The Carer's View:

A New Perspective on Chronic Illness and Disability within the Early Modern Family

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Abstract

Based on a close reading of Elizabeth Isham's (b. 1609 – d. 1654) and Mary Rich's (b. 1624 – d. 1678) writings, this thesis considers the neglected follow-up to Roy Porter's statement: while "it takes two to make a medical encounter", "it often takes many more because medical events have frequently been complex social rituals involving family and community as well as sufferers and physicians".

Using a case study approach, this thesis uniquely takes 'the carer's view'. It explores the experiences of two wealthy, early modern women who provided long-term care to a family member. It suggests that long-term caring was a deeply religious experience, which became entwined with the lives and spiritual identities of carers.

Caring forced carers to grapple with difficult questions relating to love, time, and suffering. The religious significances of these concepts consequently became bound up with how carers could navigate and understand their roles. Because caring involved 'immoderate' quantities of love, time, and suffering, it was inherently spiritually problematic; contemporary religious discourses recommended moderation in these areas, to avoid sin.

In lieu of ready-made, spiritually acceptable notions of long-term caring, carers had to personally find ways to make caring compatible with their spiritual aspirations. Resulting ideas of caring were highly particular and reliant on the carer's personal circumstances.

By examining the experiential and cultural content of early modern caring for the first time, this thesis fills a significant gap in the history of medicine and opens a rich seam for further research. It also offers a unique perspective on histories of family, love, time, lived religion, and salvation. Mary and Elizabeth show that carers experienced and negotiated with these concepts in unique ways.

This work should be of interest more generally to historians of disability, sickness and health, personal identity, love, time, family, and 'lived religion'.

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Author’s Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references.

1. Introduction

Taking the 'patient's view' has been enormously valuable for the history of medicine.[1] It has allowed historians to move away from studying the 'medical profession' to explore the rich history of sickness and suffering and see patient-doctor interactions as two-way processes. It has given agency and voice to marginalised groups, such as disabled people.

What we have forgotten, however, is the second part of Roy Porter's statement. While "it takes two to make a medical encounter", "it often takes many more because medical events have frequently been complex social rituals involving family and community as well as sufferers and physicians".[2] Though we are starting to see histories of care, caring has usually been discussed as a trans-historical category with limited attention to the experiential and cultural content of caring at particular moments. Nobody has yet attempted to take 'the carer's view'. We have much to gain by doing so.

I argue that a study of early modern caring focussing on meanings and experiences is both possible and valuable. There are indeed records of early modern individuals whose circumstances were analogous to modern day, long-term 'carers'.[3] I show that a close reading of Elizabeth Isham's (1609-1654) and Mary Rich's (1625 -1678) writings, in their entirety, provides two detailed case studies of how individuals experienced the provision of long-term care to a family member. I reveal the deeply religious nature of care, and the complex ways in which caring became entangled in lives and spiritual identities.

The history of care sits at a complex historiographical intersection. While most obviously linked to the histories of disability and medicine, poverty and women's work also offer entry points to the subject. A history of caring that explores experiences and cultural content must also consider histories of family, love, personal religious identity, and the providential salvific context in which early modern carers operated.[4] It should also acknowledge the historiography surrounding other kinds of 'care': parenthood, domestic service, animal husbandry, and care for land, properties, and nature.[5] Early modern people compared their chronically sick relatives to children and crumbling buildings, linked care of nature to care of souls, and the language and metaphors of service are pervasive.[6] There is an intriguing overlap between women who cared for sick relatives and children, and women who had close relationships with nature and animals.[7]

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[1] Roy Porter, "The Patient's View: Doing Medical History from below", *Theory and Society*, 14, no. 2 (1985): 175-198.

[2] Ibid, 175.

[3] I discuss the appropriateness of the term "carer" to describe such individuals below.

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[4] On the history of family, see Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, ed., *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Bernard Capp, *The Ties That Bind: Siblings, Family, and Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2004); Naomi Miller and Naomi Yavneh, ed., *Sibling Relations and Gender in the Early Modern World* (London: Routledge, 2017). On the history of love, see Katie Barclay, *Caritas: Neighbourly Love and the Early Modern Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Kristine Steenbergh and Katherine Ibbett, ed., *Compassion in Early Modern Literature and Culture: Feeling and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021). On the history of suffering and salvation, see Jan Frans Van Dijkhuizen and Karl Enenkel, ed., *The Sense of Suffering: Constructions of Physical Pain in Early Modern Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

[5] On the history of parenthood, see Naomi Miller and Naomi Yavneh, ed., *Maternal Measures Women & Gender in Early Modern England, 1500-1750* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2001). On animal care (through the lens of veterinary medicine), see Louise Hill Curth, *The Care of Brute Beasts: A Social and Cultural Study of Veterinary Medicine in Early Modern England* (Boston: Brill, 2010). Care for animals and nature is also discussed in Sylvia Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature: Women and Ecologies of Early Modern England* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004). See especially "If Animals Could Talk| Ecological Dialogues for Children", 135-160. Scholarship on care for buildings and land is surprisingly limited. But see David Roger Hainsworth, *Stewards, Lords and People: The Estate Steward and His World in Later Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); also, Bowerbank, "Defending Local Places| Anne Seward as Environmental Writer", in Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature,* 161-187. Anne Seward also 'cared' for her parents.

[6] Mary Rich linked care for her estate with God's care of she and her son's souls. She compared the regretful need to cut down trees "in order to its after growing againe thicker and bettar" to her son's premature death. See Mary Rich, "Upon the Cutting down of the Wilderness" in *The Occasional Meditations of Mary Rich Countess of Warwick* ed. Raymond Anselment (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009), 134. All references to Mary's meditations hereafter refer to this edition. Hereafter cited as Rich, *Occasional Meditations,* followed by the page number in Anselment's edition. William Hayley provides an eighteenth-century example of a 'crumbling building' comparison. Hayley participated in William Cowper's care in the 1790s. When suffering from disabling melancholy, Hayley compared Cowper's mind to "the tottering ruins of palaces and temples, where the faculties of the spectator are almost absorbed in wonder, and regret, and where every step is taken with awful apprehension". See William Hayley, *The Life and Letters of William Cowper, esq., with remarks on epistolary writers* (London: J. Johnson and co., 1812), 4:159.

[7] The connection may to be coincidental, but it is worth exploring. Bowerbank directly discusses Elizabeth Isham and Mary Rich in Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature*, along with Anne Seward and the connection between

Despite these connections to existing scholarship, long-term caring has never been studied from the carer's view. This is surprising. With early modern disability history being a relatively new field, it makes sense that historians have concentrated on gaining an understanding of concepts and representations of disability, and on unearthing the marginalised viewpoints of disabled people themselves. But the history of 'informal' medicine is well established. With works by Mary Fissell, Alisha Rankin and Deborah Harkness, we know a considerable amount about healers outside the male-dominated medical 'profession'.[8] Elaine Leong and Rebecca Laroche have explored medicine in an explicitly domestic context.[9] Studies by Lucinda Beier, Hannah Newton, and Olivia Weisser have elucidated subjective experiences of sickness (and other 'health events'). [10] Sharon Howard's exploration of how Alice Thornton's painful experiences of childbirth were interpreted through her providential salvific beliefs and linked to her identity is particularly relevant to this thesis.[11] A history of informal care focussing on subjective experiences seems a logical next step. Yet work in this area remains scarce.

To be sure, some scholarship touches on informal, domestic sick care. Hannah Newton's recent work is a good example, as is Lisa Smith's "The Relative Duties of a Man" (2006).[12]

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parenting and caring for animals. Elizabeth Isham and Mary Rich also feature in Jennifer Munroe and Rebecca Laroche, ed., *Ecofeminist Approaches to Early Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[8] Mary Fissell, "Women, Health, and Healing in Early Modern Europe", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 82, no.1 (2008): 1-17*;* Alisha Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Deborah Harkness, "A View from the Streets: Women and Medical Work in Elizabethan London", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 82, no.1 (2008): 52–85.

[9] Elaine Leong, "Collecting Knowledge for the Family: Recipes, Gender and Practical Knowledge in the Early Modern English Household", *Centaurus; International Magazine of the History of Science and Medicine* 55, no.2 (2013): 81–103; Rebecca Laroche, *Medical Authority and Englishwomen's Herbal Texts, 1550-1650* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[10] Lucinda Beier, *Sufferers and Healers*; *The Experience of Illness in Seventeenth Century England* (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987); Hannah Newton, *Misery to Mirth: Recovery from Illness in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Olivia Weisser, *Ill Composed: Sickness, Gender, and Belief in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

[11] Sharon Howard, "Imagining the Pain and Peril of Seventeenth-Century Childbirth: Travail and Deliverance in the Making of an Early Modern World", *Social History of Medicine* 16, no. 3 (2003): 367–82.

[12] Hannah Newton, *The Sick Child in Early Modern England, 1580-1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Hannah Newton, "'She Sleeps Well and Eats an Egg': Convalescent Care in Early Modern England", in *Conserving Health in Early Modern Culture: Bodies and Environments in Italy and England*, ed. Sandra Cavallo and Tessa Storey (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 104-132; Lisa Smith, "The Relative Duties of a Man: Domestic Medicine in England and France, Ca. 1685–1740", *Journal of Family History* 31, no.3 (2006):

Valuably, these address the neglected topic of hands-on care amongst men. But caring for acutely sick people can be very different to long-term care, and no existing studies have focussed on caring for long-term conditions.[13] Ben Mutschler's work on illness and 'social credit' underlines the need to explore long and short-term caring separately. Even well-connected individuals suffering prolonged illnesses could exhaust their 'social credit' entitling them to free community care, which was undoubtedly compounded by the fact that chronically ill individuals struggled to 'pay back' debts of care with reciprocal care later.[14]

To find specifically *long-term* early modern carers, we need to look in the 'contexts' of histories of disability, old age, and institutionalisation. Predictably, however, carers are usually side-lined. David Turner's and Daniel Blackie's *Disability in the Industrial Revolution* (2018), for example, contains a chapter, "Disability, Family and Community", which is the fourth of its five chapters. Within this chapter, the section "Home Life" discusses the impact of miners becoming disabled on their families, including their now-carers.[15] Yet this placement demonstrates how discussions of carers are often 'hidden' in marginal sections of academic work.

Works like Smith's and Newton's have also focussed on practical acts, such as preparing special diets and performing body work, and their distribution within families – along gendered lines, for instance. They have not examined the experiences of those performing the acts: their motivations, how they understood the acts, and how they fit them into their lives. Newton's *The Sick Child* (2012) does explore, for example, parents' emotions while they looked after their

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237–56. There are also unpublished cultural histories which address early modern caregiving. See e.g., Kathleen Marie Reynolds, "Sickness in Correspondence: Gentry Letter Writing and the Subject of Health in Eighteenth-Century Yorkshire, County Durham, and Northumberland" (PhD thesis, Durham University, 2018). Durham E-Theses Online, accessed April 27, 2023, http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/12584/. See especially Chapter 3, "Caregiving Activities and Managing the Sickroom", 63-98.

[13] Anne Stobart does have a chapter on chronic disorders and, within that, on nursing care and housewifery. But it is brief and does not consider the questions I do. See Anne Stobart, *Household Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 151-168.

[14] Ben Mutschler, "Illness in the 'Social Credit' and 'Money' Economies of Eighteenth-Century New England" in *Medicine and the Market in England and Its Colonies, c.1450-c.1850*, ed. Mark Jenner and Patrick Wallis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 175–95: 192.

[15] David Turner and Daniel Blackie, *Disability in the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 136-148.

sick children, but her broad source base prevents examination of these experiences in depth.[16] We have many examples of parents' reactions to their children's pain, but because these are presented largely without context, gauging the wider significance is difficult. Newton's *Misery to Mirth* (2018), which promises to explore loved ones' reactions to patient recoveries, has similar issues. Addressing kin responses alongside the sufferers', rather than in separate sections, exacerbates this problem. Though this position underlines how sufferers and their loved ones shared emotions relating to illness, some analytic potential is lost by doing so.[17] We will see that for Elizabeth Isham, suffering illness directly and witnessing another's suffering had different spiritual and emotional consequences.

A separate body of literature within social history explores early modern caring in relation to poverty and welfare. This includes work by Margaret Pelling (her chapter "Nurses and Nursekeepers" is particularly relevant), Samantha Williams, Lara Thorpe, and Jeremy Boulton.[18] These studies tell us about patterns of care in wider society: how far care was professionalised, how it was funded, the kinds of care provided, to whom, and about the social backgrounds of 'carers' like parish nurses. Valuably, they explore care for the poor. But they cannot, given their methodologies and source material (primarily, institutional and poor law records), tell us much about carer experiences. They are social histories of caregivers, not experiences of care.

Literature on early modern caring is therefore wanting in two areas. Firstly, there have been few attempts to research long-term caregiving as distinct from temporary sick care. Secondly, even detailed literature on caring has focused primarily on the processes of care, rather than on the experiences of caregivers. We need a meaningful exploration of what caring *meant* to early modern 'carers'. Using the life writings of Elizabeth Isham and Mary Rich, this thesis uniquely explores care for the long-term sick and disabled from 'the carer's view', with an emphasis on temporality. Mary and Elizabeth's caring roles spanned decades, and they reinterpreted them multiple times over their lifetimes.

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[16] Newton, "'Wrackt Betwixt Hopes and Fears': Parents' Emotions" in Newton, *The Sick Child*, 121-158.

[17] Newton, *Misery to Mirth*, 12-13.

[18] Samantha Williams, "Caring for the Sick Poor: Poor Law Nurses in Bedfordshire, c. 1770-1834" in *Women, Work, and Wages in England, 1600-1850*, ed. Penelope Lane, Neil Raven and Keith David Malcom Snell (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 141-169; Margaret Pelling, *The Common Lot: Sickness, Medical Occupations and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1998); Lara Thorpe, "'At the Mercy of a Strange Woman': Plague Nurses, Marginality, and Fear during the Great Plague of 1665" in *Women on the Edge in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Aidan Norrie and Lisa Hopkins (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 29–44; Jeremy Boulton, "Welfare Systems and the Parish Nurse in Early Modern London, 1650–1725", *Family & Community History* 10, no. 2 (2007): 127-151. See also Andrew Wear, "Caring for the Sick Poor in St Bartholomew's Exchange, 1580–1676", *Medical History* 35, no. S11 (1991): 41-60.

Though I will introduce both women fully below, it is worth outlining some basics here. Elizabeth Isham (b. 1609 - d. 1654) was a gentlewoman who chose not to marry, against her father's wishes.[19] Several members of Elizabeth's family were chronically ill, including her mother who died in 1625, and her sister Judith. Judith's condition was complex, but involved poorly healed broken bones, mobility issues, and severe melancholy. Elizabeth was Judith's most important carer, "I be-ing most with her", until Judith's death in 1636.[20]

Mary Rich (b. 1624 - d. 1678) was a noblewoman who married Charles Rich in 1641, defying her father's wishes.[21] Charles suffered from severe gout for over twenty years. He used a wheelchair and needed servants to turn him in bed. Mary was Charles' primary carer. She saw her caring role as spiritual as well as physical; caring for Charles' body went hand-in-hand with caring for his soul.

This thesis seeks to answer questions including: What were the experiences of long-term 'carers' in the early modern period? How and within which cultural frameworks did 'carers' understand their roles? Did early modern people recognise a distinct role of 'carer', and did people identify as such? How did caring interact with other aspects of 'carers" lives, and with other potential sources of purpose and identity?

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[19] For a brief introduction to Elizabeth Isham, see Kate Aughterson, "Isham, Elizabeth (bap. 1608, d. 1654), diarist", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed March 26, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/68093.

[20] "Autobiography: manuscript" by Elizabeth Isham, ca. 1638, RTCO1 (no. 62), The Robert Taylor Collection, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, f. 22r. The Constructing Elizabeth Isham Project, accessed March 26, 2023, http://web.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/Isham/index_bor.htm.This is an online edition of Elizabeth's *Booke of Rememberance*, transcribed by Alice Eardley for Warwick University's Constructing Elizabeth Isham Project. Hereafter cited as Isham, *Booke*, followed by the folio number. The manuscript of Elizabeth's *Booke of Rememberance* is also digitised and available at: https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/99342759535064 21.

[21] For further background information on Mary Rich, see Sara Heller Mendelson, "Rich [née Boyle], Mary, Countess of Warwick (1624–1678), noblewoman" in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed April 27, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/23487.

The basic methodology of this study was a close reading of source materials relating to Mary Rich and Elizabeth Isham; primarily, their life writings. These materials were read in full, multiple times, with particular attention to repetitions, associations, and context. This was a considerable undertaking; Mary's diaries alone total around 2,600 manuscript pages.[22] All instances of caring, and related themes (such as family, duty, sickness, and compassion) were tagged on digital copies of the material and noted. Repetitions of themes, phrases and concepts were all noted separately (for example, Mary Rich's hundreds of variations of phrases like "tending my sicke Lo, got noe time to retire"). These tags and notes were then categorised and indexed, with care to retain their context. Defining 'related themes' was a reciprocal process. Materials were re-read to check for earlier instances of themes that became relevant but were unanticipated.

To be clear, Mary and Elizabeth's allusions to their caring roles were not always obvious. On the face of it, neither woman's writings are 'about' caring. My methodology therefore entailed identifying and interpreting scattered discussions of caring, and discerning relevant context and circumstances in each case. The coherent narrative I present from Mary and Elizabeth's perspectives is constructed from thousands of separate, jumbled, and repetitive remarks, often in the 'backgrounds' of their texts; it is by no means readily discernible from them.

Such an approach also entailed drawing out Elizabeth's and Mary's thoughts and feelings, in an attempt to render explicit what is implicit in their texts. For example, Elizabeth did not write that her mother's 'bad death' was what made her so afraid of excessive 'worldly love'. Yet in the same year, she decided never to marry, and she seemed more comfortable expressing

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[22] This is an estimate and includes some blank pages.

'worldly love' after her sister-in-law died a perfect, Christian death despite deeply loving her earthly family.[23]

Few people are aware of and articulate all their motivations. But we can still make an informed guess at identifying these, based on what we know about someone's past, about their frames of reference, and by observing what they associate, what they fixate upon, and by observing patterns in their speech, behaviour and (in this case) writing. It is sometimes difficult to provide succinct quotations to evidence inferences of this kind, which become apparent from the accumulation of more subtle pieces of evidence which, on their own may seem unsubstantial, but taken together seem overwhelmingly to suggest a particular proposition. In these instances, while my conclusions are speculative, they are, I argue, nonetheless legitimate or (at the very least) worth highlighting for further interrogation.

I chose to use Elizabeth and Mary as case studies because both are well-known to specialists.[24] That none of the existing scholarship about either woman has focussed on their caring roles - despite how much both women wrote about caring, and despite how central caring was to their spiritual identities - underlines my point about the methodological need to adjust our focus to 'see' carers in existing source material and to read these sources closely.

Elizabeth and Mary also make for a wonderful comparison; they were incredibly similar but had very different experiences of caring. They were both women, roughly contemporary and from relatively 'new money', though very wealthy. They were deeply pious – although while Mary self-identified as a puritan, Elizabeth's religious temper was more unusual. She has been described as a "prayer-book puritan".[25] Both women made controversial decisions about marriage against their fathers' wishes. Elizabeth decided never to marry, and Mary married for love. Both women inherited surrogate children; Elizabeth cared for her four nieces, after her sister-in-law Jane's death, and Mary her three nieces, after the death of her brother-in-law, Robert. Both had an educated interest in medicine, both were close to (some of) their siblings, and both disliked the hustle of London. Both women left written records and used their writings for spiritual purposes and to discern providence in their lives. Both women began writing when they already felt 'old' – Elizabeth in her late twenties, and Mary in her early forties. And both experienced and wrote about the deaths of those they had cared for, and what followed.

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[23] For discussion of the deaths of Elizabeth's mother and sister-in-law Jane, see 48 and 62 of this thesis.

[24] This scholarship is explored in the introductions to their individual chapters below.

[25] Isaac Stephens, "Confessional Identity in Early Stuart England: The 'Prayer Book Puritanism' of Elizabeth Isham", *The Journal of British Studies* 50, no.1 (2011): 24–47.

Naturally, Elizabeth and Mary's similarities are also a limitation of this study. No two people can accurately reflect the experiences of all others, and Mary and Elizabeth were far from 'typical'. They were both godly, wealthy women with access to servants and disposable income. Both were deeply invested in the cultures of self-writing, which shaped and narrativized their experiences of caring, not simply our records of it.

Still, the bodies and physical conditions of those they looked after structured their caring roles. This would suggest that while Mary and Elizabeth are particular examples, they have wider implications which cannot simply be reduced to their particular social, ideological and religious standpoints. Furthermore, as I explain below, caring was so linked to the religiously charged concepts of love, time, and suffering, that I suspect most carers wrestled with the same core issues. The less pious perhaps cared less than Elizabeth and Mary about finding a perfect solution to these issues, and those embedded in other religious cultures may have grappled with them differently.

Since the language of care is neither contemporary to the early modern period, nor uncontroversial today, I must clarify what I mean by 'care' and 'carer' and justify my use of these terms.

By using the terms 'caring' and 'carers', I am not suggesting that the concept of a 'carer' existed in the early modern period, or that either Mary or Elizabeth identified themselves as such (although Elizabeth did ultimately self-identify as someone whose purpose in life was to look after others). While contemporaries used the word 'care', contemporary usage did not match mine. 'Care' usually meant 'caring about' something. "I cared not" was Elizabeth's most common usage, along with statements like "I should unburthen my selfe of care", or "my cheefest care was to serve thee".[26] As today, 'care' also meant a state of being looked after: Elizabeth's mother was thought "past his [Mr Naper's] care".[27]

Although there are more contemporary terms that I could have chosen (Elizabeth and Mary referred to "tending", being "with", "looking to", giving "tent" to, "comforting" and "helping" their charges), none seem suitable.[28] Terms like "tend" had specific implications, which I would not want to apply indiscriminately to all instances of 'care', namely, of serving a superior, and of motherly tending to infants. Mary's use of the phrase "tending my sicke Lord" had different significance to "was with my sicke husband".[29] And terms like "nurse" have strong, potentially misleading contemporary and modern associations - latterly, of professionalisation, payment, and a medical focus.

By using the language of 'care' and 'carers', I am therefore categorising people into a category that they would not have recognised. This, however, is justifiable. One of my key findings is that the lack of an 'official' category describing what Elizabeth and Mary did impacted their experiences. Living in a society that does not recognise your circumstances with specific terminology does not mean one lacks a category of experiences, which might be investigated alongside others like yours.[30] Describing Elizabeth and Mary as 'carers' highlights that there were individuals in the early modern period whose circumstances were analogous to modern, informal, unpaid, family carers. Analysing them as 'carers' in this thesis has yielded fascinating results, and shone light upon what concepts early modern 'carers' did use to understand their roles and activities, and upon the connections these roles had with other kinds of 'care'.

My definition of caring is helping someone to perform (or performing on their behalf) any necessary or desired physical, practical, organisational, emotional, or spiritual activities which they cannot perform independently due to their condition. I use the term 'condition' broadly. My focus here is on conditions such as physical impairment, chronic illness and (what we would call) mental health conditions. But for reasons I discuss below, I am deliberately leaving the term open to interpretations such as 'the condition of being' a child, an elderly person, or even a building or domestic animal.

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[26] See Isham, *Booke,* f. 21r, f. 33v and f. 32r for examples of these usages.
[27] Ibid, f.18v. My insertion in square brackets.
[28] *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), s.v. "Tent, n.2", accessed March 26, 2023, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/199195?rskey=VmAaNw&result=2.
[29] See page 71 of this thesis, and n. 281.

[30] For a philosophical discussion of 'hermeneutical injustice', an epistemic injustice "wherein someone has a significant area of their social experience obscured from understanding owing to prejudicial flaws in shared resources for social interpretation", see Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 147–175, which can be usefully applied here.

I use 'carer' to mean someone who provides 'care' (using the definition above), with the additional criteria listed below. These should be interpreted and applied loosely, and should, of course, be altered accordingly if using a broader understanding of 'condition', as above.

Firstly, duration. I have limited my definition of 'carers' to those who provided care for a 'significant' amount of time. It does not include those who cared as a temporary role (such as looking after someone who was temporarily sick), but those who cared long-term – although the extent to which these kinds of care were conceptualised and practised differently certainly needs analysing. I am leaving the terms 'significant' and 'long-term' deliberately vague to account for individual circumstances.

Secondly, intensity. My definition only includes carers whose caring load was 'significant' in terms of quantity and intensity. It includes only 'carers' who provided enough care that it at least partially structured and impacted other areas of their lives, rather than those who offered only occasional assistance. Individuals who were the primary or only person providing care to someone are likely to meet this condition of intensity; similarly, individuals who cared for someone with high support needs.

Thirdly, to be a 'carer' under my definition, the relationship between the 'carer' and cared-for person should be independently intimate, affectionate, friendly, or familial. That is, the carer should have a relationship with the cared-for person that is not simply about 'caring' - for example, they should be the cared-for person's friend, spouse, child, sibling, neighbour, or cohabitant.

Finally, linked to the relationship condition, 'carers' under my definition should not have a formal contract or receive remuneration for providing care; they are not employees or doing it because its 'their job'. This, of course, is not without significant caveats.[31] Essentially, I would not usually consider people such as paid nurses and servants to be 'carers' as I use the term.

I have not included an identity condition in my definition of 'carer' for reasons I discuss above. However, the extent to which Mary and Elizabeth identified as something like a 'carer' will be discussed throughout the thesis. Similarly, I analyse the extent to which the experience and (where appropriate) identity of having been a 'carer' persisted after the cessation of each woman's main caring responsibilities.

To be sure, using the language of 'caring' is not best practice in critical disability studies because it is considered disempowering to those in receipt of assistance today.[32] However, I have used it here because it remains relatively broad and neutral in common parlance and is additionally encompassing of the complex, emotive relationships and activities which develop when assistance is provided between individuals with intimate relationships; not least, the term suggests 'caring about' the person as well as 'for' them.[33] There is a body of literature which has attempted to reconcile tensions between contemporary feminist perspectives and disability studies on the subject of 'care', and I draw on these in my decision to use this term.[34]

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[31] For discussion of the blurred boundaries in 'caring' (a term Kelly rejects) relationships, including her own role as a "frien-tendant" who is occasionally paid for assisting her physically disabled friend, see Christine Kelly, "Building Bridges with Accessible Care: Disability Studies, Feminist Care Scholarship, and Beyond." *Hypatia*, 28, no. 4 (2013): 784–800. These complex dynamics are clearly also relevant to Mary Rich and Elizabeth Isham, although full discussion is not possible here. Rich was embroiled in the complex financial and contractual arrangement of early modern marriage and was arguably rewarded for her care of Charles with his estate. At various times, Elizabeth's father both financially encouraged, and punished, Elizabeth's decision to care for Judith – see e.g., Isham, *Booke*, f. 20r; Ibid, f. 27r.

[32] For a succinct outline of why the language of 'care' has often been rejected by disability theorists and terms like 'assistance' preferred, see Teppo Kröger, "Care research and disability studies: Nothing in common?" *Critical Social Policy*, 29, no. 3 (2009): 403-406; and Nick Watson, Linda McKie, Bill Hughes, Debra Hopkins, and Sue Gregory, "(Inter)Dependence, Needs and Care: The Potential for Disability and Feminist Theorists to Develop an Emancipatory Model", *Sociology*, 38, no. 2 (2004): 335-337.

[33] For a succinct discussion of the various implications of the term 'care', see Watson et al., "(Inter)Dependence, Needs and Care", 332-333.

That 'care' better captures the emotive aspects of helping another person is also the reason I explicitly chose not to give primacy to terms such as 'assistance' in this work. As Nick Watson et al warn, when the concept of 'assistance' is used distinctly so that "the caring/helping relationship is conceived primarily in mechanical, instrumental terms", "this may underplay the reciprocity and emotional involvement invested by both parties in the relationship".[35] And the latter is precisely the focus of this thesis: more than being about caring in practical, instrumental terms, it explores how the emotional investments associated with caring manifested themselves in the early modern period.

The language of assistance also has some misleading implications when applied to a historical context. Such language is designed to imply that people are being assisted to achieve self-directed goals.[36] While this language is empowering today, it is also potentially misleading when discussing times and cultures where people were often not empowered to direct their own assistance and rather had 'care' imposed upon them. Mary's relentless and unwelcome attempts to 'care' for Charles' soul provide a clear example of where Charles was not being 'assisted' but rather had 'care' thrust upon him by someone who believed they knew better.[37]

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[34] The tensions between literature exploring care from a feminist perspective, and that exploring (and often rejecting) the concept of 'care' from a critical disability studies perspective, are well known. For an overview of these tensions, and attempts to resolve them, see e.g., Watson et al., "(Inter)Dependence, Needs and Care"; Kelly, "Building Bridges"; Kröger, "Care research and disability studies"; Clare Beckett, "Women, disability, care: Good neighbours or uneasy bedfellows?", *Critical Social Policy*, 27, no. 3 (2007): 360-380; and Laura Davy, "Between an Ethic of Care and an Ethic of Autonomy", *Angelaki*, 24, no. 3 (2019): 101-114.

[35] Watson et al, "(Inter)Dependence, Needs and Care", 338.

[36] See n.32.

[37] For an example at random of Charles becoming irritated by Mary's attempts to 'care' for his soul while he was unwell (here, he forbade her from speaking more on the subject), see e.g., "Diary" by Mary Rich, c. March 1672 - March 1673/4, Add. MS 27353, British Library, 59. Perdita Manuscripts, accessed October 3, 2021, https://www-perditamanuscripts-amdigital-co-uk.libproxy.york.ac.uk/Documents/Detail/diary/362907?item=363024. The five volumes into which Mary's diaries are bound (Add. MS 27351 [July 1666-March 1669], Add. MS 27352 [November 1669-March 1672], Add.

