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Agnostos Dei: staging Catholicism and the anti-sectarian aesthetic in early-Stuart England

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AGNOSTOS DEI: STAGING CATHOLICISM AND THE ANTI-SECTARIAN AESTHETIC IN EARLY-STUART ENGLAND

by

Kerry Delaney Doyle

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in English
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2013

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Miriam Gilbert

ABSTRACT

My dissertation, *Agnostos Dei: Staging Catholicism and the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic in Early-Stuart England*, traces over four chapters the emergence of a literary counter-aesthetic to the increasingly violent sectarianism of Post-Reformation England. I focus primarily on popular plays that dramatize the destabilizing effects of radical beliefs on a society, whether small town or royal court, culminating in blood and exile. I argue that the plays' destructive conflicts and redemptive moments suggest the potential worth of cross-sectarian belief and ritual. In doing so, John Fletcher's *The Faithfull Shepherdess* (1608), William Shakespeare and John Fletcher's *Henry VIII* (1613), Dekker, Ford, and Rowley's *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621), and John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1629) participate in an aesthetic that rejects the disunity promoted by radical sectarians and revises the rhetoric of English Protestantism. Kings James and Charles promoted, ultimately unsuccessfully, a *via media* (middle way) for the Church of England, seeking reunification of divergent Christian sects. At the same time, these works used the theatre as a space of free play to consider the possibility of ecumenical success in fictionalized worlds removed from the clashing rhetoric of real kings and clergy.

My project responds to the revitalized return to religion in the scholarship of early modern England, which has included a renewed interest in the English Catholic experience and a reconsideration of the variety of believers within the nation, loosely grouped into categories like Puritans and High Church Anglicans. My work presents a correlative- and counter-narrative to these well-established readings. I consider the historical and literary analogues of the plays and the contemporary religiopolitical realities of the times of their staging. Rather than attempting to discover crypto-sectarian messages in the tales or intentions of the playwrights behind them, I argue that such categorizations can reduce and obscure the broader, ecumenical implications of these works. In speaking to a range of

sectarian audiences, these playwrights exceed the limitations of clear affiliation to address a wider Christian possibility.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

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has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy
degree in English at the May 2013 graduation.

Thesis Committee: Miriam Gilbert, Thesis Supervisor

Blaine Greteman

Claire Sponsler

Adam Hooks

Kathleen Kamerick

To Thomas Francis Delaney and Maud Esther Bright

I do verily believe so. And when I see it done, I shall be half persuaded so too.
Thomas Dekker, John Ford, & William Rowley
The Witch of Edmonton

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My dissertation, *Agnostos Dei: Staging Catholicism and the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic in Early-Stuart England*, traces over four chapters the emergence of a literary counter-aesthetic to the increasingly violent sectarianism of Post-Reformation England. I focus primarily on popular plays that dramatize the destabilizing effects of radical beliefs on a society, whether small town or royal court, culminating in blood and exile. I argue that the plays' destructive conflicts and redemptive moments suggest the potential worth of cross-sectarian belief and ritual. In doing so, John Fletcher's *The Faithfull Shepherdess* (1608), William Shakespeare and John Fletcher's *Henry VIII* (1613), Dekker, Ford, and Rowley's *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621), and John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1629) participate in an aesthetic that rejects the disunity promoted by radical sectarians and revises the rhetoric of English Protestantism. Kings James and Charles promoted, ultimately unsuccessfully, a *via media* (middle way) for the Church of England, seeking reunification of divergent Christian sects. At the same time, these works used the theatre as a space of free play to consider the possibility of ecumenical success in fictionalized worlds removed from the clashing rhetoric of real kings and clergy.

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INTRODUCTION

SECTARIAN ANXIETY AND THE ANTI-SECTARIAN AESTHETIC

On 22 April 2013, the House of Lords of the United Kingdom's Parliament will conduct the third and final reading of the Succession to the Crown Bill 2012-13. If the bill passes this third reading and the consideration of amendments by both the House of Lords and the House of Commons, Queen Elizabeth II will determine whether to give Royal Assent to the bill – the final stage normally necessary for it to become an Act of Parliament to pass into law. The schedule for passage is especially timely as Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge is due with her first child with Prince William in July 2013. The passage of the bill will affect their child in two key areas – gender and religion. The first point of the bill dismisses male primogeniture as a determinant in the inheritance of the throne; the genders of William and Catherine's first and any subsequent children will not affect the order of their succession to the throne. More relevant to this project is the second point of the bill, which declares that "A person is not disqualified from succeeding to the Crown or from possessing it as a result of marrying a person of the Roman Catholic faith" ("Succession"). While a rash of Mountbatten-Windsor marriages to Catholics is unlikely to ensue as a result of the legislation passing, the bill does allow for the possibility that soon a Catholic might occupy a prominent space in the monarchy for the first time in centuries.

This possibility has created controversy, particularly within the hierarchy of the Church of England.[1] How might a Catholic spouse influence a monarch who serves as the Supreme Governor of the Church of England? More concerning still, could this change result in heirs who have been raised in the faith of their Catholic parents? In allowing

[1] For a sense of the ongoing controversy, see, for example, "Royal Succession: Queen and Country" in *The Guardian* on 27 October 2011, "Catholic monarch could put Church of England in peril, bishop warns" by Edward Malnick in *The Telegraph* on 10 March 2012, and "Our monarchy always moves with the times" by Chris Skidmore, MP in *The Telegraph* on 20 January 2013.

Catholic spouses, is Parliament enabling a future where a Catholic monarch occupies the throne of England and therefore disestablishes the Church of England as the official church of that nation? Legislation notably does not bar individuals of other faiths or of no religious affiliation at all from either marriage or succession, though the Church would presumably expect them to convert to Anglicanism in order to properly represent, maintain, and serve as leader of the Church of England. The key difference concerning Catholics is their perceived allegiance to the Pope and, implicitly, the higher Roman Catholic Church hierarchy, which was excised from the Church of England during the Reformation. Similar anxieties inspired the passage of the Bill of Rights in 1689, the Act of Settlement in 1701, and a series of laws in the following decades – the very legislation the UK Parliament aims to revise with this new bill.[2] Following the Glorious Revolution in 1688, which ousted King James II in favor of joint rule by William III and Mary II, Parliament of that era sought to disinherit the Catholic heirs of the Stuart monarchy to ensure that a Protestant might always reign in England. Those choices rehearsed the anxieties of still earlier generations of English Christians, concerned with the influence of James I and Charles I's Catholic queens, of Elizabeth I's lack of an heir, of Mary I's attempted counter-reformation, of Edward VI's attempts to control English succession, and finally of Henry VIII's original break with the Roman Catholic Church. That earliest monarch's choices first established the Church of England and the English monarch's role as its Supreme Governor.

My dissertation examines a range in the midst of this religiously influential period of early modern English history to consider how early-Stuart popular theatre challenged the rise of sectarianism. These same sectarian concerns led to the codification of Anti-Catholicism and the factionalism of English Christianity that still shape modern English religion and rule.

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[2] For an exploration of popular perceptions of Catholicism in this later period, see Raymond D. Tumbleson's *Catholicism and the English Protestant Imagination* (1998).

I begin at the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the monarch history has traditionally celebrated for ushering in a "Protestant Settlement" after the religious tumult wrought by her Presbyterian-inclined brother, King Edward VI, and her strictly-Catholic sister, Queen Mary I. I move from the early reign of King James I, Elizabeth's chosen heir, through his evolving grasp of his nation and its varied religious beliefs. Finally, I conclude with his son, King Charles I, who ineffectually promoted his father's desire for Christian reunification, sacrificing concessions and reassurance in favor of a smaller, more focused Church of England controlled inflexibly by Archbishop William Laud.

Against this historical backdrop, I identify the evolution of a literary aesthetic that parallels, critically, James's and Charles's condemnations of radical sectarianism and the dangers its adherents across the Christian spectrum posed to the sanctity of the Church of England and the stability of the English nation itself. Though I have found evidence of this aesthetic potentially operating in a range of literature and publication, my main focus for this project is dramatic. Each chapter considers one or two plays that reject the obvious politicized rhetoric of Post-Reformation religious discourse while nevertheless promoting an ideal of Christian settlement. In doing so, the playwrights of these works participate in what I am labeling an Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic, so-called for its condemnation of extreme sectarianism and its concurrent consideration of remnants and practices of supposedly incommensurate forms of Christianity. I define the ideological basis of this aesthetic as Christian Agnosticism, which questions the relevance of sectarian difference without necessarily questioning Christianity itself. My dissertation focuses primarily on theatre, but I frame each chapter with primary historical research to trace the presence of a peculiarly positive view of English Catholicism from the early years of King James I's rule of England to the cusp of the English Civil War under his son Charles I. Both kings extolled the

moderate and permissive Middle Way, pursuing an ecumenical platform in an increasingly violent sectarian atmosphere. The Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic I explore parallels this desire for undivided and apolitical religious community and criticizes its historical achievement by violent and coercive means.

My work responds to the now well-established turn to religion in early modern scholarship, which at times seems to restage the very debates it examines on the relative worth of English Christian practices. Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Marotti provide a brief but incisive overview of this turn in their review essay "The Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Studies" (2004), where they criticize a tendency to "approach religion and politics as religion as politics" (168), essentially dismissing religion as a fantastically-distorting lens through which modern scholars can read the political and sociological truths of the past. Jackson and Marotti are heartened, however, by a parallel approach to historical readings that keeps central an understanding that early modern religion was also, "a deep psychological and emotional experience, a core moral commitment, a personally and socially crucial way of transvaluing human experience and desire, a reality both within and beyond the phenomenal world" (169). My aim in this work is to keep central this value of the religious experience that underlies the revisions and rhetoric of Christianity, so that, even when religious labels are essentially politicized, I maintain that we must consider the deep religious compulsion behind this politicization.

A trend in such analyses of early modern religious experience, particularly when paired with analyses of dramatic works, is to "discover" the religious affiliation of playwrights through the content of their writing. Shakespeare is a particularly popular subject of such works, though his fellow playwrights of the era, from Christopher Marlowe to James Shirley, have undergone similar scholarly investigations into the "truth" of their religious

beliefs.[3] This scholarship echoes the early modern desire to classify and factionalize individuals in order to dispel the anxiety of religious uncertainty, but the modern writing also highlights modern scholars' belief that they can recognize affiliations better than perhaps even the early modern individuals in question. In *Charitable Hatred* (2006), Alexandra Walsham confronts this classificatory dissonance:

> To assume that early modern people were as aware of theological distinctions as modern scholars who spend hours studying, dissecting and categorising them in books is to do violence to the unstable and amorphous nature of religious affiliation at this time [1500-1700]. It is to accord too little importance to the genuine confusion of individuals entangled in a bewildering series of institutional and intellectual adjustments and it runs the risk of investing groups on the outer fringes, but nevertheless within the broad embrace of the established Church, with an artificial coherence [. . . .] The dramatic public statements and recantations made by converts and apostates probably present merely the tip of the iceberg of religious vacillation in this period. (20)

If an early modern playwright declares his affiliation on record, modern scholars might have a limited sense of what that man believed, but they only have a certain sense of how he chose to affiliate himself at that point in time. As the examples of labels like Catholic and papist, Puritan and precisionist demonstrate, such labels shifted in denotation and connotation throughout the Reformation and Post-Reformation periods, highly dependent on audience, circumstance, and inflection. Conversely, scholars reading for affiliation based on expressed or implied doctrinal beliefs and practices might declare an early modern individual affiliated with an entirely different sect than that in which he might classify himself. Even a work like Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (1643), which I turn to in my conclusion, where the author explains his beliefs and affiliations in detail, leaves questions for readers about how Browne fit into the array of religious believers in the period. I admit that I find the efforts to declare sectarian identities intriguing, and I am endlessly impressed

[3] See, for example, Clare Asquith's *Shadowplay: the hidden beliefs and coded politics of William Shakespeare* (2005), David Rigg's *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (2004), or Eva Griffith's "Till the State Fangs Catch You. James Shirley the Catholic: Why it does not matter (and why it really does)" (2010).

by the often extensive investigatory work they contain, but I find that their usefulness has limits in literary criticism.

Sectarian identities (including secularism), while useful, have limited our ability to interpret works that experiment with and interrogate divisive categorization. In the case of this project, which proposes a series of works contending with the dangers of sectarianism and an overemphasis on factional identity, I reject the often arbitrary limitations placed on interpreting works through a narrow lens of authorial denomination. I argue that the works of the apparently Christian playwrights I examine in my four chapters reject sectarianism without rejecting religion, and they do so by devolving and assimilating Catholic remainders in their plots, even as they considered the beneficial enrichment made possible by that old faith's remaining presence. The aggressive inclusivity of the early Stuart kings opened the national discourse to a more ecumenical consideration of past and present sects, particularly the non-radical Catholics in the midst of England, the "English Catholics." In defining that group, I draw on Alexandra Walsham's *Church Papists* (1993), in which she explores the evolution of her title term from a derogatory label for those Catholics who privately practiced Catholicism while publicly attending Protestant services and abiding by the Church of England's requirements. Like Walsham, I separate these English Catholics from the continentally-inspired and supported radical Catholics in England (often affiliated with the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits), who desired to return the nation to the Roman Church. "English Catholicism" distances itself from the radical politics of revolution and Continental turmoil, allowing for a potentially more objective consideration of Catholic ideology that might include both criticism of Roman Catholic hierarchy and bureaucracy.

In exploring trends of empathetic language by kings and characters, my dissertation identifies a reconsideration of this English Catholicism as neither necessarily aberrant nor

omnipresent, but allowing for common, ecumenical sympathies.[4] I am not suggesting that a neutral or positive incorporation of Catholic ideology and ritual is the sole marker of the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic. Rather, in this initial stage of exploring and defining the aesthetic, I have found that the presence of English Catholic elements in an atmosphere of widespread and often knee-jerk Anti-Catholicism has proven a useful marker in identifying works that complicate and critique entrenched Sectarian divisions. By looking beyond the dichotomous rhetoric pervasive in religious conflict and beyond radicalized sectarians wielding religious terror to reform and counter-reform, I identify a range of works representative of the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic present in the early-Stuart English popular imagination.

My determination to focus on the early-Stuart period gained further complexity in part due to an ongoing popular perception of King James I of England as a destroyer of the advancements and settlements bestowed upon England by his predecessors, the Tudors.[5] My original sense of historiographic dissonance arose during my research for an earlier project on depictions of witchcraft in drama. I possessed the (I think relatively common) perception from popular history and culture of James as arch-witch-monger, driving the infamous witch scare of England to uncritical, bloody extremes. My reading of James Sharpe's *Instruments of*

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[4] While I ultimately diverged from a focus specifically on English Catholicism, I drew inspiration at the inception of this project from the subsection of "Return to Religion" scholarship focused on recuperating or at least reinvestigating the realities of late medieval and early modern Catholicism in England. Walsham is a key figure in this field. Arguably the foundational text of this movement is Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (1992), which continues to evoke strong reactions of agreement and contention in discussions of early modern religion. Other notable contributors to this scholarly thread include Arthur F. Marotti (*Religious Ideology & Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (2005)), Alison Shell (*Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (1999)), Stefania Tutino (*Law and Conscience: Catholicism in early modern England, 1570-1625* (2007)), and Lucy E.C. Wooding (*Rethinking Catholicism in Reformation England* (2000)).

[5] I encountered a striking reminder of the common perception of James this past fall. Kirk Cameron appeared on "The Today Show" to promote his recent film *Monumental* (2012). His conversation with hosts Kathie Lee Gifford and Hoda Kotb included Cameron's declaration "Well, I'm not a historian, but I – I have learned that King James made a great bible. He didn't make a great king." Gifford replied "He was a very, very bad man." They suggest that "old King James" opposed religious freedoms, driving the Pilgrims to found that value in the United States, but neither Gifford nor Cameron offer a sense of a complex historical or critical basis for their declarations. Everyone knows, they suggest, that James was tyrannical and ineffectual as a king ("Today's Entertainment").

Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England (1996) suggested a different sense of James's involvement with punishing instances of witchcraft, where the trials in fact decreased from the time of Queen Elizabeth. My own views of James have continued to evolve as I have researched this project. James VI of Scotland took the English throne in 1603, becoming King James I of England and beginning the Stuart monarchy that would end, twice, in civil war. His rise to power also signaled the end of the Tudor monarchy, a tumultuous line of kings and queens most defined by their contentions with the schism begun in the reign of King Henry VIII, former Roman Catholic *Fidei defensor* turned progenitor of the Church of England.

The common perception of James criticizes the king as one of the most flamboyant characters in early modern history, perhaps only surpassed by the character of his son Charles I. He staged his own drama of settlement and ecumenicalism while all the more anxious about the reflective representations of his nation on the private and popular stages. The criticism by James's opponents has largely shaped the image of James that the modern world inherits. However, recent scholarship has attempted to reclaim a more temperate and successful legacy for the Scottish king in place of the oft-caricatured misogynistic, luxuriant, combative manchild with an incomprehensible brogue and a penchant for witch-hunting. Works that have contributed to my evolving sense of James include W.B. Patterson's *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (1997), which proposes James as religious reconciler; Charles W.A. Prior's *Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603-1625* (2005), which complicates the established factional definitions of the Stuart Church; and Peter H. Wilson's *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (2009), which contributes to a fuller sense of James's beliefs and policies against a European continent in turmoil rather than simply within the factionalism of England and Scotland.

The greatest influence on revising my understanding of James has been the writing of the king himself. His record of proclamations and personal writings reveal his concerted effort to promote a conscientiously limited religious permissiveness in the pursuit of ecumenicalism and Christian reconciliation. Such clemency is apparent in a "letter to readers" prefacing the republication in 1603, when he assumed the English throne, of his 1599 "Basilikon Doron, or His Majesties Instructions To His Dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince." James writes at length:

> Wee all (God be praised) doe agree in the grounds [of religion]; and the bitternesse of men upon such questions, doeth but trouble the peace of the Church; and gives advantage and entry to the Papists by our division: But towards them, I onely use the provision, that where the Law is other-wayes, they may content themselves soberly and quietly with their owne opinions, not resisting to the authoritie, nor breaking the Law of the Countrey; neither above all, slurring any rebellion or schism: but possessing their soules in peace, let them preasse by patience, and well grounded reasons, either to perswade all the rest to like of the iudgements; or where they see better grounds on the other part, not to bee ashamed peaceably to incline thereunto, laying aside all preoccupied opinions. (21-22)

Such allowance for peaceable recusancy in hope of future unity became more pressing and earned more criticism when James took the English throne, becoming the monarchical figurehead of both the Scottish Kirk and the Church of England. James and, to a lesser extent, his son Charles I adopted an official doctrine of ecumenical acceptance, attempting to alienate neither moderate Puritans nor Catholics, while concurrently condemning their clear variance from accepted doctrine and sometime sowing of radicalization throughout the nation. The ecumenicalism such policies encouraged might have been uneasy, with ongoing efforts from sectarians continuing to encourage further reformation or counter-reformation in the Church of England, but it also succeeded for a time at allowing the variety of believers throughout England to hold firm to the quirks of their individual beliefs while remaining faithful to their Church and to their nation.

This sense of early-Stuart history and monarchical ecumenicalism helped me to historicize my developing structure of the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic in my readings of early-Stuart theatre. James's relative religious permissiveness and combatting of radical sectarianism both paralleled and enabled the plays I discuss, proposing a similar ideology of English Christian possibility. But, these works are not simply echoes of James's religio-political policies. They complicate, at times critique, and expand on the ecumenical and sectarian discourses of the period in a space of relative openness for English citizens – the theatre. In envisioning the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic, I draw on Isobel Armstrong's discussion of democratic ideology, play, and mediation in *The Radical Aesthetic* (2000). Armstrong implements Gillian Rose's term "the broken middle" to move her discussion of aesthetics beyond political dichotomies of radical and conservative both ultimately reinforcing preexisting structures of thought. She describes this mediated space: "at the point of contradiction, where opposites fail to transform one another, that intellectual struggle is at its most perilous and stressful, and where a painful restructuring of relationships comes about at the site of the middle [. . .] the broken middle is the constitutive moment of the aesthetic" (17). Armstrong critiques Cultural Materialist and New Historicist scholarship as reinforcing structures of power and largely ignoring the possibility of enfranchising the disempowered or politically indeterminate individuals or vocalizing their beliefs.

In exploring the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic, I consider this space of mediation – the undefined middle – between the apparent oppositions of religion in early-Stuart England and below the political structures surrounding James. By focusing on works that resist clear ideological identity by locating the scattered remainders of English Catholicism within a modern Protestant spiritual sense, I argue that the plays I consider maintain the possibility of denominational "playfulness" and therefore productive Christian spiritual meditation. The

Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic in theatre displaces the anxiety of sectarian indeterminacy or over-determinacy onto the mediated space of the stage, allowing the aesthetic experience (cognitive and emotional at once) to serve as a space of meditation on the seemingly irresolvable, irreconcilable fragments of schismatic Christianity. This experience promotes a potential unity of belief rather than further schism. In echoing without simply replicating the ecumenical ideals propounded by King James I, these works project a more democratic space of ecumenicalism, allowing possibilities of resolution for the spiritually-conflicted individual and among the increasingly exclusive affiliation-based identities deconstructing English Christianity. The plays model this aesthetic both in the display of disparate religious remainders in positive, common suspension and in the plain critique of the destructive methodology of sectarian promotion and implementation.

This sense of mediating playfulness is essential for my contention with a series of well-known works that suggest post-Reformation theatre as both reformative and conservative, affirming the social reconstruction enacted by the monarchy, particularly Queen Elizabeth I. I begin from a similar recognition of the potential for religious evocation and influence in drama as presented in Louis Montrose's *The Purpose of Playing* (1996) and Huston Diehl's *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage* (1997), but I suggest an alternative end for this dramatic element. I do not propose that Montrose or Diehl are wrong in their conclusions, but rather that their readings leave room for the addition of complicating interpretations and the recognition of early modern theatrical ideologies that rival those they propose. Montrose primarily addresses the Elizabethan theatre, and his work considers the development of early modern theatrical traditions against the earlier, pre-Reformation forms of medieval religion and drama. He describes the power of this new public, secular theatre:

> [A]n emergent commercial entertainment that was still imbued with the heritage of suppressed popular and religious traditions could address vital collective needs and

> interests that those dominant institutions and practices had sought to appropriate or suppress, or had merely ignored [....] the symbolic actions performed in the theatre had the immediate, if frequently transitory, capacity to stimulate the intellect and to promote the emotional well-being of their actual and vicarious participants. Plays-in-performance might proffer aids to understanding and endurance in the theatre of the world. (39-40)

Montrose views post-Reformation theatre not simply as pacifying and indoctrinating the masses but as simultaneously enforcing the status quo conception of politics and religion through a false or perhaps falsified aura of subversion. In staging elements of suppressed tradition, plays eased the sense of loss and accompanying nostalgia for these banished practices, implicitly reinforcing the established Protestant dismissal of old ritual as shallow performance, unnecessary for modern belief. Montrose leaves little room for reconstructive efforts or earnest belief in his reading of theatre as educating the masses in how to perform.

Huston Diehl parallels Montrose in proposing that Elizabethan and, in her work, Jacobean theatre contended with the deconstruction and destruction of traditional religious beliefs by subsuming their remainders into stagecraft. Diehl offers a more complex sense of this religion-inflected performance as somewhat commemorative but more pointedly destructive:

> Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedies articulate the anxieties created by Protestant assaults on medieval piety, but I do not believe that they are hostile to Protestantism or particularly sympathetic to the old religion. Although they sometimes stage the forbidden rituals and spectacles of the traditional Church, they typically do so in order to demystify and contain them. They sometimes celebrate the magic of the theater, but they are much more likely to expose both magic and older forms of theatricality as fraudulent. And although they sometimes mourn the loss of beloved images and familiar rituals, many also endorse and even engage in acts of iconoclasm. (5)

Diehl suggests that Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights found useful material in derided elements of Catholic tradition – rituals that possessed an air of spiritual mysticism. She echoes Max Weber's use of "Protestant Demystification" from *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), which interprets the Protestant Reformation as a process of

demystifying the lived experience of religion and the world. Playwrights both incidentally and intentionally, Diehl argues, destroyed the "magic" of religion through performance in a process that gradually disempowered their own enactments of that magic. While both Montrose and Diehl's readings aptly interpret some plays, they do not provide a comprehensive model for understanding the appearance of religious elements and Catholic remainders in early modern theatre. As I show in the series of plays I examine, the implementation of the castoff traditional beliefs and practices can function as recuperations and redemptions of their worth and influence rather than as jaded or ironic displays. Responding to increasing sectarian demands of more reform and more excision of traditional beliefs and practices, these plays manifest the Anti-Sectarian aesthetic to reconsider what the Reformation had already suppressed or excised. They model not the endurance of loss, at least not in any positive sense, but rather a reconstruction of the religious worth threatened by ongoing schism and instability in the Church of England.

Upon casting off its Roman Catholic affiliation, the English nation encountered a confusion of spiritual identity, inviting sectarians to affirm their own identities as English in the absence of a master religious narrative. To understand the circumstances in which Anti-Sectarianism evolved, I first need to demonstrate how Sectarian identity proved crucial to the foundation and development of the early Church of England. Sectarianism and early the Church of England both established Catholicism as an obvious counterpoint to their own beliefs, creating tangled bonds of mutually-supportive antipathy, rather than a clear and separate positive identity. Sectarians within the nation and throughout Europe invested in the ideological direction the Church of England would take. While Catholics viewed Henry's break with Roman Catholicism as essentially negative, even though his initial Church of

England altered little from that faith, early Protestants saw his political departure from Rome as a righteous first religious step.

These reformed Christians viewed Henry's schism as an invitation for influence, and they happily offered suggestions for how the Church of England might continue to evolve. One such response took the form of a historically-fantastic piece of drama, *Pammachius* (1538).[6] The author Thomas Kirchmayer, a radical German Protestant, dedicated his play to King Henry VIII and his newly-founded Church of England. Kirchmayer was a pastor and writer, whose life's works are marked particularly by his own zealous anti-Catholicism. The early Reformation date of this work shaped not only his more general views on Protestantism, strictly opposed to Catholicism without apparent internal division, but also the style of the play. The work appeared during the transitions both in Christian belief and also in dramatic style, with a new Renaissance verisimilitude replacing medieval allegory. Thus the play contains not only historical figures, such as the Roman Bishop Pammachius and the Emperor Julian, and the religious figures Jesus Christ and Satan, but also the allegorical figures Free Speech and Truth. Kirchmayer's understanding of belief lacks nuance, but this seeming simplicity supports the purpose he intended for his work to accomplish with audiences – promoting the Protestant Reformation and concurrent downfall of the Roman Catholic Church.

Kirchmayer, also known as Naogeorgus, wrote his polemical play in Latin five years after Henry had his marriage to Spain's Katherine of Aragon annulled against the expressed wishes of the Roman Catholic Church in general and the Pope especially. The original

[6] The original play circulated in England though a translation by the Protestant playwright John Bale, which unfortunately is not extant. For the duration of this paper, then, I will follow recent scholarly precedent in referencing Professor C.C. Love's translation (1992) of the text from Latin into English. Love intended his work to be of use for scholars, and thus prefaces his translations by stating that he maintains as much of the linguistic and connoted meaning of the original work as possible.

English translation by John Bale, the English polemical playwright, likely occurred in the same year that Kirchmayer wrote the play, suggesting that Bale believed it was pertinent to a wider audience of English people than those that might access it in the original language.[7] Kirchmayer supported the presentation of his play for the English people, evidenced by his dedication of the work in part to Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and his praise of the English and their King for their burgeoning works: "to purge itself of this great plague [. . .] that intolerable tyranny of the Popes." Henry's divorce and the resultant Christian schism must still have been fresh in the minds of the English citizens. Katherine had been unable to produce a surviving male heir, so the recent birth of Henry's son Edward by his third wife Jane Seymour in 1537 would have served as a reminder of that split.

In translating Kirchmayer's play for an English audience, Bale contributed to the continuing legitimization of the new and still highly undefined Church of England, offering reasons based in religion rather than progeny. Henry's church originally still accorded strongly with Catholic belief and doctrine, so the translation of *Pammachius* acted also as a prompt to reject the past and embrace the burgeoning European model of Protestantism. Kirchmayer's play does this prompting in a somewhat roundabout way, not by proving the worth of Protestantism, but rather by showing why Roman Catholicism was not only worse but supernaturally evil. Kirchmayer insists that playgoers must learn to see through external demonstrations of goodness or helplessness – as Satan says in the play: "That you oppose me in your words, I take lightly, provided that your deeds always answer to me" (II.iv.97). Christ, Free Speech, and Truth (e.g., God and the earthly manifestations of his grace) all appear in the play as figures directly at odds with the fanatical dramatization of the Catholic

[7] As Bale's translation is not extant, exact dating of his work is not possible. Alec Ryrie argues in his monograph, *The Gospel and Henry VIII: evangelicals in the early English Reformation* (Cambridge UP, 2003), that this work most likely occurred while Bale was in the service of Thomas Cromwell in the late 1530's (179).

Church. Rather than the perpetrators of justice against heresy, these figures representing right Protestantism are the victims of violence by antichristian aberrant figures.

Pammachius represents the origins and practices of Catholicism as expressly demonic. The play's plot is fairly straightforward, staging the founding of Roman Catholicism by a power-hungry bishop Pammachius. Aided by his lackey Porphyrius and demons assigned to him by the newly unleashed Satan, he actively undermines the work of those unequivocally good figures like Jesus Christ, his saints, and allegorical representations of Free Speech and Truth, both characterized as female. Pammachius also confronts the representative of earthly power, the Roman emperor Julian, recasting him as a mere figurehead of the true terrestrial control of the new Catholic Church. Pammachius and his followers become increasingly bold, empowered by meetings with Satan and aid from his demons, claiming for themselves greater power and holdings until they epitomize the "Whore of Babylon" label given to the Roman Catholic Church by reforming Protestants. While those "good" figures like Free Speech and Truth rail against these deeds repeatedly, they are ineffectual and receive no obvious aid from the only present manifestation of God – Jesus Christ.

Kirchmayer directly responds to the likely question in the minds of his audience members – if this Church is at odds with true Christianity, why does God allow its continued existence and manipulation of those truly devoted to Him? Christ opens the play by lamenting to Saint Peter and Saint Paul that Satan will soon come to power on earth, corrupting the faithful by offering redemption through trivialities, like "good works and orders" (I.i.36-37). His words are an overt condemnation of the Catholic promotion of works over faith in Christian salvation. Peter and Paul react with horror that the sacrifice of Christ will be forgotten, overwhelmed by the narcissistic desires of the Roman bishopric as represented by Pammachius.

Kirchmayer's opening discussion both erases the true syncretistic history of Catholic Christianity and refigures Catholicism as a perversion of proper Christianity. This work is in keeping with his prologue's statement of purpose, which reads "we have painted the papacy in its true colours. [. . .] The story is fiction; yet it is of such a sort that truth is present; fiction and truth give the pleasure and the profit." The play's refiguring of history is not merely the work of theater but rather a reflection of the reformed ecclesiastical past presented by the Protestant elite throughout Europe. While Kirchmayer acknowledges his fiction, still presenting it with utmost seriousness, European leaders sought actually to declare the former Catholic history a fiction and to replace it with correct Protestantism. One element of the process of refashioning was to refigure early Christianity's highly successful syncretism, the practice by which missionaries incorporated elements of worship from the religions of the groups they encountered and used the familiar and every day to explain the function and practice of Christianity.[8] For many Protestants, the developing Church of England included, the past had been overwhelmed by Roman Catholic corruption. In turn, Protestants sought to remove themselves from this popish family tree, locating themselves beyond the history by disavowing their "mixed" mother church and forcing her back onto her othered, pagan or satanic, origins. *Pammachius* serves to dramatize these newly "corrected" origins, showing the tainted past to be corrupt and antichristian, at odds with true Christianity and God Himself.

Kirchmayer's imagined Church of Rome pursues a strange demonic syncretism. Rather than strengthening the Church by converting nearby pagan groups, the founders Pammachius and his lackey Porphyrius are bolstered by Satan to emerge as a leading force in

[8] One of the most commonly cited Christian examples of this is the celebration of the Christmas holidays, scheduled in the Christian calendar to coincide with traditional pagan winter celebrations and to incorporate symbols from those traditions, most notably the Christmas tree.

Europe. Perverted (or, perhaps more fittingly, atheistic) reason and logic are the first drivers of the refiguring; the originators of Catholic corruption care more for their earthly welfare than for their heavenly ends. These Church figures, Pammachius and Porphyrius, see supernatural means as the only avenue to achieve their earthly goals. The Roman bishop Pammachius states: "I prefer to enjoy good things now and to pluck the present fruits, since our state after death is uncertain and doubtful; no one, though he gapes with curiosity, should be deprived at the same time both of present and future rewards and be a laughing stock to all" (I.iii.113-115). At first merely in charge of the Roman bishopric, he makes the conscious decision to seek out the devil in order to raise himself as the supreme of the new "Catholic" church, becoming the infallible voice of Christian truth and thus safe from criticism. Having achieved this goal, he dictates his will to the Caesar of Rome and devises popish plots left and right to delude good Christians into becoming his blind followers.[9] He completes his work with the aid of Satan's demonic minions, following the earthly orders of Pammachius and his second-in-command Porphyrius, a "sophist." Though Pammachius believes wholeheartedly in the reality of his newfound power to command demons, they obey him only in accordance with the orders of their true ruler Satan.

Throughout the course of these events, Kirchmayer's play systematically casts aspersions upon Catholic traditions by focusing particularly on the practices of calling upon the deceased, worshipping saints, and invoking the Virgin Mary. It is essential to note that his explanation of the origins of these rituals casts greater blame on the new Catholic Church hierarchy than on ordinary church members; the members are ignorant and easily led astray, perhaps, but the hierarchy lead them into sin with malicious intent. This element of evil

[9] The play particularly addresses the biblical proclamation: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21), with Caesar Julian attempting to resist Pammachius' demands for power and holdings rivaling his own (Kirchmayer, I.iv).

willfulness is clear when Porphyrius explains these practices step by step to the people of Rome, emphasizing:

> you also hope to obtain help and favour from the holy dead [. . . .] Build altars to them; make sacrifices and consecrate temples in their name; treat the statues and images of them with honour [. . . .] But most of all learn to pay observance to Mary, to whom her son can deny nothing. Fix your eyes on her and place all your confidence in her [. . . .] know that the divine saints are not willing to grant that grace in any place you like but add their miraculous power only to certain places, especially to those in which their bones lie. (III.v.142-143, 148-149, 151, 156-157)

His explanation is explicit in its intent for "Christians" to turn their focus from one of the traditional figures of the Holy Trinity to the spirits of the deceased and to the Virgin Mary, whether they are to be merely intercessors or themselves the divine fulfillers of prayers. Kirchmayer's writing particularly calls to the audience members' minds the First Commandment, as Porphyrius demands that the followers of Pammachius pray to those figures, build them altars, and offer them sacrifices, fetishizing their lives on earth and their corporeal remains.

Such a polemical work obviously aims to edify its audience members about those practices they should avoid, namely those of the Catholic religion. Kirchmayer suggests that Christians' continued practice of rituals, such as ceremonial recognition of saints, aligns them with Satan and his minions in their plan to overthrow the Kingdom of God. The play ends with recent history in the burgeoning Reformations and schisms throughout Europe as enacted by Truth and the Apostle Paul. These, unsurprisingly considering Kirchmayer's nationality, originate in Germany, spreading truth by the rejection of false ceremony and doctrine. Such a beginning does not signal the end of Satan's efforts, as he finally proclaims to his minions, both human and demonic:

> these rising doctrines must be laid low and that the Papacy should continue to flourish with all its honours and that the glory of Christ should not be proclaimed so loudly [. . . .] You keep the learned and the ignorant busy that they may sedulously

> oppose these doctrines. You sow heresies and bad doctrines. You prepare wars and rebellions in the country. (IV.v.50-51, 53-55)

The threat of reformation drives the Catholic Church and its hellish benefactors to greater corruptions and sinfulness, surpassing the reformers in zealotry. Obviously, as Satan and his followers continue to rage, those seeking to uphold true Christian doctrine and the sanctity of the proper Church must rage as well, but piously. Good Christians must combat the Roman Catholic religious leaders, keep open the avenues of incisive rhetorical analysis and the true Word of God, and ensure that their reformations improve rather than obscure the state of religion.

While *Pammachius* contains only four acts, Kirchmayer concludes with the hopeful note that Christ's Second Coming will enact another: "Do not expect now, good spectators, that a fifth act is to be added to this play. Christ will act that out one day at his own time. Meanwhile the plots of the fourth act move our affairs to and fro as is well seen at the present time" ("Epilogue"). He claims this future fifth act will signal the end of Christian discord, civil bloodshed, and, ultimately, the fallen world. The return will also bring Satan's free reign on earth to a close, allowing those Christians who remained steadfast against temptation to be sorted from those who fell to the rewards, which hell bestowed on earth. In the meantime, Kirchmayer does not counsel passivity amongst those on the side of good and right – Protestants. He writes in the preface to the play: "there is no danger of going too far against actions being continually carried out in an impious and criminal way." When Satan and his minions will surely stop at nothing in their pursuit of a Hell on earth, how can good Christians draw limits on what they will do to prevent such an eventuality? Kirchmayer suggests that evil must be combated in kind – that sectarians not only could, but should act radically in order to firmly establish their vision of Christianity against the insidious remainders of the tainted religious past. His work essentially functions as a Protestant call to

arms, mobilizing Protestants against their Catholic rivals and against their more moderate coreligionists.

This fantastic historical reimagining of the early history of the Roman Catholic Church accords with the dramatic nature of the early English Reformation, populated with flamboyant figures, tragic twists, backstage plotting, and final act redemptions as it altered the course of the nation's religious doctrine. The response to this course of events, Reformation and Counter-Reformation alike, continued to be similarly dramatic, taking place on the theatrical stage and distilling the trials and tribulations of a century and a nation of people to five acts and a representative, if limited, dramatis personae. The backward-looking reformers, whether reflecting from forty or four-hundred years later, distilled the myriad images of the past into condensed characters and plots, simplified and sanitized for the sake of the prevailing schools of thought and monarchical families. When figures like William Shakespeare and John Fletcher went to the "history" books for inspiration, the depictions they found there had already been skewed into the requisite narrative for success as public entertainments. Each new generation of authors shaped their further manipulations in accordance, both positively and negatively, with the prevailing thoughts of their day. Those plays which attempted not history, but blatant fantasy were no less influenced in accordance with popular opinions and political trends, though here, at least, playwrights had less of a concern for how lasting allegiances and descendants of the historical figures they depicted might come to judge their works.

