Of many possible questions to be considered in this conclusion, I choose to concentrate on the one that seems most relevant to a study of the rhetorical effects of Art of Dying literature.

What did readers of godly death manuals learn or gain from them?

To answer this, I will review key characteristics common to the five selected texts, thereby addressing problems of interpretation raised in the Introduction. If a particular topic, metaphor or other rhetorical technique recurs in several texts written in the same period, is this recurrence to be considered evidence of the sameness of thought of people living in that period? If godly Art of Dying manuals exhibit shared patterns of thought, then who or what is responsible for causing and changing them? Does the significance of these texts lie in their religiosity; or in their experimentation with style and print technology; or in the clues they yield about death-related practices? I have suggested that all these factors are significant in accordance with the commentator's perspective. My aim has been to analyse the techniques by which godly manuals enlist a reader's attention, and to evaluate how far the theme of death makes an emotive or otherwise effective contribution to this persuasive process.

Readers of any (or all) of the selected texts are told in various ways that it is more important to die in the 'right' frame of mind than to die following a particular form of words or actions. The 'right' disposition identified by William Perkins seems to correspond with the 'lively' examples provided by Samuel Ward. Both authors prompt us to understand that for Protestant believers, the right way to die is in a state of demonstrative and certain faith. It is not assumed that individuals will simply achieve this state of mind without effort or practice: indeed, the manuals devote considerable attention to the process of mental discipline. Readers are taught to inure themselves to the prospect of death by achieving "little deaths" in advance of it. Inuring the mind for death can take various forms: preparing godly arguments to use against ungodly doubts; increasing self-loathing for one's sinful, and so mortal, nature; grappling with Scriptural paradoxes in order to change one's mental representation of death; using combative metaphors to strengthen one's confidence against the 'enemy'; meditating on contrasts between the poverty of earthly life and the superiority of spiritual life; and animating one's faith by vocal or empathic imitation of exemplars.

In prescribing these techniques, godly Art of Dying manuals often allude or refer approvingly to the defiant style of courage exhibited by former martyrs in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. I have argued that some manuals, such as Ward's *Faith in Death*, effectively offer readers training in a kind of martyr mentality. Texts that do not refer to the example of martyrs nonetheless rely on notions of personal spirit, fortitude, judgement and faith, which relate to character rather than to doctrine or specific practice. To this extent, godly death

preparation is an art of character formation. The manuals strive to turn their readers into faithful individuals and members of a demonstrative, mutually instructive community. In doing so, the texts mobilise a rhetorical armoury that includes various aspects and models of martyrdom, with effects that are agitating as well as, presumably, consoling.

The brief demonic confrontation narrated by Phillip Stubbes, and the John Knox anecdote appended to Perkins' *Salve*, invite readers to expect moments of struggle or uncertainty in their final hour. These moments are made to seem appealing by being presented consistently as short-lived, dramatic, witnessed events which lead the dying individual to accentuated euphoria and ultimately unshakeable faith. Provided they are spiritually driven and short in duration, these momentary experiences of conscientious doubt appear in godly manuals to be catalysts, not contradictions, of the 'right' way of dying.

Examples of other people's deaths are offered to readers for their own comfort and use. As a result of this encouragement to imitate, it seems possible that Art of Dying texts would unwittingly inspire performed or self-conscious acts that run counter to Christian ideals of humility and sincerity. This danger is obliquely recognised in the manuals' insistence on the truthful nature of faithful 'testimonials', and their condemnation of excessive fear and ('Papist') pretence. Faithful dying is presented as affective, not affected; yet it is not clear to the critical observer how this difference is to be measured, despite Ward's claim that 'when it comes to the point of Death, then the speech, the behaviour, the countenance palpably distinguish the dull patience perforce of the worldling from the cheerfull welcome of the Christian' (p. 5). Limited and expedient rules govern the process of distinguishing authentic 'cheer' from feigned or insipid resignation. A tension runs through the literature between those words, sights and sounds (such as a Protestant martyr's speech) that are to be celebrated as 'palpable' demonstrations of faith, and other words, sights and sounds (such as those of a sick man who mistakenly appears to be damned, or those which issue from 'false' stage spectacles, or from one's own sinful self) that are to be reinterpreted, censored or distrusted.

