DEFORMED SUBJECTS AND TRANSGRESSIVE BODIES: INWARDNESS AND MONSTROSITY IN EARLY MODERN POPULAR CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

DEFORMED SUBJECTS AND TRANSGRESSIVE BODIES:
THE RHETORICS OF MONSTROSITY IN EARLY
MODERN POPULAR CULTURE

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This project, centered in the popular literature of early modern England, examines the perception of a complex system of relationships between hidden or inward qualities of individuals and the means by which they may be physically manifested through physiognomy, deformity, and the occurrence of wonders. As the project argues, the detectable and readable signs of moral and physical deformity were frequently treated as integral to the process by which normally invisible qualities of character and/or hidden desire might be expressed. To early moderns, these conceptions provided a theoretical means by which transgressive inwardness, hypocrisy, and even concealed sin might be detected and addressed.

A tradition of popular literature and performance that develops from the sixteenth century reflects many of the same issues of concealed inward selves in the literal and metaphorical treatments of "monsters." Some of the most conspicuous examples of these narratives are the sixteenth century broadsheet accounts of so-called monstrous births that record the appearance of children and animals with varying degrees of physical birth deformities. These literatures provide a means through which to read and interpret such creatures as embodying assertions of divine recrimination and correction, presenting "monsters" as the natural products of the spiritually compromised environments into which they were born.

Taken together with representations of deformity and transgression in the early modern playhouse and in scientific/religious texts, these literary productions evince changing views of

social order and disorder in the period. As this study shows, the rhetoric of monstrosity frequently served as a cultural tool of exclusion and condemnation to reinforce the boundaries of moral order, legitimating religious and political structures of authority that sought to restore order in the wake of disruptive, transgressive action. In the three decades following Elizabeth I's accession to the throne in 1558, this discourse broadened significantly to eschew the necessity of physical bodies in the interpretation of "monstrous" inward corruption. This shift is most visible in the popular literature of true crime, where the terms *monster* and *monstrous* become evocative, figurative epithets used to describe criminals perceived as morally depraved, whose transgressive deeds were depicted as expressions of turbulent souls and inward vices.

This study takes as its subject the multifaceted representation of transgression in the popular literature of early modern England, primarily focusing upon dramatic performance and ephemeral print. Further, by exploring literary tropes of the monster that surface in various forms over the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this project investigates the related attitudes toward transgression and social order in the period. Special regard is paid to representations of the divided or multi-faceted self as prone to affecting contradictory and/or conflicted attitudes and desires. These portrayals provide a crucial lens for characterizing the relationships between the subjectivities depicted in such literatures, as well as the real social and moral power structures that they reflect and within which they were produced. Finally, the representation and framing of inwardness in the drama and ephemeral print of the period theorize a complex notion of early modern subjectivity that anticipates and engages with the related processes of interpretation and signification. Thus, it is the perceived connection between the inward thoughts or desires of subjects and the literary depiction of the physical and/or behavioral manifestation of those desires that this project most closely addresses.

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PREFACE

Where possible, this work quotes and cites from modern scholarly editions of the primary materials that are used. Where no modern edition is available, the author has silently emended common orthographic inversions (*u* and *v*, *i* and *j, i* and *y*, *vv* and *w*), expanded archaic contractions (*m* and *n* that follow vowels; *yt* and *wt* as *yet/that* and *with*, etc.), and omitted mid-word line break hyphenation. Original punctuation, capitalization, and spelling conventions have been retained unless otherwise indicated. Where clarity necessitates a gloss, one is provided in square brackets.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

EBBA *English Broadside Ballad Archive*

EEBO *Early English Books Online*

MED *Middle English Dictionary*

OED *Oxford English Dictionary*

ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

OLD *Oxford Latin Dictionary*

STC *Short Title Catalog*

INTRODUCTION

"A Most Strange, and True Discourse": Reading Wonders in Early Modern England

> *No place hais bene more abused than Pauls hais bene* […] *So that without and within, above the grounde and under, over the roofe and beneath, on the toppe of the steple and spire downe to the lowe flore, not one spot was free from wickednes,* […] *so that we should praise God for his mercy in sparinge it so longe, and nowe tremble at his fearful judgement in justly revenging such filthines, god for his mercy sake graunt it may now be amended.*
>
> —James Pilkington (1563)[1]

When the steeple of St. Paul's Cathedral was struck and destroyed by lightning on 4 June, 1561, London citizens were uncertain what to make of the event; though many regarded it as a prodigy that represented the vengeful wrath of God in response to some specific sin or transgression practiced within the cathedral, there was much division in interpreting exactly *what* this sin could be. The Sunday following the fire, James Pilkington, Bishop of Durham, preached a sermon at Paul's Cross in the wake of Catholic proclamations and cries of "a judgment!" that proposed a connection between the event and the return of England to Protestantism under the new queen, Elizabeth I, who had not yet reigned three years (Woodbury 1.244b). Pilkington's sermon, as recorded in a pamphlet printed later that year, *The True Report of the Burning of the Steple and Churche of Poules in London,*

> […] not onely reproved the prophanation of the said Churche of Paules of longe time hertofore abused by walki[*n*]g, jangling, brawling, fighting, bargaining. &c. namely [during] Sermons & service time: but also au[*n*]swered by the way to the objectio[*n*]s of such evil tunged perso[*n*]s, which do impute this token of gods deserved ire, to alteracio[*n*], or rather reformacio[*n*] of religio[*n*] […]. (sig. A8r)

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1 *The Burninge of Paules Church in London* sigs. G4r, G5r.

Pilkington, the first Protestant to serve in his post, thus refused to entertain the notion that the calamity was a specific criticism of the new regime, opting instead to interpret it as a general warning against the inattentive, idle talk and irreligious behavior that had been allowed to take place within the cathedral during services by irreverent churchgoers. Soon after, a pro-Catholic treatise began to circulate around West Chester (Milman 278); attributed to former chaplain John Morwen, it fired back at Pilkington that it was rather the "worse abuses" of Protestantism that were to blame for the cathedral's near-destruction, particularly the practices of "blaspheming God in lyinge Sermons, polluting the Temple with Schismaticall service, destroying and pulling downe holye aulters, that were set up by good blessed men, & there the sacrifice of the blessed Masse ministred according to the order of Christes catholicke Church" (Pilkington sig. A3v).[2] Sensationally, Morwen at last carps that "this new fanglet doctrine" which has overrun the cathedral and the nation "may be called rather a deformation, then a reformation," an especially evocative turn of phrase for Londoners who needed only look up to behold for themselves the mangled and smouldering stump where Paul's steeple once stood (A6r, A65). Not to be outdone, Pilkington in turn published an extensive refutation of Morwen's accusations, scurrilously and meticulously attacking what he perceived as the various sins of Catholicism that had long tainted and weakened the physical structure of the cathedral, not the least of which was the performance of "Popishe ant[h]ems" that he held had contaminated the battlements and supports of the doomed steeple itself (sig. G4v).[3]

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[2] Pilkington had Morwen's treatise printed in the 1563 pamphlet *The Burninge of Paules*, along with his own lengthy refutation, some of which is quoted in the epigram. The full text of Pilkington's original sermon at Paul's Cross does not survive.

[3] Pilkington also gives numerous examples of other abuses committed in the cathedral, each occurring in or attributed to a specific architectural feature or location within it: "The south alley," he explains, "[was used] for usurye and Poperye [presumably referring to "holye

The controversy that surrounds the lightning-struck tower is particularly revealing for the complex ways it engages with—and, to some extent, refuses to engage with—the rhetoric of providence. Though both Morwen and Pilkington claim to regard the fiery destruction of the steeple as a divine message, the debate that ensued seems to have focused rather on the control of popular opinion and the furtherance of their own ideological claims than taking seriously the sacred duty of the hierophant to interpret and enforce the will of God. Debates of this sort are of course not uncommon in an age of religious upheaval such as that surrounding the Protestant Reformation, and there is a tradition, during such times, of holy men, scholars, and common people interpreting as divine messages a vast array of purported "wonders" that seem to disrupt the mundane and the everyday. It is impossible to know whether men like Pilkington and Morwen actually believed such happenings to be divine prodigies and, if so, whether their interpretations represented earnest and dispassionate attempts to uncover the "true" meanings they impart. What is clear, however, is that the claim to interpret divine providence was an especially powerful, albeit double-edged conceit that could be, and often was, manipulated to lend authority and credence to virtually any side of an argument. Responding in kind to Morwen's comparison of the "deformation" of religious ideology to the visible ruin of Paul's steeple—once a proud national symbol of strength and religious unity—Pilkington redirects and redoubles his rival's metaphor of corruption and aberration by alleging "that Poperye is a monster patched of al kinds of heresy" overseen by corrupt and profane "religious monsters" of various orders, vainly "strivinge which of them shoulde be the holiest" (sigs. H4r, H4v-H5r).

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aulters" of saints' shrines referred to by Morwen], the north for Simony, and the Horse faire in the middest for all kind of bargains, metinges, brawlinges, murthers, conspiracies, and the font for ordinary paymentes of money, are so well knowen to all menne as the begger knowes his dishe" (sig. G5r).

Crucial to the function of the metaphors Morwen and Pilkington use to harangue each other and disparage their respective religious doctrines is a theorized relationship between the invisible, spiritual condition of persons and places and the earthly world through which that condition may be manifested. Beyond its function to bolster his own ideology, Morwen's implied comparison of the changes instituted under reformation to the ruined steeple of the cathedral offers a specific claim about the function of providence to make transparent the metaphysical relationships between the spiritual and the material. As Protestants "deform" Catholic tradition and observances, in other words, so too was the physical structure of the cathedral "deformed" to reflect these slights and render them visible to the eye. Pilkington makes a similar claim in his chastisement of the Catholic abuses permitted to take place within the walls of the church, suggesting that the physical stability of the steeple was actually impaired by exposure to religiously unsound "papist" rituals. Further, his characterization of the various sects of the Catholic clergy as "monsters" comprised of piecemeal heresies emphasizes a connection between the inward, moral condition of these individuals' souls and the outward expression of that condition that is made legible on their bodies.[4] Even in his original attribution of the cathedral fire to the irreverent behavior of inattentive churchgoers, Pilkington similarly links the catastrophe, occasioned by divine wrath, to human immorality and improper behavior.

The attitudes expressed in this debate reflect some of the complicated ways in which early moderns treated the perception that an invisible, "inward" self existed, distinct from what was discernible through appearance and the deeds of "outward" show, a topic that has been explored at length by Katharine Eisaman Maus in her important work, *Inwardness and Theater*

[4] Pilkington's criticisms of "monstrous" monks, nuns, cardinals, and other ecclesiastical figures makes specific note of the unique habits, vestments, and symbolic adornments worn by the different orders that, as he claims, are outward markers of a conflicted doctrine and a preoccupation with vain and worldly appearance over spiritual enlightenment.

in the English Renaissance. Inwardness, according to Maus, is distinct from what modern literary critics have come to describe as "interiority," a differentiation she makes in order to avoid "anachronistic" claims to subjecthood or a modern "bourgeois subjectivity," which, among other things, presupposes self-presence, the notions of privacy and an individual's entitlement to it, and the concept of a developed "domestic" or "private" sphere that is whole and distinct from a "public" one (2-3).[5] As such, it is expected that the quality of a person's inwardness under ordinary circumstances would be unverifiable in most contexts since the qualities of what individuals "truly" believe or feel cannot normally be distinguished from any intentionally obfuscating pretense they might assume. By introducing the language of *deformity* and *monsters* into their debate, in other words, both Morwen and Pilkington implicitly accuse each other and their respective sects of, at best, feckless prodigality or, at worst, outright hypocrisy in their adherence to unsound religious doctrine. Specifically, each claims that the seemingly pious affectation of outward Godliness emulated by the other actually masks corrupted inward self-interest that motivates their opponent's rejection of the "true faith" each of them believed (or claimed to believe) himself to represent. It is the expression of this inward/outward dissonance that each finally claims the prodigious fire at Paul's was sent to convey.

The sentiments of Morwen and Pilkington regarding the issues of prodigy and human behavior were hardly new at the time these events unfolded;[6] however, by reiterating such

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[5] As Maus claims, "subjectivity" in the Renaissance is a "loose and varied collection of assumptions, intuitions, and practices that do not all logically entail one another and need not appear together at the same cultural moment" (29). The concept of "inwardness" as treated in the early modern theater concern "highly public procedures of revelation […] the interiors they unveil often seem[ing] to be structured as much by those procedures as by their prior hidden content" (33).