Furthermore, it would be erroneous to assume that people who required assistance in the past would value their independence and wish to be portrayed in this way; in a society where servants could be a status symbol, this seems a particularly bold assumption.

I have chosen to leave my definition open to include care for groups such as children, the elderly, and to links with charity. Although theorists in critical disability studies have been keen to distance assistance towards independent living for disabled people from other kinds of 'care', in a historical context it is particularly important to address these links. Without assuming these connections existed in the past, we need to be open to exploring the interactions between 'caring' for disabled and chronically ill people, and 'caring' for the temporarily sick, children and elderly people, with giving and acting charitably, and with 'caretaking' more broadly – for animals, land, buildings and estates, and businesses and legacies. This is not to encourage the persistence of these associations where they are problematic, but to help explain why these connections have existed and persisted in 'care'.

This research suggests that both women's experiences of caring revolved primarily around questions pertaining to love, time, and suffering. The first part of my argument is that these concepts were inherently bound to early modern caring. Love, time, and suffering were relevant to care for simple reasons. Caring for the long-term sick was incredibly time-consuming and disruptive of one's 'normal' schedule or life-course. Caring for a relative also involved feelings of love, affection, and duty – or a degree of devotion to a person that could suggest these feelings. Caring also invariably involved witnessing and experiencing suffering.

MS 27353 [March 1672-March 1673/4], Add. MS 27354 [March 1675-August 1676] and Add. MS 27355 [August 1676-November 1677]) are all available digitally through Perdita Manuscripts. Mary does not provide her own pagination, and her dating of entries is often unclear (e.g., simply "23" at the start of an entry, meaning the reader must read back or ahead to discern which month and year it was the 23rd of). For simplicity, page references (including above) therefore refer to the page number of the relevant PDF downloadable through Perdita manuscripts. This also corresponds to the 'image number' on Perdita Manuscript's online browser. Mary's diaries hereafter cited as Rich, *Diary* MS [Manuscript reference number], followed by the PDF page number. I have not modernised Mary's spelling or punctuation.

The implications of care being so closely bound to love, time, and suffering were, by contrast, complex. I argue that caring necessarily invoked difficult questions relating to these religiously charged concepts, which made caring spiritually complicated. 'Carers' could reconcile the internal religious conflicts produced as they wrestled with these questions, but a lack of specific, authoritative guidance for carers meant spiritual and psychological contortions were necessary to make a caring role palatable. Elizabeth and Mary partly used their life writing to work these out.

The first parts of my chapters on Elizabeth and Mary explain how they initially grappled with the concepts of love, time, and suffering in relation to caring. Having never married over fears that she might love her husband more than God, Elizabeth worried that in devoting so much time and love to caring for her sister, she had simply exchanged one object for her sinful, worldly love for another. In witnessing so much bodily suffering in her charge, Elizabeth also feared that her comparative health indicated that God thought her unworthy of trial – or election. Elizabeth was thus tortured by anxiety about the propriety of her caring role.

Believing she had wasted two decades in sin before her conversion, Mary was most concerned by the time caring consumed. It was time she should have devoted to God. But unlike Elizabeth, she was mostly comfortable caring. Her husband controlled her time – and God knew she could (and should) not change that. Her earthly relationship with her abusive husband was also so poor that she little feared that caring for him represented excessive worldly love. Rather, she suffered while caring as part of her earthly trials, and to teach her that worldly love could not bring true happiness, like the love of God alone could.

Both women, however, reconceptualised caring over their lifetimes. The second parts of my chapters on Elizabeth and Mary explore these changes. In writing her *Booke of Rememberance,* which synthesised and attempted to draw meaning from her life's events, Elizabeth 'realised' that she had misinterpreted her caring role. All the providential evidence suggested that God had intended her to care. Her love for her sister Judith became a Christian love for the godly, and she realised that she had partaken in her family's suffering, not simply witnessed it. Ultimately, she believed her calling was to look after others, as Christ served man.

By contrast, with Charles' death and the cessation of her caring role, Mary's spiritual identity collapsed. Mary expected his death to be the culmination of her journey away from the world towards God. Instead, she found that caring had been a crucial prop to her spiritual identity: it exonerated her from blame when she 'wasted' time on worldly activities, it caused her to suffer, so brought her closer to God, and it gave her an opportunity to display Christian love and be 'useful' to her fellow man. Without her caring role, love, time, and suffering fell out of balance, and Mary became discontented with her spiritual condition.

Following these case-study chapters, Elizabeth and Mary's experiences are compared. This comparison suggests that, amplified by strong providential beliefs, personal circumstances and histories mattered deeply to interpretations of caring. Few discourses were specifically relevant to long-term care, and the most readily available (notably worldly love) produced spiritually unacceptable conclusions. Carers therefore personally had to work out acceptable ways to conceptualise their caring, using their own experiences as providential evidence to support their interpretations. The highly personalised nature of interpretations of caring underlines the methodological need to read texts fully and closely when exploring carer experiences.

The major contribution of this thesis is to remedy the historiographical neglect of carers and thereby open a rich seam of further potential research into their experiences. Given that an estimated one in five adults in the UK provide care, this hitherto neglect seems remarkable. [38] Feminists have long tried to enhance the status of unpaid, domestic work, including care. Giving this work and those undertaking it a history is key. Samantha Williams' 2004 statement still rings true today: with the decline of institutional care, there is a "real need to provide a historical context to [...] contemporary social policy debates", given that "many present-day welfare policies depend [...] upon the unpaid work of women in their own homes or in the homes of relatives". [39] Indeed, the recent pandemic has underlined the continued relevance of this project.

Moreover, in carefully delineating exactly how Elizabeth and Mary understood and experienced caring, I contribute to answering Aleric Ryrie's question - "what did early modern protestants do in order to live out their religion; and what meaning did they find in those actions?" - in an as yet unresearched area, for "the lived experience of religion is not a detail: it is what that religion actually means to those who profess it […] it consists of people who have found a way of building their daily lives around it, and it is in those lives that it finds meaning."[40]

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[38] "Key facts and figures about caring", *Carersuk*, n.d., accessed March 26, 2023, https://www.carersuk.org/policy-and-research/key-facts-and-figures/.
[39] Williams, "Caring for the Sick Poor", 144. My omissions in square brackets.

In its efforts to understand the implications of the fierce theological debates in this period for 'ordinary protestants', most literature on practical divinity has focussed on 'everyday' but explicitly 'religious' practices, such as prayer, reading, collective worship and the consumption of popular spiritual manuals.[41] But how protestants applied abstract religious principles to less explicitly religious parts of their lives has received less attention.[42] I offer both an insight into how Elizabeth and Mary applied and incorporated their faith into the practical minutiae of their caring roles – how Mary waited for her sick husband to fall asleep to pray, for example, and how Elizabeth wrestled with developing concepts of compassion and charity to justify caring for her sister – and insight into how they ultimately built these varied and often contradictory expressions of practical divinity into coherent, progressive narratives about their journeys towards God.[43]

In doing so, I enrich our understanding of subjects including love, family, suffering, time, and sickness experience, by showing that people caring for the long-term sick interacted with them very differently to non-carers. This research offers a particularly valuable synthesis, application, and extension of work on love, charity, compassion, and 'fellow feeling'. [44] It also contributes to histories of sickness experiences, by complicating and nuancing the hitherto neglected topic of 'second-hand' sickness experiences. Consequently, it enriches our understanding of suffering and salvation in the period. Full explanations of these implications are provided in my conclusion.

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[40] Aleric Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2. My omission in square brackets.

[41] See, for example, Jessica Martin and Alec Ryrie ed., *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Charles Hambrick-Stowe, "Practical divinity and spirituality", in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism,* ed. John Coffey and Paul Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 191-205.

[42] There are some notable exceptions to this; for example, Ryrie, "Sleeping, Waking and Dreaming in Protestant Piety", in Martin and Ryrie ed., *Private and Domestic Devotion,* 73-92.

[43] For a good summary of how early modern protestants sought to structure and give meaning to the narratives they told about their spiritual lives, see chapter 15, "The Meaning of Life", of Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 409-427.

[44] See Barclay, *Caritas*; Kristine Steenbergh, "Mollified Hearts and Enlarged Bowels: Practising Compassion in Reformation England", in Steenbergh and Ibbett ed., *Compassion in Early Modern Literature*, 121–38; Katherine Ibbett, "Fellow-Feeling", in *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction*, ed. Susan Broomhall (London: Routledge, 2017), 108-11; Paula Barros, "'Hee Left Them Not Comfortlesse By the Way' Grief and Compassion in Early

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Modern English Consolatory Culture", in Steenbergh and Ibbett ed., *Compassion in Early Modern Literature*, 63-81; Newton, *Misery to Mirth,* 112-30.

2. Struggle, Reflection and Resolution: Elizabeth Isham's Experience of Caring

thou hast caused me through the weaknes and sicknesses or illness of waies others to receive strength of healthy and vigorous instruction [...] thou hadest made me the servant of thy servants, and to suffer with them that suffer [...] thou hast made me the companion of them that love thee and keepe thy commandements [45]

Elizabeth Isham, *Booke of Rememberance*, c.1639

Elizabeth Isham (b. 1609 – d. 1654) was a Northamptonshire gentlewoman who spent most of her life living on her family estate - the eldest of three children in a close family. Her sister, Judith (b. 1610 – d. 1636), was chronically ill. She was "ill from her berth", as well as "ill nurst" and experienced "necclegents" by "those that tendded her bracke", when she broke her right knee.[46] Never marrying and remaining alongside Judith in their family home, I argue that Elizabeth's role in caring for Judith had a deep and complex religious significance which has hitherto been neglected in historiography.

Since the rediscovery of her *Booke of Rememberance,* Elizabeth has attracted significant scholarly attention. Religious historians have been particularly interested in Elizabeth's somewhat unusual confessional identity. Isaac Stephens used Elizabeth to demonstrate the complexity of early modern religious identity; as a "prayer book puritan", Elizabeth demonstrates how "godly beliefs and devotion to the service book could be perfectly compatible".[47]

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[45] Isham, *Booke*, f. 35v. My omissions in square brackets.

[46] Ibid*,* f. 3v.

[47] Stephens, "Confessional Identity in Early Stuart England", 47.

Historians have also underlined Elizabeth's commitment to learning and her access to books: medical, religious, and literary. She has been figured as a 'pious intellectual', foregoing marriage to devote herself to learning and God. Julie Eckerle reads her *Booke of Rememberance* as an apology – defending her decision to live as an intellectual, single, Christian woman.[48] Elizabeth also features in studies of women's medical writings, and Michelle DiMeo has highlighted Elizabeth's sophisticated medical knowledge; unusually, Elizabeth read on subjects such as surgery and theories of sickness.[49]

This scholarship is linked to that which addresses Elizabeth's decision never to marry. Stephens frames this as a pious choice; she wanted to devote herself wholly to God and assuage her fear that she loved her suitor – a mere worldly being – more than Him.[50] Elizabeth's writings have been welcomed into the canon of seventeenth-century, women's writing, with her never-married status making her interesting to feminist historians.

Elizabeth's family has also been discussed. Anne Cotterill explores the impact that Elizabeth's female relatives, and their illnesses and deaths, had on Elizabeth.[51] Cotterill underlines that Elizabeth's *Booke of Rememberance* was indeed a book of *remembrance* - a "sharply observed memoir and memorial of the dead" - and highlights Elizabeth's many references to writing as a salve to her grief.[52] Hilary Nunn explores Elizabeth's deep connection to her family and their estate, including her great-grandfather, John Isham.[53] In another work, Nunn explores

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[48] Julie Eckerle, "Coming to Knowledge: Elizabeth Isham's Autobiography and the Self-Construction of an Intellectual Woman", *Auto/biography Studies* 25, no.1 (2010): 97–121. Eckerle summarises this argument on 114-5.

[49] Laroche, *Medical Authority*; Michelle DiMeo, "The Draft of Elizabeth Isham's Medical Receipt Book", *Warwick University, Centre for the Study of the Renaissance*, April 11, 2008, accessed March 26, 2023, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/researchcurrent/isham/workshop/dimeo/. See also Michelle DiMeo and Rebecca Laroche, "On Elizabeth Isham's "Oil of Swallows": Animal Slaughter and Early Modern Women's Medical Recipes", in Munroe and Laroche, ed., *Ecofeminist Approaches to Early Modernity,* 87-104.

[50] Isaac Stephens, *The Gentlewoman's Remembrance; Patriarchy, Piety and Singlehood in Early Stuart England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 126.

[51] Anne Cotterill, "Fit Words at the 'pitts Brinke': The Achievement of Elizabeth Isham", *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 73, no.2 (2010): 225–48.

[52] Cotterill, "Fit Words", 226. See 229-234 for Cotterill's discussion of Elizabeth's grief.

[53] Hillary Nunn, "'Stepes Towards Heaven Wherein My Forefathers Have Walked': Spirituality, Family History, and Place in Elizabeth Isham's My Booke of Rememberance", *ANQ* 24, no.1-2 (2011): 75–80.

Elizabeth's spiritual connection to nature, and how this reinforced her connection to her chamber-bound female relatives.[54]

Despite this extensive scholarship, a crucial aspect of Elizabeth's narrative has been neglected. Being with and assisting her sick family clearly consumed much of Elizabeth's time and attention. While scholars often note these circumstances, the significance and centrality of Elizabeth's caring role has gone unrecognised. This chapter remedies this. I find that caring was inseparably coupled to Elizabeth's faith. Already using a deeply devotional vocabulary, caring also conjured up questions relating to three core concepts: love, time, and suffering. The first part of this chapter considers the tensions inherent in Elizabeth's experience of caring due to its interaction with these concepts. Love, time, and suffering were replete with overlapping and conflicting religious meanings, with which Elizabeth had to wrestle.

I also find that Elizabeth's understanding of caring changed after religious reflection – in particular, due to writing her *Booke of Rememberance.* The second part of this chapter thus explores how Elizabeth reinterpreted how caring interacted with questions of love, time, and suffering after reflecting on her life through writing. It examines how Elizabeth rethought what it meant to suffer a godly trial. It then explores how Elizabeth reconceptualised the love she expressed when she cared as Christian love, rather than worldly love. Finally, it explains how Elizabeth's reflections on her time as a carer helped her discover 'evidence' that the role was providentially ordained. Elizabeth ultimately found contentment and identity as a 'carer'.

Examining Elizabeth's caring role draws together many strands of the existing historiography. Elizabeth's *Booke of Rememberance* was a product of her much studied intense, introspective faith. This exercise in retrospective self-fashioning led Elizabeth to build an identity around her caring role. Elizabeth's decision to pursue an intellectual, devotional life rather than marry was strongly bound to her caring role. Incidentally, it meant she remained beside her sick relatives; ultimately, she saw caring as a core part of her pious life. Elizabeth's caring responsibilities similarly shaped her love of learning. Her interest in medicine, Laroche and others have noted, stemmed from a desire to help her ailing family, and was a reaction against the harsh treatments her mother endured.[55] Cotterill and Nunn's works are clearly relevant; they sensitively sketch Elizabeth's family life and underline how the Isham women comforted one another.

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[54] Hilary Nunn, "“Goeing a broad to gather and worke the flowers”: The Domestic Geography of Elizabeth Isham's My Booke of Rememberance", in Munroe and Laroche ed., *Ecofeminist Approaches to Early Modernity*, 153-174.

2.1.1 Elizabeth's Life Writings

Scholarship on Elizabeth Isham has primarily used two important texts: her single folio 'diary', and her sixty-thousand-word *Booke of Rememberance*: her 'chiefest worke'. Elizabeth's handwriting, though neat, is notoriously minute and difficult to decipher. For ease, I have therefore used Alice Eardley and Jill Millman's transcriptions of the *Booke of Rememberance* and 'diary' respectively, which were produced for the Constructing Elizabeth Isham project.[56] Unless otherwise stated, I have quoted Eardley and Millman's transcriptions exactly.[57] Occasionally, I insert square brackets for clarity (for example, inserting a name after a "she"). This is indicated in my footnotes.

Elizabeth's (ill-named) 'diary' is a single sheet divided into thirty-six sections, into which Elizabeth noted details of her life, one year per section (excepting her early childhood).[58] It is an unusual document, which largely notes brief domestic details and external events. The 'diary' occasionally contains practical details of caring that the *Booke* does not: for example, c.

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[55] Laroche, *Medical Authority*, 128.

[56] See n.20 re Elizabeth's *Booke of Rememberance*. Elizabeth's 'diary' refers to "Diary", by Elizabeth Isham, c.1636-46, MS, IL 3365, Northamptonshire Record Office. The Constructing Elizabeth Isham Project, accessed March 26, 2023, http://web.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/Isham/index_bor.htm.
This is an online edition of Elizabeth's 'diary', transcribed by Jill Millman for Warwick University's Constructing Elizabeth Isham Project. Hereafter cited as Isham, 'Diary', followed by the year the relevant panel refers to.

[57] This includes Eardley and Millman's expansions in square brackets (e.g., "my S[ister]") and ways of indicating features such as insertions (e.g., "\and gin/"). For the *Booke of Rememberance*, I have referred to Princeton University Library's digitised copy (see n.20) in cases where I suspect Eardley's transcription might contain errors, and to ensure that I have not missed any signficant information absent in the transcription (e.g., relating to Elizabeth's handwriting, or the physical condition of the manuscript).

[58] Jill Millman provides a detailed description of the 'diary'. See Jill Millman, "The Other Life of Elizabeth Isham", *Warwick University, Centre for the Study of the Renaissance*, December 7, 2007, accessed April 27, 2023, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/researchcurrent/isham/workshop/millman.

1633, “I began to give my S[ister] somwhat to eat in her \spars \diet//”.[59] The ‘diary’ was written largely retrospectively; Elizabeth probably began it around the same time as her *Booke*.[60] Elizabeth’s ‘diary’ continues to 1648, though she lived until 1654.

Elizabeth’s “chiefest worke” was a piece of life-writing in which she chronologically detailed the events of her life and reflected upon them. She called it her “Booke of Rememberance” and her “confessions”.[61] I primarily use Elizabeth’s *Booke of Rememberance*, as it is more detailed and reflective than the diary. The *Booke* has been dated to 1638/9, when Elizabeth was around twenty-nine.[62] I also read and refer to materials that Elizabeth recorded reading in her ‘booklists’, *Booke* and ‘diary’, which help provide the contextual frameworks in which Elizabeth operated.[63]

Erica Longfellow has shown that Elizabeth produced drafts of the *Booke*, citing passages she drafted on letter backs and margins among the family papers in the Northamptonshire Record Office. Some ‘draft’ passages were thematic, not chronological: Longfellow notes that “the verso of the sheet [a letter from Jane Isham to Elizabeth Isham] contains sections scattered throughout the ‘Book of Rememberance’, but all referring to family illness and death, while the sections copied around the direction all relate to conscience and religious practice”.[64]

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[59] Isham, ‘Diary’, panel for 1633.

[60] Margaret Ezell suspects the ‘diary’ panel for 1639 was the last written completely retrospectively. See Margaret Ezell, “Elizabeth Isham’s Books of Rememberance and Forgetting”, *Modern Philology* 109, no. 1 (2011), 71-84: 83.

[61] See e.g., Isham, *Booke*, f. 2v; Isham, ‘Diary’, panel for 1638.

[62] Isham refers to starting and finishing the *Booke* in her diary. See Isham, ‘Diary’, panels for 1638 -1639.

[63] Elizabeth’s ‘booklists’ are two manuscripts in which she listed the books she owned and read. For the original manuscripts, see “Autograph booklist” by Elizabeth Isham, n.d., MSS, IC 4824, Northamptonshire Record Office and “Autograph booklist” by Elizabeth Isham, c. 1648, MSS, IC 4829, Northamptonshire Record Office. I have used Isaac Stephen’s transcriptions of Elizabeth’s booklists. Isaac Stephens, "Under the Shadow of the Patriarch: Elizabeth Isham and Her World in Seventeenth-Century Northamptonshire", (PhD Thesis, University of California, 2008), 431- 435. ProQuest Dissertations, accessed April 27, 2023, https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/under-shadow-patriarch-elizabeth-isham-her-world/docview/304653075/se-2?accountid=13963.

[64] Erica Longfellow, “‘Take unto ye words’: Elizabeth Isham’s ‘Booke of Rememberance’ and Puritan Cultural Forms”, in *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558-1680,* ed. Johanna Harris and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 122-134: 126. My clarification in square brackets. See also Alice Eardley, ““Like hewen stone”: Augustine, Audience and Revision in Elizabeth Isham’s “Booke of

Understanding Elizabeth's motivations for writing her *Booke of Rememberance* is crucial to its interpretation. The text was, first and foremost, religious. Through it, Elizabeth could confess her "ugly sinnes", reflect upon her life's events, and discern God's intentions for her – "that I may neither ungratefully remember thy benefits nor ungraciouslly forget thy severe judgements".[65] That Elizabeth drafted the *Booke* thematically underlines this purpose. She wanted to understand the meaning of the illnesses and deaths in her family, not simply record her life chronologically. Thus, though deeply personal, it was not 'private'; God was its most immediate and important audience. This religious and reflective function of Elizabeth's *Booke* is significant. Elizabeth reinterpreted her caring role while remembering and reflecting to write it.

Elizabeth also intended for her surviving family to read her *Booke*: her father, brother, and her nieces. She hoped her nieces would find it useful, as her mother and great-grandfather's writings were to her: "not that I intend to have th[is] published. but to this end I have it in praise a than[k]fullnes to God. and for my owne benefit. which if it may doe my Brother or his children any pleasure I think to leave it them. whom I hope will charitable censure of me".[66]

This earthly readership gave the text another purpose; the *Booke* was also an apology, defending Elizabeth's unorthodox choices.[67] In its opening passages, Elizabeth hoped her readers "will charitable censure of me", and several times she stated an intention to "/writ somewhat to\ leave my mind to my friends when I die. to give them satisfaction", "especially to my father" - most notably after she and Judith discussed "the speeches of divers conserning my selfe about Marriage".[68] Elizabeth had "reasonings within me whereby I was satisfied before thee

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Rememberance" [c. 1639]", in *Women and Writing, c.1340–c.1650: The Domestication of Print Culture* ed. Anne Lawrence Mathers and Phillipa Hardman (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), 177–95.

[65] Isham, *Booke*, f. 1r; Ibid, f. 2v.

[66] Ibid*,* f. 2r.

[67] Eckerle, "Coming to Knowledge". See also Peter Lake and Isaac Stephens, "Living the 'private life': Elizabeth Isham's Book of Remembrance" in *Scandal and Religious Identity in Early Stuart England: A Northamptonshire Maid's Tragedy* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015), 294-354: 333. They see the *Booke* as a wider defence of "her dogged indulgence, in the face of the incomprehension and criticism of her kin, of her own melancholy, introverted, bookish nature".

[68] Isham, *Booke,* f. 2r; Ibid, f. 30r.

(and as I thought I was able to defende my \[selfe?]/ cause)" regarding her choices, but – unless she wrote them down – she felt she "otherwise could not so well expresse" them.[69]

As Cotterill has noted, Elizabeth also wrote her *Booke* to cope with her grief.[70] Elizabeth explicitly suggested that she wrote to "heal the wound opened by her sister's death" (Cotterill's words).[71] She wrote for distraction - to keep "a busiy head inventing".[72] And she wrote in memorial: "I thought to forget her would not doe so well whose vertues deserved rememberance [. . .] Some words of consolation I gathered for my selfe concerning this whereby I was satisfied towards the beginning of my Booke").[73]

That Elizabeth partly wrote in memoriam has significant implications, particularly for assessing negative aspects of Elizabeth's caring experience. Elizabeth wrote to cherish memories of her loved ones, not to document the parts of caring for them, and aspects of their characters, that she did not miss. While Elizabeth did write surprisingly frankly about, for example, her petty rivalries with Judith, and her frustrations with the way she handled her condition, she framed these comments apologetically. Elizabeth's reservations about caring for her family may have been more forthcoming, were she not grieving and memorialising them.

Elizabeth's family audience is also significant. Eardley has highlighted "less than complimentary" references to Judith, which were added as marginalia to 'draft' passages, but not the final *Booke.* For example, "my S [Iudith??] [seemed] to blame my mother for malancoly yet she tasted of the same cup her selfe".[74] She suggests that while Elizabeth could confess such things to God, she omitted them from the family copy. Based on the script, Eardley suggests that these notes were added *after* the *Booke's* completion, rather than included in a 'first draft' and later omitted.[75] This would suggest that greater temporal distance from her grief allowed Elizabeth to note unflattering details of her loved ones. We must consider Elizabeth's grief and self-censoring when assessing her experiences.

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[69] Ibid, f. 30r.
[70] Cotterill, "Fit Words", 226.
[71] Ibid, 229-230.
[72] Isham, *Booke,* f. 21r.
[73] Ibid, f. 31r. My omission in square brackets.
[74] Eardley, "Like Hewen Stone", 193.
[75] Ibid, 194-5. For an earlier draft of this chapter discussing similar issues, see also Alice Eardley, "'Hewen Stone': Constructing Elizabeth Isham's 'Booke of Rememberance.'" *Warwick University, Centre for the Study of the*

Elizabeth's broad and extensive reading also influenced her text. While Elizabeth read and owned mostly devotional texts, Elizabeth also read romances, ballads, medical books, and French and Latin grammars. [76] She also quoted diverse authors - for example, Spencer's *The Faerie Queene*.[77] Her frames of reference were thus extensive. Elizabeth took direct inspiration from her reading. These included her mother's writings (now lost), to which she occasionally referred.[78] While Elizabeth's *Booke* is far from formulaic, multiple historians have noted its close relationship with Augustine's *Confessions* – from Elizabeth's reasons for writing, structure, and the language she used, to the childhood anecdotes she shared.[79] Eardley, for example, points to parallels between Elizabeth's pear-stealing story and Augustine's own, and to Elizabeth's use of the unusual term 'lickorishnesse' when describing it. She notes 'lickorishnesse' is in the 1631 translation of Augustine.[80] Elizabeth herself referred to the *Booke* as her 'confessions', stated she was "imboldened" to write by Augustine's text, and cited him extremely frequently: Augustine's *Confessions* thirteen times, *S. Augustine's Praiers* once, and his *Heauenly Meditations* twice, by Stephens' count.[81]

Renaissance, December 14, 2007, accessed March 26, 2023, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/researchcurrent/isham/workshop/eardley.

[76] For Elizabeth's booklist, see Stephens, "Under the shadow", 431-35.

[77] For a detailed account of Elizabeth Isham's reading, see Stephens, *The Gentlewoman's Remembrance,* 144-185. For Elizabeth quoting the *The Faerie Queene*, see Isham, *Booke*, f. 29v. Eardley identifies the quote in footnote n.78.

[78] See e.g., Isham, *Booke*, f. 34r. Lake and Stephens discuss the influence of Elizabeth's mother's writings succinctly in Lake and Stephens, "Living the 'private life'", 316-7.

[79] Eardley discusses the relationship between Elizabeth's text and Augustine's confessions extensively in Eardley, "Like Hewen Stone".

[80] Ibid, 189-90. See also Elizabeth Clarke and Erica Longfellow, "Introduction to the Online Edition; '[E]xamine my life': Writing the self in the early seventeenth century", *Warwick University, Centre for the Study of the Renaissance*, January 12, 2023, accessed March 26, 2023, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/researchcurrent/isham/texts/. See also Isham, *Booke*, f. 10r, including Eardley's footnote, n.45.

[81] For "imboldened" reference, see Isham, *Booke*, f. 33v. For one of Elizabeth's many references to St. Augustine, see e.g., Isham, *Booke*, f. 24v. For Stephen's citation counts for Augustine's writings, see Stephens, "Under the shadow", 431-35.

The Bible was naturally one of Elizabeth's main frames of reference.[82] She quoted and paraphrased from it heavily. Like many of her contemporaries, she drew parallels between her life and biblical stories; for example, comparing her mother and grandmother to Naomi and Ruth, or she and her sister's sufferings to Job's.[83] Elizabeth actively sought sympathies between her own experiences and her models', and this altered the frameworks in which she interpreted her experiences.

2.1.2 Establishing Elizabeth Isham as a 'Carer'

I explained in the introduction to this thesis that the term 'carer' is merely a shorthand to refer to someone who provided substantial care (unpaid) to a sick family member for a signficant amount of time. Before exploring Elizabeth's understanding and experience of 'caring', we must establish what this meant in her context.

Growing up in a household where her mother and younger sister were consistently ill and required support, Elizabeth initially contributed to a network of family (including servants and waiting women) who cared for its vulnerable members. But as her immediate family shrank in caring capabilities – through illness, death, aging, and moving away – Elizabeth shouldered an increasing load. She became her sister's primary and most important caregiver.

Elizabeth's sister Judith, upon whose care this chapter is focussed, was gravely ill from birth. She suffered from unhealed broken bones and melancholy so severe that she often contemplated suicide (partly occasioned by her physical suffering), alongside other ailments. [84] In general, Elizabeth's family suffered poor health. Elizabeth's mother (also called Judith) was so consistently sickly that she was "unable to deale in afares of the world".[85] She died aged thirty-four in 1625, when Elizabeth was sixteen.[86] From around 1617, Elizabeth's paternal grandmother was also sick. She became "weake" and "unable to stir abroad as she had done but remained in her chamber".[87]

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[82] I have assumed Elizabeth used the King James Version of the Bible; her biblical quotations usually match this version, and she even explicitly noted respect for James I's religious writings. See Isham, *Booke*, f. 25v. However, she only specified having "2 Bibles, a greater & lesser". See Stephens, "Under the shadow", 435.