Readers seeking practical guidance from the manuals are supplied with much advice that is paradoxical or ambiguous. To some extent, this lack of clarity is an inevitable result of the constraints of the printed form. No amount of tables or points of instruction can tell a believer how to believe. To die well, the reader must finally exercise conscientious judgement. However, methodical writers like Perkins use tabular devices precisely to control the reader's exercise of subjective judgement. Supplying the 'arguments' they consider to be valid, godly authors go some way to limiting a reader's thoughts. The practice of using extensive lists and tables, even in small octavo or duodecimo volumes, is indicative of the authors' fears of unsupervised reading (and deeper existential fears which give rise to this fear of textual freedom). Directing what a reader sees on the page, godly authors direct the reader's experience. In relation to Perkins' *Salve* and Byfield's *Cure*, I have argued that

despite the authorial control or coercion in these manuals, their thought-regulating devices provide the potential comfort and pleasure of contained, ordered moral schemes. The effect is far from 'practical', in a modern understanding of that term, since readers learn very little about how to alleviate pain by physical means. Yet Art of Dying manuals are practical in this cognitive sense, as aids to memory, self-persuasion and moral judgement.

Godly death manuals rely on two main rhetorical strategies, using moral dichotomies and figurative tropes to produce particular effects. To take them in order, dichotomies structure the reader's imagination into opposing concepts such as 'good' and 'bad' deaths, or faithful and worldly attitudes. These divisions guide readers to recognise the godly choice of two polarities, not to explore the whole range of choices. Because the oppositions are always presented in moralised terms, as values or principles rather than as options or strategies, readers are thereby taught to see every contrast as a moral one. The central dichotomy created in godly death manuals is that of sin and redemption; an opposition so fundamental to Art of Dying rhetoric that we might see it as a gravitational force which attracts and holds the attention of readers. Once convinced by the first half of the dichotomy, that death is the result of sin, a reader is logically and emotionally drawn to the corresponding idea; that mortals must and can be 'saved'. The symmetry of this sin-salvation dichotomy is self-reinforcing; a persuasive achievement of godly language which helps to explain the popularity of how-to-die manuals at an aesthetic, literary level. Moral contrasts affect the reading experience of these texts in other ways, for instance by enhancing a reader's pleasurable anticipation of a faithful death by alluding to – or instancing examples of its polar opposite, the 'bad' death. Generating fear towards one prospect, authors increase the audience's desire for the other, and strengthen the impression that life is inherently structured in a polarised moral pattern.

Building on a structure of moral dichotomies, Art of Dying texts engage their reader's imagination more dynamically by using tropes, that is figures which 'turn' what is evident into something analogous, to transform one expectation of death into quite another. Readers are told that they will not die, physically or existentially, at death, but will enter a 'palace' of infinite joy, rest, glory and fellowship. The appeal of specific tropes for death has been discussed in previous chapters. Here I wish to emphasise the general potential of such tropes to cause shifts of mood (literally, their psychotropic effects). Fearful readers, for example, may be comforted by metaphors of containment and change which suggest that death has a known history and a finite future; that it was brought into being by human 'sin,' was subsequently modified by Christ's first visit to earth, and will be made redundant by Christ's second and last coming. By imposing a narrative structure on something which has no structure, authors effectively humanise and contain the reach of mortality; as it were giving 'Death' a biography. Crooke tells readers that after fighting this enemy, they will eventually

‘shake hands with him as a friend’.³³³ The potential comfort to readers in this strategy of personification is obvious. Death can only be represented figuratively, I noted earlier. In these manuals death is a figure, a kind of Ur-trope which reflects and transforms readers’ fantasies.

