

**A Biographical and Critical Study  
of the Life and Works of Elizabeth Carey,  
1st Viscountess Falkland (1585-1639).**

**by Stephanie J. Wright**

**Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy  
The University of Leeds, School of English  
March 1994.**

**The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that  
appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the  
work of others.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis argues for a full recognition of the significance of Elizabeth Carey and her literary works by offering new theoretical and critical approaches to her life and her two major works, *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II*. The Introduction offers an assessment of the recent critical works on Elizabeth Carey and ultimately rejects the prevalent tendency to interpret her works simply in terms of her life. Chapter 1 constitutes a biographical study of Elizabeth Carey which focuses upon the roles she played: as wife, recusant and writer. Chapter 2 examines Carey's use of two sources of "patriarchal" authority - Seneca and Flavius Josephus - in her composition of *The Tragedy of Mariam*. It explores the ways in which she manipulates these sources in order to create a text which offers resistance to patriarchal authority. Chapter 3 is a reading of *The Tragedy of Mariam* which eschews the traditional critical opposition between "virtuous" and "vicious" characters in the text. Rather, the text is viewed as a set of competing discourses which, by their very competition, effect a deconstruction of patriarchal ideology. Chapter 4 seeks to re-establish Carey's claim to the authorship of *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II*. This issue of authorship has been confused by the existence of the text in a longer, folio form and a shorter, octavo form. Here, I argue against a recent publication to show that Carey is the author of the folio but not the octavo. Chapter 5 focuses upon the historical and literary contexts of *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II*, beginning by exploring the possibility that the text is a criticism of Buckingham's role in the courts of James I and Charles I. The chapter then focuses upon the ways in which Carey rejects the characterisation of Queen Isabel by Drayton and Marlowe and constructs her own version of the history in which Isabel is both powerful and sympathetic.

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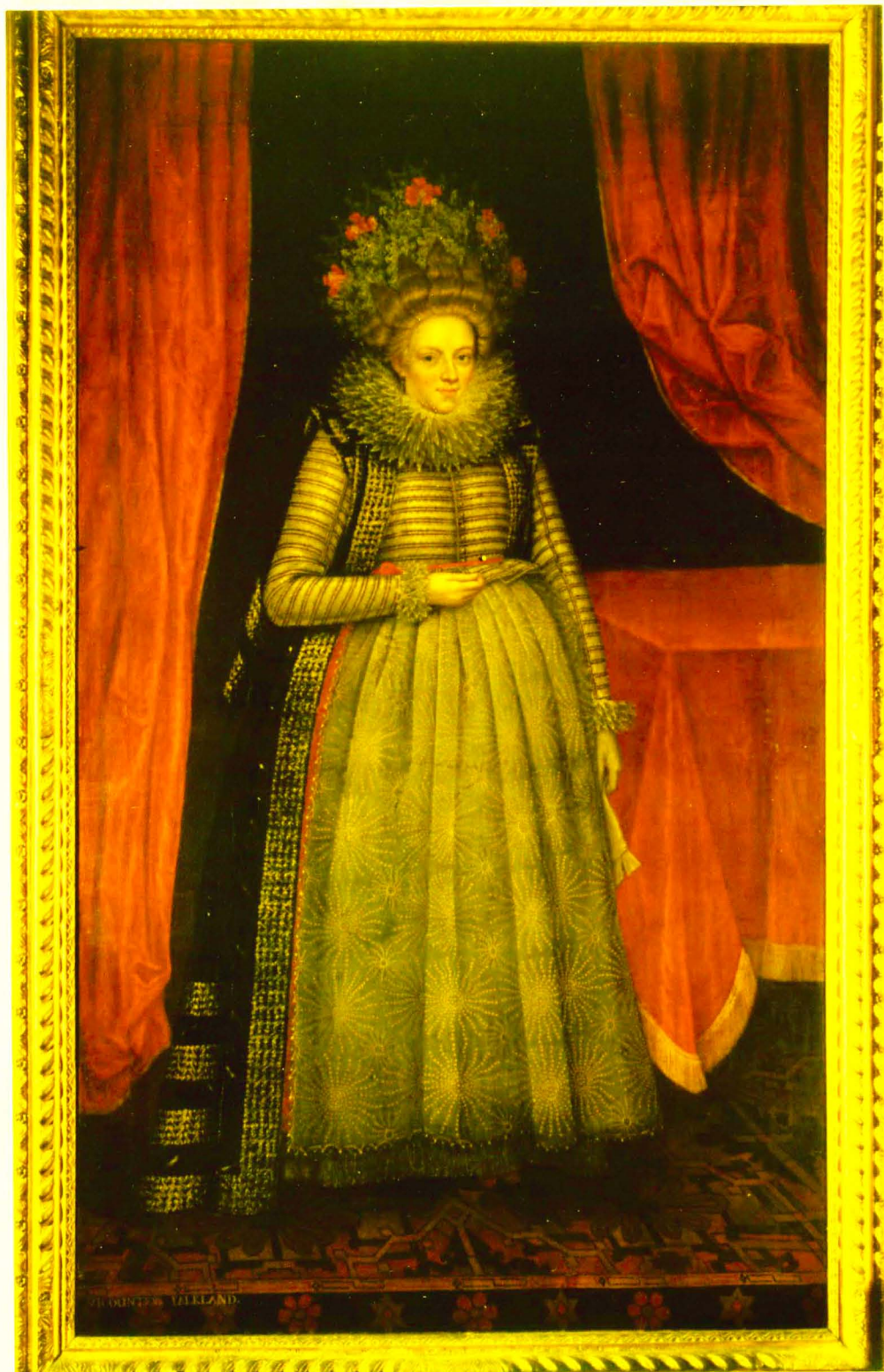
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COLOUR PLATE: VAN SOMER'S PORTRAIT (c. 1621)  
OF ELIZABETH CAREY, 1ST VISCOUNTESS FALKLAND



## ABBREVIATIONS

*Ant.*, Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities*, in *The Famous and Memorable Works of Josephus*, trans. Thomas Lodge, 1602, STC 14809, pp.1-528.

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*CSP Dom.*, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, 1601-1640.

*CSP Irel.*, *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland*, 1625-1632.

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## Journals:

*BLR*, *Bodleian Library Record*.

*ELR*, *English Literary Renaissance*.

*G & H*, *Gender and History*.

*Hist Worksh*, *History Workshop*.

*N & Q*, *Notes and Queries*.

*PLL*, *Papers on Language and Literature*.

**Journals (cont.):**

*RD, Renaissance Drama.*

*RQ, Renaissance Quarterly.*

*Soc Hist, Social History.*

*TSLL, Texas Studies in Language and Literature.*

All quotations from Shakespeare's plays are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 1974.

In transcribing from manuscripts and primary texts in their original editions, I have made the conventional j/i and u/v substitutions. When transcribing proper names, I have not retained the italicised form of the primary texts.

All years are given in according to the new system, except when the old system date is of relevance, in which case, both dates are given, eg. February 1627/8.

Place of publication is London, unless otherwise stated.

## INTRODUCTION

### (Re)instatement or Canonisation? <sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this thesis is to make an original contribution to the field of women's studies and to women's writing in the Renaissance in particular. Its aims are twofold - first, to present and consolidate the available material, some of it previously unacknowledged, by and about Elizabeth Carey. <sup>2</sup> Secondly, it will offer a fresh theoretical approach to her literary works and thereby present the case for their (re)instatement into the established canon of Renaissance literature as it now stands. In order to clarify the need for a new perspective on Elizabeth Carey's life and her literary works, this introductory chapter will offer a critical evaluation of the most recent secondary texts, published as a result of the rising academic interest in women's studies.

Annette Kolodny identified two of the major problems of (re)instating women writers into the literary canon, arguing that current acquired reading strategies, which focus on the appreciation of established canonical texts, may be at the root of the absence of women writers from the major canons. She emphasises that this is:

due not to any lack of merit in the work but, instead, to an incapacity of predominantly male readers to properly interpret and appreciate women's texts - due, in a large part, to a lack of prior acquaintance. <sup>3</sup>

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1. I have used parentheses around the prefix "re" to draw the reader's attention to the problematic nature of the term. Reinstatement without the parentheses would suggest: a) a conscious and deliberate exclusion by those who created the canon; b) a legitimate and accepted exclusion which is now being questioned. Clearly, neither of these conditions apply. Carey's lack of canonical status has been as a result of lack of knowledge of her work. (Re)instatement is a term designed to indicate that whilst Carey's work has not been included in, neither has it been legitimately excluded from the canon.

2. The spelling of Carey's name varies enormously, eg. Cary, Carye, Carie and Carew. I have chosen the "ey" spelling as a "via media" through the variant spellings, in which an "e" is more often present than not. Also this is the spelling which *Life* uses.

3. Annette Kolodny, "Dancing Through the Minefield: Some

These are crucial issues, but Kolodny does not take account of the politics of acquaintance. It is certainly impossible to reinstate a woman writer into the canon if her works are unknown and unavailable, but even when women writers are allowed to take up a position on the fringes of the canon, the terms on which their texts are accepted is as much a political issue as the question of (re)instatement itself.

The process of creating the Renaissance canon is subject to a variety of political agenda; what actually constitutes the Renaissance canon may range from the plays chosen for performance by the Royal Shakespeare Company, to the texts published by the major academic publishing houses, to those texts chosen for teaching at undergraduate level. This final category probably provides the most telling evidence of the status of Renaissance women writers because, due to limited time and resources, the inclusion of one text leads to the exclusion of another. Whilst it is feasible to extend the Renaissance canon (in its widest sense) indefinitely, this means that texts by women constitute little threat to established texts by men. But, were the situation to arise where a choice was to be made between teaching *The Courtier* or pamphlets by women; <sup>4</sup> "To Penshurst" or "The Description of Cooke-ham"; <sup>5</sup> *Othello* or *The Tragedy of Mariam*, then the proposition to (re)instate women writers into the Renaissance canon is rather more serious and threatening.

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Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism" (1980), rpt. in Showalter (1986), p. 155.

4. For example, Rachel Speght, *A Mouzell for Melastomus*, 1617, STC 23058; Esther Sowernam, *Ester Hath Hang'd Haman*, 1617, STC 22974; Constantia Munda, *The Worming of a Mad Dog*, 1617, STC 18257; all of which were responses to Joseph Swetnam's derogatory pamphlet, *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women*, 1615, STC 23533.

5. From Aemilia Lanyer, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, 1611, STC 15227. "The Description of Cooke-ham" is a poem of the Country House genre, written in honour of Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland (1560?-1616). The undeserved obscurity of this and the women's pamphlets (see above, n. 3) is evidenced by the fact that they require an explanatory footnote, whilst *The Courtier* and "To Penshurst" do not.



This threat can, however, be neutralized to a certain extent by bestowing an "exceptional" status on texts by women, rendering them worthy of interest, but not worthy of widespread academic study because they are not seen to (or are not allowed to) take part in the mainstream cultural milieu of the Renaissance. Ironically, this sense of the woman writer in the Renaissance as an historical phenomenon, rather than a producer of significant texts, can be seen to pervade works which actually attempt to make a positive contributions to women's struggle for recognition in Renaissance literature. For example Betty Travitsky, in her invaluable anthology of women's writing in the Renaissance, *The Paradise of Women*, comments on Lady Mary Wroth:

Lady Wroth has true facility and grace; she is lacking in the ability to make her materials moving. Therefore, her achievement must be qualified finally as historical rather than literary ... The romance [*Urania*] itself must be considered derivative, since it adds nothing original to her uncle's contribution to the genre. <sup>6</sup>

Similarly, Simon Shepherd's edition of five Renaissance pamphlets written in defence of women, by women, and another invaluable source of Renaissance women's writing, ends with this conclusion:

We are left with a handful of texts, all *limited intellectually and politically* by their being produced *in an age before feminism*, but all nevertheless pre-eminently remarkable for their intellectual bravery and adventure; remarkable, in short, that they exist. (my italics) <sup>7</sup>

In his conclusion, Shepherd also refers to the second major problem which emerges when dealing with women's writing of the Renaissance: the role of feminism. This issue is raised, with much the same effect, by Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, in *Half Humankind: The Texts and contexts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540-1640*, <sup>8</sup> although they go further, to cite the role of religion in limiting the degree of "feminism" to which Renaissance women writers could hope to aspire, and

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6. Travitsky (1981), p. 135-6.

7. Shepherd (1985), p. 23.

8. Henderson and McManus (1985), p. 27.

judge the texts with which they deal according to how successfully they overcome these "limitations".

Whilst it is quite true to say that Renaissance women writers operated in a society which did not give a name or an identity to female resistance against patriarchal oppression, this did not mean that the texts produced by women were intellectually and politically limited as a result. One could just as feasibly argue the opposite - that finding a means to articulate resistance, without the support of a distinct and recognisable group actually indicates the *greater* political and intellectual skill of the women who wrote under such circumstances. It is because of the problems of a current critical terminology, which privileges the twentieth-century feminist agenda over any other, that I shall adopt the term "resistance" to describe both the texts and the subversive activities of Elizabeth Carey. Where similarity with a more modern feminist agenda can be detected, I shall use the term "proto-feminist".

Furthermore, in the attempt to stimulate interest in women writers, the above critics (amongst others) have virtually imposed upon the texts in question a token status, by emphasising their *historical*, rather than literary significance. Elizabeth Carey's literature has suffered much as a result of being both exemplary and of historical significance. She is a writer who has, as a result of the renewed interest in her work, been constantly subjected to a critical attitude which sees her as an historical phenomenon and thereby overshadows the value of her texts themselves.<sup>9</sup> Nancy Cotton, in one of the

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9. In the period between writing up this thesis and final submission, Barbara Kiefer Lewalski has published *Writing Women in Jacobean England*, 1993, which includes a substantial chapter on Elizabeth Carey. The structure of this chapter is very similar to that of my thesis, i.e. a biographical section followed by two sections on *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II*. Many of her arguments pre-empt my own, particularly her call for a move away from reading *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *Edward II* as being rooted in Carey's own domestic and personal experiences. Consequently, I shall make occasional reference to Lewalski's work at points where it bears the most significant relation to my own, but I shall not try to integrate her work fully into my thesis. This is partly because of the late availability of her work to me, but mostly because my critical stance has, apparently, emerged in much the same way as Lewalski's own. I should therefore like to acknowledge here that her work constitutes the kind

earliest articles calling for recognition of Elizabeth Carey, takes a line which is predominantly historical and consequently devalues the very text which it is trying to promote, i.e. *The Tragedy of Mariam*. The article makes excuses for the literary standard of *The Tragedy of Mariam*, (or lack of it) via biographical detail - Elizabeth Carey suffered from excessive childbearing and religious mania. Whatever the questionable validity of such a claim (in fact Elizabeth Carey did not suffer excessive childbearing until well after she wrote *The Tragedy of Mariam* and it is questionable whether her inner religious conflict was fully developed so early in her life), the real point is that the article deems it necessary to make such excuses. Cotton's final conclusion is similar to that of Betty Travitsky's comment on Lady Mary Wroth:

Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland, must still be remembered as the first Englishwoman to write an original play. <sup>10</sup>

The alternatives to this view, however, seem equally unsatisfactory. Nancy Cotton's historical claim for Carey's text constitutes a strategy to protect, ensure and justify its place in the canon; when *The Tragedy of Mariam* has been denied such a justification, it has not experienced such supportive treatment:

[T]he dramatist is no mean workman as far as construction is concerned, but is no poet. (1908) <sup>11</sup>

[T]he play as a whole is singularly uninspired and deficient in interest. (1924) <sup>12</sup>

The *Tragedie of Mariam* is certainly not to be numbered among the outstanding Mariamne tragedies. (1940) <sup>13</sup>

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of progression in the critical approach to Carey's works for which this thesis calls.

10. Cotton (1977), p. 608.

11. Dunstan (1908), p. 43.

12. A.M. Witherspoon, *The Influence of Robert Garnier on Elizabethan Drama*, New Haven, 1924, p. 154.

13. Valency (1940), p. 87.

As the plotting and characterisation of Lady Carey's *Mariam* are almost identical with that of Massinger's far greater fictionalized version of the story, it will not require separate analysis here. (1977) <sup>14</sup>

This drama ... was a negligible piece of lifeless 'sententia' and the dramatist remains of interest not for her poetic skill but on account of her rather tenuous association with several members of the Wilton circle. (1982) <sup>15</sup>

Even Catherine Belsey, whilst at least taking the play seriously in context with other plays of the period, disappointingly fails to give it anything other than a conservative reading, unquestioningly casting Salome as the villainess, the "spiritual sister of Vittoria and Lady Macbeth" without accounting for the fact that these two meet the death demanded by the ideologically informed Renaissance poetic justice, whilst Salome does not. <sup>16</sup>

In the face of such literary hostility, how are Elizabeth Carey's texts to be brought to the fore as worthwhile texts for study? The strategy adopted so far, which began in 1977 with Nancy Cotton, is to emphasise Elizabeth Carey's historical right to be placed in the canon because of the pioneering nature of her work *The Tragedy of Mariam*. Six of the most recent critical works on *The Tragedy of Mariam*, by Nancy Cotton, Elaine Beilin, Sandra K. Fischer, Betty Travitsky, Margaret Ferguson and Tina Krontiris, <sup>17</sup> have all been written from this historical perspective. Credit certainly has to be given to these works in that they attempt the initial stage of the battle for (re)instatement - they create awareness. Unfortunately, the way that each of these writers creates awareness of Elizabeth Carey can be perceived as creating new problems, of a more specifically literary and critical variety.

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14. Leonora Brodwin, *Elizabethan Love Tragedy*, 1977, p. 389, n. 2.

15. Michael G. Brennan, "The Literary Patronage of the Herbert Family, Earls of Pembroke, 1550-1640", unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1982, p. 174.

16. Belsey (1985), pp. 174-5.

17. Cotton (1977); Beilin (1980); Cotton (1980); Fischer (1985); Beilin (1987); Travitsky (1987); Travitsky (1991); Ferguson (1992) and Krontiris (1992).

All of these works attempt a biographical criticism of *The Tragedy of Mariam*, justifying its place in the canon via the "authority of experience" approach. Far from wishing to devalue this critical strategy, I merely wish to suggest that, as it is only one critical strategy amongst many, in the case of Elizabeth Carey it should be used with extreme caution and perhaps even abandoned altogether in favour of a different approach. This "authority of experience" reading is invited, even determined, by the fact that the life of Elizabeth Carey is particularly well documented, due to the survival of a manuscript biography. This was written c. 1650 by one of Elizabeth Carey's four daughters, who were all members of the French convent at Cambrai, and is preserved in the Archives départementales du Nord in Lille. It was edited by Richard Simpson and published in 1861, <sup>18</sup> and it is this edition upon which the critics tend to rely. Another edition, by Lady Georgiana Fullerton, which was substantially re-written and incorporated many of Elizabeth Carey's letters, was published in 1883. <sup>19</sup> There is also a short chapter in K.B. Murdock's *Sun at Noon* which provides the critics with additional material. <sup>20</sup>

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18. I should like to acknowledge the kind assistance of M. Claude Lannette, the Directeur des Archives départementales du Nord, who arranged for a photocopy of the original manuscript to be sent to me, in order that I could compare it with Simpson's edition.

It turns out, in fact, that Simpson was very faithful to the text and to its female author, who was one of Elizabeth's four daughters. In his edition he re-inserts the sections of the text which have been crossed out (though fortunately not obliterated) by another hand and also includes the marginal notes which are made in the same hand. Simpson suggests (*Life*, p. vi) that this hand could be that of Patrick Carey, Elizabeth's youngest son. Furthermore, Simpson's edition includes an Appendix of letters (*Life* Appendix) transcribed from the State Papers in the Public Record Office, London. These were by Elizabeth; her husband, Henry; Katherine, Duchess of Buckingham; Lord Conway; Charles I and Lady Tanfield, Elizabeth's mother and pertain to the turbulent years surrounding Elizabeth's departure from Ireland, conversion to Catholicism and rejection by her husband.

19. Fullerton (1883). Fullerton obviously used the manuscript independently of Simpson, as there are points in her book which offer differing readings, eg. where *Life* reads "a little beer with a toast", p. 17, Fullerton (1883) reads "a little beer with a tart", p. 29.

20. Murdock (1939).

It is reasonable to assume that the more that is known about a woman author the better her chances of being (re)instated into the canon. But it is essential to recognise that the criteria by which the sources for a woman writer's life are selected has major implications for the way in which her texts are received back into the canon. There are many sources, in addition to the biographies of Elizabeth Carey used by the recent critics, which have been largely neglected. These include: documents in the Public Record Office (SP Dom., 1601-1640; SP Irel., 1625-1632); her epistles which preface both her literary works and her translations <sup>21</sup> and six works dedicated to her by male writers. <sup>22</sup> These last two groups of sources are particularly valuable because they offer an insight into how she perceived herself and how she was perceived by others. I shall be making full use of these sources in Chapter 1, especially the dedications prefacing her two surviving translations, which are of particular interest in this context because they are her earliest and latest surviving works. Her translations, therefore, primarily appear in the

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21. "The Mirror of the Worlde translated Out of French into Englishe", c. 1598, Bodleian Library, Dep. d. 817. Prefaced by a dedication "To the righte honorable my singular good unckle Sr Henry Lee, knighte of the most noble order of the garter".

*The Tragedy of Mariam*, c. 1604, pub. 1613, STC 4613. Prefaced by a dedicatory poem to her sister-in-law, "To Dianae's Earthlie Deputesse and my worthy sister, mistris Elizabeth Carye".

*The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II*, 1627, pub. 1680, Wing F313, includes "The Author's Preface to the reader".

*The Reply of the Most Illustrious Cardinall of Perron*, 1630, STC 6385. Prefaced by a dedication to Queen Henrietta Maria and an epistle to the reader. There are also two manuscript poems, namely a sonnet to Henrietta Maria and a quatrain to Jacques Davy, Cardinall du Perron, which appear only in the copies in the Beinecke Collection at Yale University Library, shelfmark Me65 D925 +R4G; the Houghton Library at Harvard University, shelfmark fSTC 6385 and in the Bodleian Library, shelfmark P5.7 Th.

See Appendix A, pp. 249-53.

22. Michael Drayton, *Englands Heroicall Epistles*, 1597, STC 7193; John Davies, *The Muses Sacrifice*, 1612, STC 6338; Richard More, ed., *Englands Helicon*, 1614, STC 3192; William Basse, *Poetical Works 1602-1653*, ed. R. Warwick Bond, London, 1893; Richard Beling, *A Sixthe Booke to the Countesse of Pembroke's Arcadia*, 1624, STC 1805; William Sheares, ed., *The Workes of Mr John Marston*, 1633, STC 17471. See Appendix B, pp. 254-60.

biographical study as they help to indicate both her social position and, more importantly, the development of her awareness of herself as a writer, and of the political nature of the act of writing.

Possibly due to a lack of awareness of the availability of these sources, Cotton, Beilin, Fischer, Travitsky, Ferguson and Krontiris make scant use of them, concentrating on the three biographical works of Simpson, Fullerton and Murdock. Unfortunately, the treatment each critic makes of these sources is somewhat simplistic. They explain the literary fiction of *The Tragedy of Mariam* by counterbalancing it with what they perceive as the literal truth of biography. All of the biographies are based on, if not directly lifted from the daughter's manuscript, and despite Elaine Beilin's description of it as a "spiritual history verging on hagiography",<sup>23</sup> neither she nor the other critics take any account of this, nor of the fact that the biography itself belongs to a distinct literary genre.

Reading the manuscript biography as literally true is a very tempting prospect for the feminist scholar. If this text could be accorded such a status, it would guarantee Elizabeth Carey's texts a place in the canon because the manuscript presents us with a literary and linguistic prodigy. It draws specific attention to the works which Elizabeth Carey wrote (the majority of which are, sadly, lost), mentions the numerous volumes which she read and stresses her aptitude for languages. Furthermore, her childish independence and appetite for learning are conveyed in the descriptions of how she bribed the servants to bring her materials to read and write at night, running up debts of £300; how she sent away her French tutor and learnt the language by herself in a matter of weeks; how she saved an old woman from being condemned as a witch because of her precocious insight into the corrupt practices of magistrates courts.<sup>24</sup> It is very difficult to resist the appeal of

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23. Beilin (1987), p. 158.

24. *Life*, pp. 4-7.

such a heroine - unless, of course, this heroine puts an end to the efficacy of her own work.

By decoding *The Tragedy Mariam* in terms of Elizabeth Carey's life, Cotton, Fischer, Beilin, and Ferguson <sup>25</sup> have, paradoxically, in their attempt to create critical awareness, effectively offered up a final reading of the text, rendering it inert. It is surely no coincidence that whilst the earliest work of these writers bestows upon Carey token status as the first woman playwright, the later works, as a result of relying on the biography, emphasise the religious content of *The Tragedy of Mariam*. The daughter's biography is for the most part concerned with Elizabeth Carey's progress to Catholicism, and this begins to inform the reading of her mother's play; the more the biography becomes used as a decoding device, the more "religious" the reading of the play:

Like Cary, Mariam is unsuccessful in escaping the tragedy of personal and political tyranny; however, her death asserts the integrity of her conscience and apotheosizes her as a victim whose suffering and sacrifice affect the tyrant and open the way for change. This was perhaps more than Lady Falkland could hope for personally, and she used the marginal genre as a forum for the philosophical investigation of the subject closest to her heart. <sup>26</sup>

On the one hand, Mariam's death punishes her outspokenness, so warning women to be silent; on the other hand, it makes her a martyr. Mariam's Christian triumph may well reflect Cary's optimism for her own art by detaching her surrogate from earthly oppression. By affirming Christian values, Cary modified the challenge her writing posed to traditional feminine boundaries. <sup>27</sup>

Margaret Ferguson, seeks to "show how, and to begin to show why, the play's ideological statement is so mixed" <sup>28</sup> and goes part way to achieving

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25. Neither Travitsky (1987), nor Krontiris (1992) present a particularly Christian "authority of experience" interpretation of the play, but this is rather because their works lack critical sophistication, than because of a conscious rejection this type of reading. They both present potted biographies followed by a moral evaluation of the texts in question. Krontiris takes a particularly liberal humanist line, despite making use of Belsey (1985) and the John Davies dedication (see n. 21).

26. Fischer (1985), p. 237.

27. Beilin (1987), p. 175.

28. Ferguson (1992), p. 236.



this end by ascribing the "culturally constructed censoring power" to "the Chorus, and, at certain moments, to the heroine herself, speaking, evidently, for an aspect of the author's own conscience or superego." <sup>29</sup> She also agrees with Beilin's Christian interpretation, further emphasising the religious significance of Mariam's death, by drawing historical and scriptural links:

[T]here is considerable emphasis on the "fact" that she is beheaded. This detail, unremarked by Cary's critics so far as I know, seems an overdetermined and historically volatile allusion: it conjures up the ghost of Mary Queen of Scots, whose son ruled England when Cary wrote her play and who was in the eyes of many English Catholics a victim of Protestant tyranny; it also links Mariam with the figure of Christ's harbinger John the Baptist, beheaded by Herod's servants at Salome's request. <sup>30</sup>

Ferguson does not seem to have taken account of the fact that the Salome who requested the head of John the Baptist was Herod's stepdaughter by a later marriage, and not his sister, who is the Salome of the play. And, following on from Nancy Cotton's anachronistic use of Elizabeth Carey's conversion to Catholicism (see p. 5), Ferguson talks of the "aura of sanctification" which surrounds Mariam's death, having an "uncannily proleptic justification of the rebellious path Cary herself would follow when she converted publically [*sic*] to Catholicism in the mid-1620's". <sup>31</sup>

These critical works have unquestioningly taken on board the emphasis of their major critical tool. Furthermore, it would appear that, in their eyes, the heroine of the play and the heroine of the biography are one and the same; the Mariam of the play is viewed as a literary manifestation of the "real" Elizabeth Carey of the biography. Too much emphasis on this type of reading renders the text and its author an historical curiosity. The play earns its place in the canon because of who wrote it, not because of its value as a Renaissance text; it becomes a phenomenon, to be understood only in terms

29. Ferguson (1992), p. 240.

30. Ferguson (1992), p. 245.

31. Ferguson (1992), p. 245.

of its author and thus denied vital interplay with other texts of the period. Elizabeth Carey and *The Tragedy of Mariam* are in serious danger of becoming inextricably fused together and "canonised" as a feminist cultural icon, revered yet impotent in the fight to redress the balance of the Renaissance canon.

The invalidity of sealing off the text in such a way is irrevocably exposed by the realisation that it relates, on a purely textual level, to many other works. For example, the play is part of the European tradition of dramas concerning Herod and Mariam, upon whom two other English Renaissance plays were based and <sup>32</sup> there is a clearly discernible similarity between *The Tragedy of Mariam* and Shakespeare's *Othello*. Two recent articles suggest that *The Tragedy of Mariam* may have been a source for Middleton and Rowley's *A Fair Quarrel* and for the anonymous *Second Maiden's Tragedy*, thus pointing to Middleton as the author of the latter, <sup>33</sup> and the hyperbolic misogynistic discourse which is deconstructed so effectively by the pamphlets of Esther Sowernam, Rachel Speght and Constantia Munda, <sup>34</sup> is given similar treatment in *The Tragedy of Mariam*.

The relationship between Elizabeth Carey's biography and *The Tragedy of Mariam* could be described as being similar to that of the chemical elements sodium and chlorine. Whilst fused together, they make a harmless compound - common salt - which is safe, yet interesting to consume. Apart, they are both dangerous and noxious elements. <sup>35</sup> Fortunately, whilst the

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32. *The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater: With the Death of Faire Mariam*, Gervase Markham and William Sampson, 1622, STC 17401; *The Duke of Millaine*, Philip Massinger, 1623, STC 17634.

33. Richard Levin, "A Possible Source of *A Fair Quarrel*", *N & Q*, vol. 228, 1983, pp. 152-3; R.V. Holdsworth, "Middleton and *The Tragedy of Mariam*", *N & Q*, vol. 231, 1986, pp. 379-80.

34. See p. 2, n. 4.

35. The chemical analogy is not intended to be detrimental towards Carey and her works. Rather it draws attention to the perceived threat to the *status quo* which Carey and her texts might pose, but also invokes the notion of "danger" as a positive force which instigates social and cultural change.

chemical fusion of sodium and chlorine is irreversible, the fusion of Carey and text is at best temporary. For Elizabeth Carey is the author of another literary text beside *The Tragedy of Mariam* and it is the recent critical treatment of this text which emphasises the political nature of the decision upon which terms her texts are (re)instated into the Renaissance canon.

The recent controversy over the authorship of the two texts, *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II*, (Wing F313) and *The History of the Most Unfortunate Prince, King Edward II*, (Wing F314), as it stands at present, would appear only to reinforce the symbiotic relationship (invented by the critics) between Carey and text. The most recent edition of Wing attributes them to Elizabeth's husband, Henry Cary, based on the fact that the later, octavo text makes the claim "Found among the Papers of and supposed to be writ by the Right Honourable Henry Viscount Falkland, Sometime Lord Deputy of Ireland" (sig. A1<sup>r</sup>). However, the initials which appear at the foot of the preface "To the Reader" in the earlier, folio text are "E.F." (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>). Elizabeth Carey, as 1st Viscountess Falkland, signed her letters "E. Falkland" and it is this fact which led Donald A. Stauffer to suggest that she, rather than her husband, was the author.<sup>36</sup> His evidence has been accepted by many scholars since, such as Betty Travitsky,<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth Hageman<sup>38</sup> and Barbara Lewalski.<sup>39</sup> However, there has been some doubt cast on Elizabeth Carey's authorship. D.R. Woolf claims that both versions of *Edward II* were in fact written 1679-80, and so could not have been written by Henry Carey, as Wing claims, or by Elizabeth, as Stauffer claims. Woolf takes no account of the evidence brought by Stauffer, completely overlooking

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36. Stauffer (1935).

37. Travitsky (1981), pp. 216-20.

38. Hageman (1988), p. 147. Beilin (1990), p. 358, admits that this attribution "has been controversial".

39. Lewalski (1993), p. 201 and pp. 317-20.

the possibility of Elizabeth Carey being the author.<sup>40</sup> His evidence is flimsy, and I will provide a counter-argument to his article in Chapter 4.

There has been little attempt by feminist scholars to supplement the evidence of Stauffer, even after the appearance of such an adverse article. Only Tina Krontiris writes extensively about both texts of *Edward II*. In *Oppositional Voices*,<sup>41</sup> the chapter on Elizabeth Carey merely retells the story of Carey's work, without any apparent theoretical perspective. Whilst she acknowledges the existence of other works on Edward II, she does not take the opportunity to place Elizabeth Carey's text in its literary context. Her earlier article, Krontiris (1990), relies heavily on the biography, in the same vein as the critics of *The Tragedy of Mariam* discussed above, although the article is charged with a different motivation. Instead of trying to justify Elizabeth Carey's place in the canon like Cotton, Fischer, Beilin and Ferguson, Krontiris is trying to justify Elizabeth Carey's claim to the authorship of both texts of *Edward II*. The principle, however, is the same. Krontiris says that she will introduce new evidence which will point to Carey as the author. What she does, in fact, is to draw parallels between the plight of Queen Isabel and that of Elizabeth Carey after she had converted to Catholicism. The eventual effect of this kind of reading is the closure of the text, an effect very similar to that created by Cotton, Fischer, Beilin and Ferguson upon *The Tragedy of Mariam*. This kind of reading is, paradoxically, complicit with the preservation of the canon. It is rather difficult to deny Elizabeth Carey's *Edward II* a place amongst the political writings of the period that sought to criticise bad kings, and their favourites, but closing the text by reading it as a pseudo-biography of Carey helps to effect precisely this denial.

The critical history to date, then, suggests that the only way to validate

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40. Woolf (1988).

41. Krontiris (1992), pp. 91-101.

*The Tragedy of Mariam* as a text and Elizabeth Carey as the author of *Edward II* is by reference, not just to her life, but to her life as conveyed by her daughter, resulting in the situation complained of concisely by Christiane Rochefort in 1975: "A man's book is a book. A woman's book is a woman's book." <sup>42</sup> At present, *The Tragedy Of Mariam* exists as "a woman's book"; it is known only as part of the myth of Elizabeth Carey, rather than as one of the group of literary texts known collectively as Renaissance drama. Similarly, *Edward II*, if Carey is to be accepted as its author, must be seen to reflect her personal situation at the time of writing. This emphasis obscures the fact that it is also part of the "long tradition of didactic, cautionary tales such as the popular Elizabethan work, the *Mirror for Magistrates*." <sup>43</sup>

The current situation is, then, somewhat adverse to (re)instating Elizabeth Carey's texts into the Renaissance canon. Rather, a separate and distinct sub-canon has come into existence, containing the manuscript life of Elizabeth Carey, Elizabeth Carey's *Tragedy of Mariam* and Elizabeth Carey's *Edward II*. Defining the texts by their writer also denies their treatment via any more sophisticated criticism than the biographical approach, which cuts off the possibility of the texts being subject to any new developments in literary criticism. Chris Weedon defines the situation:

The study of women's writing as a feminist project can take many forms depending on the assumptions and perspectives of the reader. It is possible, for example, to look at it in both essentialist and poststructuralist ways and the key difference in these approaches is the significance given to women as authors. Essentialist approaches assume that female authorship of texts is their most crucial aspect and that they are the product of a specifically female experience and aesthetic. In poststructuralist theory authorship does not guarantee meaning, though the historical context in which the author is located will produce the discourses of the text. The forms of gendered subjectivity offered by texts are also the product of the social discourses on gender in circulation at the time of writing. <sup>44</sup>

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42. Christiane Rochefort, "Are Women Writers Still Monsters?", in Marks and de Courtivron (1981), p. 183.

43. Woolf (1988), p. 441.

44. Weedon (1987), p. 153.

In the particular case of the cited criticism on Elizabeth Carey, not only does authorship guarantee meaning, but meaning guarantees authorship and the two live in an hermetically sealed symbiotic harmony - immune, but also harmless.

The desire for the recognition of Elizabeth Carey as a writer and justification of her texts as worthy of study partly explains why the potentially destructive stance of biographical criticism has been taken by critics in the past; closely linked to this are the problems which emerge from the very diversity and scarcity of Carey's works. What is left of Elizabeth Carey's works are: a manuscript translation of Abraham Ortelius's *Mirror of the Worlde* (probably 1598-9); *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1603-4, pub. 1613); *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II* (1627/8, pub. 1680) and a translation of *The Reply of Most Illustrious Cardinall of Perron* (1630).<sup>45</sup> In other words, a translation of a geographical work, a Senecan tragedy, an historical biography mixing prose and dramatic poetry and a translation of a religious work. This is certainly a very diverse set of texts, spread thinly over thirty-four years and this fact has bestowed an importance on the *Life* in that it simultaneously draws together and expands the Carey oeuvre. It tells of a verse "Life of Tamberlaine", in addition to *The Tragedy of Mariam*; other translations, including Seneca's epistles; religious and biographical works - verses to the Virgin and the lives of St Agnes the Martyr and St. Elizabeth of Portugal.<sup>46</sup> There is no one poetic voice by which to identify Elizabeth Carey; evidently this was viewed as a problem by previous critics and the manuscript biography brought in to alleviate the situation.

However, it is questionable whether the situation actually needs

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45. The manuscript "An Epitaph upon the death of the Duke of Buckingham" and the verse on the tomb of her parents at Burford Parish Church are also attributed to her, but I have not included them in the above list because attribution is by no means certain.

44. *Life*, pp. 4; 8-9; 39.

alleviating. I feel that it would be more productive to make positive use of the diversity of Elizabeth Carey's works and utilise the difficulty in defining her poetic voice as an advantage. This thesis will actively exploit the diversity of the texts written by Elizabeth Carey. It will use the combination of Elizabeth Carey's lack of literary consistency with the unfortunate loss of so many of her works, as a justification for the re-instatement of the extant literary texts on their own terms, without the special protection of their author. Elizabeth Carey as an historical subject will be the focus of the first chapter; the literary texts alone will be considered in the rest of the thesis.

## CHAPTER 1

### "I am a Catholique and a Woman": A biographical study of Elizabeth Carey, 1st Viscountess Falkland.

#### Constructing a Framework

The title of this chapter is somewhat misleading because it is only a partial representation of the historical personage with whom the chapter is concerned. This clearly indicates how biographical writing has many theoretical and methodological pitfalls, especially when trying to compose a chapter which treats the subject matter from the political and theoretical standpoint of this thesis. Consequently, this chapter does not present a chronologically ordered account of the historical subject named above as Elizabeth Carey, 1st Viscountess Falkland. Indeed, she was only given that name some years after the point at which this biographical study begins. Therefore, this chapter is, instead, an exploration of the various subject positions which this historical subject has held, using the sources which are currently available.

The problem posed by writing women's history, particularly about women of this period, lies in the fact that if a particular woman is well known and well documented enough to have a biography written about her, then she is, perforce, exceptional. As Gordon, Buhle and Dye have said in a relatively early paper on the problems of methodology in women's history, the availability of evidence suggests something exceptional about the woman in question and that

Most biographies are limited also because they are narrative and anecdotal: characteristics singled out as unique or eccentric are often emphasised at the expense of analysing how the subject fit [*sic*] into her social environment.<sup>1</sup>

My aim is to examine Elizabeth Carey in her social context and to do this I feel it would be a mistake to try to create a seamless story of her life.

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1. Ann D. Gordon, Mari Jo Buhle and Nancy Schrom Dye, "The Problem of Women's History", in Carroll (1976), pp. 79-80.



Obviously there are some aspects of her life which are better documented than others and to try to fill in the gaps with speculation would be a misleading and therefore counterproductive exercise. I will not, then, be attempting to create an unassailable representation of a distinct historical character named Elizabeth Carey. The documentation simply is not available, even though the sources are quite numerous. Moreover, it is questionable whether a discrete individual bearing the name "Elizabeth Carey" can ever be said to have existed. My opening sentence stated that the title of this chapter is misleading, representing only one part of the story. Elizabeth was only called Carey after 1602 (by which time she had established herself as a scholar) and was 1st Viscountess Falkland for a very short period of her life - thirteen years whilst Henry was alive and bearing the title 1st Viscount Falkland (1620-1633).

The historical personage of whom I write has more than one name and several roles - hailed, perceived, identified via the patriarchal ideology under whose authority she attempted to find some autonomy beyond the roles into which she was coerced. This will be the perspective from which I consider the life of this subject - the roles which she played. To give an account of a life of a single, unified subject is to obscure the extent to which women are expected to play certain roles throughout their lives; roles which may only correspond partially to their own desires and their own perceptions of themselves. Such an account would emphasise agency at the expense of oppression; Elizabeth Carey trod a fine line between both, adopting, variously throughout her life, positions within the patriarchal ideology of Renaissance England and positions well outside it.

It would, of course, be possible to present a skeleton account of her life, mostly culled from the manuscript written by her daughter, and currently housed in the Archives départementales du Nord at Lille, and from SP Dom., 1601-1640 and SP Irel., 1625-1632 in the Public Record Office, London.

We could simply say that she was born at Burford in 1585, daughter of Lawrence Tanfield (later Lord Chief Justice) and Elizabeth Tanfield. During her childhood and the early years of her marriage (particularly when Henry was away) she learned languages including French, Italian, Latin and "of a Transylvanian his language" <sup>2</sup> and wrote several works including *The Tragedy of Mariam*, *Edward II*, "The Mirror of the World translated Out of French into Englishe", a "Life of Tamberlaine", and verses to female saints and the Virgin Mary (these last two items being lost). She married Sir Henry Carey of Berkhamstead in 1602, by whom she had eleven children. She moved to Ireland in 1622 when her husband became Lord Deputy there, but returned to England in 1625, soon afterwards converting fully to the Catholic faith. Whilst estranged from her husband (and living in London) she was given no allowance by him and suffered very great poverty, although the Privy Council had ordered Henry to pay her £500 per annum. <sup>3</sup> When Henry was recalled from Ireland in 1629, a reconciliation began to develop and, in 1633, Elizabeth nursed him on his deathbed after a hunting accident. After his death, Elizabeth was determined that her six youngest children (four daughters and two sons) should convert to Catholicism. The *Life* relates how she had to kidnap her two youngest sons from the care of their elder brother, Lucius, and send them away to France. <sup>4</sup> The four daughters joined the Benedictine Convent at Cambrai, where the *Life* manuscript was written. Elizabeth Carey died in 1639, and was buried in Queen Henrietta Maria's chapel, presumably the one which was "hastily fitted up on the ground floor at Somerset House to show Bassompierre [the French Ambassador] that there was no deficiency in this respect." <sup>5</sup> But this is far from the whole picture.

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2. *Life*, pp. 4-5.

3. Council Register, Charles I, vol. iii, p. 188, cited in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 163-7.

4. *Life*, pp. 95-106.

5. Hamilton (1976), p. 81. However, Lewalski (1993), p. 388, n. 53,

Indeed, questioning whether a whole picture is possible or even appropriate to the study of Elizabeth Carey forms the theoretical basis of this chapter.

From the above brief account it is possible to identify at least one area of Elizabeth Carey's life which can be selected and reworked from a feminist perspective in order to give a positive celebration of Elizabeth Carey as a leading protagonist in the Renaissance woman's assertion of the right to write and be recognised for her own literary abilities. This is her skill in the area of foreign languages, translating and, most significantly for the purpose of this thesis, creative writing. But herein also lies the potential for the evolution of a mythical creature: Elizabeth's prolific writing and translating skills could cause her to be cast as the archetypal Renaissance thief of man-made language. <sup>6</sup> Merely to celebrate Elizabeth Carey's achievements is to lose sight of the fact that the Renaissance in England proved to contain as many forms of oppression for women as it did new freedoms. Elizabeth Carey was subject to such oppressions and it is important to emphasise the conditions under which she produced her work as well as the work itself.

There has been much debate as to the direction which women's history should take regarding the conditions of women's lives in the past. In 1976, Sheila Ryan Johansson attacked the type of history which she called "Woman-the-Passive-Victim", which wrote women's history as merely a struggle to survive. <sup>7</sup> Alternatively, Nancy Cotton, Sandra K. Fischer and Elaine Beilin have been eager to bring Carey's achievements to the fore, creating a heroine, rather than analysing the conditions and experience of Carey's life. <sup>8</sup>

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suggests that Carey was buried in Henrietta Maria's chapel at St. James's Palace, which is now covered by a road. She cites no evidence for this.

6. I am using two phrases which have become an established part of the feminist critical canon, due to the works of Claudine Herrman, *Les Voleuses de Langue* (1976), trans. Marilyn R. Schuster, extract rpt. in Marks and de Courtivron (1981), pp. 87-9 and Dale Spender, *Man Made Language*, 1980.

7. Sheila Ryan Johansson, "'Herstory' as History: A New Field or Another Fad?", in Carroll (1976), p. 401.

8. The chapter in Cotton (1980) is particularly guilty of trying to evolve a

However, as Lisa Jardine points out, an overly optimistic view, specifically in the case of the Renaissance, can mask the ideological function of patriarchy in "allowing" women certain freedoms. The cultured and learned lady (of whom Elizabeth Carey could be seen to be a model example) advocated by humanist writers was not an intellectually autonomous individual, according to Jardine. Rather, humanist education distracted women from useful education, such as in political thought, simply to produce a cultured individual with a decorative rather than practical function.<sup>9</sup> Joan Kelly-Gadol goes even further in her article, "Did Women have a Renaissance?", suggesting that the periodization of (men's) history is of little relevance to women's history and is often anathema to it. Taking the Renaissance as a case in point, she argues that the new freedom of thought experienced by men resulted in increased oppression for women.<sup>10</sup> A recent article by Judith M. Bennett puts forward an idea which suggests that the victim status and resistance cannot be so easily differentiated when writing women's history, but that both must be borne in mind as a methodological starting point:

Women have not merely been passive victims of patriarchy; they have also colluded in, undermined, and survived patriarchy. But neither have women been free agents; they have always faced ideological, institutional, and practical barriers to equitable association with men (and indeed, with other women). By creating a false dichotomy between victimization and agency and then eschewing the study of victimization, historians of women have sometimes created an almost idyllic history - of a medieval 'golden age' for working women, of a renaissance for learned women in the sixteenth century, of a 'female world of love and ritual' in nineteenth-century America. In celebrating the agency of women in the past, we have sometimes lost

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knowable individual from very few sources - namely John Davies *The Muses Sacrifice* (1612), the *Life* and *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1613). She asks, p. 37: "Could the woman who wrote Salome's speech resist the appeal for publication [made by John Davies in *The Muses Sacrifice*] on behalf of her sex's honor?"

9. Jardine (1983), pp. 51-2.

10. Kelly-Gadol (1977), pp. 132-64, uses the term "periodization" to refer to the process by which history is (artificially) divided up into separate chronological sections and named according to the events of those sections, as judged by essentially masculine values.

sight of their very real oppression.<sup>11</sup>

The previous attempts to represent the life of Elizabeth Carey under the label of feminist studies in the Renaissance, compromise the feminist label under which they are written, for they present a lone (and therefore exceptional) feminist figure struggling against Renaissance patriarchy, thereby isolating her both spatially and temporally. In these works she is denied any community with other writers, male or female; she is also denied a position in the historical tradition of women's writing. I choose, therefore, to consider her in the context of the three subject positions for which she is best known and most well documented: as Sir Henry Carey's wife, as a recusant and, most importantly, as a writer. The sources for each of these positions are considerably different. Sometimes they show instances of great resistance on Carey's part. At other times they show the might of Renaissance patriarchy and Elizabeth Carey's compliance with it. If the three different sections appear, at times, to contradict each other, that is all part of displaying the impossibility of presenting a single unified subject, identified (if inaccurately) for simplicity's sake as Elizabeth Carey.

### **Elizabeth Carey: the Wife**

I am beginning with the subject position which is most at odds with female independence because, as will be shown, Elizabeth Carey's experience of it served to undermine much of the Renaissance ideology surrounding marriage. The *Life* exposes particularly well the contradictions in patriarchally defined history, regarding the experience of women as wives. The category of wife is itself without definition in this case, because determining exactly when Elizabeth Carey took on this role, either in name or in practice (which were not necessarily the same in this period) is fraught with problems. There are no definite dates available and so the clearly defined

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11. Judith M. Bennett, "Feminism and History" in *G & H*, vol. 1, 1989, p. 262.

social role comes immediately into question.

The fact that the Burford Parish Registers do not begin until 1612 means that there is no irrefutable documentation of the date of the wedding. The *Life* says that she married Henry Carey when she was fifteen years old.<sup>12</sup> This would make the year 1600 or 1601, as the *Life* gives the year of her birth as 1585 or 1586, although the former is confirmed by the dates on her effigy which stands at the head of her parents' tomb in the church in Burford.<sup>13</sup> The *Life* then goes on to explain that she still lived at her father's house for a year after the marriage and then spent the rest of the time living with Henry's mother, whilst Henry went abroad to Holland.

However, the correspondence of John Chamberlain with Dudley Carleton<sup>14</sup> indicates that Elizabeth Tanfield became Elizabeth Carey some time later than the *Life* suggests. In a letter dated 27 June 1602, Chamberlain writes from London:

Here is talke of a match ... twixt Sir Henry Cary and Master Tanfelds daughter with 2000<sup>li</sup> presently, 2000<sup>li</sup> at two yeares, and 3000<sup>li</sup> at his death, yf he chaunce to have more children, otherwise to be his heire *ex asse*.<sup>15</sup>

The likelihood of there being two Sir Henry Careys and two Mr Tanfields with an sole female child is small. Furthermore, a second letter from John Chamberlain, dated 2 October 1602, mentions the commencement, presumably of the Autumn (Michaelmas) Term, at Oxford, Cambridge or the Inns of Court, where as well as a large number of distinguished men there were, apparently, a number of cutpurses. As a result "Sir Richard Lea [lost] two jewells of 200 markes, which Sir Harry Lea and he meant to have bestowed on the bride Master Tanfeld's daughter".<sup>16</sup> The location of this

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12. *Life*, p. 7.

13. This effigy also gives the date of her marriage to Henry as 1600.

14. McClure I (1939) and McClure II (1939).

15. SP Dom., Elizabeth I, 1601-1603, vol. CCLXXXIV, art. 46, in McClure I (1939), pp. 151-5.

Tanfield family at Oxford (Elizabeth Carey's childhood home was Burford Priory near Oxford), along with the mention of Sir Harry Lea, who is probably the same person as Sir Henry Lee, Elizabeth's maternal uncle, to whom she dedicated the manuscript "The Mirror of the Worlde translated Out of French into Englishe" would confirm that the Chamberlain correspondence does indeed refer to our subject. The accuracy of the dates suggested by the *Life* are further called into question by the fact that it says:

At fifteen years old her father married her to one Sir Harry Carey (son to Sir Edward Carey, of Barkhamsted, in Herts), *then master of the Jewel-house* (my italics).<sup>17</sup>

However the *CSP Dom.* records the grant of this office, jointly to Edward and Henry, as taking place in June 1603,<sup>18</sup> by which time, as Chamberlain shows, they were married.

Even so, there is still some considerable uncertainty as to when Elizabeth and Henry became husband and wife in practice. The *Life* tells us that, immediately after her marriage, Elizabeth went back to her parents house in Burford:

The first year or more she lived at her own father's; her husband about that time went into Holland, leaving her still with her own friends; he, in the time they had been married, had been for the most part at the court or his father's house, [away] from her, and had heard her speak little, and those letters he had received from her had been indited by others, by her mother's appointment: so he knew her then very little.<sup>19</sup>

Other evidence would seem to corroborate this claim that Henry and Elizabeth, although married, lived apart even before he undertook the customary journey abroad. Henry and Elizabeth appeared on at least one occasion in public as husband and wife, as John Chamberlain reported to Dudley Carleton on 23 December 1602:

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16. SP Dom., Elizabeth I, 1601-1603, vol. CCLXXXV art. 23, in McClure I (1939), pp. 158-62.

17. *Life*, p. 7.

18. *CSP Dom.*, James I 1603-1610, vol. II, 21 June 1603 (no art. no.).

19. *Life*, p. 7.

Sir John Harrington meanes to kepe a royall Christmas in Rutlandshire having the earles of Rutland and Bedford, Sir John Gray and Sir Harry Carie with theyre Ladies, the earle of Pembroke, Sir Robert Sidney and many moe gallants. <sup>20</sup>

Yet Henry did not begin his travels abroad until nearly two years later. In August 1604, he was granted a licence to travel for seven years <sup>21</sup> and it seems that he took advantage of this, although the consequences were somewhat inglorious. <sup>22</sup> On 16 July 1606, John Chamberlain wrote to inform Dudley Carleton that "Sir Henry Carie is come out of the Lowe Countries so Spanish in attire as yf he were in love with the nation." <sup>23</sup>

It was only after this time, or so the evidence suggests, that Henry and Elizabeth began sleeping under the same roof - probably that of Henry's

20. SP Dom., Elizabeth I, 1601-3, vol. CCLXXXVI, art. 13, in McClure I (1939), pp. 176-9.

21. CSP Dom., James I, vol. IX, 30 Aug. 1604, art. 27,. In *The Travel Diary (1611-1612) of an English Catholic, Sir Charles Somerset*, ed. Michael G. Brennan, Leeds, 1993, it is argued, p. 10, that "It was not uncommon for the sons of noblemen to be married off to wealthy heiresses before undertaking a period of travel abroad". An example is cited, p. 42, n. 46: "In 1606 Robert Devereux married Frances Howard, elder daughter of the Earl of Suffolk, before setting off on his travels in the next year. In 1608 William Lord Cranborne, the son and heir of Robert Cecil, married Catherine Howard, Suffolk's younger daughter, and almost immediately afterwards, left for France".

22. Sir Henry Carey was taken prisoner in the Netherlands by the Spanish army, an incident remembered by Ben Jonson in Epigram LXVI "To Sir Henry Cary", in *Poems*, ed. Ian Donaldson, 1975, p. 36, ll. 9-12:

when no foe, that day

Could conquer thee, but chance, who did betray.

Love thy great loss, which a renown hath won.

To live when Broick not stands, nor Ruhr doth run:

A marginal note in *Life*, p. 8 gives further details:

Almost three years he was abroad and in prison. This Sir William Uvedale told me, who went over with him: and both with my Lord of Hartford, then ambassador for Queen Elizabeth, to seal the treaty of peace at Cambresis (I take it), with Flanders; and after went to Holland, and was taken by Don Luis de Velasco.

On 2 May 1606, Carleton wrote to Chamberlain that "Sir Henry Carey's ransom was set down £2500, of which there is £300 abated by the Spanish ambassador at the king's request.", SP Dom., James I, vol. XXI, art. 4, in *Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, 1603-1624, Jacobean Letters*, ed. Maurice Lee Jr., New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1972, pp. 80-3. There was some delay in paying this, which prolonged Henry's sojourn abroad.

23. SP Dom., James I, vol. XXII, art. 57, in McClure I (1939), pp. 229-31.



parents. We know that Elizabeth was heavily pregnant at the end of 1608, as Chamberlain wrote to Carleton on 9 December 1608 that:

Sir Henry Carie brought his Lady to towne the laste weeke in great pompe accompanied with five coaches besides many horsemen and herself in a litter because she is with child ... <sup>24</sup>

Finally, evidence from *the Life* tells us that Henry and Elizabeth did not have their own household until some years later:

She was married seven years <sup>25</sup> without any child; after had eleven born alive; when she had some children, she and her husband went to keep house by themselves. <sup>26</sup>

This extract is also significant because it lends support to the idea that Henry and Elizabeth did not live together for the first two years of their marriage, even though Henry was still in England. The sustained rapidity with which the children arrived after 1609, when compared with the first seven years of marriage in which no children arrived, suggests that it is highly unlikely that Henry and Elizabeth co-habited on a regular basis (if at all) during any of those first seven years. Even so, they were known publicly as a married couple, as Chamberlain's letter (see p. 26) makes clear.

Recent historical research would appear to confirm that there is no single unproblematic way of defining married status in this period. Martin Ingram says that by the reign of Elizabeth I "marriage" normally meant a formal church ceremony, although legally speaking a formal declaration between two consenting adults was enough to make a legally binding contract. In fact, the making of binding marriage contracts before a church ceremony was recommended by some sixteenth- and seventeenth-century moralists, as this provided time for spiritual preparation between the contract and the

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24. SP Dom., James I, vol. XXXVIII, art. 17, in McClure I (1939), pp. 271-5.

25. This length of time is accurate if we take 1602 to be the year of the wedding, and 1609 to be the year in which Elizabeth gave birth to the child which Chamberlain says she was carrying.

26. *Life*, p. 11.

solemnization.<sup>27</sup> Ingram also suggests that the ideal conditions for the forming of a marriage contract consisted of preliminary negotiations which were finalised at a pre-arranged meeting, in the presence of impartial witnesses, between the couple, members of both families and other interested parties. Matters of property were thrashed out here, usually in writing amongst members of the higher social classes. Then the couple were admonished about the gravity of marriage by a close relative and finally they joined hands and voiced the words of the contract. Church solemnisation was to be sought as soon as possible. However, Ingram says that this ideal was rarely followed in reality,<sup>28</sup> a view with which Lawrence Stone agrees.<sup>29</sup> Stone also emphasises the confusion of having two different types of contract - *per verba de presenti* and *per verba de futuro*. The former was legally binding immediately, even if unwitnessed. The latter was not binding until either consummation or, if the contract was conditional (e.g. on the consent of parents or the payment of a dowry), on the fulfilment of the condition.<sup>30</sup>

Clearly, for a woman of Elizabeth Carey's social position, the process of becoming a wife was not merely the immediate result of a single, uncomplicated procedure. From the evidence of the Chamberlain-Carleton correspondence, the negotiations for the marriage between Henry and Elizabeth are likely to have been lengthy as they involved substantial amounts of money. It is possible, then, that they were contracted *per verba de futuro* (which would lead the author of the *Life*, and whoever commissioned the statue in Burford Parish Church, to say that Elizabeth was married at fifteen) but that the marriage itself was not solemnised or consummated until the

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27. Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England 1570-1640*, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 132-3.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

29. Lawrence Stone, *Road to Divorce: England 1530-1987*, Oxford, 1990, p. 57.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

financial arrangements were finalised, in 1602. Even so, their first child was not born until after Henry Carey returned from the Netherlands, which suggests that they did not start co-habiting on a permanent basis as man and wife until after 1606. So it was only at this point that Elizabeth took up her role as wife to Henry in practice.