Though other forms of publication and literature rehearsed the same ideas, concerns, and debates, the depictions within the theatre possessed a greater sense of playfulness, however serious the topic, and a necessary malleability in response to the variables of performance. For that reason, I have focused this project on dramatic works, both as objects

to be read and to be seen and heard, though I intend in the future to expand my research into other literary forms. I took further inspiration for this focus from the writing of Peter Lake and Michael Questier, particularly their expansive *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat* (2002). Peter Lake explains his understanding of theatrical freedom in that work:

> [T]he theatre, far from being a crucial, much-censored and policed arm of the state[. . .], in fact represented a sort of festive liminal space in which cultural materials and claims, deployed in earnest and often for the highest stakes on the scaffold and in the press and pulpit, could be played with and critiqued, combined and recombined in a number of narrative and thematic patterns, patterns that were certainly related to but by no means simply determined by the interplay of those same forces and arguments in the wider world of political and religious conflict. (xxxi)

Lake's claim for the philosophical liquidity that the stage allows evokes the fears and concerns of the anti-theatrical pamphlet debates ongoing in the Renaissance. In staging debates, were theaters sowing doubts and tempting blasphemy in their spectators? These very reasons make the early seventeenth-century theatrical world the prime setting for considering the Protestant imagination's reckoning with lingering and evolving English Catholicism. The Church of England struggled to maintain the sanctity of its doctrines while reforming to incorporate the variety of English Christians. At the same time, playwrights grappled with agnostic and ecumenical beliefs at odds with the sectarian origins of the history and polemic they confronted.

My first chapter considers the politicization of the Virgin Mary in the post-Reformation, and I begin by considering that figure's treatment in John Donne's final will and in Queen Elizabeth I's self-fashioning of her monarchy. Both examples demonstrate the complex evolution of Mary in the factionalized Christian public imagination. I consider the concurrent development of the English pastoral tragicomic tradition through the influence of Giovanni Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido* (1590). These theatrical and religious contentions with tradition unite in John Fletcher's *The Faithfull Shepherdess* (1608), which relocates

contemporary religious conflict to a pastoral world with a positive, or at least intriguingly ambivalent, portrayal of heretical ritualism. The title Holy Virgin, an analogue to Mary, restores order to a community of lecherous and wayward shepherds using symbolic items like holy water and incense, invoking the ritualism of Catholicism. Fletcher presents an English religious community that escapes the politicization of the Roman Church and Protestant sects through its location in a green world, outside of nostalgic remembrance and the possibility of present achievement. His work's fantastical nature allows for his presumably majority Protestant audience to contend with a desire for the forbidden, banished rituals of their nation's religious past. Fletcher's play counters the sectarian drive for the destruction of religious remainders like the intercessory Virgin Mary by offering the audience a religious fantasy of a redeemed, re-sanctified, and reintegrated community.

My second chapter shifts from religious fantasy to an "all true" history of England's Christian Reformation in William Shakespeare and John Fletchers's *Henry VIII* (1613), which questions the worthiness of both Catholics and Reformers. I read this play against the plainly sectarian mythologizing of John Bale's *Kynge Johan* (1538) and John Foxe's *Actes and Monumentes* (1570) and Shakespeare's evolving relationship with Protestant historical revision in his play *King John* (1595). Though Shakespeare and Fletcher ostensibly staged *Henry VIII* as a celebration of the Church of England in recognition of its ongoing rule by King James I, their play problematizes this apparent purpose. The Catholic and Protestant hierarchical figures are equally corrupt, equally self-serving, and ultimately equally doomed to the fickleness of the court-system they promote. In sanctifying Catherine of Aragon for her personal faith and in condemning the hierarchical Catholic figures like Cardinals Wolsey and Campeius, Shakespeare and Fletcher dramatize the shared mistrust English Catholics and Protestants felt towards the Vatican hierarchy. The play suggests the reformed potential of

medieval English Catholicism and Jacobean Protestantism while interrogating the violent process of the Reformation through which the former became the latter.

My third chapter advances from recent national history to the contemporary, small town conflict of lived religious practice with a play that dramatizes the radicalizing potential of sectarianism. Dekker, Ford, and Rowley's *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) skeptically presents the view of Catholics as literally anti-Christian against the range of English Protestant belief by staging the events of a recent witch trial. The play calls into question the efficacy of zealous belief and its violent enactment by conflating the efforts of the characters that pursue earthly ends through criminal and demonic means with those of the zealous crusaders for apparent good. The play also features more moderate characters resistant to the dismissal of either group based purely on their divergent beliefs. I read the work against a series of publications, from Benjamin Carier's public declaration of his Catholic conversion to a series of witch pamphlets to a Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* to King James's *Daemonologie* and *Book of Sports,* each portraying contemporary concerns that shape the plot of *The Witch of Edmonton*. The play criticizes doctrinal over-certainty by questioning the rightness and efficacy of the Puritanical mob's condemnation of the witch and her devil companion. The examples of radicalism and radicalization reflect the contemporary dangers posed by sectarians against the English nation's sense of self and security.

My final chapter moves beyond James and his hopes for ecumenicalism to examine a revenge tragedy from the reign of his son, King Charles I. The escalating violent sectarianism, which led to the English Civil War, brought an end to serious ecumenical efforts especially regarding Catholicism. Unsurprisingly, then, John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633) criticizes multiple characters from the Roman Catholic faith. The parishioner turned apostate Giovanni intellectualizes himself into debauchery and homicide. The

luxuriating Cardinal is rife with the corruptions and earthliness with which Protestant rhetoric would charge him. However, between these two is the lowly friar, entrenched in the community and entwined in the earthly and spiritual fates of those he advises. Bonaventura and his faith maintain a measure of decency; he does not save all with his Catholicism, but his efforts are not wholly in vain in evoking redemption. The play presents a critique of sectarian victories based in the banishment of oppositional voices, a tactic reflected in doctrinal debates concerning Toleration and anti-theatrical pamphlets seeking the restriction of stage plays. A similar sense of the dangers of toleration and sectarian censorship appears in James Shirley's *The Cardinal* (1642). Both works ultimately echo John Milton's arguments in *Areopagitica* (1645), which condemn the constriction of public discourse in the pursuit of a greater sectarian good.

These four chapters trace the evolution of the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic through the reigns of the first two Stuart kings. Even as factionalism increasingly divided England, these playwrights engaged in dramatic considerations of belief and practice that might unite Christians beyond sectarianism. Their shared aesthetic represents a hope for ecumenical Christian unity in England against the destructive methods of the Reformation, the Protestant re-mythologizing of English history, the exponential threat of radicalism, and the mutually contentious and conducive pairing of Toleration and sectarianism to banish rival ideologies. The pursuit of the Anti-Sectarian, ecumenical hope ultimately failed, but it continued to influence the self-conception of English Christianity and a general sense of Christian unity beyond England in ways still evident today.

CHAPTER 1

TRAGICOMOEDIA, GRATIA PLENA:

AMALGAMATING CHRISTIAN PURITY

John Donne composed his final will and testament on December 13, 1630, three and a half months before his death.[10] He begins by declaring himself a "Church of England priest," a statement that confirms both his profession and his continuing devotion to the Protestant faith. The document contains the expected mix of furniture to friends and family and parting salaries to servants, yet Donne's clerical affiliation creates a peculiar incongruity in this dispensation of goods. Representations of the Virgin Mary curiously appear in the collection of art bequeathed specifically to a few named acquaintances. The fifth item willed is "the picture of the blessed Virgin Mary" from his dining chamber. He pairs this with a painting of "Adam and Eve," continuing the religious theme of the art, though representing a topic less suggestive of the iconic. The next item includes a portrait of Mary Magdalene and one of the "blessed Virgin and Joseph" (360). His willed art collection also includes pictures of the "four great prophets" (361). The overall sense of Donne's artistic sensibilities for his home décor suggests an appreciation for religious subjects, running from the Old Testament through the New. In that regard, the representations of Mary are not particularly notable. What seems striking though is the manner in which Donne refers to her as the "blessed Virgin" – a term still emphasizing those elements of her nature more central to the Catholic cult of Mary than to the Protestant recognition of the figure.[11] Nevertheless, Donne publicly expressed his antipathy for the radicalism of Catholicism, especially as represented

[10] *The Life and Letters of John Donne: Dean of St. Paul's*, vol. 2. (1899)

[11] Donne's pervasive Catholic aesthetic is evidenced in many of his poems, including "The Anniversary" (1611), where he reverts to the linguistic tropes and sensorial spirituality of his former Roman faith. Where Donne's poetic application of Catholicism at times self-consciously distances the poet from that faith, his will contains no qualifications or explanations of his possessions, seeming to offer a more intimate insight into the man's maintenance of his old ideology with his new.

by the Society of Jesus and his own family members.[12] He models in brief the process of Reformation due to his belated (relative to the majority of the English people) conversion from the old faith to a version of the new.[13] Yet, the abbreviated form of his transition also embodies the difficulty that even the most ardent adopters of Protestantism might have had years after the Reformation in casting off the remainders of Catholicism persisting in early modern English Christianity.

While scholars, particularly those addressing the "Cult of Elizabeth," tend to refer to Mary during the 16th and 17th-centuries as the "Catholic Mary," the term hardly reflects the complications surrounding the figure. Christian conceptions of Mary fluctuated from depictions like Heavenly Queen and sainted intercessor to simply a model of humility and piety to a figure deserving of no special recognition at all. A common characteristic of many of these conceptions was her essential humanity in spite of her exceptional experience, creating Mary as a central and earthly figure in the Church's spiritual hierarchy. Her personal history of human emotion, trial, and maternity suggested a singular gift of empathy. During the Reformation, the views of Mary turned schismatic. Protestant leadership rejected what they termed the papist idolatry of the mother of Christ, but they largely did not reject the figure herself. Instead, their treatment might be better termed a reinvention that allowed appreciation and even limited elevation to remain a part of proper Protestant belief, as long as this elevation was textually supported by the Bible. As evidenced by the example of John

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[12] Donne's continuing appreciation for a traditional conception of the "blessed Virgin" in fact aligns him with the Society of Jesus, towards which he expressed so much vehement antipathy (see his *Ignatius His Conclave* (1611)). The Jesuit order invested in maintaining the traditional, Catholic conception of Mary against the Protestant reduction occurring throughout reformed Europe. Members of the order were also alleged to have encouraged the martyrdom of younger recusant Catholics in England in order to "reclaim" that nation for the Church, a tactic Donne found especially objectionable.

[13] Donne (1572-1631) grew up as a member of a stoic recusant family in England, which had aligned itself with some of the most radical and controversial Catholic crusaders of the day. The exact date of his transition from his old belief to his new Protestant one remains still debated today, whether gradual or abrupt, entire or piecemeal.

Donne, the recognition of Mary resulted in less a dichotomy than a continuum from adoration to indifference, with Catholics and Protestants alike varying in their degree of recognition of her. The lack of clear divisions between the two groups of Christians further politicized the treatments of the figure in public.

The banishment of Mary from the official foreground of English Protestant worship, in theory if not in practice, created a quandary for the Protestant hierarchy – how to usher the former manifestation of Mary out of her established place in religious artwork and belief. The dual strategy of effacement and replacement reached its apex in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who saw in Mary's diminishment an opening for her own elevation and assumption of a "heavenly throne." An incident involving the queen and a recusant member of her aristocracy clearly demonstrates this intention. As recounted in a 1578 letter written by Richard Topcliffe to the Earl of Shrewsbury, the story is decidedly theatrical, perhaps staged intentionally so.[14] The anecdote, referenced often in discussions of Elizabeth's Marian-mimicry including by Miri Rubin in *Mother of God* (2010) and Helen Hackett in "Rediscovering shock: Elizabeth I and the cult of the Virgin Mary" (1993), describes an incidental discovery of a portrait of the Virgin Mary hidden on a recusant subject's property.[15] Such a possession by an aristocratic recusant is hardly surprising, as the noble

[14] The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* describes Topcliffe (1531-1604) as "the most notorious of those government servants who sought out and interrogated enemies of the crown" – a state-sanctioned torturer specializing in discovering and inflicting pain upon Catholic recusants throughout the country. Two of his most famous accomplishments in that role are the repeated torture of the Jesuit Robert Southwell from 1592 to 1595 and the interrogation of Ben Jonson concerning his play *The Isle of Dogs* (1597).

[15] Hackett notes that the Earl of Shrewsbury, recipient of Topcliffe's letter, was at the time both the patron of that torturer and the keeper of Mary, Queen of Scots, enhancing the peculiar web of pageantry and significance surrounding the dissemination of the tale of Elizabeth's symbolic triumph over the Virgin Mary (34).

Catholic class normally possessed the political clout and sufficient monetary resources to dismiss any incurred charges or fines. [16]

The expected outcome of a chastisement and fine was not to be, as Elizabeth instead became enraged by the portrait, a reaction dubbed pious by Topcliffe who contrasts her with a demonized Catholic and idolatrous Virgin Mary. Rather than quietly disposing of the work and punishing her doctrinally-wayward subject, Elizabeth determined to turn the discovery into a "teachable" moment. Local commoners – the class assumed by high society to be most prone to the manipulations of roving Jesuits and the promise of Catholic spectacle – were collected as an audience. Elizabeth proceeded to personally burn the "idol" of Mary, whipping her lowly spectators into a zealous frenzy of hatred for Catholicism and adoration of their queen. The scene is reminiscent of accounts of public executions of religious martyrs, both Protestant and Catholic, transforming relatively passive crowds into chaotic mobs seeking both to maintain mementos of and to further destroy those executed. As Hackett explains, Elizabeth's fervent need to immediately and ceremonially destroy the portrait of Mary acknowledges the power of such a representation for believers (35-36). Her destruction becomes ritualistic, destroying and therefore claiming for herself the power of and adoration for the representation of Mary. The anecdote reinforces how Elizabeth both assumed and exceeded the character of her analogous Virgin predecessor in her process of self-fashioning as personally feminine yet monarchically masculine, virginal yet versed in the intricacies of the world.

The violence in Elizabeth's assumption of the Marian role was not limited to the material destruction of public and private works of art, but was also psychologically and

[16] The recusant faith of the homeowner is undoubtedly relevant to the degree with which Elizabeth reacts to the portrait of the Virgin Mary. If she had discovered the two portraits of the figure in the home of the Church of England clergyman John Donne, I believe we can safely imagine her reaction would have been quite different.

spiritually violent. The process of excising the traditional Mary was not an easy or even welcome one, as emphasized by Peter McClure and Robin Headlam Wells in "Elizabeth I as a second Virgin Mary" (1990), who claim "It would be almost impossible to overstate the strength of the deep-rooted, even irrational, feelings that the cult of the Virgin Mary aroused in men and women at all levels of religious and social life" (63). Mary's power as a religious and cultural figure made her a key to many of the doctrinal battles of the Reformation, abroad and in England, and the public politicized their conception of the "Mother of God" in the process. McClure and Wells echo Eamon Duffy in belying the Protestant fable of the English populace (perhaps discounting the backward, ignorant lowly sort) welcoming the banishment of Catholicism's lingering "superstitious" rituals and figures of devotion from their lives.[17] Instead, McClure and Wells continue: "The sudden suppression of such a powerful source of religious comfort, hope and joy, and of the splendid images and ceremonies that dominated private and public life, could hardly have produced any other effect among the bulk of the people than a sense of profound emotional deprivation" (63). The unwelcome nature of this shift in reality might explain the fervency with which "good" English citizens, Catholic and Protestant alike, might maintain elements of the banished belief, secularly or spiritually, publicly or behind closed doors and secret panels, well after the Church of England seemed to have ascended successfully and proclaimed its own virgin queen, Elizabeth.

Indeed, as the example of Donne demonstrates, the Marian influence and a more general pervasiveness of unassimilated Catholic remainders continued under the reign of Elizabeth's follower on the throne, James I. Those citizens living through the transition between monarchs witnessed yet another reorientation of the national religion under James,

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[17] See Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars: traitional religion in England, c. 1400-c.1580* (1992).

who was rumored to have sympathies and perhaps even inclinations towards Catholicism, even as they still plainly faced the repercussions of the series of reformations and counter-reformations under the Tudors. Steven Mullaney describes this generational confusion in his essay "Affective Technologies: Toward an Emotional Logic of the Elizabethan Stage" (2007). He writes:

> It might seem odd to highlight the challenge faced by his [Shakespeare's] generation, born as it was into the relatively stable, relatively Protestant world of the Elizabethan compromise, rather than the challenges faced by the parents or grandparents who had lived through the upheavals and martyrdoms of the previous 30 years [. . . .] this generation [. . .] inherited, and had to learn to live with, a profoundly dissociated sense of its world, whether one thinks of its dissociation from previous generations [. . .] or of its dissociation from its own members, neighbors and even kin whose religious identities and sympathies could no longer be presumed or known. (72)

Mullaney writes here of the Elizabethan stage though his readings of dissociation similarly apply to the masses of those same audience members now attending the early Jacobean stage plays. Many of this generation did not have the intimate relationship with Catholicism that previous generations possessed, being familiar more with the Protestant rhetorical view of that belief, radical Continental dissidents, or the muted practices of practitioners of English Catholicism. Many were uncertain of the concreteness of any Christian sect, of the beliefs of those around them, and even of themselves.

These uncertainties of faith influenced not only the perceptions of audiences attending Jacobean theatres but also the playwrights composing the works performed there as well. The doctrines suggested on stage do not always coincide with what little we know of the public allegiances of popular playwrights, and modern readers might join with their early modern fellows in attempting to puzzle out how much of the personal spiritual beliefs of those writers infused their works or how much they simply played to the whims of their contemporaries in power. The nature of drama allows for a working out of religious possibility on stage, and we might view these plays as promoting aesthetic experience in

staging a range of contemporary varied and even conflicting views rather than promoting individual ideologies. In her book *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage* (1997), Huston Diehl proposes that religious ceremony and stage magic had become intertwined in early modern England, so that the distinction between true belief, popular interest, and demystification became less distinct in theatre. The ability to parse out influences is further muddled by the keen interest James's Queen Consort, Anne of Denmark, had in theatre, no doubt amplifying the connections among the monarchy, their beliefs, and the stage. These works become an additional space of religious debate and meditation, both paralleling and challenging the more official and radical rhetorical forums.

Each of the aforementioned elements – the Catholic remainders pervading in Protestant culture, the entanglements of belief and drama, the influences and anxieties surrounding the beliefs of monarchy among the common people – come together in the rise of a new theatrical genre in England. The tragicomedy, imported from Catholic Italy, had its origins in the play *Il Pastor Fido* (1590) by Giovanni Battista Guarini, who intended for the genre to be especially suitable for Christian audiences.[18] His first and most famous contribution to the genre is a tale of redemption through the sacrifice of a faithful shepherd to the goddess Diana, a Classical virgin matriarch analogous to the Virgin Mary. The play met with early criticism in Italy but found publication just a year later in England, personally financed by Giacomo Castelvetro, an Italian Protestant convert who would soon become the Italian tutor to Anne of Denmark. The company she patronized, the Children of the Queen's Revels, staged its own loose reinterpretation of the work, John Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess*, in 1608, earning unfavorable reviews from the original English audience. That play too presents a narrative of sin and redemption in an isolated community though

[18] Discussions of Guarini vary in naming him either "Giovanni" or instead referencing him by his second name "Battista." For the sake of consistency, I will use the former, adjusting any variant quotations as necessary.

with decidedly more innocence and simplicity. Fletcher seems to promote acceptance and allowance while also suggesting the limits of permissiveness though his depiction of active spiritual efficacy of the Holy Virgin in the midst of his community.

By focusing on a spiritually efficacious virgin, Fletcher's play might evoke for the early Jacobean audience both the doctrinally suspect Catholic depiction of Mary and the recently deceased Elizabeth's redeployment of that figure's cultic devotions in a "proper" manner. The play also evokes the communal strain and mistrust of an even more recent event – the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 – and its politicized response, adding curious depth to its intertwining elements of the pastoral and Catholicism. Its hopeful conclusion, theorized by Giovanni Guarini as essential to the pastoral tragicomic genre, gains even greater resonance, however ill-received the play might have been in a time of treason, deception, and plague. Fletcher's play has been dismissed at times as a naïve trifle, presented by child actors to an audience unwilling to be schooled in the place of entertainment. However, the title character and her quiet mastery of the narrative speak to a number of highly politicized topics of the early seventeenth century, from the evolution and appropriation of the Virgin Mary, to the uncertain beliefs and policies of a foreign king with English ancestry and his Catholic queen, to the role of entertainment in circulating new ideas and keeping alive old ceremonies. Reading the play against its generic predecessor and in the midst of a time of tumult within the Children of the Queen's Revels and English society reveals the political and religious complexity of a seemingly simple play of shepherds gone astray and reunified again in the course of a summer's night.

Belief Afield: The Christian Pastoral

The pastoral genre of the period focused on escapist commentaries, poetic and theatrical, which allowed for a consideration of religious debates with a distance from the

anxiety of real world answers. These works gave audience members and readers an opportunity to step away from the immediate turmoil of plots and politics even as they continued to reflect on topical issues in ironic and even radical manners. The genre afforded playwrights the ability to write about "ordinary" subjects with the additional separation from reality found in the "green worlds" of their settings – the unreal and even supernatural possible in the liminal spaces beyond civilization and society. Here the playwrights gained creative and theological freedom (as well as a measure of protection from censorship and its resulting punishments), in a world commingling angels and demons, fairies and Classical deities, allowing for resolutions impossible in reality. This sense of the magical and the miraculous makes the pastoral seem like a fitting genre in which to explore the origins of Christianity – the exceptional in the midst of shepherds and the unexceptional, mundane world. Christian elements appear often in the form, imbuing works with ideological inflections and curious combinations of modern belief and classical elements – both Neo-Platonic and typological. The nature of the genre also allows for inversions of other social conventions expected in early modern society, challenging structures of class, gender, and hierarchy and allowing for a potential commingling of the didactic and the carnivalesque. Shepherds woo supernaturally-suggestive nymphs, satyrs romp in the fields and forests, and citizens escape the restrictions and order by fleeing city life. The simplicity and deconstruction of society allow for a duality of natural hedonism and native virtue – the ideal of unfallen humanity, desirable and unattainable at once.

Unsurprisingly, the genre was especially popular during the Reformation and after (a time of continuing religious reforms and neo-platonic philosophical expansion) gaining successes in multiple forms, including poetry and theatre. English engagement with the genre was influenced not only by Greco-Roman Classical poets and playwrights, most

notably Ovid and his *Metamorphoses* (8 CE), but also by the English national folk tradition. The combination altered and problematized the national manifestation of the pastoral, allowing for experimentation and expansion, but also opening writers to creative mockery for their earnest but incomplete meshing of disparate inspirations. Some writers of English pastoral confront this mocking potential by including satire even in the midst of their own attempts to excel in the genre. Some of the most famous writers of the early modern period tried their hands at the form, producing notably varied examples from Edmund Spenser's epic *The Faerie Queene* (1590/1596) and his eclogue series *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579) to Christopher Marlowe's brief poem "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" (1599) and throughout William Shakespeare's canon, taking shape in plays such as *As You Like It* (1600) and *The Winter's Tale* (1610). The English pastoral varied widely to encompass light-hearted romantic gestures, sweeping commentaries on the politics of court and church, and enigmatic critiques of theatre and self-representation. The form allowed these writers to present their creative intentions playfully and inventively in the guise of nostalgic re-imaginings.

Such intentions were not always buried in the resurrected forms of Classical masters and traditional folklore; Continental literary developments continued to influence English popular forms. The pastoral form gained further explicit religious significance when paired with tragicomedy, as first notably demonstrated in Italian rather than English theatre, in Giovanni Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido* (1585, 1590).[19] His generic experimentation was not

[19] Guarini's play in fact first debuted at the wedding of the Duke of Savoy and Catharine of Austria in 1585, but he did not publish a version of the work until five years later, continually revising and reworking the play in that time. Kevin A. Quarmby suggests in *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (2012) that the play was not then performed until 1596, in the Court of Mantua (10).
Multiple English translations of the play appeared, beginning shortly after the work was first published in Italy, but the most successful version, translated by Richard Fanshawe, did not appear until 1647. In this chapter, I reference the translation edited by Walter F. Staton, Jr. and William E. Simeone (1964).

originally a critical success. Kevin Quarmby indicates: "The radical form of *Il Pastor Fido* prompted attacks from Guarini's peers and rivals, forcing (or perhaps facilitating) his publication of a manifesto for the genre tragicomedy" (11-12).[20] In response to the critics of his play, Guarini wrote the *Compendio della poesia tragicomica* (1601), where he lays out in detail the long theatrical tradition inspiring his work and how his dramaturgical philosophy has shaped his creation of a new genre.[21] He uses the tragicomic form to replace traditional tragedy, a genre he finds ill-suited to a Christian audience who should rightly be rejoicing in God's Grace. Guarini consigns the purgative ends of Classical tragedy to that pre-Christian time: "[W]hat need have we today to purge terror and pity with tragic sights, since we have the precepts of our most holy religion, which teaches us with the word of the gospel?" (523). He suggests that tragedy (particularly the bloody and morbid conclusions of a sub-genre like revenge tragedy) is inimical to an audience who should look to joyous rather than horrific or sorrowful ends. He responds to critics of the tragic-comic that the genre is: "[M]uch more noble than simple tragedy or simple comedy, as that which does not inflict on us atrocious events and horrible and inhumane sights, such as blood and deaths, and which, on the other hand, does not cause us to be so relaxed in laughter that we sin against the modesty and decorum of a well-bred man." Guarini instead promotes tragicomedy as a genre of temperance, akin in this way to the individual of well-balanced humors (512). The plays should serve as moderating catharses, offering emotional balance to the audience through restorative conclusions.

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[20] Robert Henke writes a more detailed account in *Pastoral Transformations: Italian Tragicomedy and Shakespeare's Late Plays* (1997) of the bitter exchange between Guarini and Giason Denores, a "displaced Cyprian nobleman and professor of moral philosophy" who labeled the pastoal tragicomedy as without value and monstrous, sparking a heated exchange of treatises that prompted Guarini to create his master treatise (22-23).

[21] Excerpted in Allan H. Gilbert's *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden* (1967).

Guarini pairs the proper Christian satisfaction of tragicomedy with the pastoral, though the latter form stages the uncanny desire for what never truly existed, whether in a mythologized past or a green other-world. The combination allows for the replication of elements of Christian belief in an ostensibly non-Christian story. In his *Il Pastor Fido*, Guarini explores a tangle of unrequited loves amidst a community of shepherds (a profession he explains allows for a wide variety of occupations and individuals) in an explicitly Classical world, worshipping the Greco-Roman gods and relying on the priests of Pan and oracles to direct their ritual observations. Characters include descendants of Hercules and Pan, nymphs, and satyrs. In essence, Guarini, perhaps influenced by the contemporary Neo-Platonist and syncretistic schools of philosophy, uses a typological shift to represent Christian elements through analogous figures in his play. The technique is more than allegorical as Guarini takes care to explain in order to, once again, focus the interpretation of his audience. He imitates the narrative structures of the Christian story in his play to evoke similar emotional responses to a pattern of near-tragedy and Grace.

The key plot device allowing for this Christian evocation is a curious tradition of sacrifice to the goddess Diana, implemented after a long ago demand for vengeance by a man spurned by his lover (with implications of the faithlessness of Eve). As related to the Arcadians through an oracle's proclamation, the ritual fends off plague for the entire community of Arcadia through the yearly offering of one woman who "should prove / In any sort of changeling in her love" (I.ii.559-560), rehearsing the past crimes of a single woman. While the waywardness of the sacrificed woman is an essential feature of her election, the equating of her life with sin and widespread sickness in the entire community suggests a scapegoat ritual – the woman becomes a symbolic vessel through which all might expunge their sins. Curiously, the goddess who requires placating, Diana, is the virgin

goddess of the hunt, unconcerned herself with marriage and any resultant expectations of fidelity. She is also affiliated with fertility and childbirth and exists therefore as the virgin matriarch; her analogous nature to the Virgin Mary is clear. Guarini's choice of goddess raises questions about sacrifice and the godly infliction of suffering, particularly at a time in Europe when the Black Plague continued to reemerge to ravage the population. This pagan incarnation of the Marian figure is not a merciful matriarch or intercessor to Heaven like her analogue, but is herself alone the punisher of female faithlessness and communal ills.

However, Diana still possesses at least the potential for mercy; the curse of the faithless lover allows for two exceptions to the ceremony, one occasional and the other decisive. First, during the yearly sacrifice, the woman might be spared only if: "some friend would pay the penalty / In stead of her, should without mercy die" (I.ii.561-562). Audience members might expect a Christian emphasis in this instance on self-sacrifice and the subjection of the individual's will to the greater good, proving the immolating higher love as a panacea for Arcadia's woe. But, Guarini's oracle, the origins of the gods' words, suggests this as only a means of sparing the single, chosen woman from her fate for that year alone. The people can only decisively end Diana's doom when: "two of Race Divine / Love shall combine: / And for a faithlesse Nymphs apostate state / A faithfull Shepherd supererogate" (I.ii.569-572). The proclamation is two-fold though the Arcadians focus largely on the first part – the necessity of a noble marriage, uniting two of godly descent, restaging and redeeming the broken vows of the original two lovers. The avowed-virgin goddess Diana desires a true marriage to assuage her retributive anger, but she also demands the sacrifice of one devoted to a faithless woman. Simple and mutual devotion is not sufficient, requiring one final sign of human grace to offer what has not been earned. Diana's will is, of course, delivered only second- or third-hand by holy figures like the oracle or the chief priest

Montano, and the people must rely on their successful interpretations of the gods' wills to direct their common actions and behaviors.

The gods, though spoken of often, remain largely absent from the play, allowing the whims and emotions of the decidedly human characters to twist the plot in fits of angst and adoration. Traps are laid, confessions made, and matrimonies arranged, but hardly any of these plans go according to their "proper courses." These detours allow Guarini to infuse his play with the generically necessary drama and near tragedy. The only two marriageable individuals of "race divine," Silvio and Amarillis, are opposed to the union, the former preferring the hunter's isolation and the latter the foreign Mirtillo. Even as the plague-banishing wedding seems imminent, the wanton witch Corisca lays a trap sprung from her own tangled desires, complicated further by the rough, lecherous Satyr and a number of other friends, servants, and would-be lovers. Confusion and false accusations spread, the Chorus crying: "O ye great Gods! now, now, if ever, prove / Your *anger* lesse eternall then your *love*" (IV.iii.3526-3527). They supplicate for mercy from the same gods and goddesses who threaten them with plague if the community does not enact the yearly sacrificial ritual. No hope for an alternative to the unjust justice seems likely; the few will need to die to maintain the wellbeing of the Arcadian majority. Guarini has established a society in which the citizens commit ills in the name of the gods, thinking they pursue justice. The Chief Minister to the Priest, Nicandro, emphasizes this lesson, suggesting: "Men ought to lend their aid in present woe: / What is to come, none but the Gods foreknow" (IV.v.3732-3733). His words are made ironic as he revives the unconscious Amarillis so she can face a wrongful accusation and her death. The audience, like Nicandro, cannot know what will occur, but they can hope for the averting of the gods' and priests' unwarranted punishment.

Guarini troubles the certainty of knowing the gods' will in his play without offering a clear corrective. Instead, he offers resolution and restoration in his narrative, following his tragicomic formula of setting right what has gone astray. In the process, the Oracle's riddle unravels – Mirtillo is the "noble shepherd" of the play's title, offering to sacrifice himself for his love Amarillis, and indirectly for the good of all Arcadia. Guarini diverges from the Christian typology here; the child lost, found, and restored spares the need for an individual sacrificed to redeem the community. Instead, love reigns, matrimonial, communal, and familial. The noble are healed and married according to the wills of their own hearts and presumably with the blessings of the gods. The villainous characters are largely unpunished, though faced with their failures to sow lasting chaos and deprived of love. In fact, the main plotter, Corisca, begs and receives forgiveness from the properly united and loving couple, Amarillis and Mirtillo, and she is invited to their wedding feast. Amarillis brushes aside the malefactor's confession, saying: "So whether friend or foe, or whatso e're / Thou wert to me in purpose and intent; / Yet my Fate us'd thee as her instrument / To work my blisse, and that's enough" (V.ix.5534-5567). Both because of and in spite of the citizens' best efforts to satisfy and thwart the will of the heavens, the gods' desires will come to pass. The villains have willed death and despair, but the play concludes with all seeking only to celebrate the happiness and freedom from suffering wrought by love. Arcadia rejoices and praises their deliverance by Diana from the curse she once imposed upon them. The restoration dispels both the accumulated sins of the past and the memory of bygone suffering.

A playwright who presents a doctrinal message in the guise of another philosophy risks the audience's ignorance in properly interpreting the play. Are audiences to simply take *Il Pastor Fido* at face value, understanding it as a semi-escapist romp of unseen gods and

orphan heroes set in an imaginative analogue of the world they know? Particularly in light of the novelty of his ur-tragicomedy, Guarini must ensure that wayward interpretation does not disrupt his ideological ends. He concludes his work therefore with an explicit statement of contemporary religious morality, his final chorus announcing:

> Blind Mortals, learn from hence,
> Learn (ye effeminate) the difference
> Betwixt true goods and false. All is not joy
> That tickles us: Nor is all that annoy
> That goes down bitter. 'True joy is a thing
> 'That springs from Vertue after suffering. (V.x.5571-5576)

The final line especially speaks to the core message of Christianity, though the preceding lines also counsel morals such as temperance and critical awareness of the potential good present in all things. Guarini directs his audience at the close of his work to his tragicomic philosophy – the temperate joy derived from near tragedy.[22] Only because of their previous suffering, not in spite of it, can the characters' joys be so great, loving, and forgiving at the close of the play. Diana can therefore be both the punisher and the deliverer from punishment, the one who implements bitter, deathly consequence and the loving matriarch of her people – the embodiment of tragicomedy's balance. By drafting his defensive treatise after his initial unsuccessful staging of *Il Pastor Fido*, Guarini could tailor the dramatic philosophy he outlines in his writing to explicitly support his play. He could accuse his detractors of being ignorant of his Classical and Christian achievements, biased by their desire to be "tickled" by a play of ignorance and extremity, rather than honestly (as proper Christians) appreciating the achievements of his theatrical experimentation.

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[22] J.R.R. Tolkien would refer to this type of conclusion as a "eucatastrophe," though he applies the term specifically to the Christian possibilities of the fairy tale genre in his work "On Fairy-Stories" (1939). He describes the trope as an unexpected moment of Grace or redemption in the midst of seemingly certain tragedy or doom.

This broader Christian message, even with the inclusion of a Marian analogue, allowed for Guarini's work to gain popularity after its initially muted reception and to move beyond the Catholic shores of Italy. Indeed, the individual who ensured early after the play's debut that it would be distributed in England was Italian but not Catholic – Giacomo Castelvetro. Having converted to Protestantism and fearful of resultant attention from the Inquisition, Castelvetro traveled extensively in Europe, variously associating and earning the patronage of figures like Philip Sidney and Francis Walsingham. In 1591, only a year after Guarini had finally published his play in Italy, Castelvetro personally financed the publication of *Il Pastor Fido* in England, too.[23] His ability to transmit Italian tastes to the shores of Britain would only increase the following year when Castelvetro became the personal Italian tutor to King James VI of England and his wife, Anne of Denmark (*ODNB*, Lawrence 7-8).[24] This instruction might well have brought the play to the Queen's attention, feeding her appreciation of theatrical literature and Italian culture, which she later brought to England when her husband gained that nation's crown.

The Virgin's Efficacy: Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess*

In 1603, King James VI of Scotland became James I of England, assuming the throne after his cousin, Queen Elizabeth. With her death, Elizabeth unwittingly enacted a final parallel of the Virgin Mary; John Watkins notes in "'Out of her Ashes May a Second Phoenix Rise': James I and the Legacy of Elizabethan Anti-Catholicism" (1999) that she: "achieved the miracle of virginal procreation in bequeathing her throne to the King who

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[23] The genres of Castelvetro's publishing efforts varied wildly. Personally, he wrote and is remembered for his treatise on dietary variety, *The Fruits, Herbs and Vegetables of Italy*(1614), but he also ensured the publication of *Explicatio gravissimae quaestionis utrum excommunicatio* (1589), a theological treatise by the Swiss theologian Erastus (the deceased first husband of Castelvetro's wife), which helped to promote the ideology of Erastianism (*ODNB*).

[24] See also Jason Lawrence's *'Who the devil taught thee so much Italian?': Italian language learning and literary imitation in early modern England* (2005).

united the English and Scottish crowns" (120). But for all of James's love of pomp and ceremony, his reinterpretation of Elizabeth's policies and methods of enforcement often proved more moderate and more subtly evocative of traditions of politics and religion. He believed himself to be a monarch appointed by God to effect positive change for the peoples of England and Europe, but he did not ritualize this self-characterization in the same manner as Elizabeth in her assumption of the Marian cult. James brought to the throne a variable appreciation for elements of faith and celebration left intact rather than banished or reshaped beyond recognition, and he resisted supporting those sectarians who pushed for further, more ascetic reformations of English faith.

When James and his court brought to England an investment in a new version of monarchical performance in England, they also possessed an appreciation of more popular forms of theatricality, which compounded criticisms of Stuart religious permissiveness and indulgent entertainments. Upon her arrival in England in 1603, Anne of Denmark (controversially Catholic and foreign) bestowed her patronage upon the Children of the Queen's Revels, or simply the Children of the Revels, bringing that acting company to greater prominence. In her monograph *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (2011), Lucy Munro describes how in that year: "[T]he company was granted a royal patent and became the Children of the Queen's Revels [. . . .] [T]he company lost its royal patent in early 1606 [. . . .] They continued to operate in their Blackfriars theatre until 1608 when [two controversial plays] led to the company's collapse" (2). In the midst of an extremely competitive and adversarial theatrical community (with widespread collaboration but also creative theft), the rise and fall of an acting company is not surprising.

The wild successes and ultimate failure of the Children of the Queen's Revels are further explained by the nature of the performances they chose to stage, which are dubbed

by Munro as innovative, avant-garde, and risky, catering to an elite rather than popular audience. The playwrights associated with the company included a number of the most successful writers of the day: Ben Jonson, Francis Beaumont, John Marston, and Thomas Middleton. The company focused on satire, tragicomedy, and straight tragedy, engaging boldly with contemporary politics, perhaps believing that the young ages of the actors (and the apparent ignorance this would grant them of their performances' implications) might protect their more radical endeavors (18-23).[25] Considering these factors, John Fletcher's decision as a member of the company to adapt Guarini's work and introduce a more plainly pastoral tragicomedy to the early-Jacobean audience is not surprising, particularly for the play's likelihood to please the Italianate tastes of the Catholic Queen, their recently alienated patron. *The Faithfull Shepherdess* (1608) both simplifies the plotting of Guarini's work and amplifies its religion, presenting a Catholic-inflected pastoral both more earnest and perhaps more ironic in its treatment of contemporary debates of religious efficacy and apostasy.[26]

The experimental nature of the Children of the Queen's Revels brought the company varying levels of success on the stage, and Fletcher's early adaptation proved one of the least successful plays of the theatrical season for the company.[27] Fletcher continued to

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[25] Munro does clarify that the "Children" in the company's title might be somewhat misleading, as aging boy actors could choose to remain in the acting troupe. She also argues against the notion that plays for child actors are inherently either childish or ironic in the characterizations, noting how the playwrights attached to the child companies often wrote for adult companies simultaneously, and the child companies' plays were commonly also acted by adult actors (2-3).

[26] When discussing the commendatory verses, I reference the 1656 edition of *The Faithfull Shepherdesse* published as a printed EEBO edition in 2011. For the remainder of my discussion of the play, including the "To the Reader" note of the 1610 publication, I use the edition of the play in *Stuart Plays* (1971), which features regularized spellings and line numbers absent in the other edition.