By describing these likely or intended effects of godly death manuals, I do not assume that all readers were equally or inevitably affected. We cannot assume that early readers of Art of Dying literature were entirely credulous of its claims or intent on applying its prescriptions solely for consolation. Provoked into imitation and critical self-scrutiny, and given expectations of dramatic transformation and combat, readers might be roused by these manuals in diverse ways. The range of possible responses is wide. At one end of the spectrum, those readers who were most convinced by the Art’s message – or most readily conditioned by it – became its messengers, perpetuating the prospect of dying ‘well’ as it is crafted in the manuals, and conforming themselves to it. Zealous individuals such as Margaret Hoby, Elizabeth Juxon and Mary Strode used devotional books and their own spiritual diaries and performances to make their lives into a continual mediation of death, as godly manuals urged.³³⁴ Of the many felons who prepared to make repentant deaths, under the instruction of godly divines, the case of Elizabeth Caldwell is remarkable. Condemned to die for the attempted murder of her husband, Caldwell seems to have held a kind of godly salon in Chester jail, conversing with divines, providing ‘good admonitions’ to her visitors, and writing daily letters of Christian instruction in order to be a ‘looking glasse’ to others in her last days. At execution, she used meditations that had been taught to her by godly preachers, and spoke ‘cheerfully’ of her readiness for death and of the sins of her ‘filthy flesh’.³³⁵

Pious communities, as well as solitary readers, could be similarly roused by suggestions that death signified who the Godly were and what they were to become, once properly elevated at death. Nigel Spivey says that the “tenacious pamphlets” of early Christian martyrs which circulated amongst the faithful provided ‘scripts of hope and

³³³ *Death Subdued*, sig. G3v. Other contemporary writers who gave Death biographical dimensions, thereby seeming to befriend ‘him’, include John Donne and Samuel Rowlands.

³³⁴ Hoby was discussed in Chapter 2 as a dedicated reader of William Perkins. Her life and writings are examined in Margaret Hoby and Joanna Moody, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, 1599-1605* (Stroud: Sutton, 2001). Juxon’s search for spiritual ‘marks’ was discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to existential fear. The funeral sermon which recorded Juxon’s godly habits is Denison, *Monument or Tombe-Stone*. Mary Strode was said by the preacher of her funeral sermon to have been exemplary in her dying: ‘she used words and sentences, worthy of admiration, imitation [...] From all which I wish we may [for, I am sure, we sough to] learne instruction’. John Barlow, *A True Guide to Glory [1619]*, ed. Betty Ann Doebler and Retha M Warnicke, *Funeral Sermons for Women* (Anne Arbor: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprints, 2004), p. 51.

³³⁵ Gilbert Dugdale, *A True Discourse of the Practises of Elizabeth Caldwell* (London, 1604). In her dying speeches, which were explicitly intended to instruct the audience at her execution, Caldwell condemned both her personal sins and the evil of Papism. This combination of personal anecdote, evangelism and polemic reflects the shifting mixture of rhetorical styles found in godly Art of Dying books.

prescriptions for glory'.³³⁶ Godly death manuals have a similarly 'tenacious' power to strengthen community scripts and so to tighten the bonds between believers.

Religious conviction is not the only basis of community-formation, however; and Art of Dying literature might also appeal to discursive groups on literary or philosophical grounds. George Strode's *Anatomie of Mortalitie* (1618), discussed briefly in the Introduction, is written by a lawyer and addressed to fellow lawyers at the Inns of Court, suggesting a commonality of interest which is intellectual as well as moral. Readers – and writers – could enjoy the rhetorical exercise and mental discipline of godly manuals in ways that are not explicitly prescribed, as I have argued. Conspicuous rhetorical features such as paradoxes hold a certain cognitive appeal. Equally, and ironically, the anti-rhetorical stance of 'plain'-speaking, 'practical' divines is also persuasive to those who like to apprehend and so (re)form their identity in terms of essential 'plainness'. Transparency is an aesthetic ideal, as well as a spiritual state of being. The idea of dying as a demonstrative witness has a demonstrative appeal. So, while Art of Dying manuals address and bind together communities of conviction, they also appeal to, and have the potential to generate, communities of shared interest. In much the same way, Socrates argued that a speaker creates, through the emotional understanding and manipulation of an audience, a "community of pleasure and pain".³³⁷

In the Introduction, I questioned the criteria by which texts are classified within or without the Art of Dying 'genre'. If the genre is defined by its subject matter, of preparation for death, then it must include the many dozens or hundreds of religious works which give substantial consideration to this theme among others.³³⁸ Forty-seven such works were published in 1640 as *Threnoikos: The House of Mourning*, a collection of sermons by several 'reverend divines' which offered 'directions for/preparations to/meditations of/consolations at/the house of death'.³³⁹ This prominent list of possible uses for the sermons strengthens my

³³⁶ Nigel Spivey, *Enduring Creation: Art, Pain and Fortitude* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), p. 41. The phrase "tenacious pamphlets" appears to be a translation of Edward Gibbon's term *libelli tenaces*, used as a generic label to describe the tales of martyrdom written by apostolic propagandists such as Tertullian.