[83] Isham, *Booke*, f. 4v; Ibid, f. 22v.

[84] Elizabeth introduces Judith's ill-health on Isham, *Booke,* f. 3v. She gives further details on f. 6r. For Judith actively wanting to "make an end of a miserable life", see f. 24v. Further comments on Judith's poor health can be found throughout the *Booke of Rememberance*.

[85] Ibid, f. 14v. For further discussion of Elizabeth's mother's health, see Laroche, *Medical Authority*, 123.

Elizabeth recorded many individuals looking after her sick family in her youth. Aunt Isham, Elizabeth's paternal aunt, features prominently in Elizabeth's *Booke*.[88] She tended both Judiths emotionally and physically – for example, she nursed the younger Judith's broken leg.[89] Elizabeth's grandmother often stayed with the family after her daughter's death and was "no small comfort".[90] When Elizabeth's grandmother became too ill herself to "come and keepe her [Elizabeth's mother] company as she had done", it noticeably impacted her mother's health.[91] "[D]ivers" other "neighbours and frinds" comforted Elizabeth's mother, including "Sir John Pickering a worthy Gentleman", ministers, including John Dod and Baxter, a "very Neighbourly" Mrs Nicolls, with whom Judith stayed for two weeks, and her brother, Elizabeth's "Uncle Leowen".[92] When ill, Elizabeth's grandmother received daily care from Elizabeth's mother (when well enough) and aunts. There was a strong culture of mutual care amongst Elizabeth's family and friends, and she was taught that caring was a duty.[93]

Elizabeth's role in assisting her family thus began unextraordinarily; she contributed as expected, as one of many caregivers. Over time, however, caring became 'Elizabeth's role'. Elizabeth probably did little to assist Judith when they were both children; Elizabeth mostly noted resenting the attention her sister received.[94] But once Elizabeth was older, she 'stepped up'. This was partly because Elizabeth assumed a 'motherly' role in her home following her mother's death: "after the death of my mother my father gave me in charge to keepe things of the house", and she was given permission to "keepe the Dary mony to bie what I needed for my selfe and Sister and some things of the house".[95] Despite being only slightly senior, Elizabeth admitted that, "being eldest", she increasingly felt a "motherly affection" towards her brother, and cared for Judith "as if she had bene my child".[96]

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[86] Isham, *Booke*, ff. 19r -19v.
[87] Ibid, f. 6r.
[88] For a discussion of Aunt Isham, see Laroche, *Medical Authority*, 126-7.
[89] Isham, *Booke,* f. 6r.
[90] Ibid, f. 3r.
[91] Ibid, f. 10v. My clarification in square brackets.
[92] Ibid, f. 11v; f. 12r; f. 13v.
[93] For an example of Elizabeth's father becoming angry that his wife's relatives had apparently shirked their duty to care for her, see Ibid, f. 13v.
[94] Ibid, f. 6r.

Caring support from other sources also reduced. By the time her mother died, Elizabeth had lost her paternal grandmother, as well as relatives such as "Uncle Loewen".[97] Although Elizabeth's brother Justinian occasionally gave advice and lent books, he was frequently absent: at school, then at Cambridge, then travelling.[98] He married in 1634.[99] Family members who had often cared for the family, such as Aunt Isham, increasingly had their own problems. While Judith was experiencing intense melancholy, Aunt Isham was "suffering many afflictions both of poverty and \[with]/ loseing the strength of her limbes".[100] There is little sense that the younger Judith received a constant parade of callers like Lady Isham had. Elizabeth – who decided not to marry, and thereby remained in the family home – was thus left with a greater share of the caring load.

Consequently, although others assisted her, Elizabeth's *Booke* strongly suggests that she was Judith's primary caregiver. Comments such as "I be-ing most with her" are common.[101] Believing (Elizabeth recorded) that "none knew her illness so much as my selfe. whom she thought most pittied her", Judith encouraged Elizabeth's feelings of maternal responsibility towards her. [102] When the sisters discussed who should die first, they agreed Judith should –

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[95] Ibid, f. 20r.

[96] Ibid, f. 27v; f. 31r.

[97] For Elizabeth's paternal grandmother's death in 1621, see Ibid, f. 17r. For "Uncle Leowen's" death, see f. 13v.

[98] For Elizabeth noting that Judith found comfort in Justinian, see Ibid, f. 24v. For Justinian lending Elizabeth a book because he (wrongly) thought she was melancholy, see f. 26r. Elizabeth noted that she and Judith missed Justinian while he was abroad on f. 27v.

[99] For further biographical information on Elizabeth's brother, see R. Priestly, "Isham, Sir Justinian, second baronet", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed March 26, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14489.

[100] Isham, *Booke*, f. 26r.

[101] Ibid, f. 22r.

[102] Ibid, f. 30v.

"I supp\os/ing she would have bine worse without me. then I her. which I beleeve she considered, for if I had bine a little ill she would have come trembleing about me." [103]

Elizabeth's responsibility for Judith's health developed into a broader feeling that she was instrumental to her family and should not leave them. Recounting her trip to London shortly after her mother's death, she stated that "I should be sad thinking of my friends at home takeing care how they did though I h\e/ard almost weekly from them" and explained that she was later called home early because Judith and her father were unwell. [104] If her feeling of instrumentality had not yet developed at her time of going, Elizabeth's belief that her family relied upon her was consolidated by Judith, who frequently made Elizabeth feel guilty for leaving her for years afterwards: "she would often tell me how ill she was when I was from her at London. and how she desired my father that I might come home".[105] Later, Elizabeth wept not only at the thought of losing her family, but at the thought "of my owne death if my friends should lose me" – with "thinking how they would manage for me" written in the margin.[106] Nunn has highlighted Elizabeth's "lingering preoccupation with the risks of leaving the house", noting that Elizabeth's account of Judith's death keenly regrets her absence: Judith "seemed so well that I went to church", but "when I cam home I found death upon her". [107] Only because Judith "seemed so well" did Elizabeth dare to leave her.

Caring for Judith broadly involved keeping her company, reading to her, comforting her and listening to her grievances, 'sitting up' with her when she was severely ill, making her medicines, buying her things, monitoring and managing her diet, and organising the servants responsible for her care. [108] However, precisely what caring involved shifted with the severity and nature of Judith's symptoms. Judith's condition fluctuated; she was generally weak, but also suffered periods of intense illness. In the winter of 1631-2, for example, Judith was severely ill. [109] Elizabeth closely monitored Judith's symptoms. She noted that Judith "continued 2 or 3 daies not speaking at all and eating nothing or very litle", and when a little better "she for the most part liked of poched eggs somtimes broths and other things". She recalled "sitting up with her that night", "being loth to be from her ether day or night (according to her owne desire)" "by which meanes I learned how to esteeme of watching and what letle sleep would suffice nature". She critically assessed diagnoses and treatments offered by physicians: "the cause of her illnesse was said to be the mother but those things which was proper for the desease availed not". And she comforted her: "I be-ing most with her perceived what she aileded [...] was as much in her mind. as in her body", "I per-ceved her spirits was much raised with reading to her those Bookes or places wherein she delighted".[110]

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[103] Ibid, f. 30r.

[104] Ibid, ff. 20v-21r.

[105] Ibid, f. 30r.

[106] Ibid, f. 33v.

[107] Nunn, "Goeing a broad", 168.

[108] See e.g., Isham, *Booke,* f. 22r (sitting up), f. 29v (Elizabeth arranges for a woman to help her sister), f. 29v (buying her a book); Isham, *Diary*, panel for 1633 (monitoring diet).

When Judith was severely melancholic, looking after her involved persuading her not to sit 'musing'. Elizabeth and her brother Justinian "by all meanes we could thinke of both foule and faire" tried to persuade Judith to "strive and not give way to make her selfe wrose by doeing. nothing", with limited success. And Elizabeth "prevaled with her many times to doe somthing and walke abroad" or paint, as she herself found helpful ("it kept me from those thoughts which was hurtfull to mee").[111]

Elizabeth did not, however, provide extensive practical support. The Ishams were wealthy, and had paid servants who cooked, cleaned, washed, and dressed them – whether or not they were well enough to do this independently. Nonetheless, Elizabeth did not abdicate responsibility for the practical and physical assistance Judith required. Elizabeth managed, hired, and instructed the servants who cared for Judith, and allocated household resources to ensure she was supported. Elizabeth distinguished between receiving help from servants because one wanted it, and because one needed it. She stated that "I tooke great delight in being my owne servant. to take my rest and to rinse without the helpe of any to dresse me",

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[109] Isham, *Booke*, f. 21v. Dating passages of Elizabeth's *Booke of Remembrance* can be surprisingly difficult, but Elizabeth refers to "the 21 yere" and "the 24 yeere" on f. 21v, and the events she describes correspond with those she describes for her 23rd and 24th year in the 'diary'.

[110] All quotes from Isham, *Booke*, ff. 21v – 22r. My omission in square brackets.

[111] Ibid, f. 26r.

"leaving that to my sister which had more need".[112] She recognised she could live independently and would do so to free up household resources for Judith's care. Elizabeth also hired servants specifically for caregiving; "by my meanes" Elizabeth had "the woman come […] of whom she [Judith] had some [helpe] afore" when Judith was particularly ill.[113]

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[112] Ibid, f. 21r.

[113] Ibid, f. 29v. "[helpe]" is Eardley's clarification. Other square brackets are mine.

2.2 Immoderate Care: Love, Time, Suffering, and Spiritual Anxiety

Having established Elizabeth as a 'carer', we will now consider the spiritual tensions inherent in her experience of caring. Elizabeth's example suggests that caring was a necessarily religious experience, and a conflicted one. Caring forced Elizabeth to devote substantial time and love to her sister, and to witness her suffering. It therefore raised difficult questions surrounding these concepts. Each was replete with overlapping religious meanings.

As conventional discourses emphasised the importance of moderation when devoting love and time to relatives, Elizabeth found caring spiritually problematic. Almost by definition, long-term caring involved 'immoderate' quantities of love, time, and suffering. Wrestling with these implicit spiritual complications was therefore a defining part of caring. The following section explores what made love, time, and suffering so inseparable from caring, and the consequences of this.

2.2.1 The Problem of Time

Caring for Judith was inherently time-consuming. At times, Elizabeth literally did not leave Judith's side. She "learned…what letle sleep would suffice nature" when 'watching' her, night and day, in a period of particular sickness.[114] We have seen that Elizabeth would not even go to the church across the road from her estate, unless Judith seemed particularly well – and that she returned early from her teenage trip to London to look after her family.[115] Elizabeth felt bound to look after Judith, even against her own first-order desires. When Elizabeth's father released her from the duty to "looke to things of the house", "to fulfil my Sisters desire, and that things might be for the best", Elizabeth still "over saw and many times did things which else would not have bin don. without me, though I did not desire too burthen my selfe much with my worldly bisines (for I delighted not so much in it)". [116] Elizabeth continued to manage Judith's care because Judith wanted this, and they both felt this was best for her.

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[114] Ibid, f. 22r.

[115] Ibid, f. 30v; ff. 20v-21r.

The time-consuming nature of caring was significant because it had spiritual implications. Compared to Mary Rich, Elizabeth had a relaxed attitude towards time. She approved of 'pastimes' like playing cards, providing she and her family were "not playing too often. and at such times when wee should doe better".[117] Even Elizabeth's grandmother, who thought such time could be "better spent" (on godly activities), did not hold the puritanical attitudes that Elizabeth hinted became common over her lifetime: "(not as they say now adayes to drive away the time)".[118] Nonetheless, the time Elizabeth spent caring for Judith was problematic; she worried it reflected an immoderate, unchristian affection for her.

When considering why Elizabeth's experience of caring was initially dominated by religious anxiety, the contents of Henry Mason's *Cure of Cares* is highly significant. [119] The book held special significance for Elizabeth, and it reflected or influenced her own opinions (likely both). Elizabeth's brother Justinian gifted Mason's *Cure of Cares* to Elizabeth when she was melancholy after her collapsed marriage negotiations, the death of some would-be suitors, and the unkind local gossip surrounding this. [120] Elizabeth later used the book to help her through her grief after Judith's death, and it partly inspired her to write her *Booke.*[121] It is about 'curing' oneself of overmuch care for worldly things, to better balance those cares with serving God. And Elizabeth's text is permeated with ideas and vocabulary that mirror his.[122] Mason provided Elizabeth with a religious framework, which she adapted to her own circumstances, and which concisely summarised broader tropes in contemporary religious culture.

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[116] Ibid, f. 21r.
[117] Ibid, f. 14v.
[118] Ibid, f. 16r.
[119] Henry Mason, *The Cure of Cares or a Short Discourse, Declaring the Condition of Worldly Cares; with some Remedies Appropriated Unto them* […] (London: Printed by M[iles] F[lesher] for Iohn Clarke, 1627). Proquest, accessed April 25, 2023, https://www.proquest.com/books/cure-cares-short-discourse-declaring-condition/docview/2240880026/se-2.
[120] Ibid, f. 27v.
[121] Ibid, f. 33v.
[122] See, for example, Isham, *Booke*, f. 27r.

I argue that Elizabeth interpreted Mason's guidance as suggesting the time she spent caring for Judith constituted an "immoderate" worldly care and was therefore a pathway into sin. Mason distinguished three kinds of 'cares': holy or godly, sinful or devilish, and indifferent or worldly ("neither commanded nor forbidden, but may as occasion doth require").[123] In the latter category, cares could be "*regular* and orderly", or "*irregular* and exorbitant".[124] "Immoderate cares" were when "we desire things of the world too *immoderately* or too eagerly: as if wee preferre them before Gods service, or so seeke for them, that we neglect good duties, or any way affect them more then according to their worth and value".[125] Cares "exceedeth due proportion and measure" if they distracted one when they "both should and would bee thinking on better things".[126] Worrying and ruminating indicated overmuch care. People with immoderate cares "feare and doubt, and forecast dangers and difficulties, and muse with themselues what the event may bee; and if any thing fall out amisse, they *take thought* for that which is alreadie past, and can|not be recalled".[127] The "third signe of a sinfull care" was "if it vexe the minde and disquiet the man, and bereave him of his inward peace and contentment".[128]

Mason emphasised the importance of spending time wisely, and of properly compartmentalising it; worldly cares should not "fill the head and heart of a man at *unseasonable* times", or "when hee should bee busied about other matters".[129] It was condemnable that when someone with immoderate cares started another task and left these cares "(as he thinketh) behinde him, they will attend him still: they will follow him to his *bed*, and to his *board*, and to his *closet*".[130]

Immoderate cares were problematic because they made "men *unfit* for Gods *service*". Being "grieved with worldly cares" stopped one being "free hearted" enough to do God's service cheerfully; "the heart being taken up with earthly thoughts, hath no leisure to attend to heavenly things".[131] Like seed falling amongst thorns, "*the care of this world doth choke the word*", Mason reminded his readers.[132]

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[123] Mason, *Cure of Cares*, 5.
[124] Ibid, 6.
[125] Ibid, 9.
[126] Ibid, 13.
[127] Ibid, 14.
[128] Ibid, 14-15.
[129] Ibid, 13.
[130] Ibid.

Using Mason's criteria, I suggest Elizabeth concluded that the time she devoted to Judith was "immoderate". This is difficult to demonstrate with certainty – not least, because (as I discuss later in this chapter), Elizabeth had begun to change her mind by the time she wrote her *Booke*. But, given Elizabeth's attachment to Mason's text, her anxiety, and her circumstances, it seems likely. She often suggested that she categorised care for Judith as "worldly business".[133] And we can see evidence that Elizabeth internalised Mason's ideas about worldly love in the language she used: for example, Elizabeth described being oppressed with "unesscecary /inordinate\ and immoderate cares" which interrupted "good duties", when ruminating on the death of a suitor.[134] Caring clearly took time from her service of God, and "followed" her when she "should bee busied about other matters". For instance, Elizabeth spent time "thinking of my friends at home takeing care how they did" when she should have been improving her breeding in London as a filial and gentlewomanly duty.[135]

To clarify, looking after and loving one's family was not inherently problematic. Indeed, Mason explicitly said that it was legitimate for a wife to have cares for *"how she may please her husband"* and recognised that "the single life might be subject to the like cumbrances".[136] But this was only if the time and affection involved remained moderate and did not involve "unnecessary and excessive paines".[137] Yet Elizabeth had found that long-term care for a family member unavoidably consumed immoderate amounts of time, attention, and affection. I argue that she therefore concluded that the excessive time that caring for Judith involved was a pathway into an immoderate, sinful love of the world.

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[131] Ibid, 19.
[132] Ibid, 20. Matthew 13:22.
[133] Isham, *Booke,* f. 21r.
[134] Ibid, f. 27r
[135] Ibid, ff. 20v-21r.
[136] Mason, *Cure of Cares*, 8-9.
[137] Ibid, 6.

Elizabeth's conclusion rested on the assumption that caring, and the love she expressed through it, was something 'worldly' and 'indifferent'. So long as she assumed this, the time she spent on caring was sinful. There were several nuances and caveats to this. But not until Elizabeth recategorized caring as a demonstration of Christian love, rather than a "worldly care", could Elizabeth properly assuage her anxiety about it. We will explore love, and this recategorization later. Before this, how Elizabeth's experience of caring was complicated by questions of suffering needs attention.

2.2.2 The Problem of Suffering

Elizabeth called her home a "house of griffe". Her mother and sister were ill for as long as Elizabeth could remember, and her life was punctuated with family deaths.[138] Caring for Judith particularly involved witnessing suffering. Judith was in "miserie /from her birth\" and Elizabeth, "be-ing most with her", observed this. [139]

That caring for Judith involved witnessing her suffering was significant because suffering had religious meaning. Elizabeth's writing is clear about her views on earthly suffering. Aged twelve, Elizabeth recalled her mother "telling me that the godly should suffer punishment for there sins in this life". Though she initially wept for fear of temporal punishment, this was because she was not "calling to mind thy great mercie in suffering us to scapt with a temporall punishment. and not remembering thy gratious promises to them that keepe thy Law".[140] Suffering was a two-sided coin. It was distressing, but ultimately something to celebrate, because it could indicate election: "God would turne it to \my/ good." [141]

Total contentment in this life was concerning. Elizabeth once refused to have her fortune told – not simply because "it might be bad", but because she also did not want to "heare my fortune as altogether good, or prosperous in this world. for then I should have feared to have bene excluded out of the number of thy children who have there portion of afflictions in this life",

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[138] Isham, *Booke*, f. 34v.
[139] Ibid, f. 31r; f. 22r.
[140] Ibid, f. 26v.
[141] Ibid, f. 22v.

"or whose lot it is to suffer".[142] "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth", "our light affliction which is but for a moment, causeth unto us afarre most excellent and an eternall weight of glory: and Saint paul saith if I must needs rejoyce I will rejoyce of mine infirmities": Elizabeth recounted extensive biblical evidence supporting her views on the value of earthly suffering.[143]

In this context, Elizabeth was confident her loved ones' suffering would ultimately benefit them. Reflecting on Judith's "miserie /from her birth\", Elizabeth "had much more reason to rejoyce to think of them then to be sorry. considering her greater happiness for them".[144] She once reflected that "I have observed that those which have had trialls in there life time. have had peace at there death", noting "as my Granmother, mother and sister" in the margin.[145] Judith's epitaph, composed by Justinian, summarised the family's view of her suffering:

> Heere shee whoe wth afflictions trid & tride.
>
> of minde & bodie was so purefide,
>
> That by the Sacred heate of Devine love
>
> her Soule soone hatcht flew to the saints above.[146]

Admittedly, Elizabeth sometimes thought Judith bore her suffering poorly. While Elizabeth's *Booke,* written while she was grieving, tends to idolise Judith's behaviour, Elizabeth hinted that Judith occasionally crossed the line between bearing her trials with godly resignation and simply indulging in misery. When she and Judith were suffering from religious melancholy, Elizabeth explained that painting "kept me from those thoughts which was hurtfull to mee".

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[142] Ibid, ff. 18r-18v.

[143] Ibid, f. 6v. Elizabeth noted that she had paraphrased II Corinthians 4:17, II Corinthians 11:30, and I Peter 4:13 respectively.

[144] Isham, *Booke*, f. 31r.

[145] Ibid, f. 19v.

[146] Ibid, f. 30v. I have slightly amended Eardley's transcription to better reflect the digitised Princeton manuscript, as Elizabeth laid out these lines carefully, in larger handwriting and separately from the main body of her text. Eardley's transcription loses some of this impact. Note that the epitaph Elizabeth records is slightly different (spelling, word changes e.g., "heate" instead of "beate") to Judith's tombstone inscription recorded in Stephens, *The Gentlewoman's Remembrance*, 79.

"But my sister delighted not to imploy her selfe this way. but many times sat musing whereby I suppose she suffered more".[147] On another occasion, although she afterwards apologised for "judging" and "sencering" her, Elizabeth could not resist suspecting that since Judith's fits were "comming and goeing suddenly many times upon letle occation wee thought she might helpe partly". Significantly, she noted this in a margin, perhaps with some distance from her grief.[148] Elizabeth often discussed the poor (how they could be thankful with less, a desire to help them, and so forth) after passages where she discussed Judith's condition with frustration. After complaining about Judith's "delight" in inactivity, for instance, Elizabeth wrote about how "many times in those poore cottages there inhabits as rich soules as in more statly buildings" and how "by goeing amongst the poore accation of good may be offered. for wee see-ing there content. and what shift they make with little \we/ may be \the/ more thankfull to thee for much".[149]

Still, Elizabeth was sure that Judith and other members of their family would be rewarded in heaven for their patient suffering on earth.[150] Despite this, witnessing it made Elizabeth anxious. Olivia Weisser has suggested that women in particular observed the sicknesses and sufferings of others and used them to evaluate and describe their own.[151] Elizabeth did just this, but as someone who could not remember being "\very/ ill two daies together", witnessing Judith's illness drew attention to her own remarkable health. [152] Counterintuitively for a modern reader, this worried her. I argue that contrasting her health to her family's suffering made Elizabeth fear that she had suffered insufficiently to merit salvation.

To be clear, Elizabeth did believe she had been trialled. She particularly suffered in her early twenties and felt "strongly tempted" around the time of her marriage negotiations, "which I knew was by God's triall of me".[153] These trials were considerable; Elizabeth felt "at the pitts brinke divers times through temtations and other crosses".[154] But she always weighed her trials against her mother's and sister's. After stating she felt "at the pitts brinke", Elizabeth qualified: "yet I found it to be the better with me (being the sildomer troubled [than Judith]) because I busied and pleased my selfe with those works of my fancy".[155] When Elizabeth felt tempted to "make away my selfe", she also noted that "my sister was tempted to make an end of a miserable life having so much illnes of mind and body as she had", and that Judith's affliction was so severe that she was tempted to "make me away sleeping by her".[156] Although Elizabeth liked Judith's company because she "knew those conflicts of mind which I was then troubled with", Elizabeth's were "not in that extremity as my mother and sister was having more health and strength of body to bare it". [157] When Elizabeth made the comment above, she was "loth to be from" Judith "ether day or night", because Judith was lying in bed and "seemed without sence and motion (onley she looked well whereby wee had hope of her life)".[158] However much Elizabeth suffered, Judith seemed to suffer more.

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[147] Isham, *Booke*, f. 26r.

[148] Ibid, f. 30v.

[149] Ibid, f. 26r.

[150] Ibid, f. 31r.

[151] This argument is central to Weisser's book, but she summarises this part on Weisser, *Ill Composed*, 3, 184.

[152] Isham, *Booke*, f. 35v.

[153] Ibid, f. 22v.

Thinking her sufferings were incomparable to those she cared for meant Elizabeth felt less deserving of godly comfort. Judith explained to Elizabeth that "in her greatest extremity of paine \or/ and sickness […] she had exceeding joy".[159] Although Elizabeth sometimes desired this comfort for herself - "I hereing my Sister relateing to me divers times of the joy she hath bine in. and as \it/ were seeing glorious sights. since her death I desired I might be comforted with some glimps of such glory in my dream or sleepe by night" – she did not think herself as worthy as Judith, when she reflected. She added in a margin that she had "considered not my Sisters great humiliation by afflictions therefore her consolation was great", as a reason why God did not grant her "some glimps of such glory".[160] That Elizabeth's feelings of spiritual inadequacy mirrored childhood jealousies made them especially poignant: "I should be dejected supposing my mother loved my Sister better […] not considering her much pitting and sparing of her because she was corrected by thy hand O Lord", Elizabeth wrote, early in her *Booke.*[161]

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[154] Ibid, f. 24r. Elizabeth also uses the phrase "pitts brinke" on f. 32r.
[155] Ibid, f. 24r. My clarification in square brackets.
[156] Ibid, f. 24v.
[157] Ibid, f. 22r.
[158] Ibid, f. 22r.
[159] Ibid, f. 22r. My omission in square brackets.
[160] Ibid, f. 31r.

Elizabeth's feelings of relative unworthiness extended beyond 'one-off' godly comforts, however. Rather, she worried she did not belong to the Elect. Towards the end of her *Booke,* Elizabeth feared that "I had not done so much good nor my afflictions was any waye comparable to my mothers and [Sisters] to enter into such joy". [162] She hoped to live longer so she might further serve God to compensate. Elizabeth's concern was clearly palpable, because Elizabeth recorded Judith comforting her several times. Judith suggested that Elizabeth's co-sufferance alongside her was a trial in itself: "she told me another time lying by her. I hope Sister as you bine partaker of my misery so you shalbe of my joy". [163] "She said she was as a hollow trunk which also I heard by her"; her suffering and consequent salvation would pass through to Elizabeth, like sound through a hollow tree. Judith expressed this regularly. After her death, Elizabeth referred to Judith's "owne speeches to me whereby I verely beleeved I shall have the greater joy for being pertaker of her misery", whereby she gained some "consolation".[164] While Elizabeth was ultimately convinced of this, it took time for her to believe it. Elizabeth's 'realisation' that caring was spiritually beneficial was cumulative, and (I suggest) she remained unconvinced by Judith's assertions for some time. Elizabeth continued to express anxiety about her relative suffering until late in her *Booke.* I discuss the process by which Elizabeth accumulated 'evidence' in support of Judith's suggestions, and how she thereby became convinced of them, in the final section of this chapter.

An inherent feature of caring – witnessing another's suffering – thus made Elizabeth feel uncomfortable about her salvation status. The salvation anxiety Elizabeth experienced because of caring appears unusual, however. Although historiography on long-term caring is limited, visiting and relating to the sick was supposed to bring spiritual benefits. Kristine Steenburgh has explored protestant encouragement of compassionately 'co-suffering' with the afflicted to

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[161] Ibid, f. 3v. My omission in square brackets.
[162] Ibid, f. 33r.
[163] Ibid, f. 30v.
[164] Ibid, f. 31r.

'soften the bowels of compassion'.[165] Paula Barros has similarly written about the importance of compassionate 'fellow-feeling' – that is, Christ-like participation in another's suffering – when comforting the grieved.[166] It is well attested that early modern women were 'supposed' to visit and care for the sick. Yet Elizabeth did not initially view caring positively. Presumably, she understood the supposed benefits of co-sufferance since Judith drew on them. Elizabeth's apparently 'unusual' reaction again comes back to moderation. *Occasionally* witnessing another's suffering helped one reflect on mortality, just as caring for the temporarily sick fulfilled a neighbourly, Christian duty. But when witnessing another's suffering instead dominated one's life, and one's own experience was starkly different, cultural templates emphasising spiritual comparison resulted in spiritual paranoia.

2.2.3 Categories and Questions of Love

Elizabeth distinguished between four types of love: worldly, human, Christian, and godly. This broadly lined up with the hierarchy implicit in Mason's *Cure of Cares*. Godly love was one's love of God. It should exceed all other loves. At the other end of the spectrum, worldly love was one's affection towards 'worldly things' – like hobbies, material possessions, and family. 'Worldly love' was distinct from 'worldly cares'. Having worldly 'cares' (for example, attending to a business) was thought practical and necessary in moderation; "for to trust to Gods help without using our owne care, is not so much to trust God, as to tempt him".[167] Worldly love was considered less favourably. It was frivolous and foolish to love distracting, worldly idols. 'Human love' was a subcategory of 'worldly love'. But it proved more problematic. Placing one's love of God unquestionably above one's love for a sibling, partner, or parent was difficult.

The final category of love, 'Christian love', was a kind of legitimate human love that followed Christ's example. One could love fellow Christian souls and show them kindness, even though they were imperfect worldly creatures; Christ did this for man. Christian love channelled God's grace: it was not 'worldly' in origin. Christian love was central to the emotional ethic 'caritas', which Katie Barclay has explored.[168]

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[165] Steenbergh, "Mollified Hearts and Enlarged Bowels".
[166] Barros, "'Hee Left Them Not Comfortlesse".
[167] Mason, *Cure of Cares*, 9.

Elizabeth was wary of worldly love. Her uncomfortable memory of her mother's 'bad' death was partly responsible. Contrary to the Christian deathbed ideal of giving oneself willingly to God, Elizabeth's mother was afraid and wanted to remain among her family. Elizabeth remembered the minister John Dod "admonishing my mother of death. who seemed to be unwilling to leave us. but hee said she should not be unwilling to leave her children to God."[169] "Death is terrable to mee […] O let me live with my husband and my Children", "a sickly mother was better then no mother", Elizabeth recalled her saying.[170] "I suppose the feare of violence of death together with her affection taking on like a natural mother. caused her to be unwilling to die", Elizabeth reflected afterwards.[171] Though she ultimately decided her mother's death had been 'good', despite appearances - "yet what neede I be dismaied at her unwillingness to die seeing our Blessed Saviour as he was man feared death" – her reluctance to join God for love of her family worried Elizabeth.[172] Aged sixteen, Elizabeth had seen how familial attachments could impact one's relationship with God. Caring about, and caring for, one's family carried religious issues.