The evidence which exists for much of Elizabeth Carey's experience of married life, particularly the period up until she left Ireland to return to England, is almost totally confined to the one text, the *Life*. However, Henry Carey's life is well detailed in the *CSP Dom.*. The documents therein give a clear account of his rise through the ranks at court, from details of his transactions as Master of the Jewel House,<sup>31</sup> his elevation to Comptroller in 1618,<sup>32</sup> being made Viscount Falkland in 1620<sup>33</sup> and being given the Lord Deputyship of Ireland,<sup>34</sup> a post he took up in 1622.<sup>35</sup> In all these accounts there is no mention of Elizabeth. She has actually been "written out" of this kind of history, only appearing again when she acted independently, to pursue her husband's interests at court, whilst he was still Lord Deputy in Ireland. Significantly, however, *SP Dom.* and *SP Irel.* feature Elizabeth Carey most prominently when she has become a recusant. Whilst playing the role of a quiet and complicit wife, she had no place in the documentation of the state, and only gained her place there when she acted against this role.

The picture of Henry's career is, however, useful in that it presents us with the public background to the *Life*, which is essentially a text about the private experience of one individual. Significantly, the space dedicated by the

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31. e.g. 20 Dec. 1607, *CSP Dom.*, James I 1603-1610, vol. XXVIII (no art. no.).

32. 1 Feb. 1618, *CSP Dom.*, James I 1611-1618, vol. XCV, art. 1.

33. 2 Dec. 1620, *CSP Dom.*, James I 1619-1623, vol. CXVIII, art. 12.

34. 26 May 1621, *CSP Dom.*, James I 1619-1623, vol. CXXI, art. 54.

35. 24 Aug. 1622, *CSP Dom.*, James I 1619-1623, vol. CXXXII, art. 115.

*Life* to describing Elizabeth's time as Henry Carey's wife is quite brief - 19 pages out of a total text of 123. The text is more concerned with Carey's intellectual progression towards reconciliation with the Catholic faith. The *Life* does display an element of complicity with the historical criteria of the SP Dom. and SP Irel., if not with their political standpoint, in that Elizabeth Carey's Catholicism was more significant (as a threat to Protestant patriarchy) and therefore worth documenting, than her position as the wife of a courtier. Nevertheless, the *Life* also gives a picture of the perfectly devoted wife, although this has to be taken in context of the entire text and the conditions of its production. The author, Elizabeth Carey's daughter and a nun at the convent at Cambrai, concentrates on celebrating her mother's goodness and piety (which inevitably included being a good wife and mother) and struggle to attain the true faith.<sup>36</sup>

Despite these factors, the *Life* also creates a vivid image of the physical realities of Elizabeth Carey's role as a married woman - particularly in relation to nursing and childbirth. The small number of pages devoted to describing Elizabeth Carey's time as a wife is full of details which undermine

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36. The extent to which the *Life* concentrates on this aspect of Elizabeth Carey's life is illustrated by the fact that her only surviving daughter who did not convert to Catholicism is almost completely written out of the text; she is never mentioned by name. She appears in the Register of Baptisms for the parish of Aldenham Herts: "1620. Sep. 16 Vittoria, y<sup>e</sup> dau' of Mr. Carye." In *Herald and Genealogist*, ed. John Gough Nichols, London, 1866, p. 44.

Elizabeth Carey mentions her in one of her letters, to Susan, Countess of Denbigh: "I desire to know whither Victoria may waite upon you, or no, for she grieves me so here as I know not what to doe with hir. I beseech you have a care of hir. She comes of your beleefe and free from any thoughts of the contrary", SP Dom., Charles I, vol. DXXII, art. 117. This letter is placed in 1625, but the words "your beleefe" suggest a later date, in that they could mean that Elizabeth had already converted to Catholicism when she wrote the letter. We know from the *Life* that Susan and Elizabeth were, at one point, very close in their religious beliefs, and it was Elizabeth's open conversion to Catholicism which divided them (*Life*, pp. 28-9). The inference is, surely, that Victoria was not prepared to convert to Catholicism and therefore has no place in a hagiographical work about her mother. Elsie Duncan-Jones provides some biographical details in "Two members of the Falkland family, Victoria and Henry Cary", in *N & Q*, vol. 200, 1955, pp. 404-7. For example, Victoria became Maid of Honour to Henrietta Maria and took part in Montagu's *Shepherd's Paradise*, p. 404, and she outlived all her brothers and sisters, dying aged 74 in 1694, p. 407.

the idealised concept of the roles of wife and mother as being "natural" for women. The strain which this excessive amount of childbearing put upon her is indicated by a description of how she set out to compose a moral instruction to her children: "Being *once like to die*, whilst she had but two or three children, and those very little" (my italics).<sup>37</sup> The amount of time demanded from her in her capacity as the bearer of Henry Carey's heirs is also made clear, when the incident of her falling from a horse and being in danger of losing her fourth child is described:

after her having had a fall from her horse (leaping a hedge and ditch, being with child of her fourth child, when she was taken up for dead, though both she and her child did well), she being continually after, as long as she lived with him, either with child or giving suck.<sup>38</sup>

This passage is crossed out in the original, having been edited (according to Simpson) by Patrick Carey, Elizabeth's son, who considered this, amongst other passages, "too feminine".<sup>39</sup> "Feminine", however, as a gender-specific term, does not really apply to this portrayal of the brutal realities of female experience in Renaissance England. I would suggest that the passage is not so much feminine as female-centred, concentrating too much on the actual experience of a Renaissance noblewoman. Patrick Carey may have found this inappropriate to the hagiographical tone of the rest of the work, in that the passage effectively undermines the patriarchal image of the educated, genteel and feminine Renaissance noblewoman and also sullies the equally patriarchal Catholic image of the pious and unstained Madonna.

Although Elizabeth Carey may have made a determined effort to play the role of wife and childbearer to Henry, the *Life* gives details of the difficulties which this presented to her, as even her body and mind are seen to rebel against the lot which society cast her. The mental strain is shown as

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37. *Life*, pp. 12-13.

38. *Life*, pp. 14-15. Her fourth child was born in 1619, which means a total of approximately six years constantly pregnant or nursing.

39. *Life*, p. vi.

very real:

[S]he had some occasions of trouble, which afflicted her so much as twice to put her into so deep melancholy (while she was with child of her second and fourth child), that she lost the perfect use of her reason and was in much danger of her life. She had ground for the beginning of her apprehensions; but she giving full way to them (which were always apt to go as far as she would let them) they arrived so far as to be plain distractedness; it is like she at first gave the more way to it at those times, thinking her husband would then be most sensible of her trouble, knowing he was extraordinarily careful of her when she was with child or gave suck, as being a most tenderly loving father. <sup>40</sup>

This reads like a carefully thought out strategy. She could only blackmail her husband into taking notice of her unhappiness if it might have affected the health of one of his prospective heirs. There is no mention of Henry being a tenderly loving *husband*.

The idea of pretence, as in the above passage, permeates the section of the *Life* which deals with Carey's married life, and presents the woman as a fragmented subject. This is partly due to the overriding attitude displayed by the *Life*, i.e. that Carey was living a life of self deception until she became reconciled to Catholicism. However, the text also presents a more subtle indication of the total collapse of the (non-Catholic) subject initially named as Elizabeth Tanfield. The *Life* draws detailed attention to the extent to which Elizabeth Carey consciously adopted and played expected roles, rather than "naturally" fulfilled her allotted social position. Two activities in which Elizabeth Carey engaged, entirely to please her husband, were horseriding and dressing well. In both instances, the *Life* emphasises how each of these concessions were only made out of necessity:

And being most fearful of a horse, both before and after, she did (he loving hunting, and desiring to have her a good horsewoman) for many a year ride so much and so desperately as if she had had no fear but much delight in it; and so she had, to see him pleased, and did really make herself love it as long as that lasted ... Dressing was all her life a torture to her; yet because he would have it so, she willingly supported it all the while she lived with him in her younger days, even to tediousness ... It did sufficiently appear how alone for his will she did undergo the trouble, by the extraordinary great carelessness she had of herself after he was angry with her; from which time she never

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40. *Life*, pp. 16-17.

went out of plain black, frieze, or coarse stuff or cloth. <sup>41</sup>

Whatever the motivation of the writer, it is evident that Carey was conscious of the "otherness" of her position as Henry Carey's wife. The personal motto, "*Be and seem*", which Carey had engraved on the inside of her eldest daughter's wedding ring (she too was subjected to a match of political and economic expediency) is indicative of the striving for personal integrity which Carey probably laboured under, and yet it exposes the inevitable fissure between the required external appearance and the internalised self. <sup>42</sup>

The other significant means which the *Life* employs to break the myth of the natural and harmonious couple, living together in mutual help and support, is the exposure of the economic reality which underlay the relationship between husband and wife. Chamberlain's letter makes clear precisely what Elizabeth Tanfield was worth on her wedding day (see p. 24), but it is the *Life* which says:

He married her only for being an heir, for he had no acquaintance with her (she scarce ever having spoke to him), and she was nothing handsome, though then very fair. <sup>43</sup>

We are also told how, later in her married life, Elizabeth was obliged to provide for Henry - an indication of Carey's economic role in the marriage - and how playing this role resulted in compromising her own economic safety:

Where [Henry's] interest was concerned, she seemed not able to have any consideration of her own, which, amongst other things, she showed in this: a considerable part of her jointure (which upon her marriage had been made sufficiently good) having been reassumed to the Crown, to which it had formerly belonged, a greater part of it (being all that remained, but some very small thing), she did on his occasions consent to have mortgaged; which act of hers did so displease her own father, that he disinherited her upon it, putting

41. *Life*, pp. 14-15.

42. *Life*, p. 16.

43. *Life*, p. 7. The OED gives the meaning of "handsome" in this context as "beautiful with dignity" (the prevailing current sense). Of fair, it says that the connotations of beauty and lightness of complexion were both in operation at this period, quoting the first instance of the former as 888 and the latter as 1551. As the ideal of European beauty was at this time blonde hair and light skin, the two meanings tend to elide, although the wording of this section of the *Life* suggests the latter meaning is the overriding one.

before her her two eldest (and then only) sons, tying his estate on the eldest, and in case he failed, on the second. <sup>44</sup>

SP Dom. give further evidence in support of this. When Elizabeth had returned to England, and converted to Catholicism, Henry cut off any allowance to her, insisting that she go to live at her mother's house in Burford. <sup>45</sup> Lady Tanfield was unwilling to receive her daughter and so on 18 May 1627 Elizabeth petitioned Charles I for aid:

Upon my lord's going into Ireland I was drawn, by seeing his occasions, to offer my jointure into his hands, that he might sell or mortgage it for his supply, which accordingly was done; and that being gone from me, I have nothing to trust to hereafter but my mother's bounty at her death; for my father disinherited me only for resigning my jointure: so, if I offend her, God knows what may become of me, if my lord, as God forbid, should fail. <sup>46</sup>

Henry, of course, was eager to present his version of the same story, which he included in a letter to Viscount Killtullagh (Lord Conway), dated 5 July 1627. The bitterness with which he writes is indicative of the grounds upon which the estrangement has caused him most distress:

That her father disinherited her, for her obedience to me is much misreported by her; he foresaw in her that bad condition which she hath since manifested to the world, which made him do that he did against her and me for her sake. If her jointure be sold, it is she that hath had the benefit of the sale, and hath spent treble the value of it out of my purse, who never saw penny out of her father's, but my part of her first petty portion paid at her marriage. <sup>47</sup>

The historical reality of Elizabeth Carey's marriage to Henry Carey disrupts the ideologically imposed concept of marriage as a partnership, an idea which had become more popular as Protestantism gained a secure hold in Britain and

44. *Life*, pp. 15-16.

45. Henry wrote more than one letter to this effect: 5 April 1626, SP Irel., vol. CCXLII, art. 280, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 132-3; 12 April 1626, SP Irel., vol. CCXLII, art. 284, in *Life*, Appendix, p. 133; 8 Dec. 1626, SP Irel., vol. CCXLIII, art. 503, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 137-9; 29 Dec. 1626, SP Irel., vol. CCXLIII, art. 515, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 140-1.

46. SP Dom., Charles I, vol. LXIII, art. 102, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 148-9.

47. SP Irel., vol. CCXLV, art. 726, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 152-4.



the married state was no longer seen as inferior to celibacy.<sup>48</sup> The ideological occlusion of such socio-economic realities is indicated in a text such as *The Merchant of Venice*, in which the rich heiress is won by a poor suitor, only to lose her independence in the process:

Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours  
 Is now converted. But now I was the lord  
 Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,  
 Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,  
 This house, these servants, and this same myself  
 Are yours - my lord's!<sup>49</sup>  
 (III ii 166-71)

Elizabeth Carey's life, as it is written by her daughter, stands in contrast to such an ideological image of the marriage of mutual harmony. Her economic dependence is stripped from her, her time for creative writing is removed, and the ability to retain her religious integrity is seriously compromised. Her experience stands to explode the new-made Renaissance love ideology, which has been deconstructed by Joan Kelly-Gadol thus:

It accepted, as medieval courtly love did not, the double standard. It bound the lady to chastity, to the merely procreative sex of political marriage, just as her weighty and costly costume came to conceal and constrain her body while it displayed her husband's noble rank.<sup>50</sup>

We have already seen how Carey acted as both a bearer of children and a bearer of fine clothes (see also Colour Plate, p. ii). And, whereas men only had to suffer the humiliation<sup>51</sup> of dependence in the public domain, by being

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48. Kathleen M. Davies "The sacred condition of equality - how original were Puritan doctrines of marriage?", in *Soc Hist*, vol. 2, 1977, pp. 564-5, questions the notion that marriage was ever seen as inferior to celibacy and also suggests that the Protestant doctrine for mutuality in marriage was not particularly new.

49. Portia does not even have the choice of husband. The comedic ending in this play is, I would argue, perilously dependent on the mutual attraction of the lovers involved, which papers over the potential disaster of a falling out - although the possibility of this is explored in Act V.

50. Kelly-Gadol (1977), p. 160.

51. Whilst this form of social hierarchy may be seen as giving comfort and stability to the individuals within that hierarchy, I would argue that oppression is also an essential factor in maintaining such stability and it is the oppression of the female subject with which I am concerned here.

subservient to the monarch, the woman had to endure it in private also, being denied access to the freely chosen, mutually satisfying relationship which English Renaissance ideology claimed was the nature of marriage. Significantly, this love ideology was being directed at precisely those members of society whose marriages were, like Carey's, based on wealth or political expediency. As court intrigue rose and alliances were formed through the marriage bed, the need for the chastity of the wife was paramount, and an easy way for an impoverished courtier to relieve his embarrassing position as court dependent was to marry a rich heiress. The idea of mutuality in marriage was an ideological smoke-screen for the *realpolitik* of the marriage market.<sup>52</sup>

Sherrin Marshall Wyntjes has argued that the reformed, Protestant attitude to marriage was liberating for women. She says:

Perhaps because established institutions were being forced to justify their very existence, women had the opportunity to assume different roles from those that were time honored.<sup>53</sup>

However, Lisa Jardine takes this attitude to task, arguing that:

The 'freedom of conscience' which the reformed Church gave the wife gave her the added burden of taking a share in the responsibility for how the marriage turned out. At the same time, her acknowledgedly subordinate role gave her no real means of controlling the state of affairs.<sup>54</sup>

In Puritan tracts, she says, "[j]ustifications for subjugation" were

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52. The extent to which the Carey family were involved in the process of marriage alliances is illustrated in a note in *The Devon Carys*, vol. II, New York, 1920, p. 401, on the marriages of Sir Henry's sisters:

The eldest, Elizabeth, married Sir John Savile, of Howley, co. York, who was (1628) created Baron Savile of Pontefract; Frances married Sir George Manners, who succeeded (1632) as seventh Earl of Rutland; Catharine married Sir Henry Longueville, of Bucks; Muriel married Sir Thomas Crompton, of Skerne, co. York; Jane married Sir Edward Barrett, of Belhouse, co. Essex, who was (1627) created Baron Newburgh of Fife; and, finally, the youngest, Anne, married Sir Francis Leke, of Sutton, Co. Derby, who was (1624) created Baron Deincourt of Sutton and (1645) Earl of Scarsdale.

53. Sherrin Marshall Wyntjes, "Women in the Reformation Era", in Bridenthal & Koonz (1977), p. 167.

54. Jardine (1983), pp. 42-3.

metamorphosed into "sophisticated mutual consent theories".<sup>55</sup> This idea is borne out by Arthur Winnet's mid-century study of divorce and remarriage, which shows how changing attitudes to marriage during the Reformation put even more restrictions upon women.<sup>56</sup> He assesses and analyses the writings of major sixteenth-century divines, which had an effect upon the legal and cultural status of marriage in post-Reformation England. The Continental reformers denied the sacramental nature of marriage, the principle of indissolubility was abandoned, impediments were swept away, a severe limit was set on grounds of annulment and divorce *a vinculo* was allowed for adultery and other causes with Scriptural precedent. Adultery was viewed as a crime as well as a sin and the early reformers, including Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, advocated the death penalty.

A later reformer, Peter Martyr, who became Professor of Divinity at Oxford in 1547 and was involved in the production of the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, was rather less harsh, although his attitude to marriage was to prove particularly oppressive to women. He discussed marriage and divorce at length in *Loci Communes*, which was translated into English in 1583, and which stressed that divorce had to be sanctioned by civil as well as religious authorities. If the couple proved incompatible, it was the man's duty to God to stay with his wife.

In the matter of divorce for adultery Peter Martyr would place the man and the wife on an equal footing, though if divorce be allowed for other causes the woman shall not have the right of putting away her husband *owing to female inconstancy*. (my italics)<sup>57</sup>

This was the crux of the new problem which beset women in Renaissance England. The reformed marriage laws carried with them a much heavier

55. Jardine (1983), p. 43.

56. Arthur Robert Winnett, *Divorce and Remarriage in Anglicanism*, 1958, Ch. 1, pp. 11-31.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

burden of personal responsibility, without any improvement in the legal status of women. Under Protestant law, divorce carried with it an element of blame, whereas in the Catholic church, the process of annulment carried no such implicit judgement. Catholicism taught that a *validly* contracted marriage was indissoluble, but marriages could be annulled for various reasons eg. consanguinity, spiritual affinity, non-consummation, pre-contract. None of these reasons carried with them a moral judgement upon either party. However, Protestant teaching said that marriage was dissoluble, particularly by adultery, the act itself being enough to destroy the marriage bonds. The removal of the responsibility for the validity of a marriage from the authority of the Church to the behaviour of the partners inevitably put a greater strain upon women, because they still lost their economic and social independence when they married.

In addition to this, there were several Protestant writers who expected women to subject themselves to their husbands, as if to the Church. Thomas Becon (1512-1567) in his *Book of Matrimony* (1564) said that the union of husband and wife was like the union of Christ and the Church, i.e. the patience and forgiveness of Christ towards the Church. Therefore, any imperfections in the wife are to be borne by the husband as part of his duty to God. John Hooper (d.1555), Bishop of Gloucester, in *Declaration of the Ten Holy Commandments* (1548, reissued, 1550 with additions), said that in marriage, the man is the head and the woman should acknowledge this superiority gladly.<sup>58</sup> This doctrine became fully established as part of Renaissance ideology via the *Homily on Matrimony* which James I ordered to be read from the pulpit.

What the Protestant reformation of the marriage laws in England had effectively done was to fuse all forms of authority over women, both spiritual and temporal, into the figure of the husband. The Catholic wife owed certain

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58. Ibid., pp. 22-6.

obediencies to her husband, particularly sexual fidelity to ensure legitimate heirs, but her relationship with the Church was essentially separate, affording her a limited amount of spiritual autonomy. In England the situation was even more favourable towards Catholic women. As Marie B. Rowlands notes:

In England ... heads of households, whether men or women, carried more responsibility for the day-to-day development of religious life than was normal in the Catholic Church. Between 1559 and 1623, and again from 1631 to 1686, there was no English Catholic bishop in England, and it was not until after 1625 that the secular clergy began to organise themselves into regular districts and accumulate their own funds. The Jesuits developed local organisations from 1620 and met for retreats and renewal of vows, but their numbers never exceeded 185. Members of the Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican and Carmelite orders had some degree of organisation, but their members usually lived in isolation from each other and came together only for short periods. The absence of structures of clerical authority encouraged a sense of individual responsibility among Catholic heads of households.<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, the Catholic authorities in England encouraged women to disobey their husbands in their observance of their religion,<sup>60</sup> which is precisely how Elizabeth Carey made justification of her disobedience to the more immediate and tangible authority of her husband:

I desire nothing but a quiet life, and to reobtain my lord's favour, which I have done nothing to lose, but what I could not, with a safe conscience, leave undone.<sup>61</sup>

But the Protestant wife had no such escape. The essence of being a good Protestant, for a woman, was being a good wife and mother. She had no autonomous relationship with any authority, other than her husband, who represented God and State in the home, whereas the Catholic paterfamilias "was not in a position to act as the 'interpreter of scripture' to his family: the

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59. Rowlands (1985), p. 162.

60. Rowlands (1985), p. 165, quotes from Henry Garnet's "Treatise on Christian Renunciation": "your husbands over your soul have no authority and over your bodies but limited power".

61. Elizabeth Carey's petition to Charles I, 18 May 1627 SP Dom., Charles I, vol. LXIII, art. 89, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 148-51.

layman had no more authority in this field than the laywoman." <sup>62</sup>

Ironically, the only progressive feature of the oppressive Protestant domestic arrangement was the encouragement to women to exercise their intelligence, learn foreign languages and read widely. But the ideologically determined function of this was merely to make women into better wives, to grace their husband's bed and table. Lisa Jardine refers to this as a "double bind" - women were allowed to develop their minds but never to use them independently - and quotes Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* as illustrative of the problem. <sup>63</sup> At the beginning, Ann Frankford is described as having intelligence which will reflect well upon her husband.

You have a wife  
 So qualified, and with such ornaments  
 Both of the mind and body. First, her birth  
 Is noble, and her education such  
 As might become the daughter of a prince,  
 Her own tongue speaks all tongues, and her own hand  
 Can teach all strings to speak in their best grace,  
 From the shrill treble to the hoarsest base. <sup>64</sup>

However, her independent action, in this case adultery, <sup>65</sup> results in her (self-imposed) destruction, by starvation.

Elizabeth Carey's independent action was not adultery, although some interesting parallels may be drawn between the theatrical representation of Ann Frankford and the lived experience of Elizabeth Carey. Like Frankford, Henry was at first pleased to discover that his wife was intelligent. Once he returned from the Low Countries, and discovered that his mother had prevented Elizabeth from having access to her books, he was angry and put a stop to this repression. Furthermore:

In his absence he had received some letters from her since she came

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62. Rowlands (1985), p. 174.

63. Jardine (1983), p. 38.

64. Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed With Kindness* (1607), ed. Brian W. M. Scobie, London, 1985, I i 14-21.

65. Jardine (1983), claims that all independence of thought and action are "inevitably represented on stage as adultery and sexual rapaciousness", p. 39.

from her mother [who had arranged for Elizabeth's letters to be written for her], which seemed to him to be in a very different style from the former, which he had thought to have been her own. These he liked much, but believed some other did them, till, having examined her about it and found the contrary, he grew better acquainted with her, and esteemed her more. <sup>66</sup>

Yet when Elizabeth began to use her intelligence to act independently, Henry apparently changed his opinion. On her return to England, Elizabeth began to pursue her husband's financial interests at court. His reaction to her activities is detailed in a letter to Conway dated 5 April 1626:

I conceive women to be no fit solicitors of state affairs; for though it sometimes happen that they have good wits, it then commonly falls out that they have over-busy natures withal. For my part I should take much more comfort to hear that she were quietly retired to her mother's into the country, than that she had obtained a great suit in the court. <sup>67</sup>

The notion of starvation as a result of independence of action is common to both the theatrical representation of Ann Frankford and Elizabeth Carey's documentation of her own experience. However, in Ann Frankford's case, although she is well provided for by her estranged husband, she adopts the ideologically correct position of penitence and self-imposed starvation, to act as a caution to all women who may seek like independence. Elizabeth Carey, on the other hand, having had all her economic independence taken from her by trying to fulfil her role as a supportive wife (see pp. 33-4), is shown no such kindness by her husband. He cuts off any allowance to her:

reducing her to such want, which was in such extremity, as she had not meat of any sort to put in her mouth; <sup>68</sup>

effectively imposing upon her a state of near starvation. And Elizabeth was not prepared to starve for her husband's displeasure, as she made clear in her letter of August 1627, to Lord Conway:

None is lother to have my Lord Deputy discontented than I; but, alas!

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66. *Life*, pp. 8-9.

67. SP Irel., vol. CCXLII, art. 280, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 132-3.

68. *Life*, p. 32.

where the question is whether he should be displeased or I starved, it will admit no dispute. <sup>69</sup>

She was, however prepared to endure humiliation and discomfort to maintain the faith which alienated her from Henry as much as (possibly more than) if she had, indeed, been an adulteress.

### Elizabeth Carey: the Recusant

Elizabeth Carey was taken to Ireland by her husband in 1622, when he became Lord Deputy there. She stayed for only three years and left in 1625, taking her eldest unmarried daughter and her three youngest children with her. There is no record of exactly why she left, and from the correspondence which is available, it would seem that there was no formal estrangement between the couple until her Catholicism became known, although that occurred very soon afterwards. It is a fair speculation to assume that Carey's increasing leanings towards Catholicism, exacerbated by her acquaintance with Lord Inchiquin, <sup>70</sup> made it impossible for her to stay in a country where her husband was employed to suppress the Catholicism of the indigenous population. His harsh attitude to the Catholics is displayed in his proclamation of 1624, which ordered the banishment of Jesuits and priests from Ireland. It begins:

It is well knowne, by daily experience, what intolerable mischiefes and inconveniences have growne upon this Realme, through the extraordinary resort of such persons hither as are commonly called titularie popish Archbishops, Bishops, Vicars generall, Abbots, Priors, Deanes, Jesuites, Fryers, Seminary priests, and others of that Sect,

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69. SP Dom., Charles I, vol. LXXV, art. 85, in *Life, Appendix*, p. 161.

70. *Life*, p. 23: "In Ireland she grew acquainted with my Lord Inchequin, an exceeding good Catholic, and the first (at least knowing one) she had yet met. She highly esteemed him for his wit, learning, and judgment, though he were but about nine-and-twenty years old when he died." *The Complete Peerage*, ed. H.A. Doubleday and Lord Howard de Walden, vol. VII, 1929, p. 51, gives the following details:

DERMOD (O'BRIEN), [5th] BARON INCHQUIN

... aged 2 years and 9 months at his father's death. His wardship was granted to his mother, 16 Jan. 1609/10. In Apr. 1616 he was fined for harbouring a Jesuit. He m. in or before 1614, Ellen, 1st da. of Sir Edmund Fitz-Edmund FITZGERALD, of Clayne, by Honora, da. of James FITZGERALD. He d. 29 Dec. 1624, aged 30.



who seeking to set up and maintaine a forreine power and authority within this his Majesties Dominion, the said Bishops, by pretence thereof, have usurped and exercised Ecclesiasticall Jurisdiction within this kingdome in spirituall and Ecclesiasticall causes, to the great derogation of his Majesties imperiall Crowne. <sup>71</sup>

The exact date of Elizabeth's full conversion to Catholicism is not given by the *Life*, although it must have been before December 1626, as this is the date of Henry's outraged letter to Charles I (see p. 44). <sup>72</sup> However, it is possible that Henry suspected his wife's religious leanings and so his request that she go to stay with her mother (see p. 41) may partly have been motivated by the desire to keep her away from the various Catholic influences in London. The *Life* gives details of how Elizabeth spent much of her time in London with a group of courtiers and divines who had strong Catholic leanings, but were tolerated within the Anglican Church to prevent their total recusancy. <sup>73</sup> However, this proved not to be enough to satisfy her spiritual needs. Whilst visiting her friend, Lady Denbigh, one of the said group, Elizabeth revealed that she intended to convert fully. Lady Denbigh's reaction was to try to keep Elizabeth in her rooms until she could be persuaded out of such an action:

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71. Carey, Henry, 1st Viscount Falkland, "By The Lorde Deputie and Councill. A Proclamation for the Banishment of Jesuites and Priests", Dublin, 1624, STC 14185.

72. *Life*, Appendix, pp. 137-8.

73. *Life*, p. 27, names one of the King's chaplains, Dr Cousens; Lord Ormond (at whose house they often met); Mr Coshet, a Scotch minim; the two Fathers Dunstan; and Lady Denbigh.

The importance of such groups keeping the semblance of loyalty to the Anglican Church is evidenced by the description in *Life*, p. 30, of Dr Cousen's reaction to Elizabeth Carey's open conversion to Catholicism:

... having heard from her all that had been done, fell into so great and violent a trouble that, casting himself on the ground, he would not rise nor eat from morning till night, weeping even to roaring, using for arguments (to make her return) the disgrace of their company, and that she would hurt others, making them afraid of them, and that every one would say this was the end of those that received their opinions ...

Lucius Carey gives a more cynical view of the reasons why Papist divines were anxious to appear to remain within the Anglican church. He spoke of some who have "found a way to reconcile the opinions of Rome to the preferments of England, and to be so absolutely, directly, and cordially Papists, that it is all that £1500 a year can do to keep them from confessing it".

She was amazed to see herself thus surprised, little expecting it, but thought it best then to seem content to stay there. The lady ... making herself sure she would at least stay for her return, left her alone; who, suspecting - as it was, truly - that the lady was gone to fetch one that should confirm her stay, let not this opportunity slip, but got her ways in the lady's absence, going with all speed to my Lord of Ormond's ... finding black (Pettinger) Father Dunstan there, she was, the soonest she could, reconciled by him in my lord of Ormond's stable (who continued her ghostly father till he was taken); and as soon as she had done, in the afternoon returns to court to this lady, telling her she was now content to stay with her as long as she pleased, for all was done. <sup>74</sup>

The reaction was swift and harsh. Lady Denbigh immediately told her brother, the Duke of Buckingham, who in turn informed Charles I. Failing to persuade her to recant, they sent her home, shortly followed by orders to remain there during his Majesty's pleasure.

Henry's reaction was no less severe. His letter to Charles I expressed his "great grief of her apostacy, whom I now I may say I have long unhappily called wife", requesting that his daughter be taken out of Elizabeth's care "for her better deliverance from the peril of that most leprous infection", i.e. Catholicism. <sup>75</sup> The irony of this letter is that whilst Henry bewailed the disgrace of being married to an apostate, and feared for the moral safety of his children as a result, the recipient of the letter was in exactly the same position. And, as T. Languet points out, the child in question is hardly likely to be protected from Catholicism, in going to serve an openly Papist Queen, surrounded by Catholic priests. <sup>76</sup> It is therefore difficult to have a very high opinion of Henry's tact, judgement or intelligence. Simpson reproduces two more letters written by Henry, which have a similar tone, attacking Elizabeth variously for treason, heresy, and stupidity. One very significant feature is that he requests a separation *a mensa et thoro*, in other

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Quoted in Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud 1573-1645*, 1940, 2nd edn., 1962, p. 175.

74. *Life*, pp. 28-9.

75. 8 Dec. 1626, SP Irel., vol. CCXLIII, art. 503, in *Life*, Appendix, p. 137.

76. T. Languet, *Falklands*, 1897, p. 20.

words, a divorce, but without the right to remarry.<sup>77</sup> This carried with it the obligation to pay maintenance to Elizabeth, which he did not.

Henry's raging attitude to Elizabeth was not borne out by the rest of Charles I's court. She had many powerful friends, mostly women (including the three women closest to the King's favourite, Buckingham, i.e. Susan, Countess of Denbigh, Katherine, Duchess of Buckingham and Mary, Countess of Buckingham - his sister, wife and mother respectively)<sup>78</sup> some of whom interceded on her behalf. For example, after her confinement to her rooms by the King, the *Life* says:

After this she was visited by some others, and my lady Manors, a Catholic cousin of hers, seeing the state she was in, told it to my lady of Carlisle ... who advertised the king in what necessity she was, and that, being deprived of her liberty, she could not seek remedy; and that there had not been any that had done thus much before to his Majesty in her behalf, had been the only cause her confinement had continued so long; for the king wondered she was still confined, it having been far from his intention, but that he had not been put in mind of her before; and he presently gave her leave to go abroad at her pleasure.<sup>79</sup>

Evidently, the court's fear of Elizabeth Carey's Catholicism was far less than Henry's. Katherine, Duchess of Buckingham also intervened in Elizabeth's favour. She attempted to prevent Elizabeth being sent to stay in Burford with her mother, Lady Tanfield, as Henry had requested. Her letter to Lord Conway, dated March 1627, asked him to prevent the King's letters, ordering Elizabeth Tanfield to receive her daughter, being sent, assuring Conway of Elizabeth's willingness to go, if only her mother would receive her.<sup>80</sup>

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77. 26 Dec. 1626, SP Irel., vol. CCXLIII, art. 515, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 140-1 and 4 April 1627, SP Irel., vol. CCXLIV, art. 630, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 141-3.

78. On 19 January 1622, Chamberlain wrote to Carleton that these three ladies and Buckingham himself, had gone from London to attend the christening of one of Elizabeth's daughters, SP Dom., James I, vol. CXXVII, art. 35, in McClure II (1939), pp. 420-2. It is likely that this daughter was Mary, as the Baptisms section of the Parish Register at Aldenham in Herts contains the following entry for 9 January 1622: "Marye, ye da. of ye r<sup>t</sup> hoble Henry Lord Carye, Viscount Falkland", in Nichols, op. cit., p. 44.

79. *Life*, pp. 32-3.

Unfortunately, this support from Elizabeth's friends did nothing to ease the situation between her and Henry. He continued to pay her no allowance.

Elizabeth Carey then wrote in her own defence. Simpson reproduces three letters of petition, in which she details her distressed situation and begs not to be subjected to imprisonment at her mother's house. The first, dated 24 March 1627, states the consequences of such imprisonment in stark terms, whilst also reminding the recipient, Lord Conway, of the financial support she gave to Henry, which has partially caused her present hardship:

I have committed no fault that I know of, and though I had, sure I believe the King would take some other way for my punishment, than so unusual a one as to starve me to death. My mother hath expressed to me that if ever I come down to her (which she believes his Majesty will never enforce me to do,) she will never give me the least relief, either now or at her death, I, having freely given up a fair jointure to help my Lord for his provision into Ireland (for which kindness of mine my father disinherited me, and for no other cause, as he testified at his death) have now nothing to hope upon but her favour at her death, which I hope his Majesty will not drive me to forfeit.<sup>81</sup>

The idea that the King will somehow be condemning her to death if he does not help her financially is continued in her petition to Charles I:

I am here in an estate so miserable, as to starve is one of my least fears; because if I should do so, and not be guilty in it of mine own destruction, it were the end of my afflictions. ... I am now in a case so pitiful as to have neither meat nor money, nor means to come by either; so, though I have committed no fault worthy of death, even in your Majesty's censure; yet, if you be not compassionate, I am like to suffer that or worse.<sup>82</sup>

The final letter of these three, which encloses the above petition, is short and urgent in tone, as if she is literally on the point of death. Addressed to Lord Conway and dated 18 May 1627, it opens:

My Lord, - I must beseech you to do me the great favour, with all the speed you can, to present this unworthy paper into His Majesty's hands; and be pleased to importune him to read it; for it concerns no less than the saving me from starving.

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80. 24 March 1627, SP Dom., Charles I, vol. LVIII, art. 17, in *Life*, Appendix, p. 143.

81. 24 March 1627, SP Dom., Charles I, vol. LVIII, art. 19, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 144-6.

82. 18 May 1627, SP Dom., Charles I, vol. LXIII, art. 89, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 148-51.

It closes in a tone no less urgent: "Expedition is also my suit, for delay may destroy me." <sup>83</sup> It would seem that such letters had their desired effect, for on 4 October 1627, the Privy Council ordered that Henry should pay his wife £500 a year for her upkeep. <sup>84</sup>

Such vindication did not, however, materially improve her circumstances, as Henry did not pay the money. Charles, in a letter dated 28 May 1628, ordered that the money paid to Elizabeth directly from Henry's salary <sup>85</sup> to which Henry replied, on 27 January 1628, by offering to pay her £300 a year, an offer which he never fulfilled. <sup>86</sup> The *Life* explains how Elizabeth's conscience was troubled enough at having upset her husband, and she was reluctant to anger him further, <sup>87</sup> but as we have seen already (pp. 41-2), there was no contest between her starvation and his displeasure. However, once he returned from Ireland, in 1629, <sup>88</sup> the SP Dom. indicate that Elizabeth renewed her suit. On 12 April 1630, the King, having been informed once again by Elizabeth of her distress, ordered that the Lord Keeper and Treasurer, the Earl Marshal, the Earl of Dorset, Mr Vice-Chamberlain and Secretary Coke settle her maintenance. <sup>89</sup> The significant fact about her suit on this occasion is that she gives Henry the option of taking her back as his wife. <sup>90</sup>

83. 18 May 1627, SP Dom., Charles I, vol. LXII, art. 102, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 151-2.

84. 31 Oct. 1627, Council Register, Charles I, vol. III, p. 188, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 163-7.

85. Shapiro (1984), p. 69; Lewalski (1993), p. 387, n. 41.

86. 27 June 1628, SP Irel., vol. CCLXVI, art. 1050, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 167-8.

87. *Life*, p. 36.

88. 16 Nov. 1629, *CSP Dom.*, Charles I, vol. CLI, art. 80.

89. SP Dom., Charles I, vol. CLXIV, art. 44, in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 174-5.

90. April (?) 1630, SP Dom., Charles I, vol. CLXXXI, art. 58, in *Life*,

This, however, did not happen. The evidence of the *SP Dom.* provides the sub-text to the evidence of the *Life*, which suggests that Henry and Elizabeth were reconciled personally (partly due to the intervention of Henrietta Maria), although they did not live together and he never gave her any money. In fact, it seems as if she were put in a worse position than before:

And yet, though she had not anything from him, she did so much regard his will, as not to seek remedy for her own need but by his leave; for being not able always to make what she had serve her, and in her occasions desiring to have recourse to the king for succour, she would not do it (though the fear of his discredit could not be there) till she knew he did not apprehend it would be any hindrance to his pretences towards the king, and that he let her know he was very well content and desirous she should do it. <sup>91</sup>

Fortunately for Elizabeth, this situation was short-lived, as Henry died in a hunting accident in September 1633. <sup>92</sup> The *Life* claims that they were reconciled and that Elizabeth nursed him on his deathbed. Furthermore, the text hints that Henry converted to Catholicism before he died, <sup>93</sup> but judging from his published attitude to Catholicism, and the nature of the *Life*, this is possibly a fabrication.

Apparently freed from Henry's oppression, Elizabeth continued in her Catholic faith, but still experienced considerable financial hardship. Despite this, according to the *Life*, she wanted her children to live with her in order that she might instruct them in the Catholic faith. <sup>94</sup> Thus began her next battle. Whilst Elizabeth's own Catholicism may have been tolerated, especially for the sake of Henrietta Maria, a rather more damning view was taken of her attempts to convert her children. For example, a note in the *CSP Dom.*, dated 3 November 1629, lists a number of recusants who made a

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Appendix, pp. 173-4.

91. *Life*, p. 44.

92. 27 Sept. 1633, *CSP Dom.*, Charles I, vol. CCXLVI, art. 85.

93. *Life*, pp. 48-9.

94. *Life*, pp. 52-3.

pilgrimage to St Winifred's Well. <sup>95</sup> Elizabeth Carey was one of their number. In a paper dated 1632, Elizabeth Carey is also mentioned as being one of the recusants lodging in the parishes in the immediate neighbourhood of the City of London. <sup>96</sup> Yet no action seems to have been taken against her. Even her confinement after her conversion was relatively short-lived, lasting only six weeks. Conversely, Archbishop Laud wrote a concerned letter to Charles I about the conversion of Elizabeth's two eldest daughters, Elizabeth and Anne, dated 20 July 1634, indicating that Elizabeth had been a cause for concern for some time:

Your Majesty, I presume, remembers what suit the Lord Newburg made to you at Greenwich, and what command you sent by Mr. Secretary Coke to the lady, that she should forbear working upon her daughters' consciences and suffer them to go to my Lord their brother, or any other safe place where they might receive such instruction as was fit for them. The lady trifled out all these commands, pretended her daughters' sickness, till now they are sick indeed, yet not without hope of recovery. ... [I] pray your Majesty to give me leave to call the old lady into the High Commission if I find cause so to do. And farther, as I was, so am I still, an earnest suitor, that she might be commanded from court, where, if she live, she is as like to breed inconvenience to yourself as any other. <sup>97</sup>

It would appear that Archbishop Laud had a very personal interest in the religious fate of the Carey daughters, for his godson and close personal friend was none other than William Chillingworth, <sup>98</sup> about whom the author of the *Life* writes with such disgust:

But this man, of whom it is hard to know (if ever he were a sound Catholic) when he began to change, yet it may easily be thought that he was none from hence [when he began to visit Elizabeth Carey's house]: both because after bragging of his own great charity, he did affirm he had dissembled himself a Catholic one half year for their sakes (and it was not so much after they were reconciled before he fell openly); and that he (who could hardly think anything well done that was not done by himself; and now saw this that he had offered at effected by another, - who meddled not in it but by his prayers till he

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95. *CSP Dom.*, Charles I, vol. CLI, art. 13.

96. *CSP Dom.*, Charles I, vol. CCXXIX, art. 131.

97. *Life*, Appendix, pp. 178-9.

98. Trevor-Roper, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

was sought to, - without his having any hand in it, or being made acquainted with it) did soon show signs of dislike of what had passed, and from that time did seem to go seeking the drawing them back, and that with so much closeness, subtlety, and so many forgeries, that, as it may be well thought none but the devil could have invented, so it may be certainly said none but God could have delivered them from.<sup>99</sup>

Elizabeth Carey became determined that her children should leave England, to live under a Catholic monarch in Europe. We know, from the register of the Benedictine Convent at Cambrai, that all her daughters eventually became nuns there, between 1638 and 1639,<sup>100</sup> although there are no records available which indicate exactly when they made their escape. It is possible that Henrietta Maria was complicit with the removal of the daughters. A letter from Elizabeth to Lord Aston, the Ambassador to Spain, dated 19 December 1635, concerns the possibility of Anne being found a place at the Spanish court and it contains a recommendation by Henrietta Maria.<sup>101</sup> There was a great deal of trouble, however, once it was realised that Elizabeth Carey would try to send her sons abroad also. The *Life* gives a long and detailed account of how she virtually kidnapped them from their brother's house and hid them in London, until such time as she could send them on to France.<sup>102</sup>

On 16 May 1636, Elizabeth Carey was examined by Lord Chief Justice Bramston, but her answers proved unhelpful:

And beeing further demanded whether they are now about London, or in Englande, or gone beyond the seas she saith she knoweth not where they are, nor whether they bee in England or out of England beyond the seas. And beeing also demanded whether shee did not appointe whither her sonnes should goe & where they should bee placed, shee doth also refuse to make answere there unto, otherwise then that shee saith she hath not sente them or appointed them to be sent to anie religious house or person, or to be intrusted in anie religion at all, but hath lefte them freely to that Religion wherein they have been hitherunto brought up & intrusted.<sup>103</sup>

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99. *Life*, p. 64.

100. Quoted in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 184.

101. SP Dom., Charles I vol. CCCIV, art. 75, transcribed in Shapiro, pp. 143-5.

102. *Life*, pp. 94-102.



The *Life* says that, in fact, at this point she was hiding them in London,

but she was willing they should think, if they pleased, that they were already over, that they might the easlier pass when they should go. <sup>104</sup>

Five days later, Lord Chief Justice Bramston examined the two men accused of helping her, Harry Auxley and George Spurrier. <sup>105</sup> They confessed everything. Elizabeth was then sent for and questioned by the Star Chamber on 25 May 1636 "to answer the charge against her for sending over into foreign parts two of her sons without license to be educated there (as is conceived) in the Romish ... religion". <sup>106</sup> Her answers proved "illusory" <sup>107</sup> and a re-examination was ordered, in which, if she proved equally unhelpful, she would be committed to the Tower.

It is difficult to determine whether this threat was ever put into action. *CSP Dom.* gives details of a "Book of Rough Notes", listing the proceedings of the Council. It begins on 6 January 1637 with an entry "The Lady Falkland is to be confined to such a place as Lord Treasurer think fit", <sup>108</sup> but there was certainly a delay in putting this into action, according to a letter dated 21 February 1637, from her old adversary, Archbishop Laud, to King Charles:

There is a great resort of Recusants to Holy-Well ... this summer the Lady Falkland and her company came as Pilgrims thither; who were the more observed, because they travelled on Foot, and Dissembled

103. SP Dom., Charles I, vol. CCCXXXI, art. 29, Harvester Microfilm, Reel 105.

104. *Life*, p. 102.

105. SP Dom., Charles I, vol. CCCXXXI, art. 75.

106. 25 May 1636, *CSP Dom.*, Charles I, vol. CCCXXXI, art. 6. There is some confusion as to the actual date of this examination because the Council Register, Charles I, vol. XII, 5 May, p. 194, quoted in *Life*, Appendix, pp. 182-3 is clearly a document relating to the same examination. I would surmise that the later date applies, as an examination by the higher authority of Star Chamber would be more likely to occur *after* an examination by Lord Chief Justice Bramston.

107. OED: "Having the quality of illuding or tendency to deceive by unreal prospects".

108. *CSP Dom.*, Charles I, vol. CCXLIII, art. 17.

neither their Quality, nor their Errand. And this Boldness of theirs is of very ill construction among your Majesty's People. My humble Suit to your Majesty is, that whereas I complained of this in open Council in your Majesty's presence, you would now be graciously pleased, that the Order then resolved on for her Confinement may be put in execution.

T. Languetille cites a note in the margin: "C.R. It is done." <sup>109</sup>

However, SP Dom. contain three more documents relating to Elizabeth Carey, none of which refer to her having been imprisoned. The first is a petition by Elizabeth Carey to the King, which is catalogued under the year 1638, and concerns her usual problem - want of money. She requests that she be allowed to pay her four daughters £2,800 to redeem the mortgaged estate of Aldenham, which the King has bestowed upon them. Whilst it is still mortgaged she cannot keep court there, nor receive the rents from the land. <sup>110</sup> Unless this document has been catalogued under the wrong year (which is a possibility, as three of the four daughters were received into the convent of Cambrai in 1638), it suggests that Elizabeth Carey was either never imprisoned, or was only imprisoned for a very short time.

The date of the next document is rather more certain. It is a petition from Anne Carey to the King, requesting that the King pay her the £1,900 owing to her father, which he bestowed upon her on his deathbed. <sup>111</sup> As Anne Carey was not received into the convent until 1639, there is little reason to doubt the accuracy of the date. More importantly, though, Anne refers to having lived off her mother for some years; no mention is made of her mother being, or having been in prison, which might otherwise have added weight to her plea of hardship. Furthermore, it is possible that Elizabeth wished to purchase Aldenham from her daughters because they would no longer need it, and they, in all probability, needed the money to get them

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109. Languetille, *op. cit.*, 1897, p. 85.

110. SP Dom., Charles I, vol. CCCCVIII, art. 163, Harvester Microfilm reel 139.

111. SP Dom., Charles I, vol. CCCCVIII, art. 164, Harvester Microfilm reel 139.

across to France and be received into the convent. Anne, too, may have been petitioning for money for the same reason. In which case, as there is no documentation following Archbishop Laud's letter of 21 February 1637 to suggest that Elizabeth Carey was ever imprisoned, we may assume that she was not.

The final document concerning Elizabeth Carey is an Order of the Council, dated 11 January 1639, <sup>112</sup> dismissing a complaint by her in respect of a financial dispute between her and the jeweller and money-lender, Philip Burlamachi. In October 1639 Elizabeth Carey died, yet there is no document which refers to her death, even in passing. There is no evidence as to how she died, or where. Even the *Life* only gives the location of her burial - Henrietta Maria's chapel - and little other information. It simply stresses that she died a good Catholic, listing her achievements and characteristics, and that she was given a Catholic burial. <sup>113</sup>

Elizabeth Carey's experience of recusancy provides plenty of scope for turning her into a heroine - be it predominantly Catholic or predominantly feminist. This appears to be the nature of the secondary works on Carey which are available at present. Simpson, in the *Life*, Appendix, <sup>114</sup> Georgiana Fullerton in *The Life of Elisabeth Lady Falkland*, <sup>115</sup> and Kenneth

112. SP Dom., Charles I, vol. CCCIX, art. 62, Harvester Microfilm reel 140.

113. *Life*, p. 122.

114. The attitude of the editor, however, would seem to be in sympathy with that of the writer, a fact which is revealed in *Life*, Appendix by his incidental comments on the letters and papers transcribed therein. In these comments he adopts the hagiographic tone of the mid seventeenth-century author of the *Life*.

115. Fullerton (1883). Lady Georgiana Fullerton's account is basically a nineteenth-century retelling of the Simpson material, plus some extra information from SP Dom. and SP Irel., collated to form one text. The tone, if anything, is more laudatory and the story is romanticised, especially in its attempts to present Elizabeth Carey as a fully-rounded character:

Elisabeth Tanfield, the future Lady Falkland, mother of the Royalist hero of that name, was born in 1585, at Burford Priory in Oxfordshire, doubtless one of those old monastic houses confiscated in

Murdock in *Sun at Noon*,<sup>116</sup> all present Elizabeth as an heroic recusant, celebrating her religious integrity in the face of marital and state oppression. These texts form a brief, but nonetheless discernible tradition of writing about Elizabeth Carey as a Catholic heroine. Because these three texts all draw on the same source, we find that there are certain incidents and events of Elizabeth Carey's life which are repeatedly emphasised. These aspects have found a new place in the recently blossoming critical tradition which presents Elizabeth Carey as a Renaissance feminist heroine (see Introduction, pp. 6-12). Elizabeth Carey's literary and linguistic skills have an obvious place in such works, particularly the fact that at the age of five she found herself more capable of learning French without a tutor, and from then on taught herself. Her dedication to study caused her to defy parental authority and bribe the

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Henry the Eighth's reign ... May it not ... have been that the sight of the old abbey, inhabited in other days by God's servants; the stone crosses left here and there on the monastic walls; possibly a stray volume from the monks' library, fallen into her hands when at an early age she became passionately fond of reading, biassed the mind of the young Elisabeth towards the Catholic faith? ... Whether Elisabeth Tanfield mused or not in her childhood on the history of her home in other days, she no doubt often thought of it in her mature years. (pp. 1-2).

There is little extra information in this text and none of any real relevance. Its usefulness is seriously compromised by Fullerton's lack of scholarly citation and bibliography.

116. Murdock (1939). This is, arguably, the worst of the three, in that, whilst it celebrates Elizabeth Carey's religious integrity, it is also patronizing towards her, precisely because of her sex. The text itself is a collection of three biographies about English Catholics - Elizabeth Carey, Lucius Carey and John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester - an odd juxtaposition, which he justifies thus:

Many men [*sic*] in the seventeenth century, as before and since, derived their warmest satisfactions from religious assurance, the gift of God to His dependents, and it was this that John Donne wrote of as "the Sun at noon." (p. 2).

Elizabeth Carey, however, owes her presence in this book partly to her Catholic faith, but mostly to her son Lucius:

She has a right to be remembered because *she helped to shape the life of a man greater than she*, and also because what she lived through illustrates what many of her contemporaries had to survive. (p. 7, my italics)

Murdock's work is very short, although it does contain a quite useful bibliography. Again, he provides little extra information about Elizabeth Carey's life, and the chapter on her seems merely to provide a background for the two larger chapters on her son Lucius.

servants to bring her candles and writing materials. By the time of her marriage she was in debt by £300. Later events in her life, particularly her willingness to dress finely and ride horses (both of which she hated) for the sake of her husband, and her virtual starvation at his hands when she converted to Catholicism, are also to be found in the early feminist works on Carey. The emphasis may have changed, with Carey being hailed as a feminist heroine rather than a Catholic one, but the mythmaking process is virtually unchanged. The ease with which the language of Catholic hagiography can be re-worked into that of feminist biography may be seen to undermine the integrity of the latter. Yet, whilst the wholesale re-appropriation of hagiographical discourse by feminist scholars might be counterproductive to the ideological validity of the work produced, the gulf between female resistance and Catholicism in this period may not be so vast as one might expect.

In the late twentieth century, Catholicism may be seen as the form of Western Christianity which is most oppressive to women. But in the seventeenth century it provided a more effective outlet for women's religious and personal needs than Protestantism. The abolition of convents cut off a form of separatist, independent intellectual activity for women. Furthermore, saint veneration had allowed women to address their prayers to female figures, shaping religious activity to suit the spiritual needs of women, whereas Protestantism provided only the male figure of God the Father to whom to address prayers. It may be argued that whilst this form of cultural activity was denied to both sexes, men, particularly poets, had an outlet for the discourse of female saint veneration. One only has to look at the quasi-saint like status which Donne's epistles to the Countess of Bedford <sup>117</sup> bestow upon her, for evidence that the need for female icons had not departed the

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117. John Donne, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. A.J. Smith, Middlesex, 1980, pp. 221-33.

English cultural milieu along with the outlawing of Catholicism. Perhaps Donne, having once been a Catholic and then reconciled to the Anglican Church, reworked his old Catholic practices in his poetry. In fact, perhaps this practice can be seen as the flip-side of the coin of the Protestant oppression about which Kelly-Gadol and Jardine write. Whilst all women were oppressed from above, by the paterfamilias representing God in the domestic setting, those women at the top of the social ladder were also oppressed from below, by becoming the focus of an unsupplied cultural need to revere figures other than God the Father alone.

In the light of this, it is surely significant that the *Life* puts such an emphasis on Elizabeth Carey's reverence for the Virgin,<sup>118</sup> and that her religious writing is addressed to female saints. Although Elizabeth Carey's conversion to Catholicism may not have marked her out as a feminist by twentieth-century standards, it did show that she was prepared to resist the harsher and more patriarchal Protestantism, which placed greater moral responsibility upon women, but reduced the opportunities for actual or spiritual relief. Women like Elizabeth Carey were expected to surrender their independence for the small hope of spiritual and intellectual satisfaction in marriage; denied that satisfaction, Elizabeth Carey refused such a surrender.

### Elizabeth Carey: the Writer

Elizabeth Carey did, of course, have access to writing and learning. She could have alleviated the need to venerate female figures by writing to or about secular women, but she did not. Her writing which survives is not

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118. *Life* tells that she took the name of the Virgin in confirmation, p. 39, and that, p. 18:

She continued her opinion of religion, and bore a great and high reverence to our blessed Lady, to whom, being with child of her last daughter (and still a Protestant), she offered up that child, promising, if it were a girl, it should in devotion to her bear her name, and that as much as was in her power, she would endeavour to have it to be a nun.

venerative, it is analytical and political. Her religious needs were supplied by confessing her Catholic faith and writing openly Catholic works on female saints and on the Virgin Mary, rather than by evolving a quasi-saint like figure from one of her contemporaries. Whilst entering into the male-dominated world of writing, she did not impose the same ideological restraints of creation upon her female figures as male writers did, particularly upon actual women to whom or about whom they wrote. This section will examine how Elizabeth Carey was the subject of such treatment in verses by men, and these will be contrasted with those pieces of her writing which belong to the genre of dedicatory writing and which also present a view of her own literature.

The conditions of the Renaissance in relation to women as subjects and as writers are debatable. Joan Kelly-Gadol argues that women actually lost much of their creative autonomy in the Renaissance and this reduction of woman to a passive creation of the male writer was actively supported by Renaissance thinking. In the poetry of Dante, Petrarch and Vittoria Colonna, the female subjects

have no meaningful, objective existence, and not merely because their affective experience lacks a voice ... The unreality of the Renaissance beloved has rather to do with the *quality* of the Renaissance lover's feelings. As former social relations that sustained mutuality among lovers vanished the lover fell back on narcissistic experience. <sup>119</sup>

Betty Travitsky tells us that when women were encouraged to write, this encouragement came with the proviso that certain prescribed roles were adopted, i.e. the mother giving pious advice to her children, the translator of works, usually, though not specifically, religious. <sup>120</sup>

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119. Kelly-Gadol (1977), pp. 153-4. By "mutuality", Kelly-Gadol is referring to the mutuality of sexual passion in a love-affair as opposed to the mutuality of emotional and domestic responsibility in marriage, as referred to elsewhere in this thesis as part of the Protestant doctrine of marriage.

120. Travitsky (1981), pp. 8-10. This anthology includes a substantial number of examples of religious literature, pp. 17-48, and mother's advice literature, pp. 49-60.

Carey's writing falls under both the "officially approved" and less approved categories. The *Life* relates how she penned a mother's advice tract to her children when she thought she was dying.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, she is believed to be the author of "The Mirror of the Worlde translated Out of French into Englishe", although her absolute authorship of this is questionable.<sup>122</sup> Her other works, of which only three survive,<sup>123</sup> are less complicit with the approved category. *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II* are certainly radical in content and her translation of *The Reply of the Most Illustrious Cardinall of Perron* was publicly burnt for its Catholic content.<sup>124</sup> Yet Elizabeth Carey was praised and revered as a learned woman and talented poet. There is no evidence to suggest that her early works caused any scandal, not even the

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121. *Life*, pp. 12-13, says:

Being once like to die, whilst she had but two or three children, and those very little, that her care of them might not die with her, she writ (directed to her two eldest, a daughter and a son) a letter of some sheets of paper (to be given them when they were come to a more capable age), full of such moral precepts as she judged most proper for them.