[6] Cf. the interpretations of Philipp Melanchthon and Martin Luther apply in 1523 to the discoveries of the "Popish Asse" and the "Monkish Calfe," discussed in Chapter 2.

established rhetoric in support of their interpretations, they emphasize the perception of a complex system of relationships between hidden or inward qualities and the means by which they may be physically manifested through physiognomy, deformity, and the occurrence of wonders. In each of these cases, such observable and readable signs were held to be an integral part of the process by which the normally invisible qualities of character and/or hidden desire might be expressed. Similarly, these conceptions theoretically provided a means by which transgressive inwardness, hypocrisy, and even concealed sin might be detected and addressed. In fact, Protestant doctrine held the management of an orderly self to be an element crucial to a life devoted to God, stressing the importance of transparency between an individual's orderly inward spiritual condition and the outward "show" or manifestation of behavior.[7] Though certainly not without precedent in Catholic teaching, the Protestant notion of the individual's relationship to God through prayer and self-reflection seems specifically related to these concerns.

A tradition of popular literature and performance that develops from the sixteenth century in the wake of England's introduction to the printing press and, later, the founding of the first permanent London playhouses, reflects many of the same issues of concealed inward selves in

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[7] As one example, cf. the interpretation of Matthew 23 provided in the first book of the Homilies, introduced in 1547 under King Edward VI and preached widely in support of reformed Protestant doctrine. Here, in "An Homelie, or Sermon, of Good Woorkes Annexed Unto Faithe," the account of the "Seven Woes" of the Pharisees is subtly altered from its original biblical presentation to emphasize the need for transparency between thoughts and deeds. As the story is related in the *Tyndale New Testament* of 1523, Christ's criticism of Jewish religious leaders lists a number of metaphorical charges against hypocritical doctrines, including "Wo be to you scribes and pharises ypocrites which make clene ye utter [outer] side of the cuppe and of the platter: but within they are full of bribery and excesse. Thou blinde Pharise clense first the inneside of the cup and platter [so] that the outside of them maye be clene also" (23:25-6). When the story is recounted in the homily, the specific references to "the cuppe" and "the platter" ("*calicis et paropsidis*" in *Jerome's Latin Vulgate*) are collapsed and emended so as to read "the vessell" (Cranmer sig. J1v), a word that specifically connects the associations of the reciprocally "cleaned" inside and outside to those aspects of the body, regarded figuratively as "the receptacle of the soul" (*MED*, def. 2).

the literal and metaphorical treatments of "monsters." Some of the most bizarre and conspicuous examples of such narratives are the print broadsheet accounts of so-called monsters from the period that recorded the appearance of unfortunate children and animals burdened with varying degrees of physical birth deformities—the hapless consequences, naturally, of the morally compromised environments into which they were born. Taken together, such literary productions were themselves the products of changing views regarding social order and disorder in the period. A cultural tool of exclusion and condemnation, the deployment of monstrous rhetoric frequently served to reinforce the boundaries of moral order and legitimate the religious and political structures of authority that sought to restore social order in the wake of disruptive, transgressive action. In the period of 30 years following Elizabeth I's accession to the throne, this discourse of monstrosity began to broaden significantly in its application to eschew the necessity of the physical form in such interpretations of inward corruption. This shift can be seen in the increasingly popular literature of true crime, where the terms *monster* and *monstrous* are typically evocative, figurative epithets used to describe criminals perceived as morally depraved, whose transgressive deeds were often depicted as expressions of their turbulent souls and inward vices.

Aristotle, in his *On the Generation of Animals*, remarks that "monstrosities belong to the class of things unlike the parent" (4.4.¶4), which seems to suggest a contaminating or adulterating addition to the normal generative process, the offspring which results constituting an unlikely hybrid of the earthly parent(s) and *something else*—a quantity frustratingly deferred. Early modern characterizations tended to treat monstrosities as disruptions in the natural process of generation, expressed in deformities that, either by excess or deficiency—*lack* vs. *superfluity* of limbs, features, etc.—evince "an incorporation," as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen asserts, of the

human/worldly with "the Outside, the Beyond" (7). Conversely, when taken in a metaphorical register, the "parent" or actor of monstrous deeds serves a similar function of disrupting systems of legal and moral order by refusing to conform to social norms—a crucial difference being that here, "hybridity" is a result of individuals' *actions* rather than physical constitution, and so the "generation" takes place when they ill-advisedly join their human capacity of free will with transgressive or "unnatural" moral choices.[8] Much critical work has treated the figure of the monster in these capacities to deform and defy everyday systems of classification, employing a series of "shape shifting strategies" that, as Mark Thornton Burnett has claimed in his work on the monstrous capacity of drama and performance, "muddled God-given identifications" (9).[9] The primary function of the monster—whether "deformed" physically or morally—is to render visible that which is hidden or inward; as Burnett's project explores at length, monsters are necessarily objects of spectacle, and they demand interpretation. While Loraine Daston and Katharine Park maintain that the interpretations of monsters were "[rooted] in the perceived violation of moral norms" and "a sign of God's just wrath," they were also "a paradoxical product of God's mercy, an alert and a warning issued to allow sinners one last chance to reform themselves and avert the catastrophe to come" (175). The rhetoric of the monster, finally, is necessarily concerned with the ways desire motivates human behavior, especially when that desire is hidden, excessive, and/or potentially transgressive. As Cohen insists, the monster is "continually linked to forbidden practices [and] escapist fantasies," existing in an unlikely reflexive simultaneity of cultural icon and scapegoat—"fear of the monster," he concludes, "is really a kind of desire" (16-7).

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[8] The perception of particularly heinous crimes, especially murder, as "unnatural" is discussed at length in Chapter 3.

[9] Similarly, Cohen refers to the monster as a "harbinger of category crisis" (6).

In exploring these and other issues that emerge from the appearance and application of monstrous rhetoric, this study takes as its subject the multifaceted representation of transgression in the popular literature of early modern England, primarily focusing upon dramatic performance and ephemeral print. Further, by exploring literary tropes of the monster that surface in various forms over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this project investigates the related attitudes toward transgression and social order in the period. Particular attention is paid to representations of the divided or multi-faceted self, capable of affecting potentially contradictory and/or conflicted attitudes and desires, representations that provide a crucial lens for characterizing the relationships between the subjectivities depicted or described in such literatures, and the real social and moral power structures that they reflect and within which they were produced. The literatures of ephemeral print and public performance hold particular import for the study of monsters because, as "popular" genres, they enjoyed wide availability and were accessible to consumers despite the barriers of literacy and education that posed significant hurdles to the enjoyment of non-performative, non-pictorial literary efforts. As pursued in this study, the representation and framing of inwardness in drama and ephemeral print of the period offer important insight into the production and projection of early modern subjectivity, including the related processes of dubious interpretation and signification. Thus, it is the perceived connection between the inward thoughts or desires of subjects and the literary depiction of the physical and/or behavioral manifestation of those desires that this project most closely addresses.

In addition to exploring representations of transgression and public morality in the literature of early modern England, this project seeks to define an archive of popular print primary materials that intersect with but are in many ways distinct from the monolithic canon of literatures generally regarded as exemplary Renaissance texts. It is in the network of popular

literatures that some of the most fruitful connections and revelations can be found pertaining to popular attitudes and anxieties of the day. As much of the primary material studied in the project is little known and treated sparely—if at all—in modern editions, a selection of supplemental texts at appear in an appendix that includes full versions of many of the texts examined in this study with original scholarship and editorial intervention by the author with the hope that it will serve as a useful tool for readers who may be encountering these texts for the first time.

Chapter 1 explores the early practices of playacting, focusing upon the popular representations of transgression in English medieval and early modern play spaces—representations that both anticipate the formal playhouse and predate the printing press. It is in these dramatic forms that many of the notions of the divided self and the hidden, transgressive interior of the individual begin to come to prominence. My analysis reveals the complexity of such representations, as well as arguing that such dramatic forms are explicitly and implicitly structured to invoke moral awareness and correction in their audiences. Early critics of theater often dismiss the ability of audiences to comprehend and accept such lessons, arguing instead that they will recognize and imitate only the transgressive behavior depicted. Stephen Gosson, for example, wrote a number of anti-theatrical treatises at the end of the 16th century that criticize what he regarded as the "vices" of the public playhouses, specifically their capacity, in his view, to incite audiences to imitate characters' bad behavior and, ultimately, to experience moral degradation or inward, spiritual corruption as an effect of witnessing the enticing spectacle of vice and transgression. Many of Gosson's claims specifically invoke sentiments found in Plato's *Republic* regarding the appropriate utility of dramatic spectacle and imaginative writing in the well-ordered society. Thus, this chapter compares relevant portions of these texts in some detail to investigate the nature of the anxiety they posit between the spectacle of staged

transgression and the threat of its imitation by spectators who, these texts seem to suggest, are enticed to behave badly, even against their own better judgment.

The language of "vice" and the "fall" from grace that Gosson invokes in his arguments is itself entrenched in the history of playacting in England through the traditions of what are now called the cycle and morality plays. The representations of transgression and vice in these early dramatic forms prefigure representations of vice in the Renaissance playhouse, and resonate in much of the discourse surrounding "monsters" as popular manifestations of transgressive inwardness or passion. Taking up Gosson's language of the moral "fall," the chapter examines the four extant Fall of the Angels pageants from the cycle plays, particularly comparing the representation of Lucifer, who serves as the main hero/antagonist of each. An extra-biblical episode, the story of Lucifer's expulsion from heaven as punishment for his pride and overweening ambition has no explicit source text for use by pageants' playwrights and actors. The differences, therefore, between the representations of Lucifer's transgressions in each of the pageants offer revealing insights into expectations surrounding good behavior and what, precisely, "disobedience" might entail. Ultimately, each of the four Lucifer cycle dramas represents the nature of their main character's transgression differently, suggesting, on one hand, an expectation that audiences would be capable of engaging across complicated interpretive registers as they witnessed various forms of "bad" behavior, and on the other hand, some possibly conflicting notions of what might constitute a transgression sufficiently severe to warrant Lucifer's expulsion from heaven.

Next, the chapter takes up another of Gosson's often-used terms, that of the "vice" by which spectators may be tempted to stray from paths of virtue in an examination of the concept of vice through the staged representation of vice characters in Morality Plays, chiefly those of

Mankind. A brief discussion of the play's critical reception helps to situate the stakes of a conversation about the function of vice characters in an allegorical narrative. Almost universally panned throughout most of its modern critical treatment, *Mankind* is a complicated narrative that delivers its moral lessons by luring its audience into enacting the very sins its vice characters manifest, thus supporting the urgency of the play's moralizing themes, which include the mutability of flesh and the necessity of repentance. *Mankind*'s interactive narrative is also noteworthy in that it prefigures Gosson's anti-theatrical arguments by performing the very scenario of audience enticement to bad behavior described in his texts, yet still manages to present a positive moral lesson by the end of the play, even in the wake of its vice characters' outlandish and buffoonish behavior. Through these varied lines of analysis, this chapter reveals the complex understanding of and engagement with notions of transgressive inwardness expressed in medieval drama, as well as its engagement with the individual inward capacities of medieval audiences to learn moral lessons, and to distinguish between and critique desirable and undesirable behavior in others and in themselves.

Chapter 2 explores the representational practices of "monstrous" rhetoric in the popular literature of sixteenth-century England, especially the perceived relationship between inwardness and physical manifestation. By examining the long interpretive history surrounding scientific, religious, and popular accounts of deformed births, the chapter investigates the means by which "monsters" became useful rhetorical tools to diagnose and address perceived transgression of the natural and/or social order. Beginning with a brief treatment of Richard III's familiar characterization in Shakespeare's first history cycle, the chapter explores the subtle and tricky modes of signification utilized by the deformed duke to strategize his way into power by alternatively calling attention to and concealing the extent of his physical deformity and moral

shortcomings. In two separate instances during the first tetralogy, characters invoke the language of prophecy in conjunction with Richard's supposedly unusual birth, which the chapter argues directly connects the historical Richard to the popular literature of monstrous deformed birth accounts and their considerable interpretive trajectory of transgressive inwardness made manifest on the physical body.

A brief discussion of the interpretive history around monstrous births follows, as well as a specific consideration of the relationship of the monster to ideas of the "natural" order as originally conceived in the period. For a society that regarded monsters as a type of wonder or prodigy sent by divine providence to deliver messages to humanity, the interpretive burden of deciphering the specifically coded meanings such signs might entail was imperative. More broadly, the chapter makes note of an interpretive shift within the sixteenth century through which monsters were more frequently interpreted as invitations to self-examinations, rather than as presages for future events as classical authors had broadly regarded them. As such, they incite observers to look instead first *into themselves* to search out the specific signs of sin and vice the monster might emblematically reveal, and then *into the future* to consider the effects of their own sinful transgressions of thought and deed on their eligibility for Christianity's promised life everlasting. The interpretive discourse of monstrosity circulating in England ca. 1522-73 recognizes "monsters" not only as the physical manifestations of hidden corruption but also as indicators of inner moral disorder capable of producing vicious, immoral, socially transgressive acts without a corresponding manifestation of physical signs—in other words, a "monster" *without a monstrous body.* A careful examination of several extant broadsheet monstrous birth accounts follows to help give shape to this rising trend of interpreting "deformity" as a moral condition separate from but readable on the physical body. Finally, the chapter argues that the

insertion of Shakespeare's Richard III into this tradition of monstrous interpretation is an explicit and complex critique, recognizable to his original audiences though their familiarity with print broadsheet literature, of England's national history—specifically of the hypocrisy and corruption associated with the Wars of the Roses. While Shakespeare's Richard bears the physical signs of monstrous birth, for instance, his characterization problematizes the simple cause and effect relationships of inner corruption and physical manifestation, suggesting instead a complex relationship between transgression, physical and "moral" deformity, and individual subjectivity.