Partly reflective of this concern, Elizabeth decided aged sixteen to prioritise godly love. She was "so pleased with devine truth. that to injoy it with the more freenesse I desired not to marry".[173] While Elizabeth eventually considered marrying to please her father, this was with the caveat that God would intervene if it was against His wishes after all. He would "doe for the best which way it please the\e/ and I thought my selfe safe in thus doeing".[174] Ultimately, she believed He did. Fearing that she loved her suitor more than God, Elizabeth believed marrying him would impede her service of God. Elizabeth thus let their marriage negotiations fall apart:

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[168] Barclay, *Caritas*.

[169] Isham, *Booke*, f. 19r.

[170] Ibid. My omission in square brackets.

[171] Ibid, f. 19v.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Ibid, f. 18v. Isaac Stephens discusses Elizabeth's spiritual decision never to marry in detail in Stephens, *The Gentlewoman's Remembrance*, 126.

[174] Isham, *Booke*, f. 21v.

> then I was jelous of my selfe lest I should offend God in my affections. which I thought was too strong for man. therefore I desired of \thee/ my Lord God that I might never have him to offende \[thee]/ (ether in with\r/awing my love and service from \there/ thee or) in loving him too much. again I thought how well I should chance to breake off that I might thinke of Marriage no more but that I might with more freenes serve thee without \those/ thoughts of humon /(love\[175]

She insisted that her never marrying was not because she was proud, melancholy, "for dislike of it" or because she "disdained to be in subjection"; "it was rather that contrairy having that true content which I thought the world could not give".[176] A 'worldly' life like marriage would deprive Elizabeth of "the opertunity to doe so much service or thinke so much of thee".[177] Rather than tying herself to hypothetical family, whom she feared (like her mother) she would love too much, Elizabeth remained single to limit the worldly objects of her devotions and devote herself to godly love.

That Elizabeth deliberately chose godly love over worldly and human love is significant for understanding her experience of caring. Firstly, it demonstrates Elizabeth's sensitivity to issues of love. Marriage was not necessarily incompatible with a godly life, but Elizabeth did not trust she could keep her affections in check. Less straightforwardly, it coupled Elizabeth's continued care of Judith to her choice to prioritise godly love over filial and gentlewomanly duty. Elizabeth believed that God had intervened to stop her marrying, so she could devote herself to Him instead. Yet this meant that rather than moving to a marital home, she stayed beside Judith: looking after her, mothering her, and sharing in her sufferings. We will return to the significance of this.

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[175] Ibid, f. 23r.

[176] Ibid, f. 29r.

[177] Ibid, f. 28r.

Given Elizabeth's sensitivity to issues of worldly love, it is significant that Elizabeth adored Judith. While Judith and the "privat life" they shared sometimes frustrated Elizabeth, her comments about it were mainly positive.[178] It was "sweet" and she feared an end to the life "wherein \I/ \have/ found so much content".[179] She deeply grieved Judith's death, stating that she had "a wound taken by having that sweet and deare custome of living with her thus broken off."[180] Even a year later, she "almost lost my [her] voice through my foolishnes of too much sorrow for my S Judeth", and was "very ready of sencering my selfe. for want of performing all duties and love unto her".[181] Elizabeth's care of Judith strengthened affections between them, and Judith was deeply grateful to Elizabeth. Elizabeth recorded her "thanking me for my kindnesse to her which she would say she was un-able to requit often confessing she knew not how to doe but for me."[182] Caring also added a maternal flavour to their relationship; Elizabeth described caring for Judith "as if she had bene my child".[183]

Elizabeth's love for Judith was a problem. She felt it was immoderate, worldly, and therefore religiously problematic. Elizabeth's *Booke* is littered with religious concerns about familial love:

> whoever prefereth father or mother. Brother or Sister before thee is not worthy of thee [...] I finding my one /selfe\ nature either to exceede to much in natural affection. or else to decline for that duty which I owe. My God I desire not to love any but in thee. and for thee [...] for thee as thou hast commanded us to love one another.[184]

> let not any human or worldly respect alliannate my soule from thee [...] let it always remane in that temper or state wherein I may be fit to doe thee service. [185]

That caring made her feel motherly love towards Judith introduced additional anxiety; Elizabeth associated caring with the kind of doting, maternal affection that she feared in her mother, and had tried to avoid by remaining single.[186] Concerned for Elizabeth's soul and for her happiness after her passing, Judith warned Elizabeth against loving her excessively. Judith said "I should not be too fond of her", and that she thought Elizabeth "was loth she should leave me".[187]

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[178] Elizabeth described she and Judith's life as a "privat life" multiple times. See e.g., Ibid, f. 29v.
[179] Ibid, f. 28r.
[180] Ibid, f. 30v.
[181] Isham, *Diary*, panel for 1638; Isham, *Booke*, f. 31r. My clarification in square brackets.
[182] Isham, *Booke*, f. 30v.
[183] Ibid, f. 31r.
[184] Ibid, f. 33r. My omission in square brackets.
[185] Ibid, f. 34v. My omission in square brackets.

Elizabeth thus believed that caring drew her from God, practically and emotionally. Considering the possibility of Judith's death, Elizabeth was comforted when "thou putest it into me that if though tookest her from me. I might with more freenes and fullness enjoy thine owne selfe. for seeing those whom I loved passed away. it did me yet good to thinke that I should be more wholly thine".[188] She loved her family "because they were in some measure good", "but much more should I love thee which art goodnes it selfe".[189] On the anniversary of Judith's death, Elizabeth had to remind herself that "death should not be desired out of naturall affection or human respect but to be with thee", after "a conceit came into my mind […] that I might die at the same time or day of the yere that she did", "that I might lie by her".[190] Her affection for Judith competed problematically with her love for God.

Caring thus allowed Elizabeth to indulge an ostensibly sinful sisterly love. It also forced Elizabeth to struggle with complex questions of love relating to Judith's life. Caring for Judith, after all, was preserving the life of someone who claimed she "was tempted to make an end of a miserable life having so much illnes of mind and body as she had", in a culture which berated suicide, but encouraged the pious to welcome death.[191] On one hand, Elizabeth suspected her immoderate 'natural affection' for Judith made her want to preserve her life to retain her company. In fact, Judith would have been happier in heaven, free from her suffering: "I had heavines fearing her death and much desiring she might live with me. although sometimes I thought it […] uncharitable to wish her in still misery”. [192] However, she feared Judith desired death “to be out of misery”, rather than for love of God.[193] Perhaps she was right to warn Judith against desiring death? “To be afraid to die or wish for death. are words of passion. or despairing breath”, she reminded her.[194]

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[186] In line with Calvin's warning against placing family and kin above the wider Christian community, Barclay points out that puritanical families (like Elizabeth's) were particularly cautious of excessive love for children lest they become distracting 'idols', and encouraged parents to "love their children moderately, as a form of grace, rather than immoderately". See Katie Barclay, "Love and Other Emotions", in *The Routledge History of Women in Early Modern Europe* ed. Amanda Capern (London: Routledge, 2019), 77-96: 86.

[187] Isham, *Booke*, f. 29v.

[188] Ibid, f. 30v.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Ibid, f. 33r. My omission in square brackets.

[191] Ibid, f. 24v.

Elizabeth did not know whether she should persuade Judith to live, lest she die impatiently, or ignore her unchristian attachment to her and let her go. But Judith’s health made her constantly confront these questions. Retrospectively, Elizabeth decided that Judith’s intentions were pious:

> I doe suppose that my opinion is now more charitable and rightly of her desireing to die. for she having not great comfort in the world (or in worldly things by reason of her owne misery) her Cheefest joy was in thee).
>
> I verely beleeve that not onely through her sence of misery […] but through her great joy and love to thee she desired to die […] she proved to me these words of S paul I desire to be desolved and to be with Christ \phil 1.23/.[195]

But she struggled with these emotions and conceptions of love during Judith’s life. The margins next to the quotations above betray Elizabeth’s continued uncertain fluctuation: “yet S pail saieth whether to live in that flesh were profitable for me and what to chuse I know now” and “that we should not too much desire death especially through impatiency but rather learn what it is to live”.[196] Difficult questions of love and death would not have been everyday considerations, were Elizabeth not caring for Judith.

Caring thus encouraged Elizabeth to love her sister immoderately and to consider difficult questions relating to love and the preservation of Judith’s life. But a confounding factor complicated matters. Elizabeth viewed unchristian ‘worldly love’ in gradations: excessive love of friends and family was not ideal, but it was better than loving clothes and high society. Consequently, Elizabeth sometimes thought that caring protected her from leading an even worldlier life.

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[192] Ibid, f. 30v. My omission in square brackets.
[193] Ibid, f. 29v.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid. My omissions in square brackets.
[196] Ibid.

Elizabeth believed she was vain and self-indulgent, particularly regarding her appearance and intellect. Pride was "that sin which raigined too much in my youth. being proud of those natural parts which thou gavest me".[197] She felt a weakness for worldly things, like "frinch facion" and male flattery.[198] She regretted that her vanity meant she "loved too much to be in my cosen Eusebys Isham company. Because I thought he had a good opinion of me".[199] Though Elizabeth struggled spiritually with the time and love she devoted to Judith relative to God, looking after Judith was 'better' and 'less worldly' than the alternatives it discouraged: the frivolous company of fashionable society, self-indulgent study to bolster her ego, and fine clothes.

Caring helped Elizabeth cope with temptation through necessary avoidance. It also gave her justifications to carve out spiritually acceptable ways to pursue what she enjoyed. Feeling bound to Judith removed the temptation to engage in fashionable society by adding a further reason to forgo it; Judith still spoke regretfully of "how ill she was when I was from her at London. and how she desired my father that I might come home" a decade after Elizabeth's trip.[200] Similarly, Judith's poor health justified some non-religious learning, which satisfied Elizabeth's desire for knowledge without allowing her to become 'puffed up' and arrogant. For example, though Elizabeth had a "mind to learn latin", she instead "read of the virtue of […] herbes and flowres", "I found this way might be very beneficiall both to my Sister and others".[201] While mere knowledge like Latin "puffeth up […] love edifieth", she quoted.[202]

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[197] Ibid, f. 20r.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Ibid, f. 30r.

[201] Ibid, f. 28r. My omission in square brackets.

[202] Ibid. My omission in square brackets. This quotes I Corinthians 8:1, although where the King James version reads "charity", Elizabeth substituted "love". She likely understood and recalled the word "charity" to mean "caritas", Christian love.

After Judith's death, Elizabeth was again tempted by worldly things: "I found my olde sinnes to take much hold on me".[203] She complained of experiencing "[alur]ments of the world", "covetous thoughts" where she "hoped for a worldly rewarde for things to please […] my owne sensuall delight or fancy and to satisfy my pride and ambition", "self conceit", "filthy thoughts which were not desent", and of having been taken "with the praises of some (taken with [my] vertue and otherwise commended me".[204] She wrote self-patronisingly of how her hobbies pacified her, "as Children are with there toyes", while she adjusted to life without Judith. [205] Elizabeth clearly gained a sense of purpose from caring, which kept her from frivolous temptations. She found herself tempted once again after Judith's death. Caring was a better, if imperfect, use of Elizabeth's limited time and capacity for love.

That caring had this dual interaction with questions of love gave caring an ambiguous spiritual status. Caring strengthened Elizabeth's problematic affection for Judith – a mere 'worldly' being - and drew Elizabeth away from God. It also forced her to consider difficult religious questions surrounding love and the preservation of Judith's life. But caring also protected Elizabeth from excessive affection for frivolities. This introduced complexity. Elizabeth believed that divine intervention stopped her marrying that she might devote her love to God alone. Yet she seemed to have exchanged one object competing with God for her affections (a husband) for another (her sister). Did the fact that caring helped her resist worldly temptation providentially suggest that God wanted her to care? Or was the love and time she lavished upon Judith indicative of Elizabeth's continued weakness for the 'world' despite God's intervention?

At the crux of the problem was that even the charitable interpretation of how caring interacted with love was a gradation of something negative. Elizabeth did not want caring to just be 'less worldly', and thus only 'less bad', than the alternative. But she also could not abandon the role. Elizabeth only resolved this conflict when she recategorized the love that drove her to care. We will discuss Elizabeth's reconceptualization of caring next.

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[203] Isham, *Booke*, f. 32r.

[204] Ibid. My omission in square brackets.

[205] Ibid, f. 32v.

2.3 Resolving the Spiritual Conflicts of Caring

For most of her life, Elizabeth found caring religiously problematic. It consumed immoderate quantities of time, which she had explicitly put aside for God, at His providential intervention. This reflected an overattachment to the world. Caring also involved witnessing extreme suffering; Elizabeth concluded that God considered her unworthy of trial and election compared to her charge. Finally, caring interacted ambiguously with ideas of love. It was both symptomatic of Elizabeth's excessive worldly affections, yet discouraged more frivolous worldly attachments. This ambiguity was its own problem. It made Elizabeth uncertain about the propriety of caring; there was conflicting providential evidence.

Writing and reflecting on her experiences, however, changed how Elizabeth viewed caring. Believing strongly in providence and predestination, when Elizabeth wrote her *Booke of Rememberance*, she hoped to reflect upon her life's events to discern meaning and resolve tensions in them. She was not simply documenting, but attempting to learn something new about herself and God. Once she laid out her experiences in writing, Elizabeth 'realised' there was substantial evidence that God had intended for her to care. Having recalled her experiences with temporal distance from her grief, Elizabeth appreciated how much she had suffered while caring. She had not simply witnessed her family's trials, but actively endured them. Rather than reminding her that God thought her unworthy, Elizabeth's remarkable health became a sign that God kept her strong so she could care for others. Her trial was to compassionately "suffer with them that suffer", not experience bodily affliction herself. [206] This providential validation of her role helped Elizabeth reinterpret the love involved in caring. It was not a worldly indulgence, but selfless, Christian love. Like Christ, Elizabeth sacrificed herself to serve poor mortals suffering on earth.

To be clear, Elizabeth's journey towards making caring compatible with a godly life was cumulative. She did not suddenly change her outlook upon writing her *Booke*. She had already reflected on the meaning of her bodily health, and considered that caring for Judith might count as a kind of 'co-suffering'. But collecting and synthesising her life's events – all of which she believed were part of God's plan – finally convinced her to embrace a positive spiritual interpretation of caring. After she resolved the spiritual conflicts caring caused, being a 'carer' became a core part of Elizabeth's spiritual identity.

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[206] Isham, *Booke*, f. 35v.

2.3.1 Rethinking Suffering

Writing her *Booke* as a salve to her grief, the aspects of caring that Elizabeth found trying were not foremost in her mind when she began. But the process of remembering and recording the events of her life in a detailed, chronological fashion changed this. However reluctant Elizabeth remained to write unflatteringly of Judith, there are passages of Elizabeth's *Booke* that show that caring for her could be unpleasant, exhausting and sometimes harrowing. This reminded Elizabeth that her private life with Judith had not always been as "sweet" as she claimed.[207] Counter-intuitively for a modern reader, this helped Elizabeth see that caring had been a positive, productive experience. She had suffered in the role. So perhaps, as Judith suggested, because Elizabeth had "bine partaker of my [Judith's] misery", so she would be of her heavenly joy.[208]

We have already noted instances when caring would have been unpleasant for Elizabeth: witnessing Judith's suffering, physically exhausting herself to watch over her, and coping with Judith's sometimes frustrating attitude towards her illness, for instance. Judith had a "miserable life", "having so much illnes of mind and body as she had". [209] It must have been distressing to see her suffer. Elizabeth clearly compartmentalised her pleasure that Judith's trials would bring her heavenly joy, from her distress that she suffered in this life. Elizabeth herself suffered from religious melancholy, which sometimes made coping with Judith's care difficult; suffering with "dullnes", Elizabeth noted "my sisters being ill againe. Me thought was more grievous to me then afore. I thinking my selfe worse to beare it".[210]

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[207] See e.g., Ibid, f. 30v, f. 29v, f. 21r.

[208] Ibid, f. 30v. My clarification in square brackets.

[209] Ibid, f. 24v.

[210] Ibid, f. 30v.

Occasionally, Elizabeth hinted that Judith could be spiteful and manipulative.[211] She told Elizabeth she loved their brother more, although Elizabeth explained this away.[212] When given gifts, Judith sometimes told Elizabeth what she would have preferred – which Elizabeth only recounted in marginal notes, perhaps remembering afterwards that her comments in the main body, that Judith was pleased with them, were not entirely accurate: "yet after she said she liked his poems better".[213] And Judith repeatedly (and perhaps manipulatively) reminded Elizabeth that their now-deceased mother "knew" Elizabeth would look after her, and of how ill she had been when Elizabeth was away in London, ten years after she went.[214]

Fittingly, Elizabeth sometimes suggests that she felt boredom, frustration, and unfulfillment while caring. This is particularly apparent for years leading up to Judith's death, after Elizabeth's collapsed marriage negotiations. On folio 29v, Elizabeth again wrote about looking after Judith after a long hiatus: she purchased her "Mr Quarlesses emblems", and "did what I could to uphold her mind in thee with joy […] and \found that/ not only her soule but her body was the more healthfull for it".[215] Interestingly, she also noted that while "I have bine so well pleased with this privat life […] I confesse I have somtimes desired a little more liberty". She reflected on how to "make a vertue of necessity and have that which I could not helpe without altering the whole state of my life as well as I could". And she recorded making "that time" "more plesent to me by reason of my industry in work", which otherwise "would have bine more tegious".[216] Abruptly, she also revealed that "about this time", Judith felt actively suicidal. Elizabeth suggested she had distressing and repetitive conversations with her: "my Sister told me she hoped God would take her away \shortly/ but I answered her \a/gaine I hoped she might be better then she expected"; "but I praied her not to speake to me (so often) of her griefe and illness which I was unwilling to here".[217] Surrounding these passages,

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[211] Lake and Stephens also discuss the 'dark side' of Elizabeth's relationship with Judith - their "claustrophobic world of sisterly co-dependence". See Lake and Stephens, "Living the 'private life'", esp. 309-317.
[212] Isham, *Booke*, ff. 24v–25r.
[213] Ibid, f. 29v.
[214] Ibid, f. 30r.
[215] Ibid, f. 29v. My omission in square brackets.
[216] Ibid. My omissions in square brackets.
[217] Ibid f. 29v; Ibid, f. 30r. The term suicidal is accurate. Elizabeth noted instances where Judith actively wanted to end her life (and Elizabeth's), rather than simply wished to die soon. See also f. 24v.

Elizabeth wrote marginal notes. One resolved to see Aunt Isham more and make "good use of her company", and another recorded that Elizabeth had asked her father if it might be more "lightsome for us" if her brother and sister-in-law moved in; she had clearly wanted diverting company. [218] While Elizabeth (straightforwardly) did not *want* to marry, finding herself monotonously caring for a melancholy Judith shortly after losing an opportunity for a different life was difficult. Stephens and Lake have also underlined what Elizabeth sacrificed (and clearly missed) to live a 'privat life' caring for Judith.[219]

Recollecting the difficulties and sacrifices she endured while caring helped Elizabeth rethink what it meant to suffer. Although Elizabeth remained healthy, caring for Judith had been a kind of suffering in itself. Judith's suggestion that Elizabeth experienced 'indirect' trials through her gained credence. From merely hoping this was so, Elizabeth became increasingly convinced. In her *Booke's* reflective, opening passages, Elizabeth had already been considering Judith's words. She hoped they were true: "though I was well yet suffered in my friends […] my hope is stedfast that as I have been partakers of the\ir/ sufferings so I shall be also of the consolation".[220] But she still doubted this even late in her *Booke*. By its closing portions, however, Elizabeth felt certain. Having reflected on her worldly life, Elizabeth gained a sense of clarity. She concluded that her trial was "to suffer with them that suffer":

> when I called to mind the time that is past. it rejoiced mee to thinke thou hadest made me […] to suffer with them that suffer) when I might have enjoyed more worldly pleasure.[221]

The comfort she gained following this suffering proved that it was a godly affliction:

> I never found thy mercy so sweete to me as in these troubles. and in the consideration of thy long forbearance /suffering\ of me also through thy goodness in Blessing my

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[218] Ibid, f. 29v; f. 30r.

[219] Lake and Stephens, "Living the 'private life'", 324-25.

[220] Isham, *Booke*, f. 6v. My omission in square brackets.

[221] Ibid, f. 35v. My omission in square brackets.

> indevers I have many times bine satissfied and gained or \[even]/ found the increase of much sound joy.[222]

With her experiences laid out, Elizabeth reframed caring for her suffering sister as spiritually productive suffering in itself. The significance of this cannot be understated. Rather than a constant reminder that God considered her unworthy of trial, her time caring became something spiritually profitable. Elizabeth's long concern that this was not the case was just part of her affliction.

2.3.2 Recategorizing Love

The idea of co-suffering had further implications for Elizabeth's re-conception of caring. It helped her recategorize the love it involved, because co-suffering was a core concept in ideas of Christian compassion, love, and charity. Interestingly, the connection between co-suffering, sympathy, compassion, and fellow-feeling, and acting charitably and with Christian love, was still developing in this period - as were the terms themselves.[223] Elizabeth's re-conception of her caring role thus provides a fascinating example of how individuals navigated this shift and applied it to their own actions and emotional states.

Kristine Steenbergh has shown that seventeenth century sermons tried to nurture "a capacity for sharing in the suffering of others", to ensure Christians remained compassionate despite the discontinuation of practices such as meditation on the Passion and giving to monasteries.[224] Compassionately 'co-suffering' with the afflicted 'softened the bowels of compassion', because seeing suffering precipitated "a bodily response of opening towards the other, of pouring out compassion towards them".[225] This was vitally important, because "sharing in another's suffering was so central to Protestant faith as to be considered a prerequisite for Christian charity".[226] Steenbergh's quote from Thomas Draxe's *The Christian armorie* (1611) summarises the point well:

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[222] Ibid.

[223] Good explorations of the development of these terms and concepts can be found in Toria Johnson, "'To Feel What Wretches Feel': Reformation and the Re-naming of English Compassion", in Steenbergh and Ibbett ed., *Compassion in Early Modern Literature*, 219-236; and Richard Meek, "'Compassion and Mercie Draw Teares from the Godlyfull Often': The Rhetoric of Sympathy in the Early Modern Sermon" in ibid, 103-120.

[224] Steenbergh, "Mollified Hearts and Enlarged Bowels", 122.

[225] Ibid, 128.

> wee must haue a fellowlike feeling of their misery, and sympathize with them; otherwise we cannot effectually comfort them: for as iron cannot be ioyned, and fastened to iron, unlesse both of them bee made red hote, and beaten together: so one Christian can yeeld no comfort to another, unlesse both suffer together, (if not in action) yet in fellow feeling.[227]

Similarly, Toria Johnson has described a reformation shift away from concepts of charity grounded in clear church doctrine, to concepts "more commonly associated with interpersonal connection, like pity, fellowship and compassion" and the emotional upheavals associated with this shift.[228] Paula Barros has written about 'fellow-feeling' and Christ-like co-suffering when comforting the grieved.[229] Contemporary authors commonly quoted "weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15) in discussions of compassion. This clearly mirrors Elizabeth's phrasing of her role to "suffer with them that suffer".[230]

As she began to see caring as its own unique trial, Elizabeth increasingly saw it as compassionately feeling Judith's pain. Consequently, Elizabeth could relate more strongly to discourses which, increasingly in this period, related co-suffering to Christian love. She could then recategorize the love that drove her to care. Rather than being symptomatic of vain, worldly love, the time and affection Elizabeth devoted to Judith became an expression of Christian compassion.

Elizabeth's descriptions of caring and the love it involved show this shift. Throughout her text, the language Elizabeth used to describe caring overlapped with that she used in relation to God. For example, she used "help" and "comfort" to describe the assistance she sought and received from God: "my comforter", "helper", "thou comfortest", "thou helpest", as well as the assistance she provided to Judith. [231] Similarly, Elizabeth used the word "tender", which she associated with caring and children, to describe God's "tender love", and "thy tender mercies".[232] Reminiscent of biblical passages (for example, I Thessalonians 2:7), Elizabeth explicitly compared God's dealing with man to a "Nurs with her Children" – which is significant, when Elizabeth cared for Judith "as if she had bene my child".[233]

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[226] Ibid, 125.

[227] Ibid, 126.

[228] Johnson, "'To Feel What Wretches Feel'", 221.

[229] Barros, "Hee Left Them Not Comfortlesse".

[230] Isham, *Booke*, f. 35v.

Towards the end of her *Booke*, however, the language Elizabeth used to describe caring became even more strongly associated with her faith. Specifically, it suggested that Elizabeth increasingly imitated and identified with Christ. This is strongly reminiscent of Barclay's exposition on Christian love ('caritas'). Christian love was a manifestation of God's redeeming love within believers, which took the form of grace. Through this grace, individuals could love others – and their loving interactions "brought people closer to God".[234] Describing herself as "the servant of thy servants", on earth "to suffer with them that suffer" is a clear example of this, with strong biblical connotations.[235] The theme of sacrificing oneself to serve mortals suffering on earth had particular relevance to Elizabeth, once she had reflected on what she had suffered and given up, in order to care for Judith. Rather than serving her family instead of God, Elizabeth increasingly saw herself as the servant of others, as Christ is servant of all. The love she showed was not worldly and indulgent, but Christian.

Elizabeth's increased interest in charity after Judith's death underlines how caring had become bound to Christian love. After Judith's death, Elizabeth reflected that she was "past my helping of her with" her wealth, and instead hoped to be "more helpefull to the poore". [236] Elizabeth needed a new object to show Christ-like care and charity towards, to replace her loss. Elizabeth closely associated care and charity. At the end of her *Booke* where Elizabeth wrote prayers, she placed her requests relating to the afflicted and poor side by side. She prayed for God to "helpe all those that are afflicted in mind or body, give them patience to bare it or mitigate there griefe. consider the cause of the poore and helplesse. and be merciful to them in there distreses".[237]

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[231] See e.g., Ibid*,* f. 30r, f. 37v, f. 32r.
[232] See e.g., Ibid*,* f. 37v, f. 36v, f. 36r, f. 33r, f. 24v.
[233] Ibid*,* f. 15v.
[234] Barclay, "Love and Other Emotions", 78.
[235] Isham, *Booke*, f. 35v.
[236] Ibid, f. 33r.

Another event also helped Elizabeth reframe the love involved in caring. Elizabeth's suspicion of familial love was partly born of her mother's uncomfortable death. But while writing her *Booke*, another death powerfully impacted her. Jane Isham, Elizabeth's sister-in-law, died within a week of her premature son. Though Elizabeth was distraught, Jane's death was therapeutic for her. "And now I learned how to die of my Sister Isham", she wrote:

> tho she was young and had as she confessed that content in the world. whereby she had as much cause to desir to live in it /as\ any. yet she willingly resigned her selfe to thy will (my God) to die and to leave her husband and children which she dearly loved. /and to be with [thee]\.[238]

Jane Isham's admirable Christian death helped Elizabeth appreciate that familial love and "content in the world" did not preclude one from possessing wholehearted godly love. And if she believed that her love for Judith had not irreparably damaged her relationship with God, perhaps it became easier to interpret this love as something spiritually positive.

2.3.3 Reinterpreting Time, Health, and Providence

Having witnessed many early deaths of family members, by the time Elizabeth wrote her *Booke of Rememberance*, she felt 'old'. While Elizabeth was relatively relaxed about time day-to-day, she *was* concerned with how she spent her time on a macroscale. Towards the end of her *Booke*, Elizabeth frequently "call[ed] to mind the time that was past" and "consider[ed] the shortnesse of life".[239] She wondered "what benefit it might be to me while I live. and hopeing it might be exceptable /to\ thee", and how best she should go about "reformeing my selfe".[240] She wrote admiringly of her grandmother, "how she could spend her time wholly in devotion doing nothing else besides" and tried to emulate her.[241] Time on earth was precious and needed purpose.

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[237] Ibid, f. 36v.

[238] Ibid, ff. 34v - 35r.

[239] Ibid, f. 30v. My square brackets, to change tense.

[240] Ibid.

Writing when there was a "sicknesse so neere us", Elizabeth was especially reflective on her health and mortality: "the sicknesse being so neere us I must needs /forced to\ thinke of death".[242] She hoped "thou wouldest spare me in health (at lest) to finish this [her Booke]".[243] Elizabeth thus frequently "much merveiled" at her own "bodily health", especially "coming of so weake and sickly a woman as my mother was" and compared her health favourably to her relatives.[244] The Lord preserved her "when I [she] have bine likely to fall into bodyly diseases and other hurts besides".[245] She found herself to "be in health" in "this house of griffe". [246] She suspected there was a divine reason why she was never "\very/ ill two daies together" while her family suffered, but she was not sure what this was. She needed to discern it: "me thinkes thou shouldest question with me how I have used this body which thou gavest me".[247] We have seen that she initially feared her health suggested she was unworthy of trial and election.

After reinterpreting the love involved in caring and what it meant to 'suffer', Elizabeth abandoned this fear and could finally discern the 'true' purpose of her time on earth. Reflecting on what she had learned "*since I called my owne waies to rememberance*" through her *Booke*, Elizabeth concluded that God gave her health and longevity to alleviate the suffering of those around her: "thou hast caused me through the weaknes and sicknesses /or illnes\ of \waies/ others. to receive strength of health and vigorous instructions".[248] Thus, not only was Elizabeth's health and longevity not a sign of spiritual unworthiness, because she had suffered through caring and compassion, but it had a God-given purpose: she was "fitted" for care.