122. This manuscript has been put on deposit, Dep. d. 817, at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in October 1991, by the Revd. Tingle. It was previously housed at the Vicarage in Burford.

The main problem with this manuscript is that the hand changes part way through the text. The letter dedicating the work to Sir Henry Lee, and the first six items of the text are in one hand (ff. 4-6), but the remaining forty-eight (ff. 7-30) items are in a different hand, which casts doubt as to whether the whole work is by Elizabeth Carey (then Tanfield). If we are to assume that the hand of the dedicatory letter is hers, then it is evident that she oversaw the final version of the text, as there are several corrections and insertions, on both sets of writing, in the first hand. It could be, however, that the first few pages are in Elizabeth Carey's formal hand and the later pages in her informal hand, as the difference between them is not vast. Alternatively, the later pages could have been written by a scribe.

123. *Life*, p. 4: "she learnt Latin ... (without being taught) ... and translated the Epistles of Seneca" and "some ... of Blossius out of Latin"; p. 9: "Of all she then writ, that which was said to be the best was the "The Life of Tamberlaine" in verse."; p. 39: "she writ the lives of St. Mary Magdalen, St. Agnes, Martyr, and St. Elizabeth of Portingall, in verse; and ... many verses to our Blessed Lady".

124. *Life*, p. 39.



hard-hitting critique on marriage which *The Tragedy of Mariam* presents.<sup>125</sup> From written evidence supplied by other poets, Elizabeth Carey was rather a *cause célèbre* than a *bête noir* of the Renaissance literary scene.

However, there is something very significant operating in the various letters and poems dedicated to her. It is akin to the power dynamics which are described by Susan Gubar thus:

[The] model of the pen-penis writing on the virgin page participates in a long tradition identifying the author as a male who is primary and the female as his passive creation - a secondary object lacking autonomy, endowed with often contradictory meaning but denied intentionality. Clearly this tradition excludes woman from the creation of culture, even as it reifies her as an artifact within culture. It is therefore particularly problematic for those women who want to appropriate the pen by becoming writers.<sup>126</sup>

Whilst Carey attempted to step into the role of creator, the politics of the poetic language in which she was revered pushed her backward again. The praise itself took the focus away from Carey's writing and refigured her life and her works as a cultural artifact which existed to be commented upon by men. Lisa Jardine has suggested that intellectual women were constantly seen as "other" - as either honorary men, whores or monsters.<sup>127</sup> I cannot agree with such a demoralising perception of the status of literary women of this period. I would suggest that there is another way of tokenising and devaluing women's writing in this period: namely, the attempt to create a special enclave for literary women which compromised their position in relation to the men who were also writing in the poetic or dramatic genres.

The dedications to Elizabeth Carey seem, in varying degrees, to write to this agenda. I have been able to locate six<sup>128</sup> such works and they fall

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125. See Ch. 3.

126. Susan Gubar "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity", in *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 8, 1981, rpt. in Showalter (1986), p. 295.

127. Jardine (1983), pp. 56-7.

128. Five of them are listed in Franklin B. Williams, *Index of Dedications and Commendatory Verses*, 1962, p. 32. The William Basse poem was noted in the bibliography in Murdock (1939). I shall consider the very specific comments which appear as part of her translation of *Perron* at the end of this

into two categories - those requesting her approval for a newly published work and works praising Elizabeth Carey's literary talents. The former are most obvious in the methods they employ to limit Elizabeth Carey's position. They simply re-write her into the role of glorified patroness; one who has gone beyond the passive role to prove her literary worth by actually attempting to produce literature herself.

Richard Beling, in his *A Sixthe Booke to the Countesse of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1624) dedicates the work to "the Right Honourable, the truly vertuous and learned la: the Viscountess of Falkland".<sup>129</sup> Knowing full well that she was a writer, Beling addresses her only as a patroness and in so doing, tries to usurp the pen which she herself has already so successfully utilized, by saying:

If it containe any thing that is good, that you may justly claim as your own, aswell because it was so auspiciously begun, as that goodnes can no where finde a more worthy patronesse.<sup>130</sup>

This reduces Carey from being the active producer of literature to the passive judge of it. Perhaps this would not be so suspicious if it was written to a woman who never wrote literature herself. But by this time, Elizabeth Carey had written several works and had had one published; the significant factor is that Beling does not acknowledge Elizabeth Carey's literary skills in a context where it would seem most appropriate. This piece is, however, less effective in marginalising Elizabeth Carey's literary presence than the dedicatory epistle by the printer William Sheares which prefaces *The Workes of Mr John Marston* (1633).<sup>131</sup> The main body of this epistle is concerned with

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section of the chapter. Full bibliographical details of these dedications and the works which they preface are given in Appendix B, p. 254. All quotations are taken from the dedications and prefaces transcribed in Appendix B, pp.255-60.

129. Appendix B, p. 254.

130. Appendix B., p. 257.

131. Appendix B, p. 254.

defending the literary value of the dramatic genre. Elizabeth Carey is mentioned only at the end thus:

In [John Marston's] absence, Noble Lady, I have been imboldened to present these Workes unto your Honours view, and the rather, because your Honour is well acquainted with the Muses; In briefe, Fame hath given out; that your Honour is the Mirror of your sex, the admiration, not onely of this Iland, but of all adjacent Countries and Dominions, which are acquainted with your rare Vertues, and Endowments: If your Honour shall vouchsafe to accept this Worke, I with my Booke am ready prest and bound to be

Your truly devoted,  
William Sheares.<sup>132</sup>

Again, her own literary talents are obscured under a sea of praise for her well-renowned virtue and she is reduced to being the passive acceptor of a male-authored text. Moreover, she is only being addressed as a substitute for the author himself.

Although one must take into account the conventions of dedicatory panegyric which were in operation in the Renaissance, simply to pass off this discourse of praise as merely "convention" is not enough. Convention is a phenomenon which owes its very existence to ideology and exists, virtually exclusively, to perpetuate the status quo and therefore feed the interests of the ruling class. It is possible that these dedicatory poems had no more sinister intention than gaining recognition (not money, as Elizabeth Carey was constantly poor) by attaching the poet to a famous literary patroness. Even so, it is the gender-specific language in which such forms of praise had to be couched which is under scrutiny here. I believe that this language is part of the "step backwards" which occurred for Renaissance literary women, as argued by Joan Kelly-Gadol and (perhaps a little too simply) by Lisa Jardine. The image of the muse and the mystificatory element which is present in Sheares' text constitutes the significant factor in those works which praise Carey as a writer. By emphasising the special "other worldly" qualities of her writing, the authors of these three works effectively marginalise Carey and

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132. Appendix B, p. 260.

reclaim her as the passive material of inspiration, thereby taking her back to the situation described by Susan Gubar (see p. 59).

The earliest of these works was written to her whilst she was still unmarried, yet known as a prodigious and learned child. In *Englands Heroicall Epistles* (1597) Michael Drayton<sup>133</sup> writes one of the fairest accounts of Elizabeth Carey's talents. It emphasises her linguistic skills rather than her creative ones and so is likely to have been written before she attempted any original writing of her own.<sup>134</sup> However, the language which Drayton uses inflicts a decorative role upon the Elizabeth Tanfield. She has been "adorned" by nature and education; he claims she has more effect upon him than Laura, whom Drayton could "know" only as a literary creation of Petrarch; and that her accomplishment in foreign languages merely serves to *decorate* those languages. Nor can one ignore the implicit eroticism; Elizabeth's learning creates more interest for Drayton in the female sex than all of Petrarch's love poetry about Laura. Finally, the text puts her on a semi-mythical plane, hailing her both as a Grace and a Muse.<sup>135</sup>

Equating her with Laura puts her on the same level as a passive and voiceless literary character created by a man. The Grace and Muse images,

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133. Appendix B., p. 254.

134. The reason why Michael Drayton was so aware of Elizabeth Tanfield's linguistic abilities at a point before she produced any of her extant works might have been that he was employed as her tutor. Bernard Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and his Circle*, Oxford, 1941, p. 78, argues that this is the case, because the wording "My honoured Mistresse", suggests that Drayton was in the service of her father.

The *Life* does not mention the production of any original work until she went to live with Henry's mother (*Life*, p. 9) and even her earliest work, "The Mirror of the Worlde translated Out of French into Englishe" could not have been produced by this time because the French version of Ortelius's work was not published until 1598. NUC, vol. 433, p. 367:

Ortelius, Abraham, 1527-1598

Le miroir du monde; ou, Epitome du Theatre d'Abraham Orteluis. Auquel se represente, tant par figures que par caracteres, la vraye situation, nature & propriete de la terre universelle. Aggrandi & enrichi, entre autres de plusieurs belles cartes du Pais-bas ... Amsterdam, Z. Heyns, 1598.

135. Appendix B, p. 255.

whilst flattering, set her well outside the actual literary milieu of Renaissance England. Furthermore, the image of the Muse is one which is very inappropriate to women writers, particularly the pioneering women writers of this period. The Muses of classical mythology presided over the arts, but were not creators themselves. The writer's Muse, such as the one who instructed Sidney to "look in thy heart and write", is a fictitious female figure created by male writers to personify artistic inspiration. There is, arguably, an element of the pseudo-sexual in the relationship between the male writer and "his" Muse; or at the very least the relationship resembles that of mother and child, nurturer and nurtured. By likening Carey to a Muse, these writers are obscuring her own talent for literary production on two counts. Firstly, she is translated into a mythical creature who does not create; secondly, foregrounding the writer-Muse relationship forces recognition of a model of inspiration and literary production which is entirely inappropriate to a woman of this period. <sup>136</sup>

Therefore it is surely significant that the Muse image appears in the remaining works dedicated to Elizabeth Carey. Richard More, in the dedicatory poem prefacing his edition of *England's Helicon or The Muses Harmony* (1614), <sup>137</sup> a collection of pastorals and songs including works by Sidney, Shakespeare, and Drayton, refers to her as "Englands happy Muse, /

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136. The dedicatory material from the first edition of *England's Helicon*, ed. John Bodenham (and N. Ling?), 1600, STC 3191, illustrates the use of gender-specific language in this genre. The material consists of a poem to the editor, John Bodenham (sig. A3<sup>r</sup>), and an epistle to the patrons (sig. A3<sup>v</sup>). The poem speaks metaphorically of Bodenham's literary efforts: "in the Muses Garden, gathering flowres", illustrating the Muse's role as one of nurturing and tending, rather than creating. Bodenham himself is not, significantly, described metaphorically. The epistle is couched in respectful, yet affectionate terms. There is little metaphor except, interestingly, that *England's Helicon* is personified as a woman who "comes now to Yorke to salute her rightfull Patrone first, and next (as his deere friends and kindsmen) to offer you her kinde service." These two pieces help to clarify the politics of creative writing: the female sex can be created or can nurture creation but it is the male sex which actually creates.

137. Appendix B, p. 254.

Learnings delight, that all things else exceeds". Moreover, in addition to this conventional, but nonetheless problematic hailing of her as a Muse, the progression of the poem actively reduces the power of its subject. She begins by being asked to be the protector of this work (a passive enough role), but ends up by being limited by the work itself: "Have equall fate: Then cherrish these (faire Stem) / So shall they live by thee, and thou by them." <sup>138</sup> These final two lines indicate a mutually beneficial relationship, whereby *her* survival is dependent on the survival of the text she has been asked to protect, ignoring the fact that she has already produced three of her own. It is these by which she should be remembered, not by *England's Helicon*.

The only poem which is not, apparently, attached to a published literary work - in fact it only existed in manuscript until 1893 - retains this Muse convention. William Basse's "To the Right Honorable the Lady Viscount Falkland, upon her going into Ireland, two sonnets" <sup>139</sup> (of which only one survives) endows her with a ubiquitous nature as well as craving her "Muses care". The politics of power which are operating in this poem need little elucidation. England has created its Muse and is not going to let her go, even if Basse has to endow her with ubiquity of location. In the light of what has been said previously, lines six and seven have an ironic note: "How much your fame exceeds your Caracts sayle: / Nay, more than so; your selfe are every where". <sup>140</sup> Elizabeth cannot escape from what is being said about her - regardless of its accuracy, or her opinion.

John Davies' poem at the beginning of his *Muses Sacrifice* (1612) <sup>141</sup> is rather more complex, in that it does adopt a very positive tone in its respect for Carey's writing and makes her literary talents its main object. It

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138. Appendix B, p. 256.

139. Appendix B, p. 254.

140. Appendix B, p. 256.

141. Appendix B, p. 254.

constantly oscillates between mythologising her and setting her very much in the material and ideological reality of Jacobean England. All the ladies to whom the poem is dedicated - Lucy, Countess of Bedford, the Dowager Countess of Pembroke and Lady Elizabeth Carey - are associated with the Muses. If not directly called such, they are certainly hailed as Patronesses and the "darlings of the Muses". The section on Elizabeth Carey, emphasises her intellectual power, but via this, translates her onto a mythical plane:

Cary (of whom Minerva stands in feare,  
     lest she, from her, should get Arts Regencie)  
 Of Art so moves the great-all-moving Spheare,  
     that ev'ry Orbe of Science moves thereby.

Thou mak'st Melpomen <sup>142</sup> proud, and my Heart great  
     of such a Pupill, who, in Buskin fine,  
 With Feete of State, dost make thy Muse to mete  
     the Scenes of Syracuse and Palestine.

Art, Language; yea; abstruse and holy Tongues,  
     thy Wit and Grace acquir'd thy Fame to raise;  
 And still to fill thine owne, and others Songs;  
     thine, with thy Parts, and others, with thy praise.

Such nervy Limbes of Art, and Straines of Wit  
     Times past ne'er knew the weaker Sexe to have;  
 And Times to come, will hardly credit it,  
     if thus thou give thy Workes both Birth and Grave. <sup>143</sup>

The section of the poem addressed to Carey can be seen to be much more positive than the other works, yet it is shot through with the negative realities of the period. Davies has detailed (much more so than any of the other writers) her actual literary achievements, and has not obscured them in praise of her personal virtue. However, Davies urges her to publish her work, or future times will never believe such a woman existed. <sup>144</sup> If society has not succeeded in making her a myth during her lifetime, there is still the

142. The Muse of Tragedy.

143. Appendix B, p. 255.

144. Perhaps John Davies' encouragement worked, as *The Tragedy of Mariam* is entered in *The Stationer's Register* for 17 December of the same year, 1612, Edward Arber, ed., *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London 1554-1640 AD*, vol. III, 1876, fol. 231<sup>v</sup>.

threat that it will happen afterwards. And, as has been the case with every woman writer before Aphra Behn, and many since, (patriarchal) history has not, indeed, believed that they wrote and were published. Despite John Davies' efforts, those women who did publish, be they encouraged by him or not, have been rendered obscure by powers other than simply the availability of a publisher. The substantial bibliographies and anthologies of women's writing <sup>145</sup> show that publication was not necessarily a problem, though doubtless many women found it so, Elizabeth Carey included. But when one notes that a publication like Joseph Swetnam's *Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women* (1615) ran to several editions, whereas none of female-authored replies to this work ran to more than one, there are obviously other factors involved than mere access to the printing press. <sup>146</sup>

A considerable factor in women's exclusion from the canon, and a prominent site of conflict in the battle to reinstate women into the canon, is the issue of tradition. Women have constantly been "written out" of any tradition or writing, be it their own or that dominated by men. Apart from the poem by John Davies, the rest of the dedicatory poems do not link Elizabeth Carey *as a writer* with any other writer, male or female, effectively refusing to write her into the literary milieu of the Renaissance. Ironically, the early feminist works on Carey tend to be complicit with this position. Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of language is that each signifier is only given significance and meaning by its context. <sup>147</sup> Perhaps literary works are

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145. eg. Travitsky (1981); Crawford (1985); Hageman (1988); Beilin (1990);.

146. Joseph Swetnam, *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Woman*, 1615, STC 23533 ran to nine more editions, 1615-1637, STC 23534-23542, whereas the three women' pamphlets which answered this - Constantia Munda, *The Worming of a Mad Dog*, 1617, STC 18257; Esther Sowernam, *Ester Hath Hang'd Haman*, 1617, STC 22974; and Rachel Speght, *A Mouzell for Melastomus*, STC 23058, only ran to one edition each.

147. Ferdinand de Saussure, "Nature of the Linguistic Sign" (1915), rpt. in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Lodge, 1988, pp. 10-14.



subject to similar conditions - if they are denied a literary context, they lose the power to signify effectively and are therefore devalued or ignored. Thus, whilst the praise for Elizabeth Carey may have been genuine, this silence of the writers in question on her active participation in the literary production of the Renaissance, and the refusal to see her as anything other than exceptional, may be fundamental to her exclusion from the canon.

Unfortunately, to counterbalance this, we are left with very little evidence as to how Elizabeth Carey considered herself as a writer.<sup>148</sup> The dedication at the beginning of her first work, "The Mirror of the Worlde translated Out of French into Englishe",<sup>149</sup> puts a great deal of emphasis on her youth and inexperience as compared to her maternal uncle, Sir Henry Lee,<sup>150</sup> to whom it is dedicated:

Receave here honorable Sir my humble presente the fruites and endeavours of my younge and tender yeares ... this little treatise ... leaiving to your considerate judgements & wise regarde the controule of what is herein amisse to be reformed by the experience of your many years travailes abroade in the worlde. And as riper years shall afforde me better fruites and harsher judgemente I shall be ever ready to present you with the best of my travailes.<sup>151</sup>

Significantly, there is no sense of a gender difference, merely that of age. And whilst she modestly makes excuses for her lack of skill, she quite clearly states that this is due to her lack of years and promises much better things as she matures.

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148. Full bibliographical details of the dedications and prefaces by Elizabeth Carey are given in Appendix A, p. 249. All quotations will be taken from her dedications and prefaces as transcribed in Appendix A, pp. 250-3.

149. Appendix A, p. 250.

150. W.A.J. Archbold, entry in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, ed., Sidney Lee, vol. XXXII, 1892, pp. 356-7: LEE, Sir Henry (1530-1610), master of the Ordnance. 1559, became Queen's champion and president of the newly-formed Society of Tilters. Resigned post as Queen's champion in 1590. Probably the same Sir Henry Lee who took part in Essex's expedition to Cadiz in 1596. On 23 April 1597, he became K.G.

151. Appendix A, p. 250.

In the dedicatory poem which prefaces *The Tragedy of Mariam*,<sup>152</sup> there is little indication of Elizabeth Carey's attitude to her own writing. Significantly, though, she makes no excuse for it, or for her sex, the subject matter of the poem being a comparison of her feelings for her husband and for her sister-in-law (also called Elizabeth Carey). This comparison is, however, a device to draw explicit attention to the fact that *The Tragedy of Mariam* is her second such work.

Hee shone on Sicily, you destin'd bee,  
T'illumine the now obscure Palestine.  
My first was consecrated to Apollo,  
My second to Diana now shall follow.<sup>153</sup>

The play is not, therefore, presented as an anomalous piece of literary production, penned in an idle hour.

Which, strangely, is how *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II* (written 1627/8, published 1680)<sup>154</sup> is presented in the address to the reader: "To out-run those weary hours of a deep and sad Passion, my melancholy Pen fell accidentally on this Historical Relation". The negative opening of this piece seems surprising, but it soon asserts itself;

I have not herein followed the dull Character of our Historians, nor amplified more than they infer, by Circumstance. I strive to please the Truth, not Time; nor fear I Censure, since at the worst, 'twas but one Month mis-spendd; which cannot promise ought in right Perfection.<sup>155</sup>

Perhaps it would not be beyond the bounds of reason to suggest that, whilst Elizabeth Carey confidently presented her earlier works to her readership, marriage to and estrangement from Henry Carey led her to expect criticism for those things she did earnestly and with the best intentions. Conversely she is bold enough to attack the method of contemporary writers (and considering

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152. Appendix A, p. 249.

153. Appendix A, p. 250.

154. Appendix A, p. 249.

155. Appendix A, p. 251.

how many versions of the story of Edward II were produced in the Renaissance, she is undermining a considerable number of people)<sup>156</sup> and makes the claim of "Truth" for her text. At the very least this counterbalances the meekly worded ending, in which she admits all the text's faults, thereby denying the reader the power to criticise.

If we were to take the evidence of the dedications *about* her, we would be left with the impression of a discrete, isolated and homogeneous literary patroness. What Elizabeth Carey leaves us of her own writing gives a different impression. First, she presents herself self-consciously as a writer. Secondly, the rate at which she produced literature throughout her life is inconsistent. "The Mirror of the Worlde translated Out of French into Englishe", "The Life of Tamberlaine" (now lost) and *The Tragedy of Mariam* were all written before 1604-5, which is the latest possible date that Dunstan (1914) gives for the latter.<sup>157</sup> *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II* (1627/8), the lives of the saints (now lost) and her translation of *The Reply of the Most Illustrious Cardinall of Perron* (1630) were not written until after she had left Henry. There is no record of her having written anything between *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *Edward II* except, significantly, the tract of the patriarchally sanctioned "mother's advice book" genre. Even her writing during the time she lived with Henry fits into the role of wife and mother - she is not a writer who is a wife and mother, but a mother and wife who writes, and writes appropriately to her role.

A microcosm of the struggle to define her literary and historical voice can be found in the prefaces to her last known piece of writing - the translation of *The Reply of the most Illustrious Cardinall of Perron* (1630). There is much writing in this text which presents the opinions of male divines

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156. For a full list of English authors who had written on Edward II by 1627, see Ch. 4, p. 195.

157. Dunstan (1914), p. xv.

on her writing and also indicates the political nature of her work. Prefacing the text are dedicatory pieces which concern Elizabeth Carey in one respect or another. They comprise two epistles by Elizabeth Carey herself: one to the reader and the other to Henrietta Maria, to whom the work is dedicated, <sup>158</sup> and three poems by men: "An admonition to the Reader", "In Laudem Nobilissimae Heroinae" (which also appears in English in sonnet form) and "To the most noble Translatour" (a 52 line poem in rhyming couplets). <sup>159</sup> There are also two manuscript poems by Carey in three copies of this text, addressed to Henrietta Maria and to Cardinal Perron. <sup>160</sup>

Of the three pieces by men, the first refers to Carey as if she were a transparent medium through which to perceive the works of Cardinal Perron. The emphasis is upon her faithfulness to the text. So faithful to the letter, in fact, that it is not faithful to the spirit:

... we have not presumed to alter or change any one word of her translation, but in some few places, where the French allusions could not be so well understood, if they were expressed in English properly corresponding thereunto: for every tongue hath some peculiar graces and elegancies, which be lost the in translation, yf they be put word for word ... the translatresse having so fittly, and significantly expressed the autours meaning, that it would have been lost labour to strive to do it better, and rather marring, then mending so perfect an expression. <sup>161</sup>

The next piece places much more emphasis upon Elizabeth Carey's gender:

One woman, in one Month, so large a booke,  
 In such a full emphatik stile to turne:  
 Ist not all one, as when a spacious brooke,  
 Flowes in a moment from a little Burne?

In rather the same tone as the writing discussed earlier in this chapter, she is transformed into a mythical figure, hailed as a kind of human (female) equivalent of the Philosopher's Stone (hence an impossible myth):

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158. Appendix A, p. 249.

159. Appendix B, p. 254.

160. Appendix A, p. 249.

161. Appendix B, p. 258.

Or is she not that miracle of Arts  
 The true Elixir, that by onely touch  
 To any mettals, worth of gold imparts?  
 For me, I think she valewes thrice as much.  
 A wondrous Quintessence of womankind,  
 In whome alone, what els in 'all, we find. <sup>162</sup>

This emphasis upon Elizabeth Carey's gender continues throughout the other texts. The long poem "To the Most Noble Translatour" is particularly interesting in that it admits of a gender conflict in the area of writing:

But that a Woemans hand alone should raise  
 So vast a monument in thirty dayes  
 Breeds envie and amazement in our sex  
 Of which the most ore weening witts might vex  
 Themselves thrice so much time and with farre less  
 Grace to their Workmanship or true successe.

However, the envy which the author mentions seems to be present in his own work, as the attitude of this poem largely seems to be to draw attention to the possible criticisms which might be levelled at this translation, particularly the speed with which it was done. This takes away from the intellectual effort needed to produce the translation; the author of this poem almost implies it was done by divine intervention: "Your bright soule did but once reflect upon / This curious peece, and it was clear'd and done." And in a rather weak defence at the end of the poem, he says that criticism for the speed of completion is unfair, because if Michelangelo could have produced his great works in an hour, or Rome could have been built in a day, we would not value them any the less, rather we would value them more.

Furthermore, he emphasises the fact that this work can be viewed as merely a translation, rather than an original work. The text points to Elizabeth Carey's selflessness in taking on such a humble task, effectively undermining the intellectual effort, whilst praising her virtue:

Behold this Mirrhor of French Eloquence,  
 Which shee before the English view doth place  
 Fill'd with the whole Originall truth and grace ...  
 And though you know this where to weack a frame  
 To rayse up higher the greatnesse of your name  
 Which must from your owne rich inventions grow,

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162. Appendix B, p. 258.

As Rivers from the springes whence they first flow:  
 Yet hee who truly knowes your noblest will  
 To profitt others and your various skill  
 In choseing and in marking cut the wayes  
 May thinck this might add something to your praise[.] <sup>163</sup>

The fleeting reference to her other original works merely serves to reinforce the inferior status of the translation.

Elizabeth Carey's epistle to the reader stands in contrast to these works in her honour. Whilst they have all marvelled at the fact that a woman has the ability to translate so quickly and so accurately, her epistle undermines these sentiments with a rather more simple and self-effacing explanation:

Thou shalt heere receive a translation welintended, wherein the Translator could have noe other end, but to informe thee aright. To looke for glorie from Translation, is beneath my intention, and if I had aimed at that, I would not have chosen so late a writer ... I am a Catholique, and a Woman: the first serves for mine honor, and the second, for my excuse, since if the worke be but meanely done, it is noe wonder, for my Sexe can raise noe great expectation of anie thing that shall come from me[.]

Significantly, she publicly claims her right to publish, saying that she will not use the "worne-out forme of saying, I printed it against my will, mooved by the importunitie of Friends". Furthermore, she openly admits an ideological motive behind her work, in that she wishes to encourage people to read Perron's work, and believes that making it available in English will achieve this end. As to the marvel of producing the work in so short a time, this she passes off thus:

[I]f it gaine noe applause, hee that writt it faire, hath lost more labour then I have done, for I dare avouch, it hath bene fower times as long in transcribing, as it was in translating. <sup>164</sup>

Finally, Elizabeth Carey's manuscript poem and dedicatory epistle to Henrietta Maria further exploit the two significant factors of female sex and Catholicism in both writer and addressee. In the poem, the subtle usurpation of masculine panegyric discourse can be seen at work, as the poem praises Henrietta Maria's beauty: "... famous Greece / Whose beauties ruin'd

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163. Appendix B, p. 259.

164. Appendix A, p. 252.

kingdomes, never saw / A face that could lik yours affections drawe". However, at the end of the poem, Henrietta Maria is constructed as the facilitator of the return of the Catholic faith to England: "Yet for your sake he proves ubiquitarie / And come to England though in France he tarrie."<sup>165</sup> A more obvious political statement is made by the epistle to Henrietta Maria. In listing her qualifications as being the obvious choice to whom this work should be dedicated, i.e. that she is a Catholic, a woman, she is French and yet the Queen of England thus personifying the translation process, Elizabeth Carey includes a very thinly veiled criticism of Charles I and the official government policy towards Catholics:

You are King James his Sonns wife, and therefore, since the misfortune of our times, hath made it a presumption, to give the Inheritance of this worke (that was sent to the Father in French) to the Sonne in English, whose proper right it is, you are fittest to receive it for him, who are such a parte of him, 'as none can make you two, other then one.

This last clause, particularly, carries with it a criticism of Protestant marriage ideology and an assertion of the indissolubility of marriage, as upheld by the Catholic Church. But the greatest emphasis in this dedicatory epistle is upon Henrietta Maria's gender and her religion. In fact, the tone of the final section of this epistle is so strongly focussed upon the fusion of female sex and Catholic religion that a subtle form of appropriation appears to be taking place - Catholicism is the suitable religion for a woman as both are marginalised by the established patriarchal power structure of Protestant Caroline England.

And for the honor of my Sexe, let me saie it, you are a woeman, though farr above other wemen, therefore fittest to protect a womans worke, if a plaine translation wherein there is nothing aimed at, but rightlie to expresse the Authors intention may be called a worke. And last (to crowne your other additions) you are a Catholicke, and a zealous one, and therefore fittest to receive the dedication of a Catholicke-worke. <sup>166</sup>

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165. Appendix A, p. 253.

166. Appendix A, p. 252.

The literary value of the work itself is very much played down, with the effect of bringing the political motivation of its production to the fore. And this is finally spelled out in the four lines of manuscript poetry which are addressed to Cardinal Perron himself:

Great Author heere; thy portraicture doth stand  
To recommend this worke to ev'rie hand  
Whose braines it fittes; and doth this promise give  
Let men but read, and understand, and live[.]<sup>167</sup>

Obviously, there are two levels of text at work here - the manuscript and the published epistles. Significantly, on comparison, it is the published epistle to Henrietta Maria which draws most attention to the political nature, not only of the text, but also to the act of publication itself. The subversiveness of this political act is enhanced by the fact that the text itself is a set of answers contradicting the former King of England, James I, to which Elizabeth Carey draws specific attention in her epistle to Henrietta Maria. The manuscripts serve to indicate Henrietta Maria's (expected) complicity with Elizabeth Carey's act of subversion.

This unfortunate text may have been burnt on its arrival in Britain from Douay, where it was printed. But there is little doubt that Elizabeth Carey's whole purpose in translating *Perron* was to promote the Catholic faith as widely as possible. Although *Perron* was responsible for the greatest reaction on its publication, the politics of gender, religion and government are dealt with in all of Elizabeth Carey's writing. However much other contemporary writers may have devalued her work or praised her work (either of these could be equally motivated by her gender, and the desire to keep that gender in its ideologically imposed place of "other" and therefore inferior) Elizabeth Carey herself leaves us with no evidence either that she made great claims for her writing, or that she was excessively modest about it. The significant factor is that her work is consistently political, drawing on the marginalised position of a Catholic and a woman.

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167. Appendix A, p. 253.



## CHAPTER 2

**"Foule pith contain'd in the fairest rinde":  
Seneca, Josephus and Elizabeth Carey.**

## Sources

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Elizabeth Carey's utilization of dramatic conventions and source materials in *The Tragedy of Mariam*.<sup>1</sup> The title quotation is from IV iv 1452, in which Herod accuses Mariam of adultery, the "fairest rind" being Mariam's outside beauty, the "foul pith" her attitude to Herod. I will therefore be examining the extent to which the play itself might also be considered to be "foul pith" of proto-feminist subversion contained in the "fairest rind" of its sources and style, by exploring Elizabeth Carey's apparent fusion of two patriarchal authorities to create her play.

The sources for the subject matter are the works of Flavius Josephus, namely *The Jewish Wars* completed between 69 and 79 AD and *The Antiquities* completed circa 93-94 AD, which are still used as a credible primary source by both historians and theologians.<sup>2</sup> First, I shall be discussing the availability and use of the works of Josephus during the seventeenth century. Secondly, I shall consider the critical interpretation of Carey's use of Senecan conventions and examine the problematic nature of the term "Senecanism" itself. Then there will be a detailed account of the changes made to the story as told by Josephus, with a discussion of the

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1. Dunstan (1914). All quotations will be taken from this edition, in which the line numbering is continuous and takes account of all printed lines, including act and scene numbers and stage directions.

2. For example, by Solomon Zeitlin, *The Rise and Fall of the Judaean State, A Political, Social and Religious History of the Second Commonwealth*, Philadelphia, 1967, and Pere Villalba I. Varneda, *The Historical Method of Flavius Josephus*, Leiden, 1986.

*The Antiquities* is the major source for the plot and most of the characters. *The History of the Jewish Wars* gives a shorter and what is now considered to be a historically unreliable account of the story, according to Allen Wilkgren, ed., *Josephus in Nine Volumes. With an English Translation by Ralph Marcus*, 1969, pp. 42-3. He suggests that the Herod-Mariam story as told in *The History of The Jewish Wars* contains many anachronisms and that *The Antiquities* version is preferable.

potential effects of such changes. This will inevitably entail a brief discussion of the major characters, beginning with those which are seemingly changed for purely structural reasons and ending with those which are changed with apparently no structural motivation. Finally, I will present an argument for the play being a radical comment on the patriarchal society of Renaissance England, as opposed to a representation of a distant culture, through an exploration of the language and structure of the text and the values apparent therein.

In determining the relationship of the play to its sources, it is first necessary to ascertain upon which edition of Josephus Elizabeth Carey relied. The works of Josephus were not available in an English translation until 1602, with the publication of Thomas Lodge's *The Famous and Most Memorable works of Josephus*.<sup>3</sup> Until then, the only edition printed in England was in Greek.<sup>4</sup> There were, however, a prolific amount of translations of Josephus, in Latin, Czech, Dutch, French, Spanish and Italian, published on the Continent throughout the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Whether or not Elizabeth Carey had access to any of them is difficult to determine. It is certain that she had already had access to at least one work published abroad, *Le Miroir du Monde*

3. The STC entry suggests a sustained interest among stationers in the publication of this work:

Josephus, Flavius. *The Famous and Memorable Works of Josephus*. Tr by T. Lodge. fol. (*P. Short*) at the charges of G. Bishop, S. Waterson, P. Short, a. T. Adams 1602. Ent to R. Walley 7 mr. 1591; ass'd to P. Short 12 oc. 1591; ent to S. Waterson, P. Short, a. T. Adams 26 jn 1598. STC 14809.

The copy in the Special Collections of the Brotherton Library has the following handwritten on the title page:

*The most auncient historie of the Jewes: comprised in twenty books. And newly translated out of the Greek, Latin and French into English by Thomas Lodge, D.M.P. Printed at London on Bread-Street Hill at the signe of the Starre, 1602.*

All quotations are taken from this text.

4. The STC lists only one translation of Josephus' works published before Newton's translation. This was in Greek, ... *cum Latina interpretatione Joannis Luidi*. Oxonia, Jos Barnesius, 1590, STC 14814.

5. NUC, vol. 285, pp. 148; 166-7; 168-70; 171-3; 175.

by Abraham Ortelius, published in Amsterdam in 1598, which she translated (see Ch. 1, p. 62.). Elizabeth Carey was proficient in many languages, so it is possible that she worked on the play from her own reading of Josephus in a European translation, rather than made use of the English translation.

However, A.C. Dunstan, in his introduction to the Malone Society facsimile edition, <sup>6</sup> argues that she did use Lodge's translation, mainly from the evidence of various verbal agreements. He points out the similarity between certain phrases in *The Tragedy of Mariam* and phrases in Lodge's translation. For example in Carey's Argument she says "and presently after by the instigation of Salome, [Mariam] was beheaded" (ll. 51-2), which corresponds with Lodge's translation "Marriame by Salomes instigation is led to execution" (*Ant.*, p. 398). Likewise, when referring to the assassination of Aristobolus, Carey's Argument talks of how he was drowned "under colour of sport" (l. 13), whereas Lodge has "pretending to duck him in sport" (*Ant.*, p. 386). Finally, Dunstan refers to the line, "Am I the Mariam that presum'd so much" (IV viii 1799), which he says ties in with the Lodge translation thus: "For she being entertained by him, who intirely loved her ... she presumed upon a great and intemperate libertie in her discourse" (*Ant.*, p. 399). In support of Dunstan's argument, there are several other instances of such verbal agreement. The phrase "under the colour of" or "under colour of" occurs more than once in Lodge's translation, most notably:

under the colour of a high and magnanimous spirit, he made shewe to pardon [Alexandra] of his meere clemencie: yet inwardly resolved hee to make young Aristobolus away (*Ant.*, p. 385).

The idea of Mariam "presuming" also makes another significant appearance: "shee presumed too much upon the intire affection wherewith her husband was intangled" (*Ant.*, p. 398). Other textual similarities appear in the Argument: "[Mariam] still bare the death of her Friends exceeding hardly" (ll. 27-8), compared to Lodge's "she digested the losse of her friends also

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6. Dunstan (1914), pp. xiv-xv.

verie hardly" (*Ant.*, p. 399). In Act III: "Unbridled speech is Mariams worst disgrace" (III iii 1186) compared to Lodge's "the too unbridled manners of [Herod's] wife" (*Ant.*, p. 399). Finally in Act IV: "I know that mov'd by importunitie, / You made him Priest" (IV iii 1399-1400) compared to Lodge's "Mariamme did continually importune him to give the priesthood to her brother" (*Ant.*, p. 384).<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, Lodge has a character called the butler, translated from the Latin "pincernam", and Carey has Bu., presumably a butler, as it is he who brings Herod the cup of wine in IV iii. To substantiate Dunstan's claim, Elizabeth Carey's use of the translation "butler" is particularly telling in comparison to other dramatic versions of the story. In his *Mariamne*, Alexandre Hardy uses a term approximating to the English "Cup-bearer" rather than butler, presumably the result of using a French or Latin version of Josephus.<sup>8</sup> Gervase Markham and William Sampson in *The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater* (1622)<sup>9</sup> conflate the character of the Cup-bearer with that of Pheroras, referring in the *dramatis personae* to "Pheroras, brother to Herod, and Cup-bearer".<sup>10</sup> The evidence points to the fact that Markham

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7. Another similarity, which is perhaps less evident of influence, but is interesting nevertheless, is between the misogynistic diatribe of Constabarus and a description of Salome in the Lodge translation:

You giddy creatures, sowers of debate,  
 You'll love to day, and for no other cause,  
 But for you yesterday did deply hate ...  
 And Salome ...  
 ... their leader is allowd.  
 (IV vi 1597-9; 1603-4)

so variable, that according to the time, one while [Salome] would professe friendship, and presently after hatred (*Ant.*, p. 425).

8. Alexandre Hardy, *Mariamne*, in *More Plays by Rivals of Corneille and Racine*, trans. and ed. Lacy Lockert, 1968, pp. 8-51. All quotations will be taken from this edition.

9. Gervase Markham (1568-1637) and William Sampson (?-?), *The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater: With the Death of Faire Mariam. According to Josephus, that learned and famous Jew*, 1622, STC 17401.

10. Gervase Markham and William Sampson, *The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater* (1622), ed. Gordon Nicholas Ross, 1979, p. 6.

and Sampson were not indebted to Lodge's translation at all. Whereas Lodge's translation has the names of Herod's sister and mother as Salome and Cyprus, Markham and Sampson use Salumith and Kiparim. Furthermore, "The Printer's Epigrammatical Epistle, to the understanding Readers" contains the lines:

A story, which I dare be bold is true;  
Now newly writ, and truly worth your reading,  
Gather'd from learn'd Josephus <sup>11</sup>

which implies a fresh translation as well as a different format. Furthermore, this play is listed as a *translation* of Josephus, based on books XIV and XV, in Henrietta R. Palmer's *List of English Editions and translations of Greek and Latin Classics printed before 1641*.<sup>12</sup> Alternatively, in his edition of *The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater*, Gordon Ross suggests that Markham and Sampson did use a translation, albeit an 'unreliable one. They relied primarily upon an abridgement, *A Compendious and most marvelous history of the latter tymes of the Jewes commune weale, beginnyng where the Bible or Scriptures leave and continuing to the utter subversion and laste destruction of that countrey and people: Written in Hebrew by Joseph ben Gorion, a noble man of the same countrey, who sawe the most thinges him selfe, and was auctour and doer of a great part of the same. Translated into Englishe by Peter Marwyng, 1558, STC 14795*. According to Ross, Marwyng was either being deliberately misleading, or he took Joseph ben Gorion to be another form of Flavius Josephus. In fact, ben Gorion merely abridged Josephus' original work in the tenth-century and it was a sixteenth-century Latin version of this which Marwyng translated.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, either case would support the argument that "Cup-bearer" seems to have been

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11. Ibid., pp. 2-3, ll. 24-6.

12. Henrietta R. Palmer, *A List of English Editions and translations of Greek and Latin Classics printed before 1641*, 1911, pp. 65-6.

13. Markham and Sampson, op. cit., p. vii.

the more usual translation of the Latin "pincernam", which would suggest that Elizabeth Carey did, in fact, refer to the Lodge translation which has the more unusual rendering, "butler".

In addition, there is the issue of the roles played, according to Josephus, by the butler/Cup-bearer and another servant, the eunuch, in perjuring Mariam. Hardy's text includes both of these characters, as does Lodovico Dolce's *Marianna*, 1565.<sup>14</sup> Carey's text uses only the butler in this role. Dunstan claims that this is the result of Lodge's rather confusing text which translates 'eunuchum Mariammes fidissimum' as 'Mariammes most faithful servant' (*Ant.*, p. 398), which "A slightly inattentive reader of Lodge might easily assume that the butler and the eunuch were one and the same person, as actually in the drama".<sup>15</sup> An examination of the Lodge translation would seem to bear out this claim:

[The butler] at that verie instant was sent in to discover his treacherie unto the king; for which cause with a sober and staied countenance he entred in unto him, being seriously and well prepared to discourse, and told him that Mariamme had bribed him to present his Majestie with an amorous cup of drinke. Now when he perceived that the king was troubled with these words, he prosecuted his discourse, alleaging that the potion was a certaine medicine which Mariamme had given him, the vertue whereof he knew not, which he had received according as he had told him, knowing that it concerned both his owne securitie, and the kings safetie.

Herode, who before this was highly displeased, hearing these words, was so much the more incensed: for which cause he presently commanded Marriammes most faithfull servant to be examined by torments, as concerning the poison, supposing that it was impossible for her to understand any thing whatsoever, without his privitie. He being tired and tormented after this cruell manner, confessed nothing of that for which he was tortured; but declared unto the king that the hatred which his wife had conceived against him, proceeded from certaine words that Sohemus had told her. (*Ant.*, p. 398)

Apart from the torturing of the servant, the scene occurs in exactly the same way in IV iv of *The Tragedy of Mariam*, but the revelation about Sohemus is made by the butler.

Because the first English translation of the works of Josephus came out

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14. Valency (1940), p. 46.

15. Dunstan (1914), p. xiv.

in 1602, at least a year before *The Tragedy of Mariam* is thought to have been written, it could be argued that Elizabeth Carey's choice of subject matter for her play was influenced by the fact that the source was now readily available in English. The works of Josephus had already been made known to the English play-going public, as a result of the growing restrictions on Biblical drama which emerged throughout the reign of Elizabeth I. Her proclamation of 16 May 1559 officially banned all plays

wherein either matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the common weale shalbe handled or treated <sup>16</sup>

and, according to Murray Roston,

Immediately subsequent to the cessation of biblical drama came a spate of plays based either upon the less sacred Apocrypha or upon the histories of Josephus, which provided a biblical setting without the problems of a sacred text ... [and] the alternative of the Apocrypha and of Josephus to the sacred Bible itself had been exploited earlier when the mystery plays were under attack for their 'perversion' of the Scriptures. <sup>17</sup>

The popularity of Josephus as a dramatic source carried on into the seventeenth-century, used by Philip Massinger in *The Duke of Millaine* (1623) and William Heming in *The Jewes Tragedy* (1662). <sup>18</sup>

The possibility that Carey was writing for an audience to whom the source would be well known is indicated by the fact that, although knowledge of the source is not really necessary to understand and appreciate *The Tragedy of Mariam* as a piece of literature, there are a large number of esoteric references which are only made clear by knowledge of both *The Antiquities* and *The Jewish Wars*. For example, when Mariam makes her final speech in IV viii, she refers to Herod's rejection of Cleopatra's advances. The

16. Quoted in Frank Fowell and Frank Palmer, *Censorship in England*, 1913, p. 14.

17. Murray Roston, *Biblical Drama in England*, 1968, pp. 117-8.

18. Heming, William (1602-16??), *The Jewes Tragedy ... Agreeable to the Authentick and Famous History of Josephus*, 1662, Wing H1425. Massinger, Philip (1584-1660) *The Duke of Millaine*, 1623, STC 17634.

reference has little more than a rhetorical function, yet such an incident did actually occur, according to *The Antiquities*:

she sought to allure him and draw him to her lust, being of her selfe naturally addicted to such pleasures ... But Herode was not over-kindly bent towards Cleopatra, knowing of long time how badly she was enclined towards al men (*Ant.*, p. 389).

Similarly, when Herod talks of Phaesus,

Valiant Phasaelus, now to thee farewell,  
Thou wert my kinde and honorable brother:  
Oh haples houre, when you selfe striken fell  
(IV ii 1311-13)

he is referring to an incident which took place during Herod's struggle for the crown of Judea. Phaesus, one of Herod's brothers, was taken prisoner by the enemy and killed himself because, after being captured by the enemy, he could not bear the shame of execution at their hands (*Ant.*, p. 373).

## Style

*The Tragedy of Mariam* was never publicly performed, and was not published until 1613. It is possible, then, with the evidence from *Life*, which tells of her early literary pursuits being encouraged by her husband and the dedication of the play to her sister-in-law,<sup>19</sup> that *The Tragedy of Mariam* was evolved as a private entertainment based on material that was newly available to all. Alternatively, the interest in Josephus, revived by the availability of the new translation, may have encouraged Elizabeth Carey to attempt her own version of a story which had been manifested in dramatic form on the Continent several times previously.<sup>20</sup>

Critical opinion has not, so far, located any discernible influence on

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19. Appendix A, p. 250.

20. Hans Sachs, *Tragedia der Wutrich Konig Herodes*, MS dated 1552; Lodovico Dolce, *Marianna*, acted c. 1560, printed Vinegia, 1565; William Goldingham, *Herodes Tragoedia*, MS c. 1567; L.L. de Argensola, *La Alejandra*, acted c. 1585, printed Madrid, 1772; Alexandre Hardy, *Mariamne*, acted 1600, printed Paris 1625. The precise date of Hardy's composition is in dispute. Lockert, op. cit., p. 3, quotes 1605 as the earliest date of composition.



*The Tragedy of Mariam* by any of the previous dramas. Certainly, it appears to have been difficult for Elizabeth Carey to have had access to any of the texts. However, there are certain structural similarities between *The Tragedy of Mariam* and Hardy's *Mariamne* which cannot go without comment. In Hardy the characters are drawn somewhat differently: Mariam has a death wish from the very beginning, and Pheroras joins with Salome in hatred of Mariam and in stirring up Herod's feelings against her. However, the basic storyline used and the action by which the play is bounded are virtually the same as Carey's play. Hardy's first act opens with the ghost of Aristobolus, who gives a précis of Herod's wicked deeds prior to the start of the play; this is also the subject matter of Mariam's and Alexandra's speeches in I i and I ii of Carey's play.

There is rather more similarity between the final acts of both plays. In each, the story of Mariam's death is reported to Herod by a messenger, who gives a short speech on the magnitude of his news before conveying it to Herod. The story of Mariam's execution follows *The Antiquities* fairly closely, concentrating on Mariam's bravery, and calm welcoming of death, and the verbal attack on her by her mother, Alexandra. Herod goes mad with remorse, unwilling to believe that Mariam is actually dead, and then wishing for his own death when he realises what he has done. With the exception of the brief appearance of Salome and Pheroras in the Hardy version, the act follows virtually the same structure as Carey's. Of particular interest is Mariam's manner of death. Hardy's messenger says "One blow divided then her head and body." (V i 132) and Carey's says "Her body is divided from her head." (V i 2032). This would not be particularly noteworthy were it not for the fact that, as Margaret Ferguson notes of Carey's play: "the graphic image of the dead and sundered woman (which appears nowhere in Josephus's account) allows us ... to gauge the price Mariam must pay for her freedom of

conscience."<sup>21</sup> That both writers chose to name the manner of death as decapitation is noteworthy, though does not necessarily indicate any influence as both writers belonged to societies in which this was the usual mode of death for nobility thus condemned. It is impossible to be conclusive about the relationship between Hardy's and Carey's texts, but perhaps it would not be unfeasible to suggest that Elizabeth Carey had heard about the play, or even read an account of a performance of it, considering the similarities in the opening and closing scenes. It is also possible, if Lockert's date of Hardy's play is correct (see p. 82, n. 20), that his text was influenced by Carey's.

Other influences on *The Tragedy of Mariam* can be traced to the literary activities of the Wilton Circle, at the centre of which stood Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke. There has been much critical debate as to whether this group favoured any particular dramatic genre in their writing. Margaret P. Hannay discounts the opinion, promoted by critics such as Alexander Witherspoon and T.S. Eliot, that the Countess of Pembroke was "the inept leader of a conspiracy against the popular stage" whose "strategy was supposedly to root out the literary barbarism of Shakespeare and others by fostering insipidly correct dramas based on the model of Robert Garnier."<sup>22</sup> Rather, together with Michael G. Brennan and Mary Ellen Lamb, Hannay discounts any notion of a Wilton conspiracy.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, Elizabeth Carey could well have been influenced by their activities, particularly the Countess of Pembroke's translation of Robert Garnier's *The Tragedie of Antonie*, 1592.<sup>24</sup>

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21. Ferguson (1992), p. 246.

22. Hannay (1990), p. 120.

23. Hannay (1990), p. 249, n. 53.

24. Robert Garnier, *The Tragedie of Antonie*, trans. Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke (1595), ed. Alice Luce, Weimar, 1897, p.39, says this translation is "the first of that series of pure Seneca plays which appeared in the last decade of Elizabeth's reign".

There is some biographical evidence for linking Elizabeth Carey with the Wilton circle, through her association with Michael Drayton, and the fact that with the Countess of Pembroke and Lucy, Countess of Bedford she is joint dedicatee of John Davies's *The Muses Sacrifice* (Appendix B, p. 254). Margaret Ferguson claims that "Cary's play is clearly indebted to that aristocratic experiment [Pembroke's translation of *Antonie*] in Senecan closet drama."<sup>25</sup> *Antonie* and *The Tragedy of Mariam* share an Argument, a five-act structure and a Chorus. It is also possible that Elizabeth Carey found the unusual quatrain rhyme scheme in *Cleopatra* (1594) by Samuel Daniel who was also by a member of the Wilton Circle. However, Carey's play departs from the style of both *Antonie* and *Cleopatra*:

*Marc Antoine* is a drama of character, not of action; Garnier was not interested in events themselves, but in the refraction of events through different viewpoints, giving the perspectives of both the noble protagonists and their subjects.<sup>26</sup>

In the *Tragedy of Mariam*, the only offstage actions are the various executions; all other action is performed onstage. It is only V i, which consists of the Nuntio's report of Mariam's execution and Herod's subsequent madness, which comes close to this "refraction of events through different viewpoints".

The presence of a Senecan structure and Senecan elements in the play has been invoked as a critical catch-all to explain the changes which Carey has made to the original source material - to the detriment both of Carey's abilities as a creative writer and of the subversive undertones in the text. A.C. Dunstan, in both of his critical pieces on *The Tragedy of Mariam*, views the text in this way:

*In order to secure Unity of Time, the order of some events has had to*

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25. Ferguson (1992), p. 235. Lewalski (1993), p. 191, says "In addition to this influential precedent by an aristocratic woman, the closest analogues for *Mariam* are other tragedies written by members of the Countess's circle: Samuel Daniel's *Cleopatra* and *Philotas*, and Fulke Greville's *Mustapha*."

26. Hannay (1990), p. 120.

be altered. This alteration has been made in nearly every case *to make the story more probable*, by giving sufficient motive for the actions, or *to ennoble a particular character*. (my italics)<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, in his introduction to the Malone Society facsimile reprint:

She follows Josephus fairly closely, but makes several alterations, sometimes compressing, sometimes amplifying, frequently transposing events, occasionally inventing scenes, *to simplify the story and observe the unities*. (my italics)<sup>28</sup>

Dunstan apparently casts Carey as the agent in a fusion of two patriarchally-informed cultural phenomena: Senecan tragedy and Josephus' *Antiquities*. I do not disagree with Dunstan in that the changes made to the source would certainly appear to be in keeping with the conventions of classical, if not specifically Senecan, tragedy. However, this is not a sufficient explanation of the effects such changes have on the subject matter. Therefore, I wish to explode this convenient symbiotic relationship of Seneca and Josephus and suggest that Carey's alterations to Josephus' history have an altogether more radical agenda hidden under the notionally Senecan structure.

The text of *The Tragedy of Mariam* is a classic case of (albeit thinly) disguised rebellion, whereby on the surface Carey's writing appears to be orthodox, re-producing a well-known story in a well-known style. Sandra K. Fischer claims that this was precisely the method by which Carey asserted the right to produce literature:

Lady Cary's tendency to choose well-known stories from prominent sources indicates one of the circumlocutious devices of the genres of marginality: *in a simple retelling of the facts*, the author is not obliged to accept responsibility for what may be considered rebellious notions. (my italics)<sup>29</sup>

But in emphasising the disguise, Fischer fails to credit Carey with any literary creativity. For Elizabeth Carey does not present a simple retelling of the facts. *The Tragedy of Mariam* retains only the barest outline of the story, i.e. Herod's obsessive love and fatal jealousy, provoked by Mariam's coldness

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25. Dunstan (1908), p. 28.

28. Dunstan (1914), p. xiii.

29. Fischer (1985), p. 228.

and Salome's slanders. Names and events from Josephus are used, but give a totally different effect to that of *The Antiquities*. Fischer's argument indicates one of the problems of identifying feminist subversion in apparently orthodox texts: the method of disguise is often emphasised at the expense of the rebellious content. This is certainly inappropriate in the case of *The Tragedy of Mariam*, in which Carey's use of established authorities constitutes a very transparent veil over a text which actively questions, rather than upholds, male authority.

There seems, however, to be a considerable dispute amongst Carey scholars as to whether *The Tragedy of Mariam* is a Senecan drama at all. Nancy Cotton accepts the Senecanism of the play without question.<sup>30</sup> Mildred Smoot Lawson, on the other hand, disputes the Senecan form, pointing to the fact that there are far too many individual scenes in the play - twenty three in all, whereas Senecan drama should properly have no more than seven. She also points out that the presence of the swordfight (II iii) constitutes dramatic action, which has no place in a Senecan tragedy.<sup>31</sup> Somewhat counterproductively, she suggests alternative patriarchal "auteurs" to preside over Elizabeth Carey's work, talking of "her choice to apply Sidney's ideals to Josephus' story in Daniel's form".<sup>32</sup> In 1981 Travitsky concluded that the play is closer to the structure of Greek drama than to that of French Senecanism, referring to its adherence to the unities of time and place, the lack of ghosts, the presence of not more than three speaking actors in any one scene and the inclusion of a Chorus at the end of the fifth act as evidence.<sup>33</sup> This would prove a convincing and useful argument were it not

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30. Cotton (1980), p. 33, "Stylistically and dramaturgically, the play is competently though conventionally Senecan."

31. Mildred Smoot Lawson, "Elizabeth Tanfield Carey and *The Tragedy of Mariam*", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1985, p. 71.

32. Ibid., p. 77.

33. Travitsky (1981), p. 212.

for the fact that in 1987, for no apparent reason, Travitsky changed her mind and classified the play as "a highly regular, Senecan closet drama".<sup>34</sup>

The ease with which the "Senecanism" of *The Tragedy of Mariam* can be discussed is further compromised by a lack of agreement on the definition of Senecanism. J.W. Cunliffe, in his work on the influence of Seneca on the tragedy of this period argues that Newton's<sup>35</sup> edition of Seneca's tragedies was held in high regard in Elizabethan England.<sup>36</sup> However, he also points out that although "Seneca's influence was felt ... the chief motive was to please a popular audience, which made complete submission to Seneca's authority impossible."<sup>37</sup> This would not necessarily apply to Carey, as she did not write for the public stage. Alternatively, G.K. Hunter has suggested that just because certain features of Senecan tragedy also appear in Elizabethan tragedy, this does not indicate a direct Senecan influence, as they could have been picked up from other sources. Furthermore:

If we are to take as 'Senecan' only what is common to the whole body of plays we are left with a residue of pretty obvious features. ... In formal terms there is the classically simple linear or progressive construction ... usually centred on the woes of the protagonist, showing an attempt to avoid fate or alleviate suffering, with the consequence that misery is only hastened and suffering deepened.<sup>38</sup>

These are certainly features which appear in *The Tragedy of Mariam* and they may be called Senecan, but the more significant issue is their effect rather than their name. The play presents the action as having happened within a single

34. Travitsky (1987), p. 187.

35. *Seneca his tenne tragedies translated into English*, ed. T. Newton, 1581, STC 22221. This contains *Hercules Furens*, *Thyestes* and *Troas* by J. Heywood; *Oedipus* by A. Nevile; *Hippolytus*, *Medea*, *Agammemnon* and *Hercules Octaeus* by J. Studley; the pseudo-Senecan *Octavia* by T. Nuce; and *Thebais* by T. Newton.

36. John W. Cunliffe, *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy*, Hamden, Connecticut, 1893, rpt. 1965, p. 2.

37. *Ibid.*, p.36

38. G.K. Hunter, *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition: Studies in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, Liverpool, 1978, p. 177.

day; there are no scene changes; the action is mostly (but by no means totally) rendered into reported speech and is of a thematically unified nature; there are never more than three speaking characters involved in any one scene and certain character-types appear in the play as they do in Seneca's plays, such as the Chorus and the Nuntio. Whether these features can correctly be dubbed "Senecan" constitutes something of a "blind alley" in the criticism of *The Tragedy of Mariam*. The real issue is the effect such features have had on the subject matter. It is not sufficient to pass off the changes Carey made to the source as her attempt to be pedantically Senecan in her writing; this insufficiency is exacerbated by a lack of definition as to what exactly "Senecanism" means.