Chapter 3 further explores the trope of moral deformity in various domestic "true crime" narratives that rose to popularity at the end of the sixteenth century and flourished in the decades to follow. Found repeatedly in such accounts is the assertion that the crime of murder was an especially heinous violation of the "natural" order. In keeping with this sense of murder as unnatural, many murderers and their actions depicted in popular true crime accounts are specifically characterized through the language of inwardness and a metaphor of monstrous birth, wherein discontent and frustrated desires are first *harbored* and *nurtured* internally, and then boldly expressed through criminal action in a violent eruption of their repressed desire. A similar narrative of repentance found in multiple accounts of criminals' gallows speeches supports this interpretation of early criminal psychology. Further, such accounts suggest that criminals could receive some form of absolution for their sins through the genuine display of a tearful confession and farewell speech that displays genuine contrition, admits to wrongdoing, and urges witnesses to avoid similar paths of sin. Further exploring the relationships among crime, punishment, and social restoration, the chapter examines episodes from Thomas Kyd's play *The Spanish Tragedy* and Thomas Nash's popular prose work, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, to uncover some of the commonplace narratives available to early modern audiences regarding

the motivation and commission of crime, as well as the role of confession and repentant "gallows speeches."

Accounts of actual monstrous births in England's popular print literatures began to decline rather quickly toward the end of the sixteenth century, if print survivals and the Stationer's records can be taken as any indicator. This chapter argues that the true crime narrative invokes a number of the same interpretive themes to reveal the transgressive inwardness of criminals, and to invite audience members to utilize such stories as examples of misspent life in order to first reflect inwardly on their own behavior and moral conditions and then reform themselves. Some print ephemera representing transitional gestures between the earlier conceits of literal monstrous births and the narratives of crime born out of intemperate inward passion is examined as perhaps more blatant examples of how such literatures blurred the distinctions between the literal and metaphorical registers of monstrosity, particularly in cases that depict the capacity for refractory female inwardness. In such cases, the conceit of "confession" and the depiction of female speech become especially crucial to the presentation of crime in these narratives, often explicitly reporting and critiquing the behavior and words of perpetrators both before and after the commission of the crimes in order to uncover evidence by which any inwardly harbored "unnatural" qualities or attitudes could be discerned. In the case of those found to be guilty, this sort of evidence was frequently invoked to portray such women as unruly subjects of the overlapping power structures in which they were interpellated—most notably those of the household and the expected obedience and deference to a husband's authority, even in cases of abuse and household mismanagement.

The popular broadside ballad that rose to prominence in the seventeenth century reflects many of these same issues in narratives relating to crime that predate the generic form;

eventually, a particularly conspicuous tradition of "last good night" broadside ballad prints appeared. These narratives, comprised of the supposed last words of a condemned criminal as he or she stood at the place of execution or in prison the evening before, represent attempts by their authors to stage a public intervention into the perceived inwardness and subjectivities of the criminals they depict. Enfolding the role of the confessional gallows speech into the popular ballad form, these narratives could be easily and repeatedly performed by balladeers to affect much of the same emotional impact of witnessing an execution scene without the necessity of being physically present. In addition to the various literacy barriers that the broadside ballad was able to permeate by virtue of its being principally a performance text, these narratives are further significant for once again removing the necessity of the physical spectacle to convey a moral message about monstrous inwardness and the transgressive expression of repressed desire in action. Again, this is especially complicated in cases of female perpetrators, whose "confessions" related in such accounts were, in many instances, most probably male appropriations of their actual voices. Finally, the chapter explores the extent to which inwardness seems "always" transgressive, and connects the metaphor of "fashion" utilized by Luther and Melanchthon to the maintenance of moral and domestic authority. As in *Richard III*, the ephemeral literature of domestic crime often invokes the rhetoric of "monstrosity" of deed, employing the birth metaphor as a means to diagnose and repair the threat that female dissent and transgression seems to present to patriarchal order. The perception of murder as a particularly heinous act for both men and women that required specific legal rituals of redress and correction is at the heart of such concerns.

"Monstrosity" in its many forms is a concept that presupposes the act of manifesting something previously unnoticed or hidden from view. Whether used to describe the inhuman,

the deformed, or the repulsive, the term "monster" has always carried with it a fear of the unknown and the dangerous. In overcoming the various fears of the unknown, it seems appropriate that monstrous figures come to be reshaped in popular accounts as persons and beings that, even for their alterity, reinforce expectations of natural, moral, and social law. The appearance of a monster, as it came to be understood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was testament to the fact that some transgression had occurred, but it was also a merciful sign of divine invitation for Christian subjects to interpret the signs it manifested, correct the transgression to which it pointed, and avoid a still greater punishment in store for those whose sins are not repented and who go without absolution. The monster is chiefly a spiritual teacher that communicates divine truths through a physical show, a function it shares with other figures of late medieval and early modern popular literature to provide a moral lesson through a structured performance of reading and interpreting physical signs and actions.

CHAPTER 1

Vice in Performance:
Medieval and Early Modern Stages of Transgression

> *[V]ice is learned with beholding, [the] sense is tickled, desire pricked, and those impressions of mind are secretly conveyed over to the gazers which the players do counterfeit on the stage. As long as we know ourselves to be flesh, beholding those examples in theaters that are incident to flesh, we are taught by other men's examples how to fall. And they that came honest to a play may depart infected.*
>
> —Stephen Gosson (1582)[1]

By the time the playhouses were formally established in England near the end of the 16th century, public performance had already earned a reputation for vulgar spectacle and the incitement of vice. The appearance of the playhouses worked to formalize and legitimate the process by which such narratives were coded and received by spectators, as well as broad professional categories such as *actor* and *playwright*. Despite their growing prominence and popularity, however, many people were suspicious of the playhouses and plays generally. They were crowded, noisy, and filled with riotous and dubious characters both on the stage and off. More specific invectives were levied against the representational craft of the theater itself, including the troubling issues of cross-dressing, the imitation of authority figures, and the portrayal of scandalous or otherwise salacious material, to name just a few, and these were seen by many as reason enough to avoid the theaters altogether. For others, the playhouses exuded an unmistakable pull of pleasure for the very same reasons they were alleged to be immoral. Stephen Gosson, one of the earliest and most outspoken detractors of London theaters, was most especially disturbed by this attractive quality of public performance and the temptation he

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1 *Plays Confuted in 5 Actions* (Pollard 108).

believed it posed to lure the common citizen away from the path of virtue. In the quote given above from *Plays Confuted in 5 Actions*, his third and most scathing anti-theatrical treatise, Gosson specifically recalls the teaching function of representational poetry suggested by Horace and concludes, startlingly, that playhouses are in fact like "schools" that instruct those who attend plays in the practice of sin and lewd, immoral behavior.[2] Striking in Gosson's criticism of the stage is the language of contagion and transference: playhouses not only lead unwary spectators down a path of ill-repute and wickedness, but, as his metaphor insists, actually "infect" the playgoers inwardly and invisibly—sending them away from the theater somehow different than when they arrived.

England's public theater represents perhaps the earliest form of its truly *popular literature*, a term that this study takes to refer to those specifically written so as to be produced and communicated simultaneously to large audiences comprised of a potentially diverse number of spectators with different vocations, levels of education, and lived experiences. An important feature shared by most forms of early popular literature is its expected delivery in the form of public recitation or performance that makes the consumption and enjoyment of their narratives possible for a potential audience including persons who could not afford to buy and/or who may not have been able to read books and other written literary productions. This added accessibility caused anxiety for critics like Gosson, whose fears of the corrupting influence of public theater were closely linked to classed presumptions that common, uneducated citizens would be unable to correctly interpret the spectacles they encountered in the playhouses, to distinguish their content and narratives from reality, or to properly govern their own behavior when driven to the emotional excesses that plays were known to arouse. As will become clear, such issues were

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[2] The metaphor of the playhouse as a corrupted classroom was a favorite of Gosson's, first employed in his initial anti-theatrical treatise, *The School of Abuse*, in 1579.

not new to the Renaissance, or even to its burgeoning playhouses; the complicated issues debated at length in English anti-theatrical treatises at the close of the sixteenth century and the years to follow was alive and well in the production and debate surrounding Medieval stagecraft. By closely examining the ways that early plays sought to appeal to their diverse audiences—particularly in their representation of transgressive characters and actions—reveals important clues about how early audiences received the narratives of such performances, recognized the complexity of their moral and ethical issues, and, in the most ideal situations, learned and applied their lessons to their own lives. The surviving Medieval drama, finally, provides a rich and vibrant cultural backdrop to a study of early modern popular culture and its reception by a common audience it both informed and reflected in its tales, as well as the means by which it could tell them.

The "Shadow" of Vice and the "Substance" of Imitation

Fittingly or not, Stephen Gosson, one of the most vitriolic critics of the theater in England, was in fact a failed actor and playwright who left London in 1578 and wrote the first of his anti-theatrical polemics, *The School of Abuse*, one year later (Pollard 19). Gosson's treatise drew heavy criticism, due, no doubt, in great part to his presumption in skewering his former theatrical peers. This reaction prompted Gosson to issue an addition to the work, *An Apology of the School of Abuse,* later that same year, itself followed up by the aforementioned *Plays Confuted* in 1582. Though, as Pollard notes, Gosson "was neither the first nor the most intellectually prominent of the critics of the theater," his contribution to the ongoing theatrical debates in England was highly influential in setting the tone of this discourse for the next several

decades.[3] Strikingly, Gosson's treatises adopt the allusions, puns, and formal conceits typical of literary texts, demonstrative of Gosson's own formidable rhetorical abilities honed, no doubt, for and during his former career as playwright.[4] Perhaps more important still is that the content of Gosson's arguments against the theater and his anxieties regarding the interpretive capacities and intelligence of the common playgoer are predominantly Platonic in origin. Remarkably class based, unilateral in sensibility, and ultimately distrustful of the process of "imitation," Gosson's attitudes mirror those found in the *Republic,* finally contending that representative literature is far too easily corrupted by the unsavory figures who compose popular narrative and so must be expunged completely from society for its own good.

In his description of playacting and its capacity to arouse spectators into unrestrained emotionality and bad behavior, Gosson suggests that "the expressing of vice by imitation brings us by the shadow, to the substance of the same" (108). His suggestion of a "shadow" of bad behavior imitated by spectators and made "substance" seems an implicit invocation of the signifying process through which actors and playwrights of medieval play spaces represented human folly and vice on stage, allegorically characterizing what are modernly known as *vice characters*. Appearing in medieval cycle and morality plays, vice characters are, generally speaking, stock figures that personify particular sins or behaviors, often providing antagonistic distractions intended to deter the main character or characters from adherence to faith and deflecting them from the ultimate goal of salvation. Vices, of course, are opposed to the

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[3] Pollard, in fact, describes him as "certainly the most important" figure for this reason.

[4] Most conspicuously, Gosson's final tract, *Plays Confuted*, presents his argument as "5 Actions," or charges against players and the whole notion of stagecraft generally. The design is a reference to the five-act dramatic structure endorsed by Horace his *Ars Poetica* and observed by many Renaissance dramatists. By framing his detraction in these terms, *Plays Confuted* employs some of the precepts of the theater Gosson suggests were abused by his contemporaries, but applies them to a moral purpose to bolster his arguments.