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[241] Ibid, f. 34v.
[242] Ibid, f. 34r.
[243] Ibid, f. 34v. My clarification in square brackets.
[244] Ibid, f. 35v.
[245] Ibid, f. 36r. My clarification in square brackets.
[246] Ibid, f. 34v.
[247] Ibid, f. 35v; f. 34v.
[248] Ibid, f. 35v.

Because she now viewed caring as an expression of Christian love, Elizabeth could see her body as channelling 'Christ-like' qualities and doing Christ's work, while remaining 'corrupt' itself. That Elizabeth felt she had been "fitted" for caring helped her believe in its divinely ordained 'goodness' – "for I find it is not in my owne power to doe good unlesse thou enable mee to doe good I can not [doe it]", she wrote on another occasion.[249] The "many meanes" by which Elizabeth cared for Judith, and the "care and pittie" she showed her "as if she had bene my child", were thus "of thy goodnesse and not of my self".[250] That their mother told Judith "she knew I would be kind to her" surprised Elizabeth, because the qualities that facilitated her kindness and care were God-given for her divine purpose, and not recognisable in Elizabeth's childhood: "I wondered that she should thus foreknow it for it was only of thy good-nesse my God which gave me power to be so. and not of my owne corrupt nature".[251] God had lent Elizabeth a healthy, caring body for a clear purpose.

Even after Judith's death, Elizabeth saw God 'fitting' her to care. When Jane Isham died, Elizabeth gave thanks that "thy mercie preservest my father and selfe in health whereby wee were better able to comfort others", thinking of her brother. [252] Every death and illness Elizabeth survived, she survived to perform her role as comforter and carer. The illnesses she experienced just facilitated this role: "that I might the more pitty others".[253]

In using these gifts, Elizabeth did God's work:

> thou hadest made me the servant of thy servants. And to suffer with them that suffer) when I might have enjoyed more worldly pleasure. yea Lord thou hast made me the companion of them that love thee. and keepe thy commandments \psa 119/.[254]

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[249] Ibid, f. 30v.
[250] Ibid, f. 31r.

[251] Ibid, f. 30r.
[252] Ibid, f. 35r.
[253] Ibid, f. 35v.
[254] Ibid.

The reference to "worldly pleasure" is significant. In 'realising' that God had fitted her to care, she drew not only on her bodily health but on her observations (explored above) that caring had involved significant self-sacrifice and kept her on a spiritual path when she "might have enjoyed more worldly pleasure". [255] Previously, this spiritual benefit of caring was only considered 'less bad' than the alternative. But once Elizabeth began to see caring for Judith as an expression of Christian love, for which God had "fitted" her, and recognised that caring had both protected her from worldly temptations, and had involved Christ-like self-sacrifice, she 'understood' that caring was part of God's plan. Her bodily health – appearing more remarkable once laid out in writing – was the additional evidence she needed to appreciate the significance of caring in her life.

* * *

Elizabeth moved from feeling primarily religious anxiety about caring – born of the uncomfortable way in which it interacted with questions of love, time, and suffering – to viewing caring as spiritually beneficial. Through writing and reflecting, Elizabeth accumulated what she considered to be providential evidence that God had always intended her to care. She read it in her body, in the compassion she could show, in the fact that caring had been a trial, after all, and in the way that caring had protected her from temptation. In turn, this helped her reconceptualise the love on which her caring was built and assuaged her concerns surrounding her salvation status. Elizabeth explicitly stated that it was only "since I called my owne waies to rememberance" that she gained this sense of clarity and contentment.[256]

But Elizabeth's caring role became more than spiritually beneficial in and of itself. From being something peripheral in Elizabeth's life, of ambiguous spiritual status, caring became central to Elizabeth's spiritual identity. She ultimately concluded that caring for the sick and afflicted around her was the way in which she had devoted her life to God, and what God had intended for her to do. The divine intervention that Elizabeth believed had prevented her from marrying was the same divine intervention that had led her to care. Elizabeth did not simply manage to justify caring but concluded it was her calling: to “suffer with them that suffer”, to be “the servant of thy servants”, and to be “the companion of them that love thee”.

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[255] For further discussion of what Elizabeth 'missed out' on in the world, and how she used providence to think about this, see Lake and Stephens, "Living the 'private life'", 318-325.

[256] Isham, *Booke*, f. 35v.

3. Spiritual Journey and Shattered Expectation: Mary Rich's Experience of Caring

> He was most righteous in punishing me for my overloveing a creature and for letting my bitterest crosses come where I expected my greatest comforts.[257]
>
> Mary Rich, 25th January 1673

In 1641, Mary Rich (b. 1624 - d. 1678) defied her father's wishes and secretly married Charles Rich for love.[258] She had two children with Charles, although neither survived to adulthood. Though a "very chearefull and hansome, well bred and faichoned persone", and "good compeny" when they married, Charles suffered severe gout, among other ailments, for over twenty years.[259] His illness ruined his temper and wasted his body to a "meare skele tone".[260] His condition was severe enough that he used a wheelchair and required servants to turn him in bed.[261] Mary's role in caring for Charles had a complex religious significance which has been neglected in historiography hitherto.

Our knowledge of Mary comes primarily from writings she composed in the 1660s and 1670s: her diaries, an 'autobiography', and her spiritual 'meditations'.[262] Having led an 'exemplary life',

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[257] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, British Library, 117.

[258] "Some Specialties in the life of M. Warwick" by Mary Rich, c. 1600-1799, Add. MS 27357, British Library, 16. Perdita Manuscripts, accessed October 3, 2021, https://www-perditamanuscripts-amdigital-co-uk.libproxy.york.ac.uk/Documents/Detail/some-specialties-in-the-life-of-m.-warwick/363888?item=363889. See n.37 for how I have noted page numbers from Perdita Manuscripts. Hereafter cited as Rich, *Some Specialties,* followed by the PDF page number.

[259] Ibid, 6.

[260] Ibid, 35.

[261] Ibid.

[262] See n.37 and n.258 regarding Mary's diaries and autobiography. 'Spiritual meditations' refers to "Occasional Meditations" by Mary Rich, c. 1663-1677, Add. MS 27356, British Library. Perdita Manuscripts, accessed

Mary's writings were partially published and circulated even shortly after her death. Anthony Walker's published funeral sermon for Mary contains a selection of her meditations, and she appears in Samuel Clarke's *Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons* (1683).[263] In 1847, the Religious Tract Society produced an edition of her diary and autobiography.[264]

Being so well documented, Mary has attracted biographical works: first Charlotte Fell-Smith's, and Mary Palgrave's, in 1901, and alongside Aphra Behn and Margaret Cavendish in Sara Heller Mendelson's *The Mental World of Stuart Women* (1987).[265] Other scholarship has primarily focussed on Mary's piety and troubled marriage. Raymond Anselment has written extensively about Mary. He has explored Mary's conversion and its connection to her troubled marriage, and contextualised her frequent weeping within the Christian tradition, distinguishing tears for worldly sorrow (to be avoided), from tears of godly sorrow (wept to express sorrow for sin, divine love, and repentance).[266] Anselment has also explored Mary in the context of women's funeral sermons.[267]

October 3, 2021, https://www-perditamanuscripts-amdigital-co-uk.libproxy.york.ac.uk/Documents/Detail/occasional-meditations/363613. However, for reasons I discuss below, I have used Raymond Anselment's edition of Mary's meditations. See Rich, *Occasional Meditations*.

[263] Walker, Anthony. *Eurēka, Eurēka the virtuous woman found, her loss bewailed, and character examined in a sermon preached at Felsted in Essex, April 30, 1678, at the funeral of ... Mary, countess dowager of Warwick* […] (London: Printed for Nathanael Ranew, 1678). Proquest, accessed April 27, 2023, https://www.proquest.com/books/eurēka-virtuous-woman-found-her-loss-bewailed/docview/2248499311/se-2.; Samuel Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons in this Later Age in Two Parts: I. of Divines, II. of Nobility and Gentry of Both Sexes* (London: Printed for Thomas Simmons at the Princes Arms in Ludgate-street, 1683). Proquest, accessed March 26, 2023, https://www.proquest.com/docview/2240951709/12499911/90C44494D16B4324PQ/2?accountid=13963. Clarke's text is essentially an adaption of Walker's funeral sermon, with large sections preserving his order, structure, and phrasing. However, it is roughly half the length.

[264] Mary Rich, *Memoir of Lady Warwick: Also her Diary, From A.D. 1666 to 1672, Now First Published, to Which are Added, Extracts from her Other Writings* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1847).

[265] Charlotte Fell-Smith, *Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick (1625-1678): Her Family and Friends.* (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1901); Mary Palgrave, *Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick* (New York: Dutton, 1901); Sara Heller Mendelson, *The Mental World of Stuart Women: Three Studies* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1987).

[266] Raymond Anselment, "The Conversion of Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick", *Christianity & Literature* 66, no. 4 (2017): 591–608; Raymond Anselment, "Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, and the Gift of Tears", *The Seventeenth Century* 22, no. 2 (2007): 336–57.

[267] Raymond Anselment, "Anthony Walker, Mary Rich, and Seventeenth-Century Funeral Sermons of Women", *Prose Studies* 37, no. 3 (2015): 200–224.

Addressing somewhat similar themes, Ramona Wray has compared Mary's 'diametric' lives: her life as recounted in her diaries, versus that recounted in her autobiography.[268] She contrasts the Charles in Mary's diaries, "a violent and abusive tyrant", to the "romantic hero" Mary portrays in the autobiography; and the "chronically depressed, disappointed and embittered" Mary seen in the diaries, to the "lively, confident and fulfilled" author of the autobiography.[269] Yet this dichotomy has probably been overstated. Anselment suggests Wray's overuse of the abridged, published diaries is responsible: they give a less nuanced impression of Mary's marriage.[270]

Interestingly, like Elizabeth Isham, Mary appears in ecofeminist histories, partly due to her attachment to the Lees 'wilderness' where she meditated. Sylvia Bowerbank uses a comparison between two mice – one associated with Mary Rich, and another with her brother Robert Boyle – as "an index of gender politics" informing early modern ecologies.[271] In *Speaking for Nature* (2004), Bowerbank expands this and explores Mary's efforts to "produce harmony in her fractured family" and achieve "a good nature" through writing her diary. Bowerbank links this to a gendered, "emerging discourse of nature" relating to "a great chain of interdependencies".[272] She underlines the difficulty early modern women faced in living as both biblical sisters, Mary and Martha, which is a recurrent theme in Mary's writings.[273] Following Bowerbank, Mary also appears in Laroche and Munroe's *Ecofeminist Approaches to*

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[268] Ramona Wray, "[Re]constructing the Past: The Diametric Lives of Mary Rich" in *Betraying Our Selves: Forms of Self-Representation in Early Modern English Texts*, ed. Henk Dragstra, Sheila Ottway, and Helen Wilcox (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 148–65.

[269] Ibid, 149. For further discussion of Mary's autobiography, *Some Specialties,* in relation to romance, see also Julie Eckerle, "The Specter of Romance", in *Romancing the Self in Early Modern Englishwomen's Life Writing* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 129–58.

[270] Anselment, "The Conversion", 592. See also Ibid, 604, n.4, n.5 and n.6. See also Anselment, Introduction to *Occasional Meditations,* 5-6, including n.18.

[271] Sylvia Bowerbank, "Of Mice and Women: Early Modern Roots of Ecological Feminism", *Women and Environments International* 52/53 (Fall 2001), 27-29: 29.

[272] Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature,* 91; Ibid, 94.

[273] Ibid, 85.

Early Modernity (2011), in chapters by David Goldstein and Hilary Nunn. [274] Notably, Mary is compared to Elizabeth Isham in Nunn's chapter.

Broader histories of the Boyles also address Mary. Ann-Maria Walsh has examined perceptions and representations of Ireland in the Boyle women's writings, including Mary's, while Amelia Zurcher has examined the "still-underappreciated part" Mary and Lady Ranelagh's life writings played in representing the Boyle family.[275] Mary also features in histories of her prominent siblings, Robert Boyle and (increasingly) Lady Ranelagh, to whom Mary remained close. Michelle DiMeo's recent biography of Lady Ranelagh (2021) incidentally enriches our knowledge of Mary.[276]

Despite this varied scholarship, there remains much to be said. I would estimate that over a third of the text in Mary's diaries discusses, or is significant to, her caring role. And yet there is no study devoted to it. In describing Mary's diaries as "formulaic and tediously repetitious", Anselment helps explain this.[277] At first glance, Mary's diaries are indeed formulaic and repetitive. They usually start with a phrase like "in the morneing as sone as upe I retired and meditated", and end with "I committed my selfe to God".[278] The middle portions comment on Mary's religious reflections that day, or on what hindered them. Mary's comments on caring initially appear uninspiring: "was with my sicke Lord", "constant in my attendance upon my sicke Lord", "tending my sicke husband".[279] She apparently gives little detail about what caring involved, or how she felt about it. In the published abridgement of Mary's diaries (1847), this problem is particularly pronounced, and I suspect most people surveying the potential of Mary's writings start with this version.[280] Only when Mary's writings are read carefully, in full, can their richness be appreciated. But often, Mary's intimidatingly long and apparently tedious writings are not given this attention.

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[274] David Goldstein, "Woolley's Mouse: Early Modern Recipe Books and the Uses of Nature", in Munroe and Laroche ed. *Ecofeminist Approaches to Early Modernity*, 105–27; Nunn, "Goeing a broad".

[275] Ann-Maria Walsh, "The Boyle Women and Familial Life Writing", in *Women's Life Writing and Early Modern Ireland,* ed. Julie Eckerle and Naomi McAreavey (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 79-98; Amelia Zurcher, "Life Writing in the Boyle Family Network", in Ibid, 99-136: 102.

[276] Michelle DiMeo, *Lady Ranelagh: The Incomparable Life of Robert Boyle's Sister* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2021).

[277] Anselment, "The Conversion", 591.

[278] For an example at random, see Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 87.

[279] For examples of these phrases see e.g., Ibid, 10; Ibid, 211; Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 156.

[280] Rich, *Memoir of Lady Warwick*.

Reading her writings fully and closely, Mary's repetitive phrases become revealing. Although I am not convinced she did so consciously, it is noticeable, for example, that Mary more frequently called Charles "husband" when she feared for him, felt affectionate towards him, or cared for his soul, and "my Lord" more often when caring was routine, or when she seemed to resent it (and perhaps felt like she was grudgingly serving a superior 'lord').[281] It is apparent that after a difficult evening caring, Mary often spent the next morning thinking about how disappointing she found her worldly life – or with a headache.[282] And we discover that Mary's apparently callous reticence to discuss details of Charles' care, or even wish him better, expressed a complex fear of thinking God cruel if she dwelt upon his bodily illness too much.[283] She instead focussed on God's kindness in facilitating Charles' soul purifying suffering.

This chapter is thus based on a close reading of Mary's writings.[284] I show that caring held a hitherto unrecognised centrality and significance to Mary's life and faith. Necessarily linked to questions of love, time, and suffering, the meaning of Mary's caring role had to be constructed with reference to these difficult concepts while ensuring the practice was compatible with Mary's piety. While Charles lived, Mary successfully formed a comfortable conception of caring based around ideas of Christian love, compassion, and patient submission to godly trials. The first part of this chapter explores how she did this, looking at time, suffering, and love in turn. Mary's writings composed after Charles' death underline how central caring had become to Mary's religious identity. Without the responsibility of looking after Charles, Mary struggled anew with questions of love, time, suffering, and their implications. The second part of this chapter explores these issues.

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[281] This is something which becomes apparent cumulatively. But see e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 30, for example of Mary using the phrasing "attending upon my Lord" with frustration (as it unfitted her for having any time to retire), and also an example of begging mercy for "my husbandes Soule". The phrase 'my husbandes Soule" appears hundreds of times in Mary's diaries, but she rarely refers to 'her lord's soul'. See Ibid, 55, for an example of Mary using her less common phrase "tending my sicke husband" when Charles was particularly ill; he "grew towards evening so ill that I could not stir from him". Phrases referring to routine caring usually use "my Lord": see e.g., ibid, 78 for "red to my Lord" and ibid, 71 for "was tending my Lord".

[282] For an example of Mary waking with a headache after caring, see e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 4.

[283] Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 115.

[284] I explain my methodology in the introduction to this thesis.

3.1.1 Mary's Life Writings

Mary's diaries are the most extensive of her writings. They cover July 1666 to November 1677, with breaks between March 1670 and August 1670, and March 1673/4 and March 1675 where manuscripts are missing.[285] Mary died on the 12th April 1678; entries between November 1677 and her death are also lost. We know from Anthony Walker that Mary wrote until two weeks before her death.[286] I accessed the diary manuscripts, which consist of 29 quarto books bound into five manuscripts, digitally through Perdita Manuscripts.[287] An abridgement of Mary's diaries (1847) is also available.[288] This has been used only for reference.

Mary's diaries total around 2,600 pages, including blanks. They are mostly written neatly, although several passages are near-illegible, due to faded ink, or the reverses of pages showing through. Occasionally, text is lost to the margins. Mary's handwriting is noticeably larger and poorer when she was stressed. Although Mary kept the diary nearly daily, she occasionally wrote multiple days' entries at once. For example, Mary mistakenly wrote an entry for the 30th April 1671 after her entry for the 28th April – only to delete and recopy it overleaf, after writing her entry for the 29th.[289]

Mary's diaries were heavily annotated by William Woodrooffe, the son of her household chaplain Thomas, who owned the manuscripts after Mary's death.[290] Notably for this project, Woodrooffe was particularly interested in Charles' illness and the couple's relationship. He frequently clarified euphemistic references to Charles' angry "passions" with Mary and noted the durations of Charles' illnesses.[291] Sometimes, he tabulated this information.[292] It is difficult to ignore Woodrooffe's annotations; sometimes, they even obscure Mary's original text. He frequently corrected her spelling. Consequently, Woodrooffe's annotations influence any reading of the diaries.[293]

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[285] Anselment identifies the missing quarto books as the 9th, 21st and 22nd, of 29 in Anselment, "*The Conversion*", 604, n.1.

[286] Walker, *The Virtuous Woman Found*, 117.

[287] See n. 37.

[288] Rich, *Memoir of Lady Warwick*. This edition contains extracts from an incomplete transcript of Mary's diaries covering 1666 to 1672.

[289] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 175.

[290] Anslement discusses Woodrooffe's annotations in Anselment, Introduction to *Occasional Meditations*, 35-39. See esp. 35, n.97, for discussion of mistaken attributions of the annotations to Thomas Woodrooffe (William's father) in some historiography.

Writing her diary was a spiritual exercise. Mary decided to keep the diary after consulting two "Soul-Friends".[294] Mary regularly re-read her diaries to discern providential lessons and monitor her spiritual progress. She often resolved to "walk more closely" with God after re-reading entries recording times when she had been (ostensibly) spiritually negligent.[295]

Mary also left an autobiography, *Some Specialties in the Life of M. Warwicke*. This too is available through Perdita Manuscripts.[296] It was published as *Autobiography of Mary, Countess of Warwick*, ed. T. C. Croker (1848).[297] Mary wrote *Some specialties* in 1672. She wrote it in spare moments while caring for Charles, who had been chamber-bound "for neare nine weekes by a very ill and dangerous fit" when she began.[298] She wrote further additions after Charles' death. *Some Specialties* primarily concerns Mary and Charles' courtship, Mary's conversion, Charles' inheritance of his family title, the deaths of the couple's children, Charles' own death, and finally the marrying-off of Mary's nieces. It portrays Mary's life as an arc, showing how Mary's worldly life was built then eroded. Marrying-off her nieces represented Mary tying the final 'loose-end' that attached her to the world; completing this task (she believed) left her free to serve God unencumbered.

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[291] For Woodroffe noting "viz her husband" above Mary's comment that she hopes God will "make upe what is wanting in my relations" see Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 200. For Woodroffe's note "viz her Lords unkind carriage to her, being after violent passions with her and therein uttering words that pierced like a sword as she expressed it somewhere in the papers", above a comment that Mary was "rejoyceing in my reconciled states even in the midst of my crossess and afflictions" see Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 53. For e.g., Woodroffe noting that Charles "had been well only 3 days", see Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 293.

[292] See Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 130 for a remarkable table with columns "Anger w La. 1666", "Days Sickness", "of Recovery", "Days of La^{s} Charity" and "Aftn Retirem^{t}", under which Woodroffe noted a list of relevant date references for each column.

[293] Unless his edits are merely cosmetic (e.g., minor spelling corrections, which are often not clearly identifiable as Woodrooffe's rather than Mary's own) I have indicated where quotations are in Woodrooffe's hand, not Mary's.

[294] Anselment suggests possible identities for them: see, Anselment, "The Conversion", 595.

[295] See e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 56.

[296] See n.258.

[297] Mary Rich, *Autobiography of Mary Countess of Warwick*, ed. Thomas Crofton Croker (London: Printed for The Percy Society, 1848).

[298] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 287. Ibid, 286.

Between around 1663-1678, Mary also wrote "Occasional Meditations". For ease, I have used Anselment's edition of these.[299] The edition faithfully transcribes Mary's writings, retaining (an approximation) of Mary's spelling, and only makes minor editorial changes to clarify meaning.[300] It is also easier for readers to refer to this edition than the manuscripts. Mary's meditations are unusual, Anselment notes, because they focus on the commonplace in her own life, rather than on emblematic material, religious topics, scriptural passages, or significant life events, such as births and deaths.[301] She wrote, for example "Upon bending a young twig".[302] Mary frequently reread her meditations, including meditations penned decades earlier. Mary's meditations enrich our understanding of her spiritual worldview.[303]

Notably, Mary wrote even her earliest writings when she was nearly forty; she began her meditations, diaries, and autobiography from 1663, 1666, and 1672 respectively. Mary began writing about a decade after she began caring for Charles. But it is unclear (for this very reason) when Charles' condition became severe and Mary's caring role substantial. By this time, Mary had a clear idea of what caring meant in her life, in stark contrast to Elizabeth Isham. Yet Mary had already had a decade to reflect. Perhaps she felt more conflicted earlier in life, without record. Why Mary began writing is unclear, but I suspect that increased dissatisfaction with her 'worldly life' pushed her towards God and religious writing. Mary's only surviving son died in 1664, which further strained her already difficult marriage. With respect to her "Occasional Meditations", Mary's commencement of the practice, which was about combining and converting spare moments into spiritually productive time, was likely related to the time pressure she felt due to her increasing caring responsibilities.

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[299] Rich, *Occasional Meditations*. See n.262 for a reference to the original manuscript.

[300] For discussion of Anselment's editorial process, see Anselment, Introduction to *Occasional Mediations,* 37-39. Anselment's retention of Mary's spelling is only approximate because Mary herself and (at least) William Woodrooffe made corrections on the manuscript. Whenever I have quoted from Mary's meditations, I have also checked the relevant section of the manuscript available through Perdita manuscripts to ensure that I have not missed any signficant information absent in Anselment's transcription (e.g., relating to Mary's handwriting or the physical condition of the manuscript).

[301] Anselment, Introduction to *Occasional Meditations,* 20-34.

[302] Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 112.

[303] In addition to Anselment's Introduction to *Occasional Meditations,* see Marie-Louise Coolahan, "Redeeming Parcels of Time: Aesthetics and Practice of Occasional Meditation," *Seventeenth Century 22*, no. 1 (2007): 124-143 for discussion of 'occasional meditation' as a religious practice. She specifically discusses Mary Rich, and her brother Robert Boyle. See also Raymond Anselment, "Robert Boyle and the Art of Occasional Meditation," *Renaissance and Reformation* 32, no. 4 (2009): 73-92.

I have used other sources, to a lesser extent. Mary and her husband's funeral sermons contain valuable information.[304] The published papers of Mary's close family, for example, *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton* (1878), contain limited references to Charles Rich.[305] To help elucidate the conceptual frameworks in which she wrote, I have also read important texts referenced by Mary.

3.1.2 Establishing Mary Rich as a 'Carer'

Mary described her "poore husband" as "allmost dayly dyeng". "For above 20 yeares", God saw fit to "afflict him with the goute more constantly and paynefully then allmost any per-sone the docters sayd thay had ever seene".[306] He "quit lost the use of his limbes, and neaver put his feet to the grond, nor was able to feed him selfe nor turne in his bed but by the helpe of his sarvants, and by those constant paines he was so weakened and wasted that he was like a meare skele tone".[307] Even when relatively well, Charles had mobility issues. He was "continually tormented with the goute, and never stirrs but on crutches when he is at the best ease, the malady leaves such a weakenesse in his limbes".[308] The periods when he could not

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[304] Walker, *The Virtuous Woman Found*; Idem, *Leez lachrymans, sive, Comitis Warwici justa: A sermon delivered at the funeral of the Right Honourable Charles, earl of Warwick* (London: Printed by Tho. Milbourn for Dorman Newman, 1673). Proquest, accessed April 25, 2023, https://www.proquest.com/books/leez-lachrymans-sive-comitis-warwici-justa-sermon/docview/2240891037/se-2.

[305] Edward Maunde Thompson, ed. *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton* (London: Camden Society, 1878).

[306] Rich, *Some Specialties*, 35.

[307] Ibid.

[308] Thompson, *Correspondence*, 1: 40. Charles Lyttleton wrote this in a letter c. 1664.

"stir abroad" were frequent and considerable, lasting a few days or several months, and occurring with similar frequency. Charles died on the 24th August 1673. [309]

Mary was undoubtedly Charles' primary and most important caregiver. When unwell, Charles did not allow Mary to leave him, and she was fetched by the household if he fell ill. [310] Mary described herself as a "constant nurse to him", who "never neaglekted night or day my attendance upon him when he needed it". [311] She managed his care and was widely considered to have been diligently devoted to him. Mary's funeral sermon summarised her role:

> She would conceal and hide his infirmities, deeply sympathised in his long indispositions, attended, and reliev'd him under them with the greatest tenderness, loved his Soul, and would both counsel him with prudent zeal, and pray for him with greatest ardours, and fervency. [312]

Mary was usually non-descript about caring for Charles. Normally, she noted a variation of "was with my sick lord", rather than details. Her role was clearly active and practical, nonetheless. She consulted doctors, sat up with Charles at night, read to him, and tried to soothe his pain.[313] Mary probably performed 'bodywork' for Charles, given her medical expertise and knowing she did this for the poor. She recorded, for example, going to see "the poore woman that was speechless and was by somthig I sent her brought to speake again".[314] Presumably, administering medicines to Charles was so routine that Mary did not record it. As above, Mary also hinted that there were spiritual reasons for her apparent lack of interest in Charles' bodily care.

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[309] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 215.

[310] See e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 106.

[311] Rich, *Some Specialties*, 36.

[312] Walker, *The Virtuous Woman Found*, 94.

[313] See e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 207; Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 4; Ibid, 48.

[314] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 218. For other indications that Mary performed hands-on medicine see e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 19; Rich, "Upon woundes that have been stanched […]" in *Occasional Meditations*, 155; Rich, "Upon being with a persone that was in labor" in Ibid, 155; Rich, "Upon a poore womanes deasireing me to give her somthinge to cure a consumption […]", in Ibid, 61.

Notably, Mary thought caring for Charles' soul was central to caring for him overall. This inflected Mary's interpretation of caring. Spiritual care clearly interested her most and she provided more detail about the prayers she said for Charles, the ministers she fetched for him, and the "good books" she read to him, than physical, practical aspects of his care.

Although Mary was Charles' primary carer, she was not alone. Particularly after Charles inherited his earldom, the family was extremely wealthy, with many servants. Charles had servants to turn him in bed and feed him – and, presumably, like any early modern nobleman, he had servants cook, clean, dress, and wash for him. Mary wrote little about Charles' servants, but her mentions of them in crises make clear that he was constantly attended.[315]

Mary's extended family also assisted her. Mary's older sister, Lady Ranelagh, frequently cared for Charles. She "was near" when Charles fainted in his wheelchair and revived him by holding his nose and "pouring downe some cordiall waters".[316] She also supervised Charles' end of life care – and prevented Mary from doing this herself.[317] Ranelagh made herself ill doing so: "by her extraordinary kindness to me had by the frites she had in seeing my poore Lord in those sad fittes and by her extraordinary paines taken with him and me brought her selfe to a very ill and dangerous condition".[318] Ranelagh often stayed with the family when Charles was very ill, and Charles sometimes stayed at Ranelagh's London residence.[319] While it is sometimes unclear how much Ranelagh helped (or was explicitly invited) to care for Charles, Michelle DiMeo cites an example of Ranelagh complaining, of being called "to care for her sister Mary at a time that "was very Inconvenient to me,"", to Robert Boyle. [320] So, we know the family sometimes deliberately sought Ranelagh's medical expertise.

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[315] For a reference to Charles' footman, Lawrence, who was pushing Charles in his wheelchair when he fainted, see Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 206.

[316] Ibid.

[317] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 215.

[318] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 217.

[319] See e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 139.

[320] DiMeo, *The Incomparable Life*, 73. DiMeo is not aware of any further examples of Ranelagh commenting on her caring role within the Rich family in Lady Ranelagh's papers but has confirmed she had a considerable role in caring for Charles Rich (Personal Correspondence).