### Manipulations

The Mariam story in *The Antiquities* and *The Jewish Wars* spreads over approximately two years, is intertwined with the machinations of various self-interested parties, and is presented as little more than a sub-plot to Herod's self-promotional political activities abroad. In transforming Mariam into the focus of a drama, changes occur which are not only structural in function but political in effect. The final Chorus refers to the action as having taken place in "twice sixe houres" (1. 2,206). This is a considerable change in time scale. Furthermore, the Argument refers to events which have occurred long before Herod's visit to Caesar, the earliest being Herod's marriage to Mariam in 35 BC (*Ant.*, p. 379). The play itself includes events which happened long after Mariam's death<sup>39</sup> which are presented as being integral parts of the plot, even though the latest of these - Salome's relationship with Silleus - occurred in 7 BC, nineteen years after Mariam's death. The "twice sixe houres", then, is entirely a textual invention, in

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39. *JW*, p. 589, closes up the events somewhat, but not to the extent of the twelve hours of the play.

keeping with the unity of time, and so any temporal correspondence to the source is lost.

The Argument, by way of introduction, condenses the first four chapters of Book XV of *The Antiquities*, highlighting the events most relevant, thematically speaking, to the action of the play. For example, according to Josephus, Herod has killed only Aristobolus when Alexandra makes her accusation to Antony. Herod killed Hircanus at a much later date, just before he was summoned by the newly empowered Caesar. So, two thematically linked events - the systematic erosion of the blood royal by Herod - are temporally juxtaposed, each reinforcing the other. The time and events between Herod's first journey abroad to see Antony and his second to see Caesar are, therefore, necessarily condensed. In *The Antiquities*, once Herod returns from Antony, he becomes involved in political intrigues with Antony and Cleopatra, the battle of Actium is fought, Antony sets Herod to march against the Arabian King, an earthquake hits Judea and Herod is eventually victorious over the Arabs. All this is reduced to the words "In this meane time" (Argument, l. 29). Thematically speaking, Herod's two journeys are very similar. On both occasions Herod gave instructions that Mariam should be killed if he were to lose his life. On both occasions the servant entrusted to do so betrayed Herod's orders to Mariam and when Herod returned he assumed that an adulterous relationship had occurred between Mariam and the servant because of this betrayal. A pseudo-Biblical typology is constructed by the Argument, indicating that it is familial and marital issues which are the central, significant issues in the play.

*The Tragedy of Mariam* is not de-politicised, as A.C. Dunstan implies,<sup>40</sup> but focuses on the politics of love, sex and marriage rather than on the international political activities of Herod. This focusing is further enhanced by the fact that the play keeps to the convention of never having

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40. Dunstan (1908), p. 46.



more than three speaking characters involved in any one scene. This prevents the presentation of political drama at a national, public level and keeps the subject matter within the bounds of the politics of personal relationships. Thus, *The Tragedy of Mariam* explores the specifically sexual politics of a society where the married man is not only his wife's husband but also her lord. This focus on the domestic is particularly well emphasised by the text's observation of the unity of place. The play sets all the action in Jerusalem, unlike *The Antiquities*, which concentrates on Herod, as he pursues his career around the eastern Mediterranean. In *The Antiquities* Jerusalem and its inhabitants are only referred to in terms of the orders Herod leaves when he goes away and the state of the city when he returns. Carey seized the opportunity to write the silences left by Josephus. The first three acts are particularly significant in this respect as they set prime importance on the relationships between the women and the new found freedom that everyone (but particularly the women) have found now that Herod is believed to be dead. The incorporation of the rumours of Herod's death, which were actually perpetrated during Herod's visit to Antony (*Ant.*, p. 387), is the single most significant change Carey makes to the source material, in that the dramatic action is motivated by the characters' licence to re-consider their positions with Herod permanently absent.

The striking triumvirate which dominates the majority of the first act could only have been brought about by major changes to the physical locations of the women, which facilitates this encounter. *The Antiquities* specifically states that Mariam and Alexandra were placed in the castle of Alexandrian, whereas Salome was placed in the castle of Masada, (*Ant.*, p. 395) precisely to prevent the kind of dispute shown in I iii. In Carey's version, then, the women are re-placed at the centre of power and imbued with freedom of speech and self-determination. The unity of place sets Jerusalem as the non-moving focus of the play and Herod becomes the

intrusive "other" whose return destroys a liberated, if not exactly harmonious society.

The play observes the unity of action on a thematic level, a feature made possible only by large-scale alterations to the source covering the period of Herod's absence until the death of Mariam. The most significant alteration is the removal of Herod's state political motives in his relationship with Mariam. The play does not just cut out Herod's external political activities, but also his political considerations in relation to his wife and family. Although *The Antiquities* and *The Jewish Wars* make it very clear how much Herod loved Mariam, his reasons for wanting her to die if he died were more complex than the obsessive sexual jealousy which the play presents. When Herod first leaves Mariam, in the care of Joseph, *The Antiquities* presents Herod's motive as a mixture of love and political expediency:

For he loved her so extremely by reason of her beautie, that he supposed himselfe injured, if, after his decease she should be beloved by any other; and he openly declared that all that miserie which befell him, proceeded from Anthonies passion, and intire affection, and admiration of her beauty, whereof he had before time heard some report. (*Ant.*, p. 387)<sup>41</sup>

The second time Herod leaves such orders is much more overtly political in *The Antiquities*; this is of greater significance because it is this occasion with which the play deals. Herod's order in *The Antiquities* extends to Alexandra and has an entirely political motive - to prevent her mounting a coup. Sohemus and his men are informed by Herod that:

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41. The exact meaning of the Greek text is in dispute. Thomas Lodge's 1602 version suggests Herod gave out that the "official" reason for being summoned by Antony was that Antony desired Mariam and so wanted an excuse to be rid of Herod. It is also implied that this is the reason that Herod wants Mariam to be killed if he is executed by Antony. The 1969 translation makes this meaning more explicit:

For, he said, he was very much in love with his wife and feared the outrage (it would be to his memory) if even after his death she were pursued by another man because of her beauty. All this was a way of indicating Antony's desire for the woman, of whose beauty, as it happened, he had long before casually heard.

Allen Wilkgren, op. cit., warns, p. 33, n. f, "text and meaning slightly unclear".

if they should be certified that any sinister mishap had befallen him, they should presently kill [Mariam and Alexandra], and to the utmost of their power continue the kingdome in his children, and his brother Pheroras. (*Ant.*, p. 395)

There is no mention of Herod's jealousy over Mariam this time. Yet in the play both events are set down to Herod's jealousy and Alexandra is not included in the death threat revealed to Mariam by Sohemus. Furthermore, according to *The Antiquities*, the imprisonment and execution of Mariam are for political reasons. When Salome sets to work on Herod, persuading him to go through with the execution of Mariam, it is by instilling in him the fear of possible sedition that she succeeds in turning him against her, which contrasts with the corresponding scene in the play, in which Salome works *entirely* upon Herod's jealousy. Gender relations and sexual politics completely replace the state politics of *The Antiquities*.

The muting of international and governmental politics by the play is most apparent in its presentation of Herod's character. *The Tragedy of Mariam* gives no sense of the wily politician who can manipulate Caesar and come out of a potentially fatal situation with more power and status than before. In the play, the only mention of Herod's situation is made by one of Baba's sons in II ii:

Upon submission Caesar will forgive:  
And therefore though the tyrant did amisse,  
It may fall out that he will let him live.  
(II ii 723-5)

This is a very different situation from that in *The Antiquities* which records Herod's skilful speech to Caesar and then comments:

By these words (which were manifest testimonies of his resolute and noble courage) he so inwardly indeered himselfe unto Caesar, who was a magnificent and worthy monarcke, that hee converted this his accusation into an occasion to winne and worke him to be his friend (*Ant.*, p. 396).

And when Herod first appears at the beginning of Act IV, Mariam evidently concerns him more than state politics. His entire role in the play is to display his obsession with and jealousy of Mariam.

To complement the sexual politics of Herod and Mariam's

relationship, the text of the play includes thematically related characters and events which appear elsewhere in *The Antiquities*. Doris, Herod's rejected first wife, and Antipater their son (Herod's first born), Salome's marriage to and divorce from Constabarus, including the death of Baba's sons,<sup>42</sup> Salome's alliance with Silleus and the marriage of Pheroras and Graphina all appear in separate sections of *The Antiquities*. The play exploits the fact that the characters are linked by the themes of love, marriage and divorce, and reworks their stories to complement the main action of the play. They therefore undergo considerable changes in motivation and action.

Doris is in a very anomalous position, both in relation to Jewish law and Christian law. The play says that Herod divorced her, but she argues against the legality of this action because she fulfilled all her marital duties. The sources do not provide very many details about Doris's position. *The Antiquities* says:

[Herod] was to marrie Alexanders the sonne of Aristobolus daughter, who was Hircanus neece: on whom he begat three sonnes and two daughters. Before her also had he married a wife of his owne nation, who was called Doris, on whm he begat Antipater his eldest sonne (*Ant.*, p. 368).

*The Jewish Wars* is a little more explicit:

For being now made king, he put away his wife, which he first married (which was a Ladie borne in Jerusalem, whose name was Doris) ... For he banished his eldest sonne Antipater, whom he had by Doris, out of the citie, onely for his childrens sake that he had by Mariamme, licensing him onely at festivall times to come unto the citie in regard of some suspicion of treason intended against him. (*JW*, p. 589)

The play makes a definite presentation of Doris as the repudiated wife, a kind of nothing - being neither maid, widow, nor wife - nor even a divorcee. Her position in the play is a rhetorical one rather than a functional one. She appears only in two scenes - II ii where she plans to persuade Herod to accept Antipater as his heir, and IV viii in which she gloats over Mariam, claiming

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42. Although he describes this event at a much later point in his text, Josephus dates it as having been contemporaneous with the marital problems between Herod and Mariam. In *The Antiquities* the two events are not intertwined as they are in the play.

that it was her supplication for revenge on Mariam that has caused Mariam's downfall. She does not interact with any other characters to move the plot forward. Her character and motivation are not so much changed as invented and her position in the play is as anomalous as her social position, giving a voice to the "nothing" which patriarchy deems her to be.

The other introduced characters are integrated into the plot considerably more than Doris. Pheroras and Graphina become implicitly involved in Salome's scheming against Mariam. This stems from Pheroras' decision to marry Graphina, a slave, whilst he, like the rest of Judea, is under the impression that Herod is dead; thus contributing to the sense of freedom whilst Herod is absent. In *The Antiquities*, Pheroras is much more assertive and defiant, openly having a relationship with his maid (who is not named) whilst Herod is *in situ* in Jerusalem. Pheroras also refuses Herod's choice of wife for him:

[Pheroras] fell so farre in love with one of his maides, that he refused the kings daughter offered unto him, rather making choise of his maide. Herode took this in verie evill part, seeing his brother (who had received so many benefits at his hands, and was almost his fellow in his kingdome by his meanes) not to shew the like brotherly affection to him againe as he then ought, and himselfe to be an unhappie brother. (pp. 423-4)

Pheroras is subsequently persuaded to agree to marry another bride of Herod's choosing, although the wedding never occurs as Pheroras is not prepared to abandon his maid. However, in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Pheroras fears that the returning Herod will force him to leave Graphina, and so he becomes involved with Salome's plots. In III ii she agrees to placate Herod on his behalf, in return for Pheroras telling Herod that Constabarus harboured Baba's sons, and that Salome only divorced Constabarus because of his disloyalty to Herod. This exchange of voices is Carey's invention. In *The Antiquities* both Pheroras and Salome speak for themselves on quite separate occasions - Pheroras chose Graphina in 7 BC, whilst Salome betrayed Constabarus in 28 BC.

The inclusion of Constabarus and the sons of Baba constitutes a subplot involving Salome and her desire for a divorce from Constabarus to allow her to marry Silleus. There is a considerable difference between the male characters in the play and those in *The Antiquities*, so much so, that if it were not for the similarity of their names, it would be difficult to equate them with each other. To begin with, Baba's sons have no voice in *The Antiquities*. They are described as having been on the side of Antigonus (the rightful King) when Herod captured Judea. In *The Tragedy of Mariam* they act rather more like commentators on Renaissance masculine modes of honour and friendship and are the only characters who express misgivings about the news of Herod's death and fear his imminent return. Costabarus (Lodge's spelling) is described by Josephus as a politically duplicitous creature, with his own best interests at heart - a stark contrast to the moralistic, if misogynistic character who appears in *The Tragedy of Mariam*. *The Antiquities* relate how Costabarus behaved after he became governor of Idumea under Herod:

Costabarus, seeing himselfe in this estate beyond his expectation, grew more elate and proud then his good fortune required, and in a little time forgot himselfe so farre, that he thought himselfe dishonoured, if he shoulde performe that which Herod commaunded him and scorned that the Idumaeans should be under the Jewes subjection, notwithstanding that they had received their manner of government from them. (*Ant.*, p. 400)

His motives for concealing the sons of Baba are shown to be very different from those given in *The Tragedy of Mariam*:

after that [Jerusalem] was surprised by Herode, and he grew master of the estate, Costabarus, who was appointed to keepe the citie gates, and to lie in wait that none of those who were accused to have forsaken the kings side, should escape, knowing that sonnes of Babas were greatly esteemed and honoured among the people, and foreseeing that their safetie might be small furtherance to himselfe, if at any time there might befortune any alteration; he discharged, and hid them with his owne possessions. (*Ant.*, pp. 400-1)

Furthermore, this is all part of a plot which he develops with other men - Antipater, Lysimachus and Dositheus - to overthrow Herod. Political self-interest is the motive behind Costabarus' actions in *The Antiquities*, but this is replaced by altruistic friendship in *The Tragedy of Mariam*; not only is the

focus on the personal, but the motive is diametrically opposed to that in the source.

Silleus' role is also changed - from active pursuer of Salome to a rather more idealistic lover. Syllaeus (Lodge's spelling) appears as a visitor from Arabia in 7 BC. On arriving at Jerusalem, the highly charismatic Syllaeus becomes enamoured of Salome. Having recently had a disagreement with Herod, Salome responds to Syllaeus and "did not greatly denie to marrie him, and many feasts being made at that time, they shewed evident signes of their mutuall consent, and love" (*Ant.*, p. 425). Once Herod begins to suspect, Syllaeus departs to Arabia, but returns two or three months later

requesting him to let Salome be his wife: affirming that that affinity would be profitable unto him for the trafficke between his people and the Arabians, whose prince he was to be, and did alreadie enjoy a great part of the dominion. Herod told al this unto his sister, and asked her if she would marie him: and she answered, she would. Then they requested that Syllaeus should become a Jew in religion, or else it was not lawful for him to mary her. He would not condescend hereunto, affirming that he should be stoned to death by his people, if he did it; and so he departed without obtaining his purpose. (*Ant.*, p. 425)

This has very little in common with the Silleus and Salome story in *The Tragedy of Mariam* in which Salome takes the initiative in securing their relationship. Herod is not involved at all and there is certainly no indication that this is a political alliance. *The Tragedy of Mariam* presents Silleus as a romantic lover and little more. The scene between Constabarus and Silleus is a total invention, in which Silleus plays the lover determined to fight for his lady's honour. Whether Silleus actually marries Salome is left entirely open as the play switches its focus to the relationship between Herod and Mariam after the middle of III.

Apart from Doris, whose voice and character are a complete literary invention, the characters taken from other parts of *The Antiquities* have undergone considerable changes in their situations and characteristics. Involvement with Salome in some way is something else they have in common, which would suggest that Salome's character has also undergone

some changes. On examination, these changes prove to be extremely significant in opening questions about the social and legal rights of women in a patriarchal society. In *The Antiquities*, Salome is a prominent character, usually, though not exclusively, sharing a role with her mother, Cyprus, as leader of the anti-Mariam faction. Nevertheless, Salome's malice against Mariam is presented as being due to Mariam's disdain of Salome's low birth, which is also her motive in *The Tragedy of Mariam* and Salome's poison plot is the feature of *The Antiquities* which is most faithfully represented in the play.

It is Salome's relationships with men which are the key to the way in which her character is different in the play. The character of Salome which emerges from her three relationships has a greater dimension than the bitter rival of Mariam as constructed by *The Antiquities*. Salome is presented as a determined, if ruthless woman who is prepared to arrange the death of one husband to marry the next. In I iii Mariam says

... to thy charge I might full justly lay  
A shamefull life, besides a husbands death.  
(I iii 253-4)

There is very little evidence at all in *The Antiquities* that Salome is ever considered to step beyond the bounds of sexual propriety. The only indication is when Salome is accused of "intemperancy" by Herod's wives over her love for Silleus (*Ant.*, p. 425). Yet, as Mariam explains in I iii, the Salome of the play has been considered sexually corrupt for a long time, as her love for Constabarus is presented as the motive behind her betrayal of her then husband, Joseph. Salome's reputation is confirmed by Salome herself:

Tis long agoe  
Since shame was written on my tainted brow.  
(I iv 292-3)

When married to Joseph, she fell in love with Constabarus and so conveniently arranged the execution of her husband, Joseph. Now she is in love with Silleus, and is faced with the same dilemma over Constabarus, she



evolves the idea of a divorce.

According to the sources, this link between the husbands is a temporal impossibility. Moreover, Salome's wavering desires have nothing to do with the deaths of any of her husbands. Salome's marriage to Costabarus does occur just after the death of Joseph but is not a result of her own choosing:

Herode was made king of the Jewes, and appointed Costabarus to be governor in Idumaea and Gaza, giving him Salome his sister to wife, after he had put Joseph to death, to whom she had bin married before time (*Ant.*, p. 400).

Similarly, the reason why Salome divorces Costabarus in *The Antiquities* is simply because of an argument, reason unspecified:

Salome fell at debate with Costabarus, for which cause she sent a libell of divorce to her husband, notwithstanding it were against the lawes and ordinarie customes of the Jewes. (*Ant.*, p. 400)

This reason could certainly not have been the one presented in *The Tragedy of Mariam* as Silleus does not appear in *The Antiquities* for another nineteen years. Having got her divorce Salome then has to explain herself to Herod, claiming that her actions stemmed from loyalty to him as Costabarus was plotting against Herod. As an example, Salome reveals that Costabarus has harboured the sons of Baba, which leads to the death of Costabarus and Baba's sons.

This is significantly different from the story as told in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, where Salome is characterised by her rampant self-determination, choosing Constabarus and Silleus for herself and dispensing with the current husband in whatever way possible. The implication made by the play is that, if Herod had not returned and forced Salome to compromise her position over the divorce, Constabarus would still be alive, even if divorced. As he says in I vi:

Yet I have better scap'd than Joseph did,  
But if our Herods death had bene delayd,  
The valiant youths that I so long have hid,  
Had bene by her, and I for them betrayd.  
(I vi 489-92)

And, as the plot unfolds, Salome's betrayal of Constabarus proves to be the

*alternative* to a divorce. Whilst Herod is absent, the divorce will stand, but after he returns Salome must resort once again to having her current husband killed in order to marry the next.

Salome's character is the one which undergoes the most reworking from the source material. As with all the other characters so far, some of the changes are related to the restructuring of the source story into a technically sound drama. This fact does not in any way compromise the effect such changes have on the sexual politics of the play; nor does this devalue the radical undermining of patriarchy which the play presents. In confirmation of this point, there are two characters whose presentation is considerably altered from the sources and yet there is no structural reason why this should be so. These are Sohemus and Mariam.

Sohemus and Mariam are not only changed as individual characters, but also in relation to one another. *The Tragedy of Mariam* presents Sohemus as a loyal and virtuous vassal to Mariam. His loyalties are all with her, despite the fact that he is Herod's chosen servant for the task of looking after (and killing) Mariam. It is Mariam who first mentions Sohemus' moral fortitude, in refusing to carry out Herod's orders to kill her, but informing her of them instead:

How happie was it that Sohemus [minde] <sup>43</sup>  
Was mov'd to pittie my distrest estate?  
(I i 49-50)

Similarly, in III iii, when Sohemus tells Mariam that Herod has returned, he has no consideration for his own life, but begs Mariam to be reconciled with the King for her own sake. At the end of the scene, when Mariam has gone, he eulogises on her goodness and chastity, but despairs for her life because of her "unbridled speech" (III iii 1186). He stoically expects death at Herod's hands because he has betrayed the King's commands; continuing his eulogy of

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43. Dunstan (1914) retains the 1613 "maide". This is evidently a printer's error. No maid appears in the play, or is ever mentioned, whereas "minde" makes the rhyme with "finde" at the end of l. 47.

Mariam, he is content to die for her:

And if I die, it shall my soule content,  
My breath in Mariams service shall be spent.  
(III iii 1216-7)

This faithful, selfless Sohemus does not appear in *The Antiquities*. Rather like Constabarus, he is presented as self-interested, working only for his own advantage. When Sohemus tells Mariam and Alexandra of Herod's orders,

he hoped not that he should return with the same power and authoritie, which before he had: and for that cause he thought thus in himselfe, that without incurring any danger in regard of Herod, he might greatly gratifie the Ladies; who in all likelihood should not be deprived of that dignitie, wherein they were at that time; but would returne him the like kindnes when Mariamme should be Queene, or next unto the king. (*Ant.*, p. 397)

And this would seem to have worked as Sohemus is given a governorship within Herod's lands. He does meet his fate however, as a result of the poison plot as told in both *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *The Antiquities*. Similarly, the Mariam of both *The Antiquities* and *The Jewish Wars* is not always the dignified character which the play presents. As far as her relationship with Sohemus is concerned, she has been changed as much as he has. Mariam displays self-interest and cunning as she persuades Sohemus to tell her of Herod's plans:

she laboured to winne the affections of those that had the charge of her, and especially Sohemus, knowing verie well that her safetie depended wholly on his hands. ... after these Ladies had with prettie presents and feminine flatteries mollified and wrought him by little and little, at last he blabbed out all that which the king had commanded him (*Ant.*, pp. 396-7).

This is very different from Mariam's claim that Sohemus told her because he pitied her "distrest estate" (I i 50). Just as the loyal vassal is not present in *The Antiquities*, neither is the revered and dignified mistress. The play removes all self-interest from both characters and sets up a relationship based on loyalty, kindness, but most of all, knowing one's place in the political hierarchy and behaving accordingly.

There are two differing accounts of the character of Mariam given by

*The Jewish Wars* and *The Antiquities*. The former gives an extremely negative account of her character and her effect on Herod:

But his private and domesticall sorrowes seemed to envie him his publike felicitie, and most adverse fortune befell him through the meanes of a woman, whom he loved as himselfe ... Mariamme the daughter of Alexander, who was Aristobolus sonne, which caused troubles in his house, both before, but especially after he returned from Rome ... For Mariamme hated him as much as he loved her: and having a just cause and colour of her discontent, and moreover being emboldened by the love which he bare her, she everie day upbraided him with that which he had done unto Hyrcanus her uncle and unto her brother Aristobolus ... These things did Mariamme daily cast in Herodes teeth, and upbraided both his mother and sister, with verie sharpe and reprochfull words (*JW*, p. 589).

*The Antiquities* is more generous to Mariam, especially in its final summing up of her character after she has been executed. However the impression is given that Mariam is cunning and highly manipulative - characteristics diametrically opposed to those of Mariam in the play. On the first occasion of Herod's return, she is not cold and scornful, but is prepared to use her wiles to pacify him:

She by solemne othes and by all possible allegations in her owne defence appeased the king little by little, and pacified his choler. (*Ant.*, p. 388)

This is very different from the attitude of Mariam in III iii, who determines not to pacify Herod in any fashion. Having "appeased" Herod, the Mariam of *The Antiquities* reveals that Joseph told her of Herod's plans to have her killed. Unlike the play, *The Antiquities* shows Mariam's revelation to be the primary cause of Joseph's death, as opposed to Salome's slanders; Herod orders Joseph's execution immediately, under his own assumption that Joseph has committed adultery with Mariam. She only escapes death because of Herod's love for her.

On the second occasion of Herod's absence, when he is summoned by Caesar, Mariam does not equivocate about his return as she does in the play. Rather, "she oftentimes wished that he might never more returne againe in safetie" (*Ant.*, p. 397). *The Antiquities* goes on to say that she was quite prepared to display her true feelings, like the Mariam in the play, but the vow

to abandon Herod's bed is not evident:

Upon his [Herod's] arrival, he found that fortune which was favourable unto him abroad, too froward at home, especially in regard of his wife, in whose affection before time he seemed to be most happy. For he was as inwardly touched with the lawfull love of Mariamme, as any other of whom the Histories make report: and as touching her, she was both chast and faithfull unto him; yet had she a certaine womanly imperfection and naturall frowardnesse, which was the cause that shee presumed too much upon the intire affection wherewith her husband was intangled (*Ant.*, p. 398).

Her epitaph gives a similar verdict:

Thus died Mariamme, having beene a woman that excelled both in continence and courage: notwithstanding that she defaulted somewhat in affabilitie and impatience of nature: for the rest of her parts, she was of an admirable and pleasing beautie, and of such a cariage in those companies wherein she was intertained, that it was impossible to expresse the same, in that she surpassed all those of her time; which was the principall cause that she lived not graciously and contentedly with the king. For being entertained by him, who intirely loved her, and from whom she received nothing that might discontent her, she presumed upon a great and intemperate libertie in her discourse. She digested also the losse of her friends verie hardly, according as in open termes she made it known unto the king: whereby also it came to passe, that both Herodes mother, and sister, and himselfe likewise grew at ods with her, and in especiall her husband, from whom onely she expected no hard measure. (*Ant.*, p. 399)

*The Tragedy of Mariam* certainly impresses upon the reader the sense of Mariam's arrogance due to her birth, beauty and also her assumption that Herod loves her so much that she does not expect to suffer any harm from him. However, the emphasis is perceptibly altered. The impression from *The Antiquities* is that Mariam would cynically use the excess of Herod's love in order to behave exactly as she liked - notwithstanding she had some cause for discontent - and fear no injury. The Mariam of the play text is much more reserved, reproaching Herod only once and then leaving the rest of her defence to her "innocence". Furthermore, she makes a vow to abjure Herod's bed - a firm decision which she will not compromise. In *The Antiquities* she makes no such vow. The Mariam of the play wants to have nothing more to do with Herod, to live apart from him; the Mariam of the sources uses Herod's desire for her as an opportunity to harangue him. The emphasis in the play is on Mariam's chastity, innocence and her heroic

attempt to live as true to herself as possible - characteristics barely noticeable in the Mariam of *The Antiquities*.

## Transformations

The basic story of the proud, chaste, beautiful Mariam done to death by a combination of wrongful slanders, Herod's jealousy and her own pride is therefore heavily reworked into a play which owes much more to Renaissance values than Jewish ones. In the play, the source material has been transformed to explore the politics of personal relationships under patriarchal rule - and the values of such politics are drawn from Carey's own society rather than that of Jerusalem in 28 BC. I would suggest that this use of an ancient Jewish society to articulate such an exploration could be seen as Carey's camouflage over her radical comments. To begin with, Jews were commonly held as wicked infidels, an image popularised by such characters as Barabas and Shylock. When still allowed to live in Britain, they were subject to violent racial abuse, especially during the crusades. The Jews were eventually expelled from the Britain by order of Edward I, in July 1290, and so when *The Tragedy of Mariam* was written, they had been the (r)ejected race for three hundred years.

A.C. Dunstan has commented upon the Jewishness of *The Tragedy of Mariam*:

The allusions in the piece are Jewish throughout. The writer always remembers that she is dealing with Jews in Jerusalem. The throne is therefore alluded to as "David's chair". There are many references to Jacob, Esau, Moses and other well-known figures of the Old Testament. ... Thus the author contrives to give us plenty of Jewish local colour. <sup>44</sup>

I would argue that the writer does not "always remember" that she is writing about Jews but rather that she never lets her audience forget. The "Jewishness" of the play lies mainly in the references, which are used in a

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44. Dunstan (1908), p. 44.

primarily rhetorical manner. In comparing a speech from the Renaissance translation of *Medea* and one from *The Tragedy of Mariam*, we can see how Renaissance writers employed mythical and cultural concepts as a form of theatrical set, to remind the audience where and when the action is supposed to be taking place. This extract from Studley's translation of *Medea*:

What Sylla coucht in roring Rockes, or what Charbydes wylde,  
 (That Sicill, and Ionium Sea by frothy waves doth sup)  
 What Aetna bolking stifling flames, and dusky vapours up,  
 (Whose heavy payse with stewing heate hath smoldring crush  
 beneath  
 Encelades, that fiery flakes from choked throte doth breath)  
 Can with such dreadfull menaces in sweeting fury? <sup>45</sup>

bears considerable resemblance, in structure and use of proper names, to Constabarus' speech in *The Tragedy of Mariam*:

Why then be wnesse Heav'n, the Judge of sinnes,  
 Be wnesse Spirits that eschew the darke:  
 Be wnesse Angels, wnesse Cherubins,  
 Whose semblance sits upon the holy Arke:  
 Be wnesse earth, be wnesse Palestine,  
 Be wnesse Davids Citie, if my heart  
 Did ever merit such an act of thine.  
 (I vi 451-7)

Such calling on the mythical figures and creations of a particular culture may be a useful way of locating the action of the play, but it does not necessarily extend to the cultural values of the text. As the comparison of the two speeches indicates, this style of rhetoric can be filled with references from any one of a number of cultures. However, on examining the political and moral issues which provide the occasion for such rhetoric, a world based on Renaissance cultural values is uncovered, and the "Jewish local colour" that A.C. Dunstan refers to is exposed as "colour" in the sense of mere decoration.

Yet Carey's process of disguise is much more subtle than a crude wholesale lifting of a Renaissance society and re-placing it in a foreign land. She actively exploits the common link between Judaism and Christianity -

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45. *Medea*, trans. J. Studley, in *Seneca his tenne tragedies*, ed. Thomas Newton (1581), ed. Charles Whibley, London, 1927, Act III p. 73.

namely the Old Testament. Much of the basis for Renaissance misogyny lay in the Old Testament, a text common to both Christian and Jewish religion, which provided a wealth of misogynistic, mystificatory literature displaying women as the "other" - defined by men, relational to men, and polarised by men.<sup>46</sup> Characters such as Eve, Jezebel and Delilah appeared regularly in misogynistic tracts. For example, Constabarus' speech before his death in IV vi may well make specific references to the Old Testament, but the kind of misogynistic discourse which Constabarus expresses was widely published in pamphlet form in Renaissance England, for example this extract from Joseph Swetnam's *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women* (1615):

Then who can but say that women sprung from the Devil? Whose heads, hands, and hearts, minds and souls are evil ... For women have a thousand ways to entice thee and ten thousand ways to deceive thee and all such fools as are suitors unto them ... a woman will pick thy pocket and empty thy purse, laugh in thy face and cut thy throat. They are ungrateful, perjured, full of fraud, flouting and deceit, unconstant, waspish, toyish, light, sullen, proud, discourteous, and cruel. And yet they were by God created and nature formed, and therefore by policy and wisdom to be avoided ... many women are in shape Angels but in qualities Devils, painted coffins with rotten bones ... if God had not made them only to be a plague to men, he would never have called them necessary evils.<sup>47</sup>

In tone and style, this extract is strikingly similar to the final speech of Constabarus in *The Tragedy of Mariam*. This speech is too lengthy to quote in full, but it is worth reproducing some sections to illustrate the common elements:

You creatures made to be the humane curse ...  
 You were the Angels cast from heave'n for pride,  
 And still doe keepe your Angels outward show,  
 But none of you are inly beautifide,  
 For still your heav'n depriving pride doth grow.  
 Did not the sinnes of many require a scourge,  
 Your place on earth had bene by this withstood:  
 But since a flood no more the world must purge,  
 You staid in office of a second flood. ...

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46. Bird (1974), pp. 41-88.

47. Joseph Swetnam, *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women* (1615), rpt. Henderson and McManus (1985), pp. 201-5.



You best, are foolish, froward, wanton, vaine,  
 Your worst adulterous, murderous, cunning, proud: ...  
 T'were better that the humane race should faile,  
 Then be by such a mischiefe multiplide.  
 Chams servile curse to all your sexe was given,  
 Because in Paradise you did offend:  
 Then doe we not resist the will of Heaven  
 When on your willes like servants we attend? ...  
 You are the least of goods, the worst of evils,  
 Your best are worse then men: your worst then divels.  
 (IV vi 1583; 1589-96; 1601-2; 1671-2; 1617-8)

The kind of railing which Carey presents through the character of Constabarus does not sound out of place in a play about pre-Christian Jews, but it also has a significant place in contemporary Renaissance culture. Moreover, the scene itself is an addition of Carey's. Constabarus is not formally executed in *The Antiquities*; instead he is killed in his own home by Herod's soldiers, so no opportunity arises for him to give a valedictory speech.

On closer examination of the text, the exploitation of common ground proves to be another layer of disguise over Carey's use of male authorities. The fierce emphasis on chastity and condemnation of fornication may well appear to be completely in keeping with a culture which demanded death for both parties in the case of adultery.<sup>48</sup> However, the laws which enforce chastity and condemn illicit sexual behaviour in the play are those of the Renaissance, not pre-Christian Judea. This is easily clarified on examination of the Jewish set of laws on sex, marriage and divorce. Phyllis Bird explains:

Taken together, the various laws that treat of extramarital sex evidence a strong feeling that sexual intercourse should properly be confined to marriage, of which it was the essence (Gen. 2:24) and the principal sign. Thus the victim of rape, the slave girl or the female captive taken for sexual pleasure, must become or must be treated as a wife (Exod. 21:7-11; Deut. 21:10-14). Polygyny was a concession to the man's desire for more than one sexual partner, with concubinage a modification or extension of this.<sup>49</sup>

These values and practices are certainly borne out by the story as told by Josephus. Herod has many wives, not just Mariam:

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48. Bird (1974), p. 51.

49. Bird (1974), p. 52.

For when as *Herode* beyond all expectation arrived in his country, being adorned with mightie fortune, he first of all, as it became him, certified his wife of his good tidings and happy successe, whom onely amongst all other his friends *and wives*, he embraced and saluted. (*Ant.*, p. 397, my italics)

However, the impression given by the play is that Herod and Mariam's marriage is monogamous. For example, in his repentant state in V i, Herod says:

She was my gracefull moytie, me accurst,  
To slay my better halfe and save my worst.  
(V i 2075-6)

Similarly, the relationship between Pheroras and Graphina as presented by *The Antiquities* is one of master and slave/concubine:

Pheroras ... sent away his maid, by whom he now had a son, and promised the king to marry this his ... daughter, and appointed the thirtieth day after to celebrate his mariage; making a solemne oth unto the king, never after that time to use the company of that woman whom he had put away. This time appointed being expired, he fell so farre in love with the former woman, that he would not stand his promise, but againe companied with his maid. (p. 424)

*The Antiquities* makes no mention of a marriage (in the Western Christian sense of the word) between Pheroras and his maid, although the relationship is evidently sexual as a short time later they have a son. The situation is completely different in *The Tragedy of Mariam*. To begin with, Pheroras and Graphina are to be married. More importantly, Graphina is still a virgin, to which the text draws specific attention:

And me your hand-maid have you made your mate,  
Though all but you alone doe count me base.  
You have preserved me pure at my request,  
Though you so weake a vassaile might constraine  
To yeeld to your high will,  
(II i 604-8)

and she goes on to say:

Then be my cause for silence justly waide ...  
And fast obedience may your mind delight,  
I will not promise more then I can prove.  
(II i 613; 161-7)

Graphina is, therefore, the perfect Renaissance bride - chaste, silent and

obedient.<sup>50</sup> Pheroras is the perfect Renaissance groom, eager for the nuptial hour, but with respect for the chastity of his beloved. In this respect he is similar to Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, who assures his prospective father-in-law:

The white cold virgin snow upon my heart  
Abates the ardor of my liver.  
(IV i 55-56)

Through the characters of Salome and Doris, Carey explores the issue of divorce. The factor of male privilege was common to the Biblical Jewish laws on divorce, and the practicalities of obtaining a divorce in Renaissance England. In England, until this century, a divorce was only available by private dispensation by Church and State. As women were, practically speaking, excluded from access to the centres of power, their opportunity to obtain a divorce was considerably smaller in comparison with men.<sup>51</sup> Old Testament law specifically states that it is a male prerogative and not available to women. Salome's seizure of this male prerogative is a move of equally radical proportions in either culture, although the issue is given far more significance in the play than in the source. The important difference is Salome's motivation for claiming the right to a divorce. *The Antiquities* gives no particular reason, simply that she quarrelled with Constabarus and that to

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50. Ferguson (1992), p. 238, in her assessment of the scene between Pheroras and Graphina, says that it shows patriarchally sanctioned private speech in action. Graphina speaks only when Pheroras tells her to. Furthermore, Ferguson suggests that Carey invented Graphina's name as a play on "graphesis", Greek for "writing" and the "the figure of Graphina represents ... the possibility of a non-transgressive mode of discourse (like private writing?)".

51. David Lindley, *The Trials of Frances Howard: Fact and Fiction at the Court of King James*, 1993, writes of the notable exception in this period, Frances Howard, who obtained a divorce from her husband, the Earl of Essex, on the grounds that he was impotent, in order to marry Robert Carr, p. 1. Sir Thomas Overbury opposed this marriage and was subsequently committed to the tower on a token charge in 1613, where he died shortly after, p. 146. Foul play was suspected, Frances Howard and her husband were implicated and she confessed on 12 Jan. 1616. They were both sentenced to death, but Frances was pardoned after two months, as was her husband in 1625, pp. 149-50.

justify her actions she tells Herod about Constabarus shielding the sons of Baba. The divorce is thus short-lived as Constabarus loses his life almost immediately. Salome's actions in *The Tragedy of Mariam* give her more in common with the fictional Vittoria Corombona or Alice Arden who both dispensed with one husband when a preferable suitor appeared. The only difference is that Constabarus gets a brief respite of life due to Salome's insistence on the right to a divorce and this surely serves to highlight the tragic and murderous course of action into which Renaissance women were forced, in the most extreme cases, due to their lack of access to divorce.

Doris's position on divorce would at first seem to be much more in keeping with Jewish rather than Renaissance attitudes. She claims that her divorce from Herod is illegal because it was not based on either of the two criteria, as cited by Phyllis Bird:

Some scholars have interpreted the "indecency" (ערwah) given as the ground for divorce in the law of Deut. 24:1-4 as a reference to sexual infidelity ... Others have suggested barrenness.<sup>52</sup>

Clearly, Doris is aggrieved because she is guilty of neither of these things. And *The Antiquities*, as cited earlier, give no specific reason for Herod's divorce from Doris other than his preference for Mariam and a fear that Antipater would prove to be a political problem if he were allowed to stay in Jerusalem.

In terms of the Jewish law, Doris's complaints are justified. It is her perception of the roles of Herod and Mariam in the situation which are culled from Renaissance ideology. For she calls both Herod and Mariam, but particularly Mariam, adulterers. This is not the case according to Jewish law. Doris's divorce may well be questionable, but this would have no relation to Herod and Mariam's marriage in a society where polygamy was an acceptable practice. Whether or not Mariam is guilty of adultery with Herod is not in question, according to Jewish law, because the legality of their marriage

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52. Bird (1974), p. 52.

would not rely on the legality of Herod's divorce from Doris. Yet, in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Doris claims that Mariam's marriage to Herod is adulterous *precisely because* the divorce was illegal. This firmly establishes the rule of monogamy as the basis for marriage contracts in the play. Doris condemns Mariam as an adulteress on the grounds that she is an unmarried non-virgin,<sup>53</sup> and Antipater, in his single short speech, confirms her opinions thus:

They are but Bastards, you were Herods wife,  
And foule adultery blotteth Mariams brow.  
(II iii 830-1)

Such condemnations put Mariam in the same class as Beatrice-Joanna in *The Changeling* and Annabella in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, the unmarried non-virgins who are consigned to the category of whore and who are thus dangerous superfluties in a patriarchal society and who have to be removed.

Standards of beauty and personal behaviour are derived from Renaissance culture. The descriptions which Silleus, Pheroras and Herod give of their respective paramours are based on European ideals of beauty. The words "faire", "white" and "red" are constantly used; "faire" being the most telling as it has its etymological roots in the meaning of blonde hair and pale skin. One only has to consider the treatment of Rosaline in *Love's Labours Lost* (IV iii 243-277) and Phoebe in *As You Like It* (III v 43-48) to see the extent to which Renaissance aesthetics under-rated dark women. Similarly, the contrast of red cheeks and lips with a white brow and hands was considered the ideal colouring in a woman, as the following descriptions suggest:

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53. This phrase is used by Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind 1540-1620*, Brighton, 1984, p. 84. It is somewhat clumsy, but the fact that an non-pejorative word does not exist to describe such a woman indicates the extent to which the "unmarried non-virgin" is still outside the bounds of acceptable thought and speech.

The Redde rose medled with the White yfere,  
 In either cheeke depeincten lively chere.  
 Her modest eye  
 Her Majestie  
 Where have you seene the like, but there? <sup>54</sup>

Red porphyr is, which lock of pearl makes sure;  
 Whose porches rich (which name of 'cheeks' endure)  
 Marble, mixed red and white, do interlace. <sup>55</sup>

These are the standards by which the women in *The Tragedy of Mariam* are judged. Cleopatra is dismissed by Alexandra as an unattractive "browne Egyptian" (I ii 195). Herod also passes off dark women: he insults Salome by calling her a "Sun-burnt Blackamore" (IV vii 1734) in comparison with Mariam. It is inconceivable that Mariam, Graphina or Salome could have been blonde-haired and pale skinned, having been born of middle eastern families and having lived all their lives in Judea. Carey's women characters are Renaissance beauties, not Jewish ones.

The presentation of male characters also derives from Renaissance values, particularly ideas of honour and virtue as celebrated in works such as *The Faerie Queene*. Constabarus' role as the Renaissance misogynist has already been discussed (see pp. 106-7). But he also represents a sense of masculine honour and fair dealing with both friend and enemy - his treatment of Baba's sons and of Silleus is perfectly courteous. In the first scene with Baba's sons, he talks of how their altruistic friendship signifies a return to the Golden Age - a popular Renaissance myth:

With friends there is not such a word as det:  
 Where amitie is tide with bond of truth,  
 All benefits are there in common set.  
 Then is the golden age with them renew'd,  
 All names of properties are banisht quite:  
 Division, and distinction, are eschew'd:  
 Each hath to what belongs to others right.  
 (II ii 648-54)

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54. Edmund Spenser, *The Shepherds Calendar*, in *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, ed. William A. Oram, Einar Bjorvand, Ronald Bond, Thomas H. Cain, Alexander Dunlop, and Richard Schell, 1989. April Eclogue, ll. 68-72, p. 73.

55. Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* (1591), in Duncan-Jones (1989), Sonnet 9, ll. 6-8, p. 156.

His attitude to Silleus - respecting his enemy because he holds similar values - could be lifted straight from any one of the various conduct books produced during the Renaissance and certainly harks back to the medieval romances of, say, Chretien de Troyes. Having beaten Silleus, Constabarus says:

Thy wounds are lesse than mortall. Never feare,  
 Thou shalt a safe and quicke recoverie finde:  
 Come, I will thee unto my lodging beare,  
 I hate thy body, but I love thy minde.  
 (II iv 940-3)

In a similarly chivalric fashion, Silleus takes his role as a courteous lover as far as fighting for the honour of his lady, and despite his wounds, he claims that her love will give him the strength to fight:

My heart in bloods stead, courage entertaines,  
 Salomes love no place for feare affords.  
 (II iv 924-5)

This is comparable with the way in which Stella inspires Astrophil to excel in a tournament. Whilst the onlookers wonder from where Astrophil gets his prowess, he explains:

Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face  
 Sent forth the beams, which made so fair my race. <sup>56</sup>

Constabarus considers Salome an unworthy cause and refuses to fight for her, and waits for Silleus to insult him or his religion before taking up arms.

This encounter between Silleus and Constabarus is entirely fictional. Moreover, is it not particularly necessary for the structure of the play or the progression of the plot. It is feasible to read this scene as a signifier for the value-system upon which the play is really based. There may be a Jewish "glaze" over the finished product, drawing attention away from the Renaissance values of the society depicted, but this scene bursts through any such veneer to present the contemporary idealisation of woman encountering the misogynistic denigration of woman; perversely parodying the idea of woman as object of exchange. The issue of the status of women is thus put at

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56. Ibid., Sonnet 41, 13-14, p. 169.

the forefront of this male dominated scene and leaving us in no doubt that Renaissance patriarchal attitudes to woman are the real subject matter of *The Tragedy of Mariam*.

As to the structure of *The Tragedy of Mariam*, whilst it may be seen to owe something to the classical form, there is another, more contemporary structure to which the text bears considerable relation: the Court Masque. A.C. Dunstan has commented that the act and scene divisions do not comply with a classical structure.<sup>57</sup> In fact, the structure centres around (1) the rumour of Herod's death (I and II); (2) the assertion of his survival and return (III); (3) Herod's return and the ensuing effects (IV and V). There is little doubt that this break away from classical structure serves to emphasise Herod's return as a destructive event rather than a harmonious one. Josephus concentrates on writing of Herod's adventures, but Carey takes the precedent of Jerusalem without a patriarch and gives a voice to this silence left by Josephus. What we find is a society where plotting and violence are minimised and the freedom of the individual is paramount. I cannot agree with the pessimistic criticism presented by Sandra K. Fischer, who claims that the three women - Alexandra, Mariam and Salome - "fail to offer a "counter-universe" to the male oriented and dominated order".<sup>58</sup> This simply assumes that one of them should take up the role of monarch in Herod's place and thus quash the factional squabbling we witness in I iii. But the society presented in I and II is one where freedom is the keynote; the rule of law is disregarded, rather than affirmed by a replacement matriarch, which is what Fischer seems to desire. Constabarus is free to liberate his friends from hiding now that Herod cannot harm them; Pheroras and Graphina are free to marry because Herod is not there to impose his wish that Pheroras should marry a princess; Mariam is freed from the marital obligation of sleeping in

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57. Dunstan (1908), p. 40.

58. Fischer (1985), p. 233.



Herod's bed. Most significantly, Salome, after the apparently irresolvable conflict with Alexandra and Mariam in I iii, turns her mind to the possible - her relationship with Silleus. If her desire to marry him is fulfilled, then she will leave Jerusalem and live in Arabia, thus removing her from the site of conflict. Salome's proposal to remove Constabarus is much less violent than her previous method of removing Josephus; divorce takes the place of execution. Doris's violent curses prove ineffective as does Silleus' attempt to duel with Constabarus over Salome. As a counter-universe, I would suggest that it is not a failure and is presented as preferable to that which exists once the patriarch is re-established.

Whilst there is obviously some kind of government, there is no definite acknowledgement of a new patriarch. It is more of a "non-archy" than a monarchy. References to government are muted. Alexandra mentions it obliquely at the end of I ii:

Let us retire us, that we may resolve  
 How now to deale in this reversed state:  
 Great are th'affaires that we must now revolve,  
 And great affaires must not be taken late.  
 (I ii 208-211)

There is certainly no overt acknowledgement of a new patriarch. Herod's successor to the throne is still a boy, as Mariam says:

My Alexander if he live, shall sit  
 In the Majesticke seat of Salamon.  
 (I ii 145-6)

The society in I and II is, then, a patriarchy in suspense. The references which are made to the new-found freedom usually emphasise Herod's absence, rather than the new presence of a better and more benevolent monarch. Individual freedom is foregrounded as the prevailing rule by which the characters act. Salome says "My will shall be to me in stead of Law" (I vi 468) and Pheroras talks of the absence as having "made my subject selfe my owne againe" (II i 553). Even Mariam talks of how she has some sense that her "virgin freedome" (I i 74) has returned now that Herod is thought to

be dead. Once Herod returns, conflict and violence are maximized. Whilst the discontent of Doris serves to remind us that I and II do not present a perfect world, the fact that six people lose their lives as a result of Herod's return suggests that the world of IV and V is considerably worse. Of these six, four die on an instant command of Herod's, with no consideration of the situation on Herod's part. Constabarus, Baba's two sons and Sohemus have no opportunity to re-align themselves under the rule of this newly re-instated patriarch. Salome and Mariam do. Salome takes up this opportunity and her orthodox face masks subversive deceit. Mariam acts true to the "self" of I and III and consequently dies. It is quite clear that integrity perishes and dissembling thrives under patriarchal rule.

It is not difficult to detect in this structure an unfavourable comparison of absolute patriarchal government and a government which has no patriarchal centre. Furthermore, there is an exploration of the individual returning to a mode of existence before the imposition of the rule of the father - a kind of Golden Age where the emphasis is upon individual free will. Whilst such notions may seem to pre-figure the ethos of modern feminism, they apparently conflict with Julia Kristeva's theory of the "thetic subject". This refers to the unified subject which is an imaginary result of the *entry into* the symbolic order - the rule of the father (as opposed to the *exit from* the rule of the father, as in the play).<sup>59</sup> However, *The Tragedy of Mariam* can be seen ultimately to uphold Kristeva's theory. Whilst it appears that the subjects are unified before the entry of Herod and die as a result of trying to preserve that unity once Herod has returned (or fragment themselves and occupy different positions in order to survive), it must be remembered that the society of I and II is not *pre-patriarchal*, but one which has been liberated from a previously patriarchal rule. Thus, there are still patriarchal values left intact, even without the patriarch there to impose them, such as Mariam's emphasis on her

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59. Weedon (1987), p. 88.

chastity, the conditions of Pheroras and Graphina's marriage and Constabarus' code of behaviour. Integral to these values is the idea of the "thetic subject" - the characters use their new-found freedom to express the belief that they are at last able to be true to themselves and that their unified subjectivity is being given full reign. Once the patriarch returns, those who still hold on to their unity perish and those who compromise flourish; unity of language, truth, meaning and action is destroyed and along with it the notion of the thetic subject.

Comparison with the structure of the Court Masque <sup>60</sup> is an equally effective method of illustrating the radical nature of Carey's text. Sufficient contemporary evidence is in existence to suggest that the beneficent rule of the father/King was constantly presented by the Court Masque as the desirable alternative to non-patriarchal rule. Carey is therefore undermining an idea prevalent in the early seventeenth century:

As the masque proper displaced the inversion of antimasque, it was typically the royal figure who was shown to be responsible for accomplishing this, restoring order and equilibrium analogically with God or even more directly as His delegate. <sup>61</sup>

Of particular significance is the fact that in the early years of James' reign, he is seen, through the masque, to overcome unruly or unsightly women. There is a long tradition of myths in which the chaos brought by female rule is brought into order by the conquering male. The archetype is the lordship given to Adam over Eve after her transgression in the Garden of Eden. But in Classical mythology too, this kind of patriarchal imposition occurs: Zeus defeats the earth Goddess Gaea and imposes his law; Theseus defeats

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60. Although the composition of *The Tragedy of Mariam* (but not the publication) pre-dates *The Masque of Blackness*, *The Masque of Beauty* and the subsequent structure of antimasque and masque proper, the play nevertheless articulates a protest against ideas which were prevalent in the early seventeenth-century and ultimately found a form of cultural expression in the Court Masque.

61. Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, Brighton, 1984, p. 27.

Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons and brings her into wifely subjection. Queen Anne's masques, whilst foregrounding women as the main participants, perpetuated this tradition by showing women to be particularly subjected to James' patriarchal rule. In her *Masque of Blackness* (1605) the ladies appeared as Aethiopian blackamoors who experienced a vision whereby they were to seek for a land ending in -tania. This is Britania:

Rul'd by a SUNNE, that to this height doth grace it  
Whose beames shine day, and night, and of a force  
To blanch an AETHIOPE, and revive a Cor's. <sup>62</sup>

This celestial body is, of course, James. At the end of their dance, the Blackamoors promise to return in a year (in what was to become *The Masque of Beauty*) to show the effects of their visit to Britania.

Of course the *primum mobile* of this fictive universe was James, the royal One who is the source of Beauty and Love in the world of Great Britain, who has drawn the wandering beauties of the masque to him as souls are drawn to their source, and who has bestowed an ideal beauty on them. <sup>63</sup>

However, circumstances intervened and *The Masque of Beauty* was not performed until 1608, in which the ladies danced with their true complexions.

The ability of the patriarch to dispel female unruliness is made even more overt by a change in the masque structure, instigated by Queen Anne herself in 1609. For the *Masque of Queens* she requested that Jonson should create "some dance or show that might precede hers and have the place of a foil or a false masque". <sup>64</sup> The antimasque consisted of twelve witches who, after being allowed to articulate disruptive sentiments which opposed James' policies, were deprived of power by the entry of the Queens, who led the witches captive around the stage. The general ideological function of the masque is evident; the significance of these masques is that James is shown as

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62. Quoted in Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603-42*, Manchester, 1981, p. 46.

63. Ibid., p. 49.

64. Ibid., p. 49.

one whose power defeats unruly women and brings unsightly ones up to standard. And this process evidently became recognised as an important ideological statement as Queen Anne specifically developed a kind of "before and after" effect in her masques, purely to show the benevolent effects of James' fatherly authority upon a society devoid of it.

The analogy with *The Tragedy of Mariam* needs some explanation. This play presents a direct inversion of the ideology of the masque. The unruliness of women is presented as a non-destructive force before patriarchal rule is imposed. It is the *very imposition* of patriarchal rule which turns female self-determination into a destructive force, both to self and to others. The return of Herod shows male monarchy in its worst light - for patriarchal rule is only as good as the patriarch himself and if that patriarch is vain, rash and easily manipulated, better to have none at all. This criticism cannot be fully obscured by Carey's use of Seneca and Josephus because it is made explicit by the very structure of *The Tragedy of Mariam*.

## CHAPTER 3

**"I will not speake unles to be beleev'd":  
Discourse and deconstruction in *The Tragedy of Mariam*.**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to offer a reading of *The Tragedy of Mariam* as set of competing discourses, through an examination of the three major characters: Herod, Mariam and Salome, and their relationship to the rest of the dramatis personae. This chapter will also argue the case that the competition between these discourses, and the relationship of each discourse to patriarchal ideology effects a deconstruction<sup>1</sup> of that ideology. As an indication of the terms within which this chapter will be working, I quote Chris Weedon's definition of patriarchy:

The term 'patriarchal' refers to power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men. These power relations take many forms, from the sexual division of labour and the social organization of procreation to the internalized norms of femininity by which we live. Patriarchal power rests on social meanings given to biological sexual difference.<sup>2</sup>

My argument is that Elizabeth Carey's text illustrates this form of patriarchy as oppressive and destructive not only to the female sex, but also to society in general and even to the wielders of patriarchal power themselves. The title quotation is a line of Herod's, indicative of his false-consciousness with regard to his (patriarchally defined) power over language. For Herod, the relationship between (his) truth and the articulation of that truth in language is unproblematic - until he learns otherwise. I would suggest that *The Tragedy*

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1. Although the term "deconstruction" may not have been familiar to Renaissance writers, there is little doubt, from the evidence of *The Tragedy of Mariam* amongst others, that such a practice was taking place. I develop this idea from a similar argument by Dollimore, op. cit., p. 18, on his comparison of Montaigne and Althusser: "I make the comparison here as a way of insisting first, that the Renaissance possessed a sophisticated concept of ideology if not the word; second, that Renaissance writers ... were actively engaged in challenging ideology".

2. Weedon (1987), p. 2.

of *Mariam* educates its audience in a similar manner. Beginning with a discussion of Herod, as the centre of patriarchal power, followed by *Mariam*, as the central tragic figure, this chapter will ultimately deal with Salome, whose ambiguity and elusiveness is crucial to undermining the patriarchal power-structure in the play.

Focusing the tragic action on a female character links *The Tragedy of Mariam* with many other Renaissance plays. Thomas Newton's edition of *Seneca: His Tenne Tragedies Translated into English* (1581) includes *Medea* and *Octavia*. Imitations of classical style tragedy, such as Samuel Brandon's *The Virtuous Octavia* and John Marston's *The Wonder of Women* have women as their tragic subjects. And so too do those tragedies which owe more to the domestic tradition of tragedy than classical imitation, such as *Arden of Feversham*.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, in Webster's plays *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*<sup>4</sup> women are placed at the centre. What sets *Mariam* apart from Renaissance tragic heroines in general is not the mere fact that she occupies the central position, but the terms on which she occupies it. Tragic heroines such as Vittoria Corombona, the Duchess of Malfi and Sophonisba, despite the many virtues and vices that constitute their characters, are ultimately condemned and/or eulogised in sexual discourse. For example, the eponymous heroine of *The Duchess of Malfi* is chastised in a manner more pertaining to her sexuality than the social transgression of marrying below her status. On hearing the news of his sister's marriage, Ferdinand says "a sister damn'd; she's loose i'th'hilts / Grown a notorious strumpet" (II v 3-4).

However, a male character is condemned in a totally different way for the same deed. Perhaps the starkest example of the difference in the way

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3. Samuel Brandon, *The Virtuous Octavia* (1598), rpt. 1909; John Marston, *The Wonder of Women, or The Tragedy of Sophonisba* (1606), ed. Stephen Orgel, 1979; *Arden of Feversham* (1592), rpt. 1940.

4. John Webster, *The White Devil* (1612), ed. John Russell Brown, 1960 and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614), ed. John Russell Brown, 1964.

men and women are condemned is illustrated in John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*.<sup>5</sup> Whilst the two central characters, the siblings Annabella and Giovanni, are guilty of an incestuous liaison with each other, Giovanni is condemned in terms of his insubordination in the face of temporal and divine law, whereas the title of the play, which is also its final line, passes judgement on Annabella based on a solely sexual criterion. Whatever her social status, the woman who is party to a sexual liaison unsanctified by the laws of patriarchy is the sexual transgressor - the *sole* sexual transgressor.<sup>6</sup> This is indicative of the masculine nature of the ideological code against which the transgression is taking place. To this code, the male transgressor has the political relationship of ally or antagonist, whereas the female transgressor has only the sexually-defined relationship of chaste woman or whore. This code, inscribed in language, is revealed in semantic irregularities, such as the gender-specific meanings of the word "honest". Honesty in a male subject means keeping his word, dealing fairly with others. Honesty in a female subject refers to her chastity. An honest woman is a chaste one. Renaissance drama abounds with such rhetoric: "Ha, ha! are you honest?" asks Hamlet of Ophelia (III i 103); "Why, do you think she is not honest, sir?" asks the anxious Wooer about his bride-to-be in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (V ii 30).