[27] Munro explores the failure of the play in the 1607-1608 season in more detail in her book, surmising: "[T]he Blackfriars audience in 1607-1608 seem simply to have been confused. They seem to have expected the play to be more like *Mucedorus* [. . . .] Perhaps the pastoral tragicomedy's fault in the eyes of the audience was that it was not pastoral enough, but too witty, too allusive, and too high-blown" (132).
In *Court and Country Politics in the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (1990), Philip J, Finkelpearl suggests the work "represented Fletcher's effort to present an English version of the pastoral dramas of Tasso and Guarini, the very latest in Italian sophistication. Such plays were designed for court audiences with a taste for slow

follow Guarini's pattern by proclaiming his initial audience's lack of appreciation as a matter of ignorance about the pastoral and the tragicomic. He appended a note "To the Reader" to the 1610 publication of his play, in which he contrasts what he imagines his dissatisfied original audiences must have expected with what they in fact should have desired. Originally, the audiences "having ever had a singular gift in defining, concluded to be a play of country hired shepherds in gray cloaks, with curtailed dogs in strings, sometimes laughing together, and sometimes killing one another; and, missing Whitsun ales, cream, wassail, and morris dances, began to be angry" (6-13). While the characters of Fletcher's play can be foolish, celebratory, simple, and violent, they are not just stereotypes of rough country folk, traipsing about for the mirth of a city audience – the apparent desire of Fletcher's initial, displeased viewers. He counters this description of cheap entertainment with a statement of his scope, intention, and inspiration:

> A tragi-comedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no comedy, which must be a representation of familiar people, with such king of troubles as no life be questioned, so that a god is as lawful in this as in a tragedy, and mean people as in a comedy. (32-41)

Fletcher's shepherds are independent minders of sheep, pervaded by no more simpletons than any other selection of individuals. His conception of tragicomedy follows that of Guarini, more briefly, in bringing such a group close to tragedy but affording them ultimate salvation. He concludes that this generic balance justifies his combination of "a god" and "mean people," bringing together heavenly matters and mundane rusticity in a single work.

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movement, rhetorical display, and the kind of scenery and spectacle usually reserved for the masque in England" (101), not the broader theatrical audience who first view it at Blackfriars.
Tellingly, the play was resurrected in the reign of James's son, Charles I, to better success. The title page of the fourth edition proclaims, "Acted at Somerset House, before the king and Queen on Twelf night last, 1633. And divers times since, with great applause, at the Private House in Black-Friers, by his Majesties Servants." The "Twelf night last" suggests the title page comes from an earlier edition, unedited for the 1656 publication (when monarchs, theatre companies, and indeed Catholic themes would be more questionable selling points for a text).

Fletcher later received additional support for his dramatic choices from his collaborators and theatrical acquaintances, including a senior playwright in his company, Ben Jonson.[28] That playwright was well-acquainted with the vicissitudes of theatrical success, not only enjoying at that time of Fletcher's failure the favor of the court for his masques (with multiple requests from Queen Anne personally) but also continuing to face political threats for his Catholicism and the political commentary present in his plays.[29] In a commendatory sonnet prefacing later publications of the play, Jonson bluntly condemns the original audience of Fletcher's work. He labels them a motley crowd, who, "had, before / They saw it halfe, damned thy whole Play" (7-8), because it lacked the show of vices they desired. Jonson obliquely valorizes the morality of the play, proclaiming his gladness that Fletcher's "Innocence was thy Guilt" (11), and his play will outlive the more indulgent successes of the season. Jonson's views of theatrical audiences are generally jaded, of course, but the differing interpretation by the younger playwright from his more experienced acquaintance is noteworthy. Jonson states that only time (and perhaps more refined, future audiences) will prove the worth of *The Faithfull Shepherdess*. Fletcher, reflecting the redemptive hopes that his play propounds, suggests that his audience members were only in need of instruction, and more familiar with his interpretation of Guarini's tragicomedy, they would have better appreciated his work.

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[28] The fourth edition also contains commendatory verses from Francis Beaumont, Fletcher's famed later collaborator; Nathan Field; George Chapman; and Shackerley Marmion. While Beaumont attributes the play's failure to any number of incidental factors from flat acting to low candlelight to unfashionable costumes, the others follow the more expected path of accusing the audiences of possessing ill-refined tastes and balking at the play's innocence, revealing their own poor morals.

[29] These risky expressions of religion and politics would later lead to Jonson's imprisonment and encounter with Topcliffe, mentioned above. He expresses his own markedly-Catholic perception of the Virgin Mary, at least at that point in his history of conversion and reconversion, in his epitaph, "On My First Daughter" (1616). He speaks of his deceased infant daughter, Mary: "Whose soul heaven's queen, whose name she bears, / In comfort of her mother's tears, / Hath placed among her virgin-train" (7-9).

While he reworks the pastoral tragicomedy of Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido* in his own play, Fletcher diverges markedly from the earlier work's plot. His narrative is simpler, if more satiric, presenting a community of shepherds and shepherdesses who drift into temptation and sin over the course of a night's celebration. Resolution occurs with the exile of one violent apostate and redemption of the majority by a singularly holy shepherdess in the community's midst. The play dramatizes religious longing and dissent, reflecting the national concerns and conflicts of post-Reformation England. However, the theatrical result, though produced by a playwright, Fletcher, who bears no evidence of being a recusant, is intriguingly Catholic. The main character of the play – the "Holy Virgin" – undeniably evokes the controversy surrounding the treatment of the Virgin Mary in Christian sectarianism, and the play cannot escape the savage politics involving that belief. How might the work sow sympathy or perhaps even desire for a gentler, forgiving, maternal element of that old Catholic faith now largely absent in Protestant belief?

The inherent nostalgia of the pastoral form, imagining a perfected past simplicity that never was, particularly suits the genre for presenting polemically dangerous religious commentary.[30] Fletcher removes his play from the contemporary English world, creating a setting with no recognizable class hierarchies or real religious difference. His community surrounds the character of a "Holy Virgin," the Marian central figure of his work tasked with healing the wayward figures around her. By sanctifying individuals, she strengthens the bonds of the community and bolsters its resistance to future internal and external threats. The impossible nature of Fletcher's work ideally allows for a Protestant audience to contend with a desire for the forbidden – elements of the old faith, namely the now uncommon

[30] For instance, see John Kerrigan's discussion in *Archipelagic English* (2008) of how writers used religiously-inflected pastorals to present a pseudo-history of early England as proto-Protestant, natively spiritually-sound and yet to be corrupted by Roman (read: Roman Catholic) conquering and conversion.

conception of Mary's efficacy as an intercessor for the common people. The rituals surrounding the virgin and her holy prescriptions, including holy water and incense, enable a fantasy of the unification and peace that seemed impossible in a Post-Reformation England no longer welcoming to a more than secular "Holy Virgin."

While freed from explicit location in the English countryside, the setting of the play does bear a microcosmic resemblance to the nation. The community of shepherds and shepherdesses is sequestered from outside intrusion, seemingly, but it is far from inviolate. The occupants share a single lifestyle as shepherds (though no sheep are apparent) and a common worship of the god Pan.[31] Like Britain, this land and its inhabitants lie apart, but not unconnected, still vulnerable to the sinful influences of the outside world. The character of the Old Shepherd remarks on this vulnerability to the community's Priest, when they discover their neighbors have not come home for the night: "The woods, or some near town, / That is a neighbor to the bordering down, / Hath drawn them thither 'bout some lusty sport" (V.i.26-28). These unseen neighboring lands are the loci of temptation, drawing the shepherd-folk out of their wooded sanctuary. The bad influences are only possible because of the community members themselves; when sin enters the woods, it does so because the shepherds or shepherdesses have chosen to embrace that which they know to be wrong. And, conversely, the inhabitants are also singularly responsible for expelling sin, though in this they have intercessory aid. This communal empowerment first splinters the group and later redeems it to a pastoral ideal – a narrative of decay and reformation more decisive than any enacted in England's recent history.

[31] Pan's identity as the god of shepherds and flocks allows for an uneasy parallel with the Christian God, troubled by the lecherousness of the half-goat, half-man deity. Indeed, he, distracted with wooing an unnamed paramour, never personally appears in the play. However, the purity and sanctity of his human priest and satyr servant suggest a much more acceptably Christian analogue for the religion of the shepherds.

The necessary intercession comes from the title character of Fletcher's work, "The Faithfull Shepherdess."[32] Her true name is Clorin, but numerous characters refer to her in the course of the drama as a "Holy Virgin," clearly and succinctly invoking the contention surrounding the Virgin Mary in post-Reformation religious politics. Fletcher carefully crafts his analogue; he emphasizes Clorin's mortality when she says: "Sure I am mortal, / The daughter of a Shepherd; he was mortal, / And she that bore me mortal" (I.i.105-107). Fletcher dispels any expectations an audience familiar with Guarini's work and his characters' supernatural heritage might have. Clorin is merely an extraordinary human, like the Virgin Mary, whose personal devotion to a holy vow elevates her above her compatriots' sanctity. While others might therefore seem capable of achieving similar blessing to Clorin, no spiritual equals appear in the work. She is singular, endowed by:

> that great name of virgin that binds fast
> All rude, uncivil bloods, all appetites
> That break their confines. Then, strong chastity,
> Be thou my strongest guard, for here I'll dwell
> In opposition against fate and hell! (I.125-129)

The play begins with her disavowal of all earthly pleasures, no matter how chaste, so that she can remain faithful to a deceased love. Where Guarini eschews an earthly parallel for Mary and opts instead for an uncertainly vengeful and pagan goddess, Fletcher adopts a more human Marian analogue in his work. She locates herself in chastity and deprivation by her love's grave, separating herself from her neighbors and their rituals, but remaining near to them.[33]

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[32] Fletcher's later play, *The Island Princess* (~1620), engages with a number of similar issues, including a gunpowder plot of its own, religious conversion, and female character at the heart of plots of violence, deception, and restoration. Located in a more contemporary and realistic setting of faraway islands explored by the Portuguese, the plot proved more successful for Fletcher, including performances at court.

[33] This initial profession and resulting lifestyle seems to mirror the profession of a nun, vowing celibacy and poverty, at a remove from everyday lay society. When Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in his kingdom, he

Setting aside for the moment the Catholic implications of this characterization, the question must arise if Fletcher's Clorin might act as an analogue of the Virgin Elizabeth rather than the Virgin Mary.[34] The play originally appeared onstage in the early years of James I's reign, when the memory of Elizabeth might still be fresh in the minds of a people yet uncertain of their new monarch, his Catholic wife, and his strange, indulgent court. In her lifetime, Elizabeth's personal role in the destruction of the cult of Mary, replacing that lost idol with her own queenly personage, collapsed many of the possible distinctions between the two figures. But, her assumption of the characteristics of the earlier, now essentially Catholic conception of the Mother of God also served to maintain that figure. Thus, the English audiences' perception of Elizabeth in the character of the Faithfull Shepherdess would simultaneously evoke the Catholic Mary. Particularly as the character of Clorin becomes more spiritually efficacious throughout the play, evocations of the Virgin Mary would eclipse her queenly imitator. In effect, Fletcher's Clorin inverts Elizabeth's appropriation of Mary – the Protestant-acceptable conception of Holy Virgin becoming increasingly more holy and thus more Catholic.

In the course of this spiritual development, Clorin amasses a following of her own, apart from but yet consonant with the official structures of the religion represented by the shepherds' Priest. Her first notable follower is a curious figure, stereotypically associated with intemperance (as in Guarini's characterization), the Satyr. He roams the woods in

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effectively removed the religious profession as an option for English women. The Church of England still offered professional opportunities for men, though these were also reduced by the Reformation.

[34] Finkelpearl explores the Elizabethan parallel, and a potential suggestion of Pan as James's analogue (108-110), drawing on the work of James J. Yoch, to suggest the play as a chastisement of the king's royal intemperance. This would create an odd hierarchy of Elizabeth as empowered servant of the absent James, a construction that seems frankly more problematic than potentially successful as polemic. Finkelpearl concludes by labeling the Fletcher who wrote *The Faithfull Shepherdess* 'more narrowly "Puritanical" than Milton' (114), a claim made more curious in light of the play's reliance on ritual and apotropaic elements for its restoration of peace and unity.

service of the god Pan, representing a combination of the human and the beastly, the earthly and pagan holiness. Though repeatedly met with fear and prejudice by others, the goat-man is reasonable, respectful, and charitable in his actions. These virtues are reflected in his interactions with Clorin, whom he is the first to call "Holy Virgin." He first imagines her to be a supernatural figure, like his own master, descended of the gods, but he turns his devotional urges to constructive and beneficial ends (I.i). Without disavowing his allegiance to Pan, the Satyr becomes an unofficial priest of Clorin's. He provides offerings of sustenance and thanksgiving to her and elicits her healing and sanctification on behalf of needy residents in the community. These efforts present the first solid elevation of Clorin's holiness beyond extraordinary devotion to a lost love to the level of holy service – an unspoken annunciation of her status as elect in the community. Fletcher portrays the development of this new locus of holiness as organic and peaceful; Clorin gains influence without seeking power or personal gain and avoids conflict with the nearby gods and priests as a result.

Were that the extent of Fletcher's depiction of enacted religion, perhaps the criticism of his play as too simplistic, too naive would be warranted. But, there are complications beyond the common, randy exploits of the shepherds and shepherdesses in the night. The ultimate redemption of the community includes an acknowledgement that some cannot be brought back into the fold, as they are too aberrant and willful to constructively participate in the spiritual well-being of the community. The actions of two of these characters mirror the stereotypes of religious radicalism present in contemporary England. Like those extreme sectarians, these men are unwilling to alter their own behaviors even as they violently and

insistently impose their personal doctrines on others.[35] First is the Sullen Shepherd, who insists on denying the wonder in any experience and glories in destroying the joys of others (verbally, physically, and sexually). He proclaims his "blesséd destiny" (II.i.225)) to deceive, deflower, and discard as many women as possible, and he is willing to kill any who prevent his will. His actions mark him as an apostate and gleeful terrorist, sowing chaos for its own sake as an expression of ideologically-shallow iconoclasm. Even when his intentions are laid bare to the Priest himself and witnessed by his neighbors, the Sullen Shepherd simply proclaims his violent sexual conquests are natural. His lack of repentance earns him the label of "manlike monster" (V.i.421) by Clorin and the Priest, countering the character of the inhuman-looking but gentle Satyr with the dissembling monstrosity of an ordinary man. The religious leaders of the community join to "put [him] from the sight / And memory of every honest wight" (V.i.423-424)). He is marked as irredeemable, threatening further violence by his ongoing presence, and they suggest that even the thought of him risks corrupting the ideal purity of the community.

Fletcher's play suggests that religion is endangered both from outside destructive forces, iconoclasts like the Sullen Shepherd, and from overzealous members within the faithful. The other religious radical in the community is Thenot, whose adulation is always already destructive. He is an idolator whose adoration threatens the essential nature of that which he adores – Clorin. His desire for an intimate relation to holiness undermines the sanctity of the Holy Virgin, exemplifying Protestant polemic's criticism of Catholic worship as blasphemous. His respect for ideas but not the individuals or practices representative of them dooms him to bitter disappointment. Compounding his sin, Thenot is aware of the

[35] James's proclamations following the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot illustrate his desire for ecumenical unity – for national redemption and the restoration of order – but also his recognition that he must exile the truly radical and resistant sectarians from England for this peace to occur. Otherwise, they would continue to sow disunity and violence among the otherwise amenable, moderate sects.

paradox of his intemperance, yet persists, bemoaning: "such my affection, set / On that which I should loathe, if I could get" (IV.i.497-498). His encounter with Clorin tests her character – can she redeem the sinner when her very holiness prompts him to sin? Her initial pity and sympathy only inflame Thenot further. She considers the quandary of his destructive devotion:

> Did ever man but he
> Love any woman for her constancy
> To her dead lover, which she needs must end
> Before she can allow him for her friend,
> And he himself must needs the cause destroy,
> For which he loves, before he can enjoy? (IV.i.499-504)

Clorin opts for a self-sacrificial act, risking debasing her own reputation to evoke the loathing Thenot had foretold. She prefers that he lose his delusion of love rather than his life, as he will if he continues to pine away in her presence. Clorin dispels his perception of her as special and holy, feigning corruption to drive Thenot from his devotion. The method is harsh but not violent, coercing him to reject his professed devotion of his own accord by forcing him to recognize the shallowness of his faith in her. Fletcher's construction of this conflict raises a curious suggestion – that apostasy is preferable to idolatry or blasphemy. Thenot is incapable of reforming his faith – of changing his worship while the object of faith remains intact – and chooses finally to focus solely on his profession as shepherd, relinquishing his devotion to the Holy Virgin and presumably any higher ideas than his sheep.

Clorin rejects Thenot's intemperate devotion and seems pleased to have the Satyr serve as her connection to the rest of the community, but she remains in fairly regular contact with her neighbors. Her choice to relinquish earthly comforts leads her to a life of healing service to others, correcting the aftermath of their indulgences. She is more than a lay healer, her abilities to cure mysteriously resulting from her vow of celibacy:

> Only rememb'ring what my youth did gain
> In the dark, hidden, virtuous use of herbs.
> That will I practise, and as freely give
> All my endeavors, as I gained them free.
> . . . . . .
> These I can cure, such secret virtue lies
> In herbs appliéd by a virgin's hand. (I.29-32, 39-40)

Her purity qualifies Clorin to be a conduit of powers beyond ordinary humanity – the Holy Virgin as healing intercessor, subjugating herself in the service of those who fail to imitate her conquering of human frailty. Through subjugation, she paradoxically becomes elevated in society, rising even above the male hierarchical figures in the community. She becomes the means by which Pan, the shepherds' god, manifests his protection of those lowly, rural figures – the feminine actualizing the mysterious masculine power.[36]

Clorin's conduct balances the gentle and firm, painfully revealing the sins of her flock, by didactic play or fiery trial, before she heals their wounds and souls. Her greatest success occurs with the woman least like her – the pseudo-witch of the drama, Amarillis. The name might derive from Guarini's divinely-descended bride, but the character is more akin to Corisca. The wayward shepherdess uses magic, derived like Clorin's healing ability from earlier generations, to further her sexually-predatory agenda, intending to take advantage of a number of innocent shepherds. She seems as irredeemable as Thenot and the Sullen Shepherd, set in her ways and uncaring of those she might hurt in the process. Her daring leads to her downfall when she is victimized by her fellow outlier the Sullen Shepherd, whom she had enlisted to aid her plotting. The experience proves formative, as

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[36] Sharon Rose Yang interprets this circumstance at length in *Goddesses, Mages, and Wise Women: The Female Pastoral Guide in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Drama* (2011). She reads Clorin's role as the patriarchal subjugation of classical feminine power, continuing her exploration of the Virgin Mary as a Christian containment of pagan, empowered female figures. She explains the paradox of a virgin shepherdess as efficacious representative of a lecherous god. She leaves unaddressed questions of the ramifications for women and their worship of having a figure like the Virgin Mary at the height of the heavenly hierarchy in Christianity, particularly Catholicism. See the work of Patricia Crawford and Miri Rubin for their more extensive commentary on the larger gender ramifications of the Protestant reformation of Mary.

Amarillis becomes penitent and chooses to pursue absolution, though she cannot attain it on her own, rather than exile. As Fletcher repeats multiple times throughout his play, virginity is at the core of the goodness of this community, providing strength, blessings, and protections. Yet, the figure of Amarillis, who goes to the greatest lengths to threaten and undermine these defenses, prompting violence and loathing among her neighbors, becomes the example by which virginity proves its worth. Clorin can show, by interceding to aid Amarillis once she desires change, that the truly penitent in this community can receive absolution, no matter their earlier transgressions.

John Fletcher confronts the subversive and idolatrous potential of religious figures like the Holy Virgin, but he also maintains the traditional beneficence that surrounds them, in spite of Protestant reforms. He creates a clear, if simple, doctrine over the course of his five acts. Fletcher epitomizes the dangers of uncritical adoration (unchecked Catholic idolatry) and also of denying all possible wonder and miracles in the world (strict Protestant demystification). Faith alone is not sufficient, either untried or undesired (a particularly contentious issue in a nation of enforced church attendance and Oaths of Allegiance). Sanctity must be chosen and acted upon, but with the promised aid of a more perfect intercessor, Clorin, the Holy Virgin. The established religious structures in the community are less sound, however, and those individuals tasked with directing the faithfulness of the community prove problematic. The play begins with the Priest sprinkling holy water on shepherds and shepherdesses, intoning:

> I do wash you with this water.
> Be you pure and fair hereafter.
> From your liver and your veins,
> Thus I take away the stains;
> All your thoughts be smooth and fair;
> Be ye fresh and free as air.
> Never more let lustful heat
> Through your purgéd conduits beat,

> Or a plighted troth be broken,
> Or a wanton verse be spoken
> In a shepherdess's ear.
> Go your ways; ye are all clear. (I.146-157)

The verses read as a ritual of reconciliation, wiping away sin and re-bestowing purity and chastity on the community. The evocation of Catholicism in this scene is clear, treating reconciliation sacramentally but not negatively, at odds with the Church of England's reformed status of the act. Even more problematic are the apotropaic elements of the rite; the holy water is not just symbolic, but also ostensibly efficacious in purifying the tainted congregants of their sins.

If the Protestant audience felt uncomfortable at this staging of Catholic ritualism surrounding the reconciliation still available to them in the English Church, they might be put at ease when the Priest is proven powerless. He can neither purify his flock effectively nor protect them from harm, unable to inspire them to avoid sin. By the end of the play, each of his forbidden sins of mind, word, and body have transpired. To more fully deflate the empty ritualizing of the Priest, Fletcher might simply have had the man repeat his actions, continuing the cycle of earthly sin and ritualized redemption in mockery of Catholic tradition. Instead, the Priest turns to a greater power; he supplicates the aid of the one he calls "honored Virgin" (V.i.394) asking her what he must do to repair the fault lines of their forest paradise. This admission of personal insufficiency paradoxically strengthens the shepherd religion by finally unifying the previously disparate figures of religious practice in the community – Clorin, the Satyr, Pan, and the Priest. In the process, Clorin must leave her liminal role as incidental intercessor by both election and action. She maintains her humility and humanity still while accepting the role of spiritual center of the community, so that she is poised between the realms of gods and humanity.

In her communal ascension, Clorin has become the unambiguous Marian analogue, assuming her place firmly in the play's pagan-Christian spiritual hierarchy. She is served by the servants of the god, Pan, yet is more accessible and humane in answering the congregation's supplication. By her action, the merely symbolic actions of her Priest become finally efficacious. She responds to his request with clear direction:

> Fume all the ground,
> And sprinkle holy water, for unsound
> And foul infection gins to fill the air;
> It gathers yet more strongly; [take a pair]
> Of censers filled with frankincense and myrrh,
> Together with cold camphire. (V.i.407-412)

Clorin's prescription is laden with Catholic apotropaic elements, exceeding the Priest's former ritualism with the addition of incense and, elsewhere, candles. She instructs the Priest in additional ceremonies to achieve better ends, suggesting the worth of corrected sacramentalism. The Catholic elements of Fletcher's play are now undeniable – holy virgin, priest, supplication, intercession, holy water, incense, rites, and rituals. The opportunity for Fletcher to satirize these reformed and banished symbols is at its peak, ripe for a Protestant rhetorical deflation. Yet, her prescriptions do indeed banish sin and restore order to the pastoral world. Clorin proves that her processes are not sleight of hand or trickery meant to pacify the masses, but the means of true godly redemption at the point of tragedy.

If audiences desire to read Fletcher here as showing the trick behind the religious tenets and mocking the Protestant-dubbed superstitious absurdity of Catholic ritual with staged mysticism, the course of the play will prove disappointing. Rather, Fletcher sets forth a pseudo-pagan community where the basic ecumenical Christian ideals have been sanctified in practice. Whether the play stands most strongly as allegory, pastoral exploration of possibility, or Anti-Sectarian fantasy, *The Faithfull Shepherdess* is most certainly not simply Protestant Post-Reformation catechism, dramatizing the deconstruction and destruction of

the England that could no longer be by staging a forest that never was. Fletcher ends his work having banished the over-indulgent and exiled the demystifier, tasking the shepherds and shepherdesses with achieving higher moral standards. Their Priest oversees them with greater vigilance, but the community also now possesses the comforting assurance that the Holy Virgin remains ready to intercede "lest harmless people catch / Mischief or sad mischance" (V.i.579-580). No matter the railing of Protestant reformers and sectarians, the suggested blessing offered – intercession on behalf of the wayward but devoted – would seem a difficult prospect for bewildered believers throughout Christian England to reject, Catholic or not. Fletcher's play does not resurrect the specter of Catholicism, staging Counter Reformation, but nor does he simply mock that faith's corpse. Rather, the tragicomedy considers the tragedy of communal disunion and the blessing of reunification. In this, the intercession of English Catholic memory – through ritual and doctrine – is essential for the community to resolve its own dissociation.

Near Tragedy and Dramatic Belief

The wake of the failed Gunpowder Plot, discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, evoked strong responses from sectarians throughout England and from interested parties in Continental Europe. The aftermath of the event became a rallying cry for both further and counter reformations, amplifying the efforts already continuing from the reign of Elizabeth to that of James. These extant voices often prove the most sectarian and polemical, unreflective of the less certain masses, still struggling for self-definition and certainty in their religious orientations. The iconic nature of the Virgin Mary and her analogous representations present one method of beginning to decipher the muffled doctrinal confusion of the transitional period. Guarini's depiction, imported and popularized in England in the later years of Elizabeth's reign, would have paled in comparison to the

queen's own assimilation of the powerful Marian mythos. His Diana is a darker, subtler, and more distant echo of Mary, virginal and matriarchal, responsive to supplicants but willing to inflict terror and suffering on generations of a community. Fletcher's Holy Virgin more comfortably appears in the aftermath of Elizabeth's death, allowing a juxtaposition of Elizabeth's staged scene of pastoral, frenzied destruction with the play's final scene of peaceful reunification and redemption. Both scenes are dramatic, drawing on the lingering power of the Virgin Mary in Christianity while reshaping the figure according to the needs of the moment.

My reading of Queen Elizabeth and Fletcher's Clorin as both simultaneously destructive and sustaining, where the former is violent and the latter restorative, might seem incommensurable. Huston Diehl explores this complexity in *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage* (1997), arguing that the religious remainders of the Post-Reformation, particularly the ritualistic, ceremonial, and intercessory, maintained power for audiences even as their unmooring from mainstream practice allowed more malleability in their application, particularly in theatre. However, by turning Catholicism's mysticism into stage trickery, the playwrights both adored what the Reformation had displaced and destroyed that old faith's mystery at once. Diehl concludes that:

> Shakespeare and his contemporaries […] explore what is lost when the medieval world breaks apart, and they dramatize the fear and confusion that ensue, even as they adopt the demystifying and revolutionary strategies of the reformers. If, for them, iconoclasm is liberating and exhilarating, it is also disturbing and even terrifying. I see them as killing what they love—sumptuous spectacle, awesome ceremony, wondrous magic, and the older, miraculous forms of theatricality. (217)

This commingled appreciation and destructive urge among a portion of Elizabethan playwrights is evidenced at the end of that Queen's reign. But, I would contend that these dual urges do not necessarily fade with time and the distance of English citizens from their state-sanctioned Catholic pasts, even among Protestants, as we might expect.

Diehl notes that by the time of John Milton the nostalgic yearning had passed, leaving only the destructive urge. But do those transitional generations under the reigns of Elizabeth and James, bereft of a personal connection to Catholicism but still enmeshed in its debris, simply lose one element of the conflicted duality while maintaining the other? The complicated portrayals of Catholic remainders like the Virgin Mary on the Protestant-censored stage by playwrights, both Catholic and Protestant, suggest that the reverse might also be true – that the theatrical depiction of these elements might come to be sustaining and even redemptive, rather than solely destructive. Logically, those elements of Catholicism not assimilated into the Protestant mainstream would simply fade over time. But, occasionally these remainders seem to erupt again, in the framed art of converts and on the stages of the Protestant public, fulfilling the desire, in the words of McClure and Wells, for a "powerful source of religious comfort, hope and joy" (63). Undeterred by sectarian Protestantism's continuing efforts to efface and replace, these eruptions suggest a more amorphous, less contained range of Christianity in England, open to spiritually-creative recombination across sectarian boundaries.

CHAPTER 2

REFORMED AND RECUSANT: DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH(S)

Was William Shakespeare secretly a Catholic? The question of the playwright's true belief has spawned a sub-field of modern publication and polemic in the industry of Shakespeare, surpassed in zeal perhaps only by those that would argue Shakespeare was not even Shakespeare.[37] Such arguments, however, are decidedly modern lacking evidence of any substantial concern during the actual life of Shakespeare.[38] I do not mean to say that the religion of individuals was not a matter of concern for the people of early modern England, as it patently was. Rather, I argue that the modern drive to affiliate each famous name with a particular sect suggests a specificity that does not reflect the reality of early modern belief and affiliation. Relating terms like Anglican and Puritan to a determined set of beliefs is anachronistic, and suggesting that Catholicism might be read in certain subtle habits of language presumes boundedness to what had become a diffuse and ill-defined congregation within the nation. Further, and more importantly, categorizing individuals according to sect implies that they must act and speak according to the beliefs of that sect, or else be aberrant

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[37] See for instance: Jean-Christophe Mayer's *Shakespeare's Hybrid Faith* (2006), David N. Beauregard's *Catholic Theology in Shakespeare's Plays* (2008), Clare Asquith's *Shadowplay: The Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare* (2005), Eric Sams's *The Real Shakespeare: Retrieving the Early Years, 1564-1594* (1995), Park Honan's *Shakespeare: A Life* (1998), or Beatrice Batson's *Shakespeare's Christianity: The Protestant and Catholic Poetics of Julius Caesar, Macbeth, and Hamlet* (2006).

[38] The evidence of an early modern interest in Shakespeare's belief is minimal, including a possible disparaging allusion by the cartographer and historian John Speed to Shakespeare as a Catholic in his *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (1612) in defense of Sir John Ouldcastle – the original of the *Henry IV*'s Falstaff. Speed writes: "That N. D. author of the three conuersions hath made Ouldcastle a Ruffian, a Robber, and a Rebell, and his authority taken from the Stage-plaiers, is more befitting the pen of his slanderous report, then the Credit of the iudicious, being only grounded from this Papist and his Poet, of like conscience for lies, the one euer faining, and the other euer falsifying the truth" (637). Samuel Schoenbaum established the common reading of this textual moment in his book *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life* (1987), glossing Robert Persons as the "Papist" and Shakespeare as the "Poet," with the association suggesting the latter as Catholic. Subsequent scholarship that addresses Speed and his aspersion tends to read the quotation through Schoenbaum rather than returning to the source, not addressing the original's textual note that reads, "Papists and Poets of like conscience for fictions" (637). Is Speed necessarily suggesting the "Poet" is Catholic, or merely that papists are as prone to fabulation as poets and thus that neither is a fit source for historical truths? I tend to believe the second reading.

and in need of new classification. The approach is scientific, but it is also often reductionist. What Shakespeare might have believed is meaningful and relevant to understanding what he wrote, but his plays are neither spiritual autobiographies nor soliloquies. The works exist in conversation with the historical moments in which they were produced, a time when the religion of a popular culture figure might have been an issue of curiosity but the real interest lay with those whose belief determined the faith of the nation – the kings and queens of past and present. Shakespeare offered his own interpretations of these figures in works like his *King John* (1595) and the collaboration with John Fletcher *Henry VIII, or All is True* (1613), both of which reject early modern anti-sectarianism in intriguing ways. The earlier play condemns sectarians and their politicization of religion, probing the veracity of belief underlying the conflicts of the medieval King John. The latter play is more generous in its reading of religion, even that which is corrupted by politics, as basically sincere though the work still condemns sectarian enforcement. The two works by Shakespeare reinterpret the received polemical histories of writers like John Bale and John Foxe – they reimagine the English Christian mythology as more than simply Catholic or Protestant – to propose Christianity (and its corruptions) as once more a common, rather than contentious, belief. Such contentiousness was foundational for the Church of England and the policies of the Tudor monarchs, so that the evolution and strengthening of the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic between the two plays was possible in large part due to the ecumenical platform of King James I.

James refused to clearly affiliate himself with sectarians, inflaming efforts both diplomatic and terroristic in response. Two years after assuming the throne from Elizabeth I, he nearly became another in the history of martyr kings, providing further material for polemical historians. On November 5th, 1605, James published a proclamation describing

"one of the most horrible Treasons that ever was contrived, that is, to have blowen up this day, while his Majestie should have bene in the upper House of the Parliament, attended with the Queene, the Prince, all his Nobilitie and the Commons, with Gunpowder," which that day had been foiled with the discovery of Guy Fawkes in the vault below Parliament (Larkin and Hughes, 123). The plot was (and is) commonly believed to be a manifestation of the Continental Catholic conspiracy to overthrow the Protestant governance of England and return the nation to its former faith.[39] Beyond serving as evidence of the heavenly blessing James possessed as monarch of England, the disrupted plot also proved politically advantageous to James in a second way – by seeming to give the lie to the suspicion that James himself was involved in the Continental effort to counter-reform England. If he were the great Catholic hope, why would his co-religionists seek to transform him into a powerful Protestant martyr? Guy Fawkes and his co-conspirators had presented James with a near perfect opportunity to shore up doubts concerning his doctrine, to align himself unambiguously with the Protestant cause, and to root out all pervasive Catholics, radical or not. In a proclamation published a mere two days later, James sternly and decisively dismissed any such expectations. He writes first of the conspiracy: "which howsoever cloaked with zeale of Superstitious Religion, aymed in deed at the Subversion of the State, and to induce an horrible confusion of all things" – the conspirators were indeed "utterly corrupted with the Superstition of the Romish Religion," but their ends were unsectarian anarchy rather than Catholic counter-reformation (124). He then proceeds to censure those subjects who spread rumors of the conspiracy:

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[39] Periodically the conspiracy theory reemerges that suggests the Gunpowder Plot as an English Protestant attempt (perhaps masterminded by Robert Cecil himself) to force James to abandon his tolerant treatment of English Catholics and to clearly align himself with the more reform-minded sects of Protestantism. A more extensive argument for this theory is John Gerard, S.J.'s *What Was the Gunpowder Plot? The Traditional Story Tested by Original Evidence* (1897), which has been derided, countered, and at times even appreciated since its publication.

> wee doe heare that many do spread abroad, that this Conspiracie was intended onely for matter of Religion, and that forreine Princes our neighbours are interessed therin, which Rumours are divulged by busie persons both to scandalize the Amitie wherein wee stand with all Christian Princes and States, and to give unto lewde persons hope that they shall be backed in their enterprises by great Potentates.

Such gossipers risked "paine of our displeasure and to bee punished as persons seeking the disturbance of the Peace" (125-126). Rejecting calls for sectarian enforcement, James responded to the conspiracy and its aftermath with an ecumenical insistence on maintaining the bonds of the Christian community, Protestant and Catholic, against any who would seek to foment violent disunion.

James's persistence in holding the ecumenical line in his religious dealings frustrated his would-be allies across the Christian spectrum, from Catholic to Puritan. His appreciation for the interreligious dialogue of sectarians was intellectual, but encountered difficulty in practice as more radical groups rejected the *Via Media* of his Church of England. So in spite of his attempts in the immediate aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot to hold distinct the political and religious, he took the Parliament's direction in supporting the implementation of the "Oath of Allegiance" in 1606 as necessary following the attempted terrorism. The oath targets Catholics especially, as proclaimed by the title of the act containing it, "An Act for the better discovering and repressing of Popish recusants," and the language within both that act and the oath itself, which specifically addresses the Gunpowder Plot and the perceived threat of Catholics willing to assassinate James on the order of the Pope (Kenyon 456-459).[40] Known and convicted Catholics were thereby limited in occupation, travel,

[40] The implementation of the 1606 Oath of Allegiance relied upon the discovery or confession of recusant Catholics, so that those Catholics sufficiently discreet in their belief might escape the requirement to swear their primary allegiance to the king in matters earthly, in spite of any direction by the Pope. A 1673 amendment by Charles II, titled "An Act for preventing dangers which may happen from Popish recusants," sought to remedy this oversight by commanding that any individual who found him or herself within "thirty miles distant from the city of London or Westminster" and in service to or receiving, however tenuously, a salary from the throne must appear at court to publicly proclaim the "several oaths of supremacy and allegiance" (Kenyon 461).

monetary and land holdings, and, unsurprisingly, the possession of any weaponry, armor, or gunpowder. The act and oath again signaled James's willingness to reprimand his wayward believers and seek to ensure their proper national allegiance and devotion to his rule, even where he conflicted with the proclamations of Rome. The legislation should have stood as proof for Protestant doubters that James would enforce punitive measures as required rather than simply trusting that his recusant citizens were honorably bound to recognize his rule.

Even still, questions of James's personal faith persisted, as did demands that he enforce compulsive Protestantism either more liberally or conservatively. Attempting to settle once more the question of his belief and how it might affect his rule of England, James had to confront one of the more recent examples of a controversial religious martyr – his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots. Forced to abdicate the Scottish throne in favor of her infant son and later executed in England on charges of attempting to seize the throne from Elizabeth I, Mary remained a firebrand even after her death. James needed to express his own understanding of his religious genealogy in order to defuse Mary's rhetorical power to taunt or entreat him. One of the most intriguing responses he offered addresses the views not of Protestant critics, but Catholic ones. Having been dubbed a heretic by Cardinal Bellarmine and his coreligionists, James reasserts his patrilineal inheritance of Protestantism through his father and grandfather in the newly affixed introduction to the 1609 republication of his *Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance*. Turning to the more troubling suggestion of inheritance from his mother, James acknowledges her papist affiliations but proclaims her "so farre from being superstitious or Iesuited therein" (33). He continues that his mother never pressed him to convert, but rather, even "at her last words" she sent word to him: "That although she was of another Religion then that wherin I was brought up; yet she would not presse mee to change, except my owne Conscience forced mee to it. For so

that I led a good life, and were carefull to doe Iustice and governe well; she doubted not but I would be in good case with the profession of my owne Religion" (34). James rebuffs Catholic critiques of his own religious self-identification by citing his mother's supposed expression of unorthodox Catholic belief, having rejected those elements she dubbed "superstitious" and distasteful to her spiritual sense. In doing so, he appropriates the dual Catholic and Protestant imagery of his mother as promoting the Catholic cause in her relationships throughout the British Isles. The introduction essentially rewrites the English perception of Mary established under the reign of Elizabeth, when popular opinion demonized the Scottish queen to justify her expulsion from Scotland and imprisonment and execution in England.

In rooting his ecumenical approach to the rule of English Christians in both Protestantism and liberal Catholicism, James promotes a belief in "Adiaphora" – matters indifferent – as a key to the reconciliation of the sects with obvious though perhaps not incommensurate differences. This adiaphorism is influential in the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic, which considers beliefs from across the sectarian range simultaneously in play in order to test their practical religious worth, their usefulness in achieving the "good life" and being in "good case" with Christianity. Just as James found it necessary to confront the established perceptions of Catholicism in order to make his claim for its good influence on his own belief, so those writers participating in the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic needed to reinterpret once again the received Protestant mythology that countless others had developed from the start of England's Protestant identity. In doing so, they first need to deconstruct the claims of their Protestant forefathers so that they might then consider the more beneficial possibilities of a reconstructed Christianity beyond the contemporary sectarianism.