Importantly, Mary's caring role was not confined to Charles. She looked after countless others on a short-term basis.[321] Visiting the sick, and providing spiritual counsel, was a duty Mary performed diligently in her community. Mary's medical expertise was also considerable. DiMeo notes that Lady Ranelagh used one of Mary's remedies to treat the Duke of Kendal, alongside those of accredited medical practitioners.[322] In Mary's funeral sermon, Walker wrote that:

> her Countenance and very heart were open to all persons of Quality in a considerable circuit, and for the inferiour sort, if they were sick, or tempted, or in any distress of Body or Mind, whither should they go but to the good Countess whose Closet and Still-house was their Shop for Chirurgery, and Physick, and her self, (for she would visit the meanest of them personally) and Ministers whom she would send to them, their spiritual Physicians.[323]

Mary's diaries attest this work. She often recorded variations of "had som charitable imploymentes for the helping those that ware sicke".[324] Clearly, Mary was not simply her husband's carer, but was widely known to tend the bodies and souls of rich and poor alike.

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[321] Among those she cared for were Lady Ranelagh, her cousin Butler, her nieces, Lady Manchester, Lady Evehard, John Beaconsfield, Thomas Woodroffe, named servants (including Tom Sherman and Tom Holland), neighbours (including Mr Sorrel), and numerous others, including 'the poor'. See e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 56 (Lady Manchester); Ibid, 50, 218 (the poor); Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 80 (Tom Sherman); Ibid, 296 (Cousin Butler); Rich, *Diary* MS 27353 283 (Cousin Butler); Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 63 (Cousin Butler); Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 292 (Mr Sorrel); Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 48 (sick neighbour); Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 85-89 (Lady Ranelagh); Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 111, 122, 133, 134, 145, 155-6, 163 (sick friends and relations); Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 18 (Lady Evehard); Ibid, 132 (John Beaconsfield); Ibid, 162 (Thomas Woodrooffe); Ibid, 167, 195 (Tom Holland).

[322] DiMeo, *The Incomparable Life*, 154-56.

[323] Walker, *The Virtuous Woman Found*, 97.

[324] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 50.

3.2 Navigating Questions of Love, Time, and Suffering

We will now consider how Mary experienced and conceptualised her caring role. Like Elizabeth's, Mary's example suggests that caring was an inherently religious experience, which forced her to grapple with questions surrounding love, time, and suffering. Unlike Elizabeth, Mary had already answered these tricky questions and understood the 'meaning' of caring when she began writing.

Believing she had already wasted time in sin, Mary was most concerned by the time caring consumed; it could otherwise have been devoted to God. But because her husband controlled her time and she had a duty to obey him, she believed that God would not judge her too harshly. Suffering abuse as she cared for Charles, Mary was sure caring was a spiritual trial to be patiently endured. It was an apt punishment for 'over-loving' him in youth. Finally, Mary's troubled marriage quashed any fears that she cared for Charles out of worldly love. Rather, caring taught Mary that worldly love could not bring true happiness like loving God could. And because Mary believed Charles' illness stemmed from sin, caring for his soul went hand in hand with caring for his body. It expressed Christian love. All this, Mary believed, was part of a providential scheme. Through caring, she was being weaned from worldly love to godly love.

The following section explores how Mary navigated these questions of love, time, and suffering in detail. The final section explores the limitations of Mary's comfortable conception of caring and how it collapsed when her circumstances changed.

3.2.1 The Problem of Time

> […] tending my sicke husband, I was hindred from having any retiring time. [325]

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[325] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 55. My omission in square brackets.

In her autobiography, Mary described herself as "a constant nurse" to Charles, never neglecting "day or night my attendance upon him when he needed it".[326] Her diaries corroborate this statement. There are hundreds of quotations like the one above in Mary's diaries. Their frequency is striking. Clearly, Mary devoted huge quantities of time to caring for her husband, and it bothered her.

Charles' 'fits', which left him bed or chamber-bound, were frequent. During these times, Mary wrote some variation of "was with my Lord attending" or "was constantly tending my sicke husband" daily until he was well.[327] Long periods of illness were common. When Charles was chamber-bound for eight weeks between the 25th February and the 25th April 1673, Mary recorded caring for him almost every day: "in the afternone my Lo still continuing Ill I was attending him, got onely some time to read in a good booke", "all this day my Lord being extraordinary ill I was taken upe in my Constant attendance upon him".[328] Similarly, on the 31st March 1671, Charles finally went "abroad againe" (left his chamber) after 52 days.[329]

Caring could consume whole days and nights. Mary's full entry for the 3rd October 1671 shows this:

> In the morning I spent not so much time as usuall at my devotiones, my Lord haveing bene violently ill all night with a fitt of the colicke. I was allmost constant in my attending him onely prayed and that I did with dullness too. I was all the whole day imployed about him, got noe time to retire but had some short reaturnes to God. [330]

Even when it did not consume whole days, caring dominated large portions of Mary's time. There are hundreds of entries describing days like the 2nd October, where Mary "all the afternone was tending my Lo'", though she had time for her morning meditations.[331]

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[326] Rich, *Some Specialties*, 36.
[327] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 2-3.
[328] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 152-3.
[329] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 165. William Woodrooffe counted the days.
[330] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 234.
[331] Ibid.

Caring also had physical impacts on Mary, which consumed time by unfitting her for other pursuits. She frequently cared all night, so felt tired, "dull", and ill the next day – or rose later than she wanted:

> my Lord haveing bene very ill in the night with a violent cough I slepte not and therefore rose later than usually and was discomposed, and had onely time in shorte to comend my Soule to God.[332]

When caring coincided with responsibilities like entertaining, Mary had no time to herself: "was by my attendance upon my sick Lord and by my Lo of Manchestors coming to see hither hindred from haveing any retireing time".[333]

The time caring consumed mattered. Straightforwardly, time spent caring was time not spent on religious duties. Mary recorded several sermons about the "pretiousness of time". Similarly to Henry Mason, one sermon by Baxter warned listeners to "take heade of too many littell imploymentes", which "wold insensible many times take us off from the more great and searious ones". He emphasised the need:

> to doe to know how to time the doeing what was our duty, and not by doeing one part of it to neaglekte the other, he sayd too, that by our littell even domestike imploymentes and things of order and deasency and visettes we spent much of our time that it we wisely considered of might be imployed to our better advantage.[334]

This sermon obviously resonated with Mary, who wrote pages reflecting upon it – although notably, she heard it after Charles' death. Caring for Charles was plausibly a worldly pursuit, consisting of "many littell imployments" that consumed time, which might be better used.

Mary thus almost always contrasted time spent caring, to time spent serving God: "my Lord being ill a bed I was constantly with him, but got some time to read"; "but my lord being still full of violent paine I had not so much time as usuall for my devotions"; "tended my sicke lord but got some time to read in a good booke and to meditate upon death".[335] "But got some time" and "had not so much time as usual" are easily some of the most common phrases in Mary's writing. Mary's continued description of her spiritual routine (spending two hours daily meditating) as "usual", despite how frequently caring interrupted it, indicates her unrelenting commitment to it.

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[332] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 95.
[333] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 152.
[334] Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 113.

Mary tried to offset the problem by multi-tasking and adapting her schedule. She particularly used time at Charles' bedside: "was constantly taken upe in looking to my husband who still continued in violent paine but whilst he slepte had time to read and pray."[336] Mary also rescheduled her devotions from evening to early morning, finding the former "inconvenient, by reason of her Lords long illness, which gave her many inevitable diversions and interruptions".[337] Mary's commitment to the practice of 'occasional meditation' was likely an adaption to her limited time: the practice was sold as a "means of redeeming time for spiritual purposes" for busy protestants.[338] These steps only mitigated the issue, however. As we will see below, I suspect that Mary did not simply want *enough* time for her devotions, but to spend as much time as possible in God's service, because she felt she owed all her time to God.

Mary believed her time was God's because she had wasted so much in youth. Initially encouraged by her sister-in-law, who "brought me to be very vaine and foleish, intiseing me to spend (as she did) hur time in seeing and reading playes, and Romances, and in exquisite and cureous dressing", Mary felt she had led a vain and sinful youth until her conversion aged twenty-one.[339] She frequently regretted her youthful vanity and disobedience to her father, and the resultant misspent, "irrecoverable" time:

> God was pleased to make me call againe to my remembrance the Sinnes of my youth, and my unregenerate state, and to make me in an esspesial manner to morne for my

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[335] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 94; Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 146; Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 59.
[336] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 175. See also e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 267; Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 137.
[337] Walker, *The Virtuous Woman Found*, 62.
[338] Coolahan, "Redeeming Parcels of Time", 125. This would accord with Mary's frequent assertions that she wished to "gather upe the fragmentes of my time that I might loose none of it", Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 55.
[339] Rich, *Some Specialties*, 5; Ibid, 20.

> misspending my precious time then in seeing playes and reading them, and romances.[340]

Consequently, Mary believed she was living on borrowed time, at God's merciful discretion, when she easily might have died in sin. [341] Mary was thus haunted by the idea that her time on earth might have suddenly ended (and might still end), without due service to God. When her cousin Betty died – whom Mary had seen "fresh and healthfull" a week before – Mary considered "that if one of a boute seaventine years olde ware by afeaver suddenly taken away what must I expecte that was much older".[342] Similarly, her brother-in-law Hatton's death made her "call to mind […] how many of my Lordes family and neare allyes I had seen snatcht away by deaths som being youngar and stronger then my selfe which did much worke upon me".[343] Even "the sudden putting out of a candle" made Mary reflect on "soden death".[344] If younger relations could be struck down, so could she. Only God's mercy let her continue to live:

> my heart was much carried out to Bless him for his mercyes but in an esspecial maner I did so for his patience towardes me in my unregenerate state, that he did not then cut me off in my Sinnes and send me downe to Hell. [345]

Mary's time was thus not her own. God had loaned her extra time on the promise she would repay him by spending it in his service. The monetary language – "spend", "profitable", "expense" – Mary used when writing about time was more than figurative: she needed to repay God's investment in her.

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[340] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 117. Mary makes similar comments e.g., Ibid, 260; Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 272; Ibid, 117. Contrasting one's sinful youth to one's converted state was something of a trope in this period. But Mary believed that she had changed and left her sins behind, whether or not this was the case. Mary conversion was apparently dramatic enough that her family thought the change was "to them very aparent in all my maner of life". See Rich, *Some Specialties*, 25.

[341] See e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 55; Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 22.

[342] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 172.

[343] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 154. My omission in square brackets.

[344] Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 92.

[345] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 231.

> [M]ake me in good earnest to give up my selfe, my whole self, a liveing sacrifise which is but my reasonable service of thee O Ld make me for to remember that I am not my own but am bought with a price, and lett me therefore Glorify thee with my soule and with my body which are thyne. [346]

Caring thus forced Mary into a difficult position. Her time belonged to Charles, whose illness meant he demanded more of it than he might otherwise have, and it belonged to God. And their demands on her time were often incompatible. While Mary clearly *wanted* to spend her time with God, she could not simply 'choose' to do this. Although she was strong-willed, Mary took obedience to her husband seriously. She constantly did things at her "Lords command".[347] Her phrasing suggests she was often coerced (or at least reluctant) to spend as much time caring as she did: "was forst to be constantly with him", "my Lord wolde not sufur me to be long from my attendance upon him, yet i wacht all the opportunetyes I could whilst he slept to have reaturnes to God."[348] Mary's meditation upon an occasion when she rushed through her prayers to greet her husband – only to discover "he had a mind to be rid of her" – reflects Mary's dual duties:

> […] make me punctually, as thou commandest me, pay my duty to my husband, neglecting noe thing that is fitt for me to doe both as a loveing and obediant wife; but make me so discrete in chuseing the most convenient times for my injoy-ing communion with thee that I may attende upon thee without distrac-tion and may not be tempted either to neglect quite my devotiones or slitely to performe them. [349]

The effect of this difficult position on Mary's view of caring was interesting and surprising, however. Because Mary felt somewhat coerced (socially, and religiously) into caring for her husband, she could believe that she would devote all her time to God if her circumstances allowed. I suspect that, whether Mary was aware of this or not, her lack of agency over her time gave her an 'excuse,' which mitigated the spiritual conflict caring caused. While Mary never stated this explicitly, it becomes heavily implicit in the way she contrasted her time caring for Charles with her widowhood. This is explored in depth in the final section of this chapter. Mary's diligence to complain whenever time spent caring impeded her spiritual devotions can additionally be read as her asserting where her priorities and affections would lie, if only her circumstances allowed. God knew that her hands were tied but her intentions were good; she would devote her time to Him, if she could. Interestingly, this perspective is in keeping with the message of manuals on the practice of 'occasional meditation', which Marie-Louise Coolahan has discussed. Quoting Jeremy Taylor's *The Rules and Exercises of Holy Living* (1650), Coolahan writes that "the lower and middling sort are reassured that devotion and occupation are not mutually exclusive: 'thy time is as truely sanctified by a trade, and devout, though shorter prayers, as by the longer offices of those whose time is not filled up with labour and useful businesse'".[350] Mary, heavily invested in the practice of occasional meditation, perhaps applied its messages, about balancing legitimate occupation with devotion, to her caring.

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[346] Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 210. My capitalisation in square brackets. See also Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 174, and Rich, *Some Specialties*, 39 (the final line of the autobiography) for this same sentiment and reference to Romans 12:1.

[347] See e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 26.

[348] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 54; Ibid, 106.

[349] Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 77. My omission.

Mary's limited agency thus stopped her believing that the time she spent caring suggested she loved her husband at God's expense. This would have been far more spiritually problematic. Usually, there was no question of this; we will see that Mary even believed the unpleasantness of caring for Charles was a providential scheme to prevent her ever 'overloving' a man again. Caring thus consumed only her time, not her thoughts and affections. Even at Charles' bedside, she read "good books" and thought about spiritual matters, not him.

3.2.2 Sense from Suffering

As well as consuming her time, caring for Charles caused Mary to suffer. But, as we ultimately saw with Elizabeth, this helped Mary feel sure that she was right to care for Charles; caring was a godly trial to be endured. Charles' abusive behaviour was a major cause of Mary's suffering while she cared. Even in Charles' own funeral sermon, there is a carefully worded reference to this. As a result of "his great, his heavy, and his long Afflictions; and that Gout which was so severe to him", Anthony Walker wrote, Charles was "sometimes less kind to you

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[350] Coolahan, "Redeeming Parcels of Time", 125.

[Mary] and others, than his Natural Temper […] you felt it's pain, not only by Sympathy, as you did always, but sometimes in other effects." [351]

The emotional impact of this abuse was enduring. While attempting to "doe my duty" (care for Charles) "my Lo without any provocation given by me fell in to an extraordinary pation against me wherein he was very provokeingly bitter ^that is cursd me^ I found my selfe exsidingly afflicted for it", Mary wrote on 24th March 1673. The following day she still felt "a great and disturbeing fit of malancolly and discontent upon me by reason of my worldly Crosses".[352] Mary claimed several times that "his unkindness to me so much trobled that I was weary of my life, and that my life was a burden to me".[353] He was most unkind when he was most unwell, so Mary – his "constant nurse" – was his target.

Charles' temper also forced Mary to hear blasphemous language when he complained of his pain. More than once, Mary looked forwards to heaven, where she would be free from the foul language of sinners like Charles.[354] These incidents were doubly distressing because they were also a test. When Mary did not confront Charles about his blaspheming (fearing his anger), she felt guilty for indulging him: "I found my selfe much selfe-condemned for my not being of late so forward to speake to him about his eternall consernes as usuall".[355] She regretted "not mourning of late so much for my Lords Sinnes as formerly, and my being of late more backward to speake to him about his soule for fear of displeaseing him." [356]

The stressful and time-consuming nature of caring also impacted Mary physically. Comments like "my Lord haveing bene very ill in the night with a violent cough *I slepte not* and therefore rose later than usually and *was discomposed*" are common in Mary's diaries.[357] She frequently lost sleep due to her caring responsibilities and consequently felt unwell. While Mary recorded having headaches only a few times after Charles' death, these were frequent during his life. [358] Her headaches clearly coincided with intense caring responsibilities; presumably, the hard work, sleep deprivation, abuse, and tearfulness involved partly caused them. "Fitts of the spleene", which were associated with melancholy, were also common.[359]

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[351] Walker, The Epistle Dedicatory to *Leez lachrymans*, vi. My clarification and omission in square brackets.
[352] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 148-9.
[353] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 142; Ibid, 132.
[354] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 139-140.
[355] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 224.
[356] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 117.
[357] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 95. See also e.g., Ibid, 211.

Reading Mary's diaries broadly, her periods of intense unhappiness clearly correlated with times when her caring duties were greatest. When Charles was extremely ill in winter 1669-1670, Mary frequently reflected upon the "great emptiness and unsatisfactoryness" she found in "sublunary thinges", the "^almost^ hearte-breaking disapoyntmentes" she had experienced, often wept, and even admitted to "being discontent with what God saw fit for me". [360] Leading up to Charles' death in 1673, Mary often felt in "an extraordinary" or "unusual" "manner cast downe" and "much opprest".[361] Mary's morning meditations often reflected on the vanity and "unsatisfactoriness" of the world, following an evening caring. After "attending" Charles who "still continued ill", the next morning, Mary "had large meditationes of the vanity and unsatisfactorynes of all wordly thinges and did realy conclude with Soloman all was vanity and vexation of spirit".[362] Significantly, although she portrayed these thoughts as comforting, Mary wished to be dissolved in death with Christ far less frequently after Charles' death. Mary's writings rarely suggest she felt unhappy because her husband suffered and she was worried about him; rather, they give the impression that she felt worn down by the seemingly unrelenting and often thankless task of looking after him.

That Mary suffered while caring is important because suffering had religious significance. Suffering could indicate sin, but also election. The opportunity to suffer in this life rather than in hell was a gift from God: "there were some persones that God did love with a peculiar love, and those persones he loved best he did chasten", Mary heard Woodroffe preach one Sunday.[363] Suffering was also spiritually educational and discouraged further sin. Afflictions were "fatherly Chastisements"; God might "strike me with his rod", Mary thought, but this was correction – and God would support her "that I might not faint when I was corected of him" but would rather be "saintefide".[364] Facing correction on earth was nothing compared to the joy of heaven: "they were but short and momentary […] I should be eternally happy in the fruition of God for ever in heaven".[365] Bearing trials well was also important to Mary: "it was the duty of those that were afflicted to be dumb and silent under his afflictions".[366] Unlike the "many lovely peaches" she witnessed "bloune down" by a "very boysterous and rough storm", she wanted to "imbrace" her trials, "rejoyseing that I am found worthy to suffer for thee".[367]

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[358] See e.g., Ibid, 234; Ibid, 4.

[359] Ibid, 209. Anselment has also noted the apparent connection between Mary's caring, melancholy, and fits of the spleen. See Anselment, "Gift of Tears", 340-3.

[360] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 8; Ibid, 9; Ibid, 12.

[361] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 198-199.

[362] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 268. See also Ibid, 307.

[363] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 201.

Mary believed that caring for her husband was an earthly trial. The providential, salvific language Mary used to describe her unhappiness suggests this. And explicit references to caring forming part of her trials are also common in Mary's diaries. She often begged God for "patience to beare my Crosses and a saintified improvement of them" after caring, especially if Charles had behaved 'passionately'.[368] Her contemporaries shared her interpretation; Walker praised the "admirable Meekness, the inconquerable Patience, [and] the indefatigable diligence" that Mary exhibited in her "unwearied Attendance" of Charles.[369] Caring was a trial to be patiently borne.

The 'appropriateness' as well as the obviousness of Mary's suffering helped support this interpretation. Mary frequently regretted her "undutyfullnes to my father in my youth" (marrying Charles without his permission) "and my loving my husband at so high a rate as made me give him more of my heart then I did to God, and take more care to please him than I did to pleas my good G".[370] She therefore felt "he was most righteous in punishing me for my overloveing a creature and *for letting my bitterest crosses come where I expected my greatest*

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[364] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 254.
[365] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 121. My omission in square brackets.
[366] Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 130.
[367] Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 96. Mary expressed a similar sentiment when she reflected on opium making people insensible to pain, in relation to feeling insensible to the danger of their sins. See Ibid, 143.
[368] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 105.
[369] Walker, The Epistle Dedicatory to *Leez lachrymans*, vi. My insertion in square brackets.
[370] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 117.

comforts".[371] To care for her husband, whose character was ruined by illness, seemed like a fitting punishment for her youthful sins. It made sense that God would punish an excessive love for her husband by removing her joy in their relationship.

That Mary believed her caring role was a providentially ordained trial had several interesting consequences. Firstly, viewing caring as a trial meant that whenever Mary suffered while caring – usually from her husband's abuse – she saw it as a test of her Christian patience and ability to "return good for evil" (that is, continue to care for him):

> In the afternone was tending my Lord, was put by my Lord upon great exercise of my patience, but blesed be God I was inabled to indeaver to overcome evill with Good.
>
> My Lo without any provocation given by me fell in to an extraordinary pation against me where in he was very provokeingly bitter ^ that is cursd me ^ I found my selfe exsedingly afflicted for it, but bore it pati-antly and returned noe answer but went to doe my duty to him indeavering to overcom evill with good. [372]

Caring was thus both Mary's trial, and her patient, Christian response to this trial. Secondly, all this helped her feel certain that she *should* be caring. Unlike Elizabeth Isham, who struggled to interpret her caring role and was therefore uncertain about its propriety, Mary's suffering seemed so obvious, appropriate, and therefore providential that she was certain it was something to endure and learn from. We will now see that enduring this trial was a lesson about love.

3.2.3 Love and Duty

Mary believed her greatest sin was 'overloving' Charles. We have seen that caring for her now abusive and ailing husband, rather than enjoying life with the cheerful, handsome man she married, was a trial to fit this sin. But this trial had another purpose: it was designed to transform her worldly love into Christian affection and ensure she loved God above all others. This follows Anselment, who argued that Mary and Charles' marital tensions were "paradoxically inseparable" from Mary's "newfound spiritual love that leads to a new love for her husband".[373]

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[371] Ibid. Mary returns to this theme repeatedly. See also Rich, "Upon lookeing into a glass bee hive, and expecting to see in it a great deale of hony, and finding nothing but blake, dry comes", in *Occasional Meditations*, 71.

[372] *Diary* MS 27353, 162; Ibid, 146.

Caring also allowed Mary to express Christian compassion to Charles and the unconverted generally. She cared for Charles' soul as she cared for his body and treated the root cause of his physical suffering: sin. In doing so, Mary fulfilled her religious and social duty as a wife and expressed love for Charles' soul – a nobler love than the worldly love for which they married. As caring interacted with questions of love in a way that made it seem spiritually beneficial, Mary was encouraged to feel confident that she was 'right' to care.

Like Elizabeth, Mary imagined a hierarchy of love. Worldly love and "passion" were at the bottom. Woodrooffe explained in a sermon that "idolatry was giveing of Deavine worshipe unto any Creature".[374] "Overloveing" "the world, and all creatures in it" and other "sublunar" things – for example, family, wealth, or household employment – was a sin.[375] Mary thought "carnall relations" stood "betwene us and God like this dam to stop our passage to him", but eventually pious Christians "would trample upon them" to reach God.[376]

Loving worldly things was not inherently reprehensible, however. It was a question of moderation. Recording a Sunday sermon, Mary noted that Gilbert Barnett urged his listeners "to take heed of too much indulging our selves in those things which ware lawfull in themselves, if we fond thay ware ocasiones to draw us to ill".[377] Woodrooffe similarly warned believers "to avoyd the hinderances of the receiving of the Gospell, chiefel the inordinate love of the world".[378] As with Elizabeth, "inordinate", "too much", "excessive", and "overmuch" were the key and recurrent terms in discussions of worldly love.[379]

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[373] Anselment, "The Conversion", 592.

[374] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 200.

[375] For an example of Mary's many references to "overloving" worldly "creatures", see Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 200-202. Raymond Anselment describes "worldly love" as "secular" in Anselment, "The Conversion", 592. He notes that Mary's conception of it drew heavily drawn upon Richard Baxter's writings and personal influence, particularly warnings against excessive sorrow over worldly things, Ibid, 597.

[376] Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 126-7.

[377] Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 171.

Mary also conceptualised an acceptable love for "worldly creatures": compassionate, Christian love. Mary shared this love with her "spiritual friends", and expressed it through charity, comforting other Christians, and showing compassion towards sinners. It was a channelling of God's grace – like Barclay's "caritas". Anselment called it "spiritual love": loving "through the love of God".[380] The preacher Giford outlined the key features of Christian love when he spoke on I John 4:11-13, which Mary recorded. In short, "our love to our neighbour ought to have som resemblance and hold som proportion to Godes love unto us". Christian love, he explained, must be: "a preventing love" (that is, prevent others from falling into sin); a "disinterest love", because "Gs love to us was free"; "a condescending love" (that is, allow for humbleness); and "a holy love […] we must chiefly love their soules and desire to make our relationes and friendes good, else he sayd it was but a fitfull love and not becoming a Christian to love onely their bodyes". Love should be felt even for "enemyes", and it must be "a bountifull love" (that is, involve "disposeing liberally our charity to those in want"). Giford was clear about where this love ranked hierarchically: "he told us all religion was made up of love, first love to G, and for his sake to our fellow creatures".[381] Thus, the final love Mary envisaged was godly love. One's love for God should exceed all others.[382]

Caring demanded reflection on this hierarchy of love, because it involved devoting time and attention to a "worldly being" at God's expense. Despite this, Mary successfully balanced devotion to Charles with her duty to love God most. This was partly because Mary could exculpate herself from blame about how she spent her time, and thereby convince herself that caring did not reflect 'worldly love', only reluctant adherence to duty. But it was also because

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[378] Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 215.

[379] Fittingly, Mary was reminded of the danger of being "drawne by things temporall to the undervalueing and disregarding of God and things eternall" by an "overfull" glass which was "apt to spill". See Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 97-8.

[380] Anselment, "The Conversion", 592; Ibid, 601.

[381] All Giford quotes from Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 100-101. My omission in square brackets.

[382] Anselment again has underlined Baxter's influence in Mary's conception of this kind of love. From a holy fear, the converted moved towards a more perfect holy love. See Anselment, "The Conversion", 596-7.

Mary believed that Charles' illness, and her care of him, were designed to wean her from worldly love, towards Christian and godly love. She accepted that she had not reached the perfect apex of godly love, but was confident that caring was progressing her towards it.

Mary's thinking went something like this: "By maring my husband", Mary believed, she had "flatly disobayd his command […] of obaieng my father".[383] She had allowed Charles to gain a "great and full po-sesion" of her heart. [384] This was her greatest sin. When Mary reflected on her worldly life, she dwelt upon her disobedience in marrying Charles, and on her foolishness in expecting happiness from him:

> God was pleased […] to breake my heart for were my undutyfullnes to my father in my youth, and my loving my husband at so high a rate as made me give him more of my heart then I did to God, and take more care to please him than I did to pleas my good G. [385]

To remedy this sin, she frequently prayed to be "weaned" from the world and did "beg of God more love and dealight in him, that I might now make him my constant desire and delight, this, and grace to serve him better". [386] She prayed to abandon vain love of her husband and exchange it for a whole-hearted love of God.[387]

Mary was sure that Charles' deteriorating health, character, and her unhappiness while looking after him when he had lost the worldly characteristics she had loved, helped answer this prayer. She had married Charles, out of passion and vanity, because he was a "very chearefull and hansome, well bred and faichoned persone", and "very good compeny".[388] But illness ruined his temper and wasted his once handsome body to a "meare skele tone".[389] Charles' illness, and Mary's dutiful care of him, were part of a providential scheme to "wean" Mary from worldly love by showing her the world was fleeting and could not comfort her like a love of God could. She believed caring was a lesson about the "vanity of worldly things", which did "promise much at a distance but did frustrate my expectations".[390] "God was pleased to tarnish the gods of the earth that he might be God alone", Mary wrote; "God imbittered the stream that I might come to the fountain and spend sweet refreshing hours with him in solitude".[391] Mary saw the process as analogous to her niece weaning her baby "by layeing som bitar thing upon hur breast": "When God is weaneing them from som idolised dealight which he sees them over love, and in ordur to that mersyfull deasigne he dropes in wormewode and gall".[392] She resolved to embrace the intervention, rather than grow peevish under it.

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[383] Rich, *Some Specialties*, 17. My omission in square brackets.

[384] Ibid*,* 9.

[385] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 117. My omission in square brackets.

[386] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 134.

[387] Mary explicitly implored God to exchange her worldly heart for "an inliv-ened spirituall one", see Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 145.

[388] Rich, *Some Specialties*, 6.

[389] Ibid, 35.

Mary believed that God's attempts to wean her from the world were not simply to ensure she loved Him most on principle. Rather, I argue below that Mary believed that the more she cared for Charles, and suffered thereby, the more their relationship deteriorated. The worse their relationship, the better Mary could endure Charles' abuses without becoming upset – and the better she could focus on God. Mary summarised this idea well when she "did with great fervency beg a heart sicke of love for lovely Jeasus and that God wold bloote out every name from my corrupted heart that hindered the deepar ingraveing of his name, being resolved not to have my heart any more torne with the briars and thornes of this world, but layd up in the bosome of my Crusifide Lord".[393] This lesson in love helped legitimise Mary's caring role, by making it spiritually beneficial.

Charles' illness and Mary's care for him thus helped ensure she no longer gained earthly comfort from their relationship. Caring could not, therefore, reflect excessive 'worldly love' for his person. But in continuing to care for Charles despite this and her own suffering, Mary displayed a different love to the passion for which they married: a selfless, Christian love of his soul. Mary's Christian love manifested itself in her attempts to convert Charles. Mary was confident that Charles' physical suffering resulted from sin. His "allmost constant paine and illness" were "constant warneinges" from God, and she prayed for him to repent, "that his sinnes might be bloted out".[394] She wanted Charles to gain "santefide use" of "these dreadfull paines" and reap "the fruit of his punishment" – that is, "take away his sinn, that he might have cause to say it was good for him to be afflicted", and convert him to God. [395]

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[390] Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 149.
[391] Ibid, 89; Ibid, 113.
[392] Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 83-84.
[393] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 50.