In Renaissance drama, a sympathetic female character is drawn using the same criteria as those used to present a villainess. Sophonisba, in Marston's *The Wonder of Women*, is presented as a strong and determined

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5. John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1632), ed. Brian Morris, 1968.

6. Carey draws explicit attention to this gender-specific meting out of blame. In *The Tragedy of Mariam* Pheroras, Herod's brother, chooses to marry his slave, Graphina, rather than the royal child-bride whom Herod has selected for him. But Herod chastises him in terms of his lack of brotherly love: "thou hast strooke a blow at Herods love" (IV ii 1308). It is Graphina *only* who is condemned in terms of her sexuality. Herod calls their marriage bed "a harlots bed" (IV ii 1316), whereas Graphina has already been presented in II i as chaste and modest.



woman, but these aspects of her character are entirely related to her sexuality. Her decision to commit suicide at the end of the play is to save her husband from an impossible choice between consummating his marriage to her, and handing her over to his superior as a prisoner of war. She is reduced to a sexual problem, which she is forced, as the good wife, to remedy by her own destruction. And, as Dympna Callaghan says of *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The White Devil*:

As unrepresentative of humanity and the universal situation, Vittoria and The Duchess can only play out a specific dramatic catastrophe instead of the mythic archetype posited by the tragic paradigm.<sup>7</sup>

That specificity being, of course, the kind of sexual transgression which is the only transgression of which women are deemed capable in their "heterosexual" relationship to patriarchy. Marston, Ford and Webster allow the sexual value judgements of their male characters to give the final word on their female characters, be it in eulogy or condemnation. Valuing women only by their sexual status is one of the received ideas underlying their plays. The effect of Elizabeth Carey's text is to expose, and subsequently undermine, the means by which women were seen only in terms of their sexual status, by projecting such a means of identification onto a character, i.e. Mariam, to whom it is entirely inappropriate.

## Herod

The character of Herod acts as a working model which exemplifies the process of judging women solely in terms of their sexuality; a model which is put under severe scrutiny in *The Tragedy of Mariam*. Carey has drawn the character of Herod in a completely two-dimensional fashion, in that he occupies only two positions throughout IV and V, i.e. eulogy or condemnation of Mariam. This lack of psychological depth may owe

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7. Dympna Callaghan, *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy*, 1989, p. 68.

something to the traditional portrayal of Herod in the Mystery Plays of York, Chester and Wakefield as a tyrant given to excessive displays of emotion: "Ah devil! methink I burst for anger and for teen".<sup>8</sup> Carey's Herod certainly does not display the range of emotions of Massinger's Duke of Milan or Shakespeare's Othello, nor does he occupy as much textual space, making a late appearance to dominate the discourse in IV and V. Herod seems to be a bizarre theatrical parody of the romantic posturings of Renaissance love poetry. Rather than experiencing Mariam solely as a linguistic *construction* of Herod (as we experience Sidney's Stella or Shakespeare's Dark Lady for example), we experience Herod solely as *constructor* of Mariam. Apart from a very brief scene - IV i - (which opens and closes with Herod speaking of Mariam) in which Herod deals with all the other pressing matters of state, the sole subject of his discourse is Mariam. Unlike the poetic heroines listed above, Mariam has her own voice and character already established in the text, which diametrically oppose Herod's construction of her, and are constantly present to undermine his discourse. The text invites us to witness the gaping chasm between the way in which the husband perceives his wife and the way in which she perceives herself.

Herod's eulogizing of Mariam begins from the moment he enters in IV i, imbuing her with a variety of superhuman powers, exalting her to a god-like status with powers over time and a brightness greater than that of the sun. Yet within all this praise is contained the essence (in shape of the imperative verb) of Herod's actual power over her; he still commands her through the power of his language:

Oh hast thy steps rare creature, speed thy pace:  
 And let thy presence make the day more bright,  
 And cheere the heart of Herod with thy face.  
 (IV i 1267-9)

When Mariam enters, Herod, seeing that she is evidently displeased, asks

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8. *Herod the Great*, in *The Complete Plays of the Wakefield Master*, ed. John Russell Brown, 1983, p. 102, l. 118.

what he can do to make her happy again. Or, more precisely, he tells her what she can tell him to do, for his language still includes imperative verbs only, which set the limits for her "power" over him:

Oh speake, that I thy sorrow may prevent.  
 Art thou not Juries Queene, and Herods too?  
 Be my Commandres, be my Sovereigne guide: ...  
 Thou shalt be Empresse of Arabia crownd,  
 For thou shalt rule, and I will winne the Land.  
 (IV iii 1359-61; 1366-7)

Mariam resists this invitation and attacks Herod for the murder of her brother and grandfather, at which point the reality of power relations is soon restored. The subliminal political oppression contained in the above speech is given full rein: Mariam can have as much control over Herod as *he* wants and she must not seek to have control over herself. Her ability for thought and judgement must be surrendered to Herod because (and only 'because) *he* loves *her*:

Thou art by me belov'd, by me ador'd,  
 Yet are my protestations heard with scorne.  
 (IV iii 1382-3)

Herod establishes his love as the sole signifier of their relationship. His love alone defines the truth of the situation and therefore his love alone defines how Mariam should think and behave.

The difference between Mariam's self-perception of I and III and Herod's construction of her is irrevocably brought to the surface by the next scene. The Butler enters with "A drinke procuring love" (IV iv 1423). Herod immediately assumes this is poison. The crucial point is that Herod focuses his attention not on the alleged attempt on his life, but on Mariam's possible motives. The Butler confesses that "Sohemus told the tale that did displeas" (IV iv 1434). On this one line of evidence which refers only to a verbal interaction, of which Sohemus is the instigator, Herod assumes a sexual liaison between him and Mariam. In a distinct echo of Chorus III,<sup>9</sup> Herod's language constructs a logical consistency between the poison plot and

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9. For a full assessment of this problematic part of the text, see pp. 141-3.

sexual transgression, and the alleged sexual transgression is progressively magnified at the expense of the alleged poison plot. By the end of the scene, Herod has made a total reversal of the two crimes: poison is in doubt, whereas adultery is certain.

I cannot thinke she ment to poison me:  
 But certaine tis she liv'd too wantonly,  
 And therefore shall she never more be free.  
 (IV iv 1521-3)

Yet the evidence for the attempted murder is much stronger than for Mariam's supposed adultery, and the material presence of the Butler with his "poison" cup seriously compromises the validity of Herod's accusation.

Because sexual desirability is the sign by which Mariam is constructed, Herod appropriates that sign as he chooses. In a speech diametrically opposed to Mariam's in III iii, he accuses her of an active use of her sexuality. Compare the two extracts:

**Mari.** ... I know I could inchaine him with a smile:  
 And lead him captive with a gentle word,  
 I scorne my look should ever man beguile,  
 Or other speech, then meaning to afford.  
 (III iii 1166-9)

**Her.** ... I might have seene thy falsehood in thy face,  
 Where coul'dst thou get thy stares that serv'd for eyes?  
 Except by theft, and theft is foule disgrace: ...  
 My wisdom long agoe a wandring fell,  
 Thy face incountring it, my wit did fetter,  
 And made me for delight my freedome sell.  
 Give me my heart false creature, tis a wrong,  
 My guliltles [*sic*] heart should now with thine be slaine:  
 Thou hadst no right to looke it up so long,  
 And with usurpers name I Mariam staine.  
 (IV iv 1483-5; 1488-94)

Herod attempts to re-work the physical phenomenon of Mariam's beauty into a crime of misappropriation; but the whole tenor of his discourse in this section obliquely draws on the crimes of misappropriation of which Herod himself is guilty. He is guilty of wrongful imprisonment; it is Mariam who is incarcerated for her lack of wisdom. He is the thief and usurper, having stolen Jerusalem and usurped the throne. More significantly, perhaps, Herod's language calls into question the validity of making female beauty the

culpable cause of male lust. His perception of Mariam is via one characteristic - her body, which, as her husband, he demands to appropriate to his sole use. But the logical progression from this unilinear view of Mariam is that any transgression she commits must entail the unlawful use of that body. As Luce Irigaray points out:

For woman is traditionally use-value for man, exchange-value among men ... Woman is never anything more than the scene of more or less rival exchange between two men.<sup>10</sup>

Within Renaissance patriarchal ideology, the concept of a female subject being in (sexual) possession of herself is not tenable; she cannot pass out of circulation. Herod reworks the phenomenon of Mariam's sexual rejection of him by constructing Sohemus as a successful rival for possession of her body, in order to make conventional patriarchal sense of the situation. But Herod's construction of the situation is constantly undermined by the text of I and III and eventually falls apart by V. Even the patriarch does not have sufficient power over language to make his meanings hold fast forever.

The literary representation of Herod's relationship with Mariam corresponds closely to Annette Kuhn's twentieth-century feminist interpretation of the patriarchal family:

Patriarchy - the rule of the father - is a structure written into particular expressions of the sexual division of labour whereby property, the means of production of exchange values, is appropriated by men, and whereby this property relation informs household and family relations in such a way that men may appropriate the labour and the actual persons of women.<sup>11</sup>

rather than to the received idea of the patriarchal family in the Renaissance as epitomised by James I in *Basilikon Doron*:

Ye are the heade, she is your body: It is your office to command, and hers to obey, but yet with suche a sweete harmonie, as she should be

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10. Luce Irigaray, "Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un" (This sex which is not one), in *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (1977), trans. Claudia Reeder, rpt. in Marks and de Courtivron (1981), p. 105.

11. Annette Kuhn, "Structures of patriarchy and capital in the family", in *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production*, ed. Annette Kuhn and Anne Marie Wolpe, 1978, p. 65.

as readie to obey as ye to command; as willing to follow as ye to go before: your love beeing whollie knit unto her, and all her affections lovingly bent to followe your will. <sup>12</sup>

What the text presents is a marriage of appropriation, not of "sweete harmonie". The extent of Herod's actual physical appropriation of Mariam is grotesquely emphasised by his indecision regarding her fate. Death is the first solution, but Herod changes his mind four times in seventeen lines as he articulates the conflict between personal desire and patriarchal law:

... love and hate doe fight:  
And now hath [love] acquir'd the greater part, <sup>13</sup>  
Yet now hath hate, affection conquer'd quite.  
(IV iv 1509-11)

Mariam is silent throughout this. Having actively refused Herod her love, she is now a passive body, to be removed and re-placed as Herod desires. As the text suggests, she is physically pulled back and forth whilst Herod vacillates in language. She may have denied him sexual possession as her husband, but he is still able to appropriate her body, as her King.

Herod is also a victim of patriarchal ideology, although unlike Mariam, he is not aware of it. He suffers from the false consciousness of the ruling class, whereby he believes that he makes all the rules and controls all the ideas. But this control is conditional. In order to retain his position, Herod must uphold the laws which validate that position. The ideologically imposed magnitude of female sexual transgression is so great that Herod is required to order the death of the woman without whom, as becomes apparent in V, his life is not worth living. IV vii shows Herod faced with two competing and mutually exclusive courses of action - one to preserve the object of his desire and the other to uphold patriarchal law, the irony being that both of these courses of action are, of course, based on totally false perceptions: Mariam would not submit herself to Herod's desire if she were

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12. *The Basilikon Doron of King James VI*, ed. James Craigie, 1944, pp. 133-5. Quoted in Beilin (1987), p. 315.

13. Dunstan (1914) retains "bove" which is clearly a misprint for "love".

to live and she is not guilty of the crime for which she is condemned.

The dubious justice of Mariam's punishment breaks through into Herod's language from the opening of IV vii. He debates how "To finde a meanes to *murther* her withall" (IV vii 1631, my italics) and falls back into nonsensical rhetoric, saying that blades cannot pierce her skin, rivers would turn their course to avoid drowning her and fire would not harm the source of passion. The irony of this perception is paramount, as Mariam is in prison at this point and does not have any power over her location, let alone her life or death. Herod constantly looks to Salome for a solution, for permission to save Mariam's life. When she refuses him that, Salome becomes the subject to bear the blame; her delivery of Herod's execution order incurs his wrath. But rather than immediately revoking the execution order, Herod looks to Salome to confirm his idealisation of Mariam's appearance. His concern is not with her physical life, but with the idea of her beauty, over which he maintains strict linguistic control. Salome is never allowed to criticise Mariam's beauty; in contrast, any comment she makes on Mariam's chastity is never refuted by Herod. One reminder from Salome is enough to confirm Mariam's guilt to Herod. For example:

**Sal.** ... foule dishonors do her forehead blot.  
**Herod.** Then let her die, tis very true indeed.  
 (IV vii 1678-9)

Provided Salome will leave him to comment unhindered on Mariam's beauty, Herod is content to let the execution order stand and accept Mariam's alleged adultery as fact. Salome's manipulation is not entirely smooth, and Herod is quite pointedly shown to realise the prompting Salome has been giving. After Salome reminds Herod for the last time of Mariam's alleged affairs, he turns on her, dismissing her thus:

Hence from my sight, my blacke tormenter hence,  
 For hadst not thou made Herod unsecure:  
 I had not doubted Mariams innocence,  
 But still had held her in my heart for pure.  
 (IV viii 1785-8)

Significantly, Herod's accusation of Salome leads no further. His faith in the death sentence on Mariam is considerably shaken and yet instead of facing the problem and pursuing it, Herod seeks a state of abnegation in sleep.

The character of Herod illustrates that the patriarchal society which puts so much power in the hands of the husband/King is not an unassailable code of law but subject to the failings of the husband/King and is therefore morally and legally inadequate. Herod goes through a final scene of self-realisation, ending in a nihilistic welcoming of death. Throughout his final scene, Herod's discourse is confused and disjointed. Disbelief in the fact of Mariam's death, his sense of guilt, attempts to place the blame elsewhere and acknowledgement that his dead wife was innocent all inform Herod's language with no real consistency until his final lines. As always, Herod's discourse is as much concerned with himself as with Mariam. However, it is precisely through that inward looking characteristic that Carey attacks the role of the patriarch, as Herod is forced to make a detailed examination of himself and his role in Mariam's death.

An admission of his political responsibility is soon expressed:

... I was her Lord,  
Were I not made her Lord, I still should bee.  
(V i 2010-11)

By the double use of the word "lord" Carey scrutinizes the social and political position which the husband was supposed to occupy in the household. In Jacobean England, the structure of family and state were supposed to mirror one another. James I styled himself the husband of the state, with his subjects as his children. In *Basilikon Doron*, "James claims Divine Right, and the language of paternal love and willing obedience becomes the language of "fatherly authority" on which absolutism rests."<sup>14</sup> Similarly, the husband in each household, whilst being subject to the King was, in turn, King in his

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14. Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne and Their Contemporaries*, 1983, p. 117.



domestic domain. As described in the *Homily on Matrimony*: "Yee wives, be ye in subjection to obey your owne husbands." <sup>15</sup> Herod's illogical language - if he were not her lord, he would still be her lord - exposes this dual faceted subject-position as a concept which can be articulated in language, but never fully or permanently occupied in practice.

Herod is also quick to declare: "I hold her chast ev'n in my inmost soule" (V i 2018). The fact of Mariam's chastity has had very little to do with her fate. Whilst she is alive, Herod believed her unchaste. When she is dead, Herod believes her chaste - even before the Nuntio tells him of the Butler's confession. Rather like the witch's trial by water, death and innocence are inextricably linked, as are life and guilt. Now that Mariam is dead, Herod has the luxury of being able to construct her exactly as he wishes, without the corporeal fact of her person to contradict him. He can even fantasize as far as imagining her back in life again and orders the Nuntio to bid her:

Put on faire habite, stately ornament:  
And let no frowne oreshade her smoothest brow.  
(V i 2084-5)

As we have seen in IV iii, Mariam would not do this for him in life; her death provides the perfect excuse for her disobedience and does not force Herod, as the living Mariam did, to face the fact that her will is contrary to his.

However, as the scene progresses it exposes this self-indulgent linguistic re-construction to be inadequate. In the midst of this excessive, poetic language, the physical absence of Mariam and the palpable fact of her death at his command keep breaking through, in very telling metaphor. He calls her an "inestimable Jewell" (V i 2061) and his "pretious Mirror" (V i 2067) - both of which he has smashed. A jewel has no value beyond that set

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15. *Certaine Sermones or Homilies, appointed to be read in Churches, in the time of Queene Elizabeth I*, Gainesville, Florida, 1968, p. 242. Quoted in Beilin (1987), p. 315.

upon it by those who own or covet it; its sole value lies in its appropriation rather than in any inherent quality. The "mirror" image confirms that the true focus of Herod's discourse is still himself. Philippa Berry says:

Just as Mary was seen as a selfless *material* mirror of heavenly purity ... so the idealized women of the love discourses were the nurses or receptacles of new men, intermediaries between their lovers as they were, and as they hoped to be. <sup>16</sup>

By using such an image, the text indicates that Herod, by destroying his wife, has effectively destroyed himself. This idea is subsequently corroborated:

She was my gracefull moytie, me accurst,  
 To slay my better halfe and save my worst.  
 (V i 2075-6)

Taken literally, one half of the body cannot live without the other, suggesting that Herod cannot face the fact of Mariam's death because he knows that it inevitably entails his own. Unlike the love-poets of whom Philippa Berry speaks, Herod cannot reconstruct himself anew via a poetic image of his beloved. Full realisation of the fact of Mariam's death brings about a dwindling of Herod's power of reasoned discourse. In his bizarre final exchange with the Nuntio, it appears that Herod can no longer distinguish between metaphorical and literal language:

**Herod.** Oh what a hand she had, it was so white,  
 It did the whitenes of the snowe impaire:  
 I never more shall see so sweet a sight.  
**Nun:** Tis true, her hand was rare. **Her:** her hand? her  
   hands;  
 She had not singly one of beautie rare,  
 But such a paire as heere where Herod stands,  
 He dares the world to make to both compare.  
 (V i 2092-8)

The image of the white hand was used to represent chastity. But Herod forgets he is speaking metaphorically and takes the reply literally, indicating a loss in linguistic capability.

When left to himself, Herod tries to escape from his admission of guilt in seeking to place culpability elsewhere, but he cannot escape the fact that

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16. Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen*, 1989, p. 9.

Mariam would not have died without his command. Initially, he tries to blame Salome, but his assumption about her motives is completely wrong:

But Salome thou didst with envy vex,  
To see thy selfe out-matched in thy sexe.  
(V i 2103-4)

Just as he cannot see the truth of Mariam's behaviour, neither can he see the truth of Salome's; he is equally ignorant of virtue or vice in women. Salome's motive was revenge, not jealousy, but in the process of attributing Salome a role, Herod informs it with his own uni-faceted perception of Mariam's beauty. His accusation of Salome inevitably leads to self-accusation, as it was he who had the power to deem Salome's language true and Mariam's false. Herod incites his subjects to rebellion and treachery:

Why graspe not each of you a sword in hand,  
To ayme at me your cruell Soveraignes head.  
Oh when you thinke of Herod as your King,  
And owner of the pride of Palestine:  
This act to your remembrance likewise bring,  
Tis I have overthrowne your royall line.  
(V i 2115-20)

Once the patriarch has fully utilised the powers ideologically constructed as rightfully his, the act of utilisation itself becomes treason. Carey uses a politically problematic concept - the idea of the King committing treason - to draw attention to and thus attack the contradictions presented by patriarchal absolutism. Metaphorically speaking, Herod does commit treason - upon his own linguistic power. Just as he constructed Mariam's speech as a trope for sexual transgression, he now constructs his own as a trope for murder: "My word though not my sword made Mariam bleed" (V i 2131).

The final discovery which Herod makes is the one which completes his course of self-destruction:

If she had bene like an Egiptian blacke,  
And not so faire, she had bene longer livde:  
Her overflow of beautie turned backe,  
And drownde the spring from whence it was derivde.  
Her heav'nly beautie twas that made me thinke  
That it with chastitie could never dwell:

But now I see that heav'n in her did linke,  
 A spirit and a person to excell.  
 (V i 2181-8)

In reaching an understanding of how his own motives were constructed, Herod rips apart the patriarchal ideal of the chaste and fair woman. In a society where the ideological practice of translating the lust of a male subject into the wantonness of a female object is a major means of social control, the woman who is commonly acknowledged as desirable can easily be redefined as a whore. Herod realises that it is this practice which has made him kill Mariam and not her behaviour. As this practice is absolutely crucial to the maintenance of patriarchal power, Herod has no reason to continue as the patriarch, as he has discovered the hypocrisy and brutality at the foundations of his position. Herod's determination to seek his own death is a literary invention by Carey. According to *The Antiquities* Herod lived on to marry several more times. To detect the working of poetic justice in Carey's treatment of Herod is to read a moral or political intent into the text. Nevertheless, the last verse of the final Chorus certainly vindicates this reading:

This daies events were certainly ordainde,  
 To be the warning to posteritie  
 (Chorus V 2232-3).

## **Mariam**

Mariam, the victim of patriarchal language, stands to expose the difference between the sexually-defined role a woman is expected to play and her own perception of herself. Carey's Mariam is desperately trying to avoid such a role, either as dutiful wife or unfaithful adulteress, in order to live by her own values. It is evident from her first scene that Mariam constructs her own identity by other than her sexual status, although this first soliloquy presents this discourse of individualism as struggling to free itself from the restraints of patriarchal ideology. It is significant that she compares herself to

Julius Caesar <sup>17</sup> rather than another woman in a similar position, (say, Dido or Penelope):

How oft have I with publike voyce runne on?  
 To censure Romes last Hero for deceit:  
 Because he wept when Pompeis life was gone,  
 Yet when he liv'd, hee thought his Name too great. ...  
 Now doe I find by selfe Experience taught,  
 One Object yeelds both grieffe and joy.  
 (I i 3-7, 11-12)

Mariam has attacked Caesar for hypocrisy because of his grief at the death of his enemy; now she is in the same position herself. Mariam is politically and emotionally antagonistic towards Herod as he is responsible for the deaths of her brother and grandfather, yet her role as wife demands tears and misery at the news of his death. There is an unquestionable binary opposition being set up in Mariam's language.

But now his death to memorie doth call,  
 The tender love, that he to Mariam bare: ...  
 Why joy I not the tongue no more shall speake,  
 That yeilded forth my brothers latest dome: ...  
 These thoughts have power, his death to make me beare,  
 Nay more, to wish the newes may firmly hold:  
 Yet cannot this repulse some falling teare,  
 That will against my will some grieffe unfold.  
 (I i 33-4; 41-2; 53-6)

There are two voices competing for supremacy, two conflicting subject positions by which Mariam is being hailed: one of the devoted wife and the other of the rational being capable of moral judgement. The radical suggestion is that the position of good wife is not inextricably part of being a good individual; in this case they are diametrically opposed. <sup>18</sup> This quotation

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17. Shapiro (1984), p. 166, n. 8, notes that the reference to "Rome's last hero" is to a description of Julius Caesar in Plutarch's *Lives*, when he bursts into tears after receiving the dead Pompey's seal.

18. Ferguson (1992) p. 244, makes a link here between Mariam's self determination and the writing of "minority religious dissent", especially Catholic teachings which "often portray an individual conscience disobeying ungodly authority on the advice of a Jesuit priest". She suggests that the passage from Henry Garnet's *Treatise on Christian Renunciation* which says "your husbands over your soul have no authority and over your bodies but limited power" (see Ch 1., p. 39, n. 60) is "an important subtext for Cary's play". Although the connection is both feasible and interesting, to consider the passage a subtext is too limiting an interpretation and ignores the more general, secular appeal of the issues which the play raises.

from Jane Anger, praising the virtuous moral absolutism of the female sex, illustrates the impossibility of Mariam's situation:

*Aut amat aut odit, non est in tertio*: she loveth good things and hateth that which is evil; she loveth justice and hateth iniquity; she loveth truth and true dealing and hateth lies and falsehood; she loveth man for his virtues and hateth him for his vices. To be short, there is no *medium* between good and bad, and therefore she can be *in nullo tertio*.<sup>19</sup>

But Mariam's position requires exactly that; a third way, for she is expected to be a good wife to an evil man. Her attempts to create a role for herself within this third way (i.e. remaining chaste and faithful to Herod yet abandoning his bed) results in her destruction as the limits of patriarchal ideology render it incapable of comprehending and containing that role.

Mariam recognises that marriage to Herod compromised her true "self":

... for Herods Jealousie  
Had power even constancie it self to change:  
For hee by barring me from libertie,  
To shunne my ranging, taught me first to range.  
(I i 25-28)

Simon Shepherd points out the importance of this kind of language in drawing attention to the fact that women are to some extent creations of their social context, that context being dominated by men. He refers to Esther Sowernam's work, *Ester hath hang'd Haman* (1617):

Woman is seen to be made by society. This development is clearly radical in implication: discussion centred on the idea of an immutable nature, inherently either good or evil, is replaced by debate about social power and social structure.<sup>20</sup>

Mariam clearly does not act according to any inherent "nature". Her discourse is one of conscious choices about modes of social interaction, through which she articulates a subject position which can barely be contained or credited by the society in which she lives. She is in the anomalous position

19. Jane Anger, *Her Protection for Women* (1589), rpt. in Shepherd (1985), pp. 35-6.

20. Shepherd (1985), p. 20.

of not wanting to enter into a sexual relationship with any man at all. She may not want Herod, but she certainly does not want anyone else either:

But yet too chaste a Scholler was my hart,  
 To learne to love another then my Lord:  
 To leave his Love, my lessons former part,  
 I quickly learn'd, the other I abhorde.  
 (I i 29-32)

Carey appropriates the patriarchal ideal of chastity to create a female character who, having once entered into sexual subjectivity, decides to depart from it altogether, in order to preserve her integrity and autonomy in a state of proto-separatism. But Mariam's decision is not presented as an unequivocal choice. Her ability for judgement is thrown into crisis as her speech is linguistically violated by the intrusion of patriarchal discourse, through her memory of Herod's love for her. His love - his appropriation of Mariam as an object of sexual exchange - intrudes into Mariam's own value system by which she judges him and threatens to reduce her from a position of moral and intellectual autonomy to a passive object. This form of self-negation is taken to its extremest form as Mariam almost accepts her own destruction as a legitimate sign of Herod's love:

It was for nought but love, he wisht his end  
 Might to my death, but the vaunt-courier prove:  
 But I had rather still be foe then friend,  
 To him that saves for hate, and kills for love.  
 (I i 61-64)

In the subsequent scene, however, Alexandra rapidly dispels any idea that Mariam is indebted to Herod just because she is married to him, by clarifying Mariam's *independent* right to the throne of Jerusalem:

... My Alexander, if he live, shall sit  
 In the Majesticke seat of Salamon,  
 To will it so, did Herod thinke it fit.  
**Alex.** Why? who can claime from Alexanders brood  
 That Gold adorned Lyon-guarded Chaire?  
 Was Alexander not of Davids blood?  
 And was not Mariam Alexanders heire?  
 (I ii 145-51)

However, Alexandra still perceives Mariam as an object of exchange and encourages her to seek for political advancement in this way. She suggests

that Mariam could have been Antony's mistress. Mariam resists such a coercion in the patriarchal discourse of devotion and chastity,

Not to be Emprise of aspiring Rome,  
 Would Mariam like to Cleopatra live:  
 With purest body will I presse my Toome,  
 And wish no favours Anthony could give.  
 (I ii 204-7)

In practice, however, Mariam is seizing the chance of Herod's death to avoid ever having to relate to a man via her sexuality again, as the struggling proto-separatist voice of I i becomes dominant. Betty Travitsky argues that the negative portrayal of Cleopatra, which occurs in this scene and elsewhere, is evidence that "Cary, apparently, had internalized the contemporary male conflation of female rule and out-of-bounds sexuality."<sup>21</sup> However, I would argue that it is Travitsky who is imposing both seventeenth-century patriarchal values and twentieth-century liberal moral standards. To begin with, Mariam and Alexandra are, at this point in the play, the rulers of Judea, yet neither of them are presented as being sexually "out-of-bounds"; Mariam is presented as precisely the opposite. Furthermore, both Cleopatra and Alexandra are, in terms of the play, members of the older generation and the old-world order under which women were obliged to use their bodies as a way of gaining power - through the marriage market. Travitsky seems to assume that by encouraging her to find a more politically advantageous match, Alexandra is soliciting Mariam to do something unusual or immoral and that Mariam rejects this "immorality" in her rejection of Cleopatra's lifestyle. However, Mariam is, at this point, believed to be a widow and therefore legitimately available for marriage and so there is nothing conventionally immoral in Alexandra's suggestion. So, rather than making a moral judgement on Cleopatra, Mariam is actually rejecting the values of her mother's generation - the abdication of bodily power for the sake of political and economic gain. She may refer to her "purest body", but the main emphasis of this quatrain is

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21. Travitsky (1987), p. 189.



on Mariam's rejection of the gain of worldly power - the cost of being Empress of Rome would be too high, if it meant another round of sexual subjugation.

Mariam's non-sexual self-identification continues into I ii, in her encounter with Salome. It is Alexandra who emphasises Mariam's sexual desirability:

... More Kings then one did crave,  
For leave to set a Crowne upon her head.  
(I iii 221-222)

Conversely Mariam herself places the emphasis upon her individual worth as defined by her descent from the house of David. She has a crown on her head in her own right and does not need to lie in a King's bed to earn one. She is of the rightful blood royal, whereas Herod is a usurper, put into his position with the overt help of Rome. Mariam's sense of social and political worth is something which she enjoys separately from her position as Herod's wife, as she impresses upon Salome:

Though I thy brothers face had never seene,  
My birth, thy baser birth so farre exceld,  
I had to both of you the Princesse bene.  
(I iii 241-3)

Ultimately, the voice which was compromised by the discourse of wifely devotion in I i has triumphed, as Mariam constructs herself via her own political power and familial descent rather than by the love of Herod. But Mariam's discourse is not powerful enough to impose the fact of this new subject position upon others. Whilst she refuses a sexual role, one is imposed upon her regardless, be it chaste wife or whore. Mariam does not appear again in the play for a considerable time and her absence is the very time when the play illustrates how much Mariam is vulnerable to erroneous construction by characters who have an interest in her reputation.

In II iii Doris claims that her divorce from Herod was illegal and therefore accuses Mariam of being an adulteress. Doris curses Mariam for occupying a subject position which she, Doris, craves and yet Mariam abhors.

Such irony exposes the role of wife as just that - a role into which women are fitted, or from which they are removed at the will of men, as opposed to being a natural part of female behaviour. Despite her invective against Herod for rejecting her in favour of Mariam - he is the "false Monarch" (II iii 789) who rejected his wife and son - Doris does not call for revenge to fall upon Herod, but upon Mariam: "The fall of her that on my Trophee stands" (II iii 803). Doris's revenge is presented as motivated by gender politics rather than an idealised concept of love. Her fundamental desire is the position as Herod's wife. Therefore, she focuses all the blame on Mariam and constructs her as the only individual who deserves punishment - demonstrating the patriarchal practice that, whenever a sexual relationship is deemed unlawful, the woman is constructed as the *sole* transgressor. Carey makes this type of discourse all the more disturbing by having it articulated by a female character who has every reason to distrust and reject patriarchy, yet she clings to it as her only means of identification and her only hope of exacting revenge.

Mariam re-appears again in III iii, when Sohemus tells her of Herod's return. Sohemus shows comprehension of Mariam's distress solely in terms of her relationship with Herod, reading her fear at his return as fear that he may not love her any more. "His love to you againe will soone be bred" (III iii 1134) says Sohemus, which leads to Mariam making her refusal of sexual subjugation clear:

I will not to his love be reconcilde,  
With solemne vowes I have forsworne his Bed.  
(III iii 1135-16)

Mariam's aversion to Herod puts her course of action outside patriarchal marriage ideology, and therefore beyond Sohemus' frame of reference. His overriding concern is for Mariam's physical preservation and so his advice is to conform to her position, rather than to her "self".

Mariam remains determined, effectively offering a deconstruction of

the "love" for Herod which she articulated in I i. She was able to place herself in the subject position of wife only whilst it was purely a linguistic construct, with no material husband to whom to submit, sexually or otherwise. In III iii Mariam exposes the conscious dissembling necessary for her to perpetuate the material reality of that marriage, but she rejects this course of action in favour of strict constancy of her outer appearance to her inner self :

I know I could inchain him with a smile:  
 And lead him captive with a gentle word,  
 I scorne my looke should ever man beguile,  
 Or other speech, then meaning to afford.  
 (III iii 1166-9)

T. McAlindon has suggested that such constancy is at the heart of the tragic hero's struggle:

[I]ts etymological meaning - 'standing together' provides a clue to its essential significance in the drama and in Renaissance thought generally: it is constancy in human behaviour which makes for unity and integrity. Constancy, therefore, implies fidelity to self and to others, psychic and interpersonal harmony; and since fidelity may entail strength of mind and purpose, it also implies fortitude.<sup>22</sup>

This may be the case for the masculine hero. But Mariam, whilst possessed of unity and integrity, cannot perpetuate harmony with others. Her allotted subject-position of wife to Herod, the playing out of which would promote "interpersonal harmony", is *at odds with* her integrity - an irreparable fissure exposing how the role of wife barely corresponds to the subjectivity of the individual woman. Carey's choice of subject matter highlights the absurd moral injustice of this situation. Mariam is expected, even by the servant who adores her enough to die for her, to be complicit with a man who has murdered her brother and grandfather, and has twice threatened her with death.

Chorus III is crucial to the debate about Mariam's actions. It is problematic for a feminist reader as it seems so viciously restrictive of the

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22. T. McAlindon, *English Renaissance Tragedy*, London, 1986, p. 11.

wife's role, but I would argue that Chorus III is in a process of deconstructing itself, as it moves from a reasoned account of appearance and reality to troping on verbal and sexual freedom. In relation to Mariam, Chorus III underlines her difficulties in the relationship with Herod. The first stanza talks of being restrained by her "proper self". Yet Mariam's "proper self" is anathema to her position as Herod's wife. When touching on the idea of the wife speaking to another man, at first Chorus III does not totally censure:

Yet though most chast, she doth her glory blot,  
And wounds her honour, though she killes it not.  
(Chorus III 1235-6)

The image of line 1236 points to the excessive nature of Herod's punishment of Mariam. Yet from this conciliatory tone, in eleven lines the Chorus develops a completely new voice:

For in a wife it is no worse to finde,  
A common body, then a common minde.  
(Chorus III 1247-8)

Troping thus on sexual and verbal transgression gives the effect that *all* female transgression is inevitably sexual.

The stanza in between the conciliatory third stanza and the reactionary fifth, indicates a hidden agenda in Chorus III. It starts out as an instruction to wives:

When to their Husbands they themselves doe bind,  
Doe they not wholly give themselves away?  
Or give they but their body not their mind,  
Reserving that though best, for others pray?  
No sure, their thoughts no more can be their owne,  
And therefore should to none but one be knowne.  
(Chorus III 1237-42)

Catherine Belsey suggests that the "one" of the last line refers to the thinker rather than to the thinker's husband and that the last two lines of this stanza are a warning for a married woman to keep her thoughts to herself "precisely because in marriage they are no longer her own".<sup>23</sup> This interpretation would certainly complement the proto-separatist position which Mariam adopts.

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23. Belsey (1985), pp. 173-4.

However, this kind of restriction results in submitting the body. Mariam cannot keep her thoughts to herself as this would mean returning to Herod's bed and suffering in silence. Whatever course of action Mariam chooses, she does so at the expense of her body - silence and sexual submission; speech and death. This ambiguous "one" in stanza four is rather an enjoinder to silence for the sake of bodily survival, in the same vein as Sohemus in III iii: the survival of integrity is not even an issue, as Mariam's fate soon makes clear.

The re-enforcement of patriarchal rule in IV brings a change in Mariam's spoken discourse. Apart from in her final scene she says very little in IV. In her early scenes with Herod - IV iii and IV iv - her language is simple, direct and unequivocal, in an effort to keep speech and meaning unilinear. For example:

I cannot frame disguise, nor never taught  
My face a looke dissenting from my thought.  
(IV iii 1407-8)

Mariam expects her denial of the poison plot and adultery to be accepted as the simple truth. After all, the essential feature of language, according to patriarchal ideology is that it is unilinear, direct and an unambiguous representation of the truth. However, any language articulated by a speaking subject is also at the mercy of those who listen and interpret. Therefore, the synthesis of meaning and language lies not with the speaking subject but with the subject who has the greatest socio-political power. As Chris Weedon suggests:

The degree to which meanings are vulnerable at a particular moment will depend upon the discursive power relations within which they are located. <sup>24</sup>

The meaning of Mariam's language is dependent upon Herod's interpretation; she is subject to construction by his male gaze. Significantly, in *The Tragedy of Mariam* it is the patriarch himself who fails to recognise language as the

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24. Weedon (1987), pp. 85-6.

unilinear discourse of truth. This failure dichotomises speech and meaning - beginning a process whereby patriarchy not only destroys its subjects, but also itself.

Mariam's final scene presents her trying to make sense of the events of the day before she dies. The speech is one of self-discovery, beginning with a defeatist lapse back into a patriarchal discourse:

Am I the Mariam that presum'd so much,  
 And deem'd my face must needes preserve my breath? ...  
 Now death will teach me: he can pale aswell  
 A cheeke of roses, as a cheeke lesse bright.  
 (IV viii 1799-1800; 1803-4)

This type of discourse echoes that of both Sohemus (III iii) and Herod (IV iii) as they encouraged her to accept wifely subjugation. As the soliloquy develops, Mariam, punning on the word "drawn" expresses a realisation that Herod's love was never actually taken from her, but was manipulated - "It could be drawne, though never drawne from me" (IV viii 1832). The sense of herself as an autonomous subject becomes significantly modified, as she realises that the perceptions of others count as much as, if not more than, her own in defining her "true" self, thus creating an impossible situation under which women have to live:

But I did thinke because I knew me chaste,  
 One vertue for a woman, might suffice. ...  
 But if one single seene, who setteth by?  
 (IV viii 1835-6; 1840)

Women have to *be* chaste and be *seen* to be chaste via the virtue of humility - exposing the subject-position of wife as requiring not just restraints on sexual activity, but an adoption of a specific mode of public and private behaviour if that restraint is to be recognised as valid.

Chastity, by its passive nature, is not a quality which can be materially proven; it is subject to construction by the most powerful discourse current at any one time. In effect, it has to be "proved" by means other than itself - in Mariam's case by being a compliant wife - the signifier of chastity bearing little relation to the actual signified. A brief comparison of Mariam with

Coriolanus displays the extent to which the ability to impose the truth of one's own "self" is dependent upon the nature of the "self" which one is trying to promote and upon having access to the correct discourse in which to articulate it. Coriolanus reveres and practises superb military skill; Mariam reveres and practises strict chastity. They both reject the need to promote these essential characteristics publicly, and this rejection is crucial to their downfall. However, in the eyes of his society, even after banishment, Coriolanus never loses that by which he identifies himself - military prowess. It is a quality which can be proven by material fact and which therefore cannot be denied, even by his enemies. Mariam, on the other hand, fiercely preserves her chastity and yet is executed as an adulteress.

Mariam has therefore no guarantee of a continuum between inner self and outward appearance. She prepares to quit her body, which has been beyond her control to define and hopes to find more self-determination in heaven. She rejects the worldly power by which she once defined herself, reminding those who are likewise empowered:

Your birth must be from dust: your power on earth,  
In heav'n shall Mariam sit in Saraes lap.  
(IV viii 1847-8)

There are various critical interpretations of Mariam's death. Apart from A.C. Dunstan, who calls her end "pathetic", <sup>25</sup> most of the more recent critics seem to read the scene only to the end of her soliloquy and then either pass over or forget about the encounter with Doris. <sup>26</sup> One particularly glorifying account is by Elaine Beilin:

By raising Mariam to spiritual heroism at the end of the play, Cary removes her protagonist from the earthly problems that beset her to a transcendent [*sic*] state. The idealization of Mariam changes her from a disobedient wife and subject to a prophet of Christianity. <sup>27</sup>

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25. Dunstan (1908), p. 34.

26. Lewalski (1993), p. 200, also ignores the dialogue between Mariam and Doris which ends IV viii.

27. Beilin (1987), p. 172.

Continuing the Christian theme, Sandra K. Fischer comments:

The redemption of humanity by Christ's sacrifice becomes equivalent to the redemption of womanhood by Mariam's sacrifice.<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, only a "Christianized" reading of this scene can make a triumph out of the fact that an innocent woman is bereft of life for a deed which she did not commit. Only two critics have, so far, read beyond the end of Mariam's soliloquy, although neither attempts anything more than a moral evaluation of the respective characters. Shapiro considers Mariam to be totally exonerated by the end of the scene,<sup>29</sup> whereas Krontiris suggests that Carey takes Doris's side to hint that Mariam "may not be so very innocent after all."<sup>30</sup>

In contrast to these views, I do not feel that a moral stance in favour of one or other character is at all apparent. Rather, the entire scene acts as a powerful criticism of a society in which access to the marriage market, in which women were merely objects of exchange, was their only means of gaining and retaining access to political and economic power. The entrance of Doris certainly dispels any impression of Mariam's final hours as peaceful, dignified and stoic, for her accusations force Mariam into defending herself against yet another charge of adultery:

Was that adultery: did not Moses say,  
That he that being matcht did deadly hate:  
Might by permission put his wife away,  
And take a more belov'd to be his mate?  
(IV viii 1861-4)

The patriarchal law to which Mariam refers, ironically to justify the legality of her marriage to a man she loathes and who has condemned her to death, cannot withstand Doris's attacks. The legality of the divorce is certainly questionable, as Doris has fulfilled all her wifely duties. Moreover, it

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28. Fischer (1985), p. 236.

29. Shapiro (1984), p. 202.

30. Krontiris (1992), p. 91.



appears that Heaven has found in favour of Doris and both women remain under the impression that Mariam's death is a result of divine judgement. Mariam is thus stripped of an heroic and virtuous end and takes her leave with relief, because there is nothing left by which or for which she can live:

Now earth farewell, though I be yet but yong,  
Yet I, me thinks, have knowne thee too too long.  
(IV viii 1901-2)

Patriarchy has failed Mariam, Doris and itself. This last appearance of women in the play portrays destructive, empty bickering between the two women whose only enemy is Herod. Each tries to justify her claim to occupy the position of Herod's wife, although Doris cannot have the position and Mariam does not want it. Both women have been characterized as deeply righteous under the strictures of patriarchal law, yet the patriarch has failed to see that righteousness and thus they have both been effectively robbed of that which they prized the most - Doris of her husband and Mariam of her chastity. Mariam's exit to her death, under the threats of Doris's curse, constitutes the ultimate and most radical criticism of patriarchy - that it fails to live up to its own standards and cannot recognise those ideals which it purports to prize.

## Salome

Conversely, in the case of Salome, patriarchy is shown to be powerless to detect and curb those qualities which it purports to condemn.<sup>31</sup> The character of Salome is the one which poses most problems in trying to interpret the text of the play. Critics have either tried to suggest that she slips

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31. Markham and Sampson evidently felt that the patriarchal order could not be seen to be weak in this way. They invoked poetic justice to bring about Salomith's death in *The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater*. After she has been imprisoned for her plotting, Salomith "Forsooke all foode, all comfort, and with sighes, / Broke her poore heart in sunder" (V ii 284-5). This fate is significantly reminiscent of that of Ann Frankford and offers a reinstatement of patriarchal power which is absent in *The Antiquities*, in which Salome outlives Herod.

out of the text unnoticed, and hence that her fate is unimportant,<sup>32</sup> or have avoided assessing her role by simply setting her down as the villain. Those who judge Salome in this way have generally tried to force her into a two or three-handed relationship with Mariam alone or with Mariam and Graphina. Dunstan, Cotton, Fischer, Krontiris and Lewalski<sup>33</sup> see a binary opposition of virtue and vice between Mariam and Salome; Beilin and Ferguson<sup>34</sup> prefer the three-handed model, in which Graphina and Salome represent the virtue and vice polarities of Mariam's character. However, both of these readings make assumptions about virtue and vice that fall well within the norms of patriarchal ideology, and these assumptions are easily exposed.

The three-handed model does not take account of the fact that Graphina is not of the same social class as Salome and Mariam, yet this considerably affects the way in which she can be judged in relation to them in terms of her "virtue". Graphina is a slave. This does not mean she is simply socially and economically inferior; it means that, by law, she does not have power over her own body. Therefore, by marrying Pheroras, she does not stand to *become* economically dependent, because as a slave, she is dependent in this way already. Nor does she stand to lose any self-determination because she never had any. It was because of his love for her, that Pheroras refrained from his legal right, as master, to rape Graphina:

You have preserved me pure at my request,  
 Though you so weake a vassaile might constraine  
 To yeeld to your high will.  
 (II i 606-8)

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32. Dunstan (1908), p. 38

33. Dunstan (1908), p. 36; Cotton (1977), p. 604; Cotton (1980), p. 34; Fischer (1985), pp. 234-5; Krontiris (1992), p. 85; Lewalski (1993), pp. 196-7.

34. Beilin (1980), p. 57; Beilin (1985), p. 167; Ferguson, (1992) pp. 237-8. Ferguson does admit that this three-handed model is not ideal, but only because Graphina represents "the possibility of a non-transgressive mode of discourse ... and the possibility of a mutually satisfying love relation", neither of which are available to Mariam. Ferguson does not consider the implications of Graphina's social position.

By becoming Pheroras' wife, Graphina merely undergoes a process of *consenting* to the relationship based on the assumption of male sexual power under which she already lived, without giving her consent, as his slave. Thus, Pheroras and Graphina's relationship in II i shows that the only means by which marriage can be played out in a mutually successful way under the strictures of patriarchal ideology is in the format of male master and female slave. Graphina's virtue cannot therefore be compared with that of Mariam, because Graphina's virtue is a virtue of socio-economic necessity.

The binary opposition of Salome/vice and Mariam/virtue would perhaps appear more feasible. They are adversaries, certainly, and are presented as being in factional opposition to each other. This does not mean that they occupy places at opposite ends of the moral spectrum. In fact, they have their most significant characteristic in common: a desire for sexual self-determination. Both characters assert the right to choose what they do with their bodies. By way of illustration, I shall cite the opinion of Krontiris, who tries to align Cleopatra with Salome, as lustful women against whom Mariam's virtuous chastity is set. However, as I argued earlier (pp. 138-9), Cleopatra represents the "body as career" topos. Mariam seeks to escape from this and so too does Salome. The crucial difference is that, whilst Mariam escapes into sexual abstinence, Salome escapes into sexual pleasure. To claim that Mariam is virtuous because she prefers to abstain from sexual relationships with men, and that Salome is vicious because she wants the freedom to choose her lovers, is to re-impose those patriarchal value judgements which the play itself brings under scrutiny.

Assessment of the character of Salome does present problems, particularly because the pursuit of her own desires greatly aids the deaths of five people (six, if the Butler is included). A feminist reading cannot allow the woman who calls for equal rights of divorce for women to be cast as a villain; but how can feminist theory treat Salome's desire for the death of an

innocent woman? A close study of her character reveals gestures of constant difference and constant deferral, culminating in her leaving the text without any single impression, any one set of values by which we can define her, except her "self" and that changes with each scene.

Her first appearance casts her very much as the underdog, devoid of influence now that her brother is believed dead. She bears the brunt of Mariam's pride and scorn, but passes it off by dismissing those values by which Mariam defines herself. She asks:

Still twit you me with nothing but my birth,  
 What ods betwixt your ancestors and mine?  
 (I iii 247-8)

Furthermore, whilst Mariam may attack Salome for having slandered her unjustly, Salome speaks from a perfectly orthodox position within patriarchal ideology:

Tis true indeed, I did the plots reveale,  
 That past betwixt your favorites and you:  
 I ment not I, a traytor to conceale.  
 Thus Salome your Mynion Joseph slue.  
 (I iii 255-8)

Such reworking of this nature is a crucial factor in Salome's discourse. Mariam claims that Salome wanted Joseph dead so that she could marry her new love, Constabarus. But Salome played out her desires from a patriarchally orthodox position - manipulating the discourse of patriarchal politics for her own ends.

Yet Salome is as eager as any of the other characters to enjoy the freedom brought by Herod's absence. She wants to marry Silleus, but is already married to Constabarus, whom she no longer loves. The constraint of being married to Constabarus is soon passed off as an easy obstacle to overcome. Salome can do this precisely *because* she accepts the role into which she is slotted by patriarchal ideology. Unlike Mariam, who is trying to resist being constructed as wife or adulteress, Salome accepts her role as the latter, being able to reconstruct from it the liberation she desires:

What childish lets are these? Why stand I now  
 On honourable points? 'Tis long agoe  
 Since shame was written on my tainted brow:  
 And certain tis, that shame is honours foe.  
 (I iv 291-4)

Salome's speech here indicates the anarchic danger of a woman who is simultaneously "cast out" by patriarchal discourse, in that she is deemed a "whore", and yet contained within it by this very process of categorisation. Having nothing left to lose in terms of her ideologically determined reputation, she is free to behave without constraints. Therefore, she determines to break the male prerogative of divorce and claim it for herself and, most significantly, for all women. In so doing, she not only exposes how ridiculous the divorce laws are, but also questions any religious foundation for misogyny or sexual inequality:

Why should such priviledge to man be given?  
 Or given to them, why bard from women then?  
 Are men then we in greater grace with Heaven?  
 Or cannot women hate as well as men?  
 (I iv 315-8)

Salome's final comment in this scene directly correlates her cruel action against Constabarus and Baba's sons with the divorce restrictions imposed on women:

If Herod had liv'd, I might to him accuse  
 My present Lord. But for the futures sake  
 Then would I tell the King he did refuse  
 The sonnes of Baba in his power to take.  
 (I iv 323-6)

This threat is borne out when Herod returns.

Salome's next scene is with Silleus and it serves to illustrate that patriarchal ideology is only powerful if it is taken on board completely and by all men. Silleus simply does not acknowledge the categorisation of Salome as a whore, and yet speaks in apparently conventional, patriarchal love-language. But his language is free from the attendant taint of patriarchal restrictions upon his beloved. He refuses to condemn Salome for her actions in divorcing Constabarus because they will both gain that which they desire most as a result. As with Salome, it is desire for the loved one, rather than

patriarchal propriety, which informs Silleus' discourse.

Thinks Salome, Silleus hath a tongue  
 To censure her faire actions: let my blood  
 Bedash my proper brow, for such a wrong,  
 The being yours, can make even vices good.  
 (I v 353-6)

He has no concern with Salome's past; does not conceive of her actions as immoral or illegal; his sole concern is that she is his and he is not concerned that she has been someone else's beforehand. The love discourse articulated by Silleus is a love which is more powerful than patriarchy; Salome's (self-acknowledged) sexual status does not compromise Silleus' love. This is diametrically opposed to the patriarchal convention whereby Silleus' love would rely on Salome's worth (i.e. chastity). Equally disdainful of patriarchal conventions, Salome, like Mariam, is not prepared to use love as a means of political advancement.

Were not Silleus he with home I goe,  
 I would not change my Palastine for Rome:  
 Much lesse would I a glorious state to shew,  
 Goe far to purchase an Arabian toome.  
 (I v 373-6)

The love discourse of Silleus and Salome is one that rejects patriarchal power/gender politics, imbuing it with a purity which is inevitably compromised if their love is to be fulfilled after Herod returns.

The next scene, when Salome encounters Constabarus, stands in contrast to I v. Whilst Constabarus may incite Salome to (patriarchally defined) virtuous behaviour, his actions are presented as futile attempts to force Salome into the role of perfect wife. Not surprisingly his concerns (like Herod's) are ultimately with himself. It is interesting that whilst he upbraids Salome for "shaming" all those things by which she is defined, i.e. her name, race and country, it is he himself whom Constabarus perceives to be most shamed. Furthermore, after her soliloquy of I iv, we know that Constabarus evidently has no idea of his wife's character (as Herod has no idea of Mariam's) and is trying to persuade her using a discourse and a set of values

to which she no longer subscribes. Salome, however, reminds him of the socio-political realities of their respective situations, which should completely negate the husband/King position which Constabarus is trying to adopt:

This hand of mine hath lifted up thy head,  
Which many a day agoe had falne full lowe,  
Because the sonnes of Baba are not dead,  
To me thou doest both life and fortune owe.  
(I vi 415-8)

Constabarus does not recognise that he can only exert ideological control if he also has political and economic control, which, clearly, he does not. He simply does not comprehend the relationship between the material and the ideological and expects to wield control simply by virtue of his gender. Therefore, when Salome expresses her desire for divorce, Constabarus' reaction can be seen as little more than rhetoric. Catherine Belsey suggests that his words provide the final judgement on Salome's actions.<sup>35</sup> However, this view is seriously undermined by the fact that he does not have the power to prevent Salome and so his words are completely empty. His idea of a chaotic world resulting from the equality of men and women in the question of divorce is ridiculous, but telling, as he claims that men will become like slaves in this "topsie turved" (I vi 438) world, which can only imply that women occupy slave-like positions at present.<sup>36</sup>

More significantly, perhaps, it is Constabarus' own words which undermine his righteous indignation, in the very act of trying to accuse Salome:

I was Silleus, and not long agoe  
Josephus then was Constabarus now:  
When you became my friend you prov'd his foe,  
As now for him you breake to me your vovd [*sic*].  
(I vi 475-8)

Here, Constabarus effectively admits complicity in the death of Joseph. For it is Salome's "inconstancy" that has raised Constabarus to his present

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35. Belsey (1985), p. 175.

36. See discussion of Graphina, pp. 148-9.

position and Joseph had to be executed to facilitate this event. Constabarus is more fortunate - he only faces divorce - and yet he invokes his role as husband (and, as he perceives, superior) to attack Salome for that very characteristic by which he once profited and by which he now stands to suffer considerably less than his predecessor. Constabarus owes his life to Salome, but refuses to accept that it alters their positions and so tries to impose conventional patriarchal rule. His fate illustrates that there is no power inherent in the husband over the wife: it needs the support of political, social and economic power and becomes merely insubstantial rhetoric without them.

Salome's next appearance is not until III i, by which time she seems to have completely changed her attitude to the relationship between love and power. Her discourse is conventional as she chides Pheroras for having rejected a princess and married his slave, which appears incongruous after her rejection of such concerns in I iii-v. However, the scene as a whole serves to show the extent of Salome's ability to adopt various subject-positions. She can talk perfectly convincingly within patriarchal discourse to discourage Pheroras from Graphina yet, when it proves expedient (when Herod's return is announced), she offers to speak to Herod on Pheroras' behalf in support of the marriage. In return she asks Pheroras to tell Herod about the concealment of the sons of Baba by Constabarus and also to inform him that Salome divorced Constabarus out of loyalty to Herod. Once again, Salome is able to rewrite her actions into a totally orthodox political position, well within the confines of Herod's patriarchal rule. Furthermore, Salome is still sharply aware of her status and hence that of her word:

This will be Constabarus quicke dispatch,  
Which from my mouth would lesser credit finde.  
(III i 1078-9)

Unsure of the validity of her own voice to press her own suit, she exchanges voices with a male subject, simultaneously recognising and using his ideologically superior position.



When she forms her plot against Mariam - another change from I iii-v - she makes her only misjudgement of the play. This misjudgement is indicative of Salome's radical perception of women as whole, autonomous subjects, in that she does not realise that jealousy will be sufficient cause for Herod to condemn Mariam. She forms her plot with the assumption that the relationship between Herod and Mariam is between two equal subjects, rapidly passing off the idea of inciting Herod's jealousy and concentrating on framing Mariam for treason against him. She perceives Mariam as a whole, unified subject and does not, at this stage, realise that Herod's one-dimensional construction of Mariam is the effective truth upon which she, Salome, has to base her strategy. The elaborate plotting to suborn the Butler ultimately proves superfluous as Herod ignores the poison plot and focuses on the question of Mariam's chastity.

When Herod returns, Salome's plots are put into action and by the time she reappears for the last time in IV vii, she has gained almost all her desires. The execution of Constabarus has taken place and the preceding scene presents him delivering a bitter, misogynistic speech before his death, culminating in a specific attack on Salome. This may be as interpreted as a form of literary condemnation, an answer to Salome's deeds and a final verdict on her which prevents her leaving the play with total vindication. However, the tenor of the speech is that all women are evil because of Salome and only Mariam stands out as virtuous:

You wavering crue: my curse to you I leave,  
 You had but one to give you anie grace:  
 And you your selves will Mariams life bereave.  
 (IV vi 1579-81)

Salome is deemed to be the leader of the worst of womankind "adulterous, murderous, cunning, proud" (IV vi 1602). His logic fails, as it would have been just as feasible to revere the whole of the female sex because of Mariam and curse Salome as the exception. Dramatically speaking, this perhaps would have made Salome's deeds appear all the more wicked, going against

"naturally virtuous" femininity. But it does not need a twentieth-century critic to point this out. Constantia Munda, replying to Joseph Swetnam's misogyny says this:

If a thief take your purse from you, will you malign and swagger with everyone you meet? If you be beaten in an ale house, will you set the whole town afire? <sup>37</sup>

Constabarus' words can hardly be given any credence and are immediately silenced by death whereas Salome appears alive and successful in the following scene.