De-Secting the Protestant Mythology

In order to gain a full sense of the progressiveness of such an aesthetic, particularly within a nation defined by its Protestantism, facing domestic terrorism and imminent Continental war over matters religious, I want to start first by considering an early contribution to the English Protestant mythology that promotes markedly polemicized representations of both King John and King Henry VIII – John Bale's *Kynge Johan* (~1538).[41] Written a few short years after Henry's divorce from Katherine of Aragon and official break with the Roman Catholic Church, the play participates in the early English struggle to determine what it meant to be Protestant and English – the question that would spawn such divisiveness among sectarians as the Reformation progressed and the Post-Reformation era began. For Bale, the answer begins simply enough (in theory, at least) that to be a good Protestant is to reject Catholicism and to root out all of its accompanying ills. Adopting a tactic that would become de rigueur in Protestantism, Bale illustrates his ideal of the faith through the use of model historical figures, the title king (1166-1216). He fashions John as a martyr for his proto-faith against the monolithic corruption of the Roman Church, and the writer's contemporary king, the long-awaited savior succeeding where his predecessor had failed. The play contains blatantly polemical characterization, plotting, and moralization. For instance, Cardinal Pandolphus, the key figure charged by the Pope (the allegorical "Usurpid Power" in religious dress) with excommunicating the rebellious king, is indeed the character of "Privat Welth." Bale's characteristic lack of subtlety demands little in the way of interpretation to understand his message of condemnation and sanctification in celebrating a proto-Protestant champion struck down for his efforts. Nevertheless, an "Interpreter" appears between the first and second acts to explicate the events of the play and to explicitly

[41] I reference here the version prepared and generously shared by Gerard P. NeCastro on his site "From Stage to Page," hosted by the University of Maine at Machias.

connect the unsuccessful efforts of the martyred King John with his Protestant heir apparent, King Henry VIII. The Interpreter declares of John and his time:

> How he was of God a magistrate~appoynted
> To the governaunce of thys same noble regyon,
> To see maynteyned d~ie true faythe and relygyon.
> But Satan the Devyll, whych that tyme was at large,
> Had so great a swaye that he coulde it not discharge. (I.1089-1093)[42]

Satan's desires neatly map onto the efforts of the Roman Catholic Church, represented mainly by the Pope and Pandolphus and their collusions with characters like Sedition and the easily swayed population, to foil and dispose of the troublesome Christian righteousness of King John. Bale's depiction becomes a memorialization of an aborted Protestant nativity inhibited by Catholic evil.

Bale makes heavy use of pathos in describing the sorrowful end of John, whom he fashions as a kind of medieval Moses, and of John's reformist efforts. But the playwright also reinforces the properly Christian joy that good English citizens might discover in England's own analogue of King David, King Henry VIII:

> That hys poore people ded styli in the desart dwell,
> Tyll that Duke Josue, whych was our late Kynge Henrye,[43]
> Clerely brought us in to the lande of mylke and honye.
> Asa stronge David at the voyce of verytie,
> Great Golye, the Pope, he strake downe with hys slynge
> Rest[o]rynge agayne to a Christen lybertie (I.1112-1117)

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[42] The line numbering and any related errors are my own.

[43] Though the earliest date suggested by editors for *Kynge Johan* is 1538, this line clearly suggests either a later date for the work, postdating Henry VIII's death in 1547, or a later emendation. In 1838, the Camden Society published an edition of the play based on a manuscript in the library of the Duke of Devonshire. The editor of the volume, John Payne Collier, describes the manuscript as: "thoroughly corrected by him [Bale], with various passages of greater or of lesser length inserted, which, after the copy had been made by the scribe he employed, he thought it right to add, to render the production more complete" (ix), allowing for the possibility of Bale continuing to revise and adapt his work over time as the Reformation progressed. The name John Payne Collier might raise suspicions, as the man is most remembered today as one of the great Shakespearean forgers, though scholars generally attribute his "creative" recoveries to his individual publications rather than those in concert with the Camden Society. More information on his work as part of the Camden Society, as well as a description of the circumstances of this particular publication, can be found in *John Payne Collier: Scholarship and Forgery in the Nineteenth Century* (2004), an extensively researched, highly detailed two volume monograph by Arthur Freeman and Janet Ing Freeman.

Bale neatly focuses on David's godly successes before his kingship in defeating the encroaching pagan threat embodied in the champion giant Goliath, updated for early modern audiences as the Pope – Protestantism's threatening Roman Antichrist. Presumably, Bale wished to avoid the troubling connotations of David's reign, particularly his ungodly libidinous urges for Bathsheba, though such parallels might fit well onto the baser depictions of Henry VIII's character. Instead, Henry's instigation of the English Reformation becomes the journey to the Christian Promised Land, a freeing of the English from ignorance and enslavement, returning them to an idealized former state with the metaphorical death of that "goliath" Pope. Bale became a part of the larger popular effort to reconstruct English history apart from the Catholic Church, highlighting a long history of proto-Protestantism that laid the groundwork for the fruition of an English Protestant nation under King Henry.

Bale's play represents an extreme example of early Protestant polemic, against which later Protestant polemicists would seem comparatively moderate in their own works. One of the most impactful of these ensuing figures is John Foxe, who wrote the *Actes and Monuments,* also known as *The Book of Martyrs* (1563, 1570,1576, 1583), a Protestant martyrology intended as a counter history and catalog of Christian models to those received from English Catholic history.[44] The text even gained a place alongside the Bible in many English churches, prominent and authoritative in its presence. This widespread display greatly increased the influence of Foxe's work, including on the historical works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Where Bale's early publication date and Protestant extremity exaggerate the scale of comparison between his work and that of Shakespeare, the later dates and ongoing presence of Foxe at the heart of public and popular Protestantism makes his work an ideal

[44] In addition to the copy held in the University of Iowa's Special Collections, the University of Sheffield's site "The Acts and Monuments Online" provides abundant resources for a more sustained consideration of Foxe and his work than this chapter will allow.

counterpoint for reading two works that diverge from the received and official mythology of England.[45] The comparison highlights how Shakespeare's *King John* and Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Henry VIII* are more than the next ideological step in moderating early statements of Protestantism from the likes of John Bale. They offer their own evolving aesthetic that critiques the Protestant mythology as overblown and insufficient. In its place, the playwrights offer an ideology both more initially pragmatic in its historical reflection and later more idealistic in its dramatic consideration of alternate possibilities of belief and practice.

In his telling of the medieval history in *King John* (1595), Shakespeare largely focuses on King John's conflicts at home and abroad without celebrating the righteousness (or condemning the diabolical nature) of any of the major players. The king of this play is a deeply flawed man and ruler – an apostate who alienates himself from Rome, his French neighbors, and his own people, earning at times throughout the play the enmity and violent responses of each group.[46] Similarly, Shakespeare's version of the Pope's legate Pandulph is a man constantly reorienting his goals in order to maintain the most politically advantageous position for Rome in the midst of the disputes of European powers jockeying for their own advantage, proving not wholly successful in his efforts. Neither of these men offers a model of Christianity that audiences might follow, instead inviting cynicism for the stark politicking underlying each action they claim as in service of the public good. They are hardly alone in a

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[45] Bale was in fact highly influential in Foxe's composition of his master work, providing encouragement, resources, and scholarly connections to the younger writer as he composed the earlier, Latin incarnations of the work. Bale died in 1563, the same year as the first and more popular English edition of the work was published. (*ODNB*)

[46] In a fashion, Shakespeare's John more resembles the depictions of him created in the medieval era, during which chroniclers condemned the king for ineptitude in his rule and bad faith in his dealings with the Roman Catholic Church. Such portrayals provided the source materials that the earlier English Protestant mythologizers needed to reconfigure for their own purposes. In stripping John of his pseudo-martyrdom, Shakespeare achieves a more human, more short-sighted king, who seeks his own purposes but no greater, either for (proto-)Protestantism or against Catholicism.

play with no clear models of right and successful action. The variance from the models of Bale and Foxe and the parallels to late-Elizabethan concerns suggest a weariness, perhaps, within an England that had achieved "Settlement" and yet still contended with the same conflicts of monarch and Pope, the same use of common belief as a rallying cry for uncommon political cause, the same manipulations that had echoed from the very start of the English Reformation.[47] Four key events exemplify this evolution away from sectarian polemic – John's excommunication and recrowning at the hands of Pandulph, the death of John's nephew Arthur, and John's own death at the hands of a monk.

John's memorialization as a Protestant martyr during the Reformation requires that his struggles on behalf of that faith be emphasized. Problematically, of course, Protestantism did not exist in any early modern sense in the time of John, and so the polemicists focus must shift to the opposition – the Catholic Church, against which John struggled, establishing him as a Protestant by default. John's two main interactions with Pandulph – the first in which he is threatened and driven from the church and the second in which he regains Catholic approbation – are central to how the medieval king's place in English and Christian history is ultimately established. Foxe focuses primarily on the misdeeds of the Catholic Church, via Pandulph, in these encounters, lauding the actions of John without analyzing overly much the intentions underlying them. Shakespeare instead portrays John and Pandulph as dueling politicians who alternatively attack and entreat each other as suits their needs, but whose words and actions are largely without deeper moral or religious meaning.

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[47] The timing of the original staging might also suggest why Shakespeare chooses not to address John's divorce from his first wife, Isabel of Gloucester, supposedly over concerns of consanguinity, and his quick marriage to his second wife, Isabellla of Angouleme, though both events would have affected the Continental politics at play throughout the work. Neither wife appears or is even mentioned in the course of the play, sidestepping the obvious parallels to Henry VIII's justification for his own divorce and subsequent marriage to Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth's mother.

The root cause of John's problematic reign in Foxe is not the shallowness of the man, but the relentless corruptions of his Catholic opposition, who Foxe dubs: "the great or more greater enemies (that is with the pope & his popelings)" (327).[48] The anachronism of his argument is blatant at this point, as the non-heretical Christians of John's time might logically all be "popelings" in their recognition of the pontiff as head of the Catholic Church. Foxe reflects the Protestant rhetoric of his day that sought to disenfranchise all Catholics based upon their affiliation with the demonized figure of the Pope. John's medieval heresy can, through the application of early modern presentism, become an act of Christian heroism regardless of the intention behind it. Foxe commends John:"for that keyng farre from the superstition which kinges at that tyme were commonly subject unto: regarded not the popishe masse [. . .] see sayth he, how esily and happily he hath liued, and yet for all that he neuer head anye masse" (335). Better an apostate, Foxe suggests, than a man of faith to a corrupt Church. And, as Foxe is only too happy to illustrate, the Catholic Church he portrays uses superstition to create an ignorant populace who will not question the usurpation of state powers or the division of spiritual and political allegiances. Pandulph confesses as much when he informs John: "all the kings, princes, and the great dukes christened, have labored to the pope to haue license to crosse them seles, and to warre against thee, as upon Gods enemie, & winne thy land, & to make king whom it pleaseth ye pope. And we here now assoyle all those of their sinnes that will aryse against thee here in thyne owne land" (330). While the active seekers of rebellion are the aristocratic figures, Foxe blames the Pope for inciting civil treason and bestowing the guise of religious right upon treasonous actions. Against an enemy wielding salvation and damnation as currency to buy its will, John's resistance and even his heresy are comparatively valiant.

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[48] The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists Foxe as the first user of the term "popeling" with only a scatted selection of disparaging uses in later, primarily anti-Catholic polemical works.

The contention of John and Pandulph in Shakespeare elevates neither man, though the parallels to Queen Elizabeth's own troubled relationship with the Vatican initially should bias the play's audience in favor of the monarch. Pandulph arrives in the play's third act, after John has already declared himself "God's wrathful agent" (II.i), attempting to use military might to suppress questions of his legitimate rule and unfavorable comparisons to his brother, "Richard, that robb'd the lion of his heart, / And fought the holy wars in Palestine" (II.ii.3-4). Where Richard ostensibly fought to advance the Christian cause and in defense of the Church, John attacks that same church and identifies himself as a lone, heroic figure: "Though you, and all the rest so grossly led, / This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish, / Yet I, alone do me oppose / Against the Pope, and count his friends my foes" (III.i.168.171). His taunts evoke the stereotypical Protestant polemic against the Catholic Church and its followers. John attacks the flaws of the Catholic Church, overstepping its limitations in presuming to trifle with monarchs and manipulating its followers through the selling of indulgences. He is against the Catholic Church, clearly, at least in this moment, but the alternative he offers is civil obedience to him, rather than any religious alternative. Pandulph identifies the insufficiency of allegiance solely to John, declaring him a heretic and offering a blessing for any that would revolt against his earthly rule (III.i.174-175). His initial response reveals the inextricable nature of politics and religion that undercuts John's proposed independent rule – for reasons both political and religious, Pandulph can confidently threaten John with the forces of France if the English king continues to resist the rule of Rome. Lacking a unifying sense of alternative religion, John can neither claim allies in religion nor counter Pandulph's threat that the individual will be: "canonized and worshipp'd as a saint, / That takes away by any secret course / Thy Hateful life" (177-179). The legate's threat echoes the rumors of assassination plots against Elizabeth orchestrated

supposedly by Jesuits and other radicalized Catholics, who took Elizabeth's ceremonial excommunication from the Catholic Church as Vatican approbation for her murder.[49] The parallel between John and Elizabeth's situations lies in the Catholic Church's use of faithfulness to prompt civil rebellion, rather than in the monarchs themselves. As a strong and active Protestant, Elizabeth could found her response in an established Christian faith, providing spiritual justification largely absent in the character of John.

Unlike Elizabeth, John does not remain consistent in his resistance to the Catholic Church; he is as willing to re-embrace Catholicism as he was to leave it when that relationship suits his maintenance of power. As John repeatedly proves, his desire for greater control is his actual compulsion for the majority of his deeds, rather than any devotion to conscience.[50] He reconverts and resubmits to the Pope's rule once he finds his reign threatened beyond his own defensive capability. His self-faith is practically insufficient: "Our discontented counties do revolt; / Our people quarrel with obedience, / Swearing allegiance and the love of soul / To stranger blood, to foreign royalty" (V.i.9-12). Severed from the web of politics and religion directed by the Vatican, John cannot stand on the strength of his perceived morals and abilities as a king. His abdication is ceremonial, but yet so is his reacceptance by Pandulph. Each man might invoke God, but Christianity merely overlays the actions of two individuals seeking to increase their own power through the enlargement of allegiances. Faith is simply a façade, an easy means of justifying questionable deeds, and in staging this reality in the present of *King John*, Shakespeare undercuts the

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[49] In 1570, Pope Pius V published the papal bull "Regnans in Excelsis," officially excommunicating the Protestant Elizabeth and releasing any faithful Catholics from allegiance to her will.

[50] Historically, John's legacy as king must contend with the overblown nationalistic adoration of his brother, Richard, who openly despised the English language and nation even as he ruled England. That former king is repeatedly invoked over the course of the play, present as a specter of memory and in the visage of his bastard son.

mythologizing of writers like Bale and Foxe in attempting to retroactively use the questionable deeds and individuals of the past to justify their faith in the present.

John fails as a model of a Christian king and fails further as a Christian man in his handling of his nephew Arthur, a pivotal event that Bale wisely chose to avoid entirely and Foxe struggles to spin in his efforts to create John as proto-Protestant martyr. Initially, Foxe and Shakespeare rehearse the same history of the boy prince – aligned with the French king, captured by English forces in battle, calling his uncle an usurper of an English throne that should rightly be his, and imprisoned thereafter in a tower. The difference between Foxe and Shakespeare's ideological intentions becomes clear in how each writer then depicts the troubling and uncertain circumstances surrounding Arthur's death, an obvious opportunity to judge the personal character of the king. Foxe's entire address of Arthur occupies a single paragraph, which he concludes as quickly, succinctly, and definitively as possible, attempting to minimize the damage done to his valorization of King John: "(whether by leaping into the ditch thinking to make his [Arthur's] escape, or whether by some privy hand, or by what chaunce else: it is not yet agreed upon in stories) he finished his lyfe. By occasion wherof, the forsayd kyng Jhon was had after in great suspition: whether justly or unjustly, the Lord knoweth" (327). Foxe acknowledges the rumors surrounding Arthur's death, allowing for the possible guilt of John, but affords the ability to judge the figure neither to his readers nor to himself, only to God. Having concluded the question of the child-heir with religious conviction, Foxe dismisses the matter.

Where Foxe rushes, Shakespeare revels, featuring at length John's duplicitous intentions towards the boy and his demise. John begins a vague conversation with Hubert, the keeper of Arthur in his imprisonment: "Death." "My Lord?" "A grave. "He shall not live" (III.iii.65-66). The king coaxes until the man catches the implication of murderous

intent, concluding: "Enough. / I could be merry now. Hubert, I love thee" (66-67). Where Foxe hedged, uneasily acknowledging the rumors in his source materials of John's murderous intentions, Shakespeare openly depicts John as indirectly yet undeniably commanding the boy's murder. The playwright compounds his characterization of the king as manipulative and depraved a full two acts later, when the English people raise doubts about John having their best intentions in mind, and John realizes that Arthur's death might prove his political damnation. John accuses his "beloved" Hubert of inhumanity for killing the boy though the king never desired that he do so. When Hubert understandably objects that his only desire was to fulfill the wishes of the king as he understood them, John bemoans: "It is the curse of kings to be attended / By slaves that take their humors for a warrant / To break the bloody house of life" (IV.ii.208-210). The audience, omniscient in the theatre as they cannot be as readers of the *Book of Martyrs*, knows that John's denial here is still more evidence of his willingness to change course and damn those who might suffer in his pursuit of his own ends. Of course, Shakespeare's Arthur is not actually dead yet – compelled though he is to fulfill his monarch's command and earn that man's love, Hubert follows his conscience in sparing the boy a torturous death. Arthur's ultimate death is an accident (the first possibility mentioned by Foxe), resulting from his own aborted efforts at escape rather than any plot of John's. Ironically, the English nobles disbelieve this explanation and threaten violence to avenge the boy prince. Shakespeare's depiction complicates his audience's views of the death, but he does not suggest that this complication should dissuade them from judgment as Foxe does. John is caught in his own manipulative trap; seeking plausible deniability in the death of Arthur, he cannot convincingly claim his innocence when his desires are fulfilled by alternative means.

While the course of events surrounding Arthur's death is minimized in Foxe and of key importance for Shakespeare, the opposite is true in the case of John's death. The end of the king is, after all, the event that allows him to become a martyr, and the relative balance of relevance for each writer suggests his respective interests in John's memorialization as a sacrifice for the Protestant cause. Foxe, at the conclusion of his writing on King John, benefits from the opportunity to shift focus from the questionable character of the man he would make martyr to the far darker (and shallower) character of the monk who martyred him. Foxe writes in detail of the monk, here named Simon, who wishes to make a martyr of himself, and is supported, preemptively absolved, and thereafter celebrated by his Abbot and his order. Foxe mocks the members of the Catholic orders at this point, writing: "I would ye did marke wel the wholesome preceedings of these holy votaries, how vertuouslye they obey their kinges, whom God hath appointed: and how religiously they bestow their confessions, absolutions and Masses" (335). There is some irony in Foxe chastising the Catholic Church for lauding unholy deeds by sinful representatives even as he does the same when committed by flawed Protestants. Irony is inherent in the ideological battles of early modern sectarians, and Foxe is empowered by writing a Protestant work for Protestant audiences eager to justify their belief in the history he creates. If Foxe cannot finally prove John to be an early sacrifice for the Protestant cause, he can at least cast him decisively as a victim to the Catholic hierarchy, and perhaps that is enough.

Shakespeare rejects the ease of affiliation to valorize or condemn the characters in his work. The personal character of John, to the detriment of his dramatic legacy, remains central to the conclusion of Shakespeare's play about the king. Attempting to play politics and religion at odds for his own empowerment, John finally falls due to the enmity of both, facing invasion by French forces and apparently "poison'd by a monk" (V.vi.23). The

fulfillment of Pandulph's third act desire for John's life to be taken by secret means hardly arouses the anger or horror that such an assassination might against another monarch. As a result of the domestic and international hatred of John, this final revelation that someone, especially an avowed member of the Catholic hierarchy, however lowly, has ended John's life has a dampened impact on the audience. Though the mysterious monk was ultimately successful, Shakespeare depicts forces both French and English desirous of the bloody honor of killing the king, for issues both religious and political. Victim to his own snares and follies, John's death is unsurprising and the means become less than meaningful; Shakespeare depicts the fall and death of a king, but his title character is no martyr. Though John might die because of a religious conflict, a sense of true faith (of any Christian sort, Protestant or Catholic) is absent in the power plays and manipulations that lay the groundwork for his death.

Re-membering an Anti-Sectarian Mythology

Admittedly, the depiction of John as a Proto-Protestant martyr was always already a weak proposition, taking a deeply-flawed figure whose personal ambition led him to battle the Roman Catholic Church and attempting to make him a crusader for a faith that would not exist until centuries later. Bale achieves this transformation through the sheer extremity of his depiction, but even Foxe's earnest attempts seem tempered by his awareness of John's somewhat flimsy martyrdom. Fervency aside, both men recognized that the strongest example of an English king seeking to free his people from the thrall of martyrdom is the man who actually achieved that schism – King Henry VIII. Henry had his own issues of personal character and intentionality, but at least he succeeded where his martyred predecessors woefully had failed in their attempts. Foxe opens the second volume of his *Actes and Monuments* by proclaiming: "For by hym [Henry] was exiled and abolished out of

the realme the usurped power of the Bysh. of Rome, Idolatrie & superstition somewhat repressed, images and pilgramages defaced, abbays and monasteries pulled down, sects of Religio rooted out, scriptures reduced to ye knowledge of the vulgare tongue, and the state of the Church and Religion redressed" (924). Foxe's celebration of Protestant reduction and destruction is tempered by incompletion, qualified with his "somewhat" and against his readers' knowledge that sects had only proliferated further with each successive publication of the work. Foxe's aim in his mythologizing of Henry is to memorialize the recently deceased king as the founder of a still-evolving, still-perfecting Protestant Church in England, a process willed by God and continued by the contemporary Queen Elizabeth. By the time William Shakespeare and John Fletcher wrote their version of those originating events, *Henry VIII, or All is True* (1613), that queen too had passed, having restored the nation to Protestantism after the Catholic counter-Reformation of her half-sister Mary but leaving a Church of England still flawed, still imperfect. The new king, James, had proposed ecumenicalism in place of simply continuing the reforming trends begun by Henry and continued by Elizabeth.

Shakespeare and Fletcher reflect on this potential course correction in their work. Shakespeare's second play addressing a Protestant hero king does not continue the jaded undercutting of active religion from his *King John*, but neither do the two collaborators simply celebrate the origins of the Church of England as Bale and Foxe do. Instead, they question the means by which Protestantism had finally taken hold in England, setting aside sectarian biases to condemn corruption and celebrate true faith wherever it might fall on the Christian spectrum. They open their account with a chiding and somber prologue rather than a celebration, beginning: "I come no more to make you laugh" and closing:

> Be sad, as we would make ye. Think ye see
> The very persons of our noble story

> As they are living. Think you see them great,
> And follow'd with the general throng and sweat
> Of thousand friends; then, in a moment, see
> How soon this mightiness meets misery;
> And if you can be merry then, I'll say
> A man may weep upon his wedding day (25-32)

Theirs is not a story evidencing how the hand of God works great changes through the works of man, but instead how humans can stray and the repercussions of their assuming to know God's will. The play prompts the audience to mourn the loss of a model of Catholic belief, to critique the corrupt circumstances of that dismissal, and yet to still rejoice in the forthcoming Protestant peace that has arguably already come to pass. Offering their own course correction of the Protestant mythology passed down by Foxe, Shakespeare and Fletcher's adoption of the Anti-Sectarian aesthetic is evident in three foci on this theme present in both the earlier martyrology and the later play: the connection between the reactions of the common English public and Henry's own intentions, the succession of English queens from Katherine of Aragon to Anne Boleyn, and the state of the Catholic Church embodied in Cardinal Wolsey.

Henry's divorce from Katherine of Aragon catalyzed England's departure from the Roman Catholic Church, though that was almost certainly not his intention when he initially proposed the dissolution of their marriage. Indeed, both the martyrology and the play portray Henry as more concerned with personal and civil matters than religious ones, and he only comes to consider the imminent evolution of English Christianity after his divorce has been finalized. Even less than the king, the population would not have foreseen the long-term, far-reaching effects of Henry's divorce from Katherine as it occurred, certainly not conceiving of the creation of a Protestant Church of England. These were high matters, courtly and diplomatic, monarchical but intimate, providing English citizens with minimal voice in and insight into Henry's pursuit of a divorce (quite like the readers or audience

members seeking broader knowledge in *Actes and Monuments* or *Henry VIII*). The common people in each work therefore allow the respective writers to critique how the later early modern public audience might react to a reading or viewing of the historical events. Foxe portrays the public's unavoidable ignorance as undercutting their opinion towards Henry's action, uninformed words from people too unaware to realize the boon they had just received. He writes of the common resistance to a divorce justified by God and the will of learned men: "But yet the mouthes of the common people, in especiall of woman, and such others as favored the Queene, and talked theyr pleasures, were not stopped" (1193). He diminishes the impact of this public resistance by noting the biases inherit in gender, faction, and gossip. Foxe also stresses Henry's patriarchal correction of his people's resistance: "if our true heyre be not known at the time of our death, see what mischeiefe and trouble shall succeede to you and to your children" (1193).[51] The common people are swayed by pathos rather than logic, ignorant of the greater causes of God and country that will prove so beneficial to them. Following the model of Henry, Foxe attempts to correct the wayward and emotional interpretive habits of the commons, using his disparaging account of the short-sighted historical public to do so.

The public of Shakespeare and Fletcher are also prone to emotional reasoning and a devotion to Katherine at the start of the divorce proceedings, but they do so not only due to love or favor but a reasoned appreciation of her character as well. Early in *Henry VIII*, Katherine acts as intercessor for the common people's claim of over-taxation by Cardinal Wolsey. She is literally their voice in court, the last of the intercessory queens of England, and ensures that the will of the people can contend with the wills of Church and State.

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[51] The actual mischief and trouble would follow his son Edward VI's death, when Henry's efforts to ensure that a male heir rule would be unchallenged by declaring both of his daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, illegitimate led to the brief enthronement of Jane Grey.

Henry's chastisement of Wolsey in this scene ironically highlights the tendency of rulers introducing novel practices according to their whims:

> Things done without example, in their issue
> Are to be fear'd. Have you a president
> Of this commission? I believe, not any.
> We must not rend our subjects from our laws,
> And stick them in our will (I.ii.90-94)

The public's understanding of the full range of political and religious machinations behind the closed doors of the English government is limited. Unlike in Foxe's account, when this Henry explains his fears that he will leave his kingdom without an heir (a justification doubted by his own men), he does so within a hall at Blackfriars, only after the divorce has become the topic of public gossip (II.iv). And, Katherine's representation of the people to the court only operates in a single direction; she does not report the concerns of the court and the clashes of its powers back to the common people, and they must instead rely upon rumors that seem to reflect the reality of court developments.

For Shakespeare and Fletcher, the complicity of the common people rather than their ignorance is most relevant, as the public of the play proves itself interested in gossip but largely inactive otherwise. A common commentary runs through the acts, spoken by two and sometimes three gentlemen who meet to gossip on the occasions of major state news. While their words are not without criticism for the men who govern them, the discussions also suggest that the king's fickleness is endemic to the nation. At the start of the fourth act, the men take the stage, addressing the fate of Katherine, by this time Princess Dowager. The first gentleman notes that the divorce is finalized, annulling the marriage, and the Queen "was remov'd to Kimmalton, / Where she remains now sick" (IV.i.35-36). The second gentleman hardly replies with an "Alas, good lady!" when the Coronation processional for the new queen passes by, prompting that same man, now enamored of Anne's visage, to

proclaim: "Thou hast the sweetest face I ever look'd on. / Sir, as I have a soul, she is an angel; /[. . .]/ I cannot blame [The King's] conscience" (IV.i.43-47). The third gentleman compounds this abrupt sympathy to idolatry by proclaiming Anne's presence as "saint-like" (IV.i.83). Are the gentlemen simply fickle or swayed by luxury?[52] The public sphere might criticize the actions of the state in *Henry VIII*, but they also seem to possess an understanding of why Henry chooses to act as he does, illuminating the shallowness of those choices and undermining the normal justification of the monarch – that he possessed superior reason and foresight in exerting his private will. The play's Henry is a flawed king, whose fickleness and impetuousness has far greater implications than those same characteristics in a lesser man. He might become a better man with the birth of his daughter with Anne, but the play suggests that the ramifications of his earlier choices, rather than personal desire for change, necessitate this evolution.

While Henry's religious and moral intentions remain questionable in both works, he is clearly active in one reformation – that of his married life, choosing to divorce Katherine and take Anne as a wife instead. Foxe describes this as the will of God Himself, who had noticed the corruption and suffering rife throughout the English church and "by a straunge and wonderous meanes, whiche was through the kinges divorsement from Lady Katherine Dowager, and marrying with Lady Anne Bullen, in this present year: which was the first occasion and begynnyng of all this publicke reformation, which hath followed since in this Church of England to thys present day" (1192). The immediate juxtaposition of Katherine

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[52] We cannot rely on the coherence of representations of the public in Shakespeare's plays to clarify how we should view these men. Jeffrey Doty in "Shakespeare's *Richard II*, "Popularity," and the Early Modern Public Sphere" (2010) considers a related issue in the unusually nuanced participation of the public in that play. He writes: "Shakespeare sometimes presents the commons in the political sphere as monstrous, and almost always renders them as objects of cruel laughter" (195). Doty later claims the commoners of *Richard II* as exceptions to the pattern of commoners in Shakespeare's earlier histories who "rabidly support whomever fortune favors at the moment" (197). This statement indeed fits these three gentlemen in *Henry VIII*, but the men's fickleness mirrors the fickle desires of Henry himself, swayed by an angelic face to wrest England's fate to a new course.

and Anne suggests a troubling spousal exchange, which Foxe attempts to legitimize as essential to God's intervention. But, even in spite of his earlier dismissal of the common people's sympathy for Katherine, Foxe is surprisingly sympathetic in his account of her. He records at length her woeful, impassioned pleading for explanation and reconsideration of the divorce. In a matter of God's will, when the individuals are merely pawns to achieve the Reformation, Foxe can say that even Katherine, continuing Catholicism aside, was not necessarily bad or more flawed than anyone else in the matter. Her good image is magnified by Henry's own words during the divorce trial: "she is a woman of most gentleness, of most humilitie and buxemnes, yea & of all good qualities apperteynyng to nobilitie, she is without comparison, as I this XX. Yeares, almost have had the true experiment." Henry emphasizes his sorrow for the divorce saying he would marry Katherine again before anyone else, but he sorrowed more that he offended God and had no heir (1193). But, as Henry in the matter of his marriage and Foxe concerning the redemption of the English Church make clear, the will of God required that Katherine be dismissed, and no faithfulness or devotion on her part could change the necessity of the divorce. All that either man can say will not redeem the fate that befalls her.

Katherine's insistent and devoted Catholic faith excludes her from joining the ranks the Protestant heroes in Foxe's martyrology. The ideological freedom of *Henry VIII* allows her to become a model of love and loyalty to husband and adopted nation, whose personal character is inextricable from the Catholic faith she embraces until her death on stage. The theatrical queen commands admiration certainly, but not that which would simply dismiss her personal worth as meaningless in judging her ultimate decline. Fletcher and Shakespeare at first mirror Foxe's depiction of Katherine begging for explanation in the divorce, seeking a flaw in her own behavior to blame, frustrated not by claims to God's will but by the

clouding of bureaucratic corruption. Henry again proclaims her the best wife any man might hope, with "sweet gentleness, / Thy meekness saint like, wife like government, / Obeying in commanding, and they parts / Sovereign and pious else" (II.iv.138-141) – unassailably virtuous in her devotion to God, Church, and husband King. [53] Were that all, this Katherine too might be listed among the necessary losses for the nation's betterment, an individual but not English tragedy. However, Shakespeare and Fletcher's Katherine is not just the obediently Catholic, foreign queen; she is willing to attack the corruption of the Roman Church without slandering the spiritual structure supported by its bureaucracy.[54] And, most importantly, this Spanish Katherine of Aragon becomes the model of traditional English belief in the play. Unlike the other characters passively inheriting and then corrupting the traditions of English history, Katherine's Englishness is a choice. England, Spain, and the Vatican negotiated her marriages to the brothers Arthur and Henry to achieve political ends, without concern for her personal will. But, her choice to remain and fight for her marriage and her adopted people is decidedly her own. She emphasizes this active conversion in a scene that juxtaposes English and Continental, both in terms of nationality and Catholicism. Wolsey and Campeius, the Cardinal sent from Rome, visit Katherine in her apartments to convince her to surrender to the king's proposed separation. They are rebuffed in their attempts to speak with her alone, and begin to use Latin; Katherine demurs:

> O, good my lord, no Latin;
> I am not such a truant since my coming,
> As not to know the language I have liv'd in.

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[53] Amy Appleford writes a strong argument for the concurrently traditional and highly sympathetic, even saintly, figure of the queen in her recent essay, "Shakespeare's Katherine of Aragon: Last Medieval Queen, First Recusant Martyr" in the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* (2010). Appleford inverts the rhetoric of proto-Protestant martyrs from this period to make a claim for the essentially English Catholicism of the Spanish queen.

[54] Katherine is akin in this to James's depiction of Mary, Queen of Scots' willingness to criticize those elements of the Church she found incongruous with the faith it proclaimed, all while maintaining her own faithfulness.

> A strange tongue makes my cause more strange, suspicious;
> Pray speak in English (III.i.42-46).[55]

Her rejection is twofold: first, asserting her active acclimation to the English culture in her time living in the country; and, second, rejecting the "strange" tongue as marking Katherine, Queen of England as alien – an untrustworthy imported stranger. Just as Katherine served as intercessor in English on behalf of *her* English people at the start of the play, she continues to use that language as she intercedes on her own behalf, resiliently representing the English nationality and devotion. Catholic and Spanish, in this moment, Katherine clearly models what the Jacobean, mostly Protestant audience too might value. She will eventually sicken and die on stage, but Shakespeare and Fletcher provide her with a final, angelic vision, re-crowning and celebrating the one powerful character in the play who seems to fully live the belief she espouses to others. Ironically, in deconstructing the received Protestant mythology and martyrology to create their play, Fletcher and Shakespeare retain a clear moment of valorization, though of a Catholic.

This symbolic beatification fixes Katherine's memory on the stage and raises the question of her legacy within England through the person of her daughter. Just before her death, Katherine offers a series of petitions to be presented to her former husband. The first, coming as it does on the eve of the infant Elizabeth's dramatic ascendancy in *Henry VIII*'s plot, is particularly striking. Katherine proclaims:

> I have commended to his goodness
> The model of our chaste loves, his young daughter—

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[55] Multiple scholars, including Julia Gaspar in "The Reformation Plays on the Public Stage" (1993), suggest that Katherine's objection to Latin here might be read as a paradoxically Protestant attack on the use of Latin in Catholic ceremonies. Following that argument, Wolsey and Campeius are attempting to linguistically if not spatially isolate Katherine by using a language unknown to her ladies-in-waiting. However, Alison Shell asserts in her book *Oral Culture and Catholicism in Early Modern England* (2007) that immersion in the Latin of religious ceremony might have provided Catholics across a range of classes and levels of education with a basic aural familiarity with Latin. Wolsey's insistence on Latin would then be less a means of entirely denying understanding to the other women in the room, than a further attempt to maintain control of the conversation with Katherine.

> The dews of heaven fall thick in blessings on her!—
> Beseeching him to give her virtuous breeding—
> She is young, and of a noble modest nature,
> I hope she will deserve well—and a little
> To love her for her mother's sake that lov'd him
> Heaven knows how dearly. (IV.ii.131-138)

If the play were simply a celebration of Protestantism's victory over Catholic corruption, the irony of these lines remind the audience of the daughter Mary's return of the nation to Catholicism and ensuing persecution of Protestant converts. Foxe, for instance, devotes an extensive portion of the second volume of his *Actes and Monuments* to recording "the unprosperous successe of Queene Mary in persecuting Gods people, and how mightily God wrought against her in all her affaires" (2337). However, Katherine's words in *Henry VIII* also suggest the virtuous youth of Mary in the time before her mother was dismissed as queen, inciting the Protestant Reformation. Rather than simply invoking Mary's dark depiction in later Protestant rhetoric, the play's allusion to her instead suggests a complex history of family, faith, and fear for the wellbeing of the nation.

If her daughter Mary complicates the perception of Katherine, the opposite is true of Elizabeth – the earliest perceptions of her in both works begin with the characterization of her mother Anne Boleyn. Foxe makes the connection explicit when he describes the "foresaid Lady anne bullen, mother to our most noble Queene now." The contemporary rule of Elizabeth might account for the effusive though oddly flat praise of Anne that follows, detailing her compulsive generosity in bestowing alms on the needy and the unprecedented order she maintained among her ladies-in-waiting (1237). Otherwise, Anne receives praise by default for being involved in the series of events that led to England's divorce from Rome. The portrayal of Anne in *Henry VIII* is more varied, but the sense of her character remains vague; her character is shallow, defined repeatedly as beautiful but never convincingly established as virtuous or moral. She famously claims that she "would

not be queen" (II.iii.24), expressing her supposed sympathy for Katherine's imminent dismissal, but her subsequent acceptance of Henry's proposal shows her to be either perfidious or fickle in her youth.[56] Rather than from a certain sense of what she wants or truly believes, Anne's character gains depth only when other characters project their judgments and motivations upon her. Cardinal Wolsey offers one of the most complex assessments of the to-be queen, saying:

> The late queen's gentlewoman? a knight's daughter,
> To be her mistress' mistress? the Queen's queen?
> This candle burns not clear, 'tis I must snuff it,
> Then out it goes. What though I know her virtuous
> And well deserving? yet I know her for
> A spleeny Lutheran (III.ii.94-99) [57]

Anne is certainly fine to look upon as demonstrated by the multiple compliments paid by men around her. The audience might even view her avowed rejection of political self-advancement, upended by her dalliances with Henry before his divorce and their marriage, sympathetically in light of the king's influence and power. She might yet possess the virtue noted by Wolsey. But, she also served as the lady-in-waiting to the still-living former queen, and will soon take that queen's throne, an uncomfortable social inversion. More troubling is Wolsey labeling her a "spleeny Lutheran," suggesting that the proto- turned patriarchal-Protestant Henry was wedding himself to the wrong sort of non-Catholic Christian – one already affiliated with a sectarian cause.[58] Her lack of demonstrable depth of character might

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[56] Her denial also foretells her own sorrowful end after accepting Henry's offer of hand, crown, and bed (though perhaps not in that order).

[57] The allusion to Lutheranism might bring to mind Henry's relationship to the historical German monk, particularly the king's publication of "The Defense of the Seven Sacraments" (1521), after which the Roman Catholic Church declared him an official "Defender of the Faith."