Bound up with Mary's care of her husband's body was therefore care of his soul. Mary highly valued this aspect of caring. She gave more details about it than about physical, practical aspects of his care. During one illness, Mary noted "constantly attending" Charles, who had "falne in to very violent paine of the goute", several times, always non-descriptively: "taken upe in tending my lord", "constantly imployde in attending him". Yet huge portions of these entries describe care for Charles' soul. She did "weepe most pationately for my poore husbands swearing and ofending God […] I did indeaver to wrestle with god, and did send upe strong cryes and teares to God for converting grace for my poore husbandes soul". The following day, she devoted nearly two handwritten sides to describing the same:

> I poured out my soule to God for mersy for my poore husbands soul and I did with many teares beg of God a saintefide improvement of his seavere hand upon him
>
> having an oppertunety offered to me by my Lord, I did […] with great humilety and yet with great plainess speake to my Lord about the things of his everlasting consernement and did mightely presse him to consider what was Godes deasigne in thus often and heavily afflicting with with those dreadfull paines, and did mightily earnestly with teares beg him to breake off his sinnes by repentance […] I did […] presse him to make pease with God, God was pleased to make him patiantly heare me.[396]

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[394] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 294.
[395] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 155.
[396] All quotes from Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 274 -5. My omissions in square brackets. Note that the quotes from Mary's "two handwritten sides" are shortened.

By encouraging her husband to see the meaning of his illness and turn to God, Mary believed she could end his suffering – from his sickness, and in his next life. And by caring for Charles' soul in this way, Mary expressed Christian duty, love, and showed compassion to a sinner.

In caring for Charles, Mary also fulfilled a religious and social duty as a wife. This further legitimised caring. On "Lord Berkeleyes" wedding anniversary, Mary heard his chaplain preach on spouses' duties for each other's souls: "knowest thou o woman wither thou shalte save thy husband". Later that day, she "prayde God to make me instrumentale to save my husbande".[397] When she believed Charles was not doing "what was fit for him under Godes afflicting hand", she felt partly responsible: "I did beg of God to show me what was my duty too doe in order to his repentance, that if I ware yet wanting in any thing that he wold convince me of it, and make me instrumental to save his soule".[398] When her niece married, becoming Lady Mary St John, Mary bequeathed this sense of wifely duty and "spent much time in giveing good Counsell to my Lady Mary in her new change of condition and did in a very awakened frame press her to indeavor to be instrumentall to bring her husband to a serious diligence in the things of his everlasting happyness".[399]

Protected from excessive affection for Charles' 'body' by his unkindness, and by the loss of his attractive qualities, Mary was unconcerned that caring for him reflected 'worldly love'. Rather, it formed part of a divine lesson about the futility and 'unsatisfactoriness' of worldly love compared to a love of God. Caring for Charles offered Mary an opportunity to display Christian love and show that her love for Charles had graduated from a vain love of his body to a Christian love of his soul. Caring therefore performed important spiritual services for Mary. The final step in this process would have been for Mary to devote herself to God entirely, leaving behind any remnants of worldly love for her husband that his sickness and her care of him did not erode. Mary believed Charles' death would allow this. But the reality of Mary's widowhood did not live up to these expectations. We will now see that Charles' death and the cessation of Mary's caring role left Mary with limited outlets for Christian love, and a feeling that she was 'unuseful' to fellow Christians.

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[397] Ibid, 110.
[398] Rich, *Diary* MS 27352, 38.
[399] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 278.

3.3 The Limits of Clarity

Mary navigated the questions of love, time and suffering inherent in long-term caring to build a secure and comfortable conception of her role. Caring was not periphery to Mary's life, but instrumental to building her spiritual identity. It was an excuse, a trial, an opportunity to display Christian love, and part of a providential lesson about the value of worldly versus heavenly things.

This final section explores the limitations of Mary's conception of her caring role and how it collapsed when her circumstances changed. The first part underlines the specificity and fragility of the circumstances that allowed Mary to feel comfortable caring, by exploring instances when she was not. When Mary looked after her niece, she found caring more spiritually problematic.

The second part explores the impact of Charles' death and the consequent end of Mary's long term caring role on her spiritual identity. Mary viewed her life in phases. Though a tool for weaning her from it, caring was part of the "worldly" phase. She imagined that the end of her caring role would mark the end of her journey away from the world, and towards God. She could finally devote herself to Him fully. It became apparent, however, that caring was instrumental to *maintaining* Mary's spiritual identity. Still distracted by the world, but without the 'excuse' of obedience to Charles, Mary struggled to believe her utmost priority was God. Without the trial of caring, Mary's relationship with God also suffered; it had been built on the comfort she found in God during hardship. Increasingly, Mary felt "unuseful" to her fellow Christians without the duty to show patient, Christian love to Charles, and guide him to God. In short, love, time, and suffering fell out of balance, and Mary became discontented with her spiritual condition.

3.3.1 Fragile Circumstances

Mary had an unquestionable social and religious duty to her husband. Charles and his soul clearly needed her help; it was a Christian duty to convert the sinful. By being bad-tempered and unkind, Charles eroded his and Mary's marriage. This protected her from feeling excessive, worldly love for him. For the same reason, caring for Charles was undoubtedly Mary's trial. Caring for Charles for two decades, Mary had time to reflect on the spiritual implications of caring for him – and make them acceptable. But although Charles was Mary's only long-term caring responsibility, Mary cared for others, too. Her accounts of caring for others were often strikingly different to those describing Charles' care. Most notably, when Mary described more satisfaction and enjoyment from caring, she found the task more spiritually problematic.

Mary's account of caring for her niece, Lady Mary St John, when she fell ill shortly after Charles' death, provides a notable example of this. For over a week, Mary's diary became littered with her usual comments: "I was most of the day imployde in tending her"; "I spent not so much time as usual at my devotions, because of my La Maryes being somthing worse"; "I was most of this day taken upe in my lookeing to my La Mary, who still continued ill".[400] This included some intense periods of care when Lady Mary was in a dangerous condition: "I stird not from her, but was constant in my attendance upon her assisting her what I could for 15 houres togeather".[401] The following morning Mary slept in, "haveing satt upe all night", before resuming her post that afternoon.[402]

The similarities between Mary's accounts of caring for Charles and Lady Mary end there, however. Her retrospective reaction to the time she spent caring once Lady Mary St John had improved was most strikingly different. Having been "for many days since my La Maryes being in so much danger highly disturbed with frites for hur", Mary considered "how much deadness and amaseing distraction I had fond in my wretched selfe of late which made me with great detestation abhor my abominable selfe and make me long to be at rest where I should be freed from the distractions I fond by thingses of this world".[403] She complained of "that strange dull and distracted temper I was in for the last fortningt in holy dutyes" and because of this, she considered herself "the most disingenuous ungratefull wretch that breathed", who "deserved greator damnation".[404] While Mary was often concerned that care had consumed her time and attentions, the language she used in this instance was unusually severe. This was because caring for Lady Mary St John was a more socially and spiritually ambiguous task than caring for Charles.

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[400] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 284-285.

[401] Ibid, 284.

[402] Ibid.

[403] Ibid, 286.

[404] Ibid. For similar comments, see also Ibid, 287.

Unlike Charles, Lady Mary did not need Mary to prepare her soul for death. Mary was content with her niece's spiritual condition:

> upon hur one desire I got Mr Paige to her he had much discourse with hur, which was much to his satesfaction as to hur spirituall condition, which was a great comfort to me.[405]

> I did this day, and every day since she was ill, upon all occasions, speake to hur about hur soules consernements, and fond still much joy to heare hur answer me so well, and to see hur in so good a frame as to God.[406]

Though this reassured Mary, it removed a significant justification for Mary's investment of time and love in her. If Lady Mary's soul was already safe, she did not *need* Mary's efforts. So, was caring for her just another worldly distraction from Mary's spiritual devotions, which suggested that she cared out of a vain love for Lady Mary's body?

Mary's contentment was also significant in itself. Lady Mary St John was like a daughter to Mary. She was also a kinder and more grateful patient than Charles. She spoke sweetly of God and she did not become frustrated and angry or lose her temper with Mary. Caring for her was not, in this sense, a trial. Her illness distressed Mary. But this was the extent of her suffering. Mary uncomplicatedly *wanted* to look after her niece. So again, something which had made caring for Charles spiritually acceptable was absent in this case. Her niece's death would have been an affliction and part of God's attempts to wean Mary from the world. Yet caring for her was not. It did not purify Mary's soul, nor express self-sacrificial Christian love. It distracted her, without doing any spiritual good.

Lady Mary's illness was also sudden and surprising. Mary had little time to adapt to her care or process its implications. It also occurred after Charles' death. As explored below, Mary had resolved to give herself entirely to God after this symbolic end to her 'worldly' existence. This presumably exacerbated her sensitivity to 'wasting' time and affection in another worldly pursuit.

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[405] Ibid, 285.

[406] Ibid, 286.

Mary's motherly relationship to her niece also mattered. While women were frequently reminded of their duty to their husbands, excessive affection for children was cautioned against.[407] Mary believed she had already erred by loving her own children excessively and been punished for it.[408] Neglecting her spiritual duties to care for a surrogate child perhaps felt to Mary like she had learned little from these warnings. Caring for her husband, by contrast, was clearly 'right'.

The suggestions I have given for why Mary found caring for Lady Mary St John more spiritually problematic than caring for Charles are speculative. Mary did not reflect on the difference explicitly; I am not convinced she was aware of it. But they underline that the circumstances that allowed Mary to be comfortable caring for Charles were incredibly specific, and therefore fragile. When these circumstances were absent – when Mary did not suffer as she cared, when the patient did not require her spiritual guidance, and when the patient was not her husband, to whom she had a clear, religiously-defined duty – Mary reverted to the most readily available interpretation of intense-caregiving: it was a worldly distraction, which drew her from God.

3.3.2 A Damaged Spiritual Identity

In this final section, I argue that Mary's spiritual identity was unexpectedly damaged by Charles' death. Caring had performed significant spiritual services for Mary, and she suffered more from their absence than she acknowledged their value while Charles lived.

When Charles died on the 24th August 1673, Mary believed her worldly life had symbolically ended. Having already lost her children, and her pleasure in her husband's company, Charles' death bookended the worldly chapter of her life. Henceforth, she would devote herself entirely to God. This was a long-held goal; Mary often aspired to lead a "retired" rather than a

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[407] See n.186.

[408] See e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 17. Mary states other reasons for believing God thought she and Charles were unworthy of further children. See Rich, *Some Specialties,* 34-35.

"publicke" life, free from worldly temptation.[409] Appropriately, this goal is the final line of her autobiography:

> O Ld, be pleased to grant that the remaineing part of my dayes I may be a widow indeed, liveing as a creature wholy devoted unto thee, remembering that I am not my owne, but bought with a prise, and therefore lett me glorefy thee with my body and with my Soule, which are thyne.[410]

It was a sentiment she returned to frequently in her diaries:

> I found that the consideration that though my husband was dead yet to my maker I had esspoused my soule, and that he had loved me with an everlasting love did exsidingly warm and revive me […] I might now take upe with him alone [411]

> my heart was cared out to firmely resolve to cleave to him with full purpose of soule for the remaining part of my life. [412]

Part of Mary's symbolic detachment from the world was her liberation from the duty to care for Charles. She had done her duty: Mary had "much inward pease to consider that I had bene a constant nurse to him and had never neaglekted night or day my attendance upon him when he needed it".[413] But now, she could devote the remainder of her days to spiritual pursuits. With her new temporal and financial freedom, position, and authority, as Charles' heir, she resolved to be more charitable, and do more good for fellow Christians:

> O Lo I do most humbly implore that I may neaver forgett those promises I made to thee that if thou woldst be so mersyfull to me as to putt an end to my distracting worldly affaires I wold spend more time in serving thee and in seeking after eternall life, and

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[409] See e.g., Rich, *Occasional Meditations,* 132-33. Rich compares the safety of a "a bird that I have kept alive ten years in a cage" to the danger of the outside world and aspires to similarly be kept safe from the worldly.

[410] Rich, *Some Specialties*, 39. This paraphrases several biblical passages, including I Corinthians 6:20, and Timothy 5:3-16.

[411] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 224. My omission in square brackets.

[412] Ibid, 273. See also Ibid, 217.

[413] Rich, *Some Specialties*, 36.

> wold indeavour to bring more Glory to thee, and to do more good to my fellow Christianes by my good example for their soules good, and by my distributeing a good portion of that which thou hast given me for their bodyly realife (O Lord dealiver me now from procrastination and from the deasaitefullness of my one heart which has often made me believe I should do many thinges wch I never practised and now be pleased to make me a widow indeed, one that for the remainer of my life may live as a creature wholly devoted unto thee O Lord make me to be good, and to do good, and to make it my business to save my one with others soules. [414]

It became apparent, however, that caring for Charles had not only been central to building Mary's spiritual identity, but to *maintaining* it. Mary's perspective on the time she spent on 'worldly' pursuits shifted after Charles' death. We saw above that Mary did not control her own time and that this exculpated her from blame regarding the time that caring consumed. Caring for Charles was a social and religious duty, and a legitimate occupation; but Mary *would* devote herself to God entirely if her circumstances allowed, for her love for Him exceeded all others. But it turned out that this premise was flawed. Inevitably, caring was not the only obstacle preventing Mary's full devotion to God. Charles' death therefore did not prevent Mary from being ensnared by "worldly things". Without the 'excuse' of duty and obedience to her husband, it became harder for Mary to believe her utmost priority was God.

Until the completion of Charles' will on the 16th October 1676, Mary's role as Charles' executrix hindered her from spiritual pursuits most significantly. Mary frequently complained of it: "my thoughtes ware much distrac ted with so much bisnes of the world that at this time in order to the discharging the trust of being my Lordes exseketrikse lay ypon me, and I could not keape my thoughtes fixt to good thinges as at some other more happy times".[415] At first, Mary thus blamed her distraction on these duties; they were, after all, plausibly an extension of her caring role. When the task was finally complete, Mary promised anew to give herself to God. This, finally, was the end of her worldly life:

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[414] Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 183. See also Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 241.

[415] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 239.

> write a law of thankefullness in my heart for thy great goodness to me in letting me come to an end of my worldly intaiengull-ments in this kind and that now I am so I may dedicate the remaineder of my time to serve thee my God, and to indeavour to bring Glory to thee.[416]

But much to her own self-loathing, Mary remained tethered to the world. We saw that Mary spent several weeks caring for Lady Mary St John. She also had to do estate accounts: "pardon me that I have so much this weeke been imployde in takeing up in my accounts for this world, and so littell imployed in lookeing how my great account standes in order to my ever-lasting happiness." [417] She spent time comforting her grieving niece, and her sister, Ranelagh, after their respective children's deaths: "spent not so much time as usual in reatirement being imployde in discoursing with the afflicted parents of the dead child".[418] After ten days of being "imployde in visiting my afflicted sister", Mary apologised for her recent "dull and distracted temper", and did "bewayle my having there againe repeated that haineous faulte of being by company and my lawfull worldly bisness too much diverted from Gs service".[419] Family scandals also arose. Mary found her heart "very dull and distracted" following the news that Ranelagh's daughter had married a "very meane persone" (a footman).[420] In short, Mary complained constantly of "being since his death more taken up with marthas imployment of the world and less in heavenly thinges".[421]

Naturally, Mary had always experienced distractions besides caring. But Mary clearly considered her continued distraction in widowhood to be especially reprehensible. Initially, Mary became unusually defensive about worldly engagements. While she seldom defended her caring duties this way, Mary began to prefix mentions of "worldly imployments" with terms like "lawful", "necessary" and "unavoidable":

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[416] Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 25-26.
[417] Ibid, 44.
[418] Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 13.
[419] Ibid, 78-79.
[420] Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 117-18.
[421] Ibid, 177.

> I spent not so much time as usuall this morneing at my devotiones being imployde in my neasisary, and at that time unavoyd able worldly imployments, I onely prayed and that in that duty my wicked heart was dull and distracted [422]
>
> […] being neaseasitated to be imployde in my worldly imployments [423]
>
> […] my mind this day was so much diverted from thy serves and so miserably distracted in it by my lawful worldly occasiones. [424]

As the quotations suggest, however, Mary did not believe that the lawfulness of her distractions excused them.

Mary's continued engagement with the world thus damaged her spiritual self-confidence. While Mary had always lamented her sins and declared herself unworthy of God's mercies (as was usual for pious Christians), her increased dissatisfaction with her spiritual condition is palpable. Her complaints became more frequent, her lists of sins more extensive, and her ability to focus on - and write about - her devotions noticeably reduced. She became pronouncedly concerned with "misspending precious time" in the present; previously, she had primarily lamented misspending time in youth.[425] Mary believed her attachment to the world and consequent distraction had increased. Her diaries filled with comments like "since I was a widow I did with great abhorrence confess […] my being too much diverted from and too much distracted in Godes service by my lawfull worldly imployments".[426] Anselment has also noted Mary's increased spiritual anxiety at this time. [427]

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[422] Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 11.

[423] Ibid, 39. My omission in square brackets.

[424] Ibid, 144. My omission in square brackets.

[425] See e.g., Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 3, 37, 46, 70, 78, 81, 90, 101, 112, 119, 121, 146, 149, 159, 178, 193, 218.

[426] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 243. My omission in square brackets. See also Rich, "Upon my dogs care when hee was hunting not to loose me, and when I called him instantly forsakeing his hunting to follow me in", in *Occasional Meditations*, 172. Mary thought that her continued distraction by worldly pleasures, even when God 'called' her, compared poorly to her dog's diligence not to lose sight of her, even when enjoying himself hunting.

[427] Anselment, Introduction to *Occasional Meditations,* 16-17.

These worldly pursuits were more problematic than caring because Mary now had a choice about how she spent her time. Having spent her married life blaming her (ostensive) spiritual shortcomings on her obligation to care, the removal of this obstacle meant any time she now 'misspent' was her responsibility. And because Mary felt she no longer had any legitimate duties in this world, she thought any engagement in it was "overmuch" and reflected a sinful love of it. In the context of her widowhood promise to give herself wholly to God if He ended her worldly affairs (chiefly, caring), Mary felt this especially keenly. Mary had always believed that she would devote herself to God entirely, if she had the opportunity – and now (she believed) she had the opportunity and was wasting it. Charles' death thus represented the sudden loss of a legitimate 'excuse' for why Mary could not achieve her (unreasonable) goal of devoting her time entirely to God. As such, it was also the sudden loss of an important bulwark to Mary's spiritual identity.

Losing her caring role also meant losing her main outlet for expressing Christian love, which was a central part of Mary's faith.[428] Expressing Christian love was again something that Mary believed widowhood would facilitate: free from worldly concerns, she would "do more good to my fellow Christianes by my good example for their soules good, and by my distributeing a good portion of that which thou hast given me for their bodyly realife […] make it my business to save my one with others soules."[429] The problem was, however, that caring had regularly involved exercising Christian love: she guided Charles' soul, was an example to him, and she selflessly and charitably cared for him, despite the cost to her personal happiness. Her increased devotion to charity, and renewed efforts to guide those under her charge – namely, her servants and household – proved a poor replacement in service of Christian love.

While rare between 1666 and August 1673, after Charles' death Mary's diaries are full of complaints about feeling "unuseful" to fellow Christians. Mary's expectation that she would be even *more* useful to others after her husband's death, not less, exacerbated these feelings. She often lamented her "unusefullness in the station G had plased me in", and regretted "my doeing no more good to the soules and bodyes of my fellow Christians"; "my being no more usefull to the soules and bodyes of my fellow Christianes, and in an espesall maner to the soules of my servants which did with much lothing of my selfe confess I was grown more careless of then formerly"; "my misspending my time and my not improveing those many preatious opportunityes that G put in to my hands of doeing and receaveing good"; and "my bringing no more glory to G, and my unusefullnes in my station G had sett me in to my fellow Christians, and my great decay of pyety".[430]

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[428] Mary frequently stated that expressing Christian love and drawing others towards God gave her comfort. See e.g., Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 107.

[429] Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 183. My omission in square brackets.

Mary's emphasis on being "no more" useful, bringing "no more" glory, and wasting "preatious opportunityes" underlines her sense of shattered expectations regarding her widowhood. Mary complained "of the great talentes G had intrusted me with which thoughtes had this effect upon me to make me exseadingly a-shamed and selfe condemned before the Ld for my not imploying my autho-rity and my wealth to do more good with […] I deserved with the fruitless fig-tree to be cutt downe for my unfruitfull-ness".[431] When Charles had lived and needed care, Mary had, had purpose. Once her love and charity lacked a substantive target, Mary felt uncertain and unproductive. That the former barrier to her doing 'good' had ostensibly been removed made this worse: she was a fruit tree, in perfect conditions, but unable to bear fruit.

The end of Mary's caring role was also the end of a significant trial. After her initial grief at Charles' death – the "greatest tryall of my life" – Mary's burden of affliction lightened significantly; she no longer had to care for him.[432] This created spiritual problems for Mary. Combined with the problems of time and Christian love, Mary worried that her lack of affliction was causing her to 'backslide'. She noted sermons that "told us that we ware more in danger usually from the world when it smiled upon us then when we ware afflicted by the crosses we met with from it", and "that a besieged city whose walls indured many batteryes and rough assaultes yet yielded to conditions of pease".[433] Mary's final meditation in

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[430] Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 159; Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 170; Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 169; Ibid, 178; Ibid, 214.
[431] Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 62. My omission in square brackets. Mary repeated this metaphor several times. See also Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 170.
[432] Notably, Mary's diaries are missing between March 1673/4 and March 1675. Mary evidently overcame the worst of her grief for Charles during this time, but it is a frustrating to lack details of this.
[433] Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 108.

"Occasional Meditations" dwelt upon these concerns. "Upon a boy that was selldome obedient to his fathers comandes longer then by correctiones he was made to be so, he being still worst when his father was kindest unto him" ruefully notes that "when God has been pleased to take off for som time his fatherly chastisements and to draw me to him with the cordes of a man, with loveing kindness and gentleness, I have been so basely disingenuous as to grow worse by his love".[434]

Increasingly, Mary fixated upon her former piety during periods of distress. She frequently reread her diaries, reflecting on the comfort she had found in God while afflicted, and compared this to her recent 'decay of piety'. She thanked God more frequently for her "saintefyd afflictions" and His "supports extraordinary under them by the warme and lively comfortes", but regretted her current spiritual condition more keenly as a result.[435] Diary entries like the following became common:

> began to consider seriously how good G had been to me, even under the saddest dispensation he was ever pleased to exercise me with, by many supportes he came in with, upholding me beyond my expectation, when he was pleased to take him from me, which thoughtes had this effect uppon me that it made me extraordinary self-condemned that I had since my great change in my condition bene so much by my even lawfull im-ployments diverted from G-s service, and distracted in it.[436]

For the first time, Mary believed she had responded inappropriately to a trial – and her former affliction while caring was responsible. Charles' death had not brought her closer to God. On its fourth anniversary, Mary reflected that:

> upon that solemn view of my self I fond that what my conscience most acused me of was my sines since I was a widow, that I had since I was in that condition not seene G so much in that affliction as to be so trewly humbled under it as I ought, nor so

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[434] Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 173-4. Anselment has also noted Mary's "new and emphatic attention" to backsliding and other sins during her widowhood. See Anselment, Introduction to *Occasional Meditations*, 16-17.
[435] Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 123.
[436] Rich, *Diary* MS 27354, 54.

> thoroughly reformed by it as I ought, but had been rather worse, more taken up with the business of the world, and more pleased with the glory and vanity of it, and less imployed in the thinges of my everlasting condition.[437]

There are several interesting reflections in this statement, which clearly summarises Mary's sense of 'promise unfulfilled'. But Mary's admission that she did not feel "so trewly humbled" by her husband's death as she "ought" to be is highly significant. While Mary (and God) had intended Charles' death to be Mary's greatest trial, in fact, it had been a relief. Caring for him had been so trialling, that liberation from this role was, problematically, also a liberation from suffering. Without the constant affliction of caring for her husband, Mary struggled to maintain her relationship with God, which had been built upon her gratitude for His comforting presence compared to the trials of her worldly life.

* * *

Mary imagined that her husband's death, and the end of her caring role, would be the culmination of her journey away from the world, and towards God. She would finally have the time and freedom to devote herself fully to Him. No longer would worldly entanglements prevent this. In practice, Mary was unable to live up to this ideal. Although caring for Charles created spiritual problems for Mary – most notably, its consumption of her precious time – caring had also bulwarked Mary's Christian identity.

Without the duty and compulsion to care, Mary could no longer figure herself as someone who would devote themselves entirely to God if their circumstances allowed. Mary's continued entanglement in "worldly affairs" became her own failing, and her problem of time became a problem of divided love – an altogether more serious transgression. Without Charles, Mary also lacked outlets for Christian love, and consequently felt "unuseful". Mary's widowhood charity and attempts to serve the souls of her household and neighbours (which she had always done, even before her husband's death) seemed weak compensation. No longer subject to the trials associated with caring, Mary also struggled to maintain her close relationship with God; she missed the warmth of His support while under affliction.

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[437] Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 176.

The erosion of Mary's spiritual identity after Charles' death shows how powerfully caring could be incorporated into early modern senses of self. Caring was not something Mary simply 'did', but something she wove into her spiritual narrative. Mary struggled to maintain contentment with her spiritual position, without the conceptual services her caring role had performed.

4. Comparing Elizabeth Isham and Mary Rich

In the introduction to this thesis, I outlined the similarities between Elizabeth Isham and Mary Rich, which make them fascinating to compare. Yet Elizabeth and Mary had very different personalities, circumstances, and experiences of caring. Mary was more conventional than Elizabeth. She married (albeit rebelliously), had children, and was a model noblewoman. Despite her constant insistence that she was happiest in God's company in Lees, Mary led a public life and was well-known in her community. Elizabeth, by contrast, seldom left her family estate. She lived almost as a "puritan nun" (a lifestyle that Mary, in later life, would have envied), although Elizabeth's motivations for reclusiveness were probably family-orientated as well as pious.[438] Their differences are symbolically apparent where Mary was celebrated in the "Lives of Eminent Persons", while Elizabeth does not even have a headstone.[439]

The following chapter synthesises findings from the previous two. It compares how Elizabeth and Mary experienced and made sense of caring and suggests broader conclusions. It contrasts how both women grappled with the concepts of love, time, and suffering, and suggests reasons for the differences seen. Overall, it suggests that personal circumstances and histories heavily influenced how caring was interpreted, as limited authoritative guidance meant carers used their own experiences to discern and refine what caring meant. In this respect, caring provides a wonderful example of how protestants applied and practiced divinity while working within the constraints of their daily lives and responsibilities.

4.1.1 Problems and Solutions to Time

Caring was incredibly time-consuming for Elizabeth and Mary. Both women spent years committed to it. Often, they could not leave their charges' sides for months at a time. Caring constantly interrupted Mary's spiritual routine and departed from how she had expected to spend her married years. For Elizabeth, caring simply was her routine. Judith had always been ill, and Elizabeth's care of her arose organically from their circumstances.

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[438] Stephens describes Elizabeth as a "puritan nun" multiple times. See Stephens, *The Gentlewoman's Remembrance*, 102, 112, 138.

[439] Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons*; Stephens, *The Gentlewoman's Remembrance*, 1-2.

Both women attached religious significance to time. Although Elizabeth was more relaxed than Mary about 'day-to-day' time (for example, regarding the acceptability of 'pastimes'), she believed her time on earth should have an overall meaning and purpose. Time (and health, which provided time) was a gift from God. It needed to be used wisely. Elizabeth was also wary of what the way she spent her time suggested about her priorities. She feared that devoting time to Judith suggested she loved her immoderately. Henry Mason's *Cure of Cares* provided a clear articulation of why Elizabeth was concerned, reflective of a wider cultural discourse.[440]

Mary was more immediately concerned with making every moment matter – encouraged by the sermons she consumed. Complaints that she had insufficient time for her spiritual devotions due to caring pervade her writings. She directly contrasted time spent caring with time spent serving God, and felt the former hindered the latter. Mary's sensitivity to "misspending" her "pretious time" was partly because she felt she had wasted her youth in sin. To compensate, she wanted to give all her remaining time to God.

Both women's attitudes towards time were influenced by strong senses of mortality. Mary constantly reflected on the spectre of death, particularly after the deaths of others. She believed she was living on 'borrowed time' at God's discretion. Elizabeth, though only around thirty, had already outlived much of her family and felt 'old' when she wrote her *Booke of Rememberance.* With sickness nearby, Elizabeth thought death was too – and urgently wanted to understand the meaning of her hitherto long life.

Yet both women's concerns about time were relatively shallow. This was because time had religious meaning, primarily in virtue of its connection to love. Elizabeth feared that she used her precious time to indulge unchristian worldly love. Her long-life consequently lacked meaningful purpose. Mary wanted to use all her time developing her commitment to godly love. Mary's sense of mortality gave urgency to the task, but her concerns about the time caring consumed were really about her distaste for 'loving' the world by engaging in it, when she could be loving God instead.

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[440] Mason, *Cure of Cares.*

Because Mary's concerns about time were relatively shallow, she could resolve them by emphasising her powerlessness to act otherwise. Mary had a duty to serve and obey her husband. This ensured Mary's problem of time was not a problem of love; Mary believed she would devote herself to God entirely when her circumstances and husband allowed. This caused problems for her later. When given (she believed) an excess of time with Charles' death, Mary's time was still consumed by 'worldly things'. And now, Mary chose to 'waste' her time, rather than was forced to. This problematically suggested a love of the world.