In IV vii Salome conducts her most successful change of voice. She abandons the political plotting of III i and appropriates the sexually focused discourse of Herod. She says relatively little, apparently letting Herod control the scene and admits no interest in his decision until he specifically tells her to command Mariam's death, which she does with alacrity. From then on, her language concerns itself solely with the combined beauty and adultery of Mariam which was the focus of Herod's language in IV iv. She appropriates the misogynistic discourse which has been used against her by Constabarus in II iv and against Mariam by Herod in IV iv. More significantly, this is also the discourse in which she so defiantly defined herself as outside the respectable pale of patriarchy (see p. 151). For example:

... Mariams very tresses hide deceit. ...  
She speaks a beautiful language, but within  
Her heart is false as powder.  
(IV vii 1692; 1701-2)

She secures control of the situation when Herod decides to see Mariam one last time, by mentioning Mariam's previous "lovers":

For sure she never more will breake her vow,  
Sohemus and Josephus both are dead.  
(IV vii 1775-6)

Completely covering herself, she apparently supports a revocation of the

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37. Constantia Munda, *The Worming of a Mad Dog* (1617), rpt. in Shepherd (1985), p. 136.

death sentence, yet introduces the two signifiers that will secure it. When Herod begins to suspect her manipulative role, Salome exits, protesting her innocence:

He leave you to your passion: tis no time  
To purge me now, though of a guiltles crime.  
(IV vii 1789-90)

This final oxymoron is typical of Salome's whole character - evading definition and defying the precision of unilinear, patriarchal discourse. The only further mention of Salome is by Herod in V i, as part of the deferral of blame process, by which he eventually realises that the fault was his own. He gives no promise of retributive action against Salome and her part in Mariam's destruction is minimalised.

It is impossible to draw a firm conclusion about Salome's character. Ever changing, she slips out of the text at a vital moment, thus avoiding any final definition. Unlike Herod and Mariam, she has no final speech to sum up her character, nor does another character do it for her. However, by her ever-changing character, it is feasible to argue that she epitomises the proto-feminist and anti-patriarchal sentiments which the play puts forward. It is she who changes most as the play shifts from liberation to oppression under Herod. The first act sees her proto-feminist call for equal divorce rights and her anti-patriarchal dismissal of birth, wealth and power for the sake of love; she is also one half of a match which subverts the socio-political positions of male and female in marriage. Once Herod returns, she is forced to seek the deaths of three men to maintain the desires expressed in I iii-v, but she also revives a concern with revenge on Mariam, now that Herod's return makes this possible. She thus moves from righteous aggression against inequality in I to vindictive aggression against innocence in III and IV, the re-establishment of patriarchal rule being the crucial factor in this change. Salome undermines patriarchy in three ways, all of which reflect the structure of the text itself. In I she does it directly, being possessed of more socio-political power than

her husband. In III and IV this is more covert. She now undermines patriarchy on two levels: (a) by her very existence, which provides the moral observation that the wicked and destructive thrive under patriarchal rule, and (b) by "stealing" patriarchal language and using it against itself, exposing its inconsistencies and displaying how vulnerable it is to manipulation and thus showing that it is not the discourse of absolute truth. Salome makes two achievements which are considered important to feminist theory. First, she is plural, multi-linear, elusive of definition. Julia Kristeva<sup>38</sup> and Luce Irigaray have illustrated how the narrow, masculine ideas of woman and the language in which they are expressed are inadequate for woman's experience of herself. Salome performs Irigaray's idea of "a woman's (re-)discovery of herself" in that she never sacrifices any of her pleasure to another, thus not identifying with anyone in particular, "never simply being one".<sup>39</sup> More significantly perhaps, she is a thief of language, like her creator. For she exhibits an attitude towards patriarchal language which is highly reminiscent of Carey's attitude towards her sources. Salome adopts a seemingly orthodox position in taking up patriarchal discourse but, she exploits its inconsistencies to make it mean what *she* wants it to mean.

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38. Julia Kristeva, "La femme, ce n'est jamais ça" (Woman can never be defined), an interview by "psychoanalysis and politics", in *Tel Quel*, Autumn 1974, rpt. in Marks and de Courtivron (1981), pp. 137-41.

39. Irigaray, op. cit., p. 104.

## CHAPTER 4

"Thou gavest me birth and yet denyest me being": The "true" authorship of *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II.*

## Textual Problems

This chapter is the most textually problematic of the thesis in that it deals with a text, or, more correctly, two texts over which there is a dispute as to the authorship. My aim is to assess the case for either or both of these texts being by Elizabeth Carey and then proceed with a critical analysis in the following chapter. The texts in question are:

*The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II. King of England, and Lord of Ireland, with the Rise and Fall of his great Favourites, Gaveston and the Spencers.* Written by E.F. in the year 1627. And Printed verbatim from the Original. London: printed by J.C. for Charles Harper ... Samuel Crouch ... and Thomas Fox ... 1680, folio, Wing F313 (henceforth <A>).

and

*The History of the most unfortunate Prince King Edward II. With Choice Political Observations on Him and his unhappy Favourites, Gaveston and Spencer.* ... Found among the Papers of and (supposed to be) writ by the Right Honourable Henry Viscount Faulkland, Sometime Lord Deputy of Ireland. Printed by A.G. and J.P. and are to be sold by John Playford, 1680, octavo, Wing F314 (henceforth <B>).<sup>1</sup>

Both of these texts are still listed in Wing under Henry Carey, first Viscount Falkland - the authorship claim made (by the stationer?) in the second text, although these claims have been discounted by the most recent scholarship on these texts. There is, of course, no overriding evidence either in favour or

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1. There is a third text, Wing F314a, entitled *The Parallel: or the History of the Life, Reign, Deposition and Death of King Edward the Second, with an Account of his Favourites, P. Gaveston and the Spencers*, 1689. This is "By a Person of Quality". It would appear, however, to be a reissue of pages printed in 1680, for a number of reasons: This text reproduces the pagination error which occurs in <A>, where 132 is followed by 137 (no text appears to be missing, the error is simply in the numbering); the folio lettering is exactly the same; both texts print "An" at the bottom of page 160 as the first word to follow on 161 whereas the word is, in fact, "The"; the advertisement for *Cottoni Postuma* printed by Charles Harper also appears in both texts, even though by 1689 it would have been out of date. I shall therefore treat this as simply a reissue of extant copies of the original 1680 <A> text, minus "The Author's Preface to the Reader" and with new title page.

against Elizabeth Carey's authorship. The hypothetical document which would prove the case one way or the other has yet to be found, and indeed may well never be found. All that can be done at present is to weigh up the evidence, and if there is a case to be made for Elizabeth Carey's authorship, then to proceed.

The dispute over the text, however, seems to mirror the conditions of its production, in that both are subject to the reader making a conscious choice in how to read the text. The history of Edward II was constantly retold in a literary form from the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the eighteenth century, spanning the reigns of Elizabeth, James I, Charles I, the Interregnum, Charles II, James II, William and Mary, and finally, Anne. Inevitably, each retelling has the potential to be read as a political allegory for the reign under which it was written; and each retelling will be informed by the ideology of the time of its production. But, as with all allegory, each retelling fits its perceived subject imperfectly. So much so, in fact, that when it comes to the <A> and <B> texts of *Edward II*, where the evidence for when they were written is scant, fixing them by their allegorical nature to one particular monarch is a highly problematic task, and has highly political implications for the literary canon. Which canon has the right to claim the text? The Renaissance canon - on the evidence of <A>'s claim to be written in 1627/8; or the Restoration canon - on the evidence of the date of publication? If the Renaissance canon is to make the successful claim, then the question still remains of the text being by Elizabeth Carey as opposed to any other writer; if the Restoration canon is to make the successful claim, the possibility of either text being admitted to the Carey oeuvre is nil.

The attempt to answer the question of whether or not Elizabeth Carey is a potential author, is made particularly difficult by two problems. The first is that there are two texts, neither of which make the same claims about their date or authorship, and the second is that, whilst each text claims to have

been written before the Civil War, neither was published until 1680. The possibilities are many and various: a) both texts were written pre-Civil War, but discovered and published in 1680; b) both texts were written in 1679/80 and published under false pretences; c) one text is an original pre-Civil War text, but published belatedly in 1680, the other being a contemporary reworking. This latter category is itself fraught with problems, such as ascertaining which text is the original and which the adulterated one, and acknowledging the possibility that both texts could be based on the same original, but both could have been adulterated by editorial tampering, the extent of which may never be known.

These complex questions of authority are ones which Carey scholars (or at least those who are currently published) have apparently been avoiding. In 1935, Donald A. Stauffer<sup>2</sup> made a purely oppositional argument in favour of Elizabeth Carey as the author, against the attribution of the texts to her husband. He concentrates mainly on the <A> text, making a fleeting reference to the <B> text, which he suggests is an edited down version of <A>.<sup>3</sup> He does not address the question of the extent to which the <B> text could still be considered to be Elizabeth Carey's after this editorial interference. Unfortunately, published research seems to add little to this pioneering work by Stauffer. Much of the recent published work, moreover, has caused great confusion as to the genre of the works. Betty Travitsky reprints sections from both versions in her anthology *The Paradise of Women*,

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2. Stauffer (1935), pp. 289-314.

3. Stauffer (1935), p. 295, n. 7, says:  
 Who did this shortening I cannot determine. The titlepage of the 1680 octavo suggests that this short version is Falkland's work. Falkland died in 1633. But a tendency in this octavo version to simplify the language and to omit archaisms might support the theory that the original Falkland manuscript was published in folio in 1680 and that upon this edition the printers of the octavo edition, who are not the printers of the folio, based their shortened biography. There is, of course, no positive proof that the short edition is not the original text, of which the longer account is a poetic elaboration. This, however, seems unlikely.

making no distinction between the two, and putting both into the generic category of drama as an "unfinished drama or the work draft of one".<sup>4</sup> However, in 1987, in "The *Feme Covert* [sic] in Elizabeth Carey's *Mariam*"<sup>5</sup> she suggests, contrary to Stauffer's assumption, that <B> was the rough form which led to the more poetic expansion of the <A> text. Elizabeth Hageman's bibliography published in the second special Women's edition of *ELR* in 1988 refers only to the <B> text, but points somewhat confusingly to Stauffer as her authority, and then, like Travitsky, refers to the text as a play.<sup>6</sup> Fortunately, Barbara Kiefer Lewalski points to the influence of the classical writers, particularly Tacitus and refers to the genre of the work as, simply, history.<sup>7</sup> Elaine Beilin begins to voice concern in her "Current Bibliography of English Women Writers, 1500-1640".<sup>8</sup> She says that attribution has been controversial, although she only refers to the <A> text. She points the reader to an article by Tina Krontiris, which, however, epitomises the current problems created not only by the published critical work on the <A> and <B> texts, but also by much of the critical work on *The Tragedy of Mariam* (see Introduction pp. 6-15).

Krontiris says she will supplement Stauffer's evidence with new evidence "mainly internal", which turns out to be the exercise of relating events in the text to incidents in Elizabeth Carey's own life, making parallels

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4. Travitsky (1981), p. 211.

5. Travitsky (1987), p. 193, n. 3.

6. Hageman (1988), pp. 146-7, refers solely to the <B> text as it appeared in the *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. I, 1744, but points to Stauffer as her authority and says "although Cary continues to accept some of her culture's negative ideas about womanhood, *this play* demonstrates her increased confidence as a writer" (my italics).

7. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski "Writing Women and Reading the Renaissance", *RQ*, vol. 44, 1991, pp. 792-821. This generic classification is re-iterated in Lewalski (1993), p. 179.

8. In Haselkorn and Travitsky (1990), pp. 347-60.



between her and Isabel. Tina Krontiris' attempts to "fix" <A> to Elizabeth Carey are also potentially damaging to any future scholarship on the text. She draws very detailed parallels between Elizabeth Carey and the character of Queen Isabel, but this process is based on a rather suspect methodology, i.e. "there is an emphasis on certain aspects of the queen's life that are in agreement with Lady Falkland's personal experiences *as her biographers have conveyed them to us*" (my italics).<sup>9</sup> Without considering the possibility that in the texts by the three biographers chosen (the pseudo-hagiographers Simpson, Fullerton and Murdoch), the character of "Lady Falkland" could well be undergoing the same fictionalising process as Queen Isabel in <A>, Krontiris draws various parallels, none of which constitutes conclusive evidence. The upshot of her argument is that, like Elizabeth Carey, Queen Isabel was alienated in her own home and had to search desperately for friends; the sympathy with which Isabel is treated in <A> indicates the empathy between the author and her subject matter. This is supposed to confirm Elizabeth Carey as the author.

Unfortunately, this kind of "proof" is caught in a double bind. On the one hand, if the hypothetical document, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, ever does emerge, then this kind of scholarship is wasted, and the interest in <A>, which, in Krontiris' case rests so heavily on the mere fact of Elizabeth Carey's authorship, will diminish. Furthermore, if the "proof" of her authorship and the critical interpretation of the text are so heavily dependent on each other, a more sophisticated form of literary theory, currently being applied to other Renaissance texts, cannot then be applied to <A>, since to deconstruct the text in this case would be to deconstruct the authorship claim also. In this case <A> will remain as isolated from the other Renaissance canon texts as it was before the interest in Elizabeth Carey caused it to be reclaimed from obscurity.

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9. Krontiris (1990), p. 137.

In the context of this chapter, however, Krontiris' perception of the relationship between the two texts is of rather more relevance. Throughout the article, Krontiris quotes randomly from each text with little sense of distinction between them, apart from indicating whether the source is <A> (folio) or <B> (octavo). The main thrust of her article is that Elizabeth Carey wanted to redress the balance in terms of the literary presentations of Queen Isabel, which is a valid enough argument in itself. But the grounds upon which Krontiris argues this appear somewhat counterproductive. To take only one example, she argues that Isabel is presented as a mother-figure (which is supposedly positive), yet quotes from the <B> text:

Her eldest Son, her dearest comfort, and the chief spring that must set all these wheels a going, she leaves not behind, but makes him the Companion of her Travels. (<B>, p, 38)

Compared to the <A> text, this quotation is disempowering, precisely because it puts the emphasis upon Prince Edward as the central figure in the political dispute, and renders Isabel merely the mother of the Prince. The folio equivalent is more strident:

Then, with the Prince her Son and Comfort, that must be made the Stale of this great action, she fearless ventures on this holy Journey. (<A>, p. 91)

It is only in a footnote that Krontiris makes any mention of the relationship between the two texts, in that it is "difficult to determine" - hence the random quotation. She does suggest that the <B> text might have merely been corrected by the printer, without any actual cutting down of text, but whether she hereby implies the existence of a long and a short manuscript it is impossible to conclude.

This kind of non-committal publication has left the <A> and <B> texts rather vulnerable, not least to attack from the those who would dispute Elizabeth Carey's claim to authorship. D.R. Woolf's article in the April 1988 issue of *BLR*,<sup>10</sup> tries to prove that both the texts are, in fact, examples

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10. Woolf (1988); his only apparent support comes from Patricia Crawford, "Provisional Checklist of Women's Published Writings 1600-

of Exclusion Crisis propaganda and, in doing so irrevocably draws attention to the fact that there are two distinct texts, both published in 1680. And so, whilst Woolf received a reprimand from Isobel Grundy in the following issue of the *BLR*,<sup>11</sup> for not even taking into account the possibility of Elizabeth Carey being the author of one or both of the texts in question, one cannot now afford to ignore the problems which Woolf has exposed with regard to the attribution to Elizabeth Carey.

Woolf's first assertion is that the attribution of both texts to Henry Carey is derived solely from the second text, which is true enough:

There are several problems with the ascription to Falkland, problems which can be resolved only if one examines the prefatory material to *both* <A> and <B>. The claims of these editions contradict each other and since <B> is simply an abridged and revised rendering of <A>, the attributions must stand or fall together. The attribution to Falkland originates in <B>, where a single new preface is substituted for the publisher's and author's prefaces in <A>. On the title page, and in the new preface, <B> is asserted to have been 'found among the papers and (supposed to be) Writ by the Right Honourable Henry Viscount Falkland, sometime Lord Deputy of Ireland'.

Yet if Viscount Falkland were the author, why then does only <B> make this claim? Since the text of <B> is clearly extracted from <A>, not the other way around, it is surprising that <A>, as exemplar, does not make the same assertion. Viscount Falkland is never mentioned in <A>, either in the text or the prefaces. (p. 442)

Like Stauffer, Woolf argues that the <B> text is a cut-down version of the <A> text, and I can state here that I am in agreement with both of them, though not for quite the same reasons as either. Woolf also, quite rightly, points out that the whole case for linking the text to the Carey family centres on the <B> text. This obviously causes problems for the case of Elizabeth Carey being (as I believe) the author of the <A> text only.

But, on reflection, how could the first text make the claim for Henry

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1700", in Prior (1985), which puts both the <A> and <B> texts under a section entitled "Works attributed to women, but which are now doubted", p. 262, and which cites Woolf's article as evidence.

11. Letter in "Notes and News", *BLR*, 1988-1991, vol. XIII, pp. 82-3. Grundy points to Woolf's palpable oversight of the Stauffer article and the wealth of evidence which it presents in favour of Elizabeth Carey.

Carey as the author, if it contained an author's preface signed E.F? This, of course, brings into doubt a Carey connection at all. Yet the <B> text is very clearly an abridgement of the <A> text; a fact which must have been obvious to many of the 1680 readership and also to the publishers.<sup>12</sup> Why then, would the publishers of <B> make a *false* claim that it was found amongst Henry Carey's papers and supposed to be his work, when the initials attached to its source throw that into question? Would it not have been a more profitable tactic to find a pre-Civil War worthy with the relevant initials and claim the authorship for them? There is, therefore, no logical reason why the publishers of <B> should have done as Woolf suggests:

One is forced to conclude that the association of his name with the work probably derives entirely from no other source than the mind of the editor or publisher of <B>, who simply picked on Falkland in order to provide the book with an illustrious father. (p. 442)

As the second is the adulterated text, the need for validation is stronger, and this need can be seen in the publisher's inclusion of a potted history of Henry Carey's life, confusing him at one point with his son Lucius. The anxious desire for validation is evident, but this still begs the question, why choose Henry Carey *falsely*, when the falseness of the claim could have been so easily pointed to by the initials at the foot of the preface to <A>? Finally, it must be taken into consideration that Elizabeth Carey could well have a claim to the authorship of the text, independently of the Henry Carey connection, and that the appearance of his name as author of <B> was a happy accident which pointed Stauffer in the right direction. After all, Elizabeth Carey signed all her letters E. Falkland once she became Viscountess Falkland, and the dedicatory poem at the beginning of *The Tragedy of Mariam* is signed E.C.,<sup>13</sup> which is all favourable evidence

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12. It was obvious to Thomas Park, one of the compilers of *The Harleian Miscellany*, 2nd ed., vol. I, 1808, in which <B> was reprinted. He says, p. 67, n. 1: "The diction throughout seems to have been much modified by Mr. Oldys, according to the averment of the folio [<A>] edition: for the octavo [<B>] has not been met with."

13. The practice of an author referring to themselves by their initials was a

pointing towards her being the E.F. of the <A> text's preface.

There is clearly, then, a case to argue against Woolf with regard to <A>, particularly as he makes the same mistake as the pro-Carey scholars by failing to make a clear enough distinction between the <A> text and the <B> text and therefore does not satisfactorily argue that they were both composed in 1679/80. To begin with, he points to the use of Francis Hubert's verse *The Life and Death of Edward II* by the author of <A>. This was not available in print until after 1627, when <A> was written. However, as Woolf says himself, it was available in manuscript - quite prolifically, as Bernard Mellor, the editor of Hubert's *The Life and Death of Edward II* and *Egypt's Favourite*, makes clear:

[T]here are still extant six manuscript copies of the poem in various forms and one fragment in handwriting of the early seventeenth century; Sir Egerton Brydges and Joseph Hunter note three others which I have been unable to trace.<sup>14</sup>

Woolf finds his most conclusive evidence in the political vocabulary of the text. Of the comments on the rarity of men of "true religion" in "the wars of late years" he says "What else can this be but an absent minded reference to the civil war and interregnum?" (p. 444). There are, in fact, several other options. Perhaps it is a reference to the Thirty Years War, which involved most of Europe and was at its height around 1627. This had started as a religious war, but soon deteriorated into a war of national interests, displaying a palpable lack of "true religion" amongst its participants. Isobel Grundy, in her letter, suggest the wars in question could be those in Ireland, of which Elizabeth Carey would have been acutely aware, having very recently left her

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common seventeenth-century practice and cannot therefore be taken as evidence that E.F. necessarily signified Elizabeth Falkland. However, the E.F. in this case also utilised the singularity of expression and proto-feminist politics found in *The Tragedy of Mariam* (see pp. 196-200 and Ch. 5).

14. Bernard Mellor, ed., *The Poems of Sir Francis Hubert*, Oxford, 1961, p. xxi. He proposes the date, p. 298, as "between the end of 1597, at the height of the corn famine, and the end of 1600, when the need for the poem's warnings [re: Essex] was greatest and after which most of the point was lost."

husband, whilst he was still Lord Deputy of Ireland. <sup>15</sup>

The context of the text's publication seems irrevocably to colour, for Woolf, any vague hint which may fit the context of the Exclusion Crisis rather than that of 1627/8. He claims:

No one seems to have noted the significance of the *History's* date of publication - no one, that is, except Anthony Wood, who from the beginning entertained suspicions about the work's origins. As he astutely observed, <B> appeared 'when the press was open for all such books that could make any thing against the then government.' (pp. 444-5)

This quotation from Wood is a manuscript note taken from the Bodleian Library copy of <B>. Significantly, for my purposes it refers only to the second text, and not to the first. If Woolf is trying to say that the <B> text was received by such scholars as Wood as a piece of Exclusion Crisis propaganda, then I am entirely in agreement with him. Where we differ is in the fact that I think the text from which it was evolved was written in 1627/8 by Elizabeth Carey and not in 1679 by a commentator on the Exclusion Crisis.

"Clearly, the appearance of E.F.'s *History* at this time was no accident" (p. 445) says Woolf. No indeed; for with the Licensing Act just expired, it was once again safe to publish texts which could have been perceived as seditious. This does not mean that the composition of <A> was contemporaneous with its publication. The trouble which Francis Hubert faced, when his text was surreptitiously published in 1628, caused him to assert vigorously that he had written it in the late sixteenth century. He was then obliged to publish a more acceptable version in 1629. This would suggest that the earlier period could prove dangerous for political commentators also. Bernard Mellor has provided evidence that Hubert's assertion is in fact true, and that publication did not take place immediately after composition because it was "by Supreamest Authoritie forbidden to bee

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15. Grundy, op. cit., p. 83.

printed" - possibly because it was then seen as an attack on Essex.<sup>16</sup> It is perfectly possible, then, that Elizabeth Carey wrote the <A> text in February 1627/8 and then decided against its publication, having seen the potential for trouble which such texts carried. It is equally possible that she never intended to publish the text at all. As the loss of her first play and the ten year gap between the composition and publication of *The Tragedy of Mariam* indicates, Elizabeth Carey was never particularly anxious to present her literary works to the publisher. Thus, it is possible that the text remained in manuscript for many years, and was perhaps discovered even earlier than 1679, but the publishers had to wait for the Licensing Act to expire before venturing a publication. It is an explanation which is at least as feasible as Woolf's. Elizabeth Carey would not be the only seventeenth-century figure whose work lay in manuscript for some years until the time was, rightly or wrongly, perceived as more opportune for publication.<sup>17</sup>

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16. Mellor, *op. cit.*, p. xxi. Woolf himself gives us another example, that of Sir Robert Cotton's *Henry III*, 1627, which was badly received because the portrayal of Simon de Montfort was seen as an attack on Buckingham (p. 441). Another example is that of Fulke Greville, 1st Lord Brooke (1554-1628) 1st Lord Brooke and a close friend of Philip Sidney. Reputedly, he destroyed his MS play *Antony and Cleopatra* because he feared it was "apt enough to be construed or strained to a personating of vices in the present governors and government", Fulke Greville, *Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed Nowell Smith, 1907, cited in Ronald A. Rebholz, *The Life of Fulke Greville, First Lord Brooke*, Oxford, 1971, p. 330.

17. The publishers of <A> had a political interest in the material they published, as Woolf (p. 445) claims to show. Samuel Crouch started a newspaper called *The True Protestant Domestic Intelligencer* on 9 July 1679, which was probably written by Nathaniel Crouch, a relation better known under his pseudonym Richard Burton, who wrote potted histories, particularly of the seventeenth century. Charles Harper and Thomas Fox have less obvious sympathies, as Woolf admits. Quite what his argument is concerning the role of the Crouches is not made clear. Perhaps we are to assume that Nathaniel wrote <A> and Samuel published it. Two points weigh very heavily against that. First, <A> is anything but "potted", being a folio work of 160 pages long and secondly, the politics of the piece are ambiguous, but they are certainly not fiercely Protestant, as the respect which is given to the Pope makes clear (<A> pp. 42-4). Furthermore, the collaboration of Harper, Fox and Crouch with the printer J.C. during the years of the Exclusion Crisis appears to be unique. According to Wing, J.C. printed and S.C[rouch] published *Work for a Cooper* by William Jones of London, 3rd edn., 1679, Wing J1002; Charles Harper published and Thomas Fox sold *Cottoni Posthuma* by Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, 1679 (1st published 1651), Wing C6487; Sam. Crouch and Tho. Fox both sold *The Catholicke*

## Rhetoric and Reactions

Woolf then turns his attention to the language of <A>, saying it is much more suited to 1679 than 1627/8. His examples are, however, questionable. He attacks the distinction made between the "court" and the "country", with the former having pejorative overtones. Whilst this may well be appropriate to the Exclusion Crisis, it also reflects the terminology in use before the Civil War. One only has to read Shakespeare's *As You Like It* or one of the more popular Country House poems to find an ideological opposition between the corrupt court and the idyllic country. And if Elizabeth Carey needed inspiration to use the terms, she could simply have looked at *Peirs Gaveston, Earle of Cornwall*, 1593, by her former tutor, Michael Drayton, to find these lines:

The Court become the cause of al our woe  
The Country now a Campe of enemies <sup>18</sup>

written whilst she was probably still under his tutelage.

Evidently, Woolf anticipated this line of criticism, because he then goes on to say that the terms were well known in early Stuart England, but "were not taken to represent polarized political positions, much less party labels, before the civil war." In fact, these terms are not used in either of these senses in <A>. There are eighteen references to "the court" or "courtiers", including two referring to France (pp. 104, 108) and one to Heinault (p. 113). There are eight references to "the country", of which five appear in the same context as references to the "court". Significantly, none of these five occasions remotely implies that "court" and "country" are being presented as political opponents. Instead, they are constructed as geographical and administrative entities - quite in keeping with early

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*Hierarchie* by Isaac Chauncey, 1681, Wing C3745. Therefore, J.C, Charles Harper, Thomas Fox and Samuel Crouch in no way constituted an established group who produced anti-Catholic propaganda.

18. Drayton, *Works* I, p. 199, ll. 1466-7.



seventeenth-century terminology. Moreover, the first time the terms are used together, there is a clear textual effort to make those who suffer as a result of Spencer's success appear as diverse as possible. This makes the interpretation of the term "country" as a unified body of political opposition quite inappropriate and sets the precedent for the interpretation of the term throughout the rest of the text:

These insolencies, carried with so great a height, and exprest with so malicious a liberty, were accompanied with all the remonstrances of a justly-grieved Kingdom. The ancient Nobility, that disdain'd such an equal, accuse the injustice of the time that makes him their Superiour. The grave Senators are griev'd to see the places, due to their worths, possess'd by those unworthy and unable. The angry Souldier, that with his blood had purchas'd his experience, beholds with sorrow, Buffoons prefer'd; while he, like the ruines of some goodly Building, is left to the wide world, without use or reparation. The Commons, in a more intemperate fashion, make known their griefs, and exclaim against so many great and foul Oppressions. (<A>, p. 21)

When, on the next page, Lincoln informs Edward of these grievances, he says: "No place is free; both Court and Country languish; all men complain, but none finde help or comfort". "Country" is evidently being used in its widest geographical and social sense, as the diverse characters referred to in the quoted passage make clear. Similarly, in three of the subsequent four passages where "country" is paired with "court", "paired" is the operative word, as the impression created is of "court" and "country" constituting two parts of an homogeneous whole, rather than opposing political parties, i.e:

To win a nearer place in [Isabel's] opinion, [Spencer] gains his Kindred places next her person; and those that were her own, he bribes to back him. The Court thus fashion'd, he levels at the Country, whence he must gain his strength, if need enforc'd it (<A>, p. 52);

See you not how he weaves his webs in Court and Country (Clifford's speech, <A>, p. 54);

Perhaps the Court is guilty of some Errours, the Countrey is not free from worse Oppressions (Edward to Parliament, <A>, p.60).

None of these instances refers to the kind of oppositional politics which Woolf argues are present in the text.

There is, however, one more pairing of "court" and "country", which

perhaps suggests an opposition, but it is the rather conventional early seventeenth-century opposition of the intricate and corrupt court with the simple and honest country:

Those that are truly wise, discreet, and vertuous, will make him so that pursues their counsel; upon which Rock he rests secure untainted. But this is Country-Doctrine Courts resent not, where 'tis no way to thrive, for them are honest. (<A>, p. 31)

However, this criticism is not levelled solely at the English court, in order to oppose it with the English country; the references to the French and Heinnault courts are also much less than flattering. We hear how the French King and his court are easily bribed by Spencer's agents to remove their support for Isabel, and that the Earl of Heinnault's court:

As all Courts have, his had a kinde of people, and these were great ones too, that boldly warrant and undertake to undermine their Master (<A>, p. 113).

Finally, one of the remaining references to the "country" places it on the receiving end of Parliamentary policy decisions, rather than playing an active role in the decision making process - which would have been the role of a "country" opposition such as Woolf describes. The commons grant Edward the "sixth penny of the Temporalty" and:

When the knowledge of this Grant came into the Country, it bred a general Murmur, and quite estrang'd their loves from their subjection, cursing those times that caused so sad a burden. (<A>, p. 82)

Woolf's insistence on a political opposition being drawn between "court" and "country" is clearly untenable and his ignorance of Elizabeth Carey's possible authorship leaves his next claim vulnerable:

There was a great deal of distrust of the court and of Charles I himself by 1629, but no one conceived of politics in the stark, dualistic terms of the *History*; nor did any English historian of the pre-war period, even a politically minded critic of Buckingham like Cotton, describe the court and courtiers in such lurid colours. (p. 447)

He re-iterates the heavy party political tone of the text, a presence which, in the light of textual evidence is at least questionable. Moreover, it is clear that his list of potential 1627/8 authors is severely limited to historians and political critics. It does not include poets or dramatists, male or female, and

so Woolf has not even taken into consideration two whole genres and one whole gender. Lurid representations of court and courtiers were conventions used by many Renaissance dramatists and poets, for example, in Hubert's ill-fated text:

The Court, which in my fathers life-time seem'd  
 A Senate-House of silver headed sages,  
 Might now a pompous Theater bee deem'd  
 Pester'd now with Panders, Players and with pages  
 Of my ensuing fall too true presages. <sup>19</sup>

Perhaps Woolf's most unsettling argument is that of the terms in which elections are described in the text. He selects one passage, which is worth quoting in full:

Things standing thus, the Writs and Proclamations for Election are sent out, in which there was as much time won as might be taken without suspition. Now is there stiff labouring on all sides (though not visibly, yet with underhand working) to cause a major part in this Election; which the Lords wisely foreseeing (as the main spring that must keep all the wheels in their right motion) had beforehand so provided for, that the engines of the adverse Party serv'd rather to fright, than make a breach in the rule and truth of this Election. The subjects sensible of the disorders of the Kingdom, and seeing into the advantage which promis'd a liberty of Reformation, make choice of such as for their wisdome and integrity deserv'd it; rejecting such as sought it by corruption, or might be in reason suspected. This made the undertakers fall short and wide of the Bow-hand. (<A> pp. 57-8)

Woolf claims that this was alien to Tudor and Stuart concepts of the political process and that E.F. was reading back the Whig victories of the 1670s into 14th century elections. To begin with, Woolf makes a not entirely accurate use of the work of the historian Perez Zagorin (p. 452, n. 28), claiming that he, amongst others, illustrates how the terms of "Court" and "Country" "were not taken to represent polarized political entities, much less party labels, before the civil war." (p. 447) What Zagorin actually says is this:

[Country] was the label most commonly applied to the opposition to the crown before the civil war. Occasionally other terms, such as 'patriots' and 'parliamentarians,' were employed, but 'Country' was becoming current in the 1620s and appears to have been in fairly wide use by the commencement of Charles I's reign. Its emergence

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19. Hubert, op. cit., p.48, stanza 177.

reflected the hardening of political differences in these final years of King James and the first of his son.<sup>20</sup>

Further on in his work, he explains that 'Court' and 'Country' could not be likened to modern party titles:

A man could be 'of the Country,' or 'for the Country,' but nowhere at this period is the expression, 'country party,' met with, such as came into use later in the century during the reign of Charles II.<sup>21</sup>

In keeping with Zagorin's assessment, nowhere in <A> do we meet with the term "country party". The text uses both the terms "country" and "party", but on entirely separate occasions, and when the word "party" is used to describe one particular interest group in the political power struggle during Edward II's reign, this group is not described as having a "Court" or "Country" allegiance. If this caused Woolf to evolve his argument, then it would be as well to point out that, according to the OED, the use of the word "party", to distinguish a particular side in a debate, has been in use since 1411, where it appears in the Rolls of Parliament. Samuel Daniel mentions how Gaveston "drew such a party upon him", by insulting Lancaster, Pembroke and Warwick<sup>22</sup> and Francis Bacon, in his *The Historie of the Raigne of King Henry the Seventh*, 1622, uses the word to describe the two sides negotiating a treaty between England and France:

Neither was the King himselfe lead all this while with credulity meerly, as was generally supposed: But his Error was not so much facility of beliefe, as an ill measuring of the forces of the other Partie.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, should there be a question as to whether the word "party" is appropriate in this context, one only has to return to Zagorin, who says "If faction and party be considered as alternative types of political structure, then

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20. Zagorin (1969), p. 33.

21. Zagorin (1969), p. 37-8.

22. Samuel Daniel, *The Collection of the History of England* (1612-18), in *The Complete Works*, ed. Alexander B Grosart, vol. v, 1896, p. 180.

23. Francis Bacon, *The Historie of the Raigne of King Henry the Seventh*, 1622, STC 1159, p. 49.

the Country approximated more nearly to party, notwithstanding that it was yet far from having evolved into one." <sup>24</sup>

Woolf also takes issue with the concept of "fighting" elections, saying that this was a rare occurrence in the early seventeenth century. However, a glance at Hirst's table of contested elections in *The Representative of the People* shows that the number of contested seats rose in 1621 to 24, from the 1614 figure of 14. There was a very significant increase in 1624 to 41, which decreased in 1625 to 26 and then increased again in 1626, reaching 28. <sup>25</sup> These figures may seem very small, but proportionately speaking there was a considerable increase by over threefold in the ten years between 1614 and 1624. Moreover, Hirst comments on these figures

The totals of contest can only give a minimum indicator for the arousal of the voters. Evidence for many has probably perished totally ... candidates sometimes withdrew at the last minute, having canvassed extensively, to avoid the humiliation of imminent defeat. <sup>26</sup>

He devotes a whole chapter ("The electorate and politics", pp. 132-53) to showing how elections in the 1620s were fought on Court and Country lines, eg. "Bury St Edmunds ... was said to be adamantly set against the election of a courtier in the 1626 county election. Southampton equally was anti-Court in 1624". <sup>27</sup> The extent to which pre-election activity (perhaps the "stiff labouring" which <A> mentions) became a feature of the 1620s is indicated by the fact that a contention of the 1626 election bill was that canvassing was destructive of free elections. <sup>28</sup> I do not think, therefore, that Woolf's claim that this passage, or in fact any of the rest of the text which he mentions, could not have been written before 1680 stands up to detailed analysis. <sup>29</sup>

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24. Zagorin (1969), p. 75.

25. Hirst (1975), pp. 217-22.

26. Hirst (1975), p. 216.

27. Hirst (1975), pp. 134-5.

28. Hirst (1975), p. 115.

29. Still on the subject of parliament, however, his next point is that

After all his rhetoric, Woolf concedes that the difficulties in finding the author of <A> are immense. More aggravatingly, he cannot suggest even one possible author for whom there is half as much positive evidence as there is for Elizabeth Carey. This is disappointing coming from one who so earnestly tries to claim the text for the Exclusion Crisis. Having abandoned, within one paragraph, the attempt to find an author, Woolf's argument then falls into unconvincing conjecture, which is all but devalued by the problems which he simultaneously raises. He suggests "The purpose of <A> does not seem to have been to promote exclusion as such" (p. 448). Indeed not, for the <A> text contains rather too much reverence for the Pope and his Cardinals.<sup>30</sup> However, Woolf's reasons for finding a problem with the <A> text's relationship to the Exclusion Crisis are purely concerned with allegorical interpretation. He points out that there is no "one-to-one" relationship which can be drawn between characters in <A> and on the political stage of the Exclusion Crisis and his assertion is that

The main concern of the writer seems only to have been to justify aristocratic opposition to the crown, and to hold a mirror up to court corruption. (p. 448)

This could just as easily have been the concern of a writer in 1627/8 as in

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<A>'s description of it as the "High Court of Parliament ... that had an over-ruling Power to limit the King, and command the Subject" (<A>, p. 36) could also not have been written in 1627/8. What he refers to as its "idea of parliamentary sovereignty" (p. 448) - a doubtful interpretation - could not have been articulated before 1680. However, parliament did act as a High Court, most notoriously by its right of impeachment, a medieval practice which it had successfully revived in 1621; it did have constitutional power to limit the King, by refusing to vote money to the King, which inevitably determined his foreign and domestic policies. Exertion of "redress of grievances before supply" was a constant sticking point in the reigns of James I and Charles I and was at least partially responsible for the eleven years' Personal Rule of the latter, during which he could only survive financially by collecting taxes illegally; finally, command of the subject speaks for itself, as Parliament played a major role in the law-making process.

30. This, incidentally, is also admissible evidence against the claims that it was written by Henry Carey, who was possessed of notorious anti-Catholic sentiments. Reverence for the Pope fits as badly with an Exclusion Crisis reading of the text as it does with the argument for Henry Carey's authorship.

1679. Finally, Woolf talks of <A> as a "friendly" warning to Charles, reminding him of his father's fate. I would suggest that there is nothing friendly about such a warning, and it is a particularly inappropriate interpretation for a time when the overriding fear throughout the country was another civil war, or another regicide.

### <A> and <B>: a comparison

Woolf's next move is to compare <A> with <B> and I shall take his lead for the next two sections of this chapter. Interestingly, he comments that the "Court" and "Country" references in <A> are cut out in <B>. This rather undoes his comments earlier in using these references to date <A>. If "Court" and "Country" were the latest forms of political jargon in 1680, then why cut them out of the <B> text? Unless it was, as Woolf says, to bereave the <B> text of ideological significance. But then why does the <B> text have phrases such as "Kings are gods on earth" added - is this not of ideological significance also? Woolf seems to think not, and claims that the former extraction and latter addition contribute to making the second text *less* political. His assertion is that <A> is the ideological text and <B> drained of "ideological purpose"; a "carcass" to be sold "at a cut rate" (p. 449). Despite this rather questionable opposition between the two texts, the assertion itself is not very convincing, particularly if one considers how the texts were received by the contemporary and subsequent publishers and readers. Having researched into the binding of the surviving copies of <A>, <B> and the reissue of <A>, Wing F314a, I have found that <B> was, in fact, received as a political text. According to the evidence of those libraries which hold copies of either text,<sup>31</sup> it appears that all the

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31. The <A> text is housed in: The Bodleian Library, Oxford, shelfmark Mason E115; the British Library, London, shelfmark 610.1.2; Trinity College Library, Cambridge, shelfmark X.3.24; Trinity College Library, Dublin, shelfmark W.6.20; National Library of Scotland, shelfmark C.12.b.15; the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Collection, Yale University Library, shelfmark Brit. Tracts. 1680

surviving copies of <A> are bound alone.

However, two copies of <B> are bound with other texts, whose nature is highly significant. The Bodleian Library copy is bound in a volume with three other texts: *Argumentum Anti-Normanicum*, 1682, attributed by Wing to Sir Edward Coke <sup>32</sup> ; *The Life and Reign of King Richard the Second*, 1681, attributed by Wing to Sir Robert Howard <sup>33</sup> ; and *The History of the Reigns of Edward and Richard II with Reflections and Characters of their Chief Ministers and Favourites as also a Comparison between those Princes Edward and Richard the Second, with Edward the First and Edward the Third*, written 1685, published 1690, also by Sir Robert Howard. <sup>34</sup> Both the first and the fourth texts have dedications to King Charles II, the first being an invitation to share equally the burden of government with Parliament:

May the Illustrious Senate of the Land,  
With their Wise Councils, ever by him stand;  
He pleas'd in them, and they resolv'd to show,  
What th'utmost stretch on Loyalty can do.

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1F18; the Houghton Library, Harvard University, shelfmark fEC.F1875.680h; the University Library, Michigan, shelfmark DA230.F19; Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, shelfmark B92/Ed91; the Huntington Library, California, shelfmark RB 283903; the Folger Shakespeare Library; shelfmark F313. (Walter Library, University of Minnesota, did not reply.)

The <B> text is housed in:

The Bodleian Library, Oxford, shelfmark Wood 234(2); the British Library, London, shelfmark d.13.292; Cambridge University Library, shelfmark W.13.13; Trinity College Library, Dublin, (two copies), shelfmarks RR.n.76 and RR.mm.43; National Library of Scotland, shelfmark C.15.f.28; the Houghton Library, Harvard University, shelfmark EC.F1875.D680h; Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, shelfmark B92/Ed9; the Huntington Library, California, shelfmark RB 124720.

The 1689 reissue of the <A> text is housed in:

The Bodleian Library, Oxford, shelfmark Vet.A3.c168; Christ Church Library, Oxford, shelfmark W.b.4.20; St John's College Library, Cambridge, shelfmark M.8.7.

32. Sir Edward Coke, *Argumentum Anti-Normannicum*, 1682, Wing C4907.

33. Sir Robert Howard, *The Life and Reign of King Richard the Second*, 1681, Wing H3001.

34. Sir Robert Howard, *The History of the Reigns of Edward and Richard II*, 1690, Wing H2999.



Then will his Glories shine in brightest state,  
 At th'Head of such a joint Triumvirate:  
 Then King and People doubly will be blest,  
 And Europe then enjoy a lasting Rest.  
 For this let all our Vows to Heav'en be sent  
 To see Great Charles happy in's Parliament. <sup>35</sup>

The preface to *The History of the Reigns of Edward and Richard II*, evidences the enduring political significance which was read into history texts. This text was written in 1685, before the deposition of James II, but was not published until 1690, after the Glorious Revolution and the accession of William and Mary. Evidently concerned that support for James II's government might be read into his text, Howard includes these caveats in the Preface:

I was much surpriz'd to see an imperfect Copy of this steal into Publick, far from my Knowledge or Intention ...

I ... consider'd the Proceedings of the Government in the latter part of King Charles the Second's Reign, and in the short Reign of King James the Second, and perceiv'd how exactly they follow'd the steps of these two unfortunate Kings, and I then expected to see a Revolution resembling theirs.

When K. Charles had prepar'd things ready for Popery and Slavery, he seem'd no longer useful to those that eagerly waited to assume that Power that the Papists had guided him to make ready for them; and as his Actions were like those misguided Princes, I believe, his death as much resembled theirs, and was equally as violent. <sup>36</sup>

Howard's assertion is an indication of the extent to which the political allegory of the history of Edward II remains unfixed. Howard invites a re-write of his story, not physically, via the editorial process, but by the process of politically and historically determined reading. After the Exclusion of James II, it is possible to read his version of Edward II as an allegory of James and his brother, Charles, by virtue of historical events and political necessity.

Most significant, perhaps, in this quartet of histories, is not a printed text, but a manuscript addition. *The Life and Reign of King Richard the Second*, has the following written on the leaf which divided it from <B>:

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35. Sir Edward Coke, op. cit., sig. A4<sup>v</sup>.

36. Sir Robert Howard, 1690, op. cit., p. i; pp. iii-iv.

The life of K. Rich. 2 following was published for example for the fanatical crew of the times [1680] to imitate - and it seems the author would have K. Ch. 2 disposed, because he & his brethren could not obtain their ends by aggravating the pøpish papists, in Oates his plot, nor by lyes & slands that followed.

The writer is Anthony a Wood - the same writer used by Woolf to provide evidence of the timely publication of both <A> and <B>. This, however, does not support his later claim that <B> is non-political, as the Bodleian copy is bound with two texts which make their political nature overt, and one text which was received and interpreted as highly political in effect and intent.

One of the British Library copies of <B> is bound with a later work on the same subject matter: *The History of the Life and Reign of Edward II containing a Full Account of the Tyrannical Government of his Favourites and Minions. The severall Struggles of the Barons for Liberty in his Time. The Bloody Executions when the Minions prevail'd. Their ill Treatment of the Queen and the Prince. The Deposing of Edward II and the Election of Edward III.* By the Author of the Life and Reign of Henry VI. To which are added, *The Political Reflections of a Person of Quality.* London, 1713. This text opens thus:

The Design of Writing the Lives of those of our Kings, who having broken through all the Laws of God and Man, did their utmost to introduce Arbitrary Power, and deprive the People of England of their Liberty, has been so well approv'd and receiv'd, that it will be now perus'd till our history has no more such wicked Examples left, to deter future Princes from the like Illegal Practices. One would think the Misery that has always attended those Kings and their Ministers, should have been a sufficient warning to all their Successors to make the Law the Rule of their Government: But the unhappy Conduct and Fate of King James II shew us, that nothing can prevent Ill Minds from running into the same Excesses, so nothing can hinder the Just Judgment of Heaven from following them with that Destruction which they intended for others.

I shall take no further Notice of the Life and Reign of this or any other Prince, than as it respects the before-mention'd Design, leaving it to those who are more delighted in such Things to entertain the World with what they call the Remarkables of those Times, as Winds, Rains, Comets, Dearths, Plagues and the like; neither shall I enter into a detail of Battels on any Occasion, farther than in necessary to give a clear View of the Facts I treat of and their Consequences. (pp. 1-2)

This preface overtly invites the reader to receive the text as an allegory for contemporary politics, and this surely must have implications for the way in

which the person who had them bound together <sup>37</sup> viewed its predecessor, <B>. There are certain manuscript additions to <B> which suggest that at least one of its readers took it as a political text, published at a very opportune time. There are some marginal notes, the majority of which are annotations of an historical nature. However, on page 10, the word "impudence" is underlined in the following section:

He that is guilty of doing ill, and justifies the action, makes it evident he hath won unto himself a habit of doing so, and a daring impudence to maintain it by the protection, of which he believes all things in a politic wisdom lawful. (<B>, p. 10)

and a marginal note reads "a King may [not long?] be so impudent as to stand in it". There are crosses in the margin at several points in the text, which mostly occur at a point of political debate, or at a description of Edward's errors, eg:

Multiplicity of able Men is the Glory and Safety of a Crown, which falls by degrees into confusion, when one Man alone acts all parts, whence proceeds a World of Error and Confusion. (<B>, p. 20)

The Kingdom seems now in better Peace and settled; the principal Pillars of the Common-wealth are taken away, and those which remained are utterly disheartned in the danger of so fresh an Example. (<B>, p. 30, MS underlining in the text)

If this evidence is not enough to assert that <B> was politically charged, perhaps the subsequent fate of <B> *vis-à-vis* second editions will provide confirmatory evidence. <B> was never published again on its own. It did however, have greater longevity than <A> as a published piece, in that it became one of the selections for the 1744 edition of the *Harleian Miscellany*. This edition contains a long introduction which claims the diversity of the material and celebrates the freedom of speech and of the Press in Britain, which inevitably leads to much publication:

The boundless Liberty, with which every Man may write his own Thoughts, and the Opportunity of conveighing new Sentiments to the

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37. This was possibly the Right Honorable Sir Thomas Grenville, whose bookplate is fixed to the inside of the front cover.

Publick, without Danger of suffering either Ridicule or Censure, which every Man may enjoy. <sup>38</sup>

More significantly, however, the introduction invites a particular reading of the historical pieces, like <B>: "If we regard History, it is well known, that most Political Treatises have for a long Time appeared in this form". <sup>39</sup> The *Harleian Miscellany* itself went on to a second edition, sixty-four years later in 1808. A footnote on the title page of the <B> text contains this significant comment: "Its sage and philosophical reflections are of more worth than the historical matter it contains." <sup>40</sup> This view of the text is far removed from the depoliticised carcass to which Woolf refers.

Woolf's whole critical strategy, concerning the relative ideological content of the two texts, is perhaps of greater concern than his assertion that <A> was written in 1679. He apparently implies that if a text in this period was pro-court, then it is somehow non-ideological - a dubious enough critical standpoint. However, even more dubious is his belief that the process of editing <A> into <B> is both a neutral and a neutralizing process which "empties" the former text of its ideological significance. This simply does not stand up to inspection. No text about a previous King written during the reign of the incumbent monarch can be completely free of ideological content; this content can change shift its position or its emphasis, but can never be completely absent. The <A> text and the <B> text are balanced in a completely different way; different emphases are given to the various characters and the two texts are effectively written in two completely different genres.

The overriding feature, then in the comparison of the two texts is how very *different* they are, which is partly why I do not agree with either Stauffer

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38. *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. I, 1744, pp. ii-iii.

39. *Ibid.*, p. iii.

40. *Harleian Miscellany*, 2nd edn., vol. I, 1808, p. 67.

or Travitsky that they were both written by Elizabeth Carey. <sup>41</sup> <B> is apparently an example of the post-Restoration potted prose histories which Woolf mentions (p. 445); <A> is not. For the most part <A> is not written in prose at all, but in lines of blank verse, the majority of which have feminine endings, and it includes 22 pages of dramatic monologue in a total of 160. Stauffer has used this evidence to date the text, by arguing that the use of the feminine ending is typical of the first half of the seventeenth century, and its eventual proliferation Stauffer likens to "a disease". <sup>42</sup> More evidence for dating <A> in 1627/8 comes from the binding of *The Parallel*, a reissue of the <A> text. One copy of *The Parallel*, owned by St John's College, Cambridge, is bound with Francis Bacon's *The Historie of the Raigne of King Henry the Seventh*, 1622. <sup>43</sup> As Elizabeth Quarmby, Assistant Librarian, Special Collections, informs me, the binding is, very approximately, contemporary with *The Parallel*. There is a significant similarity between the two texts in their prolific use of dramatic speeches. In both cases they are set aside from the rest of the text, being printed in italics. Finally, the proportion of these speeches comes out at as approximately 14% in both works. Even though this is not conclusive evidence, it does suggest that the person responsible for their being bound together, located in *The Parallel* a genre, if not a text, which belonged to the pre-Civil War period.

<B> on the other hand, has few dramatic speeches (six pages in all - approximately 7.5%), and the position of those which do exist suggests that they are the remains of <A> which the editor did not cut down. All the dialogue before Isabel's address to her brother is heavily cut down and

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41. Lewalski (1993), pp. 317-320, argues that <A> was written by Elizabeth Carey and that <B> was re-written to reflect the politics of the Exclusion Crisis. She does not, however, give any detailed evidence for this.

42. Stauffer (1935), p. 290.

43. N.B. This is the only one of the three extant copies of *The Parallel* which is bound with any other work.

paraphrased in the third person. After this point (p. 41 in <B> and therefore well over half way through the text), the speeches are retained in the first person, but heavily cut. Furthermore, a close comparison of the two texts shows that direct lifting of whole passages, coupled with the complete cutting of others, is the practice towards the end of <B>, whereas the first half shows a more sophisticated use of <A>, rewriting passages and reordering events, as well as lifting an image from its context in <A> and using it elsewhere. For example, in <A>, when the Barons are unsure what course of action to take after Edward asserts his right to recall Gaveston for the first time

They sadly silent sit, and view each other, wishing some one would shew undaunted Valour, to tye the Bell about the Cats neck that frights them; but none appears. (<A>, p. 14)

This singular image is used in a completely different context in <B>. After describing the ambush of the two Cardinals by Middleton and Selby, and the outlaw band raised by Denvil - all of which occurs after Gaveston's death and the defeat of Edward by the Scots:

All Men discover their ill affections, expecting but a Patron that durst declare himself, and adventure to hang the Bell about the Cats's Neck. (<B>, p. 16)

The evidence does rather suggest a hasty rewrite, as <B> was entered for publication in February 1680, only four months after <A>. <sup>44</sup> Thus, the project may have been started with the best intentions, but the editor simply ran out of time or enthusiasm.

### <A> and <B>: Political Content

The theory that the editor lacked time or enthusiasm is, however, somewhat undermined by the fact that the editor managed to insert into <B> certain passages which do not appear in <A>. And these, significantly, do

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44. Edward Arber, ed., *The Term Catalogues 1668-1709*, vol. I, 1903, p. 368, lists <A> under publications of November 1679 and, p. 382, lists <B> under publications of February 1680.

not only occur in relation to the re-ordering and cutting down of events, but present a new political agenda and re-focus the political philosophy of the piece. It is small wonder that Woolf found it difficult to map <A> onto the political situation in 1680, for the text is long, complex and ambiguous, sometimes showing sympathy for its protagonists and sometimes criticising their actions, never making a clear conclusion about any of them. <B>, however is much less ambiguous; Gaveston and Spencer are insidious creatures; the King is unfit to rule; Isabel is a relative character who is led into treachery by an equally insidious Mortimer. The whole philosophy of the text is to expose the potential evils of absolutism.

The issue of absolutism, and its diffusion via the state's ideological machinery is presented in the opening pages of <B> - a feature quite absent in <A> :

He glories in the advantage, *knowing himself to be an absolute King*, and at liberty; yet thinks it not enough, till the belief of the Kingdom did equally assure it. He esteems no Act more proper to confirm it, than running in a direct strain of opposition against his Predecessor's will and pleasure. (<B>, p. 4, my italics)

compared to:

Seeing himself now free and absolute, he thinks it not enough, unless his Will as well as his Power, were equally obey'd. (<A>, p. 8)

and it is surely significant that in further reference to the sovereign, <B> uses the term repeatedly, and in each instance the corresponding passage in <A> omits the word "absolute" altogether. For example, "The discourse being in the commendation of Arms, [Gaveston] stiles it an Heroick Vertue ... and Actions most unjust, a Royal Goodness." (<A>, p. 20) becomes "If the discourse were Arms, Gaveston extoll'd it as an Heroic Vertue ... and unjust Actions, the proper and becoming Fruits of an absolute Monarchy." (<B>, p. 6). Similarly, "that misfortune that waited so his Military actions" (<A>, p. 86), becomes "The Misfortune that waited on him ever since he was absolute" (<B>, p. 36). Furthermore, it is not just Edward

who is described by the <B> text in these terms. Once he has been deposed and Isabel and Mortimer have effective control over the Kingdom, they are presented by the <A> text as having "all the marks and essential parts of Sovereignty" (<A>, p. 150), whereas the <B> text says "they had all the marks and essential parts of an absolute Sovereignty" (<B>, p. 70).

In contrast to <B>, the <A> text makes sole use of much earlier Stuart rhetoric. In describing how Edward II breaks his word by recalling Gaveston the text says:

Princes that falsifie their Faiths, more by proper inclination than a necessary impulsion, grow not more hateful to forreign Nations, than fearful and suspected to their own Subjects. If they be tainted with a known Guilt, and justifie it, 'tis a shrewd presumption of a sick State, where the Head is so diseased. (<A>, p. 29)

<A> also refers to the dangerous situation "when the Head is ill, and all the Members suffer by his infirmity." (<A>, p. 44) and "When one man alone acts all parts, it begets a world of error, and endangers not only the Head, but all the Members" (<A>, p. 48).

Not only in its rhetoric, but also in its subject matter, the <B> text focuses upon the problematic position of the absolute monarch. It is the King's own actions, rather than those of his Government and his favourites, which are under examination in <B>. For example, when describing how Denvil and his band of outlaws terrorised the North, <A> mentions how "The intemperate and indiscreet Government had alien'd the hearts of this People" (<A>, p. 44), whereas, in the same context, <B> rewrites this as a criticism of the King and his relationship with the whole of England: "The King, by his untemperate and undiscreet actions, had lost the hearts of his People" (<B>, p. 16).

The events of the war with Scotland are re-ordered and differently emphasised to present an incompetent King bringing disaster to England as a result of his actions. The plague, dearth and famine which are referred to in both texts, are presented by <A> as additional problems to those already



faced by Edward's army:

The News of the Defeat of [the Archbishop of York's] Spiritual Army, like the voice of a Night-raven, had no sooner croakt his sad eccho in the King's ear, but he straight raiseth his Army, weaken'd with Famine, and lessen'd with Sickness. The prigging Scots seeing his going off, judge his Retreat little better than a plain flight; which gave them heart to set upon the fag-end of his Troops, which they rout and break, to the astonishment of the whole Army. (<A>, p. 47)

Neither the Scots nor the English acquit themselves with much credit in this incident. In <B>, the arrival of plague, dearth and famine occurs *before* the seige of Berwick, and is not only reworked into a form of divine retribution for Edward's bad government, but also acts as a catalyst for the second invasion of the Scots and the defeat of the Archbishop of York's army:

The crying Maladies of this Climat were such, that the Divine Power sent down at one and the selfsame instant his three fatal Executioners, Plague, Dearth, and Famine, to call upon us for a repentant Reformation. No part of the Kingdom is free, but was grievously afflicted by the unmerciful Prosecution of one, or all these fatal angry Sisters. So great a Misery was too much, but it is seconded with a sudden Invasion of the hungry Scots ... The Archbishop of York ... affronts the Scots, and gives them Battel, making Mitton upon Swale, that honoured his Enemies with the Glory of a second Triumph, the place of his Disaster. (<B>, p. 16-17)

This Apocalyptic chain of events is exacerbated in <B> by Edward's rash decision to besiege Berwick. In <A>, however, these misfortunes cause him to abandon the siege as hopeless.

In focusing on the actions of the King, the <B> text diminishes the role of Spencer quite drastically in comparison to the <A> text. <A> gives two detailed analyses of Spencer's "policy" (<A>, pp. 49-62 and 77-81) and his relationship with the King is forgerounded as the cause of Edward's inability to rule. The following passages from <A>, in comparison to their equivalent passages in <B> serve to illustrate the way in which <B> focuses upon the King rather than upon his favourites:

Such dull conceits did so ingross his fancie, that he almost despair'd of his own fortune. His Minions, now return'd from their employment, had much ado to level these deep reckonings, which lay so heavie on his guilty Conscience: yet at the length he gain'd his wonted temper, and acteth o'er afresh his former Errours.