Christian virtues, which might also be represented on the stage as characters or figurations that conversely labor to help protagonists overcome worldly obstacles and provide the moral center of the plays they inhabit. The principal function of both kinds of figures is to render explicit and visible through playacting and characterization a typically inward and invisible quality, attribute, dilemma, or motivating force. While spectators may easily recognize the schemes and exploits of vice figures as ridiculous examples of transgressive or immoral behavior, there is no denying that humor was a key element of such plays' appeal, and thus much of the entertainment in such performances derives from the vices' outlandish buffoonery and comical interactions with the virtues and other characters. Because of their simultaneously attractive and repulsive qualities, vices fit well into Gosson's vision of the danger presented by theatrical performance. As widely recognized stock figures, vices came to represent a wide range of social and moral transgressions in performance. Whether presented as allegorical embodiments of specific sins, such as the personified seven deadly sins appearing in *The Castle of Perseverance*, or as more general depictions of folly, exemplified by the many devils scattered throughout pageants in the cycle plays, vices principally function in action and appearance as concrete representations of abhorrent behavior, transgressive potential, and—perhaps most importantly—the relationship between inward desire and outward action pertaining to the physical and spiritual wellbeing of the spectators.[5]

Ever skeptical of the theater, Gosson believed that the representation of vice in performance before a general crowd served as an enticement, rather than a deterrent, appealing to the baser aspects of human nature and encouraging immodest and immoral behavior. In his first

[5] As the author of the 1493 medieval dialog *Dives and Pauper* makes clear, the principal function of "[m]iracles pleyes & daunces" is to support through mirth and play the serious lessons of church doctrine; ultimately, they are "done principaly for devocion honestye and mirthe, to teche men to love god the more" (sig. l4r).

treatise, *The School of Abuse* (1579), he specifically addresses a seven-page epistle, "to the Gentlewoman Citizens of London" concerning the contagious quality of vice in the playhouses. Here, among other charges, he suggests that women who enter public theaters put themselves in particular risk of falling prey to intemperate passion: "Though you go to theaters to see sport," he warns, "Cupid may catch you ere you depart" (Pollard 29-30). For early moderns, the dangers believed to be posed to the physical body and to the faculty of reason by "inordinate" passions to the physical body and to faculty of reason were many; among these, as Thomas Wright notes in his *Passions of the Mind in General*, are the "blindness of understanding" and "perversion of the will" (215).[6] Women, Gosson suggests, are in double danger of compromising themselves in these ways through attendance at public plays, both because they may be aroused to passion and induced to commit sinful acts of their own accord, but also because attendance itself renders them susceptible to being targeted and physically accosted by fellow audience members driven to indomitable mirth. Though specifically identifying women as the most susceptible to the perceived evils of the playhouse, Gosson's warnings apply to all playgoers broadly, as any of the spectators could, in his view, fall victim to their own or their neighbors' misguided and irrepressible emotionality.[7]

The chief allegations Gosson brings against public performance spaces and the practice of play acting recall Plato's critique of representative poetry in book ten of the *Republic*,

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6 The other two of the "four properties consequent to inordinate Passions" Wright lists include "alteration of humors (and by them maladies and diseases), and troublesomeness or disquietness of the soul" (125).

7 Wright, moreover, catalogs three specific vices associated with inordinate passions "ingenerated" in the soul, all of which "are opposite to prudence." The first and second of these are *precipitation*—rashness—and *inconstancy*, both of which reveal "the want or defect of circumspection"; the third is *astutia* or craftiness that "groweth upon excess of wicked consideration" (130-1).

particularly the dangerous, transformative capacity of emotional spectacle and, more generally, "poetic" or fictional narratives. In his famous assertion that "the most serious allegation against representational poetry [is its] terrifying capacity for deforming even good people" (605),[8] Plato's Socrates draws a bold distinction between ostensibly nonfiction and/or historical writing as having a positive social value and imaginative prose, verse, or dramatic spectacle, which, he claims, can only ever be an imitation or dilution of truth, and can never match its purity. Gosson invokes this judgment of representational poetry and expands its significance to include the emerging playhouse, aiming particularly to stifle the intemperate emotionality aroused in its patrons that launches inward desire into transgressive action. Gosson's *School of Abuse*, for instance, characterizes the purveyors of such performances as "effeminate writers, unprofitable members, and utter enemies to virtue."[9] Their literature, being "neither for profit, necessary, nor to be wished for pleasure," should be given "all the drums' entertainment" (22), that is, chased out of town—a conclusion that echoes Plato's infamous decree that the poet had no place in civilized society. As defined by Gosson, therefore, the chief abuse of the playhouses mirrors Plato's critiques of the poet—that such narratives arouse unruly passions from their audiences and drive them to imitate the ill behaviors of the characters depicted, rather than putting dramatic rhetorical potential to a more noble utility. Both arguments, of course, are founded upon Plato's conclusion that the representer[10] of a fictional narrative, eager for popularity, desirous of audience appeal, and because it is "[easier] to represent" would rather depict and relish the "petulant and varied" side of human nature than foster noble or pure aspirations (605). Here, as

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8 Citations refer to the Stephanus numbers.

9 Plato, by comparison, had claimed that the poet was an enemy to the philosopher (608).

10 This term is Plato's and is invoked in order to consolidate the various possible targets of such an argument: the author of verse, prose, and/or plays, as well as actors or other performers.

elsewhere, the representer, though not specifically evil, fulfills the role of a vice character through his or her own laziness and/or unwillingness to pursue more laudable goals, tempting others away from the path of righteousness, civility, or appropriate self-government by appealing to the base aspects of the human mind.

Though it grew to include other concerns in the Renaissance—some of which have already been briefly touched upon—the chief concern treated in Platonic arguments against theatrical performance and poetry pertains to a policing function exercised by the founders and leaders of the ideal society over, first, the *education* and, ultimately, the inward *character* of its citizens. Principal among the virtues the *Republic* works to instill, but regards as threatened by the rhetorical sway of poetry, is the individual's ability to inwardly govern his or her passions and suppress "[that] aspect of ourselves […] which hungers after tears and the satisfaction of having cried until one can cry no more." Specifically invoking the practice of play acting, Plato concludes that spectators experiencing pleasure at a play from witnessing the sympathetic breakdown of the hero fail to properly train themselves to abhor such emotional display in favor of rationality: "When the part of us which is inherently good has been inadequately trained in habits enjoined by reason, it relaxes its guard over this other part, the part which feels sad." These experiences, he continues, will build up, "feed[ing] the feeling of sadness until it is too strong for us easily to restrain it when hardship occurs in our own lives" (606). A similar argument, about finding humor in the comic performance of abhorrent behavior, ultimately claims that a society which condones a pastime that elicits pleasure from the display of strong emotions makes it more likely that the individuals of that society will indulge—willingly or not—in the exercise of behavior and emotions in their own lives that they would otherwise regard as distasteful.

The foundational concern of such debates is principally one of the individual's ability to differentiate between, and govern separately, his or her inward emotions and the performance of behavior. Most notably, Plato seems to assert that citizens of the Republic must be taught not only how to *behave* correctly, but, given that behavior is influenced by emotionality, how to *think* and *feel* correctly in response to various stimuli. A principal function of the education system necessary in Plato's ideal republic, then, would strive to teach its citizens how to navigate the relationship between their inward feelings and the sorts of reactions that are appropriate and acceptable to exhibit in which contexts. This theme, carried through the later apologies and treatises for and against plays, poetry, and performance, is also reflected in the literature of the period in response to challenges to appropriate comportment. For example, Gosson's address to women against attending plays in *The School of Abuse*, like many other treatises of its type, is a warning against the questionable behavior aroused by the passions that plays allegedly effect, thereby attempting to encourage individuals to recognize and esteem the divine qualities he believed mankind must strive to emulate in a world fraught with vice and temptation.

Though Plato and Gosson suggest that the inward transgressive potential of the individual makes playgoing a simultaneously alluring and dangerous pastime with dire and far-reaching consequences, the specific criticisms and examples they offer for how this allurement functions are remarkably narrow. Principally, the argument relies upon a single interpretive condition in which audiences are capable of perceiving only that which is explicitly presented, thus foreclosing the possibility of alternative or multiple readings. Such arguments, in effect, suggest a unified or collective interior among members of a play audience who will all equally be driven to virtue or ruin depending upon the play's success in adhering to a particular, explicit moral code. This shared attitude toward plays and their audiences severely oversimplifies the complex

interpretive capacities of individual audience members to detect irony, judge between examples of "good" and "bad" behavior and outcomes, and anticipate various alternative narrative possibilities. Ultimately, Plato's and Gosson's distrust of plays seems motivated by fear regarding the refractory potential of the individuals who gather to watch, supposing them easily manipulated and driven to frenzy by provocative spectacle. What they fail to account for, however, is the function of individual inward capacity in assuring that staged narratives do not simply imprint out-of-control behavior and emotionality onto their spectators, but, as will be shown, instigate instead a complex system of interpretation in which to work through reactions to what they see and apply their own judgments.

Gosson's use of the vice metaphor to characterize the corrupting and immoral influence of performance narrative is especially ironic, then, as the medieval cycle and morality plays from which it originates are generally unambiguous in their presentation of virtue and the moral life as something hard-won through piety, temperance, and humility on the part of the individual. That spectators of plays are "taught by other men's examples how to fall" (108), as Gosson laments, is entirely the point: the vice figure exists, in other words, to demonstrate the danger and folly of vice, to make such behavior appear undesirable and ridiculous, and to encourage the audience to reflect inwardly upon and critique their own behavior.[11] To more closely investigate the various functions of "vice" as a figure invoked out of medieval drama by Gosson, as well as the general rhetorical concept of the moral/spiritual "fall" such figures precipitate, this analysis will explore examples from the two key medieval dramatic forms that have already been mentioned—the

[11] Of course, the effectiveness of such messages is entirely dependent upon the engagement of individual audience members with these rhetorical lessons. That spectators leaving a performance may emulate "bad" behaviors they witnessed is entirely possible, as Gosson fears. What he does not account for, however, is that such reactions to a play are not in fact mindless imitations but, even in their rejection of the moral intent of such narratives, speculative interpretive acts.

cycle and the *morality*. Further, the analysis will consider how staged representations of transgression in these early dramatic texts prefigure the problems of performance spectacle as Gosson defined them, as well as how they engage with the inward interpretive capacities of their audiences. "Cycle plays," also known as "mystery" or "miracle plays," are comprised of brief dramatic entertainments that enact, through episodic pageants, a sequence of chronologically arranged biblical stories that span the creation of the universe through biblical history and project forward to the Day of Judgment. Each pageant within the cycle comprises a discrete performance that effectively tells one part of the Christian history of the world, the sum of all the pageants within the cycles creating what Greg Walker calls a "Creation-to-Doom" sequence (6), encompassing a wide array of moral lessons.[12] The contemporary term "morality play" describes a set of dramatic entertainments that, among other things, are marked by their explicitly allegorical presentation of characters that personify abstract concepts or qualities in conflict with one another over a specific moral stake, such as the salvation of a universal hero.[13] While the purpose of both types of drama are to impart moral lessons through characterization and allegory in keeping with a liturgy of biblical tradition, their modes of doing so are markedly distinct, as are their treatments of the very themes of temptation, transgression, and moral forfeiture that Gosson invokes in his anti-theatrical pamphlets.[14]

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12 The four extant cycles include the York play; the East Anglican "N-Town" collection; the Towneley plays, now cautiously attributed to Wakefield, and the Chester play. Exact dates of composition and performance are uncertain, but estimations are given below.

13 The eponymous hero of *Mankind,* for example, strives to emulate the teachings of the preacher "Mercy" while shunning the workers of a third character, "Mischief."

14 Miri Rubin contends that the "creative tension" constituted by the performance of the cycle plays by "humble craftsmen" was a vital part of their wide appeal to diverse audiences. Further, "the vernacular religious plays spoke in a language of religion which most folk could understand, and further contributed to the elaboration and constitution of that

The dramas discussed herein have been chosen for their engagement with the themes of transgression and their representations of a divided or contentious inward condition that prefigures the representations of such concepts in the popular and aesthetic literatures of the approaching Renaissance. The first to be explored are the four initial pageants from the English cycle plays depicting the Creation and the Fall of the angel Lucifer. Although, as will be shown, these pageants prefigure the subsequent Fall of Man plays in each of the cycles through the shared themes of transgression and obedience, the narrative depictions of Lucifer's rebellious rejection of his lord are particularly significant given their necessary primacy in the performance of each cycle, as well as the moves they make to establish the stakes of fealty to a creator and the appropriate exercise of free will. Although these notions are also present in the Fall of Man pageants, the disobedience of Lucifer is noteworthy as not having been precipitated by an outside corrupting influence, demonstrating instead an inward, rebellious desire that is perhaps innate from his creation. The presentation of the four plays and their distinct interpretations of these events reveal the complex ways in which the playwrights and their audiences conceived of transgression, the capacity for dissonance between the exterior and interior of individuals, and the roles of individual subjects within overlapping systems of power and social responsibility. Next, a study of the moral play *Mankind* examines its complicated representation of the human condition as one fraught with competing physical impulses and spiritual desires. Ultimately, the depiction of Mankind and the various figures of vice against which he must struggle in the play to maintain his spiritual purity represents an important and often overlooked medieval

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language" (284). That the cycle plays, like the moral interludes, invoked and performed religious lessons in a common and accessible language is key to their function as a dynamic and lively popular literature, achieving its ends of religious didacticism uniquely infused with the entertainment of live performance. It was, Rubin concludes, "a focus for personal as well as authorised interpretation."

engagement with human subjecthood and the burden of free will in a world filled with temptations to sin.