By contrast, Elizabeth solved her problem of time by reconceptualising the love she expressed through caring. Unlike Mary, she did not need to promise to spend more time serving God when her circumstances allowed. Caring was serving God by serving the godly, as Christ served man. This was a noble, purposeful, and godly use of God's gift of time and health. Elizabeth's reflections on her time on earth – its length, its events, and their meaning – helped her conclude this.

4.1.2 Problems and Sense from Suffering

Both Mary and Elizabeth suffered while caring. Caring for Judith was physically and emotionally exhausting for Elizabeth. Frequently tending and 'watching' Judith all night involved significant physical exertion. Elizabeth was constantly distressed by Judith's suffering and by fears for her life. She experienced significant loneliness and melancholy, partly caused by being tethered to her home by her caring responsibilities, and by Judith's own low mood.

Mary's experience of caring was similarly unpleasant. Caring for Charles was exhausting and frequently made Mary ill. Charles' abuse while she cared for him made Mary "weary of life". Mary's overall experience of caring was bleak. The physical exertion, emotional distress and reflection on her husband's changed character that caring invited represented the "disapoyntments" Mary "met with in all sublunary thinges". They might "promise much at a distance but did frustrate my expectations".[441]

Yet Elizabeth and Mary initially grappled with the questions of suffering related to caring very differently. Despite its distressing nature, Elizabeth did not initially view caring as a trial. Elizabeth adored her sister. Caring for Judith – who had been "ill from her berth" – was largely synonymous with being in her company.[442] Elizabeth's caring role was also closely linked to her decision not to marry, but instead enjoy a "privat lyf" spent in religious contemplation: a life "wherein \I/ \have/ found so much content".[443] Elizabeth's love for Judith and joy in their shared life compensated for the difficulties she faced while caring for her. And, writing while grieving, Elizabeth's view of caring was particularly rose-tinted. She forgot that she had suffered while caring for Judith, because she was suffering from her loss.

By contrast, it was obvious to Mary that caring was a trial. When Mary began writing her diaries, her relationship with Charles was so poor that there was little question of her enjoying caring in virtue of his company. And because Mary's suffering through Charles made providential sense, given her alleged greatest sin, she could be confident in this interpretation: "he was most righteous in punishing me for my overloveing a creature and for letting my bitterest crosses come where I expected my greatest comforts".[444]

As Elizabeth did not initially view caring as a trial, her response to observing her charge's suffering was very different to Mary's. Judith suffered intensely with her physical and mental health. In general, Elizabeth's family suffered poor health. By contrast, Elizabeth could not remember being "\very/ ill two daies together".[445] While Elizabeth had experienced trials, witnessing her family's suffering while she cared for them invited uncomfortable comparisons. Their trials seemed so much greater than her own. Elizabeth feared this meant God thought she was unworthy of trial. Because Elizabeth and her family were similarly 'good' and pious, this effect was amplified. Elizabeth could not explain why they suffered so intensely, when she suffered so little, unless God thought her unworthy.

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[441] Rich, *Diary* MS 27355, 149.
[442] Isham, *Booke*, f. 3v.
[443] Ibid, f. 28r.
[444] Rich, *Diary* MS 27353, 117.
[445] Isham, *Booke*, f. 35v.

Charles' intense suffering, by contrast, made sense. He was (Mary thought) deeply sinful and responded poorly to his trials. Hence God progressively intensified Charles' suffering to help him reform before his death. Though Mary remained healthy, caring was clearly a trial. Mary's trials were different from Charles' – perhaps even lighter – but that was because she was godlier and embraced her trials appropriately. Consequently, she never thought God considered her unworthy like Elizabeth did. Mary and Charles were trialled proportionately. When Mary, like Elizabeth, reflected that "for the most part" she had been healthy, she thus reacted very differently. She could not "but admire at thy unmerited mercy to me that when others of my fellow creatures are roreing upon a bed of sickness [...] that I showld be at ease and by being so am able to taste and relish thy mersyes".[446] Mary's suffering helped her feel sure caring was 'right'; it was a trial to be borne patiently. Somewhat counter-intuitively for a modern reader, Elizabeth's greater contentment stopped her feeling comfortable caring. If caring was not a trial, perhaps it was an indulgence of immoderate familial love, the very reason God thought her unworthy of election?

Judith and Charles' responses to their conditions also impacted Elizabeth and Mary's experiences of caring. Judith's sometimes ambiguous responses to her suffering made Elizabeth's role in caring for her ambiguous too. Judith occasionally walked the lined between bearing her trials with godly resignation, and simply indulging in misery – the latter of which was tempting God ("for to trust to Gods help without using our owne care, is not so much to trust God, as to tempt him").[447] That Judith actively wished (and sometimes attempted) to end her misery was similarly problematic. Being open to dying a Christian death to be with God was commendable, but suicide was not. The way Judith endured her considerable trials was not obviously wrong; she remained pious and professed to receive comfort and joy from God. But nor were her responses exemplary. Elizabeth's role in helping her to bear her trials was therefore unclear. Was she supposed to look after Judith's body, extend her life, and raise her spirits? Or was Judith right to resign herself to God's will without Elizabeth's interference, which was perhaps motivated by an unchristian love of Judith's body?

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[446] Rich, *Occasional Meditations*, 96. My omission in square brackets.
[447] Mason, *Cure of Cares*, 9.

By contrast, Charles' poor response to his suffering gave Mary a clear Christian purpose. It was her duty to help him to make "santefide use" of "these dreadfull paines" and reap "the fruit of his punishment" – that is, "take away his sinn, that he might have cause to say it was good for him to be afflicted" and convert him to God.[448] There was little ambiguity. To Mary, Charles was obviously wrong to respond to God's warnings by cursing Him, and Mary was right to correct this behaviour and encourage him to treat the root cause of his ailments: sin.

Despite these differences, both women ultimately saw caring as an earthly trial. Elizabeth solved many of the problems above by re-evaluating her caring experience, and by reinterpreting what it meant to suffer. After recollecting her life with Judith to write her *Booke of Rememberance*, Elizabeth realised that her rose-tinted view of it was just that. In fact, Elizabeth had suffered greatly while caring. As Judith had often suggested, Elizabeth finally believed that she had shared in her sister's suffering and that this was a worthy trial in itself. Unlike Mary, whose suffering while she cared was concrete and direct, Elizabeth used the concept of compassionate co-suffering.[449] Her direct suffering was lighter than Judith's, but she felt her pain through Christian compassion, because she loved her.

Mary did not need to reinterpret the meaning of suffering with respect to caring. It had always made sense. But Mary's widowhood underlined how important suffering through caring had been to maintaining her close relationship with God. Her husband's death was supposed to be her greatest trial and lead her firmly to Him. However, without the strain of caring, Mary no longer felt under trial. Consequently, she felt more distant from God; He could not comfort her if she was not distressed.

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[448] Rich, *Diary* MS 27351, 155.

[449] Anthony Walker explicitly remarked that Mary's suffering was direct, as well as compassionate: he stated that Charles was "sometimes less kind to you [Mary] and others, than his Natural Temper […] you felt it's pain, not only by Sympathy, as you did always, but sometimes in other effects." See Walker, The Epistle Dedicatory to *Leez lachrymans,* vi. My omissions and clarifications in square brackets.

4.1.3 Categories and Questions of Love and Duty

Questions of love were key to both Mary and Elizabeth's conceptions of caring. For Elizabeth, fear that caring expressed unchristian worldly love caused most of her anxiety. Recategorizing the love she expressed through caring as Christian love allowed Elizabeth to see caring as spiritually productive. For Mary, caring was a vehicle for a lesson about love. She suffered in the role to learn that worldly love only leads to disappointment. Caring also gave her opportunities to express selfless Christian love and patience.

Mary and Elizabeth's relationships with their charges impacted their experiences of caring. Perhaps counter-intuitively, Elizabeth's love for Judith made her caring role's legitimacy questionable. Elizabeth feared she cared for Judith out of immoderate love for her body and company. By contrast, Mary's complex relationship with Charles made her confident that caring for him was right. Having loved Charles deeply in youth, by the time Mary began writing she was reluctantly falling out of (worldly) love with him and attempting to love only his soul. She believed Charles' unkindness to her – caused by the illness which demanded her care – was providentially ordained. Through the unpleasantness of caring for her husband, God was weaning Mary from worldly love, so she might love Him alone. This would also help her bear any further trials from Charles without becoming upset and losing focus on God.

Elizabeth and Mary also had different duties to their charges. Elizabeth feared that caring for her sister was shirking familial and religious duty on multiple counts. She claimed that she never wanted to marry (shirking her duty to her father), so that she could devote herself to God without becoming distracted and overly attached to a family. Yet she spent her days caring for her sister out of (she believed) worldly love. Thus, she still failed to devote herself to God, and added insult to injury regarding her duty to marry; she exchanged one kind of worldly love and distraction for another. Unlike duty to husbands or fathers, duty to siblings – especially sisters – was not emphasised socially or religiously.

Mary had a comparatively clear duty to her husband. Mary was perhaps particularly diligent to obey Charles, in penance of her failure to obey her father in marrying him. While Elizabeth's choice to stay home and care for Judith was somewhat subversive, Mary's diligent care for her husband made her the ideal biblical goodwife.[450] She was widely praised by her contemporaries.[451] Thus, she felt confident and comfortable caring.

Interestingly, both women had concerns about the 'worldliness' of caring. In Mary's case, this manifested itself as a fear that the worldly busywork of caring was a practical obstacle to her religious duties. Elizabeth, by contrast, feared caring reflected and encouraged worldly love for her sister at God's expense. Despite these concerns, caring also kept both women from more frivolous worldly activities. Elizabeth believed caring for Judith "when I might have enjoyed more worldly pleasure" protected her from worldly temptations – like fine clothes, trips to London, and men.[452] Ultimately, she saw this as evidence that God wanted her to care; caring was a providential teaching tool, which had bulwarked her against her worst sins. In Mary's case, although she blamed caring for tethering her to the world against her will, on Charles' death Mary discovered that (she believed) she lacked the willpower to renounce the world completely. Caring had in fact bolstered Mary's spiritual identity by providing her with an excuse for failing to achieve her (unreasonable) goal of total worldly renunciation. It also kept her from worldly activities that were less spiritually profitable than care: visiting vain company, estate business, and so forth.

Both women used the concept of Christian love to make caring more spiritually palatable. For Elizabeth, Christian love solved her fears about shirking duty, and unchristian affection. Elizabeth eventually saw caring for her family as part of a calling to serve the godly as Christ served man: "the companion of them that love thee".[453] For Mary, the opportunity to express Christian love through care contributed to Mary's view of her caring role as legitimate. Unlike Elizabeth, who ultimately viewed all aspects of caring (physical, emotional, and spiritual) as expressions of Christian love, Mary emphasised caring for her husband's soul. She had a clear Christian duty to show her husband (like any sinner) Christian love by guiding him away from sin and towards God. She little considered physical care as a potential expression of charitable Christian love.

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[450] Elizabeth's decision not to marry against her father's explicit wishes was certainly "somewhat subversive". However, note that remaining single was not as unusual for early modern women as is often assumed. See Amy Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[451] See, e.g., Walker, *The Virtuous Woman Found*, esp. 25-6, 35, 93-95.

[452] Isham, *Booke*, f. 35v.

[453] Ibid.

Charles' death, however, showed that the spiritual function of caring in terms of Christian love was broader than this. While Charles was alive, Mary stressed the idea that her 'suffering' while caring was a lesson about love. But it only became clear after his death how much Mary had relied on caring for a feeling of Christian usefulness, which was distinct from this lesson. The former was about loving Charles' soul rather than his body as a steppingstone towards loving God alone. The latter concerned Mary's general duty of Christian love to those around her.

For Mary, caring was part of a lesson about where to place her love. It was a divinely ordained tool for weaning her from the world. Caring for her husband taught her about the vanity and "unsatisfactoriness" of worldly love when compared to godly love. Ultimately, Mary felt the lesson had not been entirely successful. For Elizabeth, caring had spiritual value in itself in terms of love. It was the end point of Elizabeth's godly calling, rather than – as in Mary's case – a means to reach it. Both women suggest caring interacted complexly with the concept of love. Caring had an ambiguous – and therefore flexible – position within the 'hierarchy of love' they conceptualised. It therefore had an ambiguous and negotiable spiritual status.

4.2 The Particularity of Care

Although their considerations regarding caring pivoted on similar axes, Mary and Elizabeth's use of the cultural discourses available to them, and what they concluded about their caring roles, were quite different. The important differences between Mary and Elizabeth regarding time arose from several factors. They included how far they controlled their own time, their attitude towards the spiritual status of time, and the broader spiritual status of caring – as this impacted how they perceived time spent on it. Mary, who deeply valued her time, was comfortable with caring because it had other spiritual benefits and she was obliged to do it. She intended to devote her time to God even if caring sometimes prevented this, and that was sufficient. The ambiguous spiritual status caring possessed for much of Elizabeth's life, by contrast, made the time it consumed concerning. However, when Elizabeth 'realised' that caring was her calling, the lifetime she had devoted to it had value and meaning.

Regarding suffering, the spiritual status of the cared-for person, and the way they responded to their suffering, influenced carer experiences. The comparison between the carer and their charge's suffering, relative to each's spiritual status was also significant – as was the type (direct or compassionate) of the carer's suffering. Judith's intense suffering compared to Elizabeth's health initially made Elizabeth fear for her salvation. She only felt comfortable when she reinterpreted what it meant to suffer. By contrast, Mary was sure caring formed part of her trials. It was therefore not concerning that her husband suffered physically when she did not.

It also mattered how each party's suffering fit into the providential narratives they told about their lives. While Mary's caring made perfect sense as a lesson and punishment for loving Charles excessively in youth, Elizabeth's caring worryingly seemed continuous with the sins she had tried to abandon – namely, over-loving worldly beings. Elizabeth only 'realised' caring was part of God's plan once she re-examined the providential evidence before her while writing her *Booke*.

Regarding love, the relationship between the carer and cared-for person was significant. It mattered that Mary cared for a husband, to whom she had a clear social and religious duty, while Elizabeth cared for her sister. It also mattered that Elizabeth loved her sister and enjoyed her company, but Mary (straightforwardly) no longer loved Charles in this way. While Mary was confident that – socially and religiously – she was meant to care for Charles, and that she was not caring out of immoderate affection for him, Elizabeth was not.

The spiritual status of the cared-for person also impacted the duties caring involved and its interpretation. While Elizabeth – caring for her pious sister – ultimately saw her role as serving the godly, Mary – caring for her abusive husband – saw hers as showing Christian love to sinners. Mary's belief that Charles' sickness was connected to his sin made it clear that Mary's duty was to care for his soul. She therefore regarded spiritual care as crucial to her role. Elizabeth, who believed Judith was trialled because she was worthy, not because she had sinned, had little reason to emphasise spiritual care over other kinds. The idea that caring expressed Christian love for others' souls was therefore less immediately available to her. However, it meant she ultimately had a more holistic view of the ways caring could express Christian love.

An overarching conclusion, which arises from comparing Elizabeth and Mary, is that personal circumstances and histories mattered deeply to how caring was interpreted. Although carers could use several cultural discourses to interpret their roles (worldly love, Christian love, and earthly trial were the most important), few were specific to caring, or entirely appropriate to it. There was no easy, spiritually acceptable way to conceptualise caring, which clashed particularly uncomfortably with contemporary emphases on moderation. By 'default', caring was categorised as worldly. But because the consequences of this categorisation were spiritually unacceptable (acceptable worldly love and cares were moderate; long-term care, almost by definition, was not), both Mary and Elizabeth looked for better ways to conceptualise caring. Both women made tricky spiritual and psychological contortions to do so, using their personal circumstances and histories, and driven by strong beliefs in providence. The last chapter has suggested which circumstances were particularly important determinants of how caring was understood. In this sense, it has provided a practical illustration of "the different ways people…cut their devotional cloth to suit their own minds and the various design constraints and possibilities with which they had to work".[454]

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[454] Martin and Ryrie ed., *Private and Domestic Devotion, 3*.

5. Conclusion

Entering this project, I expected to have to draw out and piece together small fragments of evidence from a few, off-hand mentions of caring in my source material. I expected caring to be peripheral. And though it now seems remarkable, I initially believed Mary Rich's writings would not prove useful. I knew she had looked after her sick husband. But she apparently wrote little of interest about it when I flicked through her abridged diaries and Anselment's edition of her meditations. One can only say so much about the phrase "tending my sicke Lord, got noe time to retire". But this changed once I understood the context surrounding these repetitions and wondered why Mary had repeated the phrase at all, and discovered why the details I sought, of what Mary 'actually did' when caring for Charles, were lacking. Mary's commentary on her caring role suddenly became immensely rich, once I persevered beyond the contextless passages suggested by the index entry for "Rich, Charles, illness".

One of my most significant findings has thus been discovering how rich and extensive the source material on carers is, with the right methodology to notice it. When studying 'the carers view', examining a small number of sources closely and systematically produces findings that a broader survey, 'cutting and pasting' relevant anecdotes from a larger quantity of material without proper context, could not. By reading my source material in this way, through a new lens, I have opened a rich seam of previously overlooked material on caring. I suspect that many other early modern sources have potential for a study from 'the carer's view'. We just need to adjust our focus to see 'carers' within them. My research underlines that we should not be too quick to dismiss sources that appear irrelevant or uninteresting on the initial reading, or which fail to produce results when searched for key words. Taking this approach only produces histories of things, and in forms, that we expect.

Using this surprisingly rich source material, I have argued that caring had deep religious significance. Both Elizabeth and Mary ultimately put caring at the core of their spiritual identities. Elizabeth eventually regarded caring as her calling. Mary regarded caring as a providential teaching tool on her journey from sinful, worldly love to a wholehearted love of God alone – and accidentally became so reliant on the spiritual services caring performed that she struggled to maintain spiritual contentment after Charles' death. Caring was far from a peripheral, 'background' feature of their lives. And because both women relied so heavily on providential evidence – that is, their life events – to interpret their caring roles, almost everything they wrote is relevant to understanding caring from their perspectives. Caring was complexly entangled in their lives, spiritual identities, and writings.

The religious significance of caring was partly because it forced carers to grapple with questions of love, time, and suffering. The religious significances of these concepts consequently became bound up with how carers could navigate and understand their roles. I have also argued that, consequently, caring was inherently spiritually problematic. It involved 'immoderate' quantities of love, time, and suffering, which was hard to balance with contemporary emphases on moderation. Finally, I have argued that in lieu of an existing, authoritative discourse that allowed this, carers had to personally find ways to square caring with their spiritual aspirations. Resulting 'acceptable' understandings of caring were highly particular because they relied on the personal circumstances and histories of the carer.

This thesis has remedied the historiographic neglect of caring's experiential and cultural content, and of its relationship to temporality. This is a substantial innovation in the history of medicine, with wide-ranging implications. Another significant contribution of this research is its unique consideration of 'carer' experiences, after they ceased caring for their main charges. This is another product of my methodology. Elizabeth and Mary's relationships with 'caring' did not end when their references to "being with" and "tending to" Judith and Charles did. Assuming that Elizabeth and Mary's writings were less worthy of analysis once their charges died would have significantly impoverished my findings. Suddenly losing one's charge and grappling with the impacts of this often was (and is) part of being a 'carer'. In Elizabeth's case, this could have been pushed further. She strongly hinted that she thought caring for her widowed brother, nieces, aged father, and simply 'being there' for her family was continuous with caring for Judith.[455] But the poor quality of source material for Elizabeth's later life and limits of space meant this could not be fully addressed.[456]

In answer to Aleric Ryrie's question "what did early modern protestants do in order to live out their religion; and what meaning did they find in those actions?", my research has shown that it was partly (and significantly) through caring that Elizabeth and Mary did this. [457] Their caring actions were imbued with complex and shifting meanings. When Mary tended her abusive husband, she simultaneously bore and responded to her Christian trials, showed love and charity to her fellow man, and frittered away the limited time she had to serve God. Elizabeth and Mary themselves learned that caring manifested abstract religious principles to which they had aspired – ultimately to Elizabeth's benefit, and Mary's detriment. Their journeys should remind historians that contemporaries also grappled with the boundary between abstract and lived religion, and struggled to recognise if and how they had applied religion in their daily lives.

In the history of love, this thesis has built upon work by Kristine Steenburgh, Katherine Ibbett, Paula Barros, and Hannah Newton, on compassion and 'fellow-feeling'.[458] It has shown how ideas about love were applied in circumstances which were not readily prescribed for. It has also proposed a new concept – a 'hierarchy of love' – which I have not previously seen discussed seriously in secondary literature.

This research has also shown how the oft mentioned but seldom explored idea that families should love one another only 'moderately' was applied, enriching our histories of the family.

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[455] See e.g., Isham, *Booke*, f. 34r. Elizabeth was "loth to leave [her father] tho he put me to my owne choice" when her brother and sister-in-law left due to "the sicknesse so neere us". My insertion. This is one example of several which suggest Elizabeth's father was increasingly elderly (and at least temporarily unable to travel?) and that Elizabeth felt a duty to look after him.

[456] Elizabeth's *Booke of Rememberance* only covers until 1639. Her diary reaches 1648 but is much less detailed and reflective than the *Booke*. Based on Millman's transcription, the later panels are also increasingly illegible. The last years of Elizabeth life (she died in 1654) are relatively undocumented.

[457] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 2.

[458] Barclay, *Caritas*; Barclay, "Love and Other Emotions"; Steenbergh, "Mollified Hearts and Enlarged Bowels"; Ibbett, "Fellow-Feeling"; Barros, "Hee Left Them Not Comfortlesse"; Newton, *Misery to Mirth,* 112-30.

Furthermore, it compliments research, like Bernard Capp's, on the importance of sibling relationships despite their frequent historiographic neglect.[459] Elizabeth and Judith's complex relationship and their ambiguously appropriate sisterly love is the key example here. But siblings were significant throughout this study. Mary's sister Lady Ranelagh cared for Charles, and she and Robert Boyle were important to Mary's faith. Elizabeth's sister-in-law Jane helped her to reconceive familial love. Elizabeth's mother received care from Elizabeth's aunts and uncles. Mary's sister-in-law Elizabeth Killigrew led Mary into the worldly vanity, which caring punished and made amends for.

My research has enriched Olivia Weisser, Kristine Steenburgh, Toria Johnson, and Paula Barros' work on the contemporary benefits associated with witnessing others' sickness and suffering.[460] Elizabeth shows this was complicated in long-term caring. For the history of suffering and salvation broadly, my research has reminded us that 'second-hand' experiences of sickness and suffering should be distinct objects of study.

Finally, my research has highlighted a fundamental gap in the history of time. We know almost nothing about how and why early modern individuals managed and 'budgeted' their time, or about how daily time interacted with ideas of one's total time on earth and its meaning.[461] Elizabeth and Mary's struggles with these questions in relation to caring show what a glaring omission this is.

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[459] Capp, *The Ties That Bind*. See also Miller and Yavneh, *Sibling Relations and Gender*.

[460] Weisser, *Ill Composed;* Steenbergh, "Mollified Hearts and Enlarged Bowels"; Ibbett, "Fellow-Feeling"; Johnson, "'To Feel What Wretches Feel'"; Barros, "Hee Left Them Not Comfortlesse".

[461] Work on early modern time has primarily concerned telling time, and time's relationship to emerging capitalism. See Mark Hailwood, "Time and Work in Rural England, 1500–1700", *Past & Present* 248, no.1 (2020): 87–121; Jane Desborough, *The Changing Face of Early Modern Time, 1550-1770* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019). See also Tina Skouen, *The Value of Time in Early Modern English Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2017) and Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift, *Shaping the Day: A History of Timekeeping in England and Wales 1300-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). One exception to this is Coolahan, "Redeeming Parcels of Time", esp. 125-131, which discusses why the practice of "occasional meditation" was appealing to protestants (particularly 'lower sorts', with occupations) in terms of 'redeeming' time otherwise lost to worldly business. There is also some relevant material in discussions of practical divinity, such as Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 441-456, which discusses time, recreation, and vocation.

The arguments of this thesis are based on two highly particular case studies. Elizabeth and Mary were both wealthy women, with access to servants and disposable income, and who were deeply embedded in godly culture and invested in self-writing. Writing about their experiences of caring shaped them, and both women's desire to narrativize and find meaning in their lives' events – characteristic of puritanical, godly culture – was a key reason why they assigned a coherent meaning and significance to caring. It would be interesting to explore if individuals belonging to other religious cultures, such as Catholics, non-conformists, or even less pious individuals, would do the same. I have already identified case-studies whose examples might elucidate the interactions between caring and eighteenth-century, evangelical Christianity.[462]

Elizabeth and Mary's economic and social privilege is also significant. Elizabeth's freedom to care for Judith as part of a single life of piety was a freedom born of her social privilege. A poor woman with a sick sister may have married out of financial necessity or may have had to neglect her sister to work. She may have been paid by the parish to care for her sister and consequently have viewed caring like a 'job'. Or the parish may have paid somebody else to do this, exculpating her from responsibility.[463] And to some extent, these might be moot scenarios. Elizabeth's mother once observed of herself that "if she had bin a poore woman she had died long afore this".[464] Judith's poorer counterpart may not have survived, and needed care, for so long. We could draw similar analogies for Mary and Charles.

We would therefore be wrong to assume that less wealthy carers shared Elizabeth and Mary's experiences of caring, even if they shared their religious leanings. Elizabeth and Mary's access to servants and their ability to pay for medicines, assistive equipment, food, accommodation, gifts, and so forth dramatically shaped their experiences. An inability to pay for these things would likely have resulted in carers having even less time, experiencing and witnessing even more suffering, and would have altered the ways they could (and have had time to) express their love towards their charges and God. Questions surrounding these concepts may therefore have been tackled differently. Their experiences might also have been so different that questions of love, time and suffering were not as important: focus may have been on survival, not religious meaning. Further research, likely in conversation with the history of work, could help reveal this.

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[462] Source material surrounding the evangelical Christian poet William Cowper looks promising for exploring experiences of caring in the later eighteenth century. Cowper suffered disabling melancholy and spiritual crises. He wrote extensively about his own 'carers' in diverse forms. See e.g., Cowper's poem addressed to Mary Unwin, "To Mary" in William Cowper, *Selected Poems,* ed. Nick Rhodes (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1988), 74-76. Cowper's carers' perspectives are also documented extensively in letters and other writings. See e.g., Hayley, *The Life and Letters of William Cowper*.

[463] Jeremy Boulton has drawn attention to a sophisticated (albeit short-lived) network of parish nurses who cared for the sick poor in London. See Boulton, "Welfare Systems and the Parish Nurse". For examples of the parish paying individuals to care for relatives (and non-relatives) more informally, see also Williams, "Caring for the Sick Poor" and Mary Barker-Read, "The treatment of the aged poor in five selected West Kent parishes from Settlement to Speenhamland (1662-1797)," (PhD Thesis, The Open University, 1989), esp. 104. Open Research Online, accessed April 27, 2023, http://oro.open.ac.uk/57030/.

[464] Isham, *Booke*, f. 19v.

There are also some striking similarities between Mary and Elizabeth, which suggest a need simply to research a broader range of individuals, who do not share these similarities. Notably, both women's personal histories made them particularly sensitive to issues of love. Elizabeth had a weakness for worldly frivolities. She constantly worried that she was overly attached to her family (a fear increased by her family history, including her mother's 'bad death'). She chose not to marry for fear she loved her fiancé excessively. Mary admitted to having loved Charles more than God, and to over-loving her children, whom God took as a consequence. Given that, of the triad, issues of love seemed to inflect both women's experiences of caring most powerfully, the question is raised of whether individuals without these personal histories would have shared their experiences or placed similar emphasis on questions of love.

This study has also neglected to significantly relate care for the long-term sick to other kinds of care. Elizabeth and Mary had complex relationships with motherhood: Elizabeth from her own mother's example and from her reticence to have children for spiritual reasons, Mary from her children's deaths, and both from their inheritance of nieces they raised as daughters. While I have discussed these issues, there is more to unpack about the relationship between long-term caring and maternal care, particularly in relation to issues of love. There were also many shared themes between long-term caring and care like charity and animal stewardship: for example, pity, sympathy, and Christian compassion. Yet other themes, such as vulnerability and dependency, which were present in concepts of stewardship, were conspicuously absent in Elizabeth and Mary's concepts of care.[465] Judith and Charles were cast as 'active' rather than passive recipients of care and misfortune, no doubt due to the religious significance of suffering. There were clearly relationships between different kinds of care, but their complexity demanded further analysis which was not possible here.

Despite these caveats, my arguments have wider applicability beyond Mary and Elizabeth. The bodies and physical conditions of the people Elizabeth and Mary looked after substantially structured their caring experiences, as did the broad culture in which they operated. While Mary and Elizabeth had different marital statuses, relationships with their charges, personalities, life histories, and circumstances, they still interpreted and experienced caring in relation to the same key axes. I have argued that the most important of these were love, time, and suffering, which were inevitably invoked when looking after someone with a long-term health condition. Thus, while Mary and Elizabeth are particular examples whose exact conceptualisations of caring were highly specific, their cases cannot be reduced to their particular social, ideological, and religious standpoints.

Roy Porter was correct to observe that "medical events have frequently been complex social rituals involving family and community as well as sufferers and physicians".[466] This research has shown just how complex this involvement could be. In doing so, it has opened a rich seam for further potential research, which I hope will continue to show the value of taking 'the carer's view'.

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[465] Bowerbank discusses these ideas about caring for animals in the eighteenth century in Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature,* 135-160.

[466] Roy Porter, "The Patient's View", 175.

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