The customary habit of transgression is like a Corn that doth infest its owner; though it be par'd and cut, yet it reneweth, unless the

Core be rooted out that feeds his tumour. The guilty Conscience feels some inward motions, which flashing lightly, shave the hair of Mischief; the scalp being naked, yet the roots remaining, they soon grow up again, and hide their baldness: the operations of the soul of true Repentance, grubs up the very depth of such vile Monsters, and leaves alone the fears of their abuses. (<A>, p. 95)

compared to:

The sad Impressions of these Disorders, and the reeking Blood of so many noble and brave Subjects, so basely spilt, do seem to cry for Vengeance. This, for a while, wrought deeply in his distressed thoughts, but a small intermission brings him back to his former temper. A customary habit of a depraved Nature, dulleth the sense of the Soul and Conscience; so that when our better Angels summon us to restitution and repentance, the want of a lively true apprehension, leads us blindfold into a dangerous despairing hazard. (<B>, p. 40)

After Spenser's return from banishment, the <A> text describes his "Policy" (pp. 77-81) working on the King:

The King's weak humour, naturally wanton, he makes more vicious, and apparent guilty, hoping to make him alike hateful, that in the Change they both might run one fortune. (<A>, p. 77)

In <B> there is rather less description of Spenser's behaviour, and the corresponding passage culminates in:

The King's Humour naturally vicious, they feed, with all the proper objects, that might please or more betray his senses. (<B>, p. 31)

Similarly, Isabel's speech to her brother when she arrives in France is given a different emphasis in each text. <A> sees Isabel placing the blame firmly on Spenser:

... my Royal Husband is too much abused; his will, his ear, his heart is too too open to those which make his errours their advantage ... But why do I include them as a number? 'tis onely one; the rest are but his creatures. (<A>, p. 96)

Whereas in <B> the blame is partly re-placed onto Edward, while the rest is dispersed amongst various anonymous corrupt courtiers:

... My Royal Husband is too far seduced, his Ear is too open, his Will too violent, and his Heart too free, to those bewitching Syrens, that make his Errors their Profit and Glory. (<B>, p. 41)

As these various examples illustrate, in <A> Spenser inflames dormant vices in Edward, and has to work hard to do so, thereby implying that Edward's conscience could have made him reform his ways, had not Spenser intervened. The metaphor of the Corn, in the first quotation, signifies that

however much vice may seem to be both recurrent and inherent in Edward, it is essentially a foreign body (Spencer) which may be cut out completely. However, in <B>, it is the very character of Spencer which is used in a metaphorical fashion, as a symbol of Edward's own inability to rule.

On comparing the end of both texts, a completely different focus upon Kingship and Government emerges. <A> is much more concerned with the choosing of a favourite, the correct behaviour of a favourite and the King's subsequent use of his favourite (<A>, pp. 137-42). When referring to the behaviour of the King and how it affected the rest of the Kingdom, <A> clearly puts the blame upon such characters as Gaveston and Spencer:

Experience tells the right use of a Favourite. A good Cause in the integrity of time warrants it self, and needs no supporter: But Imperfection, Fraud, Dishonesty, and Weakness in true Worth, fly to his protection, that by his strength they may prevail, which in Equity and Justice are meerly corrupt and counterfeit: Money, Friends, or Favour engageth him, and he is Master; hence proceed all manner of Oppression and Disorder. Let the Spring-head be never so pure and unpolluted, yet such a Diver makes it foul and muddy ... Had this unhappy subject of this Story not been thus abused, had he been worser far, he had subsisted; but when for his inglorious Minions, Gaveston and Spencer, who successively enjoy'd him, he made the Kingdome a prey to their Insolence, he found both Heaven and Earth conspir'd his ruine. (<A>, p. 159-60).

Clearly, reliance upon the unsuitable Gaveston and Spencer was Edward's fatal flaw. Had he not relied so heavily upon these two men, his own behaviour could have been far worse, yet he would have survived.

However, <B> calls the very practice of the King choosing his closest ministers into question, and puts the blame of impurity on the King himself:

Is it possible but there must be perpetual Error and Injustice, where all things are carried more by Favour and Affection, than Law and Reason? Or can the lesser Fountains be clear, when that main Spring that feeds them is tainted and polluted? Alas, common and familiar Experience tells, that the Actions and principal Use of a Favourite, is to make good by his strength and favour, those Designs that are in themselves unjust, perverse, and insupportable. (<B>, p. 76)

<A> criticises Edward II, but absolves him from being inherently corrupt:

So great a Fall these latter times produce not; a King in a potent Kingdome of his own, deposed by a handful of Strangers, who

principally occasioned it, without so much as any Kinsman, Friend, or Subject that either with his Tongue or Sword declar'd himself in his Quarrel. But you may object, He fell by Infidelity and Treason, as have many other that went before and followed him. 'Tis true: but yet withal observe, here was no second Pretendents, but those of his own, a Wife, and a Son, which were the greatest Traytors: *had he not indeed been a Traytor to himself*, they could not all have wronged him. (<A>, p. 160, my italics)

<B>, on the other hand, reworks this section of <A> to give a very different effect. The practice of writing Gaveston and Spencer as metaphors for Edward's (particular) corruption occurs again:

Had Edward in his own particular been far worse than he was, he might have still subsisted, but when for his inglorious Minions Gaveston and Spencer, who successively engross him, he fell to those injurious and dissolute Actions, that made all Men, and the Kingdom, pray to their insolent and imperious Humours, he quickly found both Heaven and Earth resolved to work his Ruin. *Not only his own, but theirs, and those of their ignoble Agents, were made his proper Errors*, which took so wholly from him the Love and Hearts of his Subjects, that he found neither Arms nor Tongue to defend him. A more remarkable Misery I think no time of ours produceth, that brings this King to destruction, without so much as any one Kinsman, Friend, or Subject, that declared himself in his Quarrel. (<B>, p. 77, my italics and underlining)

Any other form of corruption may have been acceptable, as the first two lines of the quotation make clear, but the particular corruption of excessive favouritism signifies Edward's inability to govern.

Having established the difference in the focus and the political rhetoric of both texts, it remains to consider the political philosophy of the texts and whether the <B> text does not indeed address itself to the issues of the Exclusion Crisis. <B> has presented a King who is both unwise in governmental judgement, personally unpopular and yet insists on imposing his will upon the peers and upon the country. More significantly, <B> also discusses the extent to which the King should be allowed such constitutional power. According to Richard Ashcraft, this was precisely the concern of the earliest debates in the Exclusion Crisis - the extent to which a monarch could be bound by a law passed by Parliament. Parliamentary legislation barred Catholics from taking offices in the military or the government, but could this legislation be applied to the Crown also?

The simplest response to this dilemma was, of course, a defence of the king's absolute power. According to this view, not only was the king superior to and above any legislation enacted by Parliament, but also, since the king's will was law, there could be no grounds for any individual's disobedience to his commands. <sup>45</sup>

In opposition to this view, which was supported by the 'Tory' alliance, the Whigs defended

the people's protestantism against the threat of catholic despotism, and their lives and goods against a predatory absolutist monarchy. Some (but not all) of the Whigs would have been sympathetic to the Miltonic position that kings are entrusted with power by a sovereign people, who may resume it if their trust is abused. <sup>46</sup>

The <B> text would seem to have at least some recognition of this 'Miltonic' position, as it once again displays a change from the <A> text:

The heart of the Subject as it is obliged, so it is continued by the Majesty and Goodness of the King: if either prove prostitute, it unties the links of *Affection*; those lost, the *breach of Duty* succeeds, which hunts after nothing but Change and Innovation. (<A>, p. 158, my italics)

becomes:

The Subjects hearts, as they are obliged, so are they continued by the Majesty and Goodness of a King; if either of these prove prostitute, it *unties the Links of Duty and Allegiance*, and hunts after Change and Innovation. (<B>, p. 75, my italics)

The issue of whether laws passed by Parliament are applicable to the King or not is also touched upon by <B>, and again this is as a result of a change to the <A> text:

[Parliament] is immediately call'd, and in short space assembled at London; where, after many interchangeable Expostulations diversly handled by the pregnant Wits and nimble Tongues of either Party, <sup>47</sup> a settled Agreement is concluded, and many excellent Laws are enacted, which both the King and Peers are sworn to maintain and keep inviolate. (<A>, p. 36)

becomes:

Meditation and intercession brings it at length to Parliamentary discussion, which being assembled at London, enacts many excellent

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45. Richard Ashcraft, *Locke's Two Treatises of Government*, 1987, pp. 28-9.

46. Paul Hammond, *John Dryden: A Literary Life*, 1991, p. 91.

47. The Barons on the one hand, and Edward and his faction on the other.

Laws, and binds both the King and Lords by a solemn Oath to observe them. (<B>, p. 13)

The change here is rather more subtle, but the fact that Parliament becomes the prime mover in formulating and passing the legislation, and also "binds" the king to observe it indicates that the <B> text is taking account of the central issue of the Exclusion Crisis. Furthermore, <B>'s treatment of Parliament could well be an oblique reference to Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, written some time in the 1640s, but not published until 1680. <sup>48</sup> According to Ashcraft:

When it did appear in print in 1680, its relevance to the Exclusion debate was immediately recognized by participants on both sides. Here was a theory that combined arguments for a hereditary monarchy (thus denying the legitimacy of Parliament's attempts to interfere with the succession) with an analogical argument linking the role of the king in society to the father's role within the family, thereby drawing support for the former's exercise of power from the everyday social practices of individuals raised in a society in which the patriarchal family was the dominant socializing institution. Both of these defences were ultimately grounded in a theory of divine right of kings. Filmer maintained that God had granted political power to Adam by direct appointment and that this power was transmitted to posterity through Adam's heirs. Not only was Filmer's argument derived from and dependent upon an interpretation of the Scriptures, but it was also an interpretation of the Law of Nature. In other words, Filmer tried to unify several defences of absolutism into one comprehensive theoretical framework supported by theology, the Bible and a belief in natural law. Despite the extremism of certain propositions contained in Filmer's theory, therefore, it is hardly surprising that *Patriarcha* served as the focal point for the ideological defence of royalist absolutism in the 1680's. <sup>49</sup>

The <B> text, in its reference to the activities of Parliament quoted above, would seem to take issue with the ideas contained in Filmer's work, particularly regarding the King's "oath" to observe the law:

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48. Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha; or, the natural power of kings*, 1680, Wing F922. The date of composition is suggested by Ashcraft, op. cit., p. 29, and he also says that the manuscript had a wide circulation before publication. Filmer was violently opposed to the Miltonic position: "If it be unnatural for the multitude to choose their governors, or to govern or to partake in the government, what can be thought of that damnable conclusion which is made by too many, that the multitude may correct or depose their prince if need be? Surely the unnaturalness and injustice of this position cannot sufficiently be expressed." Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, ed. J.P. Sommerville, Cambridge, 1991, p. 32.

49. Ashcraft, op. cit., p. 29.

Others there be that affirm that although laws of themselves do not bind kings, yet the oaths of kings at their coronation tie them to keep all the laws of their kingdoms ... We may observe, in [the] words of the articles of the oath, that the king is required to observe not *all* the laws, but only the *upright laws*, and that with discretion and mercy. The word *upright* cannot mean *all* laws, because in the oath of Richard II I find 'evil and unjust laws' mentioned, which the king swears to abolish ... So that in effect the king doth swear to keep no laws but such as in his judgement are upright, and those not literally always, but according to the equity of his conscience[.]<sup>50</sup>

The <B> text does not, however, constitute a direct attack upon the work of Filmer or upon the concept of *Iure Divino*. Whilst problematising the idea of an absolute monarch in its portrayal of Edward, the <B> text also retains a certain amount of respect for the position of the monarch. The text treads a very careful line between the sacred nature of the political position of the monarch and the person of Edward II himself. For example in Isabel's fear that Bristol will not yield because "Where the Person of an anointed King was at stake, there could be no assurance" (<B>, p. 56).<sup>51</sup> Similarly, in the description of the first Parliament called by Isabel, the emphasis is upon the questionable nature of the Parliamentary machinations. This extract from <B> has no correspondent in <A>:

A Parliament is immediately call'd and assembled, in which the Pack was before-hand easily laid, for Edward had lost the Hearts and Love of all his People; the Errors and Abuses of the Kingdom are there with too great a liberty against a *Sacred King yet living*, laid open and discoursed. (<B>, p. 61, my italics)

The <B> text would appear to be trying to articulate a theory of kingship and government which cut a middle way between the two extremes. As a final example, the <B> text uses rhetoric which appears to advocate conciliation of the opposing positions. On two occasions, when Isabel asks for help from her brother, and when Edward protests against his deposition and imprisonment, the <B> text can be seen as proposing an addendum to Filmer's ideas - an addendum taken, apparently, from the opposing side in

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50. Filmer, op. cit., pp. 42-3

51. As opposed to "the Royal Misery would beget a swift Compassion" (<A>, p. 123).

the Exclusion Crisis debate. Both Isabel and Edward appeal to "the Laws of God, *Men*, and Nature" (<B>, p. 42, my italics) and "the Laws of God, *Man*, and Nature" (<B>, p. 69, my italics) respectively. Not surprisingly, neither of these lines are found in <A>.

<A> has no obvious relationship to the issues of the Exclusion Crisis, neither in its political rhetoric, nor in the subject matter upon which its focuses, nor in the issues of government which it addresses. It may criticise the King, yet retains firm respect for the Pope (how could it then be pro-Exclusion?); it attacks the practice of favouritism, yet, as Woolf himself says, there was no favourite with such power in the reign of Charles II. I think it highly likely, in the face of such evidence as I have cited, that the <A> text was indeed a product of the earlier Stuart period and that <B> has been rewritten to address the issues of 1679-80, i.e., the fear of an absolute (Catholic) monarch, who would ignore the wishes of his government and alienate his subjects. If Woolf had trouble reading <A> as an allegory of the Exclusion Crisis, he should have had less trouble in seeing the conflicts of that period in <B>.

### **The Case for Carey**

My solution to Woolf's apparent dilemma over <A> is simple; the political relationships which appear in allegorical form in <A> are not those of the court of Charles II, but those of Charles I. This, of course, allows the possibility that Elizabeth Carey was indeed the author. The purpose of this final section, then, is to consider the textual evidence for <A>, henceforth *Edward II*, being by Elizabeth Carey.

Edward II was arguably the most written about King of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England. The story, in retrospect, has become something of an historical palimpsest, available for the next author to write over the version of the predecessor, but never quite obliterate it. Moreover,



in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it is significant that the majority of versions of Edward II appeared at a time of monarchical crisis and many of them have been subject to revisions. There are three main groups of dates at which versions of the story appear:

**1593 - 1598** Drayton's *Peirs Gaveston, Earle of Cornwall* (1593), *Mortimeriados* (1596), *England's Heroicall Epistles* (1597); Marlowe's play (prob. written 1592, pub. 1594); Hubert's manuscript of *The Life and Death of Edward II* composed (1598-9, dated by Bernard Mellor).

**1627 - 1629** The manuscript of the <A> text composed (1627/8); Hubert's *The Life and Death of Edward II* (politically controversial pirated version, 1628; authorised version, with revisions, 1629)

**1679 - 1680** <A> published (1679/80); <B> text composed/evolved from <A> text and published (1680).

The first of these dates corresponds with the concern over who was to succeed after Elizabeth I's death, which culminated in the Essex rebellion of 1601; the second with the growing discontent surrounding the continued dominance of Buckingham into the reign of Charles I, which ended with his assassination in 1628; and the third corresponds with the Exclusion Crisis and the end of the Licensing Act. As to the process of rewriting, Drayton constantly rewrote all of his works including those on Gaveston and Mortimer. He changed the title of *Mortimeriados* to *The Barons Warres* and removed the potentially contentious reference to the hero as "King Mortimer".<sup>52</sup> His final versions of all his works on Edward II were published in a collection in 1619. His later works on Gaveston, published under the reputedly homosexual James I, have had any direct reference to a physical relationship between Edward and Gaveston removed. Francis Hubert was obliged to rewrite his poem; and, as

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52. *Mortimeriados* (1596), in Drayton, *Works* I, p. 348, l. 1393. In *The Barons Warres* (1619), the stanza has been completely removed, although a slightly earlier stanza listing Isabel's supporters ends "With Mortimer, that mightie Malecontent.", Drayton, *Works* II, p. 73, Canto IV, l. 152.

far as it is possible to surmise, Elizabeth Carey's text was re-written for her in the shape of the <B> text.

It is evident, then, that the subject matter of the history of Edward II is one which affords little comfort to the writer, publisher, critic or reader. The fact that writers felt a need to change their own work for various reasons, thus compromising their authorial position, makes the definite identification of Carey as the author of <A> so much more difficult. However, it is precisely this literary context, troubled as it may be, which provides yet more positive evidence for the Carey case. The many factors which, if alone, seem merely circumstantial, together strengthen the likelihood of her authorship. To begin with, she has links with other writers on the subject. Michael Drayton, who dedicated a section of *England's Heroicall Epistles* to Elizabeth Tanfield (see Appendix B, pp. 254-5), and was also her tutor for some time, (see Ch. 1, p. 62, n. 134) showed a sustained interest in the history of Edward II and wrote the most extensively on the events of that period. Moreover, his works were composed at around the same time as Elizabeth Tanfield was under his tutelage, i.e. *Peirs Gaveston, Earle of Cornwall* (1593), *Mortimeriados* (1596), the two epistles between Isabel and Mortimer in *England's Heroicall Epistles* (1597). Furthermore, the evidence from the *Life* (see Intro., p. 16) points to Elizabeth Carey's best work being a "Life of Tamberlaine", which perhaps suggests an interest in the works of Christopher Marlowe, whose play of *Edward II* was available to be read at a similar time to the publication of Drayton's works on Edward II.

On a purely textual level, there are certain similarities between *Edward II* and *The Tragedy of Mariam*, which operate on three levels: vocabulary, sentiment and structure. The vocabulary is possibly the most tenuous of the three, in that both texts could simply be riddled with seventeenth-century vocabulary which are common to many other texts. However, there are a few instances of particularly quirky vocabulary in both

texts which are worthy of note. The phrase "rak'd up in the Embers", in *Edward II* (p. 36) is almost the same as "rakte in embers", in *The Tragedy of Mariam* (I ii 137). Words and phrases such as "proper", as in "proper selfe" (Chorus III 1224) or "proper goodness" (p. 8); "Jewel", used to describe Mariam (V i 2061) and Isabel (p. 19); "Cedar", used to describe Mariam (IV iv 1454) and Gaveston (p. 30); "Crue" or "Crew", meaning "group", (IV vi 1579, V i 2002; pp. 120; 128); the idea of misdeeds being recorded in brass (IV v 1540; p. 122) and "quondam", meaning "erstwhile" (IV vii 1648; p. 142) are all used at least once in each text. <sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately, there are not a great many instances of similarity in vocabulary alone. However, the relationship of the texts becomes closer by the way in which certain sentiments are expressed in them. To begin with, one of the overriding plot themes of *The Tragedy of Mariam* is that humankind has the habit of believing what it wishes most to believe - as expressed in the Chorus II:

Our eares and hearts are apt to hold for good,  
That we our selves doe most desire to bee:  
And then we drowne objections in the flood  
Of partialitie, tis that we see  
    That makes false rumours long with credit past,  
    Though they like rumours must conclude at last.  
(Chorus II 969-74)

In *Edward II* the exact same sentiment is expressed thus:

The Operations of the Fancy transport sometimes our Imagination to believe the actual possession of those things we most desire and hope for (p. 11).

And significantly, there is a character in each text who sounds a note of caution about the future, and against excessive optimism. Baba's second son has misgivings about the news of Herod's death and wishes his soul, despite its being his most precious possession, should be a liar rather than prove true.

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53. The fact that these two texts were written a quarter of a century apart, yet the second retains some of the singular vocabulary of the first, reinforces the case for common authorship.

I doubt it too: God grant it be an error,  
 Tis best without a cause to be in terror:  
     And rather had I, though my soule be mine,  
 My soule should lie, then prove a true divine.  
 (II ii 760-3)

Similarly, Edward II has misgivings about sending Isabel over to France

But yet his wandring Soul had strange impressions, which struck him  
 deeply with a sad prediction, and made him faintly yield, but yet delay  
 it. (p. 88)

The idea of Queen Isabel being "in name a Wife, in truth a Hand-  
 maid" (p. 52) is reminiscent of Graphina, who describes herself as Pheroras'  
 lowly "hand-maid" (II i 604), and who is faced with the prospect of becoming  
 his wife. The language of both texts equates the two positions quite clearly -  
 and condemns the equation. The idea of true friendship and the  
 condemnation of its opposite also receives much attention by both texts. In  
 IV vii of *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Constabarus lectures the sons of Baba on  
 the definition of true friendship and the implications of the alternative, of  
 which he says

Still wilt thou wrong the sacred name of friend?  
 Then should'st thou never stile it friendship more:  
 But base mechanicke traffique that doth lend,  
 Yet will be sure they shall the debt restore.  
 (IV vi 1555-8)

Almost exactly the same vocabulary appears in *Edward II*, first in the  
 description of Spencer's policy "so base a traffique" (p. 53) and later, when  
 the French have deserted Isabel and just before the introduction of Robert  
 D'Artois, true friendship is described thus:

The correspondencie of firm Affections is purely innocent, sincerely  
 grounded: if Private ends or Worldly aims o'er-weigh them, they then  
 are but a meer Commerce and Traffick, which hold no longer than the  
 Bargain is driving. (p. 105)

The sentiment of Chorus IV in *The Tragedy of Mariam* is echoed in the  
 description of Edward II's revenge on the defeated barons:

The fairest action of our humane life,  
 Is [scorning] to revenge and injurie: <sup>54</sup>  
 For who forgives without a further strife,

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54. Dunstan (1914) retains a misprint "scorniug".

His adversaries heart to him doth tie.  
 And tis a firmer conquest truely sed,  
 To winne the heart, then overthrow the head.  
 (Chorus IV 1904-9)

In point of extremity, it is more safe and Honorable to do less than we may, rather than all we may; the one makes known our goodness, the other the cruelty of our nature, which with a loathed fear thrusts a zealous and true love out of possession in the hearts of those that behold and observe our actions. (p. 74)

And, of course, the implied subjects of this sentiment (i.e. Mariam and Edward) in each text both meet the same fate as a direct result of their failure to abide by it.

Finally, the plot and thematic structure of the texts do have certain elements in common: (a) An absolute male monarch, characterized as having excessive sexual passions which compromise his ability to rule (Herod, Edward), results in injustice, chaos, oppression and discontent in both texts;<sup>55</sup> (b) a de-centred/absent male monarch (Herod, Edward), coupled with an effective female head of state with an heir-apparent-in-waiting (Alexandra/Mariam and Alexander, Isabel and Prince Edward) equals justice, order, freedom and peace; (c) the adultery of a woman who is trapped in an unsatisfactory relationship (Salome, Isabel) is not treated with the standard seventeenth-century "poetic justice". Salome's failed marriage is presented as being at least partly the fault of her sanctimonious and hypocritical husband and she is never punished for her behaviour. Nor indeed is Isabel, who in her relationship with Mortimer is portrayed solely in a sympathetic light; (d) a de-centred female (Doris, Isabel) rejected in favour of another (Mariam, Gaveston/Spencer) returns with her only son (Antipater, Prince Edward) in order to destroy the usurper of her husband's passions and

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55. The preponderance of feminine ending iambic couplets takes on new significance in the light of Maureen Quilligan's article "Feminine Endings: the Sexual Politics of Sidney's and Spenser's Rhyming" in Haselkorn and Travitsky (1990). She says, p. 313, that in the *Old Arcadia*, Sidney "uses feminine rhyme to articulate the patriarchal chaos at the heart of the plot" and, p. 318, that in the *Faerie Queene*, "The conclusion that Spenser consciously chose feminine rhymes for specific feminine contexts is inescapable". As the two major features of *Edward II* are patriarchal chaos and feminine contexts, the text would appear to use feminine endings in a similar fashion.

put her son on the throne.

Finally, there is the question of articulating the silences. We have already seen how *The Tragedy of Mariam* totally invents scenes and events which were only really the implied subtext of the sources. Whether or not *Edward II* does the same is difficult to define because, like Elizabeth Carey, so many other authors had already made use of available chronicle sources and all those who wrote works of literature on the history of Edward II did so via the sole or partial use of the dramatic voice. Drayton writes his texts in the voices of Gaveston, Mortimer, Isabel and Edward; Hubert presents his poem in the voice of Edward II; Marlowe gave all the main protagonists of the story a voice to a greater or lesser extent. The text was not necessarily innovative in its choice of sources in the sense that the *Tragedy of Mariam* was. But this set Elizabeth Carey an even greater challenge. Not only did she have to reshape and rework male-authored sources from within a patriarchal tradition of literature (as with *The Tragedy of Mariam*), but she had to combat the many previous literary texts, which had themselves reworked the sources to give a patriarchal and, in some cases, misogynistic rendering of the story. Despite this, (or perhaps because of it) Elizabeth Carey's text of *Edward II* found a completely different way of presenting the history of Edward II, one which effectively redressed a balance which had as its central premise, the literary characterisation of Queen Isabel as marginal and/or immoral.

## CHAPTER 5

**"I strive to please the Truth, not Time": the (sexual) politics of *Edward II*.****Text and Context**

The title of this chapter is taken from "The Author's Preface to the Reader", which prefaces the 1680 edition of *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II*. In this, Elizabeth Carey, if she is the author, pledges to give a more accurate account of the life of Edward II than any of her predecessors, be they poets or historians. Carey makes a binary opposition between the concepts of "Truth" and "Time". On the one hand, this can be interpreted as an attempt to set up the poet's art as superior to that of the mere historian. Whilst the historians might please chronological "Time" in their accounts of past events, the poets reach for a higher moral truth, such as that set out by Sidney in his *Defence of Poesy*:

I think it may be manifest that the poet, with that same hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually than any other art doth. And so a conclusion not unfitly ensue: that, as virtue is the most excellent resting place for all worldly learning to make his end of, so poetry, being the most familiar to teach it, and most princely to move towards it, in the most excellent work is the most excellent workman.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst Carey may not be pleasing the historical, chronological concept of "Time", this does not preclude her from pleasing the "Truth", which stands outside the constraints of historical "Time".

However, only two pages into the actual work itself, the text, somewhat confusingly, suggests that "Truth" and historical "Time" are, in fact, perfectly compatible.<sup>2</sup> When looking forward to the ultimate end of the

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1. Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy* (1595), in Duncan-Jones (1989), p. 228, ll. 672-8.

2. There is, however, little sense of either chronological time, or of historical period in the text. Any references which would set the story firmly in the feudal society of the fourteenth century are largely absent, beyond a brief mention of the dates at the beginning, the style of which seems to be highly influenced by that of the chronicle historians. Incidents such as the recovery of Rhodes and the persecution of the Knights Templars are entirely missed out, despite being included by three of the chronicle historians, i.e.

eponymous hero, the text says:

The Royal honour of his Birthright was scarcely invested in [Edward's] person, when Time (the Touchstone of Truth) shews him to the world a meer Imposture (p. 2).

This would appear to contradict the statement in "The Author's Preface to the Reader". Or rather, it contradicts the initial interpretation given at the beginning of this chapter. For there is an alternative reading of the word "Time" which makes rather more sense under the circumstances. The meaning of the word "Time" to which I am referring is that of the historical moment, the context of the text's production. This would turn the statement into one of moral integrity - Carey sought to present "Truths" in her work which she felt would not be pleasing to the potential readership of 1627/8. In this statement then, Elizabeth Carey implies the rejection of previous literary accounts of the life of Edward II, the sentiments of which are morally false precisely because they were designed to please the "Time" in which they were produced. I have selected this particular quotation to form the title for this final chapter because I wish to explore the nature of these "Truths" and what might have been displeasing about them in 1627/8.

Arguably the most politically contentious issue of this "Time" was the fact that the Duke of Buckingham was at the height of his power, having successfully made the transition from being the favourite of James I to become the favourite of his son, Charles I.<sup>3</sup> The text of *Edward II* is

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Grafton (1563), fol. 71r; Grafton (1569), p. 194; Holinshed (1577), pp. 848-9; Stow (1580), p. 330. Furthermore, there is question of Edward II's failure to pay homage to the King of France for the lands of Guyen, Aquitaine and Poitou. It is this failure which begins the hostilities between the French and English, although Carey makes no mention of it. This incident is detailed in Fabyan (1516), fol. lxxxviii<sup>v</sup>; Grafton (1569), p. 204; Holinshed (1577), p. 875; Stow (1580), p. 345.

3. Lockyer (1981), p. 234, gives an account of this transition: Favourites were nearly always the flowers of one reign only. ... But Charles, far from disowning Buckingham, tied the bonds of friendship between them even more closely. 'I have lost a good father and you a good master,' he told the Duke, who was in tears at James's death. 'But comfort yourself, you have found another that will no less cherish you.' Charles took Buckingham with him in his coach to London, and ordered lodgings to be prepared for him at St James's, next to his own



concerned with the civil strife caused by the English King's excessive reliance upon his favourite, and with the reaction of his French-born Queen to her resultant marginalisation. It is, of course, not possible to draw direct parallels between the triangular situation at the court of Charles I, in which the protagonists were Buckingham, Henrietta Maria and the King himself, but there are certain similarities which would point to the text as being a comment on the the rise of Buckingham in particular and the Stuart court in general. <sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the historical context of *Edward II* constituted a society in which sexual impulses and relationships were comprehended (and therefore, perhaps, inscribed into) structures of political power. This thesis has already demonstrated how the "Husband-Wife" and "King-State" motif were analogous and how *all* forms of female transgression were conceptually and theatrically reduced to sexual transgression (Ch. 1, pp. 38-42; Ch. 3, pp. 125-32). Therefore, I wish to explore the relationship between text and context in terms of two models of erotic desire which can also be used to represent political relationships. These are the classical model of homosexual relationships, whereby homosexual desire was played out by an older, free-born man and younger male (usually a slave, though not always a social inferior) <sup>5</sup> and Girard's triangle of desire, in which the female passive object

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chamber. He confirmed the Duke in all his offices, and gave him a golden key as symbol of his right to enter the royal palaces at any hour of the day or night and go where he wished.

4. That Carey should write such a text, when the "Epitaph upon the death of the Duke of Buckingham" (see Appendix A, p. 249; 251) is attributed to her, may seem contradictory. However, the attribution of this poem is by no means certain. The handwriting is not Carey's and the fact that the scribe made the significant mistake in calling her "countess" rather than "viscountess" suggests that the source of the attribution was not particularly reliable.

5. For a brief but full discussion of this model and its variants in the Greek and Roman Empires, see Paul Veyne, "Homosexuality in ancient Rome", trans. Anthony Forster, in *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, ed. Philippe Aries and Andre Bejin, Oxford, 1985, pp. 26-35.

of desire is fought over by two active males. <sup>6</sup>

In seventeenth-century England a separate identity for homosexual men and lesbian women did not exist. There was official condemnation of homosexual activity between men, although this was identified under the umbrella term of "sodomy", which could mean any sexual activity outside procreative heterosexual practice. However, homosexual activity was also celebrated in art and literature, not the least in the presentation of the homosexual relationships between classical gods, heroes and their lovers. Bruce Smith has noted that there were six models, based upon classical myths<sup>7</sup> which English Renaissance culture absorbed and reproduced, giving an artistic credibility to a mode of desire which was outlawed if acted upon. The myth which gives the most significant form of expression to homosexual desire in this context is that of "Master and Minion" - as represented by the relationship between Jove and Ganymede. <sup>8</sup> The essential feature of such a relationship is that it is played out along very strict lines of age and social class. Jove is the social superior, the older partner and, most importantly, the active pursuer and performer in the relationship. Ganymede is the younger,

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6. René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and other in Literary Structure*, trans. Yvonne Freccero, 1966, rpt. 1969; discussed in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, New York, 1985, pp. 21-5.

I am using Girard's model in its most basic form. His complex theories of mediation do not really apply here. Mediation refers to the situation when triangular desire is brought about by one desiring subject inspiring an identical desire in another subject. The second subject then looks upon the first as both role model and rival, Girard, op. cit., p. 7. In a society where marriage was arranged, it is difficult to see how either Buckingham or Henrietta Maria could have inspired desire in each other. Similarly, in Carey's text, Isabel was brought over from France to supply Edward with a love-interest other than Gaveston and so no form of mediation could have taken place between them.

7. Smith (1991). The sixth myths, discussed in separate chapters are: "Combatants and Comrades" (Ch. 2, pp. 31-77); "The Passionate Shepherd" (Ch. 3, pp. 79-115); "The Shipwrecked Youth" (Ch. 4, pp. 117-57); "Knights in Shifts" (Ch. 5, pp. 159-87); "Master and Minion" (Ch. 6, pp. 189-223); "The Secret Sharer" (Ch. 7, pp. 225-70).

8. Smith (1991), Ch. 6, pp. 191-223.

socially inferior, but above all, passive object of desire.

In the society of Ancient Rome, where homosexual activity was openly tolerated, the restrictions laid upon it were that men of a socially superior rank must never take the passive role in a homosexual relationship. A male citizen's sexual activity was defined as masculine, not by the sex of the object of his desire, but by his active relationship to it.<sup>9</sup> The difference which the society of Ancient Athens displayed was that a relationship between an older man and a youth of the same class was acceptable, in that the man, whilst retaining the active role, also acted as a mentor:

Along with its erotic component, then, this was a bond of mentorship; the boys were apprentices in the ways and virtues of Athenian citizenship, whose privileges they inherited. These privileges included the power to command the labor of slaves of both sexes, and of women of any class, including their own.<sup>10</sup>

To a certain extent these values were re-invested into English Renaissance society:

Renaissance Englishmen, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, eroticized the power distinctions that set one male above another in their society. Sexual desire took shape in the persons of master and minion; sexual energy found release in the power play between them.<sup>11</sup>

In Renaissance England, however, the Athenian and Roman models of homoerotic desire became somewhat conflated, partly because the term "boy" could refer to a socially inferior man as well as a youth.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, provided that the acting out of desire in no way compromised the social order,

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9. Veyne, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

10. Sedgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

11. Smith (1991), p. 194.

12. Smith (1991), p. 195, notes that: Early modern English included two senses of the word that are now obsolete. In addition to "boy" as "a male child below the age of puberty" (OED 1) and "boy" as a term "applied playfully, affectionately, or slightly to a young man, or one treated as such" (OED 2), speakers of English in the early seventeenth century could also use "boy" to refer to a servant or slave (OED 3) and as "a term of contempt" as a synonym for "knave, varlet, rogue, wretch, caitiff" (OED 4).

homosexual activity could be perceived as no real threat to that social order. As Alan Bray remarks, it was very difficult to equate the participants in a homosexual relationship played out along these lines and well within the compass of the social hierarchy, with "the 'sodomite' who was the companion of witches and Papists, of werewolves and agents of the King of Spain".<sup>13</sup>

Taking the master and minion model as that of "acceptable" homoerotic desire and even homosexual activity, I should like to propose that the career of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham charts the transformation from an acceptable to an unacceptable manifestation, and that the text of *Edward II* serves as both an illustration and a criticism of this phenomenon. Buckingham successfully negotiated the succession of Charles I to retain his position of favourite - the same favourite under two different Kings. In *Edward II* the reverse happens - we are presented with the King's relationship with two successive favourites, Gaveston and Spencer. But, rather than hinder the allegorical interpretation, this reversal actually helps, in that it reflects the two very different roles which Buckingham played under James I and Charles I.<sup>14</sup> Villiers' relationship with James almost certainly had an element of physical eroticism; the King had had close relationships with various other male favourites - James Hay and Robert Carr for example - and so Villiers' initial success was not particularly unprecedented, either in the bedroom or in the Court. Furthermore it was entirely in keeping with the social requirements of the homoerotic power dynamics, in that Villiers was young, socially inferior and was the passive object of James's desire. However much the relationship may have been viewed with distaste by some

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13. Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, 1982, p. 68.

14 Lewalski (1993), p. 201, argues that the text is an allegorical representation only of the relationships between James I and his favourites. She claims, p. 205-6, that Gaveston is a representation of Somerset and that, p. 207: "This narrative (unlike most others) implies that Spencer is the King's new lover; at one point he is termed "this Gipsie," with a possible allusion to Buckingham's starring role in Jonson's *Gypsies Metamorphosed* (1621)."

courtiers, there was little social threat, until Villiers began to gain more and more power, finally becoming Duke of Buckingham at the age of twenty five, only two years after he first came into favour. His position as minion, or "boy", was rapidly being eroded by his ascent of the social ladder. Bruce Smith points to the significance of the fact that Buckingham reached the height of social position at the age when most aristocratic men married - both his age and position confirmed his transition from "boy" to man. Those who may have taken comfort by sneering at this socially inferior catamite found themselves on the same, or lower social level. This anonymous manuscript poem, composed either after, or just before Buckingham became Duke, indicates the discomfort felt at court:

Arm, arm in heaven! There is a faction,  
     And the demigods  
 Now are bent for action!  
     They are at odds  
 With him that rules the thunder  
     And will destroy  
     His white-fac'd boy  
 Or rend the heavens in sunder.

Great Jove (that sways the imperial scepter  
     With his upstart love  
 That makes him drunk with nectar)  
     They will him remove.

.....

Love's Queen stood disaffected  
     To what she had seen  
 (Or what suspected),  
     As she in spleen  
 To Juno hath protested,  
     Her servant Mars  
     Should scourge his arse,  
 Jove's marrow so had wasted. <sup>15</sup>

Buckingham, was, however, spared the wrath of the gods, and the courtiers, for the time being, to continue his career into the reign of Charles I.

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15. Beinecke MS Osborn b 197, fols. 112-13, lines 1-9; 10-13; 33-40. Transcribed by Donald Foster and quoted in Smith, pp. 202-3. According to Foster, the poem also appears in Bodleian MSS Eng. Poet. c.50, entitled "On Jove [James I] and Ganymede [Buckingham]", 1623, Smith (1991), n. 19, p. 307.

This brought with it an inevitable change in the politico-erotic power dynamics, and one which proved even more subversive than the over-advancement of an ambitious Ganymede. To begin with, Buckingham was older and more experienced than Charles - the "Master" (man) and "Minion" (boy) relationship in its correct form was no longer possible. In correspondence, James I had been Buckingham's "Dear Dad and Gossip";<sup>16</sup> James had addressed Buckingham as his "sweet child and wife" and signed himself "your dear dad and husband";<sup>17</sup> whereas Charles, even at the point when the Spanish match was being pursued, was to both of them "baby" Charles.<sup>18</sup> In the change of Masters, Buckingham himself underwent a change in that, if he was not exactly master, there was something of the Athenian "Mentor" element in his relationship with Charles, in which he can perhaps be best described as a surrogate older brother. This itself has subversive potential, in that Charles did once have an older brother - the celebrated Prince Henry - and Buckingham's apparent stepping into that emotional and/or familial position must surely have been invested with some kind of disruptive political charge. Whether erotically manifested or not, this relationship still subverted the power structure - if only because it made Charles the passive object - to be taught, ruled, desired - or all three.

Buckingham retained his power after the marriage of Charles to Henrietta, and it is at this point the triangular model comes into play. Traditionally the model involves the passive female, desired and competed for by two men, who are equally strongly bonded by their rivalry.<sup>19</sup> But the perceived transfer of roles which Buckingham made on the succession,

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16. Lockyer (1981), p. 142

17. Lockyer (1981), p. 233.

18. Lockyer (1981), pp. 145; 152.

19. Probably the best contemporary literary presentation of this idea was through the character of Palamon and Arcite in Shakespeare and Fletcher's *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

coupled with the arrival of Henrietta Maria - officially Charles' consort and sexual partner, meant that this format of the triangle was not possible. It was *Charles* who constituted the apex of the triangle, simultaneously desired by both Buckingham and Henrietta Maria, both of whom were highly unpopular. The bond of rivalry between the two was played out in Buckingham's attempt to displace the many French ladies, courtiers, priests and replacing them with the female members of his own family; if Henrietta Maria was close to his family she could also be spied upon. Henrietta Maria insisted on retaining her own people, at least for a time, although they were eventually sent home.

Buckingham could not, however, prevent her providing a focus at court for those Catholic English courtiers - a factor which was of far more concern. Her politically virile activity - building up a faction, whilst contending for her rights of access to the King, found ideological expression in her artistic activities. As Sophie Tomlinson describes in "The Threat of the Actress", on Shrove Tuesday 1626, Henrietta Maria acted a French pastoral at court with her "demoiselles", which represented at once an invasion of foreign culture and a theatrical overturning of Salic Law.<sup>20</sup>

The presence on stage, however, of the female body and voice exactly reversed the order of things which placed 'woman' on the side of absence and silence. (It is important, in this respect, to register the distinction between the silent and emblematic participation of women in the Jacobean masque, and the far more dynamic potential for projecting female personality allowed by the declamation, action, singing, and dancing which made up the queen's theatrical diversions.) *The threat of the actress in performance lay in the potential for presenting femininity as a vivid and mobile force: the spectacle of the woman-actor summoning up a spectre of the female subject.* Henrietta Maria herself posed this threat in particularly acute form: both in terms of her theatrical flair, and her active engagement in Caroline politics - behaviour which was perceived as at once upstaging her husband and as constituting a political "Popish" threat. (my italics)<sup>21</sup>

Buckingham's role in this triangular struggle was put to an end by his

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20. Sophie Tomlinson, "She that plays the King: Henrietta Maria and the Threat of the Actress in Caroline Culture", in *The Politics of Tragicomedy: Shakespeare and after*, ed. Gordon McMullan and Jonathan Hope, 1992, p. 189.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

assassination in 1628; Henrietta Maria's was not. Assassination of the favourite is always a possibility but assassinating the Queen is quite a different matter. The text of *Edward II* was written at a time when the rivalry between Buckingham and Henrietta Maria was perceived to be at its height, but hints at a future in which the favourite is removed from the scene and the threat of the actress is realised.

Finally, the question of the succession was a cause for concern. Whilst discontent over Buckingham's rise to power under James may have been apparent, the succession was at least safe. Despite his taste for young men, James had fulfilled his constitutional duty in producing an heir and a spare (albeit that the original heir died in 1612). However much Buckingham's influence may have caused concern, James's dogmatic insistence on *Iure Divino* meant that the possibility of the patrilinear descent of the crown being disrupted was highly unlikely. The Court did not have such a comforting thought once Buckingham became the favourite of Charles. As the stage manager of Charles's disastrous courtship of the Spanish Infanta, and then of the more successful courtship of Henrietta Maria, Buckingham proved to be actively involved in the perpetuation of the patrilinear succession of the crown. And the rather inauspicious start that Charles and Henrietta Maria made to their married life may or may not have been actively promoted by Buckingham. The respective biographers of Henrietta Maria and Buckingham seem to disagree on this point.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Henrietta Maria

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22. For example, Hamilton (1976) and Lockyer (1981). They give rather different accounts of the role which Buckingham played in mediating the relationship between Charles and Henrietta Maria. Whilst Hamilton says that Buckingham reported Charles' wishes to Henrietta Maria, p. 70, "in his most imperious style" and, p. 72, he "busied himself carrying messages between the King and the Queen which were not altogether polite in tone", Lockyer, pp. 334-5, says that

Buckingham regretted the ill-feeling between the King and Queen ... [but the French] pointed to the many occasions on which he had carried curt orders or reproachful messages from Charles to his wife as evidence of Buckingham's true feelings, for they assumed that Charles was entirely under the Duke's influence and had no will of his own. In fact this was far from the case, as Holland explained to Marie de



was not even suspected to be pregnant until after Carey composed *Edward II* and so the concerns for the succession which this text expresses perhaps indicate the concerns over the reluctance of Charles and Henrietta Maria to sleep together.

The allegorical relationship of *Edward II* to this complex knot of relationships which hover between what is perceived as political and what as erotic, is remarkably clear. Edward's relationship with Gaveston is presented as having an erotic element. Gaveston is described as Edward's "Ganymede" (p. 4), using the popular image of James I and Buckingham. From Gaveston's point of view, on returning from banishment "Every minute he esteems ill lost, till he might again be re-enfolded in the sweet and dear embraces of his Royal Master." (p. 17) His rapid rise to high office and the discontent which this creates amongst the barons may easily be read as analogous with Buckingham's career, especially the fact that his promotions facilitated his marriage into a noble family. When reaching the end of Gaveston's life, the text begins to emphasise his political power:

The Royal Treasure he exhausts in Pride and Riot; the Jewels of the Crown are in the Lumbard; that same goodly Golden Table and Tressles of so great and rich a value, he surreptitiously embezzles; and nothing almost left, that might either make Money, or improve his Glory. No man may have the Kings ear, hand, or Purse, but he's the Mediator; his Creatures are advanc'd, his Agents flourish, and poorest Grooms become great Men of Worship. The King hath nothing but the name, while his Viceregent hath the benefit and execution. All that appertains unto the Crown and Royal Dignity are wholly in his Power, so that he might justly be thought the Lessee, if not the Inheritor of the Prerogative and Revenue. (p. 27)

Here, Gaveston is presented as a guardian or overseer of the succession - not having any actual rights to the throne, but having executive powers. This may well be read as a reference to the power which Buckingham wielded over

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Medicis [*sic*]. 'I told her', he wrote to Buckingham, 'that she must distinguish between what you say as commanded by the King, and what you say of yourself: for if it be his pleasure to make [you] the instrument to convey his will upon any occasion of his displeasure, you are not to dispute but to obey his command, in that and in all other things.'

Charles, which simultaneously transgressed the Master-Minion model of desire and undermined the power of the Royal Prerogative.

The eroticism of the Edward - Gaveston relationship is given less significance in the relationship with Spencer. His personal attractions are played down as Edward takes him on partly in revenge for the murder of Gaveston:

[He] is resolv'd of a new choice, of such a Favourite as might supply and make good the room of his lost beloved Gaveston ... his eye fixt on Spencer, a man till then believ'd a naked States-man; he was young, and had a pleasing aspect; a personage though not super-excellent, yet well enough to make a formal Minion. (p. 49)

Unlike the brief and sexually perpetuated rise of Gaveston, Spencer's rise is presented as calculating and enduring. Edward's relationship with Gaveston takes up only the first thirty-two pages of the text. Spencer makes an appearance on p. 49 and controls the King's political activity until his death on p. 130. We are presented with two long and detailed descriptions of his "policy" (pp. 51-3 and pp. 77-81). In the first of these, we see Spencer controlling Isabel's personal courtiers in much the same way as Buckingham controlled those who surrounded Henrietta Maria:

The Queen, that had no great cause to like those Syrens, that caus'd her grief, and did seduce her Husband, he yet presumes to court with strong possessions, vowing to serve her as a faithful Servant. She seeing into the quality of the time, where he was powerful, and she in name a Wife, in truth a Hand-maid, doth not oppose, but more increase his Greatness, by letting all men know that she receiv'd him. To win a nearer place in her opinion, he gains his Kindred places next her person; and those that were her own, he bribes to back him. (p. 52)

Both Lockyer and Hamilton give accounts of Buckingham's influence on Henrietta Maria's circle and thus indicate the political importance of this section of the royal court:

The only threat to [Buckingham's] extraordinary dominance over the King came from the Queen who was showing an alarming tendency to charm her husband. Buckingham, unrivalled and at the height of his power, was not prepared to accept a threat from this fifteen-year old girl. To neutralize her influence, he was determined to surround her

with his own female relations and to make all the trouble he could for her French entourage. <sup>23</sup>

If the marriage between Charles and Henrietta Maria turned into one of affection, the Queen would be in a very influential position. Richelieu realised this, and the French household was intended from the very beginning to be a political centre in its own right, with close connexions with the English catholics. Buckingham also realised it and took steps to ensure that his own interests should not be overlooked, by asking for his mother and his wife to be appointed Ladies of the Queen's Bedchamber. <sup>24</sup>

The compromising of the King as the central power base begins on p. 76, when Edward "approves his Spencers [*sic*] actions, and makes the Regal Power the Servants warrant" and reaches its culmination when Isabel escapes to France. Apart from a short intervention to appeal to the Pope (p. 102), Edward disappears from the political wranglings, leaving that to Spencer on this side of the Channel and Isabel in France. Edward does not revive his interest in Isabel either as a woman or as a symbol of the State and only reappears in the text to lose the crown, go to prison and be murdered. The extent of his passivity is signalled by the passage which heralds his brief re-entry into the political arena:

The slumbring King had slept out all the Prologue of this sad Tragedy, which he suspects would end in blood and mischief: As in his pleasures, in this weighty business he had rely'd secure on Spencer's Wisdome; *but now the hollow murmur of his danger thunder'd so loud, that he enforc'd, awakes*, and sees nought but the face of a despairing Sorrow (p. 118, my italics).

Perhaps those words which I have put in italics could be read as a warning to King Charles about being too reliant on Buckingham, and the dangers which could ensue, not the least from the Queen herself. If this is the case, then Edward II certainly could not have pleased the "Time", and provides ample reason why it was not printed in 1627/8.

### Chronicles and Queens

The sensitive attitude of the court towards literature which could be

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23. Hamilton (1976), p. 57

24. Lockyer (1981), p. 252.

seen as an attack on the favourite is evidenced by the case of Francis Hubert's *The Life and Death of Edward II*.<sup>25</sup> This text was "by Supreamest Authoritie forbidden to bee printed" in 1599 because, as Bernard Mellor has pointed out, it was considered to be an attack on Essex. When Hubert's work was eventually published, it was considered to be an attack on Buckingham and Hubert was obliged to rewrite his work in a manner more pleasing to the "Time". It is therefore possible that Elizabeth Carey wrote *Edward II* and then decided against publication, realising the trouble it could cause her, especially in view of her recusant status. Because, apart from being a criticism of Buckingham, Carey's text presents criticisms on a rather wider scale, i.e. of the way in which the subject matter of Edward II had been dealt with previously and, rather more subversively, of the patriarchal society in which she lived. Whilst Hubert may have been reprimanded and forced to re-write; whilst Drayton may have judiciously removed any overt descriptions of the physical relationship between Edward and Gaveston in his complete works, published in 1619 under James I, all the texts cited previously (see Ch. 4, p. 195) agree in one rather "Time-pleasing" detail - the marginalisation of Queen Isabel.

The chronicle sources available to the writers all illustrate Queen Isabel in a way which must have presented considerable problems. A French-born Queen, alienated by the activities of Edward and his favourites, goes to France (she either escapes or is sent on an embassy, according to different chroniclers), is ejected from the French Court as a result of Edward and Spencer's manipulations, and is admonished by the Pope and told to return to her husband. After all this, she returns to England with a very small foreign army, unites virtually all of England on her side and deposes the King. Arguably, this subject matter at the very least hovers between the embarrassing and the dangerous. And so all the writers, from Drayton to

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25. For full details, see Ch. 4, pp. 167-9.

Hubert, are complicit in stripping Isabel of all her political power. To do this, they rely upon the rather shaky marrying together of those two models of erotic desire, which, as the situation at the Caroline court in 1627/8 showed, could be troped with ease into representations of political relationships.

The presentation of homoerotic desire between Edward and his favourites in the texts by Drayton, Marlowe and Hubert follows the Master and Minion model quite closely and is largely a literary invention rather than a feature lifted from the chronicle sources. It is Michael Drayton who first attempts to marginalise Isabel in this manner. The emphasis of the relationship between Edward and Gaveston, which plays so prominent a part in *Peirs Gaveston, Earle of Cornwall*, would appear to have little precedent in the Chronicle histories. Although they hint at some kind of sexual misdemeanours, these are never specified. Fabyan (1516) says that Edward "was ruled all by [Gaveston's] wanton Counsayll and folowed the appetite and pleasure of his body" (fol. lxxxii<sup>v</sup>); the earliest edition of Grafton (1563) says "the Lordes perceaving the king geven to wantonnes, & that he was muche provoked thereunto by the meane of Piers of Gaveston" (fol. 71<sup>r</sup>); the Grafton (1569) is more specific, saying that Gaveston "brought the king by meane of his wanton condicions to manifold vices, as adulterie and other" (p. 194); Holinshed (1577), tells how Edward "burst out into most hainous vices, for them using the said Peers as a procurer of his disordered doings" (p. 847); Stow (1580) refers to Edward's sexual appetite and his relationship with Gaveston separately. He describes Edward "haunting the company of vile persons, and given wholly to the pleasure of the bodye" (p. 325), whereas Edward's relationship with Gaveston is presented as politically, rather than morally, subversive. He gives Gaveston

all such giftes and Jewels as had bin given to him, with the Crownes of hys father, his ancestours treasure, and many other things, affirming that if he could, he should succede him in the kyngdome, calling him brother, not granting any thing without his consent. (p. 327)

From the evidence above, it would appear that Drayton emphasised in an unprecedented fashion the nature of the homosexual relationship between the two men. Evidently there is some degree of implication, but nothing definite, and certainly nothing like the following passages, taken from *Peirs Gaveston, Earle of Cornwall*:

My smiles were life, and Heaven unto his sight,  
 All his delight concluding my desier,  
 From my sweete sunne, he borrowed all his light,  
 And as a flie play'd with my beauties fier,  
     His love-sick lippes at every kissing qualme,  
     Clung to my lippes, to cure their grieve with balme.

Like as the wanton Yvie with his twyne,  
 Whenas the Oake his rootlesse bodie warmes,  
 The straightest saplings strictly doth combyne,  
 Clipping the woodes with his lacivious armes:  
     Such our imbraces when our sporte begins,  
     Lapt in our armes, like Ledas lovely Twins. ...

... Some slaunderous tongues, in spightful manner sayd,  
 That heer I liv'd in filthy sodomy,<sup>26</sup>  
 And that I was King Edwards Ganemed,  
 And to this sinn he was intic'd by mee.  
     And more, (to wreck their spightfull deadly teene),  
     Report the same to Isabel the Queene.<sup>27</sup>

There may seem little point to this, apart from to add a titillating element to the poem and facilitate some erotic language. However, the sentiments which appear later in the text arguably reveal another purpose (it is certainly an effect) of this interpretation of the historical evidence. Every time Edward's relationship with Isabel is mentioned, it is always in the context of how much more favour Edward shows to Gaveston. For instance, when the marriage is arranged, Gaveston tells how Edward sits him in the throne and wants him to be his heir, thus undermining Isabel's prospective procreative role (p. 180, ll.

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26. Here Drayton exemplifies the problem, identified by Alan Bray, "Male Friendship in Elizabethan England" in *Hist Worksh*, vol. 29, 1990, p. 13, that the signs of male friendship in Renaissance England could also be read as signs of a homosexual relationship if that reading proved politically expedient. With regard to the idea that the sodomite subverts the social order and hierarchy, it is surely significant that Isabel *specifically* is told of the extent to which she has been replaced by Gaveston.

27. *Peirs Gaveston, Earle of Cornwall* (1593), in Drayton, *Works* I, p. 165, ll. 229-40 and p. 194, ll. 1267-73.

781-92). Their display of mutual affection usurps Isabel's public role as Edward's consort,

So that his Queene, might by our kindnes prove,  
Though shee his Wife, yet I alone his love.  
(p. 182, ll. 863-4)

And finally, when Gaveston had been banished to Flanders, Isabel is no substitute for Edward's affections and "Hee straight commaunds the Queene out of his sight" (p. 195, l. 1317). The interpretation of an exclusively homosexual relationship between the two male characters may at first seem a peculiar way of marginalising a woman character. In the case of Isabel, however, this works on two levels. It has the potential to remove her only access to the mainstream political power structure, i.e. her personal relationship with her husband. Furthermore, when Isabel reacts against this kind of marginalisation, her motives inevitably appear coloured by personal jealousy rather than by political interests, thus depoliticising any remedial action which Isabel takes.

Christopher Marlowe draws the relationships in much the same way. Of all the works of literature on Edward II, Marlowe's play is the most chronologically unbalanced and this is precisely because he concentrates on the relationship of Edward and Gaveston, which only lasted for the first five years of Edward's nineteen-year reign. This, of course, foregrounds Isabel's emotional, rather than her political position. When we first meet Isabel, she is presented as feeling replaced by Gaveston, who has just been recalled:

... my lord the king regards me not,  
But doats upon the love of Gaveston.  
He claps his cheeks, and hangs about his neck,  
Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ear;  
And when I come, he frowns, as who should say,  
"Go wither thou wilt seeing I have Gaveston."<sup>28</sup>

And before Isabel can act on this rejection, in I iv she is being accused of adultery by Gaveston himself, with the encouragement of Edward. When

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28. Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II* (1594), ed. W. Moelwyn Merchant, 1967, I ii 49-54.

Isabel admits the potential for a relationship with Mortimer, it will only be if she is totally rejected by Edward:

So well hast thou deserved, sweet Mortimer  
As Isabel could live with thee for ever;  
In vain I look for love at Edward's hand,  
Whose eyes are fixed on none but Gaveston;  
Yet once more I'll importune him with prayers  
(II iv 59-63).

From this point on Isabel is presented as little more than a pawn in the political game between Edward and the barons. Her determination to flee to France coincides with following up Edward's territorial interests there, and her time in France is not even given dramatic space. Marlowe's text then builds on another strategy of marginalising Isabel. Using her exclusion from Edward's bed and hence from the centre of political power, her adulterous relationship with Mortimer is presented in an unsympathetic light. On her return to England she is presented as the scheming helpmeet of Mortimer, actively seeking the murder of her husband. Moreover, as Edward is remoulded as a tragic hero, he goes through the traditional process of descent to his nadir and then redemption before his death. Necessarily, then, those who have brought about his downfall must be punished and Isabel is amongst them. The black-and-white ending puts Isabel firmly in the black. She is finally rejected by her son and symbolically participates in Mortimer's demise, with her final line "Then come sweet death and rid me of this grief." (V vi 92). More significantly, the text further marginalises Isabel because the focus is put upon Mortimer as the main political activist, in that he is presented as one who attempts to usurp the throne.