[58] Wolsey's accusation of Anne as a Lutheran is not an invention by Shakespeare and Fletcher, at least not entirely. A similar accusation appears in the correspondence of Eustace Chapuys, the ambassador to England from Katherine's nephew, Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor. In a letter dated March 22, 1531, Chapuys writes of: "the Lady [Anne] and her father, who are more Lutherans than Luther himself" (*Calendar of Letters,* vol. 4, 96). The nature of how Chapuys expresses his bias against Anne here – specifying sectarian rather than simply

at least dampen this concern within the play. Indeed, neither depiction of Anne, in Foxe nor Shakespeare and Fletcher, provides a lasting sense of the woman who would be mother to Elizabeth and would meet her end in execution as a traitorous witch.

Where Anne possesses little depth behind her beautiful façade, the character of Wolsey is a tangle of over-indulgence, self-promotion, and skewed faith. Manipulating and judging the fates of the powerful around him, the English Cardinal most clearly emblematizes the corruptions of the Christian hierarchy throughout Europe. Foxe, Fletcher, and Shakespeare agree that the man overreached his profession and that his ends were justly earned for his improprieties. Foxe again devotes a subsection of his martyrology to a negative model of Christianity. He claims he does so reluctantly, preferring to focus on positive models, but his writing relishes the revelation of Wolsey's sins, "wherein is to be seene and noted the expresse image of the proud and vainglorious church of Rome, how farre it differeth from the true church of Christ Iesus" (1120). Wolsey is both singular and synecdochic, a rogue figure attempting to surmount the heights of the Catholic hierarchy and the epitome of all that is wrong within that faith. Foxe's depiction, however, fixes Wolsey in the past perhaps hoping to evoke thankfulness in a Protestant population no longer under the aegis of the Catholic Church. He instructs his readers how, "By the amitious pride and excessive worldly wealth of this one Cardinall, all men may easely understand and iudge whate the state and condition of all the rest of the same order (whom we call spirituall men) were in those dayes, as well as in all other places of Christendome, as especially here in England" (1133). Wolsey becomes a bogeyman of history, confronted and contained by Henry VIII's growing sense of his Protestant kingship. The Catholic

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Protestant inclinations – is peculiar. He seems resentful not only of Anne's displacement of Katherine, but of her continuing manipulation of Henry in matters diplomatic and religious. The ambassador does appear in the play as "Lord Capuchius," but his role is minimal, visiting Katherine right before her death and agreeing to deliver her petitions to the king.

corruption he represents has not changed in kind but in the extent of its influence, forced to retreat by the rise of reforming Protestantism.

Fletcher and Shakespeare offer a broader initial critique of power in their depiction of Wolsey. The Cardinal Campeius serves as a co-conspirator with him in his manipulations. If Wolsey at first represents the corruptions of church hierarchy within England, Campeius epitomizes a sense of the manipulative influence of Continental power and religious politics, Catholic and otherwise. [59] Both men unite to oust Katherine from her place as queen, involving themselves in the divorce proceedings, but she is essentially collateral damage in Wolsey's aims to be Pope – her nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor, will not allow Wolsey's election to that position. Again Wolsey (now doubled by Campeius) acts as both rogue and representative, drawing on his Church influence and air of legitimacy to affect his own ends. Wolsey as much as confesses his manipulation of Katherine's case, though not the self-interest behind it, when he commends Henry: "Your Grace has given a president of wisdom / Above all princes, in committing freely /Your scruple to the voice of Christendom. / Who can be angry now?" (II.ii.85-88). In this moment, both Henry and Wolsey make use of the Cardinal's apparent sanctity apart from political intrigue for their own ends. But, the Reformation would alter the possibility of submitting a cause to religious oversight as a means of circumventing political complication by essentially collapsing both powers into the person of the monarch. As with Shakespeare's *King John*, Fletcher and Shakespeare show the

[59] The playwrights follow the convention of depicting hierarchical corruptions at the level of Cardinals and above, a neat detachment of the Catholic hierarchy directly above the level that persisted in the Church of England, the Archbishops. In his *An Apologie for the oath of allegiance* (1609), James directly addresses this matter of hierarchy when he references his refutation of a published and circulated challenge by Cardinal Bellarmine. He writes, "I was never the man, I confesse, that could think a Cardinall a meet match for a king: especially, having many hundredth thousands of my subjects of as good birth as he. As for his Church dignitie, his Cardinalship I meane, I know not how to ranke or value it, either by the warrant of God his word, or by the ordinance of Emperours of Kings; it being indeed onely a new Papall erection, tolerated by the sleeping conniuence of our Predecessors (I mean still by the plurall of Kings.)" (4-5). James views the historical recognition of Cardinals by kings more as an inaction than approbation. Intriguingly, the suggestion of Bellarmine's (relatively) low birth might allow for a further parallel with Wolsey, increasing the complicated depiction of that character on stage.

falsity through Wolsey of discretely powerful (and corrupting) realms of influence within the monarchy and the Church.

But, Wolsey does not maintain power, and this loss of influence is essential for a reading of the character. The final sense of Wolsey comes not from how he conducts himself in life but how he faces his own death. Having been elected the representative of the Roman Catholic Church, his fate reveals finally how the three writers conceive of the place of that faith in the Post-Reformation world. Foxe's commentary on Wolsey's death is especially peculiar, first suggesting rumors of suicide in the face of earthly punishment: "men sayd that hee willyngly tooke so much quantatie of a strong purgation, that his nature was note able to beare it" (1133). Wolsey's cowardice in the face of righteous justice is compounded by Foxe's oddly medieval suggestion of the Cardinal's fate in the afterlife.[60] Foxe reports:

> his body beyng dead, was blacke as pitch, also was so heavy þt vi. could scarse beare it. Furthermore, it did so stinke aboue the ground, þt they were constreyned to hasten the buriall thereof in the night season, before it was day. At which buriall, such a tempest, with such a stincke there arose, that all the torches went out, and so he was throwen into the tombe, and there was layd (1133).

After the seeming departure of his soul, the visual and olfactory signs of corporeal corruption provide evidence of Wolsey's accumulated sins. These grotesque markers finally destroy Wolsey's charismatic maintenance of his public persona; no longer able to benefit those who served him, the Cardinal is unceremoniously dumped in his tomb. Foxe mentions no funereal rights, instead focusing on the supernatural hastening of the disposal of the

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[60] Medieval hagiography and romance includes accounts of the especially holy, for instance those who would be saints, emitting a beautiful smell – the Odor of Sanctity – after their death, suggesting the incorruptibility of their corporeal and spiritual persons. Conversely, the notably evil or Unchristian would emit a horrid stench immediately upon death, for instance when Thomas Malory writes of the combat between Sir Palomydes and Sir Corsabryne: "Than he smote of his hede. And therewithall cam a stynke of his body, whan the soule departed, that there myght nobody abyde the savoure. So was the corpus had away and buryed in a wood, bycause he was a pay[n]ym" (*Malory* 407).

body. Having dismissed the stinking corpse of Cardinal and Catholicism, Foxe happily returns to the sweeter savor of Protestant martyrs.

Fletcher and Shakespeare do not conclude their depiction of Wolsey by reveling in his inglorious end, but rather they use his death as an exemplar of Christian redemption and forgiveness. Having been publicly shamed for his private luxury and plotting, the Cardinal delivers his signature speech on how ignorant pride has brought about his dishonor, comparing his fall first to the "little wanton boys that swim on bladders" (III.ii.359) and later to Lucifer himself, "Never to hope again" (III.ii.371). Both images evoke bold disobedience in pursuit of uncertain glories for the self, and the individual remembered more for their end than their accomplishment. In "The Wheel of Fortune and the Maiden Phoenix of Shakespeare's *King Henry the Eighth"* (1975), Lee Bliss suggests the moral necessity of this scene of private regret, writing: "Both the length and centrality of this scene indicate the importance of Wolsey's moral regeneration and movement toward Katherine's final calm transcendence of the political world" (12). Wolsey at this point does not and perhaps cannot play the role of the penitent sinner redeemed on the public stage (at least within the reality of the play), a restriction which serves to legitimize his sorrow in private conversation with his servant Cromwell as more genuine than his earlier fits of pathos. Wolsey expects to be forgotten, or perhaps someday redeemed for the good he attempted. He shows no sign of foreseeing the demonization that awaits him in the Protestant national memory, the satisfaction that later generations will feel in reading Foxe's account of his death. Instead, he hopes for a kinder legacy through his negative example, telling Cromwell how he might succeed rightly where Wolsey so monumentally failed. He concludes with the penitent's lament: "Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal / I serv'd my king, He would not in

mine age / Have left me naked to mine enemies" (III.ii.455-457).[61] Wolsey's surrender following his earlier bold mastery of court and conspiracy is affecting, no less for his bold confession than for the complete absence of aspersions cast upon his profession in the Roman Catholic Church. His position empowered his individual sins, but he does not suggest that the faith inspired his wrongdoings.

Similarly, Katherine criticizes both Wolsey and Campeius for failing in their Christian duties, suggesting an endemic problem in the Catholic hierarchy, but she refrains from dismissing that Church entirely. By the end of the play, when Katherine reflects from her exile on the dissolution of her former combatant in matters of faith and justice, Wolsey, she comes to forgive his wrongs and celebrate his accomplishments, just as he might have hoped. On the verge of her own death, she begins to chastise his wrongs, but her usher Griffith reminds her that Wolsey's indulgences not only served to satisfy his outsized desires but also benefitted others through charity and education. Herself chastened, she replies: "Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me, / With thy religious truth and modesty, / Now in his ashes honor. Peace be with him! (IV.ii.69-75). This moment of reflection by the play's supremely good Catholic on the largely villainous Catholic suggests redemptive rather than condemnable possibilities for the faith, if only for a necessary emphasis on supplication over self-service. This is the model that Katherine herself enacts in the course of the play – the English Catholic chastened by Protestantism's threatening empowerment and separated from the bolstering of the Roman hierarchy. Wolsey's recognition of the need for personal

[61] Wolsey's claim that devotion to God (and Church) before king would have helped to protect him is made ironic by his response to the news from Cromwell earlier in their exchange that Thomas More had been elected to replace him as Lord Chancellor. Wolsey shows humility in his response, declaring: "But he's a learned man. May he continue / Long in his Highness' favor, and do justice / For truth's sake and his conscience" (III.ii.395-397). More's devotion to "truth and his conscience" in maintaining his devotion to the Catholic Church and refusing to formally declare his allegiance to Henry VIII were the very points that lost "his highness' favor." Unlike Katherine of Aragon, More's efforts did attain him eventual sainthood for being a martyr of the Catholic faith.

reformation and Katherine's recognition of the good faith within the dissolute man offer a final sense that Catholicism might still have the potential as a model of good Christianity within a Protestant nation, rather than simply as an exemplar of aberrance bringing Protestants back into line in their faith.

Shakespeare and Fletcher use their play to dramatize the passing away of the mother church and the birthing of a virgin faith to take its place, in a process marked, necessarily, by melancholy and regret. Where many critics might again highlight these conflicted implications as further evidence of the play's faulty art, Lee Bliss instead lauds the complexity: "Shakespeare vividly presents the personal cost—in pride and affection as well as in life itself—of history's march, but he refuses to simplify for the sake of plot either the public and political arena, with its untidy tangle of private and national issues, or the essential mystery in the human hearts which initiated those momentous historical events" (11). The explicit chiding at the start of *Henry VIII* becomes implicit in the transition from the death of the intercessor Katherine, exiled and largely forgotten by the same public on behalf of whom she prostrated herself early in the play, to the birth of the Protestant champion Elizabeth, whose settlement became desirable only after the turmoil wrought by her father in pursuit of what she was not – a son. Under the reign of James, she was remembered fondly for the peace she brought to the Church founded by her father after the further polemicized and violent disruptions created by Henry's other children. Though Mary warrants mention in the play, Henry's other child Edward is wholly absent – the long-desired male heir effectively effaced from this theatrical history.[62] Shakespeare and Fletcher instead rely on the recent

[62] Shakespeare and Fletcher's choice not to address Edward VI also distinguishes their play from the contemporary, likely influential *When You See Me, You Know Me* (1605) by Samuel Rowley, which stages the interrelations of Henry VIII, Elizabeth, Edward, Cranmer, and, oddly, Wolsey, events patently impossible even in the creative timeline of births and deaths in *Henry VIII*. Rowley's play is in fact the more celebratory depiction of the Protestant cause that audiences might have expected to witness in *Henry VIII*, further illuminating how the later play elects not to stage or promote the obvious Protestant party line.

memory of his audience members to grant credence to their fifth act suggestion of Elizabeth as a model of religious belief and enactment. But, they insist in their portrayal of Katherine that she and her personal Catholicism not be besmirched or dismissed, as in Foxe, in the new Jacobean era reimagining of the English Protestant myth.

Reinterring the Corpus Ecclesia

In the course of six months, between October 1612 and February 1613, James I orchestrated two events seeking to reinforce his Christian ancestry and legacy. The first event was the re-interment of Mary Stuart's body in a new, highly decorated tomb in Westminster Abbey. Amy Appleford describes the movement: "After her execution, Mary was first buried beside none other than Katherine of Aragon [. . .] Now, James had her body brought to London, in a consolidation of his dynastic claims through his Catholic mother that anticipated by only a few months his daughter's marriage to the Protestant Elector Palatine" (166). Appleford and Martha Oberle have suggested that the staging of Katherine's pre-death vision of heavenly crowning in *Henry VIII* might evoke the iconography of Mary's new tomb. Her reinterment also placed her near to the bodies of her cousins, Mary and Elizabeth – three variously martyred and demonized counterpoints in the revision of English Christian mythology. The implications of the reinterment seem primed for antagonizing James's critics and stoking the fears of the king reestablishing Catholicism literally and figuratively in the midst of the Protestant Church of England. However, the ceremony also publicly reinforced James's claims, expressed in his *Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance* (1609), that his mother's faith and religious influence were central to his own ecumenical views of Christianity. Such an understanding of the faith could allow for a generous and accepting view of even Catholic martyrs following the Reformation.

As Appleford suggests, the second of James's orchestrations involved the marriage of his daughter Elizabeth to Frederick, the Elector Palatine. The ceremony was part of James's ongoing efforts to remain neutral and balanced in his Catholic and Protestant diplomatic efforts on the fringes of the Thirty Years War on the Continent.[63] Kevin Curran details the political complications inherent in such an event – the first royal marriage in England since Mary to Phillip II and the most magnificent since Arthur's to Katherine of Aragon, fraught allusions both.[64] The event itself became a desirable cause of celebration for the ascendancy of Protestantism, particularly in England. The marriage celebration is also the possible location for the first staging of *Henry VIII*, as peculiar as the staging of a faithful wife cast off in favor of legitimizing infidelity might seem as a matrimonial entertainment.[65] Even more so, if the wedding were simply a celebration of Protestantism's ascendancy, we might expect a narrative more akin to Bale or Foxe's joyous recitation of Catholicism's ills and the Church of England's triumphant nativity than the drama produced by Fletcher and Shakespeare.

However, if we consider the broader ecumenical platform promoted by James, explained in his proclamations, and ritualized in the bodies of his mother Mary and his daughter Elizabeth, the play instead becomes a supremely appropriate entertainment.

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[63] In describing the political maneuvers intended to fend off or spark the impending Thirty Years War at this time in *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (2009), Peter H. Wilson calls James, "one of the few entirely sensible European monarchs, and much preferred peace to war. For him, the marriage [of his daughter Elizabeth to Frederick, the Elector Palatine] was intended as part of a wider strategy to balance the hostile forces in Europe" (247). James fashioned himself as an influencer of modern Christian and European relations, a role that required a personal and political persona with the fluidity to adapt as the world shifted.

[64] See Curran's "James I and fictional authority at the Palatine Wedding Celebrations" in *Renaissance Studies* 20.1 (2006).

[65] Julia Gaspar notes an editorial consensus on this first staging in her essay "The Reformation plays on the public stage," but concludes that the paucity of solid evidence for this should instead encourage a focus that it "is far more likely to have been written for the Globe, where spectators on 29 June 1613 described it as a new play which had been performed only a couple of times before" (207-8). Of course, one of those earlier performances might yet have been at the royal wedding.

Following his deconstruction of Protestant sectarian mythology in *King John*, Shakespeare joins with Fletcher in *Henry VIII* to acknowledge the positive matrilineal inheritance of the good Christian model, Katherine of Aragon, as a counterbalance to the patrilineal Protestantism inherited from the much chronicled King Henry VIII. In doing so, they recuperate the discarded and derided bodies of England's Christian history and reinter them in a new, anti-sectarian mythology – one which can positively reflect on the past and present beliefs that guided the nation, while criticizing the destruction sown by not only the politicized hierarchy of the medieval Roman Catholic Church but also by the violent coup of the new Church of England rising to take its place. This evolution from sectarian mythology to the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic, from Bale and Foxe to Shakespeare and Fletcher, dramatizes the potential for a new ecumenicalism within the Church of England that might allow for the individual to follow their conscience, to be careful to do justice and lead a good life. By criticizing the religiopolitical corruptions and adiophora that created the basis of ongoing sectarianism, Fletcher and Shakespeare offer an anti-sectarian model for Christians to be "in good case with the profession of [their] owne Religion."

CHAPTER 3

THE RADICALIZING REFORMATION OF ZEALOUS PRACTICE

In spite of his measured ecumenicalism and moderate Protestantism, James still confronted the threat of radicalism and sectarianism, even within his own court. A striking incident of dissent occurred when one of the king's own chaplains, Benjamin Carier, turned Catholic recusant in 1613 and expressed his reasoning in an epistolary treatise begging the monarch's understanding and encouraging James to convert. Carier's letter reached public circulation in 1614, disseminating his dismantlement of Protestant mythology, his fears of factionalism leading to English civil war, and his animosity towards rampant Calvinist elitism. Carier is careful to locate his conversion in the common experience of English Christianity, writing: "I Must confesse to Gods honor, and my owne shame, that if it had bin in my power to choose, I would never have bin a Catholike. I was borne and brought up in schisme, and was taught to abhorre a Papist, as much as any Puritane in England doth. I had ever a great desire to justifie the Religion of the State, and had great hope to advance my selfe thereby" (1). He acknowledges the factionalism inherent in the Reformation, where hatred of Catholicism is the default position – where it establishes, in short, one's Protestant credentials. While James's permissiveness might have dampened this enmity for some, the Church of England's *via media* hardly encouraged its congregants to look kindly or favorably upon known Catholics. The conversion of such a prominent figure must surely have raised anxieties within the Church of England. As Carier himself argues in his treatise, he was content for much of his life and career with English Protestantism, and a well-publicized conversion in his late forties seems peculiar at best.

Modern scholarship has attempted to solve the riddle of Carier's conversion, attributing motivations varying in sincerity to the wayward chaplain. Michael Questier

considers the complicated possible reasons behind Carier's recusancy in his essay "Crypto-Catholicism, anti-Calvinism and conversion at the Jacobean court: The enigma of Benjamin Carier" (1996). He hesitates to dismiss Carier's conversion as merely embitterment following a career of frustrated career ambitions in the Church of England hierarchy. However, Questier does not accept Carier's departure from that church and embrace of its expressed opponent as purely spiritually-inspired either. By considering the realities of Jacobean conversion between Protestantism and Catholicism, which he claims has been vastly underreported, Questier explores how doctrinal differences on issues like Grace, evangelism, and confession and differing understandings of the point of conversion allowed for perpetual shifting in the tides of conversion between the less than distinct faiths. Some in the Catholic faith might in fact have been more "Protestant" than those in the Church of England, and vice versa. Questier concludes, "the attraction which Rome offered to Protestants with an evangelical tinge was based on widely shared elements of the theology of justification. [Carier's] 'conversion' experience was not an aberration after a career as a solid Protestant cleric but a logical if sudden development of ideas which he had had for a long time" (63). Questier presents an essential claim for understanding the spectrum of Christians in England and Europe and Carier's reasons for conversion – that moderates of both Catholic and Protestant affiliations were indeed quite similar, in spite of what the more radical, more sectarian parties of each group might argue.

This ultimate similarity of belief, and indeed James's own recognition of his recusant Catholic citizens' somewhat wayward goodness, forms the basis of Carier's supplications to James. Though he had at this point aligned himself with the Jesuits in Europe, the demonized and radical contingent of Catholicism decried by Protestants and moderate Catholics alike, Carier describes the impediment such hardline sects within Christianity

presented to his proposed goal and suggested hopes of James – the reunification of all Christian churches into a single congregation. He identifies a single group as both the likely greatest enemy of ecumenicalism and the cause of his own departure from the Church of England, the Puritans. He offers what will prove to be a prescient reading of that faction: "Their power is great, but not to edification. They ioyne together only against good order, which they call the Common Enemy, and if they can destroy that, they will in all likelihood turne their fury against themselues, and like Diuells torment, like Serpents deuour one another." He warns James to expect no "honor or security" from the Puritans if he chooses to ally himself and his children to those sectarians, as they will surely betray his family to their own advantage (20). Carier identifies the coercive tactics of the Puritans as the source of their power, but also warns that the same forcefulness risks alienating rather than reinforcing the faith of Protestant believers. He writes of this potential:

> [W]hen the Puritan Preacher hath called his flocke about him, and described the Church of Rome, to be so ignorant, so Idolatrous, and so wicked, as hee hath made himselfe beleeve she is, then is he wont to congratulat his poore deceived audience, that they by the means of such good men as himselfe is, are delivered from the darkenesse, and Idolatrie, and wickednes of Poperie, and there is no man dare say a word, or once mutter to the contrarie. But the people have heard these lyes so long, as most of them beginne to bee wearie, and the wisest of them cannot but wonder, how these Puritan Preachers should become more learned, and more honest, then all the rest that lived in ancient times, or that liue still in Catholike Countries, or then those in England, whom those men are wont to condemne for Papists (39).

Carier views such growing weariness and doubt positively, as they will lead moderate Protestants to question the Roman Catholic enmity endemic in the English Church. And, once they begin to interrogate the schism they have so far accepted as good and necessary, he believes, those moderate Protestants might follow his lead in departing a Church of England unduly influenced by radical Calvinists. Those moderate figures remaining in power in the Church might come to a related conclusion – that unless they checked the power and influence of the Puritans within England, they might risk losing good moderate congregants

to radicalism, either Puritan or Catholic, promulgating further schism and divisiveness rather than the ecumenical reunification James desired.

Carier's treatise might not have encouraged the imitation he desired of other prominent Protestants, but he at least brought public attention to the radicalizing potential within Church of England factions. This practice of labeling and condemning the opposition as unchristian and blasphemous was not limited to discussions of religion alone. The Post-Reformation period was marked by a second, peculiar social eruption with parallel, at times overlapping accusations and beliefs – the witch scare. Scholars have interpreted the surge of belief in the threat of witches and demons during and after the Reformation as an active if unproclaimed movement on behalf of the Church of England to define itself against its Catholic past.[66] However, the critical tendency has been to take note of the parallels between magic and the Roman Church while avoiding drawing an explicit connection between the two. James Sharpe writes in his incisive exploration of witchcraft, *Instruments of Darkness* (1997): "What is striking, however, is the frequency with which Roman Catholic practices were directly attacked or popular superstitions abutting on witchcraft were equated with them" (85-86). While Sharpe briefly discusses witchcraft's prevalence in areas known to be more Catholic, he hesitates to pursue the unified relevance of the overlap. Nathan Johnstone recognizes the cross-figuration of witches and Catholics as a negative means of bolstering the Church of England's identity in his book *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (2006), where he states: "Scapegoats were necessary at all levels of society facing, or so it believed, a combination of crises of order, and in the fears of many, Catholics and witches became fused into a single diabolic threat to society" (28). Popularly, Catholics were not

[66] See for example: Darren Oldridge's *The Devil in Early Modern England* (2000), Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, and Alison Shell's *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (1999).

simply witches, and vice versa, but the blasphemous actions, beliefs, and rituals of each group bore much in common worth considering, and the common form of Protestant reactions to each are informative to a modern understanding of early modern English religious self-definition. The specters of Catholicism and witchcraft might frighten citizens back into proper Protestantism, but the processes of identifying, accusing, and punishing the wayward might also prompt good English Protestants to question their affiliation with the radical self-appointed enforcers of Protestantism.

Could the threat of radical Protestantism equal that of Catholicism or pagan practices to the continuing sanctity of the Church of England? Benjamin Carier clearly thought so, and, while James I could not have openly agreed with his former chaplain's assessment, the king obviously saw radicalism across the Christian spectrum as a threat to his desire to reunify English Christians. By attacking moderate dissenters as radicals, sectarians might radicalize unintentionally all who stood in opposition to their beliefs, essentially creating or at least enlarging the rivals they projected in their rhetoric.[67] A dramatization of this radicalizing potential can be found in William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford's *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621). The play examines the transformative nature of evil, whether hidden or public, in thoughts or in deeds, dressed in communal piety or embodied in the insidious form of a devil dog with a wicked sense of humor. Over the course of the play and

[67] George Hakewill, a Calvinist clergyman appointed by James to rebut Carier's in *An Answere to a Treatise Written by Dr. Carier* (1616), in fact supports Carier's suggestion of the radicalizing potential of Puritanism. He collapses Carier's distinction among Protestants, writing: "the difference should rather have beene made betwixt Protestants and Papists, English and Romish Catholikes, since they who could be content the Church of England were as it was before the Reformation, can in my iudgement bee none other then Papists; and those that in their iudgement approve the doctrine of the pretended Catholike Religion, can (as farre as I apprehend it) been none other then Romish Catholikes. Thus those whom we call Papists, he calles Temperate Protestants, and those whom we call Protestants, he calles State Puritanes" (2-3). In Hakewill's opinion, any who consider the viability of Catholic doctrine must therefore be Catholic, while those preaching against Catholicism and moderate Protestantism (though Hakewill would hardly use that term) were simply good Protestants. Hakewill's dichotomous views of Christianity would, at certain points, have categorized James himself as Papist for his ecumenical desires for his Church and his resistance to the hardline Calvinists desires for greater reformations.

through its two intertwining storylines, this evil infects characters from a zealous, puritanical patriarch of small town justice to a murderous would-be bigamist, from clowns planning a morris dance to a poor widow-turned-witch. No one emerges untouched, even if they are seemingly independent figures of evil or promoters of communal good. The play ends with the apparent restoration of order, or at least of the status quo for the "right" variety of Protestant believers. The witch and the philandering murderer have gone to their community-appointed deaths and the devil dog has exited both stage and community. But, the audience is left with a series of questions, the most troubling of which is whether the town's attempted enforcement of right belief and practice invited or indeed created the evil that followed. In condemning a "witch" as evidence of their own sanctity, did the upstanding citizens of Edmonton force her conversion or radicalization into an antichristian and devil-worshipper? If those characters remain who created that self-fulfilling prophecy of the radical other in their midst, has evil potential truly been banished?

These complications of belief and right practice are present in both storylines of the work, but they are particularly evident in the figurations of and relationship amongst the characters of the witch, the fool, the zealot, and the devil dog – a motley representation of Catholicism, Moderate Anglicanism, Puritanism, and chaotic evil, respectively. By reading the play against a series of texts that clearly establish the history of an English eliding of witchcraft and Catholicism and of the contemporary fears of Puritan radicalization, I argue that a play that seems at first a domestic tragedy can serve as a commentary on the sectarian threat in England. By allowing sympathy for the witch, chastisement for the righteous, and a measured victory for the moderate believer, the play offers an Anti-Sectarian reevaluation of the radicals, both Catholic and Puritan, who demanded a new reformation of James. Moderate belief and practice do not emerge from the play as unsullied, but their

representatives at least have gained conviction and a better sense of moral realities in the process of mediating between the two radical poles.

The Devil's Due

Thomas Dekker, John Ford, and William Rowley were members of the Prince Charles' Men acting company in 1621 when they collaborated on *The Witch of Edmonton*, first performed late in that year. Arthur F. Kinney notes in his introduction to his edition of the play that the early performances included not only the expected staging at the company's current theatre, the Cockpit (or Phoenix) Theatre but also at Court where, the 1658 title page of the work proclaims, it was met with "singular Applause" (xxxiv). Part of this initial popularity no doubt derived from the contemporary inspiration of the play – a pamphlet published in London earlier that year titled, "The wonderfull discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer a Witch, late of Edmonton, her conviction and condemnation and death" by Henry Goodcole. The location of the events depicted in the pamphlet, as opposed to the more rural and distant settings of other popular witch texts of the time, was quite near to London itself.[68] Additionally, witchcraft in that place had already proven successful earlier on the stage in *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*,[69] published in 1608 with a title page proclaiming its production by "his Majesties Servants, at the Globe," a rival acting company to the Prince Charles Men, though both benefited from the patronage of the Stuarts. Dekker, Ford, and Rowley might have hoped to gain from the success of that play, but their work does not

[68] For instance, those reporting the supernatural events in Lancashire in the northwest of England. See, for example, Thomas Potts' *The wonderfull discoverie of witches in the countie of Lancaster* (1612).

[69] That edition and subsequent publications in the decades after offer no authorial identity. *Early English Books Online* attributes the play to Shakespeare, perhaps based on a bound volume in Charles II's library containing the text and labeled with the playwright's name. Kinney mentions the play and an earlier attribution to Dekker, but suggests no possible author himself. Most recent critics in fact seem to preserve the anonymous authorship of the play in their discussion of it. A perusal of Oxfordian sites reveals a common insistence that the play, like the rest of Shakespeare's canon, is indeed the product of Edmund de Vere.

follow the model of that comedy, presenting instead two plots of dark and tragic matter. The first plot invites a generic categorization of the play as a domestic tragedy, focusing more on social misdeeds than sectarian dangers. The loose connections it bears with the second plot of the play, that involving the witch, moderate, and zealot, serve to ground the second storyline, inviting audience members to view both as common social experiences. Indeed, the ultimate ordinariness of the supernatural and radical elements of the second plot presented in parallel to the first magnifies the warning of the dangers of cultural corruptions, which common society had come to view as unremarkable.

The first act sets in motion the larger, more generalized storyline of the play involving the increasingly tangled affairs of Frank Thorney, who bears little evidence of sectarianism or religious devotion of any variety. Emblematizing common social anxiety over the publicly upstanding but privately monstrous citizen, he enacts a wide range of sinful deeds concealed within a web of lies. Thorney's main concerns are amassing wealth and benefits for himself, using readily available means and prompted by his own human capability for evil. He arranges a secret marriage to legitimize the servant Winifred's out-of-wedlock pregnancy, an action that not only earns him a kind of dowry from the dallying Sir Arthur, but also a letter denying the ceremony has occurred. These dual benefits bolster Frank's public image while providing resources for greater misdeeds. He is said to have a "nimble devil" ruling his blood and later is called "A devil like a man!" (II.i.161), two instances that again establish the demystification of devils and their possibilities in everyday thought and speech. Though offered casually, the phrases gain significance as the plotline develops. Aware of the sinfulness of his deeds but placing all responsibility on "fate" and the (possibly invented) predictions of a palmist, Frank agrees to a second marriage to ensure his family's social standing. He has already established his openness to outside influence, though

the sources have been social or of a "minor" supernatural sort to this point. Only after he has determined entirely of his own accord to abandon his second wife, run away with his first, and disgrace his father does he encounter the devil dog, Tom. The demonic canine, present following the title witch's summoning, encounters Frank only for a moment, in which the dog "rubs him."

Tom's actual influence is unclear. He begins the scene by declaring: "The mind's about it now. One touch from me / Soon sets the body forward" (III.iii.2-3). Frank reacts immediately to his touch later in the scene; seemingly on the spur of the moment, he murders his second wife. He proclaims afterward: "The Devil did not prompt me" (III.iii.38), though he has offered no signal that he is aware of Tom's presence nor does he have an audience beyond himself and the invisible Tom to hear his claim of sole-responsibility. Based on Tom's initial proclamation, he sensed Frank already ruminating over murderous intentions in his mind, and apparently the sinfulness was invitation to his demonic prodding. The dog intervenes a second time, unacknowledged by Frank again, to help him arrange the murder as the work of highwaymen. Obviously, the source of his sinfulness is not the devil, or at least this devil, but Tom's invisible presence does spur to still greater extremity those final, most extreme crimes. Tom intervenes one last time, leading to the discovery of Frank's actual crimes and his communal condemnation. Why would he disrupt the ongoing sinfulness of a man he has previously seemed to inspire? In Frank's final speeches, he fully repents of his deeds and apologizes to those he has harmed, concluding: "On, on, 'tis just / That law should purge the guilt of blood and lust" (V.iii.140-141). He acknowledges his sins as entirely his own, whether from ignorance or a sense of having invited Tom's inspiration with his earlier crimes, and accepts the punishment that course of action has earned him. Tom's ultimate part is to ensure a worse end for a sinful man after he

has reached the pinnacle of the sins he is likely to commit. Frank's death, moreover, allows the community to consider the sinfulness he embodied effectively dispelled, contentedly ignorant of the other individuals involved and the permissiveness of sin integral in the drive for social advancement.

Propagating Zealotry

The Witch of Edmonton's second storyline contains the core of the play's examination of community radicalization. The second act opens with an elderly, somewhat crippled woman gathering stray sticks for a fire to warm herself, a scene likely familiar in many small English towns. She is indeed the witch of the play's title, though that categorization is not immediately evident – Mother Sawyer is at first simply a disabled and disempowered woman attempting to sustain herself. The character of Old Banks, apparently an upstanding and respected member of Edmonton society, intrudes into the scene and amplifies her perceived status. He immediately accosts Sawyer as a witch, demanding during a heated verbal exchange with her that she relinquish her rotten collection of wood. When she refuses, Banks proceeds to beat Sawyer for the brief remainder of his time on stage with her. The interaction invites horror from the audience, particularly due to the pitiless treatment of the disabled woman by Old Banks, the violent aggressor unquestionably capable of overcoming her defensive capabilities with his attack. The power imbalance is evident – he might call her a witch, but he seemingly fears no revenge from Sawyer, physical or magical. Further, his attack serves no clear ends of containment or correction; he beats her and departs, and she is left again to her own, rather mundane devices.

The callousness with which Old Banks attacks Mother Sawyer both offers audiences insight into the social practices that might isolate and torment such a liminal figure in small-town society and also prompt Sawyer to offer a self-characterization and history of her

recent experience as a "witch." Though the "Dramatis Personae" characterizes her as "The Witch," she is not initially actually one, no matter how her community chooses to label her. Instead, she is a marginalized, persecuted, and socially-powerless woman without an apparent family to defend her. Immediately before Old Banks appears to accost her, she poses the question: "And why on me? Why should the envious world / Throw all their scandalous malice upon me? (II.i.1-2). She recognizes her status as a communal scapegoat, and she can even objectively list the reasons for her isolation in the role, bemoaning:

> 'Cause I am poor, deformed, and ignorant,
> And like a bow buckled and bent together
> By some more strong in mischiefs than myself?
> Must I for that be made a common sink,
> For all the filth and rubbish of men's tongues
> To fall and run into? (II.i.3-8)

Sawyer's persecution as a witch is unjustified; she has become the scapegoat of her community merely for the fact that her neighbors find her presence lowly and disturbing to their sense of themselves. Led by Old Banks and his zealousness, Sawyer's neighbors use her as a model of evil against which they can define themselves as good. Interestingly, though Sawyer does not originally believe herself to be a witch, she does acknowledge the presence and power of other such figures in the community, attributing her own malformation to one. By nature and appearance both, Sawyer presents herself as a victim of others' ill wills, tortuously malleable according to their figurations.

Sawyer does not simply accept the figuration of herself passively, however, in spite of her lack of power in Edmonton. The accusations of her community actualize the anxieties surrounding Sawyer, a process that her neighbors begin but she herself must enact. She describes her transformation:

> Some call me witch,
> And being ignorant of myself, they go
> About to teach me how to be one; urging

> That my bad tongue – by their bad usage made so—
> Forspeaks their cattle, doth bewitch their corn,
> Themselves, their servants, and their babes at nurse.
> This they enforce upon me, and in part
> Make me to credit it (II.i.8-15)

Though she admits to no personal desire to become a witch, Sawyer proclaims that constant figuration and condemnation as such by her neighbors drives her to become what they believe. Curiously, she does not attribute any inspiration to the "mischievous" one that she believes caused her deformities. Instead, the opposing extremes of zealous righteousness drive her to extremity rather than a desire to imitate one already radically empowered. The label she once spurned she now, at least in part, embraces, taking the accusations of her enemies as instruction on how to attack them with the methods they most abhor.

This enforced transformation has no grounding in the original pamphlet, "The wonderfull discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer," where the real Sawyer never mentions unwarranted ill-treatment by her neighbors, let alone that their accusations of witchcraft "taught" her how to be a witch. Dekker, Ford, and Rowley's origin story of Mother Sawyer's witchcraft instead bears more in common with a treatise published by Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), which intended to condemn the beliefs and practices of witchmongers as primarily ridiculous and unfounded in reality and, worse, as cruel and destructive.[70] Scot describes the common sort of women accused of witchcraft: "old, lame, bleare-eied, pale, fowle, and full of wrinkles; poore, sullen, superstitious, and papists; or such as knowe no religion [. . . .] They are leane and deformed, shewing melancholie in their faces, to the horror of all that see them" (4). Scot's catalogue of maladies matches Mother Sawyer's

[70] Scot was a minor aristocrat and parliamentarian, whose decision to publish on the topic of witches seems an oddity in his career. His only previous extant publication *A perfite platforme of a hoppe garden* (1576), an agricultural treatise. Nevertheless, as evidenced by the response of James I (then King James VI of Scotland) in his own treatise on witchcraft, *Daemonologie* (1597) and mentions in other instructive texts for witchmongers, Scot's text was widely known in the decades after its publication, likely influencing other later depictions of witches on the stage through his broad, detailed descriptions of witch beliefs and practices in England.

self-description fairly closely, in terms of her physical debilitation, her economic status, and her limited education, offering further support that her persecution originates in her neighbors' distaste for her presence. He further describes how such a minor communal annoyance can become the witch next door – such a woman, taxing her neighbors' generosity, curses their eventual denial of charity. When misfortune comes to pass, as it certainly must do to the commonality of crop or animal failure or human sickness: "Then they, upon whom such adversities fall, weighing the fame that goeth upon this woman (hir words, displeasure, and cursses meeting so justlie their misfortune) doo not onelie conceive, but are also resolved, that all their mishaps are brought to pass by hir onelie meanes" (5). Chance and superstition essentially establish a self-fulfilling prophecy of a witch in the town's midst, and the legal system provides the final approbation for the townspeople that they are right in their accusations and for the "witch" that she must certainly possess the powers they attribute to her.[71] Dekker, Ford, and Rowley adopt the model if not the disbelief of Scot's treatise, depicting the people of Edmonton essentially creating a witch in order to retroactively justify their ill-treatment of a non-contributing member of their society.