³³⁷ Garver, *Aristotle's Rhetoric: An Art of Character*, p. 111.

³³⁸ Candidates in the selected period might include, in addition to those works previously mentioned: Pierre Du Moulin's *The Christian Combate* (London, 1634), George Downname's *The Christians Sanctuarie* (London, 1604), Thomas Tuke's *A Discourse of Death* (London, 1613), John Abernathy's *A Christian and Heavenly Treatise* (London, 1615), Thomas Taylor's *Christes Combate* (London, 1618), Thomas Sutton's *The Good Fight of Faith* (London, 1624), John Norden's *A Pathway to Patience* (London, 1626), Adam Harsenett's *A Cordiall for the Afflicted* (London, 1638). I have not been able to read the sermons of John Rogers, Thomas Gattaker, William Fulke, Richard Sibbes, Richard Greenhan, Richard Rogers, Joseph Hall, Samuel Gary, Samuel Gardiner, Robert Welcome, Thomas Adams, or Thomas Playfere; but I gather from critical commentaries that these pay attention to the topic of dying well.

³³⁹ Featly et al., *Threnoikos*, title page. Thanks to Mary Morrissey for drawing my attention to this publication.

opinion that we should define Art of Dying works by their intended and actual function for readers. The Art, we might say, is an art of applying any or all of the topics covered by religious writing on death to one's own situation.³⁴⁰ It is a method of using literature to live – and to die. By this definition, any text, including, arguably, a felon's 'last dying speech', or the last 'testimonial' of a dying friend, could function as a form of Christian death preparation, if used by readers or observers to discipline and increase their faith in anticipation of death.

If the Art of Dying is viewed as a method of influencing thoughts, rather than as a finite set of devotional texts, there is no need to locate a unidirectional pattern of stylistic development in the genre. Instead of claiming that narrative examples supersede dialogue devices over a certain historical period, for instance, I would simply note that various literary methods are used, in different combinations and contexts, by the Art's authors. This stylistic variety is still further increased by readers, as they select from and combine texts, thereby effectively creating their own works of 'art'. As Samuel Ward succinctly observes of persuasive devices: 'if some worke not, others may: some will affect some, some another'.³⁴¹

By resisting a chronological account of the Art of Dying genre, I inevitably hesitate to describe its legacy as a clear line of development. While aspects of godly how-to-die manuals are detectable in later forms of religious and prescriptive literature, including contemporary self-help books, it is hard to pinpoint one indisputable route of influence. Patterns and tables, commonplaces and catechisms, biographical narratives, diaries, homilies and polemic all have some formal and generative affect on one other, in the sense that these literary structures incline readers towards certain habits of perception and so perpetuate a demand for more of the same. Told that there is a 'right' way to live or die, who would not wish to know it? To the curious, a general principle or exemplary model prompts questions of how it applies in particular circumstances. Perhaps the most enduring feature of godly Art of Dying manuals is their inevitable tendency to reiterate and revise their lessons in diverse and assorted ways.

³⁴⁰ The themes treated in *Threnoikos* repeat and extend those encountered in godly death manuals, such as: 'The praise of Mourning', 'Deliverance from the king of feares', 'The sting of Death', 'The destruction of the Destroyer', 'The great Tribunall', 'Gods esteeme of the death of his Saints', 'The desire of the Saints after immortall glory', 'The profit of afflictions', 'The death of Sinne, and the life of grace', *Iter novissimum, Or Man his last Progress*, and 'Io Paen, or Christs Triumph over Death'. The last three sermons in the collection use texts from Revelations, which reinforces my impression that for godly Protestants, Apocalypse is the ultimate fantasy of ending. An interesting analysis of the attraction of Apocalypse is made in Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, rev ed.).

³⁴¹ *Faith in Death*, pp. 9-10.

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