This focus upon Mortimer is precisely where the second model - the triangle - of erotic desire comes into play. The employment of the Master and Minion model to represent the relationship between Edward and his favourites initiates a potential subversion of this triangular model, (in which two active males fight for possession of a passive female). However, if Isabel is thrown into competition with Gaveston and then with Spencer for her



husband's attentions, the triangle turns 120 degrees to put Edward at the top, as the passive object of desire, and Isabel at the bottom as one of the combatants. This inversion of gender roles and undermining of the active potency of the monarch had to be remedied and the character of Mortimer provided the answer. Before Isabel is given the opportunity to show any political independence, Marlowe's text introduces Mortimer to re-order the triangle into an ideologically acceptable form in which Edward and Mortimer become the rivals for the passive Isabel.

The adulterous relationship between Mortimer and Isabel as a driving force behind the deposition of Edward II has little precedent in the chronicle histories, except for a section from Holinshed. Having presented Isabel as the major political force, Holinshed describes the relationship in the conventional terms of monarch and favourite "for what [Mortimer] willed the same was done, and without him the Queene in all these matters [execution of her enemies] did nothing." (pp. 878-81). However, in foregrounding this relationship, Marlowe and (in his later texts) Drayton push Isabel's political significance into the background. The very title of Drayton's next work on the subject, *Mortimeriados*, indicates its central focus. In this, Isabel finds, not a political ally, but an alternative King and husband and her role merely provides romantic interest. The description of the relationship between Isabel and Mortimer seems to owe something to the sympathetic treatment of adulterous love found in the earlier European courtly love literature.<sup>29</sup> She is not presented in an unsympathetic light (most of the descriptions of her concentrate on her beauty, gentleness and tenacity) but despite, or perhaps because of, her sympathetic treatment, she is almost totally deprived of any real political power. Mortimer, on the other hand, is presented as the tragic

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29. See *Mortimeriados*, in Drayton, *Works I*, pp. 338-9, ll. 1016-57; pp. 380-1, ll. 2479-541 and *The Barons Warres*, in Drayton, *Works II*, pp. 60-1, Canto III, stanzas 58-9, ll. 457-72; pp. 117-8, Canto IV, stanzas 55-62, ll. 433-96.

hero of the piece: the desirable, but not divinely ordained, successor to the throne.

*Mortimeriados* begins after the death of Gaveston, and sets up Spencer as the heir apparent to Edward's affections:

Whose friendship Edward onley doth embrace;  
By whose alurements he is fondly led,  
To leave his Queene, and flie his lawful bed.  
(Drayton, *Works* I, p. 310, ll. 32-4)

Mortimer guides the "wife-widdowed Queene" (Drayton, *Works* I, p. 311, l. 85) into taking revenge, and Bishop Adam Tarlton schools her in politics (Drayton, *Works* I, p. 314, ll. 176-89). The idea of Isabel creating the means for Mortimer's escape from the Tower is given much room in this text, and she is presented as a "this great Enchauntresse" (Drayton, *Works* I, p. 327, l. 638) presiding over the magic potion which will put Mortimer's guards into a deep sleep. She entreats variously the wind, night, air, earth and tides to aid Mortimer in his escape (Drayton, *Works* I, p. 330-1, ll. 729-70). The power she has is presented as "other", belonging to the realm of Nature and Magic, and therefore outside the bounds of the political world. Interestingly, this image is heightened in *The Barons Warres*, where Isabel is likened to Medea - adding the element of raging jealousy and and insatiable desire for revenge; the image of her as a witch is also put across more forcefully than in *Mortimeriados*:

Thus, like Medea, sat shee in her Cell,  
Which shee had circled with her potent Charmes,  
From thence all hind'rance cleerely to expell;  
Then her with Magique Instruments she Armes,  
And to her Bus'nesse instantly she fell;  
A Vestall Fire she lights, wherewith she warmes  
The mixed Juices from the Simples wrung,  
To make the Med'cine wonderfully strong.  
(Drayton, *Works* II, p. 48, Canto III, stanza 8, ll. 57-64)

The "escape" to France is presented as a result of Tarlton's political juggling. He suggests that the Queen should go to France in a ambassadorial role, to discuss England's possession of the lands of Guyen, Poitou and Aquitaine - and he is described as "This great Archmaster of all policies"

(Drayton, *Works* I, p. 334, l. 880). Unlike Marlowe, Drayton does set some textual space aside for Isabel's time in France, although the meeting of Mortimer and Isabel there, as presented in *The Barons Warres*, suggests that Isabel's adultery is not necessarily the result of unrequited love for Edward:

Of wanton Edward when I first was woo'd,  
 Why cam'st thou not into the Court of France?  
 Before thy King, thou in my grace hadst stood:  
 O Mortimer, how good had beene thy Chance!  
 My love attempted in that youthfull Mood,  
 I might have beene thine owne Inheritance;  
     Where entring now by Force, thou holdst by Might  
     And art Disseisor of anothers Right.  
 (Drayton, *Works* II, p. 60, Canto II, stanza 56, ll. 441-8)

This stanza is virtually unchanged from *Mortimeriados*, but what is missing are the stanzas which precede it. Here the sympathy for Isabel is reduced as her adultery seems to stem from her own sexual preference rather than from rejection by her husband. It would seem that the character of Isabel is placed in a no-win situation. If she exercises choice of a sexual partner then she is to be condemned as an adulteress; if she turns to Mortimer as a result of Edward's relationship with Gaveston/Spencer, this foregrounds her (sexual) exclusion from the centre of power in England, and also bestows on Mortimer the unprecedented potential to be Edward's replacement in Isabel's bed and in England's court. The complexity of the disempowering process is perhaps best illustrated by those stanzas, present only in *Mortimeriados*, which precede the stanza quoted above:

Thou art King Edward, or opinion fayles,  
 Longshanks begot thee when in youth he rang'd,  
 Thou art Canarvan, thou the Prince of Wales,  
 And in thy Cradle falsely thou wert chang'd,  
     Hee Mortimer, and thou hast beene estrang'd:  
 Pardon me deere, what Mortimer sayd I,  
 Then should I love him, but my tongue doth lie.

As Fortune has created him a King,  
 Had Nature made him valiant as thou art,  
 My soule had not been tuch'd with torments sting,  
 Nor hadst thou now been plac'd so neere my hart;  
     But since by lot this falleth to thy part,  
 If such have wealth as lewdly will abuse it,  
 Let those enjoy it who can better use it.

Except to heaven, my hopes can clime no hier;  
 Now in mine armes had I my little boy,  
 Then had I all on earth I could desier,  
 The King's as he would be, God send him joy,  
     Now with his mynions let him sport and toy:  
 His lemman Spenser, and himselfe alone,  
 May sit and talke of Mistresse Gaveston.  
 (Drayton, *Works* I, p. 339, ll. 1058-78)

Isabel's concern here seems to be to salvage the (royal) nuclear family which has been wrecked by Edward's homosexuality. Rather than being set up in political *opposition* to the King, she strives to find an acceptable alternative, as much to fulfil her own emotional needs as England's political ones.

In *Mortimeriados*, the last stanza in which she is given any political significance in her own right, sees her metaphorically undermined by the masculine political forces with which she is allied:

From Edmondsbury now comes thys Lyonesse,  
 Under the Banner of young Aquitaine,  
 And downe towards Oxford doth herselfe adresse,  
 A world of vengeance wayting on her traine,  
     Heere is the period of Carvarvans raigne;  
 Edward thou hast, but King thou canst not beare,  
 Ther's now no King, but great King Mortimer.  
 (Drayton, *Works* I, p. 348, ll. 1387-93)

As Edward II is about to be murdered, he blames Mortimer, who has possession of his crown, his son and, most significantly, his wife (Drayton, *Works* I, p. 367, ll. 2036-40). The adultery/lust interest is particularly played up towards the end of the text. Isabel spends her time creating a secure and aesthetically pleasing domestic interior at Mortimer's castle, where she and Mortimer can while away the hours. The text reduces her to little more than a sex object and it is in precisely this mode that she is discovered by her son, Edward III when he and his supporters come to arrest Mortimer. She pleads for Mortimer's life, in the fashion of a tragic hero's consort.

It is the fact that she is defined only in relation to men, which means that whether she be the consort of a villainous malcontent, as in Marlowe's text, or of an overreaching tragic hero as in Drayton's, her end is much the same. Drayton adds the even more damning detail that she actually loses her reason, being rendered incapable of writing a letter to her son (Drayton,

*Works* I, p. 391, l. 2878-84). It is surely not without significance, either, that the 1619 revision of Drayton's text, written under the increasingly powerful Jacobean patriarchal ideology, disempowers Isabel even more. In *Mortimeriados*, Isabel retires to a secluded and specifically female interior, but with the prospect of a future life:

Heere spend my dayes untill my last dayes night;  
 And hence-forth odious unto all mens sight,  
 Flye every small remembrance of delight,  
 A penitentiall mournfull convertite.  
 (Drayton, *Works* I, p. 392, ll. 2909-12)

whereas in *The Barons Warres*, her single desire is for death:

To consummate this too-long ling'ring space,  
 Till Death inclose me in continuall Night;  
 Let never Sleepe more close my wearied Eye,  
 So Isabella, lay thee downe, and dye.  
 (Drayton, *Works* II, p. 128, Canto VI, stanza 101, ll. 805-8)

### Isabel's Reinstatement

Elizabeth Carey's treatment of Isabel stands in utter contrast to that of her male predecessors. However, rather than simply returning to a more faithful retelling of the chronicles, Carey takes on the issue of Edward's homosexual relationships which her predecessors introduced and, in so doing, rejects the uneasy conversion of Edward from a character who ignored his wife and preferred the love of men, into one who actively expresses his desire for his wife, in direct competition with Mortimer. Nor does Carey defend Isabel "through a process of victimization" in order to gain sympathy, as Tina Krontiris<sup>30</sup> suggests. For Carey's Isabel is not, like Marlowe's, the victimized, yet dutiful woman scorned, whose fury emerges when the opportunity is offered. The text works by exploiting the uneasy combination of the aforementioned models of erotic and political relationships. As Edward becomes more passive and reliant upon his favourites, Isabel takes up her position as rival and is characterised not by her erotic desire for Edward as a

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30. Krontiris (1990), p. 141.

man, but by her political desire for what he represents as a King.

First, Isabel is not presented as the rejected, jealous and helpless creature, standing on the sidelines as Gaveston takes her place in Edward's bed. Rather than being pushed out of her rightful place by Gaveston, Isabel is first introduced as a strategic ploy, brought in as an active counter-measure to Edward's affection for Gaveston and sanctioned to play that active and virile role as the pursuer of the King rather than the passive object pursued by him.

When [the Barons] had canvast all the Stratagems of State, and private workings, they deem'd it the most innocent and fair way, to win the King to marry; the interest of a Wife was thought the most hopeful inducement to reclaim these loose affections that were prostituted without or sense or honour; she might become fit counterpoise to qualifie the Pride of such a swelling greatness. (p. 18)

The *very purpose* of Isabel being in the text is as a contestant for Edward, thus subverting the triangular model of erotic desire from her very first appearance in the text. Furthermore, she enters the text as the displacer, not the displaced. To consolidate this effect, as soon as Isabel becomes one of the *dramatis personae*, we are given presentiments of her potential threat to Edward and his behaviour:

This Conclusion thus made, sends our new Lover into France, to fetch his Mistris; where he is received like himself, feasted, and married with a great deal of Joy and Pleasure. The Solemnity ended, and a Farewel taken, he hastens homewards, returning seised of a Jewel, which not being rightly valued, wrought his ruine. (p. 19)

The Barons observe the outcome of their strategy with interest, but are ultimately disappointed:

The excellency of so rare a Beauty could not so surprize the heart of this Royal Bridegroom, but that he was still troubled with the pangs of his old Infirmity: It was in the first Praeludium of his Nuptials a very disputable Question, whether the Interest of the Wife, or Favourite, were most predominant in his Affections; but a short time discovers that Gaveston had the sole possession of his Heart, and Power to keep it. (p. 19)

Whilst Gaveston is alive, Isabel is not successful in this contest. He is even able to threaten Isabel's procreative role as Edward's consort, her central role in the political power structure.

The perpetuation of patrilinear descent necessitated heterosexual relationships between men and women, particularly those who held very great economic and political power - most vitally, those who held royal power. Gaveston is presented as compromising this relationship between Edward and Isabel. Whilst the chronicles largely agree that the union of Isabel and Edward II produced four children - two daughters and two sons,<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Carey's text follows the previous literary tradition of focusing upon Prince Edward as the product of their union. The significance of this may not seem immediately obvious - there was an heir, so the succession should be safe. But England had, in the previous century and a half, seen the potential danger of relying on a sole male heir. Henry VIII succeeded to the throne only after the death of his brother, the much exalted Prince Arthur. The death of the sickly Edward VI after a short reign resulted in the accession of Mary Tudor. In the seventeenth century, the death of Prince Henry left the accession to Charles, who was under the influence of Buckingham. Even if the heir apparent survived beyond the critical age of five, there was no guarantee that he would reach manhood, or survive long into it. *Edward II* deals with this issue almost from the start. Although Gaveston is not given much opportunity to gain control of the crown, being dead within two pages of Edward making him "the Lessee, if not the Inheritor of the Prerogative and Revenue" (p. 27), even after his death Gaveston compromises Edward's constitutional role as husband, father and perpetuator of the line:

Windsor presents the King an Heir apparent; which happy News flies swiftly through the Kingdom, which gives it welcome with a brave expression. The Royal Father did not taste this Blessing with such a sense of Joy as it deserved: Whether 'twas his misgiving Spirit, or the absence of his lost Jewel, he sadly silent sighs out the relation; such a

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31. e.g. Holinshed (1577), p. 884, lists Edward, John, Eleanor and Joan; Speed (1611), p. 564, lists Edward, John, Joan and Elenor [sic].

deserving Joy could not win so much as a smile from his melancholy Brow, grown old with trouble. (p. 28)

Perhaps Gaveston's death is the cause of Edward's "misgiving Spirit"; or perhaps this refers to the role Prince Edward is to play in his father's downfall.

Isabel may have been introduced as a counter-measure to Edward's affection for Gaveston which ultimately failed, but rather than being characterised as rejected and bitter, Isabel is simply left out of the text, consigned to silence - the effective political result of being denied access to her husband. Whilst this strategy may not appear very empowering, it ultimately avoids a reading of Isabel which emulates the readings invited by the texts of Carey's predecessors. The voice of the marginalised and bitter Isabel in *Mortimeriados*, becomes the narrative voice in *Edward II*. Described by Isabel as "Mistresse Gaveston" (Drayton, *Works I*, p. 339, l. 1078) the narrative voice of the Carey text portrays Gaveston thus:

Nature in his outward parts had curiously exprest her workmanship, giving him in shape and Beauty so perfect an excellence, that the most curious eye could not discover any manifest error, unless it were in his Sex alone, since he had too much for a man, and Perfection enough to have equal'd the fairest Female splendour that breath'd within the Confines of this Kingdom. (p. 4)

The process of Isabel's marginalisation by Gaveston is almost exclusively erotic rather than political, but this situation changes on the death of Gaveston as political desire becomes the source of tension, rather than competition for Edward driven solely by erotic desire.

Once Gaveston is dead Isabel reappears in the text:

[Edward] could not sleep, nor scarce would eat, or speak but faintly; which makes him living dye with restless torment. His lovely Queen (not sorry that this bar was taken away, which stopt the passage betwixt her Husbands Love and her Affections) is truly pensive at this strange distraction, which seem'd without the hope of reconcilment. (pp. 32-3)

From this point onward, Isabel stays in the text to enact her rivalry against Spencer. The competition between Isabel and this new favourite is played out in terms which slide more easily between the erotic and the political. We see



him trying to control her own court circle and as a result she is "in name a Wife, in truth a Hand-maid" (p. 52). Isabel's marginalisation is not just sexual, but political. The use of the term Hand-maid, with its biblical overtones of sexual usage for the sake of procreation imparts a loss of social and political status at court as well as a problem in the marital relationship of Edward and Isabel. Isabel fights to regain her political status and legitimate her own (hetero-)sexual desire throughout the rest of the text.

The texts of Drayton, Marlowe and Hubert all neutralized this political virility of Isabel by bringing in the character of Mortimer. Being the fourth protagonist, Mortimer reordered the Girardian triangle of desire which had Isabel as one of the rivals. A conventional triangle was created, with Isabel as its passive apex and Edward (husband) and Mortimer (adulterous lover) as rivals for her as both Queen of and symbol of England. Spencer was thus reduced to a secondary character, no longer occupying the rival place at the base of the triangle, in opposition to Isabel. In Carey's text, however, Mortimer is very much a minor character in the unrest. He is mentioned as one of the more notable activists in the Baron's ill-fated attempt against Edward, but he was lucky enough to escape execution:

[B]ut it was rather out of forgetfulness than pity, whose deaths had been more available than all those which in so great haste tasted his fury. Some think that the Queens intercession got the respite of their execution, mainly followed by Spencer, who in that act irreconcilably lost her favour; by the subsequent effect it seems probable enough; but howsoever it was wrought, it appears he was reserved to be one of the fatal executioners of the divine justice (pp. 75-6).

In this passage the text is, arguably, making an oblique comment upon its predecessors' use of the source material. As has been mentioned above, there is no chronicle evidence to suggest a relationship between Mortimer and Isabel before the deposition of Edward II. However, the text offers a deconstruction of how the literary texts may have evolved that idea. Because Mortimer became the Queen's favourite, the other texts project that relationship backwards to explain what may have been an oversight on the

part of Edward II, or a plea for mercy on the part of Isabel, for which she had no other motivation than to oppose Spencer.

However, Carey is prepared to utilise the idea of Isabel's relationship with Mortimer, but imposes upon it a completely different interpretation. Isabel's adultery is vindicated, precisely *because* she has been marginalised by Edward's action. It is not Mortimer who pursues Isabel, or what she symbolises (i.e. the Crown of England), but she who chooses him. Her choice is entirely justified, and her "adultery" is presented as the inevitable result of Edward's far worse transgressions:

She saw the King a stranger to her bed, and revelling in the wanton embraces of his stoln pleasures, without a glance on her deserving Beauty. This contempt *had begot a like change in her, though in a more modest nature*, her youthful Affections wanting a fit subject to work on, and being debarr'd of that warmth that should have still preserv'd their temper, she had cast her wandering eye upon the gallant Mortimer, a piece of masculine Bravery without exception; had those his inward Gifts been like his outside, he had not been behind-hand in reception, but with a Courtly, brave respect, full meets her Glances. (p. 89, my italics)

Elizabeth Carey uses Edward's homosexual relationships to justify Isabel's adultery. Moreover, the text portrays the relationship between Edward and his favourites as "proper" adultery. In all the other texts, no matter how gently, Isabel is admonished for her relationship with Mortimer, for being false to her husband's bed - something which Carey omits to do.

Carey had already discussed, in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, the sexual double standard which Stuart patriarchy tolerated, even promoted: that male adulterers were not so severely judged as female adulterers and that a married man having a mistress was in no way as serious as a married woman taking a lover. The protestant view of the marriage bond was that, spiritually at least, an act of adultery dissolved it. Notionally, the emotional and sexual responsibilities in a marriage relationship were held equally by each partner and transgression, by either partner, compromised their marriage bond. But if, in *Edward II*, Elizabeth Carey is suggesting that Isabel's relationship with Mortimer is justified by Edward's relationships with Gaveston (particularly)

and with Spenser, does not this, in a paradoxical way, legitimate Edward's relationships as "proper" adultery? Within the limited frame of reference available to her, I think Elizabeth Carey is trying to present Gaveston and Spencer as feasible *alternatives* for Edward's affections, and in so doing has to describe them, as far as is possible, as the "other woman". By likening Gaveston to a woman - even using the term "Jewel" to describe him at one point, thereby equating him metaphorically with Isabel - Carey presents us with a recognisable act of adultery. The love of Edward for Gaveston is described as "Such a masculine Affection" (p. 28). It is not, therefore, posing any threat to the social hierarchy - Edward is still playing the active role, and Gaveston the "boy". The text confirms their relationship not simply as a sexual perversion troped into a threat to the political hierarchy, but as a contravention of the marriage contract evolved within the Protestant ideology of Renaissance England.

The representation of the relationship between Edward and Spenser, although still retaining some element of the homoerotic, shows a Minion who is gradually becoming Master and who is capable of sustaining his position. The political, rather than the erotic is foregrounded here and it is perhaps, therefore, more feasible to read Carey's treatment of Edward's homosexual relationships as having emerged from Carey's sense of outrage at treatment of women by her own society. *Edward II* exposes a rather more serious sexual double-standard than *The Tragedy of Mariam*, and with it an enormously powerful way of marginalising women. That unspoken act between men - current in literary and artistic production, but officially outlawed and still without a definitive name - sealed relationships, and effected access to those in power. That which was so offensive about Edward II's relationship with his favourite was not that he might be sodomising his minion behind closed doors, but that his favourite was seen to have a special, private relationship with the King and that, in public, this relationship could manifest itself in

political power. All the Renaissance literary presentations of the relationship between Edward II and his favourites, but Carey's in particular, reveal an erotic relationship publicly manifested as a privileged political relationship with the King which only men could enjoy.

This relationship, in crude terms, "short circuits" the political and ideological web of court relationships. In a society which presumed <sup>32</sup> that all its members were heterosexual, and that men and women (including Queens) had different social roles (which were totally dependent upon this presumption of heterosexuality), access to political power was inevitably gender specific. The access of the male subject to political power was through the public activity of alliance with a court faction, the exchange of their female relations in marriage, accession to or purchase of court offices, or taking a seat in the House of Lords or Parliament. In short, the public world of political activity was open to them. Much less so to women, whose involvement was much more private and unspoken. As objects of exchange between men in the court marriage market, their usual means of influence was private, unspoken. Women could be the power behind a court office, behind a title, or even a throne, but (unless the circumstances were very exceptional - as, ironically, they had been for much of the sixteenth century) could never be seen to wield that power officially. Whilst not ideal, these circumstances at least presented women with some small opportunity for influence, even if it was only over a man with whom they had some kind of emotional tie, as a mother, wife, sister, or, unofficially yet perhaps more influentially, as a mistress.

The "short circuit" effect of the relationship between Edward II and his favourites cuts out the role of the woman, which proves, under the socio-political conditions of Renaissance England, unacceptable to both sexes.

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32. "Presumed" because the Renaissance frame of reference did not include the knowledge of a specifically homosexual identity (see p. 204).

Gaveston and Spencer completely usurp Isabel's place in that they have access to the influential private speech of the bedroom, and perhaps the power of emotional manipulation. In addition to this they have access to the public world of political power, which is intensified by their access to the private sphere. The erotic and political connection between Edward his favourites is unmediated. They are not bonded by the exchange of a woman in marriage (which brings with it familial if not exactly emotional obligations), but directly to each other; there is no feminine "weak link" in their relationship.<sup>33</sup> The subversive strength of the relationship between Edward and his favourite lies precisely in the dual position which his favourite occupies. Edward could, with perfect legal right, put his Royal Prerogative into action as a means of rewarding the male object of his erotic desire whereas he could hardly give a mistress the string of titles and power over the Treasury which Gaveston and Spencer enjoyed. The consequences of their relationship evidence the extent to which the equilibrium of court power relied on public/political, (if not necessarily private) heterosexuality amongst its male members. In Renaissance terms, Isabel is transformed, from "necessary evil" to "unnecessary other" - a position from which Carey gives her the power to reconstruct herself and reinsert herself into the political framework, unhampered by her obligation to be the King's consort. Her relationship with Mortimer is a result of Edward's inability to fulfil his side of the marriage contract.

The result of this relationship is a political alliance against Edward which begins with Isabel and Mortimer escaping to France. Isabel's escape to France is probably the point at which the Carey text differs the most radically from its predecessors. Elizabeth Carey's use of the chronicle histories is, to use Stauffer's word, "eclectic". He names Grafton (1569) as the principal

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33. The weakness of the "feminine" link is illustrated by the readiness with which Isabel's brother declares war on England, notwithstanding his sister is married to the English King.

source:

The following points might be selected: the capture of the King at Bristol as narrated in the *History* finds its nearest parallel in Grafton; the same is true of the King's speech to his jailers at Berkeley ... Grafton plays up the "Parliament of Whyte bandes" ... the Falkland *History* refers to Piers Gaveston's death at Gaverseed; Grafton has here Gaverseed, as compared with ... Gaverslie heath in Holinshed, Gaversedge in Fabyan, Gavers heathe in Stow 1614<sup>34</sup>

What Stauffer misses is the vital point that Grafton gives two alternative versions of Isabel's journey to France and that, like her source, Elizabeth Carey also gives two alternative versions of the escape. The chronicle historians give varying accounts of Isabel's journey being planned by Edward II and his minions as an ambassadorial visit to re-establish relations between France and England which had deteriorated due to Edward's failure to pay homage to the new French King, Charles, for the lands which he held in Guyen, Aquitaine and Poitou. Prince Edward was sent over later to receive the lands officially from Charles. Grafton gives this version, crediting Fabyan as his source, but also includes this very different version given by Jean Froissart:

When the Queene (sayth he) perceyved the pride of the Spencers and howe they prevayled with the king, and had caused him to put to death the greatest parte of the nobles of his realme of Englande, and also that they bare towarde hir a sower countenance, and she fearing least they should have put something into the kinges head, that might have beene to the perill of her lyfe, was therefore desyrous to be out of this feare ... The Queene therefore purposed nowe to flye the Realme and to go into Fraunce, and therefore did feyne her selfe that shee would go on pilgrimage to Saint Thomas of Cauntorbury, from whence she tooke hir way to Winchelsey, and in the night entred into a ship which before was prepared for her, and had with her, her eldest sonne, Edwarde, and the Erle of Cane and Sir Roger Mortymer, who had a little before brake out of the Tower of London, as after shall be shewed.

[They arrive in France and are met by King Charles]

The Queene who had no great joye at her heart, but that she was so neere to the king her brother, she woulde have kneeled downe two or three times at the feete of the king: But the king would not suffer her, but helde her still by the right hande, demaundyng right gently of her estate and businesse. And she aunswered him right sagely, and recounted to him all the vilanyes and injuries done to her by Sir Hugh

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34. Stauffer (1935), p. 309.

Spencer, and prayed of him his ayde and comfort.

When the Noble king Charles of Fraunce had heard his sisters lamentation, who with teares had expressed her heavie case, he most comfortably spake unto her and sayd; fayre sister quiet your selfe, for by the fayth I owe to God and Saint Denise, I shall right well provyde for you some remedy. The Queene then kneeled downe whether the king would or not, and sayd: My right deere Lord and fayre brother, I pray God rewarde you. The king then tooke hir up in his armes and caused all thinges that was behovefull and meete for her and her sonne to be delyvered unto them at hys costes and charges. <sup>35</sup>

The quotation is lengthy, but necessary to illustrate just how much detail Carey has taken from this text, which is singular amongst all the other chronicle histories for its focus upon and detailed description of Isabel's departure from England.

The first version of Isabel's departure which Carey gives is a result of the machinations of Spencer and his cohorts, who plan to send Isabel as an ambassador to France. This is aborted because of Edward's misgivings. Carey thus makes a textual rejection of this version, and gives authority to the Froissart version, and shows Isabel making an heroic escape, particularly from the clutches of Spencer:

Thus did our Pilgrims scape the pride and malice of him which little dream'd of this Adventure: his Craft and Care, that taught him all those lessons of Cunning Greatness, here fell apparent short of all Discretion, to be thus over-reach'd by one weak Woman. (p. 92)

The irony of the last three words needs little explanation. The text signals not only how "weak" is an inappropriate description of women, but the ideological dissemination of such an idea leads to a false sense of security amongst men. The passages in *Edward II* which correspond to the events as detailed by Froissart are very similar, in that Isabel "escapes" from England under pretence of a pilgrimage and amongst her fellow travellers are Mortimer, the Earl of Cane and her son, Prince Edward (pp. 91-2) and they set sail for France from Winchelsea. Several features of her first encounter with her brother have also been retained:

When she beheld the Sanctuary of her hopes, her dearest Refuge, she falls upon her knee, and with a sweetly-becoming modestie, she thus

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35. Grafton (1569), pp. 204-5.

begins her Story. Her Royal Brother unwilling to suffer such an Idolatry from her, that had a Father, Brother, Husband, so great and glorious, takes her up in his arms, when thus she speaks her sorrow ...[Isabel makes her speech]... Her willing tongue would fain have moved farther; but here the fountain of her eyes poured forth their treasure; a showre of Chrystal tears enforc'd her silence (pp. 96-97).

What is perhaps significant about this lifting of details from Froissart via Grafton (or perhaps directly from Froissart, as his Chronicles were available in England in translation by John Bouchier, Lord Berners, as early as 1543) is not so much the directness, but the fact that this version was completely avoided by Marlowe, Drayton, Hubert and Daniel, in favour of the Fabian version. I would argue that the apparent independence from Edward II and popularity in her own right with which the Froissart piece characterises Isabel was untenable to authors writing within the dual framework of *Iure Divino* and Protestant marriage ideology.

The power and fortitude of Isabel once she is abroad is unmatched in any of the other texts. The respect which her brother, Robert d'Artois and John of Heinnault hold for her is detailed in a way not apparent in the text's predecessors. The focus on her activity, both political and emotional, is unprecedented. There is no sense of compromise once Isabel enters on her campaign to seize the crown for her son. It is Isabel's army, Isabel's negotiations, Isabel's treaties which cause Bristol and London to yield and so facilitate the capitulation of Edward II. In this interim situation of crisis, the text displays nothing but sympathy for Isabel. However, the situation changes once Isabel is in control - effectively taking on the patriarchal position of Head of State. If Elizabeth Carey was trying to present the argument that the system of a monarchy was both inherently corrupt and corrupting to those who undertook the position of monarch, she could probably not have done it more effectively than via the description of Isabel once she has gained control of the country. Cruelty, revenge and lack of reason begin to appear in her treatment of Spencer and then Arundel:

To see such a Monster so monstrously used, no question pleased the giddy Multitude, who scarcely know the civil grounds of Reason: the



recollected Judgment that beheld it, censur'd it was at best too great and deep a blemish to suit a Queen, a Woman, and a Victor. Whether her Imposition, or his patient Suffering were greater, or became first weary, he now is brought to give them both an ending, upon a Gallows highly built of purpose; he now receives the end of all his Torments; the Cruelty was such, unfit to be recorded. ...

Four days are scarcely ended, ere Arundel doth taste the self-same fortune. Until the last Combustion, I finde no mention in the Story of this Noble Gentleman, neither could I ever read any just cause why his Life was thus taken from him ... But we may not properly expect Reason in Womens actions: It was enough the incensed Queen would have it so (pp. 129-30).

Nevertheless she is saved the ignominy of responsibility for the final cruelty - the death of Edward II. The achievement of this absolution from blame constitutes part of the text's attack on Protestant marriage ideology. The partnership of Mortimer and Isabel is both sexual and political. Whilst refusing to compromise Isabel's active role in regaining control of England, the text places the blame for Edward II's murder firmly on Mortimer and finally renders Isabel passive, because of her inability to agree to the ultimate crime of a simultaneous regicide and husband-murder. Both Isabel and Mortimer are uneasy about the growing sympathy for Edward II, but it is Mortimer who insists that Edward must die, and he uses his emotional hold over Isabel (gained by becoming her surrogate husband - in the officially recognised guise of the favourite) to sway her. Their exchanges take place in direct speech, the proportion of which is significantly greater at this point in the text than any other. When Isabel initially refuses to consider the idea, Mortimer,

being nettled with this Reply, so far wide of the aim which in his bloody thoughts he had so constantly resolved on, thought he would return the Queen as bitter a Pill, as she had given him to bite on (p. 152)

and, his reply being given:

he flings away in discontentment, as if he meant with speed to quit the Kingdom. The amazed Queen pursues and overtakes him, who seem'd unwilling to prolong the treaty: Stay, gentle Mortimer, (quoth she) I am a Woman, fitter to hear and take advice, than give it; think not I prize thee in so mean a fashion, as to despise thy Safety or thy Council. Must Edward dye, and is there no prevention? *Oh wretched state of Greatness, frail Condition, that is preserv'd by Bloud, secur'd by Murder!* I dare not say I yield, or yet deny it; Shame stops the one, the other Fear forbiddeth: only I beg I be not made partaker, or

privity to the time, the means, the manner. With this she weeps, and fain would have recanted, but she saw in that course a double danger. (pp. 153-4, my italics)

The "double danger" is, of course, the restoration of Edward and the loss of Mortimer. Despite the graphic descriptions of Edward's political mistakes and the corruption of Gaveston and Spencer, ultimately this passage must constitute the most powerful criticism of the monarchy, the state and its ideological means of self-perpetuation. Having fought to gain her place at the centre of power, Isabel now bewails the bloody condition of monarchy, whilst being harangued into a decision she does not want to make by the masculine sexual partner of her choice.

This is the last we hear of Isabel in direct connection with the history itself, but she is mentioned in the final summing up:

The Queen, who was guilty but in circumstance, and but an accessory to the Intention, not the Fact, tasted with a bitter time of Repentance, what it was *but to be quoted in, the Margent of such a Story*; the several relations so variously exprest of their Confessions, that were the Actors and Consenters to this deed, differ so mainly, that it may be better past over in silence, than so much as touch'd (p. 155, my italics).

Once again, Carey uses silence as a positive literary device in her presentation of Isabel, the "it" of the above passage referring to Isabel's involvement (or lack of it) in Edward II's murder. However, because of the singular wording of the passage (in italics) it can be seen to work on two levels. On one level, Carey may simply be defending Isabel, putting her reputed involvement in Edward's death down to the rumours caused by the confused and contradictory statements of those who were involved. Alternatively, the words "quoted"; "Margent"; "Story" imply a wider, literary application. Perhaps Carey's Isabel is also expressing "Repentance" at having been "quoted" by previous writers as being only on the "Margent" of the "Story" of Edward II, yet brought to the fore by them as the subject of transgression (as an adulteress and a regicide) - a confusion implied in the "relations so variously exprest" which "differ so mainly".

Should the reader doubt Isabel's innocence, Carey adds this final

comment:

you may object, He [Edward II] fell by Infidelity and Treason, as have many other that went before and followed him. 'Tis true; but yet withal observe, here was no second Pretendents, but those of his own, a Wife, and a Son, which were the greatest Traytors: had he not indeed been a Traytor to himself, they could not all have wronged him. (p. 160)

It would be possible to read this as an uncompromising criticism of Isabel, because she is cast as the "greatest" traitor. However, the tone of the passage is one which minimises the seriousness of the treachery, presenting the deposition of Edward by Isabel, in favour of their son, with Isabel as regent, as the *least dangerous* outcome of Edward's political incompetence. The actions of the "traitors" are justified because the traitors are "his own", i.e. his wife and son, whose usurpation of the throne pre-empts, rather than undermines the patrilineal descent of power. Thus, like Salome in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Isabel is presented as having played out her desires and achieved her goals from a position which she has constructed for herself from within the boundaries of patriarchal ideology. Also, as in her treatment of Salome, Carey treats Isabel in a manner completely opposed to that of male writers. Just as Carey's Salome meets no "appropriate" fate (unlike Markham and Sampson's Salumith, see Ch. 3, p. 147, n. 31), Isabel is not turned upon by Edward III and incarcerated as she is in Marlowe's and Drayton's works. Having rejected their various literary constructions of Isabel, Carey makes the ultimate rejection by refusing to include their version of poetic justice.

There is little contemporary criticism of *Edward II* to which I have been able to refer in this chapter. Perhaps this dearth is due to the problematic nature of the authorship. It is surely no encouragement to put into print an article which affirms the author of *Edward II* as being Elizabeth Carey, knowing that there is a possibility that irrefutable proof may arise showing the case to be otherwise. This, however, only proves a problem if authorship is the main concern. I have included *Edward II* in my thesis because the case for Elizabeth Carey is very strong. But, what I hope to have

indicated by the textual comparisons with *The Tragedy of Mariam*, and with other texts about Edward II is that here we have a text which is at least dealing with similar issues, and seems to take a similar standpoint of resistance to the conventions of Stuart patriarchy. The author of *Edward II* may not be Elizabeth Carey and may, indeed, only have been influenced by the proto-feminist resistance of *The Tragedy of Mariam*. Perhaps the author never read the *Tragedy of Mariam* and simply evolved her anti-patriarchal stance independently. Perhaps, even, the author was a man. None of these instances would devalue the text as it stands, as any of the above instances would merely show that the idea of proto-feminist resistance was disseminating even further through Renaissance society. On the one hand, the Carey oeuvre gains another text; on the other, Renaissance resistance to patriarchy gains another ally; in either case feminist scholarship in the Renaissance gains another key text.

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## APPENDIX A

## Dedications and Prefaces by Elizabeth Carey

1. **"To the righte honorable my singular good unckle Sr Henry Lee knighte of the moste noble order of the garter."**

From "The Mirror of the Worlde translated Out of French into Englishe" by E.T. The date of this manuscript work is uncertain. However, the earliest possible date is 1598, when the first edition of *Le Miroir du Monde* by Abraham Ortelius was published in Amsterdam (NUC, vol. 433, p. 367) and the latest possible date is 1602, the year of Elizabeth Tanfield's marriage to Sir Henry Carey. This manuscript has been on deposit at the Bodleian Library, Dep. d. 817, since 1992, having previously been kept at the vicarage in Burford.

2. **"To Dianaes Earthlie Deputesse, and my worthy Sister, Mistris Elizabeth Carye."**

From *The Tragedy of Mariam*, 1613, STC 4613.

3. **"The Author's Preface to the Reader"**

From *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II*, written by E.F in the year 1627, 1680, Wing F313.

4. **"An Epitaph upon the death of the Duke of Buckingham by the Countesse of Faukland"**

British Library, MS Egerton 2725, fol. 60. This poem has been attributed to Elizabeth Carey because her name is appended to the title.

5. Inscription on the tomb of Laurence and Elizabeth Tanfield at Burford Parish Church. T. Languetille, *Falklands*, 1897, p. 24, suggests that this is Elizabeth Carey's composition.

6. **"To the Reader" and "To the Majestie of Henrietta Maria of Bourbon Queene of Great Brittaine".**

Published prefaces to *The Reply of the Most Illustrious Cardinall of Perron*, 1630, STC 6385.

7. **"The Translatress to the Author" and "To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie."**

Manuscript prefaces to *The Reply of the Most Illustrious Cardinall of Perron*, 1630, STC 6385. These manuscript additions are to be found in only three of the surviving copies of this translation, in the Beinecke Collection at Yale University Library, shelfmark Me65 D925 +R4G; the Houghton Library at Harvard University, shelfmark fSTC 6385 and the Bodleian Library, Oxford, shelfmark P5.7 Th.

1. **To the right honorable my singular good unckle S<sup>r</sup> Henry  
Lee knighte of the moste noble order of the garter.**

Receave here honorable Sir my humble presente the fruites and endeavours of my younge and tender years an acknowledgement of my bounden duty to you for though I can no way sufficiently expresse my gratefullnes for many your great favours nor presente to you any thinge worthy of your selfe yet give mee leave I humbly beseeche you to presente to you this little treatise the viewe of the whole worlde as a thinge beste awnswerable to your most noble disposition, leavinge to your considerate judgements & wise regarde the controule of what is herein amisse to be reformed by the experience of your many yeares travailes abroade in the worlde. And as riper yeares shall afforde me better fruites and harsher judgemente I shall be ever ready to presente you with the best of my travailes.

Your ever obediente  
Neece

E. Tanfelde

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2. **To Dianaes Earthlie Deputesse,  
and my worthy Sister, Mistris Elizabeth Carye.**

When cheerful Phoebus his full course hath run,  
His sisters fainter beams our harts doth cheere:  
So your faire Brother is to mee the Sunne,  
And you his Sister as my Moone appeere.

You are my next below'd, my second Friend,  
For when my Phoebus absence makes it Night,  
Whilst to th'Antipodes his beames do bend,  
From you my Phoebe, shines my second Light.

Hee like to Sol, cleare-sighted, constant, free,  
You Luna-like, unspotted, chast, divine:  
Hee shone on Sicily, you destin'd bee,  
T'illumine the now obscurde Palestine.  
My first was consecrated to Apollo,  
My second to Diana now shall follow.

E. C.



3.

**The Author's Preface To the Reader.**

To out-run those weary hours of a deep and sad Passion, my melancholy Pen fell accidentally on this Historical Relation; which speaks a King, our own, though one of the most Unfortunate; and shews the Pride and Fall of his Inglorious Minions.

I have not herein followed the dull Character of our Historians, nor amplified more than they infer, by Circumstance. I strive to please the Truth, not Time; nor fear I Censure, since at the worst, 'twas but one Month mis-spended; which cannot promise ought in right Perfection.

If you so hap to view it, tax not my Errours; I my self confess them.

20 Feb. 1627

E. F.

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4.           **An Epitaph upon the death of the Duke of Buckingham by the Countesse of Faukland.**

Reader stand still and see, loe, here I am  
 Who was of late the mighty Buckingham;  
 God gave to my my being, and my breath;  
 Two kings their favowres, and a slave my death;  
 And for my Fame I challenge, and not crave,  
 That thou beleeve two kinges, before one slave.

5.

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Here shadowe lie  
 Whilst life is sadd,  
 Still hopes to die,  
 To him she hadd,  
 In blisse is he  
 Whom I lov'd best:  
 Thrice happy shee  
 With him to rest.  
 So shall I be,  
 With him I loved:  
 And he with mee,  
 And both us blessed.  
 Love made me Poet,  
 And this I writt;  
 My harte did doe yt  
 And not my witt.

6.

**To The Reader.**

Reader

Thou shalt heere receive a Translation welintended, wherein the Translator could have noe other end, but to informe thee aright. To looke for glorie from Translation, is beneath my intention, and if I had aimed at that, I would not have chosen so late a writer, but heere I sawe stored up, as much of antiquitie, as would most fittlie serve for this purpose. I desire to have noe more guest at of me, but that I am a Catholique, and a Woman: the first serves for mine honor, and the second, for my excuse, since if the worke be but meanely done, it is noe wonder, for my Sexe can raise noe great expectation of anie thing that shall come from me: yet were it a great follie in me, if I would expose to the view of the world, a worke of this kinde, except I judged it, to want nothing fitt, for a Translation. Therefore I will confesse, I thinke it well done, and so had I confest sufficientlie in printing it: if it gaine noe applause, hee that writt it faire, hath lost more labour then I have done, for I dare avouch, it hath bene fower times as long in transcribing, as it was in translating. I will not make use of that worne-out forme of saying, I printed it against my will, mooved by the importunitie of Friends. I was mooved to it by my beleefe, that it might make those English that understand not French, whereof there are maine [sic], even in our universities, read Perron; And when that is done, I have my End, the rest I leave to Gods pleasure.

**To the Majestie of Henrietta Maria of Bourbon  
Queene of Great Brittain.**

Your Majestie

May please to be informed, that I have in this dedication delivered you that right, that I durst not with hold from you: your challenge hath so manie just titles as had I given it to anie others protection, I had done your Majestie a palpable injustice. You are a daughter of France, and therefore fittest to owne his worke who was in his time, an Ornament of your countrie. You are the Queene of England, and therefore fittest to patronize the making him an English man, that was before so famous a Frenchman. You are King James his Sonns wife, and therefore, since the misfortune of our times, hath made it a presumption, to give the Inheritance of this worke (that was sent to the Father in French) to the Sonne in English, whose proper right it is, you are fittest to receive it for him, who are such a parte of him, as none can make you two, other then one. And for the honor of my Sexe, let me saie it, you are a woeman, though farr above other women, therefore fittest to protect a womans worke, if a plaine translation wherein there is nothing aimed at, but rightlie to expresse the Authors intention may be called a worke. And last (to crowne your other additions) you are a Catholicke, and a zealous one, and therefore fittest to receive the dedication of a Catholicke-worke. And besides all this which doth appropriate it to you for my particular, your Majestie is she, to whom I professe my selfe.

A most faithfull subject, and a  
most humble servant.

7.

**The Translatress to the Author.**

Greate Authour heere; thy portraicture doth stand  
 To recommend this worke to ev'rie hand  
 Whose braines it fittes; and doth this promise give  
 Let men but read, and understand, and live.

**To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie.**

'Tis not your faire outside (though famous Greece  
     Whose beauties ruin'd kingdomes, never saw  
 A face that could lik yours affections drawe)  
     Fitts you for the protection of this piece  
 It is your heart (your pious zealous heart)  
     That by attractive force bringes greate Perroone  
 To leave his Seyne his Loyre and his Garroone  
     And to your servant Thame his guiftes impart:  
 But stay: you have a brother, his king borne,  
     Whose worth bringes men from the remotest partes,  
 To offer upp themselves to his desertes  
     To whome he hath his due allegiance sworne  
     Yet for your sake he proves ubiquitarie  
     And come to England though in France he tarrie.

## APPENDIX B

## Dedications and prefaces addressed to Elizabeth Carey

1. **"To My honoured Mistres, Mistres Elizabeth Tanfelde, the sole Daughter and heire, of that famous and learned Lawyer, Lawrence Tanfelde Esquire."**

From *Englands Heroicall Epistles*, 1597, STC 7193, by Michael Drayton.

2. **"To the Most Noble, and no lesse deservedly renowned Ladyes, as well Darlings, as Patronesses, of the Muses; Lucy, Countesse of Bedford, Mary, Countesse-Dowager of Pembroke; and, Elizabeth, Lady Cary, (Wife of Sr Henry Cary:) Glories of Women."**

Extract from *The Muses Sacrifice*, 1612, STC 6338, by John Davies of Hereford.

3. **"To the Truly Vertuous and Honourable Lady, the Lady Elizabeth Carie."**

From *Englands Helicon or The Muses Harmony*, 1614, STC 3192. This is the second edition of a collection of poems originally edited by John Bodenham (and N. Ling ?) in 1600, STC 3191. The dedication to Elizabeth Carey is composed by Richard More and only appears in this second edition.

4. **"To the Right Hon. the Lady Viscountess Falkland, upon her going in to Ireland, two Sonnets."**

From *The Poetical Works of William Basse, 1602-1653*, ed. R. Warwick Bond, 1893, pp. 155-6. There is, in fact only one surviving sonnet of the two, which were part of Basse's *Polyhymnia*, a collection of poems which was never published and which had existed in two different manuscript versions, neither of which the editor was able to locate. He found the surviving sonnet transcribed in an article by Collier in his *Bibliographical and Critical Account*, vol. i, pp. 54-7.

5. **"To the Right Honorable, the truely vertuous and learned La: the Viscountesse of Falkland."**

From *A Sixth Booke to the Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia*, 1624, STC 1805, by Richard Beling.

6. **"An admonition to the Reader", "In Laudem Nobilissimae Heroinae, Quae has Eminentissimi Cardinalis Disputationes Anglice Reddidit - The same in English" and "To the most noble Translatour."**

From *The Reply of the Most Illustrious Cardinall of Perron*, 1630, STC 6385.

7. **"To the Right Honourable, the Lady Elizabeth Carie, Viscountesse Falkland."** From *The Workes of Mr John Marston*, 1633, STC 17471.

The dedication is by William Sheares, the editor and printer of the collection.

1. **To my honoured Mistres, Mistres Elizabeth Tanfelde,  
the sole Daughter and heire, of that famous and learned Lawyer,  
Lawrence Tanfelde Esquire.**

Faire and vertuous Mistresse, since first it was my good fortune to be a witnes of the many rare perfections where-with nature and education have adorned you: I have been forced since that time to attribute more admiration to your sexe, then ever Petrarch could before perswade mee to by the prayses of his Laura. Sweete is the French tongue, more sweet the Italian, but most sweet are they both if spoken by your admired selfe. If Poesie were prayselesse, your vertues alone were a subject sufficient to make it esteemed though amongst the barbarous Getes: by how much the more your tender yeres give scarcely warrant for your more then womanlike wisdom, by so much is your judgment, and reading, the more to be wondred at. The Graces shall have one more Sister by your selfe, and England by your birth shall add one Muse more to the Muses: I rest the humbly devoted servant to my deere and modest Mistresse: to whom I wish, the happiest fortunes I can devise.

Michaell Drayton.

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2. **To the most Noble and no lesse deservedly renowned Ladyes, as  
well Darlings, as Patronesses, of the Muses; Lucy, Countesse of Bedford;  
Mary, Countesse-Dowager of Pembroke; and,  
Elizabeth, Lady Cary, (Wife of Sr Henry Cary:) Glories of Women.**

Cary (of whom Minerva stands in feare,  
lest she, from her, should get Arts Regencie)  
Of Art so moves the great-all-moving Spheare,  
that ev'ry Orbe of Science moves thereby.

Thou mak'st Melpomen proud, and my Heart great  
of such a Pupill, who, in Buskin fine,  
With Feete of State, dost make thy Muse to mete  
the Scenes of Syracuse and Palestine.

Art, Language; yea; abstruse and holy Tongues,  
thy Wit and Grace acquir'd thy Fame to raise;  
And still to fill thine owne, and others Songs;  
thine, with thy Parts, and others, with thy praise.

Such nervy Limbes of Art, and Straines of Wit  
Times past ne'er knew the weaker Sexe to have;  
And Times to come, will hardly credit it,  
if thus thou give thy Workes both Birth and Grave.

3. **To the Truly Vertuous and Honourable Lady, the Lady Elizabeth Carie.**

Deigne worthy Lady, (Englands happy Muse,  
Learnings delight, that all things else exceeds)  
To shield from Envies pawe and times abuse:  
The tunefull noates of these our Shepheards reeds.

Sweet is the concord, and the Musicke such  
That at it Rivers have beene seene to daunce,  
When these Musitians did their sweet Pipes tuch  
In silence lay the vales, as in a traunce.

The Satyre stopt his race to heare them sing,  
And bright Apollo to these layes hath given  
So great a gift, that any favouring  
The Shepheards quill, shall with the lights of Heaven

Have equall fate: Then cherrish these (faire Stem)  
So shall they live by thee, and thou by them.

Your Honours  
ever to command  
Richard More

4. **To the Right Hon. the Lady Viscountess Falkland,  
upon her going into Ireland, two Sonnets.**

What happy song might my Muse take in hand,  
Great Lady, to deserve your Muses care?  
Or skill to hold you in this amorous land,  
That held you first, and holds you still so deare?  
Must needs your anchor taste another sand,  
Cause you your praise are nobly loth to heare?  
Be sure your praises are before you there,  
How much your fame exceeds your Caracts sayle:  
Nay, more than so; your selfe are every where  
In worth, but where the world of worth doth fayle.  
What boots it, then, to drive, or what to steere?  
What doth the axle or the ore avayle?  
Since whence you ride you cannot part away,  
And may performe your voyage, though you stay.

5. To the Right Honourable, the truely vertuous and learned La: the  
Viscountesse of Falkland.

Madam,

His sixth Booke to the Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia, at the first birth of it was meant for your Honour. If it containe any thing that is good, that you may justly claim as your own, aswell because it was so auspiciously begun, as that goodnes can no where finde a more worthy patronesse. What though it have many faults? yet I hope you will not reject it, both because in its infancie it was vowed to you; and that no where it could have taken a more priviledged Sanctuarie, then is your favourable censure. The desire I had (seeing it was all I could do) to acknowledge your many favours, mov'd mee, when this addition was scarce begun, to intend it for your Hon: and now it is ended, the confidence I have in your well-knowne clemencie, emboldens me to present it to you; for my distrust of my self makes me feare, that as it could be given to none more desirous to excuse the errorrs of weake well meaning endeavours, so your Honour could no where light on a fitter subject for the practise of that vertue, then is this offering of

Your servant

Richard Beling

6.

**An admonition to the Reader.**

... Secondly the humour of the French demanded for their satisfaction that the many places which are cited out of learned, holy, and classically authors, should [sic] not only be faithfully translated in the text, but also placed at large in their original languages in the margin: that the learned reader might without recourse to the several volumes (which required a copious library, hereof few are furnished) out of hand examine the faithfulness of the translation, & consequently how fitly the alleged authority made for the purpose. But this humour not yet (for ought I have seen) much reigning in our country, we have thought it sufficient, to cite the places only in the margin, which are fully expressed in the text; the rather because the excellent translator's copy, which we have faithfully expressed contained no more; and more beseeemed not her translation, as not desiring to make a shew of skill in greek, and other such learned languages; but only of that which was sufficient, for her assumption that it is of a faithful translation according to the significant expression of the French.

Thirdly, we have not presumed to alter or change any one word of her translation, but in some few places, where the French allusions could not be so well understood, if they were expressed in English properly corresponding thereunto: for every tongue hath some peculiar graces and elegancies, which be lost in the translation, yf they be put word for word; And yet this have we done (as we sayde) very seldome ... the translator having so fitly, and significantly expressed the author's meaning, that it would have been lost labour to strive to do it better, and rather marring, then mending so perfect an expression.

**In Laudem Nobilissimae Heroinae, Quae has Eminentissimi  
Cardinalis Disputationes Anglice Reddidit -  
The same in English.**

One woman, in one Month, so large a booke,  
 In such a full emphatick stile to turne:  
 Ist not all one, as when a spacious brooke,  
 Flowes in a moment from a little Burne?  
 Or is't not rather to exceede the Moone  
 In swift performance of so long a race,  
 To end so great and hard a worke as soone,  
 As Cynthia doth her various galliard trace?  
 Or is she not that miracle of Arts  
 The true Elixir, that by onely touch  
 To any mettals, worth of gold imparts?  
 For me, I think she valewes thrice as much.  
 A wondrous Quintessence of woman kind,  
 In whome alone, what els in 'all, we find.



6.

## To the most noble Translatour.

I Would commend your labours and I finde  
 That they were finis'd with such ease of minde  
 As in some sence the praise I give must fall  
 Under the title of Mechanicall,  
 When those who reade it come to understand,  
 The paines you tooke were onely of your hand  
 Which though it did in swiftnesse overgoe  
 All other thoughts yet to your owne was slow.  
 As the Sunne Beames no sooner do appeare  
 But they make that which stands in their light cleere  
 Your bright soule did but once reflect upon  
 This curious peece, and it was cleard', and done.  
 But that a Woemans hand alone should raise  
 So vast a monument in thirty dayes  
 Breeds envie and amazement in our sex  
 Of which the most ore weening witts might vex  
 Themselves thrice so much time and with farre lesse  
 Grace to their Workmanship or true successe.  
 Why should I not speak truth without offence?  
 Behold this Mirrhor of French Eloquence,  
 Which shee before the English view doth place  
 Fill'd with the whole Originall truth and grace  
 That the most curious Author would avow  
 It were his owne well pleas'd, if hee liv'd now  
 And though you know this where to weack a frame  
 To rayse up highèr the greatnesse of your name  
 Which must from your owne rich inventions grow,  
 As Rivers from the springs whence they first flow:  
 Yet hee who truly knowes your noblest will  
 To profitt others and your various skill  
 In choseing and in marking cut the wayes  
 May thinck this might add something to your praise  
 As hee who copying a rare Picture, shall  
 Equall, if not exceede, the Originall,  
 By many shalbee held in as high fame  
 As was the first inventour of the same.  
 Nor can your worke bee any whit disgrac't  
 By those who think it done with much too hast;  
 For had it beene in Michaell Angells power  
 To perfect his great judgment in one hower,  
 Hee who for that should valed it the lesse,  
 His owne weake judgment would therein expresse,  
 And though wee in a common Proverb say,  
 That Rome was not built all up in one day:  
 Yet could wee see a Citty great as Rome  
 In all her splendour in one minute come  
 To such perfection, wee might more expresse,  
 Our wonders, and not make the glory lesse.  
 So I conclude with modest truth, and dare  
 All their free Censures who can but compare  
 And whosoere shall try may spend his Age  
 Ere in your whole work hee shall mend one Page.

7.       **To the Right Honourable, the Lady Elizabeth Carie, Viscountesse Fawkland.**

Many opprobies and aspersions have not long since been cast upon Playes in generall, and it were requisite and expedient that they were vindicated from them; But I referre that taske to those whose leasure is greater, and Learning more transcendent. Yet for my part I cannot perceiue wherein they should appeare so vile and abominable, that they should bee so vehemently inueighed against; Is it because they are Playes? The name it seemes somewhat offends them, whereas if they were styled Workes, they might have their Approbation also. I hope that I have now somewhat pacified that precise Sect, by reducing all our Authors severall Playes into one Volume, and so styled them *The Works of Mr. John Marston*; who was not inferiour unto any in this kinde of Writing, in those dayes when these were penned, and I am perswaded equall unto the best Poets of our times. If the lines bee not answerable to my Encomium of him, yet herein beare with him, because they were his Juvenilia, and youthfull Recreations; Howsoever hee is free from all obscene speeches, which is the chiefe cause that makes Playes to bee so odious unto most men. Hee abhorres such Writers, and their Workes, and hath professed himselfe an enemie to all such as stufte their Scenes with ribaldry, and lard their lines with scurrilous taunts and jests: so that whatsoever even in the Spring of his yeeres hee hath presented upon the private and publike Theater, now in his Autumne, and declining age hee need not bee ashamed of; and were it not that hee is so farre distant from this place, hee would have beene more carefull in revising the former Impressions, and more circumspect about this, then I can. In his absence, Noble Lady, I have been imboldened to present these Workes unto your Honours view, and the rather, because your Honour is well acquainted with the Muses; In briefe, Fame hath given out; that your Honour is the Mirror of your sex, the admiration, not onely of this Iland, but of all adjacent Countries and Dominions, which are acquainted with your rare Vertues, and Endowments: If your Honour shall vouchsafe to accept this Worke, I with my Booke am ready prest and bound to be

Your truly devoted,

William Sheares.