While Mother Sawyer is more aware of the reasons for her treatment than the ignorant women Scot describes, coerced and sometimes tortured into creating a history of devilish encounters to support the accusations against them, she nevertheless adopts the expected behaviors of the role her neighbors have created for her. When Old Banks attacks her initially, she does not cry out in hurt or anger at the injustice of his beating, nor does she pray to God for protection or deliverance, casting his sanctity into question with a

[71] Scot wryly notes that the witches never gain by their supposed powers from the devil: "either beautie, monie, promotion, welth, worship, pleasure, honor, knowledge, learning, or anie other benefit whatsoever" (4-5) – the corrections, in other words, for the very characteristics that led them to beg in the first place, setting them at odds with their neighbors. Instead, their "powers" are always used to revenge petty wrongs that continue because the women retain their liminal statuses in their communities.

demonstration of her own. Instead, Mother Sawyer's exclamations comprise very particular descriptions of the damage she intends to enact through her speech. She cries: "Dost strike me, slave? Curmudgeon, / Now, thy bones ache, thy joints cramp, and / Convulsions stretch and strike thy sinews" and, further, "Strike, do, and withered may that hand and arm / Whose blows have lamed me drop from that rotten trunk" (II.i.27-29, 31-32). Her words are not simple cursing but rather malediction, and she at least performs the role of witch in that moment, invoking dark magic to inflict pain and permanent disfigurement against her enemy. If they will have a witch, she will be one: "'Tis all one, / To be a witch as to be counted one" (II.i.117-118). Though she does not yet possess the demonic aid to effect her spells, her intentions remain the same for those who torment her – she has been radicalized, but has not yet established the connections that will empower her radicalism to greater ends.

Mother Sawyer has no social powers of her own, without either the personal cleverness or social connections possessed by Frank Thorney, though with an arguably better cause. Without the potential support of the "good" establishment in Edmonton, she turns instead to the obvious opposition to that good – demonic ends. She turns her back on any markers of socially-approved decency she might have possessed, intending to "Abjure all goodness. Be at hate with prayer" (II.i.111). She exchanges these instead for oaths and evil to achieve the revenge she earlier proposed. Dekker, Ford, and Rowley again stray from the model established by Scot, who insists in his treatise that devils and ritualistic proclamations are mere superstitions and papist ones at that. Following her frustrated cursing, Mother Sawyer encounters the means of her empowerment – the devil dog Tom. Taking up her proclaimed inversion of good and evil, he fashions himself as a demonic savior for her, subverting true Christianity as sectarians regularly claimed their opponents did. He tells Sawyer:

> Come, do not fear; I love thee much too well
> To hurt or fright thee; if I seem terrible,
> It is to such as hate me. I have found
> They love unfeigned; have seen and pitied
> Thy open wrongs; and come, out of my love,
> To give thee just revenge against thy foes. (II.i.123-128)

Christ aligned himself with the marginalized and downtrodden, but the Christians Sawyer encounters hardly follow that example. Instead, the power of hell in the form of the dog offers to serve as the friend of those who have been wronged, those in most need of "just revenge." If those who claim to uphold righteousness and order so obviously undermine their values in their words and actions, then logically, as Tom asserts, those they curse as hateful must be the truly righteous and orderly.

Tom's help is not without cost, however, and he commands that she convert from whatever uncertain faith she might possess to a worship of him and what he represents – the powers of hell. In order to earn his aid in countering the ongoing injustice of Edmonton, he tells her: "I'll effect it, on condition, / That, uncompelled, thou make a deed of gift / Of soul and body to me" (II.i.131-133). Compulsion is key – Tom's concern is legalistic, reflecting a folk history of tales of the devil deprived of his due souls by the canny looking to preserve their souls. But can Sawyer's hellish conversion truly be uncompelled? She has been ostracized from the range of goodness in Edmonton, a status repeatedly and violently asserted by her neighbors, compelling her towards evil by forcing her to inhabit that characterization. Conversely, Tom presents himself as her only hope, her only redemption – no other choices, even of evil, are apparent. He demands that she seal their covenant with blood, threatening: "if thou deniest, / I'll tear thy body in a thousand pieces" (II.i.135-136), giving the lie to his denial of compulsion. Sawyer has been declared damned, and the little agency she might be said to possess will only allow her to adopt that status officially, in the face of a threat of bodily torment now or hellish torments later. Isolated from acceptance

into any other religious community, Sawyer accepts the one affiliation left to her, one which can offer only revenge, at the cost of her tortured, deformed body and her aspersed soul.

My labeling of Sawyer's devotion to Tom as not simply a contract but an at least pseudo-religious affiliation is based on the rituals and invocations which mark their interactions. Tom teaches her a certain set of practices which will endow her with a connection to a supernatural power beyond her customary human reach. Her own body becomes both altar and offering to achieve this empowerment; Tom ritualistically "sucks her arm" to exact a blood payment, accompanied by "thunder and lightning," which seal his personal attention to her intentions (II.i). The ceremony inverts the Christian Eucharist, though with a sacrifice of real blood rather than symbolic, echoing the real presence of Catholic Transubstantiation rather than the representation of Protestant ceremony.[72] The Catholic reconances of their practices are compounded by the words Tom tells Sawyer will serve to summon his presence. She must intone: "If thou to death or shame pursue 'em, / Santibicetur nomen tuum" (II.i.176-177). What to those unlearned in Latin might seem like "hallowed be thy name" is made nonsensical by a minor difference, with the true phrase being "santificitur nomen tuum" ("Latin Prayers").[73] Sawyer, suggesting herself now to be a pseudo-Catholic in prayer in addition to ritual, proclaims her understanding of the phrase: "I'm an expert scholar; / Speak Latin, or I know not well what language, / As Well as the best of 'em" (II.i.182-184). Her understanding is unnecessary for the phrase to summon

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[72] Protestant polemic declared Catholic Transubstantiation particularly horrific because of the implied anthropophagic or theophagic element of ingesting the real body and blood of Christ, though mitigated in practice by the fact that the Eucharist still appeared as bread and wine rather than flesh or blood. Tom's taking of his demonic Eucharist directly from the body of Sawyer disallows a similar mitigation, though both involve the ingestion of the *living* body of another.

[73] The faulty Latin does come from the source pamphlet by Henry Goodcole, a minister whose profession should have provided him with the knowledge to correct the phrase. Whether the phrase he received from Elizabeth Sawyer was in fact the incorrect phrase or a later transcription error by the publisher, the flawed nature of the phrase serves ironic ends quite neatly when deployed in the play.

Tom, but her obvious ignorance, no matter her claims, evokes earlier Protestant reasoning for translating prayer into the vernacular as Latin was not commonly known or understood.[74] Sawyer is more concerned with what her actions will earn her rather than their meaningfulness, practicing empty piety, echoing Tom's concealing of his true demonic nature in the form of a helpful, harmless dog.

The Catholic inflection of the affiliation of Sawyer and Tom makes blatant the connections between witchcraft and Catholicism already well-established in the polemic both in favor of and opposed to the necessity of witch belief in England. Scot notes in his description of the likely victims of witch accusations that they are commonly "papist," suggesting that affiliation makes the women more credulous to the ideas of witch practice. He later explicitly states the commonality of witchcraft and Catholic practice, writing: "I see no difference betweene these and popish conjurations; for they agree in order, words, and matter, differing in no circumstance, but that the papists doo it without shame openlie, and the other doo it in hugger mugger secretlie" (252). The affiliation with Christ rather than Satan emboldens Catholics, but, Scot suggests, neither has a basis in truth or a chance of efficacy. Disbelieving the magic of both witches and Catholics, he attacks the confidence jobs that both seemingly propose, stating: "All protestants perceive, that popish charmes, conjurations, execrations, and benedictions are not effectual, but be toies and devises onelie

[74] Accounts of witchcraft during the English Reformation make the parallel of Latin used by witches to recusant Catholic practices more blatant. See, for instance, John Philips's pamphlet *The Examination and confession of certain wytches at Chensforde in the countie of Essexe* (1566). One of the accused, Agnes Waterhouse, confesses that she continued to go to church and pray "as other women do" even after she had made her contract with the devil. Clarifying that she made her prayers in Latin, her confessors: "demaunded why she saide it not in englyshe but in laten, seeting that it was set out by publike aucthoritie and according to goddes worde that all men should pray in the englyshe & mother toung that they best understande, and shee sayde that sathan would at no tyme suffer her to say it in englyshe, but at all tymes in laten" (Phillips, EEBO Image 22). Her mere gesture of prayer is not efficacious, imitating as it does the early, implied ignorance of Catholic worship.

to keepe the people blin, and to inrich the cleargie. All Christians see, that to confesse witches can doo as they saie, were to attribute to a creature the power of the Creator" (280). Both groups claim the ability to deploy supernatural power in the world, whether through the intercessions of devils or saints and angels, and to possess power through the possession of "magical" objects and the practice of rituals. Scot notes that Protestant self-definition requires the denial of the efficacy of Catholicism, however, in order to justify the rejection of that faith and its beliefs during the Reformation. If Protestants are to insist on Catholicism as superstition and empty practice, then they must similarly disbelieve the same ideas dressed as witchcraft.

King James I directly refutes many of Scot's claims, particularly that the witch scare was primarily a social construct, in his publication of *Daemonologie* (1597), republished when he took the English throne in 1603. James is careful, reflecting the finesse of his later descriptions of Catholics in England, to clearly delineate between the two groups, claiming different aims and reasoning for each. However, he does agree with Scot that the practices of the groups can overlap, even when witches and Catholics most seemed at odds. In a chapter titled "The description of Daemoniackes & possessed. By what reason the Papistes may have power to cure them," James writes:

> it is first to be doubted if the Papistes or anie not professing the onelie true Religion, can relieve anie of that trouble [. . .] the Devill is content to release the bodelie hurting of them, for a shorte space, thereby to obteine the perpetual hurt of the soules of so many that by these false miracles may be induced or confirmed in the profession of that erroneous Religion (71-72).

The miraculous achievements of Catholics and the imprecations of witches both serve the devil by leading Protestants away from proper Christian belief. James suggests that the Catholics are ignorant in their piety of the evil ends they serve, while the witches willingly and knowingly serve the will of Hell. James's writing demonstrates a measure of sympathy,

though not approval, for witches and Catholics, both who have been led astray by false beliefs and promises of reward and must be corrected (whether by simple conversion or corporal punishment) to restore the sanctity of Christianity.[75]

As James makes clear, even those relationships with the devil made openly rather than ignorantly cannot truly benefit the witch – the devil always works for his own ends. Dekker, Ford, and Rowley incorporate this inevitable betrayal into their play, though they continue to imbue contemporary religious critique into the plot as they do so. The devil dog Tom has no intentions of maintaining the sanctity of the covenant he has made with Sawyer and will use her, as he did Frank Thorney, only as long as she serves his ends. He does enact her early orders, cursing farm animals, "nipping the suckling child" (IV.i.169), and driving a local wife mad. He is efficacious in creating destruction and chaos, even if, as he admits earlier, he cannot harm directly those who: "love goodness, though in smallest measure" (II.i.162). He acts according to his whim, as when he interacts with Frank Thorney without Sawyer's direction or knowledge, rather than because he must obey her will. If Sawyer assumes her powers place her in control of Tom, he gleefully corrects her. Sawyer is still tormented by those around her, able only to call for revenge rather than defense, leading her to be interrogated by a Justice. But, shortly after, Tom disappears; her invocations now unheeded, Sawyer cries out: "Still wronged by every slave? And not a dog / Bark in his dame's defence?" (V.i.1-2). Without Tom, she realizes again that she is a crippled, defenseless old woman, cursing her neighbors in vain, a status which never really changed,

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[75] While James acknowledges the sundry reasons for an individual to become a witch, he remains firm that those who practice witchcraft through a knowing allegiance with the devil must: "be put to death according to the Law of God, the civill and imperial law, and municipall law of all Christian nations" (77). The inflexible condemnation near the end of *Daemonologie* likely contributed to James's reputation as witchmonger king. However, as James Sharpe discusses, James maintained a skeptical view of witch trials as king of England, "more likely to intervene to save witches than to secure their convictions." Sharpe describes an incident in 1616 when James, on a royal progress through Leicester, intervened in a case that already led to the hangings of nine "witches" and the jailing of nine more and uncovered fraudulence as the basis of the accusation. Sharpe declared James: "interested in fair and careful investigation rather than in avid persecution" (48-49).

even when Tom was present. After three days, Sawyer, bereft of companionship and disempowered, has reached again the emotional nadir where she first encountered Tom when he finally reappears. Mocking the Resurrection of Christ, who descended into Hell for three days after his death and needed to prove his identity to his followers after his return, Tom reappears not in his original black shade but bright white, unrecognizable to Saywer.[76] In his new, "clean" state, Tom reveals not a spirit of salvation but of harsh truth, stating: "When / The Devil comes to thee as a lamb, / Have at thy throat" (V.i.37-39). The devil, as the Christian audience well might know, could quote scripture and assume the form of a saint as served his needs, but only in pursuit of damnation. Tom's "resurrection" signals not salvation, but rather the reminder of Sawyer's half of the covenant – all actions taken at her order were only to purchase her body and soul for hell.

Tom has achieved her damnation and can now join with her previous tormentors in condemning her witchcraft. Confronted with his newly realigned allegiance to those who seek her death, Sawyer accuses Tom of possessing a "puritan paleness" (V.i.53), suggesting that his apparent new-found zealotry retroactively legitimizes his history of sin and continuing destructive intent. Sawyer has claimed from her first appearance on the stage that characters like Old Banks perform the will of Hell in so zealously pursing the condemnation of marginalized people like her, evoking evil through their pursuit of apparent good. At this late point in the play, Tom's visual conversion aligns him with those "holy" zealots, providing the means and motivation for the sinfulness of others. Dekker, Ford, and Rowley's final act alignment of devil and zealots in the target of their torment suggests that both extremes are potentially negative, whether the intended ends are good or evil. Tom's realignment devilishly satirizes the ongoing evolution of English Protestantism, transforming

[76] The transformation also echoes the description of redemption in the Book of Psalms, which reads: "Purge me with hyssope, and I shalbe cleane : wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (KJV Ps 51.7).

and then condemning his follower for the same behaviors he so recently required of her. Damned and abandoned by him, faced with an imminent execution, Sawyer confesses:

> All take heed
> How they believe the Devil; at last he'll cheat you.
> . . . . . .
> Bear witness, I repent all former evil;
> There is no damned conjuror like the Devil. (V.iii.45-46, 50-51)

Occurring after Tom has claimed her soul as wholly his and coerced by her executioners, Sawyer's final repentance seems just as questionable and compelled as her initial acceptance of Tom's covenant. She offers the words her community wants her to say, confessing to be the witch they accused her of being and assuring that their communal correction of her wrongs (rather than the loss of her earlier power and now impending death) has evoked her redemption. Earlier in that same scene, she had informed her condemners that she wished she had a devil so that she might: "tear you all in pieces" (V.iii.30), oddly the same threat Tom once levied against her to compel her acceptance of his aid; her pursuit of revenge would continue if only another helper appeared, though now she has no material or spiritual possessions left to sacrifice. No evidence suggests that her final repentance will change her fate in the afterlife. Instead, her execution will confirm that the citizens of Edmonton have long used her physical presence as a measure of their own goodness and will read her death as the pinnacle of their sanctity, while Tom can finally gain his spiritual prize as recompense for a few fairly paltry efforts to lead Mother Sawyer to her end.

Serious Foolery

Mother Sawyer represents on stage extremity enabled by sectarianism both in her own actions as an empowered witch and in her transformation into that figure, driven by the unjustified antipathy of zealous minders of social order, particularly Old Banks. A third moral standard enters the play to mitigate between these two radical extremes, represented

by the moderate views of Cuddy Banks. He is of a newer generation than his father, Old Banks, and inherits neither the strict beliefs nor the cruel manner of enforcement manifested by his father. As exemplarily ordinary, representative of the accepting middle-way of belief, he practices sympathy, embraces celebration, and views the world's possibilities, even the supernatural, with the tempered sense of awe common in Church of England belief. But yet, Cuddy is the fool or the clown, characterized as such by the "Dramatis Personae" of the play and by his own father. My suggestion of reading Cuddy as representative of a belief I associate with James I might invite the suspicion of the character as an encoded mockery of the king, calling the royal ecumenical and permissive platform foolish. The Puritan and radical Protestant perspective represented by Old Banks repeatedly dismissed James's efforts in just that manner at best, blasphemous and Catholic at worst. And, if Cuddy were entirely the fool, I would agree with such a reading, but he evolves into the most sympathetic character in the play, whose personal sense of morality and social justice ultimately save him from the sins and aspersions aggregated by his neighbors. He establishes his empathetic moderateness in his first appearance on the stage, where he moves from the company of clowns, planning revelry with utmost seriousness, to an interaction with Sawyer, where he condemns his father's tormenting of her, dismisses the zealots' accusations against her, and offers to recompense her injuries. Cuddy's actions invite community unity through familiarity and empathy, rather than by his father's techniques of scapegoating and destruction.

Cuddy's actions are not always unquestionably good, however. He does seek Sawyer's aid early in the play, calling upon the magical abilities he presumes her to possess, in order to combat a bewitchment of another sort – an infatuation. Cuddy thus recognizes Sawyer as a witch, in agreement with his father's characterization, but the two Banks men

diverge in how they judge Sawyer and her potential to influence the community. While the magic Cuddy seeks might be fairly harmless, he still asks of folk magic what is not available by natural or Christian means. Are his actions damnable and do they invalidate the moderate ideology he represents in the play? James I addresses his views of charms in *Daemonolgie*, confronting their commonality: "many honest & merrie men & women have publicklie practized some of them, that I thinke if ye would accuse them al of Witch-craft, ye would affirme more nor ye will be beleeved in." James explains that charms are still knowledge of the devil, but indirectly delivered; those good citizens who practice charms are not damned, but they still risk the devil's snares (15). This model of a minor risk inviting greater danger holds true in the play for its model of common belief and practice, Cuddy. The pursuit of a love charm culminates in a trick by Tom that finds Cuddy immersed in a pond, wet but unharmed – a literal devil's snare. Greater evil is now possible, as Cuddy's embarrassed hope of love has brought him into the acquaintance of the demon dog.

However the audience is tempted to judge the mental capacity of Cuddy Banks at first, his relationship with Tom forces a reevaluation of his character. Cuddy is aware of the nature of the dog – at one point he proclaims: "He can serve Mammon and the Devil too [. . .] If ever there were an honest devil, 'twill be the Devil of Edmonton, I see" (III.i.145, 152-153). And yet, this awareness does not evoke the awe it does from Mother Sawyer; when Tom reveals his super-canine abilities to Cuddy, the "fool" views him with a properly Protestant conception of the seemingly miraculous. Cuddy conceives of the canine demonic figure as merely a dog, albeit an extraordinary one. He treats Tom as neither truly supernatural nor magical, at least not to the point of deserving worship or recognition beyond what one might bestow on a normal dog. Such awe was the marker of the foolish, the simple-minded, and the Catholic, all potential characterizations Cuddy sheds as the play

progresses. The deal they broker is therefore essentially different from that of Tom and Sawyer; Cuddy offers: "Well, you shall have jowls and livers. I have butchers to my friends that shall bestow 'em. And I will keep crusts and bones for you, if you'll be a kind dog, Tom" (III.i.123-125). This is no covenant but a casual exchange – an establishment of a social expectation, which might be broken without threat to bodily or spiritual harm. Surprisingly, considering the earlier exchanges he brokered, Tom accepts this exchange as apparently a corollary amusement to his more serious influence of Frank and Sawyer. Cuddy asks for no great deeds of magic or revenge, and Tom demands no sacrificial recompense.[77]

The supernatural effects Cuddy requests are simply for entertainment of the community as a whole, never for violence or self-aggrandizement and never to the harm of any within Edmonton. His main purpose in continuing to engage with the demon dog is to incorporate Tom into the town's morris dance. The dog will play the fiddle and dance on two feet, complementing the presence of the hobby-horse and other costumed revelers. Cuddy predicts that Tom's presence will add to jocularity rather than engendering superstitious fear or horror in the spectators. Cuddy's discussions about the morris dance highlight the multiple purposes such recreation could serve within the community, namely as a space to both contain and defuse communal anxieties through an interactive display of misrule. In the midst of their planning the event, Cuddy tells his fellow morris dancers: "I'll have a witch; I love a witch" (III.i.11). His companion replies: "Faith, witches themselves are so common now-a-days, that the counterfeit will not be regarded. They say we have three or four in Edmonton besides Mother Sawyer" (12-14). The dancers disagree about inviting Sawyer into the morris dance – she, a seeming true witch, is most suited to portray

[77] Some might argue that the offered butcher's castoffs could serve as a sacrifice to Tom. In that case, the castoffs are symbolic, again aligning the exchange more with Protestant practice than Catholic, rather than the living flesh and blood of Mother Sawyer's covenant.

the witch in the recreation, but her real presence also invites real consequence of the devil accompanying her. The disagreement hinges on the judgment of propriety between symbolic representation and real presence. A false witch invites laughter while dispelling any fears of retribution; a true witch more accurately represents that undercurrent of crime and sin within Edmonton, but this revelation invites greater danger to the community. Both options highlight the carnivalesque potential of the morris dance, suggesting why the recreation proved so objectionable to strict Protestants including Puritans – it represented sinfulness, pagan pageantry, and papist revelry, all elements the Protestant sectarians strove to root out of English society for good.[78]

The casual exchange among Cuddy and the dancers in fact touches upon another topical political, religious, and social controversy of the time – the propriety of common recreations and whether they should be allowed to continue unchecked throughout England. This debate again highlighted sectarian divisions and presented leisure activities as another potential space in which radicalization of common English citizens might occur. Dekker, Ford, and Rowley's inclusion of the morris dance invites audiences to read the moment against the king's own proclamation on the topic. His consideration of the radicalizing potential surrounding the leisure debates prompted James to publish "The Kings Majesties Declaration to His Subjects, concerning lawfull Sports to be used" (known commonly as "The Book of Sports") in 1618. The declaration couches serious matters of law, religious practice, and exile in a somewhat informal statement of recommended recreations for Sunday afternoons. James begins anecdotally in describing his progress through Lancashire, a county he had been warned on ascending to the throne "abounded more in Popish

[78] For a sense of the Puritan or sectarian Protestant condemnations of recreation, look to the anti-theatrical pamphlets of the era, which tend to at least acknowledge activities like morris dancing and community games as corollary indulgences to the theatre. I will discuss these works in more depth in the next chapter.

Recusants then any Countie of England" (3) yet which "Wee now find that two sorts of people wherewith that Countrey is much infested, (Wee meane Papists and Puritanes)" (2).[79] Rife as it was with the two radical Christian groups that most afflicted him, James uses the region as an exemplar for his recommendations. The situation he confronts is this: Puritans wished to restrict the recreational activities of all around them, presumably viewing such diversions as ungodly, whether suggestive of papistry or paganism. James's explicit concern is that such restrictions will dissuade those recusant Catholics considering Protestant conversion: "their Priests will take occasion herby to vexe, perswading them that no honest mirth or recreation is lawfull or tollerable in Our Religion, which cannot but breed a great discontentment in Our peoples hearts, especially of such as are peradventure upon the point of turning" (4). If the Puritans have their way, the Church of England will seem like a bore, and no one will want to join it. Implicit in James's statement is a greater concern – that those Protestants also "peradventure upon the point of turning" (considering the allure of Catholicism) might be compelled by this Puritan misrule of the Protestant Church of England.

James response is two-fold, targeting the threat of both Catholicism and, more heavily, "Puritans and Precisians" (6). Those Catholics who "conform" themselves (as opposed to those who "obstinately stand out to Our Judges and Justices") will avoid the punishment of the law (6). Further, only the "all such knowne Recusants [. . .] as will abstaine from comming to Church of divine Service" may not participate in the lawful recreations (8). Essentially, those Catholics who attended the expected Church of England

[79] Lancashire was perhaps even more famous for its witches than for its Catholics. See, for example, the pamphlets *A True narration of the strange and grevous vexation by the Devil, of 7. persons in Lancashire* by John Darrell (1600) and *The wonderfull discoverie of witches in the countie of Lancaster* by Thomas Potts (1612). Witchcraft again disrupted the county in 1633, leading to another famed trial, which Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome dramatize in their play, *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634).

services would be allowed to participate, whether or not their communities knew they were Catholic. Conversely, those Puritans who remained obstinate in their prohibition of just recreation would need to "leave the Countrey according to the Lawes of Our Kingdome and Canons of Our Church" (6). Those who "conforme in Religion" and yet still abstained from attending services would, like the Catholics, be disallowed from recreation (a questionable punishment for those who protested the leisure activities). James remains permissive in his Church of England rule, reinforcing his belief in adiaphora, and simultaneously draws a hard line concerning radicalism. He cannot and will not brook a blatant subversion of his will; those who will not perform conformity have no place in his vision of England.

Dekker, Ford, and Rowley reflect a version of this hardline limit placed on permissiveness in the final encounter of Cuddy and Tom. The fool reasserts the distance and earthly propriety of their relationship, insisting: "This remember, I pray you, between you and I; I entertained you ever as a dog, not as a Devil;" to which Tom confirms: "True; and so I used thee doggedly, / Not devilishly" (V.i.107-111). The entreaty occurs directly after Cuddy has learned the fate of Mother Sawyer, condemned to death for actions Cuddy ultimately blames on Tom. He has also publicly proclaimed his knowledge of the demon dog before his father and others. Cuddy obviously wishes to confirm both to himself on an earthly level and to the dog as a representative of the supernatural that their relationship remained as appropriate and religiously proper as possible. Cuddy has resisted the damnable possibilities that Tom could offer him and further proves his individual moral worth by attempting to moderate the dog away from his radical, demonic practices. He tells Tom: "Were it not possible for thee to become an honest dog yet? 'Tis a base life that you lead, Tom," and offers ordinary canine employments as a hunting, kitchen, or lap dog – lowly but honest work (V.i.157-158). Finding Tom unrepentant and in search of a new, more powerful

master to manipulate, Cuddy finally condemns the demon dog as unsalvageable and threatens to drive him out of Edmonton. Cuddy recognizes that Tom's extremity resists containment, evoking only evil in kind rather than true good in opposition. Cuddy only now adopts a measure of his father's zeal, but his target is neither defenseless nor questionably good. The audience recalls that Tom is not a straw man for community ills, like Mother Sawyer originally, but rather an actual devil, evil and irredeemable by nature. Cuddy's banishment of Tom proves more effective than the rejections of evil by any other characters in the play, whether by zealous violence of the religious crusaders like Old Banks or by the anathema of Mother Sawyer. And, with the death of Sawyer, he seems to possess the greatest understanding of the devil's tricks: "I know / thy qualities too well, I'll give no suck to such whelps; / therefore henceforth I defy thee; out and avaunt" (III.iii.183-185). Possessing the knowledge of evil only where it truly resides empowers Cuddy to act on behalf of Edmonton by banishing the devil from their midst, but he remains aware that his banishment cannot prevent future evils nor ensure that Tom will not return.

Irreligious Irresolution

Dekker, Ford, and Rowley's play concludes with individual responses to individual wrongs – the executions of Mother Sawyer and Frank – but not a solution to those larger societal ills contained in Edmonton. In fact, though Frank receives corporal punishment for his crimes, his community still seeks to blame his actions for the devil via the witchcraft of Sawyer. As she is led to her death, Frank's father-in-law accosts her: "The witch, that instrument of mischief! Did not she witch the Devil into my son-in-law, when he killed my poor daughter?" (V.iii.21-23). Audience members remain uncertain of Tom's actual influence on Frank's murderous actions, and they have no clear proof that Sawyer directed Tom to influence Frank on her behalf. Disallowing these two men's attempt to simplify and contain

the evils of Edmonton, pinning all sinfulness on the community's pre-elected scapegoat, she responds: "But is every devil mine?" (V.iii.28). She might in fact have invoked Tom first by her cursing, but she at no time influenced Frank Thorney to consider bigamy and murder, the original thoughts that invited Tom's influence in Frank's own life. Such a reality challenges the easy resolution the older generation in Edmonton desires; Frank's father and father-in-law are more interested in communally mourning their losses than in probing the origins of evil within their own families and their own ideologies. By reconciling and jointly condemning Mother Sawyer, they propagate the understanding that two executions and the apparent disappearance of Tom are all that are necessary for Edmonton to again be "good" as they imply it was before the events of the play.

The audience must recall, however, that the original pursuit of communal good in the play created the circumstances which invited Tom's presence, goading individuals into greater crimes and culminating in the performance of justice. If we are inclined to agree that Frank murdered because of Tom's urging, and Tom was present because of Sawyer's cursing, then we must also remember that Sawyer cursed because of Old Banks's beating – the path might seem simplistic, but Dekker, Ford, and Rowley clearly establish it throughout the play. One final reminder of this occurs when the Justice arrives to legally resolve the disorder of Edmonton. He encounters a mob of Edmonton citizens who pronounce their every wrong, from a sick horse to a philandering wife, as proof of Sawyer's witchcraft, and begin to chant: "Out, witch; beat her, kick her, set fire on her. / [. . .] / Hang her, beat her, kill her" (IV.i.27, 29). Their justice is neither civil nor reasoned, and their mutual frustrations only serve to inflame greater anger and violence against their chosen target. The Justice of the Peace, notably an outsider figure unfamiliar with the biases that have driven Edmonton to the point of mob justice, chastises Old Banks: "are you a ringleader / In mischief? Fie, to

abuse an aged woman" (IV.i.33-34). He further insists that they must follow proper legal procedures and produce convincing proof beyond their hysterical recitation of anecdotes. The Justice proceeds to question Sawyer, and though she reacts spitefully and angrily, she also takes advantage of one of her few opportunities to speak her piece and be heard by those in power.[80] She criticizes the city magic and trickery that is excused, the lechery and corruption of the government and the court. Most relevantly to the question of radicalism, she denies that she is a witch, though the townspeople call her so, and concludes: "If every poor old woman / Be trod on thus by slaves, reviled, kicked, beaten, / As I am daily, she, to be revenged, had need turn witch" (IV.i.82-85). Extreme treatments necessitate extreme responses; radical beliefs applied to the torment of others might well inspire radical beliefs focused on revenging the injury. The Justice could chide the townspeople further for the behavior which led to these ends, but he does not. Instead, he condemns Sawyer as the obvious malfeasant in the eyes of the law and implicitly approves Edmonton in continuing its habits of righteousness and order.

Mother Sawyer's storyline, read against the criminality of Frank Thorney, the permissiveness of Cuddy Banks, and especially the uncritical zealotry of Old Banks, implies a critique of the religious dichotomy James addresses in his *Book of Sports*. Protestant sectarians were an ill-defined group, whether labeled Puritans or Precisionists or by some other contemporary title. Those who sought the greatest influence over English politics and belief tended to be grouped towards the more radical and extreme end of the English Christian spectrum. However, the dividing line between those sectarians who threatened the order of

[80] Again undermining the morality claimed by Edmonton, the Justice allows the presence and interjection of a local aristocrat, Sir Arthur Clarington, in his interrogation of Sawyer. Arthur's encouragement, both verbal and economic, led Frank to his first marriage to Winifred to legitimize her pregnancy resulting from an earlier dalliance with Arthur. She is nonetheless embraced by Edmonton at the end of the play, a woman now legitimized by the dark ends of the man she married.

the state and other English Protestants was unclear, depending on the shifting definitions of shifting powers at Court. The divide between Protestants and Catholics was easier to define, at least in theory if not in practice, allowing for clearer laws to be applied against the foundational definitional opposition to the Church of England. The English popular imagination clearly defined Catholic aberrancy, as it did witchcraft, with established signs and practices – the rituals, the Latin invocations, the avoidance of Protestant practices of worship. Society might find Protestant radicalism harder to identify until, as in Lancaster, it was undeniable – until lines had been crossed that undermined the central government and Church of England's proclamations of what was allowed for all. James sought to maintain a balance, which, while not allowing radicals to alter the nature of his rule entirely, at least sought to maintain them in tension at the edges, kept in check by the hopeful expectation that they might influence the future evolution of his ideology. But there were also times when he needed to confront the reality that certain radicalism could not serve the moderate center by balancing rival radicalism, but rather that the conflict of both threatened to destabilize the feasibility of a via media – a determined middle way of belief.

Benjamin Carier's defection from the center to radical Catholicism, driven according to his letter by the insistence of Puritans that Protestants either accord with their ideology or accept a classification as already essentially Catholic, provides a model of how this radicalization from the center might occur in reality. Theatrically, Mother Sawyer's transformation from beleaguered "witch" to damned witch, justly executed and recorded officially as a transgressor, also traces the possibility of destabilization due to insistent radical zealotry. The threat was clear, even if the means of defusing it finally remained elusive. In 1610, the clergyman David Owen, chaplain to the Lord Viscount Haddington, published

Herod and Pilate reconciled: or, the Concord of Papist and Puritan.[81] His aim in the text is to defend the Divine Right of Kings, as endorsed by James I, against attacks within the nation by sectarians. He opens his prefatory epistle "To the dutifull Subject" by rhetorically collapsing the apparent opposition of Christian sects into a singular threat to the security of the nation:

> These (though brethren in sedition and headie) are head-severed, the one staring to the presbyterie, and the other to the Papacie, but they are so fast linked behind, and tayle-tied together with firebrands between them, that if they be not quenched by the power of Majestie, they cannot chose (when the meanes are fitted to their plot) but set the Church on fire, and the state in an uprore. Their many and long prayers, their much vehement preaching, and stout opposition against orders established, their shewe of austeritie in their conversation, and of singular learning in their profession, (as the evill fiend transformed into an angel of light) brought them first into admiration. (2-3)

The image of Catholic and Protestant radicals as tied at the tails, trailing firebrands between them, is an apt one. The motions of each group evoked rival motions from the other, and the moderates inhabiting the ground over which they trod were most in danger of being burned in the process. But how to quench the threat? The anti-sectarian center of Dekker, Ford, and Rowley's play provides one suggestion in Cuddy Banks – offer redemption based on the renouncement of those practices that threatened the livelihoods of those around you or else depart. James espouses a similar solution in his *Book of Sports*, commanding that his citizens either quench the fires of their sectarianism or else leave his kingdom, free to carry on their seditions where they would not prove a threat. As the publication of Benjamin Carier's letter proved or the unseen roving of the demon dog Tom threatened, a radical out of public sight was not necessarily out of the public's mind, particularly when it came to the radicalizing potential of English sectarians.

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[81] The text was published again during the English Civil War under the title *Puritano-Iesuitismus, the Puritan turn'd Jesuite; or rather, out-vying him in those diabolicall and dangerous positions, of the deposition of kings* (1643) and during the Interregnum as simply *The Puritan turn'd Jesuite: or rather, out-vying him in those diabolicall and dangerous positions, of the deposition of kings* (1653). Owen had died in 1623, so we cannot attribute the title changes to him. Nevertheless, whatever their origin, they reflect a rhetorical shift from viewing the radical Protestants and Catholics represented by the Puritans and Jesuits as equal threats to the nation to attributing the combined radical potential of both into Puritan sectarians.

CHAPTER 4

PROROGUED ECUMENICALISM: SILENCING PUBLIC CONTENTION

In 1636, the polemicist Daniel Featley published a collection of his popular sermons, *Clavis Mystica: a Key Opening Divers Difficult and Mysterious Texts of Holy Scripture*.[82] He dedicates his work of scriptural exegesis to his "Most gracious and dread Soveraigne," Charles, begging the monarch's indulgence as he attempts to remedy "those venemous Serpents which infest the Church of Christ, whether Heretickes or Schismatickes" (Featley, *2-*3). Featley's concern about the creeping influence of blasphemous beliefs, particularly Catholicism, leads him to condemn another growing concern within England – Toleration. In a passage "concerning the Toleration of Popish Priests, and Divines preaching against it," Featley writes:

> Now, though toleration of different religions falleth in some respects, within the compasse of the mysteries of state, which cannot be determined in the Schools but are fittest to be debated at the Councel Table; yet considering the preheminence the Law of God hath above the law of men, and the dangerous consequence of an ill resolution of the state in this point, which may tend to the ruine of many thousand soules; certainly the States-man is not to begin but where the Divine ends in a deliberation of this nature; For First, it is to be enquired, Whether bearing with a false Religion, be a thing justifiable by the rules of true Religion? whether the God of Heaven permit any permissions of blasphemy against himself, or heresie against his true worship? And in case that God dispence with some kind of toleration of errours and abuses for some time, to prevent greater mischief, the Councell of State is to enquire, whether the condition of the present state be such, that the onely means to prevent heresie, is for a while to let it grow? (Featley, quoted in *Canterburies*, 342)

Featley's definition of Toleration in the passage might seem curiously insincere in comparison to a modern understanding of the term; he suggests that Toleration within the

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[82] Featley was a clergyman within the Church of England, at one point achieving a royal chaplaincy under King Charles I. In both public debate and publication, Featley fashioned himself as a strong opponent to Arminianism, the Roman Catholic Church, and the suggestion of possible reconciliation between that faith and the Protestant churches. Though this placed him into conflict with his High Church fellow clergyman (particularly William Laud), Featley remained fervently in favor of the Crown and episcopacy. These positions set him at odds with his fellow, otherwise sympathetic Calvinists, or Puritans. These conflicts eventually led Featley to fall out of favor with the Puritan cause, resulting in his imprisonment and eventual death during the English Civil War. (*ODNB*)

Church would be temporary and conditional. By no means does he intend to imply Church approbation of divergent beliefs simply because his fellow clergymen do not act immediately to stop those "heretics." Alexandra Walsham describes this Post-Reformation sense of Toleration in her book *Charitable Hatred* (2006), claiming that proponents rarely intended to suggest equality by tolerating divergent beliefs, instead essentially dismissing those who would invest in heresy as unworthy of redemption: "It was an act of forbearance, long-suffering and also indulgence, a conscious decision to refrain from persecuting something one knew to be wicked and wrong" (4).[83] Nevertheless, Featley expresses plain anxiety at the prospect of unchecked heresy fermenting within England, however conditional and condemnatory. Toleration might fend off sectarian violence for the moment, but the heretical and schismatic serpents would remain and grow in power in the process. More threatening still, Toleration itself might grow as a seemingly viable ideology within the Church, becoming a permanent rather than temporary response to religious disunity.

Featley's discussion of the biased basis of Toleration was timely in an England ruled by Charles I and a Church directed by Archbishop William Laud, addressing the growth of that philosophy as a third challenger in the established conflict between radical sectarianism and ecumenicalism. However, due to that same conflict, his condemnation did not reach print as a part of his *Clavis Mystica*. Instead, Featley's fellow clergyman and sometime combatant Laud commanded the removal of the passage. This excision was part of a larger trend of censorship by Laud, who was concerned especially with Protestant statements concerning both of the perceived extremes of Christian practice, Catholicism and

[83] Walsham argues against positive readings of early modern toleration, which she dubs anachronistic. She targets the scholarly habit of locating the origins of a modern, liberal embrace of diverse belief and practice in the ideology of English Civil War-era Protestantism, particularly Puritanism. She suggests this inclination is a part of the common scholarly equation of Protestant reform with the inception of the eventual downfall of superstition, hierarchical-control, and anti-intellectualism, all as represented by the medieval entrenchment of Catholicism.

Puritanism. Other excisions suggest that Laud not only disapproved of the condemnation of evolving Church of England practices as "tolerationist" but also rejected the tendency, particularly by Puritans, to group Catholicism with heretical sects and pagans as fundamentally blasphemous.