English Cycle Drama: Transgression at the Birth of Creation

The fall of the angel Lucifer and his followers from heaven as punishment for prideful defiance and rebellion against their creator is one of a number of religious narratives that depict unwary or transgressively desirous individuals or groups that succumb to tragedy and loss through inappropriate choices and actions. A favorite tableau among the four extant cycles, the distinct versions of the Fall are prominently featured as the first installation that recounts the Christian creation myth. Because of the tale's familiarity, Lucifer comes to embody a culturally shared and widely recognized figure of impiety, the sin of pride, and the folly of vanity and ambition; though not generally recognized as a "vice" character, Lucifer's function in these plays, to render visible and readable the attributes associated with his sins, is certainly an essential part of his characterization. Ultimately, the differences in the cycle plays' presentation of the motives, contexts, and character interactions within this familiar tale serve to complicate the function of play spectacle and staged narrative as one of base appeals and mindless imitation. If such conclusions were accurate, after all, plays based on the same source material should be virtually identical, with only minor, topical differences in order to most effectively appeal to audiences. But in fact, these pageants represent wholly different interpretive styles that draw from a common source their own uniquely inflected set of stakes and moral messages against the transgressive behavior embodied by the figure of Lucifer. As such, they reveal an investment on the part of their playwrights in defining and representing the complex relationships between

Lucifer's inward character, the manifestations of his hidden vices, and his responsibilities to his maker and to the community into which he was born.

The fall of the angels story has become so familiar that it can be easy to overlook the absence of these events in the creation account given in the book of Genesis; it is, in fact, an apocryphal narrative pieced together from a number of disparate biblical sources and contexts that passed, very early in the history of Christianity, into traditional retellings. As Jeffrey Burton Russell has shown, the traditional characterization and story of Lucifer owes much to cycle plays of the Middle Ages, as the "efforts to achieve dramatic unity produced the first coherent chronological accounts of the Devil's activities from his creation to his final ruin" (245). One of the key biblical sources that influenced the concept of Luicifer is a reference, in the book of Revelation, to a great battle in heaven against a dragon, "called the devil and Satan,"[15] that resulted in his being "cast into the earth,"[16] together with his followers (12:7-9). The name *Lucifer*[17] appears earlier, however, in the book of Isaiah, which describes this figure—whom it does not specifically identify as either the devil or Satan[18]—as a prideful rebel who sought to

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15 Revelation 12:9 (*Geneva Bible*, 1587); "clepid the Devel, and Sathanas" (*Wycliffe Bible*, 1395); "*qui vocatur Diabolus, et Satanas*" (*Jerome's Latin Vulgate*, 405).

16 Revelation 12:9 (*Geneva*); "cast doun in to the erthe" (*Wycliffe*); "*projectus est in terram*" (*Jerome's Vulgate*).

17 lit., "I bear the light" (Latin: *lucem fero*); as, according to Genesis, the first action undertaken in the process of creation is the fashioning of light and its separation it from the darkness of chaos, the name suggests the extent of Lucifer's centrality in the original divine hierarchy and the process of creation.

18 The passage actually refers to the defeat of an oppressive king of Babylon (see especially Isaiah 14:3-4); popular interpretation, however, has connected it to the war of heaven described in Revelation, and the name *Lucifer*—which, in the pre-Apostolic Age, referred simply to the Morning Star—to Satan before his fall.

"be like the most high"[19] and was cast out for his hubris and ostentation (14:12-15). The conflation of these accounts and their inclusion in the traditional Christian history of the creation is significant because it provides a striking parallel to an event which *is* depicted in Genesis and to which Gosson also refers in his criticisms of the theater: the fall of mankind. The effect of inserting the tale of Lucifer, drawn from disparate and conjectural Old and New Testament sources, into the Genesis account of the creation of the earth and mankind's expulsion from Eden is to inflect the sum of these narratives with a moral lesson that teaches and nuances the dangers and "sin" of transgressive inward desire. Ultimately, the invitation to compare these forms of transgression also invites their interpretation as an allegorical portrayal of individual transgressive potential.

Though the opening pageants of each of the four extant cycle plays reflect similar moral lessons drawn from the biblical narrative of creation, each depiction of the "battle" over heaven described in the book of Revelation presents the transgressions and subsequent banishment of Lucifer and the other fallen angels differently. As such, each cycle targets a specific set of transgressions with its Lucifer pageant in order to come to and teach a particular conclusion about how and why certain behaviors are unacceptable. Each pageant, therefore, constitutes a different set of interpretive actions, drawn from the narrative tradition of Lucifer by the playwrights and players, as well as a different set of interpretive imperatives imposed upon the viewing audience through performance.[20] In the York pageant, for example, the crime of the

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[19] Isaiah 14:14 (*Geneva*); "be lijk the hiyeste" (*Wycliffe*); "*similis ero Altissimo*" (*Jerome's Vulgate*).

[20] R.W. Hanning cites four distinct "sections" or stages of the familiar story rehearsed in each version of the Lucifer pageants: (1) Deus's opening declarative speech, the creation of heaven and the angels, the angels' praise of him; (2) Lucifer's assumption of "an adversarial role" and the instigation of a division and/or questioning of loyalties; (3) Lucifer's

rebel angels is presented as prideful disobedience of a lord who explicitly demands strict fealty of thought and deed from his creations, and who pointedly threatens transgressors with pain and imprisonment. By contrast, the N-Town Lucifer is guilty of actively attempting to sow discord among the orders of the angels, claiming to be more worthy of rule than the creator and boldly demanding the worship and adulation of his fellows. The Wakefield/Towneley pageant emphasizes the continuity of the divine order established by Deus with the creation of the nine orders of angels, and suggests that Lucifer's crime is his attempt to incite rebellion through rhetoric, interpretation, and casuistry. Finally, the Chester Lucifer performs a calculated deception, feigning allegiance to Deus and delaying the revelation of his rebellious intentions until an ideal moment for action presents itself. Although the resulting punishment for Lucifer and his compatriots is virtually identical across these accounts, the differences in the crimes that precipitate it—that is, the unique elements of each pageant's presentation of these events—suggest a multiplicity of interpretations of the nature and condition of transgression offered in the cycles, and thus a range of perceptions about what constitutes punishable transgression.[21]

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banishment along with any rebel followers; (4) the denouement, including "heavenly comment on the foregoing crisis" and/or the transition to the next pageant in which humanity is created (27).

21 This sense of narrative disparity was also part of the contention surrounding the performance of such drama. Contemporary criticisms of the cycle plays pointed to similar problems of representation and reception similar to those identified by Gosson; *A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge*, for example, claims that such plays "reversith Crist" as well as "dissipline," blasphemously distorting the meaning and importance of the true miracles when performed. Among the charges is the suggestion that in "taking to" the biblical narratives "of oure fleyss, of oure lustis, and of oure five wittis," the substance of divine majesty in the miracles is necessarily diminished in representing such events on stage (57-62).

The York "Fall of the Angels" seems most concerned with articulating a notion of obedience that encompasses both thought and deed.[22] In its opening stanzas, Deus establishes order by imposing a hierarchy of creation, reflected in the placement of heaven on high, hell beneath all, and the earth in between. He explains that the angels he has just created will remain alongside him in the highest of these tiers provided that they are "stablill in thoghte," but also warns that those who are "noghte" will be "put to My presone [prison]" to suffer (32-4). Further, after singling Lucifer out as the highest and most beautiful of the angels, Deus makes a similar promise to preserve for him this station in heaven as long as he is "buxumly berande [bearing]," a phrase that suggests either behaving obediently and subserviently or possessing an obedient, subservient nature (42). Given this, Lucifer's transgression against these injunctions of obedience is depicted as an offense of the mind. In his first speech, he perceives himself "More fayrear be far" than his companions (55), and, in an echo of Isaiah 14:14, finally resolves that "Abowne ȝhit [Higher yet] sall I be beeldand [placed], / On heghte in þe hyeste of Hewven. / Ther sall I set myselfe full semely to seyghte" (89-91), soon after which he and his companions[23] are cast down into hell.

The delay of Lucifer's inevitable punishment in this staged version of the tale defines the critical moment of transgression—the point after which there is no possibility for Deus's mercy or forgiveness—neither as the expression of pride, the dissemination of rebellious ideology or

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[22] Though probably in existence much earlier, the first extant reference to a performance of the York cycle places it in 1376; the earliest surviving manuscript is generally dated ca. 1463-77 (Walker 5). Its first pageant, *The Fall of the Angels*, chronicles the events from the creation of the cosmos to the banishment of Lucifer and his followers to hell.

[23] Though nonspeaking companions to Lucifer may have been presented, only one, "2 Angelus Deficiens," is indicated in the speech prefixes. Following the expulsion, Lucifer is renamed "Lucifer, Diabolus in Inferno," and is joined by "2 Diabolus," who is likely the same companion from earlier after a similar transformation.

competing discourse, nor, importantly, any specific rebellious action or intention. As early as Lucifer's opening speech, he first begins to exhibit the vice of overweening pride and vanity, yet the punishment is delayed. Following this, one of the Cherubim speaks and repeats Deus's command that the angels remain "stabyll in thoughte" (64); Lucifer remains undeterred, yet still the punishment is delayed. A second angel, apparently spurred on by Lucifer's words, speaks out and imitates his prideful sentiments pertaining to his own beauty and power, and still the looked-for punishment does not come. It is not, finally, until Lucifer expresses his desire to place himself "On heghte in þe hyeste of Hewven" that the fall comes (90), and it is for this that, following their transformation into the devils of hell, he is finally criticized and berated by his compatriots: "Owte on þee Lucifer, lurdan [villain, wretch], oure lyghte has þou lorne [lost]! / Þi dedes to þis dole now has dyghte [have brought] us, / […] For thow was oure lyghte and oure ledar, / Þe hegheste of Heven hade þou hyght [promised] us" (110-14). The pageant, then, would seem to suggest that Lucifer's disobedience is forgivable until the point at which he presumes to challenge the divine hierarchy Deus establishes in the pageant's opening lines.

Strikingly absent in the York pageant is the device of Deus's seat or throne, either mentioned explicitly in the dialog or described in the stage directions.[24] The presence of this throne in the three other dramatizations moves the site of transgression out of Lucifer's mind and projects it physically into the performance space as a property with which the players can

[24] Though Lucifer does speak of "setting" himself upon high, there is no explicit reference in either the dialog or directions to his taking Deus's seat on the performance space or his placement in the divine hierarchy. Cf. his speeches in N-Town, "In evydens þat I am more wurthy, / I wyl go syttyn in Goddys se" (55-6); Wakefield, "[…] ye shall se, full sone onone, / How that me semys to sit in trone / As king of blis / I am so semely, blode and bone, / My sete shall be thereas was His" (99-103); Chester, "Above greate God I will me guyde / And set myselfe here. […] / Here will I sitt nowe in His steade, / To exaulte my selfe in this same see" (182-7); as well as the Latin direction in Wakefield prefixing Lucifer's first speech that translates, "Here God withdraws from his throne, and Lucifer will sit in that throne" (76).

interact. Thus, in these portrayals, Lucifer's crime is one of action: with the act of sitting in Deus's place, he moves beyond the crime of prideful thought and directly disobeys his creator by upsetting the order of the divine hierarchy, ostensibly thereby usurping his power. Lucifer's transgressive desire, these accounts suggest, is certainly a powerful motivator behind the rebellious action undertaken, but by itself is not sufficiently transgressive to warrant the punishment of expulsion that comes only after the deed of sitting is performed. Further, the other pageants seem to make a distinction between Lucifer's perceived crime as the harboring of excessive pride, desire, and/or rebellious ideas—one of *thought*—versus an open act of rebellion—one of *deed*. For the York pageant, however, there is no distinction between rebellious thoughts and rebellious deeds, and each renders the subject equally culpable.[25] The difference is considerable, as it alters the nature of the rebellion and the extent of the betrayal to collapse the inward "stability" of thought Deus demands with the performance of loyalty in actions that express that inwardness.

By contrast, the initial play in the "N-Town" cycle, "The Creation of Heaven; The Fall of Lucifer," presents Lucifer as entirely a creature of action.[26] Here, the initial crime is more explicitly related to the blasphemous claims to power and glory he employs in an attempt to usurp the reverence and devotion of the other angels. After a brief declaration of his nature and power, Deus creates heaven and populates it with angels, whom he claims to have brought forth

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[25] Cf. the collapse of deeds and thoughts in Matthew 5:28-9 as pertains to the sin of adultery: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of olde time, Thou shalt not commit adulterie. / But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adulterie with her already in his heart" (*Geneva*).

[26] The manuscript of the "N-Town" cycle is dated ca. 1500, but is likely a collection of material from earlier sources, at least some of which were probably intended for performance by a touring theater troupe (Walker 6). Its first pageant, *The Creation of Heaven; The Fall of Lucifer*, is an account of events from the moment of creation to Lucifer's expulsion into hell with his followers. Totaling a mere 82 lines, it is by far the shortest of the Lucifer pageants.

to be his servants "for my sake, / With merth and melody [to] worchepe my myth," promising that they "in hevyn evyrmore xal be […] / With myrth and song to worchip me; / Of joye þei may not mys" (32-9). Focusing primarily upon the joy and pleasure shared between the creator and his creations in an imagined economy of praise, Deus's opening speech largely omits the hierarchical details of nature found in the other pageants. Because of this, the power relationships between him and his subjects are greatly simplified: no mention is made of the division of the angels or of the separation of heaven from earth and hell; Lucifer is not identified as the brightest and most favored of the angels, and no thought seems to have been given to the possibility of transgression against divine authority. Moreover, the angels are directly instructed to perform their loyalty through acts of worship. Following Deus's 39-line opening speech, the angels obediently sing a brief *Te Deum* in reverence to their creator and are answered immediately by a blasphemous Lucifer in a willful misreading of their praise: "To whos wurchipe synge ȝe þis songe," he demands, "To wurchip God or reverens me?" Further, he insists the angels are guilty of blasphemy, as unless their songs are in worship of him, "ȝe do me wronge, / For I am þe wurthyest þat evyr may be!" (40-3). Given that he has not been mentioned or introduced prior to this speech, the pageant presents a Lucifer who is unique among the cycles in that he is not distinguished from his peers in beauty or power, never enjoys a special status in heaven, and, given that it is not until after his inflammatory speeches that the audience may even be able to identify him, is always already guilty of transgression.

Despite his blasphemies, however, it isn't until Lucifer actively begins to incite a division of loyalties among the other angels that he is cast into hell. Challenging the declaration of one of the "good" angels that Deus is "most worthy of magesté" (47), Lucifer in turn retorts, "A wurthyer lorde, forsothe, am I! / And worthyer than he euyr wyl I be." Then, in order to

demonstrate "evydens" of his worth, he sits in Deus's seat at the helm of creation and demands that the others worship him as their lord (53-61). This usurpation of the divine throne as legitimating evidence to support Lucifer's pretensions to power effectively transforms the rebellious act into a rhetorical argument in order to campaign for the other angels' reverence and loyalty. Significantly, it is not until others begin to agree with Lucifer and join his ranks that the banishment is executed; more than his refusal to engage in the songs of worship that Deus much desires, then, it seems to be the success of these rhetorical arguments in further thinning the number of loyal angels that makes his disobedience unforgivable. The pageant ends in a final spectacle of defiance as Lucifer answers Deus's condemnations with a second, though much more crude, rhetorical demonstration of "evidence" to simultaneously characterize both his attitude toward Deus's power and his concern at the punishment: "For fere [fear] of fyre a fart I crake! / In helle donjoon myn dene is dyth [den is ordained]."[27] Despite his lofty aims, the N-Town Lucifer's fall transforms him into a comic stock villain, reducing the effect of the rebellion to the sort of base humor at which both Plato and Gosson would surely have cringed.

While in some ways the N-Town account seems the most straightforward of the Lucifer pageants, it is also perhaps the bleakest given its refusal to define the power relationships of the subjects in heaven or to identify Lucifer at the outset as the favorite of the creator.[28] The effect

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[27] As Douglas Sugano notes, the "crake" of Lucifer's final gassy rebuff of Deus's "magesté" would perhaps have been amplified by the use of gunpowder to create an arresting stage effect both visual and aural, such as is called for in description of the devil character Belial given in the front matter for *The Castle of Perseverance:* "and he þat schal play belyal loke þat he haue gunnepowdyr brennynge [burning] in pypys [pipes] in his handys and in hys eyrs and in hys ars whanne he gothe to batayl" (EN 81).

[28] Jeffrey Burton Russell goes so far as to claim that "to set Lucifer apart is necessary to a view in which the evil is presumed to be focused in one malevolent personality rather than diffused through many. Many demons may exist, but the unity of the one Devil is necessary" (247). While the N-Town Fall play makes certain gestures to set Lucifer apart in his actions,

of these omissions in the pageant is to construct a universe that presents the question of morality in far more absolute terms than the other extant versions. The N-Town Lucifer, finally, is not the "Lucifer" of biblical tradition; never afforded his moment of power atop the divine hierarchy or his traditional role and title as the "light bearer" of heaven, he is always "bad," undertaking his antagonistic agenda toward Deus at the instant of his first spoken line. By refusing him this initial positive identity and function and instead portraying him in an immediately adversarial role, the pageant effectively presents him at the outset as "Satan," the fallen enemy of the heavens and of the creator. In the traditional tale, *Lucifer* becomes *Satan*—literally, "the adversary"—only after being expelled from heaven and installed in hell; the N-Town play deviates from the traditional characterization of this figure as one who, richly provided with physical beauty, authority among the heavenly choir, and the favor of the creator, hazards and loses all through misguided aspiration and a prideful, flawed interior. This Lucifer is, in effect, given neither the same motivation nor the opportunity for obedience as are his counterparts in the other pageants. Ultimately, the presentation of this initially flawed Lucifer characterizes him an individual amongst a throng of other undifferentiated beings whose sole purpose in an undefined social order is to worship their creator; as such, his position affords him very few possibilities for either earnest obedience or effective dissent. It is perhaps owing to this that the Lucifer of N-Town appears the most rash and quick to take action among those of the extant cycle plays, and why, finally, his closing scatological gestures are so coarse, visceral, and ineffective.

Though portions of the Wakefield cycle are known to have been adapted in part from the York play (Walker 6), its first play, "The Creation," diverges from this source significantly in its depiction of the relationships between the angels, and the debate that ensues between them in

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the characteristics and the stakes of the "evil" he embodies seem far less distinguishable when the favor bestowed upon him by Deus is only vaguely defined.

reaction to Lucifer's grab for power.[29] The play sets up the stakes of this debate early in Deus's opening speech, which, beyond the usual prefacing assertions of his power and nature, more specifically details the process of the creation he undertakes though a meticulous catalog of the first five days. Following this speech, the angels appear and one of the Cherubim give him a brief speech of thanks for their creation and in particular for "Lucifer so bright" who "may well height [be called] Lucifere, / For lufly [lovely] light that he doth bere" (68, 71-2). This act of praise singles Lucifer out as the most beautiful but also implicitly emphasizes the hierarchical structure in which he is placed. The ultimate effect is to heighten the severity of Lucifer's transgression when he finally challenges that order, as well as to intensify the stakes for the other angels in their reactions to it. As in the York Pageant, Lucifer's entrance is here marked by his immediate recognition of his own beauty and power, which in turn leads him to conclude that the "mastré" or rulership of heaven is his rightful charge (84). Upon sitting in Deus's vacated throne, Lucifer turns to his compatriots and asks them their opinion of his undertaking—"Say, felows, how semys now me / To sit in seyte of Trynyté?"—and asserts that he is "as well as him," their creator (104-5, 107). Four angels then step forward in response to this invocation, two "bonus" and two "malus," and a debate ensues.

Though it is hardly surprising that the good angels rebuke Lucifer's actions while the bad angels encourage him, the exchange is significant since each of their reactions represents an inward interpretive act provoked by Lucifer's transgressive spectacle. All the arguments in favor

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[29] The Wakefield or "Towneley" cycle survives in a single manuscript, generally dated ca. 1490-1510; no performance data survives—even its attribution to Wakefield has been questioned (Walker 6). Its first pageant, *The Creation*, though incomplete, apparently depicted events from the birth of the cosmos through the fall of Adam and Eve. The manuscript leaves off after the fallen Lucifer's resolution to obtain his revenge against Deus by bringing about the fall of mankind. Four leaves are then missing before the start of the second play, *The Murder of Abel.*

of Lucifer's claims posited by the bad angels focus on his outward beauty as justification for their support. The good angels, meanwhile, merely regard what he suggests as a logical impossibility: "that seyte may non angell seme," the first insists, "So well as hym that all shall deme" (112-3). This response, echoed by the second good angel, constitutes a refusal to be swayed by the outward show of Lucifer's imitation of authority, however persuasive and "fayre" his performance might be. More than this, the exchange between the orders of Wakefield angels is noteworthy because it reads much more like a didactic conversation between individuals than discrete, declarative, or chorus-like utterances that characterize parallel speeches in the other pageants. Here, even as they refuse to accept Lucifer's assertions, the good angels actively engage with the debate and even offer advice in the form of unheeded warnings against disobedient behavior. In its depiction of the angelic quarrel, the Wakefield pageant incorporates a metatheatrical or public debate scenario in which the various angels act as audience members that observe and interpret an identical performance spectacle; in the end, they present competing interpretations of the scene and predictions for the consequences of actions presented. Through this presentation of Lucifer's rebellion as a kind of "play," the pageant emphasizes the function of interpretation and debate in the judgment given to the "good" and "bad" angels and, subsequently, the reward or punishment reaped by each. Ultimately, such nuance reveals the limitations of Plato's and Gosson's attitudes toward the function of play spectacle, and emphasizes how each underestimates its potential for interpretive interactivity and moral engagement.

Lucifer and the Divided Self in the Late Chester Pageant

The surviving texts of the Chester cycle are generally thought to be the furthest removed in time from the other Medieval English cycle dramas, perhaps having been revised as late as the end of the sixteenth century.[30] Its "Fall of Lucifer" pageant dramatically changes the nature and stakes of the crime for which the title character and his followers are banished from heaven, offering a very complex and extensive representation of transgressive inward desire and rebellious ambitions, uniquely inflecting Lucifer's characterization with a capacity for calculated deception motivated by inward desire that is not afforded his counterparts in the other cycles. The pageant's first and most noteworthy divergence from the familiar tale is the introduction of "Lightborne," a second angel whom Deus singles out together with Lucifer as his favorites. As there is no extant biblical or dramatic precedent for a specifically named companion to Lucifer in the story of creation, Lightborne is a complicated figure whose precise role in the Fall is far from clear. The first of many connections between the two angels is the similarity in their names, both of which suggest Lucifer's traditional role before his fall as the bearer of the divine light.[31] Deus also addresses them together, "Nowe, Luciffer and Lightborne, loke lowely you bee" (68), in an explicit warning that they both remain humble despite their privileged place in the angels' hierarchy. This marks the only instance in the extant Fall plays in which any angel other than

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[30] Like the York cycle, the Chester play probably existed well before its earliest recorded performance, which dates it to 1422. The five complete surviving manuscripts, however, all date to ca. 1591-1607, well after its final performance in 1575 and following a period of "suppression" of the other cycle plays (Walker xiv, 7). Its first pageant, *The Fall of Lucifer*, gives an account of the first day of creation, including the birth of the cosmos and the expulsion of Lucifer and his followers from heaven.

[31] While "Lightborne" may represent a simple variation of the Latin *lucem fero* from which Lucifer's name derives, additional possible meanings include "carried by light," and/or "easily (lightly) guided," the latter usually said of horses (*OED*).

Lucifer is given a proper name or expressly elevated over the rest in the divine hierarchy.[32] The explicitness of Deus's warning to his favorites against pride, "For crafte nor for cuninge, cast never comprehension; / Exsalte you not to exelente into high exaltation" (70-1), is also unique among the cycles, and introduces both to the characters and to the audience the possibility of sin and transgression before mention is ever made of rebellion.

Yet more explicit is Deus's command that the two angels who he has "exalted […] so exelente" and "set […] next My cheare [chair]" (87-8) be not tempted to ascend to his seat at the helm of creation lest they incur a terrible punishment: "Touch not My throne by non assente [agreement]. / All your beautie I shall appaier [destroy] / And [if] pride fall oughte [at all] in your intent" (91-3); Lucifer's immediate reply is an assurance of his loyalty and reverence to his master's "greate godhead" that echoes the praises of the other angels and emphatically denies that either he or Lightborne could ever "exsaulte ourselves soe hie" (96-7). This initial depiction of Lucifer, therefore, stands in stark relief against his portrayal from the other cycles, in which he enters the stage already prideful and immediately eager to incite rebellion, divide the loyalties of the other angels, and undermine his creator's authority. Here, he is introduced as ostensibly obedient, humble, and penitent. Rather than entering the play space boasting of his beauty and perfection, as in the York play,[33] boldly appropriating and reinterpreting the other angels' songs

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[32] There are several angels mentioned in the Chester and other extant cycle plays of the Fall, but these are referred to collectively by the order to which they belong (*Angelus Cherabyn, Seraphyn,* etc.) or generically by their status or the order in which they speak (*Primus Angelus, Angelus Deficiens, Bonus, Malus,* etc.).