Laud's efforts to control the published polemic concerning the Church of England's relationship with sectarians, Catholic or Puritan, were ultimately to no avail. Rather than appearing in Featley's own work, the excised passages from *Clavis Mystica* forms part of a long catalogue of letters and censored passages in *Canterburies Doome* (1646), the English Parliament's published account of their case against William Laud. In 1645, three years after civil war broke out in England over reasons both political and religious, Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, died by execution on charges of treason. Parliament accused him of being a toleration-based heretic and appointed the Protestant controversialist William Prynne to conduct extensive research and compose a convincing case for the Archbishop's prosecution and death. Laud was High Church Anglican, the central, moderate Protestantism of the Church of England, which radical Protestant sectarians treated as essentially indistinguishable from Catholicism.[84] The title page of *Canterburies Doome* declares as much: "His [Laud's] Traterous Endeavours to Alter and Subvert Gods True Religion, by law established among us; to introduce and set up Popish Superstitions and Idolatry in liew thereof, by Insensible Degrees; and to Reconcile the Church of England to the Church of Rome, by sundry Jesuiticall Polices, Practices." The more fervent Protestants and Puritans viewed Laud's ecclesiastical Christianity and the prospect of even considering reconciliation

[84] See Charles Carlton's *Archbishop William Laud* (1987) for a more detailed consideration of whether Laud was truly Arminian, in the sense of fully following Arminius's beliefs, or whether he more simply rejected the core Calvinist doctrines including Election and was labeled Arminian by his sectarian rivals.

with the Catholic Church as Christian recidivism, backsliding into the blasphemies of England's past.[85]

The roots of England's religious sectarianism lie in the origins of the Protestant Reformation itself; an uneasy mix of Calvinist, Arminian, and Lutheran philosophies, named for the Protestant forefathers of recent European history – John Calvin (1509-1564), Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), and Martin Luther (1483-1546) – influenced reformers' vision of ideal English Christianity. The effect of Lutheranism is least apparent in the ongoing evolution of English Protestantism. While Nicholas Tyacke and Kenneth Fincham in *Altars Restored* (2007) suggest the possibility of Lutheranism inspiring Queen Elizabeth to reject a return to her brother Edward's stringency in the Church of England, they also note how Protestants tended to view the Lutheran Church as the "conservative wing of the Reformation," still too Catholic in ceremony and decor for comfort (31-32, 89). Thus, Lutheranism's influence was more in tempering Calvinist reforms than in leaving a clear and distinct legacy of its own in England. Calvin and Arminius retained greater individual power for their English reformist followers, who often came to define themselves both positively and also in opposition to the others' beliefs. Three key points of contention were the episcopacy, election, and church design – Calvinists argued that a hierarchy was unbiblical, believed in unconditional election or predestination, and emphasized church simplicity, diminishing the presence of the altar with its sacramental implications.[86] The Arminians in England, often associated with High Church Anglicanism, sought to maintain the Church

[85] The Puritan tendency to collapse both moderate and recusant views into a single, pro-Catholic effort is evidenced also in the "Grand Remonstrance" (1641), passed by a narrow majority of the recently restored English Parliament. The document targets those in power in the Church who court the Arminians and sow discord "betwixt the common Protestant and these whom they call Puritanes." Parliament charges these individuals with persecuting Puritans while tolerating outrageous Catholic belief and practice (2).

[86] We can see the complications of applying the full range of these beliefs in practice through the example of Daniel Featley, who endorsed the diminishment of church decor and seemingly believed in predestination, but yet rose in the ranks of the Church of England hierarchy and defended the larger episcopacy.

hierarchy, including the rank of bishop; believed in conditional election and the free will of believers; and emphasized the beauty and holiness of church design. Whether English sectarians fully embraced the teachings of each man or not, they freely made use of the names of Calvin and Arminius to justify the propriety of their own Protestantism and declare the radicalism of their opponents.

These evolving beliefs jockeyed for preeminence within the Church of England, seeking not only popular control of the congregants but also popular support as political capital with (or against) the monarchy. Charles promoted a more centrally-limited version of ecumenicalism than his father James I, while also marrying an openly Catholic queen, Henrietta Maria of France. John Coffey, in *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England 1558-1689* (2000), describes this ecumenical evolution:

> Whereas James fostered a broad and internally tolerant church, Charles committed himself to a campaign against Puritanism which ultimately proved disastrous [. . . .] from the start of his reign, Charles promoted Arminians with greater vigour than his father had done. The policy was deeply controversial and damaging because Arminians seemed to represent a crypto-popery within the church that paralleled the open popery at court. (125)

Charles and Laud's policies ultimately alienated true Catholics as well as Puritans and other Christian sectarians, destabilizing the tenuous religious balance James had striven for in his lifetime. Questions about the relationship between official state religion and individual believers arose with renewed vigor: should the government have a role in determining individual belief and practice? What role should sectarian belief have in influencing the nation's religion? And, what extremes of religious unity or division could the nation bear in the pursuit of peace? Responses fell into three broad philosophies for confronting religious difference: Toleration, Ecumenicalism, and Sectarianism. Proponents of each throughout the range of English Christian belief offered strategies for resolving the conflicts of Church and State. Ecumenicalism sought a common belief in spite of uncommon practice – the

adiaphora or matters indifferent – revealing the shallowness of the difference, while Tolerationists proposed a coexistence maintaining difference. In *Conscience and Community* (2001), Andrew R. Murphy describes this ideological rather than temporary sense of Toleration: "[A]ppreciating that society would continue to be characterized by vast differences on religious and moral questions, Tolerationists sought a way of living together in peace: a modus vivendi" (15). I should reassert Walsham's insistence that we read this "peace" not as Tolerationists approving of divergent beliefs but rather determining not to devote their energies to correcting the wayward believers. The range of what Tolerationists permitted varied to include Protestant sects, Catholicism, and even atheism and non-Christian beliefs. Opponents viewed this ideology as unsound and dangerous, granting society too much liberty of belief and practice and too little oversight from a centralized English government and Church. Supporters of an ecumenical *via media* and sectarian uniformity both emphasized the necessity of a united Church of England. Each group was willing to risk the violence of silencing their rivals in order to achieve ideological victory.[87]

This chapter, then, more than any of the previous ones, becomes a narrative of dissolution. The established center of Church and State hierarchies no longer held, and the hopes for ecumenical reunification and broader anti-sectarianism effectively dissipated in the face of radical challenge. The popular response to contemporary religious debates and political events evolved, echoing the destructive impulses compelling England towards further reformation and revolution. In this chapter, I read two plays that demonstrate this shift in rhetoric by staging the silencing of other voices and the narrowing of ideological

[87] Attempts by sectarians to control the central Church and therefore determine national practice had already sparked violence elsewhere in Charles I's United Kingdom. Debates about the episcopacy in the Scottish Kirk led to the outbreak of the Bishops' Wars in Scotland (1639-1640). The Covenanters led the protest against an episcopal system of bishops, desiring instead to restore pre-Jacobean Presbyterianism to Scottish Christianity. This conflict finally forced Charles to recall the English Parliament after more than a decade of individual, monarchical rule, an action that would precipitate the English Civil War and the violent end to Charles's reign.

possibility in the aftermath of sectarian disruption. I begin by examining John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633), a work that seemingly fulfills the anti-Catholic expectations of revenge tragedy. The Catholic population it portrays lacks restraint – a nightmare of the Toleration philosophy run amok with instances of incest and a Church hierarchy concerned only with wealth. My second reading is of James Shirley's *The Cardinal* (1641), which again demonstrates the depravity of the religious hierarchy overstepping its professional boundaries, centered on a corrupted Cardinal. Each work seems to follow the strengthening Protestant party line of condemning Catholicism (and indeed any anti-Calvinist and pro-episcopal belief) as anti-Christian, presumably against the good, though unstaged, examples of Protestantism.

Sectarian readings of the plays require an oversimplification of both plots, demanding audiences overlook complications of contemporary politics, playwright identities, and dramatic complexity. James Shirley was likely a Catholic.[88] However, I have already discussed in a previous chapter my hesitancy to base readings of fictional (or indeed popular polemical) works solely on the apparent ideologies of their creators. While I admire the works of Arthur Huntington Nason, Sandra Burner, and Eva Griffith in analyzing the extant historical documents related to Shirley and building a convincing case for his Catholic affiliation, I disagree that this religious identity should compel critics to interrogate any seeming criticism of that Church or its hierarchy in his work. Shirley's affiliation would not

[88] The uncertainty surrounding Shirley's affiliation is of the common variety surrounding popular early modern playwrights not named Shakespeare or Jonson. The common scholarly consensus labels Shirley a Catholic, though no records seem extant that explicitly proclaim the affiliation. See, for instance, Sandra A. Burner's *James Shirley: A Study of Literary Coteries and Patronages in Seventeenth-Century England* (1988), where she accumulates circumstantial evidence surrounding Shirley (from his acquaintances, to his patrons, to the morals of his plays, to a possible arrest for recusancy) to claim that we cannot be certain but can reliably assume his Catholicism. An earlier work (and touchstone in Shirley scholarship), Arthur Huntington Nason's *James Shirley, Dramatist* (1915) also hesitates to proclaim Shirley certainly Catholic, but is comfortable in basing readings of his plays on that likely affiliation. Eva Griffith more recently offers a brief overview of the current range of evidence in "Till the state fangs catch you: James Shirley the Catholic: Why it does not matter (and why it really does)" (2010), where she reevaluates and corrects pieces of Burner's evidence, while ultimately reinforcing the earlier work's label of the playwright as Catholic.

have prevented him from possessing negative views of aspects of the Catholic Church, and he criticizes that Church's hierarchy quite clearly through the title character of the work, a Catholic Cardinal who devolves into a near caricature of pride and sinfulness. However, Shirley also raises questions about the distance between institutional identity and individual error, examining the moral corruptions of power and entrenched structures of belief. This conclusion leads me to consider and diverge from Charles Forker's suggestion in his edition of *The Cardinal* that Shirley unites Catholic and Puritan sympathies in an attack on William Laud and the High Anglicanism of the Church of England, a reading tempting for its rhetorical deftness. I suggest instead that the play is essentially Anti-Sectarian, examining the flaw of Sectarian self-valorization (whether Puritan, Catholic, or indeed High Anglican) based primarily on the condemnation of other beliefs.

The critical works I confront in my discussion of John Ford's *'Tis Pity* are similarly based on ideological readings of the playwright. John Ford's critique of the Catholic establishment is blunter in his play than Shirley's in *The Cardinal*, though Ford's condemnation of Catholicism and its representatives is intriguingly incomplete. The sympathetic character of the Friar has spawned a thread of criticism, including works by Mark Stavig, Gilles D. Monsarrant, and Lisa Hopkins, which interprets that character as embodying the personal beliefs of Ford. Though I too read that character as representative of "good faith" in that play, I find myself contending more with these positive readings than those that dismiss the Friar as equivocating or too strictly observant to realize the error of his beliefs. Ford locates the heart of the play's monstrosity in unchecked Toleration and Catholic apostasy. Rather than agreeing with those critics who laud the Friar for departing the play as a further sign of his sanctity, a condemnation of the toleration of sin around him, I propose instead that we should read the Friar as enacting another troubling act of

toleration. He chooses to silence his own critical voice, and the play concludes with a univocal declaration of moral settlement, in spite of all too evident corruption remaining.

In their complex portrayals of power and belief, exploring the dangers of embracing violent erasure or disunity as religious policy, these two plays demonstrate the increased need for cautiousness in the Anti-Sectarian theatrical "play." The freedom to speak and stage such sentiments was under a clear and violent threat, reinforced by the publication of a series of anti-theatrical works, from Alexander Leighton's brief pamphlet, "A shorte treastise against stage-playes" (1625), to William Prynne's epic treatise, *Histrio-Mastix* (1632) – works that frame my readings of the two plays. These polemical publications focus on the connection of theatrical performance and Catholic rituals (including those within the Church of England) as corrupting forces of society, enculturating audiences with sinful practices. Both polemicists acknowledge that social ills exist beyond the walls of the theatre, but they suggest that the destruction of this one locus of popular entertainment and toleration of sin might prove a bold step in banishing the devil from the heart of English society and purifying the Christianity of the Church of England. While neither Ford's nor Shirley's play explicitly responds to Leighton or Prynne, their dramas suggest a similar response to this anti-theatrical claim – by pinning so much blame on a limited target and by silencing the obvious voices of contention, the polemicists distract public attention from the larger ills of society, which they implicitly tolerate. The destruction of a sinful opponent is satisfying, but it should not replace the sectarians' duty to identify and correct the ills that remain, particularly within their own party. While both plays have been read as allegories for the wrongs and downfall of Archbishop William Laud and the hierarchy surrounding him, the two plays also critique Laud's opponents, both Sectarian and Tolerationist, by questioning reforms founded primarily on the scapegoating of ideological rivals. I propose that we can read *'Tis Pity She's a*

Whore and *The Cardinal* as demonstrating the inherent danger of those in power banishing critical voices from public discourse, reducing the multivocal structure of popular publication and performance, and interpreting the ensuing silence as proof of their own moral superiority.

Pity for the Mainstream

In the year of Charles I's ascension to the throne, the growing anti-theatrical contingent in England published one of their most famous works. Originally anonymous, "A shorte treatise against stage-playes" (1625) has since been attributed to the Scottish Puritan Alexander Leighton.[89] In building a case against theatre for its potential to influence audiences to ungodly thought and action, the treatise follows the example of the player-turned-polemicist Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse* (1579) or *Playes confuted in five actions* (1582).[90] Leighton condemns theatre and the dangers it poses to those involved, suggesting that the government must ban dramatic displays for the sake of the nation: "Whereas Stage-playes are repugnant to the written Word and Will of Almightie God, the onely wise Governour & righteous Judge of the whole world; dangerous to the eternall salvation both of the actours and spectatours; breede many inconveniences wheresoever they come; procure the judgements of God to the whole kingdome, for sinne tollerated pourchaseth Gods wrath to the whole nation" (3). Leighton's reasoning in condemning the theatre is strikingly similar to arguments against religious toleration. Errant practice, whether heretical

[89] Leighton had already encountered trouble in England by this time for his outspoken publications criticizing the government and Church of England. He likely chose to remain anonymous when publishing his anti-theatrical pamphlet to avoid further legal repercussions. In spite of this, Leighton was arrested in 1630, imprisoned, and received both a brand and ear-docking to mark him permanently as seditious (*ODNB*). See also *Notes from the Caroline Underground: Alexander Leighton, the Puritan Triumverate, and the Laudian Reaction to Nonconformity* (1978) by Stephen Foster for a more extensive examination of these events.

[90] Gosson argues especially that plays are inimical to Christianity, concluding his later pamphlet: "playes are the inventions of the devill, the offrings of Idolatrie, the pompe of wordlinges, the blossomes of vanitie, the roote of Apostacy, the foode of iniquitie, ryot, and adulterie. destest them" (122). Gosson focuses on the theatre's power to inspire sin by example, distracting audiences from godly pursuits.

belief or dramatic spectacle, taints the spiritual well-being of those involved. Leighton suggests that even right practitioners – those who believe in true doctrine and abstain from sinful entertainments – risk damnation by allowing such errant behaviors to continue unchecked.

Leighton's scholarly approach in his supplication to the Parliament strengthens the parallel between beliefs deemed heretical, for instance Catholicism, and the history of theatre. The origins of the damnable entertainment lie, according to Leighton, first among indeterminate heathens (perhaps Asian or Roman), then among the Jews, who inspired later wayward but marginal Christians, until "that great scarlet coloured whore of Babylon with her golden cup of abhominations in her hand" – the Roman Catholic Church – welcomed the "king of Locusts" with his plays into the heart of Christianity (8-9). That Church favored rituals and ceremonies already, and the incorporation of theatrical works served to manipulate believers into further blasphemies. Where heathens might be justified in believing that plays could assuage the anger of the gods, Christians should know better (10). Leighton draws the traditional Protestant parallels between the ceremonialism of the stage and that of the Catholic mass, speaking of both as distractions from true Christian practice. He concludes his short pamphlet – a mere twenty-eight quarto pages – by emphasizing the immediacy of the threat theatre poses to England, listing eight historical instances of violence, disaster, and demonic possession resulting in deaths during dramatic presentations. Moving from polemicized history and sociological arguments, Leighton concludes with scare tactics of sin and damnation. Theatre, according to Leighton's conclusion, is a dangerous endeavor, inviting bodily and spiritual violence in the midst of irreligious revelry.

Leighton recognizes that he cannot bring an end to the theatre by calling on the religious reason of theatre goers. The same irreligious elements he finds so reprehensible

form the basis of much of popular theatre of the period. The particularly popular Revenge Tragedy genre epitomizes what Leighton abhors, reveling in the entertaining possibilities of violence, hidden intrigue, and religious corruption. Indeed, the Catholic implications of theatricality and ritualism are central to the genre. Allison Shell in *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (1999) devotes a chapter to the implicit anti-Catholicism of Italianate Revenge Tragedies, where "the Protestant establishment in England erected the imaginative structure of a corrupt, politicised Catholic church" (55). She argues that earlier readings of these plays, which label them as larger critiques of Christianity in general, are ignorant of this Protestant polemical history. I would counter that the earlier anti-Catholicism of English Protestantism had become polemical ammunition by this time against any moderate Protestants. Thus, the anti-Catholicism implicit in Carolinian Revenge Tragedy can simultaneously serve as criticism of the corruptions the Church of England, while also highlighting the spiritually-beneficial elements of each church.

John Ford's play *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* initially reads as entirely critical, exemplifying Revenge Tragedy rife with the expected proliferation of bloody machinations and corrupted Catholicism. The Queen Henrietta's Men (named for their patron, Charles's Catholic wife) first performed the play between 1629 and 1633. The play is set in the Italian city of Parma, filled with individuals practicing their depraved desires in secret. The citizens maintain a façade of religious habit in spite of their irreligious intentions, their Christianity more culturally established than individually practiced. Men and women regularly invoke heaven and hell, angels and devils, salvation and damnation. This godly language persists even as they plot their goals of sex, revenge, and social-advancement. The Spaniard Vasques, captures the full depravity of the city: "To what height of liberty in damnation hath the devil

trained our age?" (IV.iii.238-239).[91] His choice of words is significant, condemning modernity for excess "liberty" – the free will for individuals to act as they choose, however sinfully.[92] Religion only nominally shapes the morality of the society, failing to assert the necessary order and restriction that might correct these "liberated" citizens.

The three characters in the play with clear, active connections to the Catholic Church (the prevailing faith of an Italian city like Parma) offer the audience some sense of how this failure is possible by enacting three forms of Toleration. The most esteemed representative of Catholicism in the play is the Cardinal, who repeatedly notes his role as the personal representative of the Pope. He is a figure of gastronomical and financial luxury, rife with the corruptions and earthliness with which anti-episcopal Protestant rhetoric would charge him. The critical history of the play fairly uniformly condemns the Cardinal as a negative example of religious power, tolerating those sins he finds beneficial and only condemning those that disrupt his enjoyment of his station. The young scholar Giovanni evokes more mixed reactions. He begins as a lay congregant, practicing the expected rituals and devotions of the faith. He uses this initial faith as a platform for disputation and devolves over the course of the play into an unrepentant atheist, rationalizing debauchery and eventually homicide. In "Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore and the Jacobean Tragic Perspective," Larry S. Champion describes Parma as "a decadent society in which each individual is a law unto himself, pursuing his own interests at whatever cost to those around him" (78), and he reads

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[91] I use the edition of the play available in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology* (2002), edited by David Bevington, Lars Engle, Katherine Eisaman Maus, and Eric Rasmussen.

[92] A positive connotation of "liberty" is more common at this time in pamphlet literature and exegesis, where it is described as a gift from God. However, in his *Institutiones piae or directions to pray* (1630, 2nd ed.), the bishop Lancelot Andrewes writes in a confessional prayer, "I have turned from the consideration of thy Excellency, to vaine, and transitory things of this life, I have given liberty, to whatsoever mine eyes have desired, and have not resisted the uncleane passions of my heart" (195). Andrewes's usage helps to illuminate the essential difference between Ford's usage and the more common connotation – the former connotes unlawful liberty, as determined by man rather than God. This danger of unchecked whim gained greater resonance in the responses to the Toleration movement.

Giovanni's "conversion" as a refutation of the debased morality of the city. I would argue instead that Giovanni's eventual apostasy codifies these same sins into his own individual law, magnifying both the degree and intensity of his sinfulness due to a devotion to his new "doctrine." Embodying the radically individual potential of religious toleration, Giovanni zealously and violently protects his personal practice of his faith against other characters' interventions. In this, I would agree with Mark Stavig's resistance in *John Ford and the Traditional Moral* Order (1968) to valorizing Giovanni as a wayward and passionate but flawed hero (95-97). Giovanni never positively promotes his beliefs to others, implicitly acknowledging that his faith entirely depends on his own individual desires of the moment rather than on any greater theological or philosophical basis.

Between these two figures of self-satisfaction and corruption is Friar Bonaventura, whose sense of spiritual obligation brings him temporarily into the community. He remains anomalous among the trio of men, displaying a strong commitment to his practice of faith. In claiming this difference between the men, I am indebted to Gilles D. Monsarrant's essay 'The Unity of John Ford: "'Tis Pity She's a Whore" and "Christ's Bloody Sweat"' (1980), where he describes Ford's play as possessing a dichotomous view of the religious figures in his play that elevates Bonaventura's character. He reads the Cardinal's character as a corruption of Rome, while the Friar's good nature is representative of Ford's own personal belief (Christian, not Catholic) (251). The Friar prescribes reconciliation and redemption to the wayward individuals he encounters, and his ministering is earnest if pragmatic. Yet, even his role concludes with an exile based in his own righteous indignation rather than his achievement of certain redemption for the Parmese. Most clearly modeling the corrective Toleration troubled by Daniel Featley rather than the self-serving, apathetic Toleration of his fellow characters, the Friar abandons the population of Parma to their own sinful

destruction, proposing therefore to spare himself so he might continue his religious efforts elsewhere. In a conclusion I disagree with, Monsarrant argues that each of the Friar's actions, particularly his departure from Parma, is in fact a sign of his godliness. Lisa Hopkins builds on Monsarrant's work in *John Ford's Political Theatre* (1994) to suggest this as further proof of Ford as an English Catholic. The hierarchy of Catholics in the play is fundamentally flawed, from its heights of Rome to its laic practitioners, but the Friar at least models a positive Catholic belief in his efforts to save those desirous of salvation. He is well-meaning and the best possible representative of Christianity in the play, but I break with Monsarrant, Hopkins, and Stavig by arguing that his flaws and insufficiencies are also central to how we must read his character. In crafting each member of this trio, John Ford stages the redemptive possibilities of contentious Christian practices. However, he also echoes the contemporary condemnation of corrupted religious hierarchies and the moral chaos possible when religious teachings and practices are at odds or indeed absent.[93]

In the play's grotesque performances of idolatry, blasphemy, and sinfulness, Ford presents a complicated criticism that exceeds simple Anti-Catholicism or Protestant criticism. Giovanni's rejection of the Catholic faith echoes the model of Protestant intellectual heroism, yet this also proves the start of his transgressive transformation.[94] He is a scholarly wunderkind, pronounced by his tutor and confesor Bonaventura: "that miracle

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[93] Gillian Woods's essay "New Directions: The Confessional Identities of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*" examines the role of confession as a sacrament within the play against the changing views of that act during and following the Reformation, focusing primarily on Giovanni and Annabella's encounters with confession. She writes, "The sectarian difficulties exploited by *'Tis Pity* participate in its tragic dynamic but are not reconciled into an answer about Ford's personal confessional identity. Ford engages anti-Catholic ideas [. . .] but also questions the possibility of a Catholic dynamic" (119). Woods suggests that contention rather than counsel is the locus of meaning in tragedies. By resisting a declaration of his own affiliation in the work and allowing for a measured view of Catholicism, Ford encourages doctrinal meditation rather than preaches certainty to his audience members, inverting the growing polemical trends of the era.

[94] Critics have compared the character of Giovanni to Marlowe's Faustus (see, for instance, Cyrus Hoy's "Ignorance in Knowledge: Marlowe's Faustus and Ford's Giovanni" (1960)) as representations of the intellectual mastering his own faith and fate and yet attaining damnation by overreaching. Is this the natural deconstructive/destructive ends of such mastery?

of wit" and "A wonder of thine age," celebrated at his university for "Thy government, behavior, learning, speech, / Sweetness, and all that could make up a man!" (I.i.47, 49, 51-52). He so excels intellectually and socially that his father worries that Giovanni might not ensure a legacy of his body as well as his mind (a fear that will prove prescient). Initially the actual effect of his studies is to spark doubt about the efficacy of the Catholic Church. Giovanni dubs the counsel and confessional prescriptions of Bonaventura, prayers, tears, and fasting, "but dreams and old men's tales / To fright unsteady youth" (I.i.156-157). If audiences read this proclamation as a dismissal of Catholic ritualism and reconciliation alone, they might view Giovanni's revelation as a victory of the individual relationship with religion promoted by Protestantism. The young man has practiced the papist rituals, found them to be unsound and inefficacious, and thus dismissed them as outdated superstition.

An individual's rigorous interrogation of his own faith is only a victory for Protestantism if he practices Protestant belief as a result. Giovanni's promising initial rejection of Catholicism leads him instead to mental aberrancy. Rather than focusing his faith on a reformed Christianity, stripped of the regalia and ritualism of Catholicism, Giovanni devotes himself instead to the incestuous pursuit of his own sister, Annabella. Religious order no longer moderates his extremes of refined mind and lustful body. Giovanni relies on his words and his wit as a means of achieving his bodily desires, believing the intellectual mastery defining his reputation at the university is sufficient to overmatch lesser men's objections to his will. Giovanni's narcissism grows from the play's first scene, when he declares an act of confession complete: "unclasped my burdened soul, / Emptied the storehouse of my thoughts and heart, / Made myself poor of secrets" (I.i.13-15). As Ford makes immediately clear, Giovanni's intentions in confessing are far from repentant;

the confessor, Friar Bonaventura, has declared the act of confession as corrupted and therefore heretical because Giovanni begins to "dispute" (I.i.1):

> Nice philosophy
> May tolerate unlikely arguments,
> But heaven admits no jests, wits that presumed
> On wit too much, by striving how to prove
> There was no God, with foolish grounds of art,
> Discovered first the nearest way to hell,
> And filled the world with devilish atheism. (I.i.2-8)

The friar is well-acquainted with Giovanni as both his tutor and confessor, familiar with both the future possibility and past failings of the young man. He is uniquely equipped to judge the danger Giovanni invites by collapsing these two relationships and treating the confessional as a space of disputation. The audience never witnesses the turn from confession to disputation in this opening scene; Ford opens his play with the Friar declaring the confession corrupted and Giovanni always already disputing his faith. Whether by an inherently twisted nature or the nurture of adoration as a university star or the sole son at home, the Giovanni who enters the play has come to view the world as negotiable. If he desires his sister, he can declare social mores as secondary to animal urges. If God's punishment threatens to derail his plans, he can banish God from his belief system. Giovanni seems to believe that the proper argument can shape his experience to match his will.

Giovanni's character becomes worse rather than better once he has cast off the hindrances of Catholicism, disappointing any hope among audience members that he might yet prove reform-minded rather than atheistic. Catholicism is merely the first of the philosophies Giovanni discards as they prove prohibitive to his will. Revealing himself finally to be on a path of devolution rather than roundabout reformation, the celebrated scholar of the first act rejects even that identity by the final act: "Let poring bookmen dream of other

worlds; / My world and all of happiness is here. / And I'd not change it for the best to come. / A life of pleasure is Elysium" (V.iii.13-16). He has stripped away his intellectual identity now as well, defining himself solely by the body – his own and his sister's. Giovanni proudly proclaims his diminishment as fully disbelief rather than empirical focus on his current experience. He taunts Bonaventura's ongoing concern for him: "The hell you oft have prompted is naught else / But slavish and fond superstitious fear; / And I could prove it too—" (V.iii.19-21). In reverting momentarily to his previous habit of disputation, Giovanni confirms he has excised that part of his identity; he *could* prove he is not damned, that there is no hell and no heaven in the spiritual sense, but he will not. Giovanni is now a model of Vasques's dangerous liberty, free from systems of scholarly logic and Christian practice, as entirely certain as any radical sectarian of the ultimate truth of his own belief and the foolishness of all others.

Giovanni's absolute certainty in his individual beliefs leads to a peculiar form of toleration rather than proselytism. He embraces atheism for himself and brooks no religious or moral objections that will prevent his will. But, he still tolerates and even promotes prayer and repentance to his sister, whom he knows (or perhaps, oddly, hopes) to be more than nominally Catholic. For instance, upon learning that his sister is pregnant with his child and has taken sick, Giovanni seeks the Friar: "that with words / Of ghostly comfort in this time of need / He might absolve her, whether she live or die" (III.iv.28-30). Florio, their father, responds: "Thou herein / Hast shown a Christian's care, a brother's love" (31-32). The father's ironic ignorance of his son's atheism and his children's sexual relationship with each other is not simply a moment of dark comedy. Whatever Giovanni's intentions towards his sister or his personal beliefs, he earnestly desires in this moment that his sister receives absolution in case her illness proves deadly. Annabella is still Christian, and the form of his

care for her is based on her faith rather than his own disbelief. A darker echo of this toleration occurs when Giovanni has descended further into nihilism and faces the inevitable end of his earthly, bodily Elysium. Intending to murder his sister and the unborn child of their incest, Giovanni commands her: "Pray, Annabella, pray! Since we must part, / Go thou, white in thy soul, to fill a throne / Of innocence and sanctity in heaven. / Pray, pray, my sister" (V.v.63-66). Woods reads this repetition of a command to pray as Giovanni's inability to "escape the discursive structures of religion" (131). I would assign more awareness to Giovanni in this moment, maintaining a clear separation between the ideologies of Annabella and himself; we never witness him reverting to these patterns of prayer or repentance when his own life is threatened. Giovanni's lecherous doctrine centers entirely on Annabella, compelling him to preserve her in order to preserve his new belief. However, he would rather destroy her than lose her as his own, endangering his own practice to maintain its sanctity. He has no intentions of sparing her life and proposes no heavenly ends for himself, but he recognizes that her own belief might yet permit repentance and a place in heaven. Through a process that is violent, self-serving, and malformed, Giovanni models a form of Tolerationist philosophy that promotes individual belief even if it leads to the mutual suffering of all.

While Giovanni is hardly admirable when he dies, he is at least more honest in his worldliness and lechery than the Cardinal, who epitomizes religious hypocrisy in the play. While asserting repeatedly his status in Parma as representative of the Pope, the Cardinal demonstrates the political and economic corruptions of that hierarchy in his two brief scenes. At the midpoint of the play, a group of citizens track a well-born murderer (who has accidentally killed the wrong man) to the Cardinal's gate, where the accompanying town officers stop: "for fear of His Grace (bless us!) we durst go no further" (III.ix.14-15). The

representatives of civil law recognize their limited ability to address matters involving the Church, even when those matters are patently civil and within their jurisdiction. Rehearsing the ongoing controversy concerning both the Catholic and Protestant hierarchies, the Church members overstep their boundaries boldly, and the civil government refuses to reassert their rights in fear of spiritual punishment. More problematically, the nature of civil and spiritual justice differs markedly, causing dissonance in the community's sense of social justice. Instead of granting the "true justice" the party of Parmese citizens expect, the Cardinal chides and dismisses the remainder of the party, reinforcing their perception of the Church exerting its prerogative at will. The murderer Grimaldi submits himself to the clergyman's justice, staging a public confession of his crime – a grotesque combination of the benefit of clergy, a claim of sanctuary, and the sacrament of absolution.[95] The Cardinal takes Grimaldi into the Pope's protection, by extension of his own powers, offering a retreat to Rome for the murderer: "no common man, but nobly born; / Of princes' blood" (III.ix.57-58). God might judge each man according to personal merit, but the Church's judgment is not so blind to class and wealth. The Cardinal attempts to shame the accusers back into their subservient social and religious roles, revealing his true motivations; Grimaldi's crime, which he seems to view more as an inconvenience than a grievous sin, has provided the Cardinal and the Church an opportunity to strengthen their alliances with a member of the Roman nobility.

The Cardinal reconfirms his hierarchy's selective application of moral judgment, determined by the possibility of institutional enrichment, in the final scene of the play.

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[95] "Benefit of Clergy" originally allowed the medieval Catholic clergy in England to transfer their cases from the civil to ecclesiastical courts, by which they could escape the possibility of greater punishments. Eventually, the practice expanded so that, if the accused could demonstrate their ability to read from scripture, as Ben Jonson famously did when charged with murder, they could reduce the severity of their punishment. The practice obviously benefitted the educated classes.

Though his high-opinion of his own reputation hardly wavers, the Cardinal's experiences three strikes against his moral mastery: first, by an atheist's denial of his spiritual direction; second, by his belated attempts to banish sin from the city; and, third, by a final instance of the Church's interest in enrichment before the salvation of its congregants. The Cardinal first bears witness to Giovanni's endgame of violent retribution, and he condemns the young man's unrepentant confession of incest and murder. The clergyman urges him: "Strive yet to cry to heaven" (V.vi.105) only after Giovanni receives a fatal wound and poses no further threat. The Cardinal is clearly more comfortable with acting as imperious aristocrat than counseling servant to his congregation. Spiritual well-being and the banishment of embedded sinfulness in Parma hardly factor into his efforts to restore the city after the violence has ended. Instead, he once again resorts to a skewed sense of self-enrichment, focusing only on removing the detritus of sin already revealed to allay the anxieties of the community. He proclaims: "First, this woman, chief in these effects, / My sentence is, that forthwith she be ta'en / Out of the city, for example's sake, / There to be burned to ashes (V.vi.134-137). The Cardinal's order deprives the unnamed woman (likely the maidservant Putana, who aided Giovanni's seduction of his sister, and is at that point imprisoned nearby) of both life and a proper Christian burial beyond the walls of the city. But, what example are citizens of Parma to take from this brutal treatment of a sinful servant? The Cardinal further exiles the Spanish plotter, Vasques, who first commented on the unrestricted "liberty" of Parma, once more offering no doctrinal reasoning for his actions. He does not expound on the moral lessons the citizens might take from violent ends of the play's many plots, delaying such talk (and his duty as Roman Catholic minister of God's will) until an unspecified later time.

Instead in that moment, as with his previous dismissal of Grimaldi's murderous actions, the Cardinal turns misfortune to the benefit of the Church's hierarchy and wealth. He declares in the same breath that others must attend to the "slaughtered bodies," while "all the gold and jewels, or whatsoever, / Confiscate by the canons of the church, / We seize upon to the Pope's proper use" (V.vi.149, 150-152). Truth and heavenly justice do not factor in his commands; the Cardinal is disinclined to correct the culture in Parma that allows him to parade himself as honored guest, collecting accolades in times of peace and looting treasures in the aftermath of tragedy. As nuncio to the Pope, the Cardinal's behavior suggests a Roman Catholic Church unconcerned with the unseen sinfulness of its congregants as long as their disruptions do not prove overly disruptive. If they do, the Church will turn the chaos and its spiritual hold on those involved to its own advantage. The Cardinal epitomizes standard Protestant polemical accusations of the Catholic Church assuming powers beyond the ecclesiastical realm. The Parmese citizens seem to accept this encroachment without objection as it allows them to act out their whims under the simultaneously uncritical eye of a luxuriant Church and State. Ford starkly presents the Catholic Church of the Cardinal as neither redeemed nor redemptive, perhaps only as nominally concerned with Heaven's will and punishment as its worldly and wayward congregants.

With no apparent moral structure above him, Friar Bonaventura is at last the only remaining hope of redemption for and with the Church. His profession is essential for his achievement; as a friar, Bonaventura has an obligation to his holy vows to immerse himself in a community, disallowing the detachment and self-importance adopted by the Cardinal

due to his "noble" status.[96] The two Church members never interact or even appear in the same scene, and we might question how the Cardinal would behave towards a mendicant member of his own hierarchy. Oddly, both men are outsiders to Parma, only temporarily residing there in pursuit of their "official duties." Bonaventura, unlike the Cardinal, has received no official orders to be present. He has traveled from Bononia [Bologna], his normal residence, to Parma in pursuit of his duties as tutor and counselor to Giovanni.[97] He is not lodged in the house of a noble, though he interacts with a number of noble citizens; for the course of his time in the play, Bonaventura maintains a cell of indeterminate location near the action of the city.[98] This unnoted separation and severe contrast of the two figures allows for Bonaventura to escape the condemnation Ford clearly aims at the Cardinal. Where the Cardinal parades his excess, luxury, and detachment (the worldliness of the earthly Roman Catholic Church), the Friar more embodies the imperfect enactment of that Church's faith – the earnest and ultimately insufficient attempts to realize the ideals of doctrine among a sinful people.

However, the same detachment from hierarchy that allows Bonaventura to more fully immerse himself in the community also limits his power to implement change in those he counsels. He recognizes himself as a supplicant, both to God and the people, counseling his congregants and entreating God, but reliant upon the wills of both to enact his

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[96] The friars' immersion in and devotion to a delimited community, with fewer immediate connections to the Church hierarchy, explains their usefulness in early modern dramas (see, for instance, Shakespeare's false "Friar Lodowick" in *Measure for Measure* and Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet*). Possessing a dually sanctified and mundane character, interacting across the range of society, free to a degree to impose their sense of moral rectitude through avenues independent and at times irreverent, friars maintain the power of religious oversight while disconnected from the perceived corruptions of the hierarchy above them.

[97] Perhaps Parma is a part of the friar's larger province, in which he is meant to travel and minister, though his connection to the University in Bononia suggests his profession is more geographically fixed at this point.

[98] Annabella speaks of Giovanni as "Newly walked abroad" (II.vi.1) when he visits the Friar at his cell, but offers no clearer sense of location. When Grimaldi slays Bergetto near the Friar's cell, the officers of the city become involved, suggesting that his cell is at least within their jurisdiction.

intentions. He can offer moral guidance and sacraments, but he must rely upon others to uphold the sanctity of these offerings once bestowed. A series of statements in his second confessional exchange with Giovanni makes these limitations abundantly clear: "I day and night have waked my aged eyes, / Above my strength, to weep on thy behalf. / But heaven is angry, and be thou resolved" (II.v.7-9), "I see thou'rt too far sold to hell; / It lies not in the compass of my prayers / To call thee back" (37-39), and "What I can do / Is but to pray; and yet I could advise thee, / Wouldst thou be ruled" (61-63). The Friar models prayerfulness and sacrifice to those who entreat him, but his faith cannot take the form of active intervention. He can only perform part of each ceremony, can only establish the circumstances in which redemption and reconciliation might occur, but he cannot himself force the minds and souls of those he counsels to change without their own earnest prayerfulness and sacrifice of self. Audiences might question why Bonaventura remains passive even after Giovanni has declared his incestuous actions and his intentions to accept a violent end. He is not echoing the Cardinal's toleration of sinfulness sheltering a sinner from public punishment. While Bonaventura's past original relationship to Giovanni might incline him to desire mercy for his former pupil, he would be similarly limited in his actions on behalf of anyone else because of the Seal of the Confessional. Bonaventura will press the bounds of his profession, pursuing pragmatic resolutions for his sinful congregants, but he will not betray the core sacrament of his profession in the process.

Bonaventura's recognition of personal insufficiency finally prompts his departure from Parma and the play; this decision enacts a third example of Tolerationist philosophy in the play. He determines that he can do no more for the Parmese, who have repeatedly rejected any suggestion of reconciliation. Bonaventura judges that the rampant Toleration of sin in Parma has prompted its ruin, echoing Daniel Featley's fears that Toleration unchecked

could evoke "dangerous consequence" and the "ruin of souls," leading to an irredeemable majority. The Friar determines that God's punishment must be imminent. Associating the fate of Giovanni with that of his city, Bonaventura declares:

> The wildness of thy fate draws to an end,
> To a bad, fearful end. I must not stay
> To know thy fall. Back to Bononia I
> With speed will haste, and shun this coming blow.
> Parma, farewell! Would I had never known thee,
> Or aught of thine! (V.iii.63-68)

The last seemingly truly Catholic figure proclaims the inefficacy of his position, echoing the Protestant proclamation that no intercessor is necessary between humanity and God. But, the circumstances do not create a world of better, more direct faith. Instead, the city remains in chaos, sin, and violence, its liberty unchallenged or unchecked. Bonaventura proclaims the Parmese unworthy of any further effort to reform them, whether actively through counsel or passively by his faithful presence. His very profession as a confessor requires that he knows sinfulness, yet he rejects that knowledge in this instance and wishes instead that he had maintained his ignorance. His action evokes Alexandra Walsham's definition of tolerance, which she describes as especially damnable for representatives of the State or Church: "Knowingly to permit individuals to continue to profess a false religion was not merely a deplorable dereliction of one's responsibilities as a Christian; it was also an act of disobedience to the deity" (228). However, Bonventura complicates this condemnation of himself, because he has repeatedly, if ineffectually, attempted to correct false religion. In departing, he states unequivocally his intolerance for the sins Giovanni continues to commit. Bonaventura implies that his departure should not suggest approval for ongoing sinfulness but instead recognition that rightful punishment is imminent.

Further, Walsham describes early modern condemnation of the toleration of religious minorities by the majority; by the fifth act of *'Tis Pity*, Bonaventura occupies the

place of religious minority within Parma, surrounded by corrupted Christians and unrepentant sinners. Again defending the righteousness of the Friar, Monsarrant argues that Bonaventura is justified in his departure, which simply enacts, he claims, the retreat of God's grace from Parma. Monsarrant justifies his claim by arguing that the Friar's presence at the end of the play would force the revelation of his role in the plot to conceal Giovanni and Annabella's incestuous relationship, which would undermine his moral authority (252). This reasoning seems relativistic – if the Friar's morality depends entirely on his public perception, is he actually morally superior to the secretly sinful population of Parma? Presumably, the audience remains aware of this complicity even if no public accusations occur in the course of the play, which clearly undermines Monsarrant's reasoning in proclaiming Bonaventura as the unerring moral touchstone of the play. I would counter that Ford depicts the possibilities of goodness practiced variably and sinfulness tolerated by all. The Friar's decision to step back from a missionary role to allow God's wrath might be reasonable, but the audience must wonder who will serve to reform Parma after the "coming blow" arrives.

At the end of the play, the question still lingers of how reform might occur if no good example can counter the bad – if those who at least attempt to elicit good from bad, like Friar Bonaventura, declare their efforts now unwarranted. The play's final scene depicts the dark and devolved potential conclusion if better natures do not prevail, if they instead retreat. Those who remain in the city sweep away through public declaration and meaningless ceremony any evidence of or individuals who revealed their role in the disruptive sinfulness. The corrupted Cardinal claims the final words of the play, shamelessly parading the specter of Annabella in service of his revisionist ends: "Of one so young, so rich in nature's store, / Who could not say, 'Tis pity she's a whore?" (V.vi.161-162). Showing

no concern for her possible redemption, he instead appropriates the reputation of the dead highborn woman to his own ends. Parma presumably follows his direction to restore the facade of order instead of reforming the actual root causes of the recent disorder. No figures of real morality remain to lead them to an alternative path. "Excess liberty" continues to rule, and the play concludes with no clear suggestion that the violent death, self-exile, and banishment will prompt the recognition that individual reform is necessary to draw the city back from a still worse "fearful end."

The Growing Opposition

As Charles I's reign continued, England too seemed poised to continue towards a "fearful end" of violence and exile, in spite (and because of) the conflicting reform efforts of King, Church, and Parliament. Puritan and other sectarian voices located the problems of society in the by-now traditional Catholic threat, the government and Church of England corruption, the toleration of divergent beliefs and practices, and, of course, the theatre. Following the brief outline established by Alexander Leighton, the Puritan controversialist William Prynne published an expansive attack on the theatre, *Histrio-Mastix* (1632), responding to an unprecedented popularity of that entertainment.[99] He also addresses the overly liberal behaviors of contemporary society – holiday celebrations, toasting good health, long hair for men, and woman acting (a possible slight against Queen Henrietta Maria's involvement in drama) – all of which he claims as ills of overly permissive moral leaders. The

[99] In addition to its primary purpose, Prynne's work also provides insight into the changes occurring in publication at the time, particularly involving dramatic materials. In his introductory epistle "To the Christian Reader," Prynne justifies the unwieldy size of his text by noting: "Some Play-books since I first undertooke the subject, are growne from Quarto into Folio; which yet beare so good a price and sale, that I cannot but with griefe relate it, ther are now (e) new-printed in farre better paper than most Octavo or Quarto Bibles, which hardly finde such vent as they: And can then one Quarto Tractate against Stage-playes be thought too large, when as it must assault such ample Play-house Volumes? Besides, our Quarto-Play-bookes since the first sheetes of this my Treatise came unto the Presse, have come forth in such abundance, and found so many customers, that they almost exceede all number, one studie being scarce able to holde them, and two years time too little to peruse them all" (xx). Prynne details in two margin notes "Ben Iohnsons, Shackspeers, and others" and "Shackspeers Plaies are printed in the best Crowne paper, far better than most Bibles" (xx).

thousand-page treatise led to Prynne's imprisonment and disfigurement on charges of sedition, though he proudly bore his clipped ears as a marker of the righteousness of his cause. Prynne's condemnation is bold; he describes "Stage-Playes" early in his work as: "the incendiaries, and common Nurseries of all Villany, and Wickednesse; the bane, and overthrow of all Grace, and Goodnesse; the very poyson, and corruption of mens mindes, and manners; the very fatall plagues, and overtures of those States, and Kingdomes where they are once tollerated" (2). Prynne risks overstating his case, suggesting the banishment of theatre (and its accompanying Catholic and pagan revelry) is all that is necessary for a successful reformation of England. If only he can convince the majority of mainstream playgoers – wayward Protestants – of the blasphemousness of the theatre, he might yet redeem the nation.

Prynne's approach, though grounded in the anti-theatrical sentiments of early Church Fathers and great pagan figures, is consciously Protestant in nature. Prynne recognizes the sectarian nature of his anti-theatricalism, or at least the public perception of sectarianism attached to the social campaign. He proclaims himself a member of an unfairly labeled and abused minority in his efforts:

> whosoever is but displeased, and offended with them [stage plays], is presently reputed for a common Enemie : he that speakes against them, or comes not at them, is forthwith branded for a Scismaticall, or factious Puritan : and if any one assay to alter, or suppresse them, he becomes so odious unto many; that did not the feare of punishment restraine their malice, they would not onely scorne, and disgrace; but even stone, or rent him all to pieces as a man unworthy to live on earth [. . . .] But now, (as if Stage-Playes were our Creed and Gospel, or the truest embleme of our Christian profession,) those are not worthy of the name of Christians; they must be Puritans, and Precisians; not Protestants, who dislike them. (3-4)

In adopting his righteous cause, Prynne claims he more fully embodies the beliefs of Protestantism, though the majority of those so labeled would seek to mark him as other. Having established the grounds for his argument as religious, Prynne then condemns his

polemical opponents' efforts to resist that categorization as blasphemous. If they do not see theatre as a threat to their practice of Protestantism, then they must be practitioners of theatricality rather than Christianity. This slippage between performance and religion evokes the popular Protestant attack on Catholicism as overly concerned with ritualism to the detriment of the underlying faith. Indeed, Prynne makes that connection explicit later in his text: "The most of our present English Actors (as I am credibly informed) being professed Papists, as is the Founder of the late erected new Play-House: The Playes which issue from them must needs resemble these Actors" (142).[100] Prynne never cites his "credible" sources, leaving his claim with the air of sectarian gossip. The implication is clear – those Protestants who persist in frequenting the playhouse become congregants not only of ungodly entertainment, but they also (unwillingly or unknowingly, perhaps) subject themselves to Catholic enculturation as a result. Prynne foregrounds his later indictment of William Laud's Church of England as a center of Catholic tolerance and recusancy by naming the theatre as another locus of those dangerous philosophies.

Yet, while polemical Puritans like Prynne attacked the Church of England for straying from Calvinism and embracing papist practice, polemical Catholics argued that Laud and his Church were anything but empathetic to their cause.[101] They shared resentment at Laud's insistently moderate Protestantism and what seemed like his undue influence on Charles, frustrating their efforts to court the favor of the king. Responses to this frustration

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[100] Joseph Pearce in *The Quest for Shakespeare* (2008) acknowledges the sectarian bias of Prynne and yet reads this passage as a factual reflection on Catholic sympathies being pervasive in theatre of the time. This premise is necessary for Pearce's proposal that, as Catholics were more oppressed socially and legally in this decade than they had been in Shakespeare's time, then Shakespeare's theatre must therefore have been *even more* Catholic (increased, according to Pearce's argument, by the presence of a Catholic Shakespeare) (97-98).

[101] Indeed, Charles Carlton notes that, while the majority of English were disinterested when news of Laud's eventual execution in 1645 spread, "Papists rejoiced as much as Puritans, and it was reported that in Rome there was widespread pleasure at the death of their 'greatest enemy'" (227). The joyous response conflicts plainly with the Puritan myth of Laud as an agent of Rome.

took the form of both polemics like Prynne's and plays performed in that "bastion of Catholicism," popular theatre. One of the clearest critiques of an overly-empowered religious figure exerting improper control of a king comes from an apparently Catholic playwright, James Shirley, in his play *The Cardinal* (1641).[102] In the introduction to his edition of the play, Charles R. Forker writes:

> If Shirley intended *The Cardinal* to refer to the fallen archbishop [Laud], simple anticlericalism and the chance for a better financial return would be motive enough. Yet it is difficult to resist the delicious irony of the strategy which speculations imply—a Catholic playwright tapping anti-Catholic sentiment in his audience to attack the enemy of recusants—and for profit! Puritans and Catholics make strange bedfellows, but this is precisely the kind of ingeniousness which characterizes Shirley's dramatic plots in general and that of *The Cardinal* in particular. (xlvii)[103]

As Forker notes, the Archbishop was already fallen by the time Shirley's play appeared on stage – Parliament had charged him with treason in 1640 and imprisoned him early in 1641. He would have been an easy target for the "strange bedfellows" of Catholics and Puritans, both deemed radical by the centrist, moderate Protestant Church of England. Was Shirley merely taking advantage of these contemporary events for profit? If he were, he would have had his choice of polemics against Laud to use as inspiration for the Archbishop's so-called crimes against England.[104] But, unlike his Puritan compatriots, Shirley mostly avoids attacking the religious doctrines and beliefs of the centrist hierarchy of Laud's Church of England. What he offers instead is a critique of corruptions based in will rather than religion

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[102] Kim H. Noling's "Recent Studies in James Shirley" (2007) demonstrates the relative paucity of material focusing on the playwright. Her review suggests a critical tendency to dismiss Shirley as focused on popular success rather than complex or challenging playwriting, noteworthy more for being one of the last of the Elizabethan/Jacobean poets than for any real accomplishment in his work.

[103] For the remainder of the discussion, I use the modern spelling edition of *The Cardinal* found in Arthur H. Nethercot, Charles R. Baskervill, and Virgil B Heltzel's *Stuart Plays* (1971), which bases its text on a 1652 collection *Six New Plays*. The editors acknowledge their indebtedness to Forker's criticism and collation of Shirley's plays.

[104] In *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642* (1984), Martin Butler writes: "more explicit and hostile dramatizations of him [Laud] had begun to circulate around London in quantity. With the abolition of the Star Chamber in 1641, the way was cleared for the extraordinary inundation of printed literature of controversy, polemic and satire that so distinguished these years" (236).

and a conclusion that troubles a view of violence as a moral panacea. The allegorical parallels of the Cardinal to Archbishop Laud and the King of Navarre to King Charles perhaps are present in the play, but I argue that a strict allegorical reading flattens the larger meaning. The backlash against Laud and Charles had already begun in earnest in England, and we can read the play's weak resolution of disorder as reflecting also on this new, Puritan-led effort to reform Church and State.

The play's criticism of the Cardinal in the play, like the Cardinal in Ford's work, has less to do with the churchman's faith than with how he takes advantage of his position for self-advancement. His profession magnifies and enables his personal corruptions, but Shirley neither suggests that the Church itself is irredeemable nor does he offer an example of a better model of faith within the play. Shirley clearly delineates the separation between corrupted members of a hierarchy and the potential good of the hierarchy itself in a heated exchange between the Cardinal and the Duchess Rosaura, the one character of sufficiently high birth and self-assurance to challenge the churchman's attempted coercion. Listing a range of personal ills including "pride and surfeit," "avarice," and "corruptions and abuse / Of the Kings ear," she concludes by commanding:

> Leave, leave, my lord, these usurpations,
> And be what you were meant, a man to cure,
> Not let in, agues to religion.
> Look on the church's wounds. (II.iii.144, 145, 146-147, 153-156)

The Duchess suggests that members of the Church hierarchy have become distracted from their professions of instruction and correction. The empowerment they seek is civil rather than ecclesiastical. The Cardinal's response, "You dare presume / In your rude spleen to me, to abuse the Church?" (II.iii.156-157), implies the question, can anyone attack a hierarchical figure for their wrongs without attacking either their position or the organization they represent? The Cardinal suggests not, using the presumed lack of distinction to his own

protective benefit – if the Church will not fall, neither will he. The Duchess corrects his willful misinterpretation shortly, saying: "Alas, you give false aim, my lord; 'tis your / Ambition and scarlet sins that rob / Her altar of the glory and leave wounds / Upon her brow" (II.iii.158-161). The Cardinal of Shirley's play might be representative of the larger corruptions of Catholic and Church of England hierarchies, but his character and sins are also singular to his person. Shirley's theatrical explication argues the need for individual reformation and the effective enforcement of doctrine already established. The play clearly stops short of encouraging the dismissal of all hierarchy or all structure based on the sins of the few – the express desire of those "strange Puritan bedfellows" in attacking Laud and his centrist policies.

Neither individual nor institutional reformation occurs in the play, as the Cardinal's secretive nature largely prevents outside intervention. The King of Navarre, the only individual capable of dismissing the Cardinal from his place at court, overly relies upon the churchman as advisor and is unwilling to investigate the suggestion of greater wrongs (an easy parallel to Charles I's own overreliance on Laud). He chides his advisor, "A churchman must show charity, and shine / With first example" (III.i.52-53) at one point when the Cardinal's will seems to diverge from his own, but he purports to take the Cardinal's "show" of religion as truth, evidencing the righteousness of his civil rule. Even when this relationship plainly threatens the sanctity of the nation, the king persists in his defense of his advisor, forced into casuistry in the third act by the Cardinal's nephew, Columbo. That man takes revenge on Rosaura for ending their engagement by killing her husband on their wedding day. He boldly flaunts his actions, assured earlier by the Cardinal that his martial victories in defense of Navarre make him indispensable to the king. The Duchess, fearing this assurance might prove true, insists upon justice: "You will take off our faith else, and, if

here / Such men, that call you gods on earth, will doubt / To obey your laws, nay practice to be devils" (III.ii.132-134). The King dismisses this threat of inspired chaos with a sleight-of-hand based on Christian humility, imitating the Cardinal's own rhetorical practice. In a lengthy response that changes tack several times and purposefully confuses the audience, the King of Navarre indicts himself and Rosaura as enabling Columbo's actions, suggesting that they must share the guilt and therefore show mercy in their mutual punishments.

After this exchange, the King again allows the Cardinal to take preeminence in matters of state, offering an uncritical endorsement that enables the Cardinal to plot increasingly absurd and villainous twists. Baffled by this ongoing empowerment, a colonel, Hernando, asks "With what chains / Of magic does this cardinal hold the king?" (IV.i.10-11). The unspoken answer is that the King benefits when he can displace responsibility onto a representative of the unimpeachable Church. The Cardinal conversely benefits by possessing the uncritical complicity of the King in his pursuit of greater influence and power. This mutual dependence manifests again when the King frees Columbo and places the Duchess Rosaura under the Cardinal's control. How did the Cardinal achieve this guardianship? Why would the King undermine his own expressed desires to protect Rosaura and act in the best interest of his kingdom? The audience might speculate that the action simultaneously silences Rosaura after she has publicly criticized both the Cardinal and the King and transfers the responsibility of her care to the Cardinal, freeing the King from further entanglement. Shirley deprives the King of clear agency in this action, never staging an opportunity for the character to express the reason behind his consignment of the Duchess to her opponent's care.

If the King had hoped to diminish the dangers posed by Rosaura, his actions instead lead to greater complication in the kingdom. The unwavering focus of the Cardinal on

destroying those who oppose him, magnified by his possession of Rosaura, leads him to lose all semblance of control and mastery of his own public image. He will fail not because he overreaches but because he cannot logically reorient himself once the playing field has shifted, and his former sparring partners offer no great challenge to his will. Though Rosaura is no longer capable of public antagonism or critical challenge, the Cardinal still intends to rape and kill her, staging her suicide, because she once challenged his will: "I'll rifle first her darling chastity; / 'Twill be after time enough to poison her, / And she to th' world be thought her own destroyer" (V.i.91-93). By this point, the Cardinal's behavior is wholly divorced from even a corrupted sense of his role in the Church or of Laud's real corruptions. Instead, the Cardinal's actions now curiously parallel the efforts to dishonor the imprisoned Laud's public image and Church accomplishments, focusing his energies on destruction rather than future achievement. He has appointed himself rapist and murderer, plotting to destroy the very things he should aim to protect – stripping the Duchess Rosaura of the chastity she prized in life and ensuring her reputation in death will be one of self-murder and damnation. His desire for vindication has overwhelmed his earlier aims of advancement and fame. Morality gives way to power, which now falls to destructive passion.

The final line of the Cardinal's plotting soliloquy is curiously self-aware and key to the audience's understanding of the man's corrupted character: "We starve our conscience when we thrive in state" (V.i.99) – a warning to any who attain power in Church or State. The line is a sententia with no apparent previous use, prompting audiences to recognize the break from the Cardinal's normal patterns of speech and the aphoristic form if not an actual source for the saying. The phrase tantalizingly hints at his past process of obtaining a favored place at court. His actions within the play suggest masterful politicking and manipulations of the wills of those around him. Was he ever a model of moral

conscientiousness before his appearance on stage? The line is disjunctive to his recent words and behaviors, as though the Cardinal can objectively recognize that his successes at court have necessitated, prompted, or followed the loss of his Catholic moral sense. However, the observation has no measurable impact on the man's drive for destruction, announced dispassionately to no one but himself. He recognizes perhaps the role his conscience once served, but he exhibits no sense of loss in noting its absence and evokes no sympathy for the man he might have been.

This habit of saying the words he should with no recognition of meaningfulness emerges again when the Cardinal's plot goes further awry. Preparing to rape and poison Rosaura, he is instead left stabbed, seemingly fatally, by a convenient defender of her honor. A courtly crowd gathers to his cries, and he offers a full confession of the sins that brought him to the point of death. The ritualized nature of confession, particularly on the deathbed, traditionally commands unprecedented truthfulness from even the most duplicitous of characters. The combination of an earthly end and inhibitions subverted in the confessional magnifies the expectation of honesty. Early modern theatre would have trained audiences to view such deathbed confessions as genuine, in spite of Catholic implications; true villains revel in the rehearsal of their past crimes while those characters that possess still some measure of humanity can salvage some hope for a better end. The Cardinal preys on the credulity of his audiences (both on stage and in the theatre), a curiously meta-theatrical moment, confessing to the King:

> I have deserved you should turn from me, sir.
> My life hath been prodigiously wicked;
> My blood is now the kingdom's balm. O, sir,
> I have abused your ear, your trust, your people,
> And my sacred office; my conscience
> Feels now the sting. (V.iii.198-203)

Two points might raise suspicion, at least for the theatrical audience. First, the Cardinal has quite recently proclaimed his conscience impotent. Second, his confession mirrors Rosaura's original accusations against him, offering no more insight than she already claimed. His list of sins seems comprehensive, though it remains generalized, muting the antipathy and viciousness that actually characterized his plots.

Carolinian audiences might well be suspicious of such proclamations of faith, even those that seem genuinely offered. Contemporary polemicists regularly declared their opponents blasphemous but also disingenuous, aware of the depravity of their actions but intentionally feigning sanctity. Shirley reinforces the assumptions surrounding deathbed confessions; the Cardinal begs his audience for the opportunity to prove before his death that he has recovered his former "goodness": "In proof of my repentance, / If the last breath of a now dying man / May gain your charity and belief" (V.iii.219-221) and later "with my dying breath confirm / My penitence" (V.iii.237-238). Those citizens in attendance, including the king, believe the redemptive act entirely; the King praises the Cardinal's "charity" to Rosaura, whom the clergyman has confessed to poisoning and offered an antidote (V.iii.242). However, the confession is merely sophistry. The Cardinal gleefully declares: "I have took / A shape to give my act more freedom" (V.iii.255-256); he has pretended to offer the Duchess an antidote, instead tricking her into taking poison. No longer possessing the influence of his social position, he has invoked his identity as a Catholic, capable of redemption and reconciliation, to take advantage of the Christian obligation to forgive and facilitate the reformation of others. The Cardinal's final declaration of his plot is proud rather than contrite; he reenacts the confessional one final time, now adopting the true persona of a blatant villain – he regrets nothing, repents nothing. At the point of death, he drops all pretense of secrecy, seemingly desiring that the crowds will

admire his mastery and fearing no punishment. In an ironic twist, he undermines the former and invites the latter. He poisons himself to ensure Rosaura's death, believing he is already fatally wounded. His fittest punishment is this realization: "I have caught myself in my own engine" (V.iii.274). Again, Shirley invites both audiences to read the moment as a critique of confession and communal reconciliation, though the scene suggests the enactor rather than the ceremony itself is problematic.

Having mocked the sacrament of reconciliation with a false confession, the Cardinal cannot convincingly redeem himself before death. Like his conscience, his ability to serve as a positive model has withered, and the only moral purpose he might possibly achieve is through negative inspiration. The Cardinal attempts to resume his proper role as religious instructor one final time before his death, but fails. The depth of his final depravity revealed, his demise imminent, he says to those collected:

> I have wracked all my own
> To try your charities. Now it would be rare
> If you but waft me with a little prayer;
> My wings that flag may catch the wind, but 'tis
> In vain; the mist is risen, and there's none
> To steer my wand'ring bark. (V.iii.279-284)

The Cardinal remains aware of morality and religious practice, though he has chosen to model impiety instead to those he begs for indulgence. His words are too late, and, more significantly, they are not the words he should offer. Shirley's experience of faith, whether indeed personally Catholic or simply surrounded by a coterie of practicing Catholics, would presumably have afforded him the language to endow the cardinal's speech with more of the formality of Roman Catholicism. The Cardinal instead becomes an echo of that faith, a mockery of the mocking portrayals of blatantly anti-Catholic clergy in theatre and polemic. The Cardinal's spiritual speech is more vernacular than clerical, as though the corruptions of

court life have stripped him too of the language of his appointment. While court language served him well in life, it is insufficient to ensure his fate in death.

The King, who had expressed a desire for fairness yet seemed to err in his overreliance on the advice of the Cardinal, remains to offer an exegesis of the tragedy wrought by his most trusted advisor. He takes immediate control, proclaiming: "When men / Of gifts and sacred function once decline / From virtue, their ill deeds transcend example" (V.iii.287-288). The play has never portrayed the Cardinal as essentially virtuous, and the King was always already enmeshed in his plotting and self-serving. If anything, the monarch can only comment on the public decline of the Cardinal – that which now negatively affects the nation, where the churchman's previous deviousness was beneficial. The King of Navarre contentedly blames the tragedy on the bad example of the religious representative, excusing his own culpability in allowing so great an influence on his rule and kingdom. He adopts the persona of well-meaning but ignorant penitent one final time:

> How much are kings abused by those they take
> To royal grace, whom, when they cherish most
> By Nice indulgence, they do often arm
> Against themselves (V.iii.294-297)

He is simply another victim of deception, he insists, erring only in being too tolerant, too indulgent, too trusting of the goodness of others. Like Ford, Shirley ends his play with the pinnacle of local power placing the blame for recent chaos solely on those conveniently absent or dead. The proclamations effectively prohibit further self-evaluation and reform within the societies. Where Shirley's Cardinal suggested that his blood should serve as the kingdom's balm to manipulate his audience to his will, the King reasserts the same suggestion as truth, bringing those gathered into line with his own will. They take as sufficient the unintentional and even incidental reforms of the kingdom's rule. The King's

final words codify his interpretation of recent events, ignoring the potential for further corruption that might require intentional and conscientious correction.

An Anti-Sectarian Defeat

The spilling of hierarchical blood and the public banishment of sinful habits in England were also intended to serve as a balm for the kingdom, signaling the destruction of those elements the reform-minded victors had dubbed corrupting and blasphemous. In spite of (or perhaps due to) King Charles's best efforts to forcibly maintain control of his nation, the English Civil War broke out in 1642. That same year, Parliament finally fulfilled the desires of Leighton, Prynne, and their fellow anti-theatricalists by closing the theatres and suppressing stage plays. To claim this as a victory for Puritanism or Calvinism would be an overstatement, though a certain segment of that sect would regard theatre's dismissal from the public realm as a success for reforming Christianity – the death knell of Prynne's so-called religion of theatricality. Public theatre could no longer inspire sinfulness by staging ill-deeds that might invite damnation upon all of England. However, the loss of theatre as a space of public discourse also deprived England of the potential for playful Anti-Sectarian contention and consideration, where the beliefs of the past and present ideologies might debate on stage. While Puritans might argue that such debates should occur more properly in religious spaces or in solitude where individuals could come to their own understandings of faith, the sectarian condemnations of the stage reveal their awareness of theatre's ability to inspire audiences to religious reflection.

Two years after the Civil War began, the sectarian platform of censoring views that disagreed with their own beliefs inspired John Milton to publish a defense, *Areopagitica*

(1644), of another embattled space of public discourse: print.[105] Arguing against government appointed licensors as the arbiters of the knowledge circulating in England, Milton presents this critique, which might easily apply to anti-theatricalists as well:

> They are not skillful considerers of human things, who imagin to remove sin by removing the matter of sin [. . . .] Suppose we could expell sin by this means; look how much we thus expell of sin, so much we expell of vertue: for the matter of them both is the same; remove that, and ye remove them both alike [. . . .] It would be better done to learn that the law must needs be frivolous which goes to restrain things, uncertainly and yet equally working to good, and to evill. (1010)

Milton's argument is two-fold: first, the ethical models contained in print are not necessarily sinful even if they do not accord exactly with the censors' views; second, even materials that contain examples of sinful or evil deeds might inspire good morals through a negative model. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *The Cardinal* might serve as key theatrical examples of Milton's anti-censorship ideology.[106] As the plays show, the beliefs staged were not always entirely at odds with those espoused by the Puritans (for instance, demonstrating corruption in church hierarchies and the overstepping of civil boundaries). Both plays also contain critiques of theatricality, particularly showing the misdirection possible within religious performativity, most prominently in scenes of confession and reconciliation. Traditional practices and the deference they evoked could magnify the destructive potential of individual sinfulness. Such critiques were hardly rare, particularly concerning the Catholic Church and High Church Anglicanism. But, Ford and Shirley's plays do not simply repeat the common Protestant and reformist criticisms; rather than concluding with the need for further reforms

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[105] I reference the Roy Flannagan edited version contained in *The Riverside Milton* (1998).

[106] Does this pro-theatrical/anti-censorship agreement suggest Milton as a proponent of an Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic? Milton's anti-Catholicism is fairly consistent in his published works, and he therefore is not a likely candidate for embracing the full ecumenical range of Christianity suggested by the works I examine in this project. However, Debora Shuger's recent essay, "Milton's Religion: The Early Years" (2012), suggests that Milton was less sectarian and more open to the breadth of Christian possibility in his younger years. Like English Christianity, Milton's views dilated and hardened with the bitter experience of the Civil War and its aftermath.

or with successful implementation, both plays question the over-certainty that follows a public banishment of sin from society. They portray violence and death used as shortcuts to rid society of its ills – eradication as the definitive reformation, the very approach Milton finds so troubling and indeed anti-Christian in *Areopagitica*.

The plays complicate the judgment of accomplishment in reformist efforts, prompting audiences to remain cautious in judging success. The most egregious malfeasants in both works are dead or banished by the final act, but the circumstances that enabled their wrongs are still largely intact. Those who remain in power express no desire for greater change, and the common people seem content to accept the declaration of wrongdoing resolved. Any who would challenge this conclusion with incisive analysis or calls for real reform were either never present or else have chosen to remove themselves. Merely remaining and surviving in these societies reinforces the perception of victorious moral superiority. The necessities of contention and earnest challenge, however insufficient, rather than mutual toleration of wrongs are clear in both works. Both *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *The Cardinal* might criticize the Archbishop William Laud and his overreaching his proper role in the Church of England. However, they also address the shortsightedness of the strategies proposed by radical sectarians in Caroline England. The catalogue of Laud's censorship of anti-Catholic passages in *Canterburies Doome* suggests that the Archbishop sought to shape public belief by eradicating contentious sentiments from the public record. Anti-theatricalists similarly sought to drive out sinfulness by condemning a rival space of debate in the theatres of England. Puritans believed they could finally root out Catholic corruptions from English Christianity by destroying church decor and dismantling the hierarchy, removing any distraction from or mediation of their vision of faith. In the years before the English Civil War, sectarians across the spectrum sought success by banishing their opposition from the

public sphere, an effort more destructive and yet more decisive than ongoing debate or attempts at reunification.

While their published polemic often included claims that doubters could read and be converted to the cause, sectarians found they might enforce their ideas more quickly and broadly with violent coercion. Featley's anxiety that allowing heretics and schistmatics (even those he might agree with at times) to persist in the Church of England would irrevocably alter the nature of the faith proved prescient, though he would not live to see the full effect of the new Reformation.[107] Once the war was over, Sectarianism of one variety had achieved victory in England, but so, in a manner, had Toleration. The wider hopes for ecumenicalism had essentially ended with a ruler who had attempted to achieve his father's cause but alienated potential allies in the process. Theatre would eventually return to England as would a king, but ecumenicalism as a viable monarchical ideology, attempting to unite English believers beyond matters indifferent, would not reemerge. Anti-Sectarianism's ability to address the full range of Christian possibility, including Catholicism, would similarly face severe limitation due to the victory of an ideology for which Catholicism represented all that was other and threatening. New forms of sectarianism and toleration, now praised for the positive sense of "liberty" that philosophy promoted, remained. The potential of reuniting the full range of Christians in England through civil debate, public discourse, and theatrical play could not take hold again.

[107] Featley continued to publish, even while imprisoned, until his death in 1645, attempting to moderate the reforms proposed by his fellow parliamentarians and continuing to attack the threat of sectarians to the sustainability of a centralized, episcopal Church of England.

CONCLUSION

A SUBJECT OF SOVEREIGN FAITH

Thomas Browne wrote his spiritual autobiography *Religio Medici* (1643) in the nativity of the English Civil War as he bore witness to the rise of the Puritan faction to power and religious rule. Factionalism and religious disunity were key inspirations of the State policies and political posturing that led to the war. While the war was not solely split on the lines of religious sects, varying beliefs often inspired allegiances in the conflict – king or parliament, episcopal or presbyterian. As the battling over England's political and religious identity began, Browne reflected on his own complicated relationship with his belief, writing:

> There is no Church wherein every point so squares unto my conscience, whose articles, constitutions, and customes seeme so consonant unto reason, and as it were framed to my particular devotion, as this wereof I hold my beliefe, the Church of *England*; to whose faith I am a sworne subject, and therefore in a double obligation sunscribe unto her Articles, and endeavour to observe her Constitutions; no man shall reach my faith unto another Article, or command my obedience to a Canon more: whatsoever is beyond, as points indifferent, I observe according to the rules of my private reason, or the humour and fashion of my devotion. (8) [108]

He was a devoted Anglican, who earnestly believed in the potential of adiaphora to tailor organized religion to the individual believer. At a time in England when labels gained increasing relevance as declarations of allegiance and demonizations of others, Browne instead declares simply the limitations of such applications for actually encompassing individual complexity. Even his own claim to membership in the Church of England, while accurate, offers a simplistic, limited sense of Browne's beliefs. That Church is a foundation, or perhaps more accurately a major node in the rhizomatic structure of his personal conception of Christianity.[109]

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[108] I use the recent edition edited by Stephen Greenblatt and Ramie Targoff (2012).

[109] Here, I of course gesture to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of the "rhizome" as an alternative model to hierarchical or strictly linear development of ideas. See their *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).

Browne's spiritual autobiography is singularly personal, and he focuses primarily on mapping the complexities and myriad incommensurable pieces of his own faith. At times, a modern sense of toleration might lead readers to label Browne as simply tolerating those with whom he disagrees about religion, particularly Catholics. However, he makes clear his sense of common belief: "we have reformed from them, not against them; for, omitting those improperations and terms of scurility betwixt us, which onely difference our affections, and not our cause, there is between us one common name and appellation, one faith, and necessary body of principles common to us both" (6). He recognizes that Catholics and Protestants alike are united in Christianity. He even admits a personal inclination to the rituals and "superstitions" of the Catholics, recognizing that they contain a spiritual power and meaning, though he has no inclination to convert. Rather, his recognition of Catholics as common Christians with himself suggests that he feels free to practice the adiaphora of their denomination with no sense that he is therefore more or less a Christian in the process.

This sense of kinship prompts him to periodically bemoan the violence of Reformations that leave little hope for reunion. He finds especially troubling those who devolve from differing opinions to sectarianism:

> for heads that are disposed unto Schisme and complexionally propense to innovation, are naturally indisposed for a community, nor will ever be confined unto the order or oeconomy of one body; and therefore when they separate from others they knit but loosely among themselves; not contented with a generall breach or dichotomie with their Church, do subdivide and mince themselves almost into Atomes. (12)

Browne describes schism as tending to reduction, breaking apart bonds of communion until essentially no bonds remain. He describes sectarianism and toleration in the extreme as only suggesting loose bonds of union while instead deconstructing the church entirely. Where Browne tends to enlarge his vision of Christianity, accepting into communion also those

who share a basic, common core of faith, he witnesses examples in the history of reformation and in his contemporary England of the many senses of Christianity instead constricting, *reductio ad nihilum.*

While Browne's *Religio Medici* was a piece he apparently never intended to share with the public, prompted only to publish his own text once someone had done so without his permission, he presents a model of individual enactment of the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic for his readers. He declares himself open to a critical but unbiased consideration of the full range of Christian possibility available to him. I would suggest that such personal statements of belief might prove a rich genre to study for further evidence of Anti-Sectarianism as aesthetic experience in practice. I imagine that these types of works might continue discussions of anti-sectarianism and ecumenicalism beyond the apparent dismissal of those ideas from serious, viable public or political consideration. I also look forward to continuing to build on this project by seeking examples of the Anti-Sectarian Aesthetic in other forms of literature and public discourse, particularly poetry. As with the "playfulness" and political and religious liquidity possible in theatre, poetry would seem an ideally flexible form in which for early modern writers to explore the range of Christian permutations with fewer restrictions than prose. This new field of consideration will necessitate a reconsideration of how the aesthetic experience of Anti-Sectarianism might operate in the experience of non-dramatic forms of literature.

I began this project by focusing on the complications surrounding the place of Catholicism in Post-Reformation England as a foreign political threat and native recusant community. In reading these plays, I found the suggestion of a belief whose continuing ritualistic thrall appeared on the stage as more than farce or mockery. I initially identified this thrall as evidence of denominational agnosticism – of doubts concerning the constructed

divisions between English Christian factions, most prominently between Catholics and Protestants as a unified group. The original necessity for this major division was clear as Protestantism in England had largely defined itself negatively against the nation's Roman Catholic past. If a good Protestant could not positively proclaim what made his faith better, he could certainly list what made that religious belief far worse. The generations of English citizens following the Reformation with no personal experience of practicing Catholicism nevertheless found their personal religious belief shaped against both real and imagined forms of Catholicism. Even after the series of "Protestant Settlements," then, their beliefs manifested religious thought infused with varying degrees of both English and Continental Catholicism. These Catholic remainders are one identifiable sub-category of the Christian elements of belief and practice available to the early modern English individual considering belief and religious self-definition..

In my introduction, I quote Alexandra Walsham's concern that modern scholars focus too insistently on radical groups to the point of suggesting those sects had far more coherence than they actually possessed, artificially stabilizing the variability of English Christian belief. While such claims of coherence might have been inaccurate, religiopolitical polemicists found that establishing the perception of exclusive sects was useful in promoting their own beliefs. In possessing clear profiles of traitors and blasphemers, English citizens could submerge their own doubts under a cover of nationalism and sanctity. In that regard, Louis Montrose's argument of the theatre training citizens to be successful performers might apply even more broadly to sectarians and polemicists, who attempted to shape the public perception of right belief and right practice by training their readers and audiences in right religious performance.

The plays I examine are largely more critical of such promotions of reductive certainty. They stage reconsiderations of historical and contemporary English Christian identities, not apart from Catholic remainders or religious doubts, but inclusive of them. The playwrights, Fletcher, Shakespeare, Ford, Dekker, Rowley, and Shirley, do not merely pay lip-service to the continental Catholic spouses of their reigning monarchs; they consider the experiences of their larger audiences, preached to and polemicized by their government, churches, and communities over what elements of belief they must maintain and what they should now eschew as blasphemous. They confront the destruction or reconstruction of intimately held beliefs and national historical identity, the elevation of certain beliefs through sacrifice and violent reduction, and the troubling future wrought through the "chilling effect" that threatened contention and silenced conversation. These early-Stuart plays use the distances of history, geography, and fantasy to confront the possible Christian agnosticism troubling the souls of English believers. In doing so, they promote Anti-Sectarianism as a basis for constructive and productive critical consideration of religious belief and practice.

Recent events in England, in particular the debate surrounding the Succession to the Crown Bill 2012-13, have brought matters of State and Church and the complex relationship of monarch as individual believer and sovereign of English Christians especially back as a matter of public concern. The passage of the bill seems likely at this point, but its potential ramifications for the future of the English monarchy and the Church of England remain tantalizingly uncertain. Will the passage of the bill lead to the disestablishment of the Church of England as the nation's religion as some in the Church hierarchy fear? Is Parliament essentially stripping the Church of its relevance as a State institution? In opening the monarchy to the prominent representation of a Catholic believer, could the bill prompt a

reconsideration of England's conception of Christianity and the relationship of English Protestants and Catholics? Or, conversely, might this loosening of a foundational restriction of the Church of England signal another step towards public Toleration and national secularization? Whatever the outcome, England is proposing institutional reformation three- to five-hundred years after the implementation of a series of laws intending to settle English Christianity as exclusive of Catholicism. If Catholicism returns to the English monarchy, perhaps English Christians might once more seriously consider the possibilities of a national Christianity beyond factional, denominational, or sectarian identities.

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