[33] "All the myrth þat es made es markide in me! / Þe bemes of my brighthode ar byrnande so bryghte, / And I so semely in syghte myselfe now I se, For lyke a lorde am I lefte to lende in his lights" (51-4).

of praise, as in the N-Town play,[34] or insisting upon his own right to rule the heavens, as in the Wakefield play,[35] this Lucifer instead imitates the speeches of the other angels in heaven that assure Deus of their loyalty, reverence, and gratitude. None of this, of course, proves to be long-lived: following Deus's exit, Lucifer immediately tears into a prideful boast, reminiscent of that from the York pageant, of his beauty and perfection, finally reasoning that since he is "wounderous brighte, / Amongest you all shininge full cleare,"[36] he need only sit upon the throne in Deus's absence to rise to the same level of power and authority (126-7). In this moment, the assurances of obedience that have gone before are revealed to be calculated deceptions to conceal the inward pride and rebellious intentions that have since become manifested.

The contradictory speeches made by Lucifer before and after Deus's exit and the context within which he and Lightborne are granted authority in the creator's absence complicate the presentation of the coming rebellion and the motivations behind it. When Deus first counsels them to resist being prideful of their singular beauty and privileged position within the divine hierarchy, he is also preparing for his departure, grooming them to govern in his stead as he goes off to continue the process of creation: "Loke that you tende righte wisely, for hence I wilbe wending [departing]" (72). In effect, Deus's orders against pride and ambition are couched within language that provides both a reason and the means for such transgressions. At the same time, Lucifer's initial assertions of obedience and humility seem a deliberate effort to mask the

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34 "To whos wurchipe synge ȝe þis songe, / To wurchip God or reverens me? / But ȝe me wurchipe ȝe do me wronge, / For I am þe wurthyest þat evyr may be!" (40-3).

35 "Syn that we ar all angels bright / And ever in blis to be, / If that ye will behold me right / This mastré longys to me" (78-81).

36 Here and elsewhere, the play collapses the idea of beauty with "light" and "brightness"; as the "bearer of light," then, Lucifer is naturally the most beautiful.

feelings of pride and ambition that he expresses soon after—to hide his true feelings and delay expressing or acting upon them until he believes he will be able do so without consequence or reproach. As such, the pageant adds to Lucifer's list of crimes an inward ambition for power and authority that explicitly transgresses Deus's command that he uphold the established hierarchy, as well as the deployment of an outright deception in an effort to conceal and further that desire. The effects of these additions to the Chester tale of the Fall are, firstly, to portray a Deus who more deliberately tests the integrity of his creations than do his counterparts, and secondly, to present a Lucifer whose initial behavior seems to affect loyalty but is soon after revealed to be a calculated, rebellious deception motivated by a treacherous inward desire for self-promotion.

Following Deus's departure, the more familiar, blustering Lucifer surfaces and, aspiring to the divine seat, attempts to entangle the other angels into his ambitious plans. In an exchange similar to that of the Wakefield pageant, Lucifer then follows his boasts and blasphemies by soliciting the opinions of the others regarding his stated designs; "What saye ye, angells all that bene here?" as well as an imperative reminiscent of that given in the N-Town play demanding their allegiance: "Some comforte soone now let me see" (132-3). The ensuing tableau is familiar in that he is rebuked consistently by the majority, who, cautioning him to turn from his designs and renew his allegiance to Deus, speak as collective voices from a chorus of the various angelic orders.[37] The voices of the "bad" angels, on the other hand, are consolidated into the lone figure of Lightborne who counters the warnings of the angelic throng with goading encouragement for his counterpart, "In fayth, brother, yet you shall / Sitt in this throne: arte cleane and cleare, / That yee may be as wise with all / As God Him Selfe, yf He were heare" (158-61). To this, moreover, he adds blasphemous comparisons that focus on outward

[37] Those specifically given in the speech tags are the Vertutes, Cherubyn, Dominaciones, Principates, Thrones, Potestates.

appearance of beauty: "Therefore you shalbe set here, / That all Heaven maye ye behoulde, / The brightnes of your bodie cleare / Is brighter then God a thousand foulde" (162-5). By urging Lucifer to usurp the divine seat, Lightborne engages much more directly with the commission of his sin than do his "bad" angel parallels in the other pageants, who tend only to give their passive assent to Lucifer's fancies, as in the N-Town and Wakefield plays, or, as in the York play, to imitate his language in thinking themselves beautiful and worthy of glory. Much more than simply acceding to Lucifer's claims or emulating his example, the language of Lightborne's responses embeds in its support a manipulative appeal to the former's vanity and aspirations that serves as the catalyst for Lucifer's transgressive thoughts to become transgressive deeds.

Given that his contribution to the debate between the angels and his encouragement of the rebellion in heaven add significant nuance to the transgressive register of the Chester pageant's depiction of these events, it seems crucial to reconcile Lightborne's placement within the divine hierarchy with his relationship to the familiar figure of Lucifer. On the most basic level, he seems a consolidated representation of the throng of "bad" angels who support or concede to Lucifer's aspirations in the other cycle plays, and so appears a separate and distinct entity. On another level, given the etymological similarity of their names and the fact that both Deus and the host of other angels address them collectively, the pageant seems to blur such distinction. Lightborne himself underscores the similarity between the two when, in response to Lucifer's initial assertions of loyalty to Deus, he claims that he is "marked of that same moulde" (102). Once Lucifer, following his companion's lone voice of encouragement, finally sits in the divine seat and demands that the other angels kneel and revere him, Lightborne remarks that he is "next of the same degree" and would be owed the same reverence "yf I mighte sit him bye" (194-5). This again suggests them to be distinct entities, both in their natures and in their placement

within a hierarchy of authority. As he continues in this fancy, however, he begins once more to collapse their identities in regard to the assumed sovereignty that they share over the other angels: "All orders maye assente to thee and me," he brags, "Thou has them torned [won] by eloquence. / And [If] here were nowe the Trenitie, / We shulde Him passe [surpass] by our fullgens [brilliance]" (198-201). In this construction, Lightborne acknowledges a sort of labor in Lucifer's attempts to persuade the other angels, as well as his physical movement to supplant Deus in the divine throne. That he considers himself owed similar reverence as his companion for these actions suggests two possibilities for understanding their relationship to each other. The first is that Lightborne, by comparing his encouragement of Lucifer's aspirations with the rebellion he finally undertakes, regards these acts as involving a similar sort of transgressive effort; as such, he seems to believe himself an equal partner in the rebellion and owed a share in the spoils. The second interpretive possibility renders literal the naming conventions and the insistence of Deus and the choir of angels to collapse the two together, imagining Lucifer and Lightborne as intrinsically linked halves of the same entity. Although both readings may be simultaneously possible,[38] the first on its own is conducive to an interpretation of the two angels as distinct beings, whereas the latter necessarily refutes this conception.

To read Lightborne as a similar but ultimately discrete being from the traditional Lucifer in the Chester play's version of these events is to complicate the traditional idea that the rebellion in heaven was a direct result of Lucifer's disobedience originating from his own pride and vanity. When read as a separate entity, Lightborne constitutes an influence external to Lucifer through his encouragement of rebellious thoughts that embolden him to take action. Taken in

[38] Such a simultaneous reading of these possibilities would contend that though the two are different halves of a divided entity, each half would carry out different symbolic roles and functions to their common benefit.

conjunction with the contrary advice offered him by the rest of the heavenly choir, Lucifer is presented with a more direct sort of dilemma than is portrayed in the other pageant accounts in which he appears much more steadfast and unambiguous. In fact, his introduction of moral conflict and the means of dissent into the divine hierarchy in these accounts is typically portrayed as one of the most criminal of his transgressions that ultimately earn him banishment. This reading portrays Lucifer more as an indecisive figure caught in a moral dispute between conflicting forces than a straightforward and unambiguous aggressor or adversary. Such a characterization of Lucifer complicates the vice-like function of his representation mentioned above wherein he embodies a widely recognizable, culturally shared metaphor of specific sins. Caught as he is between Lightborne's incitement to rebel and the admonishment of the other angels to resist such temptation and folly,[39] Lucifer's role within this reading of the pageant comes to resemble much more closely the universal hero featured in the more explicitly allegorical morality plays.[40] Though Lucifer ultimately chooses inappropriately and falls, the fact that the pageant depicts him as an agent presented with fully articulated alternatives emphasizes the importance of deliberation and choice on the level of the individual and reinforces the Christian notion of the human condition as a constant struggle between worldly, physical desires or impulses and the lofty spiritual ideals of humility, temperance, and piety.

In the alternative interpretation of Lucifer as a split or bifurcated self, the Chester play explores the nature and consequence of intentionally deceptive inwardness through its portrayal of characters that visually represent and challenge the notion of interior and exterior selves, as

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[39] This, of course, would suggest the role of the angels in this exchange to be similar to that of "virtue" characters, who serve as foils to the vices—in this case, Lightborne—in their attempts to encourage the universal hero to hold fast to his faith and piety.

[40] Lucifer's Fall, then, will in turn anticipate and parallel the Fall of Man in the following pageant, wherein the serpent in the garden plays the role as vice figure to Eve.

well as the complex relationships between thought and deed, desire and action. As such, the two transgressive angels' names pose an additional thematic significance through the play's repeated association of "light" with "beauty": Lucifer, *he who bears the light*, is associated with outward appearance and show, whereas Lightborne, *he who is carried by the light*, represents the inward, hidden, yet necessary counterpart to the exterior. It is significant, then, that only after Lightborne's encouraging appeal to his counterpart's vain obsession with beauty does Lucifer decide to act upon his earlier hypothetical and blasphemous statement that "All in this throne yf that I were, / Then shoulde I be as wise as Hee [Deus]" (130-1). Lucifer's prideful boast is, at its core, a misreading of the relationship between surface and substance; in effect, his presumption that looking or "seeming" as beautiful as Deus is the same as fulfilling his function serves as the moment at which pride is "born" into the Chester play as a true sinful act and the crime for which the creator's forgiveness is thereafter impossible to give. Unlike the other pageants, however, Chester's Fall play is much more explicit in its articulation of the cause and inevitability of Lucifer's pride and resulting expulsion. "Alas, that pride is the wall[41] of beautye / That tornes [turns] your thought to greate offence," lament the Potestates[42] during the debate over the proposed rebellion, "The brightnes of your fayer bodyes / Will make yee to goe hense" (174-7). As such, the play identifies the transgressive, desirous interior—the role played by Lightborne—as that which precipitates or encourages unlawful action, and the propensity of the worldly exterior—that played by Lucifer—to gravitate toward sin and its expression. The natural trajectory of such unchecked desire, it finally concludes, leads to damnation.

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41 *fig.* "something functioning as or analogous to […] a wall, that which is a barrier to moral or spiritual good" (*MED*).

42 I.e., the Powers or Authorities, the third angelic choir within the second sphere of angels.

In their presentation of religious narratives already familiar to the audiences they entertain, cycle plays directly engage with complicated issues of inwardness, the discouragement of transgression, and the promotion of good works by deploying and nuancing culturally shared expectations of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors with examples associated with recognizable biblical characters. Lucifer, for example, and other recognizably "evil" characters appearing in the different pageants, come to embody cultural ideas of sinful behaviors or acts to be scorned and avoided in much the same way that the deeds of iconically "good" figures present positive moral archetypes to be emulated. While not "vice" and "virtue" characters in the most traditional sense, these figures do serve a similar persuasive, teaching function within their pageants, guiding audiences to recognize and judge positive and negative examples of comportment. Similarly, while not as explicit in this as are the moralities, cycles invite audience engagement with their narratives through allegorical extrapolations of their biblical lessons and characters to the spectators' own lives through moral *exempla* that incite them to inwardly reflect and evaluate themselves. By contrast, one of the most salient features of the morality play is the absence of familiar, biblically derived narratives and universally distinguishable heroes and villains of the cycles.[43] Instead, the representational power of characters and scenarios in these narratives stem from the fact that they are not immediately recognizable but instead function as emblems through which models of human behavior and abstract moral concepts can be

[43] Contemporarily, such dramas were known as "interludes" rather than "moralities"; the latter term did not carry the same generic significance as it does today. When the title page of *Everyman*, for example, describes it as a "morall playe," this is meant as an indication not of dramatic type, but rather, as Clifford Davidson et al. have suggested, that it "should be regarded as a literary or religious work rather than drama" (1).

deciphered.[44] An important characteristic of the morality, as has been mentioned already, is its more explicit application of allegorical characters and situations to affect the lessons it intends to convey. Perhaps most importantly, allegory within morality plays presents a decipherable manifestation of the typically invisible inward conditions of the universal hero, invoking and dramatizing the condition of humanity as a soul contained within a physical body driven by desires and urges that are harmful to its spiritual health.

Allegory and the Moral Interlude

The modern generic classification, "morality play," describes a set of non-cycle medieval dramas with thematically and formally similar allegorical attributes. Of the body of texts regarded over the last two centuries as "medieval moralities," the critical favorite—and, subsequently, the one most frequently taught in modern classrooms—is also one of the most recent and dubiously "medieval," chronologically speaking. *The Summoning of Everyman*, surviving in several printed editions ca. 1510,[45] presents a relatively straightforward narrative of the journey toward death and the quest for salvation of its eponymous hero who, like the protagonists of many other plays of this type, serves as a representation of a universal human figure with whom the audience is meant to relate. Over the last two centuries, *Everyman* has become the "popular archetype" of modern expectations of the morality play (Walker 281), and as a result is frequently taught to the exclusion of the other moralities and other examples of medieval drama more broadly. What appears most striking and even unusual about *Everyman* as compared to other morality plays is its depiction of a universal hero whose motivations and

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[44] As John Watkins has suggested, the morality entails the "subordination of the particular to the universal" as a method of representing shared attributes of an entire society (767).

[45] Which, in turn, are probably translations of an earlier Dutch original, *Elckerlijc*.

desires are not characterized by inward conflict or the fundamental dilemma of a divided, inconstant nature.[46] The absence of these issues, and, indeed, of any established vice characters within *Everyman*—a play that has often been regarded as archetypical of a dramatic category that otherwise teems with them—necessarily affects how such characters are perceived by modern readers, spectators, and critics when and if they venture to explore other dramas of this type. Ironically, the effect of such critical and pedagogical tendencies has been to greatly oversimplify the representational power and nuance such characters can convey in performance or on the page. Unaccustomed, therefore, to the function and import of the vice character, audiences and readers of the other moralities may regard those they do encounter with skepticism and reproach; this condition is partly responsible for these plays being seldom read, scarcely performed, and frequently met with outright hostility by academics.[47]

The negative reception of other moralities engendered by this critical over-emphasis on *Everyman* has been perhaps the most pronounced for the play *Mankind*, ca. 1465-70, from the Macro manuscript.[48] As Kathleen Ashley explains in her introduction to the play, "*Mankind* was nearly universally condemned" by critics until the mid 1970s "as being a corrupt and unsuccessful morality play," owing to a variety of factors, including "accusations of plotlessness,

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46 Some opposition is suggested by the characterization of several physical attributes of Everyman, such as "Beauty," "Five Wits," etc.; their abandoning of him at the play's climax constitutes a diminishment of his faculties and raises the urgency of the death tableau it depicts. This is not precisely a depiction of inwardness, however, given the play's final emphasis on the soul's irreducibility and its merely temporal association with physical attributes. Everyman's loss of these faculties, finally, is not the consequence of a particular act or decision and, as such, is not an expression of inward conflict.

47 This tendency, in turn, has contributed to the popular overemphasis of the Renaissance, as distinguished from the "Medieval" period, as being marked by more explicit regard for notions of individuality, interiority, and selfhood.

48 Anne Brannan discusses the phenomenon of *Everyman*'s critical preferment over the other moralities in her article, "A Century of *Mankind*" (see esp. 11-12).

structural imbalance by too many vice figures, and corruption of the serious morality by pointless humor, obscenity, and unnecessary horseplay" (6-7). Though *Mankind* has received much more even-handed critical attention since this time, the disregard and disparagement it received from earlier critics is especially relevant to this conversation because of the ways that such criticism unwittingly engages with and reproduces many of Gosson's elitist criticisms of vice and transgression represented through dramatic spectacle. One of the more vitriolic examples of such criticism was supplied by R.W. Ingram in 1967, who, in attempting to extol the virtues of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* and rescue it from a similar critical obscurity, defends that play's use of crude humor by concluding that "[c]rudity can be a club with which to beat a certain frank bawdiness that is nonetheless much less to be maligned than the distasteful smut of such […] pieces as *Mankynd*" (267). Recognizable in these condemnations of the play's form and content is a critique familiar from Gosson's allegations regarding the inappropriateness of "obscene" topics and characters, viewing them as reasons to disregard plays altogether—or at least, in this case, those thought too "crude" to be worth attention. Such attitudes are especially regrettable in the case of *Mankind*, as its metatheatrical engagement of the audience with its moral narrative through such "crude" tableaux demonstrates a highly sophisticated deployment of dramatic allegory that was almost entirely overlooked prior to the 1970s. The play's wide array of vice characters work to tantalize the audience with pranks and cruelty to its eponymous hero and put his salvation in jeopardy. Thus, by encouraging spectators to enjoy and even take part in the transgressive spectacle, abuses, and attempts to corrupt Mankind, the play's vices implicate its audience members as unwitting, self-destructive accomplices to their own mistreatment and moral "fall" by proxy. Ultimately, *Mankind*'s dramatic engagement with the inward interpretive capacities of its audience members and the extent to which it attempts to

incite them to "bad" behavior by confronting them with spectacles of unruly behavior anticipates nearly exactly the anxieties of performance spectacle Gosson addresses over a century later, but applies the effects of this engagement to entirely educative ends in keeping with the precepts of biblical tradition and liturgy.

The first of many such instances of the play's allegorical meta-performative audience engagement is the staged interruption of a solemnly delivered opening sermon that introduces the theme of human frailty and propensity for distraction. After Mercy, the play's lone virtue character, preaches this message to the audience for 44 lines, a second character, Mischief, intrudes with mocking jests and insults. His interruption necessarily disrupts the attention of the audience from the sermon's moral lesson, thus inducing the spectators to perform their susceptibility to distractions from righteousness and the enticements of sin. Striving to further antagonize Mercy and frustrate his efforts to deliver a moral lesson, Mischief conjures three new figures—Newguise, Nowadays, and Nought—before making his exit. These three, often referred to collectively in modern criticism as "the Worldlings,"[49] continue Mischief's antagonism through frolicsome dance and verbal cheek, but, unable to shake Mercy's rigid austerity, are ultimately chased away. Though clearly opposed to the recognizably "good" ideals introduced in the opening sermon, the comic antics and banter of Mischief and the three Worldlings present an undeniable allurement to the audience that contrast strongly with Mercy's dry, moralizing tone. This early moment of conflict between the virtue and vice figures anticipates the confrontation to come wherein Mankind will be tested, but it is even more significant in that it does so while instituting an inward dilemma for the spectators that divides their loyalties between enthusiasm

[49] This term invokes Mercy's retroactive interpretation of these three characters in a late moment of the play, identifying them as representing "the World," one of the three "adversaryis" of Mankind (884-5).

for the vices' entertaining, comic hijinks and the recognizably sound moral injunctions they violate through such indulgence.

The generally disdainful criticism and inattention that *Mankind* garnered until fairly recently seems to have been almost entirely a reaction to the nature of the transgressive spectacles it presents and the complicated articulation of its characterizations. Many critics before the 1970s simply haven't seemed to know what to make of the play's multiple vices, and often attributed their disproportionately high number to theatrical inexperience and/or artistic inadequacy on the part of the playwright. Sister Mary Phillippa Coogan's 1947 study is perhaps the earliest favorable modern treatment of the play, interpreting the seductive antics of the vice figures as enacting the ideological struggle between carnival and Lent at Shrovetide;[50] even here, however, she notes the logistical demands its performance presents,[51] admitting that "the principle of economy in number of characters that operates in such semi-professional performances as *Mankind* seems to have been violated." Though she deems it expedient to question why this might be, Coogan finally concludes that "This is a problem about which one cannot be definitive" (78). The extent to which the three Worldlings and their rowdy behavior are excessive or altogether unnecessary depends upon one's conception of the vice figure and its role within a culturally conceived notion of what a "morality play" must entail.

That *Mankind* fits uncomfortably into the modern cultural and critical expectation of the medieval morality play as patterned after the later and more widely read *Everyman* is not altogether surprising, but is certainly insufficient reason to discount the sophistication of its

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50 As Coogan concludes, "the play *Mankind* seems to have been written especially to encourage people to keep a good Lent" (55).

51 Of the play's seven roles, only one, Titivillus, can be doubled (with either Mischief or, more likely, Mercy), requiring a company of minimally six actors.

narrative approach in conveying a moral message, or in presenting its vices and its eponymous character's complex inward struggle. *Mankind* ultimately seems to have endured as much censure over the history of its critical reception as *Everyman* has garnered accolades. One possible reason for this may be the more straightforward (and, to the modern reader, less taxing) representational strategies of the latter and the comparatively transparent nature of its allegory. Which is not to say "simplistic," of course—only that the allegorical characters of *Everyman* are more easily distinguishable from each other as broad categories or concepts than those appearing in *Mankind*. Critics frequently regard the three Worldlings of *Mankind*, for example, as superfluous precisely because they seem superficially identical in their contribution to the moral lessons of the play and therefore excessive in their performance of transgressive spectacle. By contrast, the nature and import of each character in *Everyman* and their relationship to its hero and his journey are explicitly rehearsed over the course of the play's action. One of the earliest of the medieval moralities, *The Castle of Perseverance*, is quite similar to *Everyman* in its allegorical presentation of character and moral themes; given that it is nearly a century older, it can seem tempting to shoehorn these plays into a teleological narrative of perceived dramatic sophistication that prefigures the birth of the renaissance playhouse. *Mankind*, however, offers quite a different take on the allegorical interlude and so resists this linear progression model. Ultimately, the critical patterns that have emerged in the early treatments of these medieval dramas may in fact suggest more about academic investment in the creation of and distinction between literary fields than the supposed quality of literary craft or the perceived "success" of such literatures in presenting moral messages and representing different types of transgressive action on stage.

The Universal Hero and the Divided Self

The danger Gosson identifies, in his *Plays Confuted*, of the moral "fall" resultant from corruption of the individual by sin and vice is one of *Mankind*'s key themes. As Mankind himself laments upon his first entrance, his existence is marked by a constant struggle between the desires and urges of his physical body—"that stynkyng dungehyll" (204)[52]—and his spiritual drive toward purity and the preservation of his soul; "Thys ys to me a lamentable story," he declares, "To se my flesch of my soull to have governance" (198-9). Mankind thus identifies the cause of his spiritual dilemma as the conflicted nature of his temporal existence, a sentiment that is shortly echoed by Mercy in his insistence that "ther ys ever a batell betwyx the soull and the body" (227). This tone of conflict in the play is pervasive, presenting the moral test of humanity as a series of confrontations between Mankind and a procession of variously nuanced vice characters that represent different registers of transgression, inwardness, and spiritual peril. With each successive confrontation, the vices raise the stakes of the transgression into which Mankind is manipulated. During his first exchange with the Worldlings, for example, Mankind's seeming triumph over their jibes and attempts to distract him from the tilling of his field is marred by what Lorraine Stock notes is a loss of patience, driving him to attack the trio with his spade and chase them offstage (392). Mercy's counsel to Mankind before this encounter warned that success at resisting the Worldlings' influence could be achieved neither quickly nor easily, and so advised him to affect "the grett pacyence of Job in tribulacyon" (286). Ill advisedly, however, Mankind allows himself to be provoked into violent action by his frustration at their incessant meddling and jeering; though he achieves the immediate result of driving the Worldlings away,

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[52] Cf. a similar sentiment voiced in the Book of Job; the connections between *Mankind* and the Job narrative are discussed at length below (see the section "Staging Vice and Virtue").

this is ultimately a "Pyrrhic victory" (Stock 394) given the transgressively wrathful motivation behind his actions.

Though employing such familiar morality play themes as the battle between the spirit and the body and the threat of a moral fall, *Mankind* intensifies the stakes of these lessons and the universality of its hero by implicating its audience in the antagonistic role of the vice figures. By enticing the crowd and engaging them with the comic horseplay and ill fellowship of Mischief and the Worldlings, the play works to make unwitting accomplices of its spectators who then help to frustrate Mankind's efforts to remain diligent and pious. The play's opening exchange between Mercy and the vices, for example, preys upon the audience's expectation of fun and entertainment in attending a play; providing instead a moralizing sermon, the play engineers a situation that invites spectators to quickly become frustrated and disinterested to the point that they may feel relief, and perhaps even cheer, at Mischief's sudden mocking interruption. In this, as Paula Neuss has suggested, the play's allegory develops a self-reflexive register that may even extend to implicating the audience in the sin of sloth or idleness simply by their very attendance. According to Mercy's exhortations "to be actively engaged in good works," she explains, "they should not be sitting (or standing) about idly" watching a play (45). As a result, spectators may harbor similar feelings of guilt and ill ease as those Mankind demonstrates upon his entrance at having been so effortlessly manipulated into scorning Mercy's sound moral advice, despite his being an obvious killjoy. Or, perhaps undeterred by his pontificating, they may instead reject the accusation and severity of Mercy's judgment, and continue to enjoy and implicitly support the hijinks and pranks of the rowdy vice figures.

The Worldlings' first interaction with Mankind reintroduces and intensifies this playful manipulation of its audience's engagement when Nowadays proposes that Nought lead the group

in what he misleadingly calls a "Crystemes songe" (332). While the verses at first seem to suggest a rollicksome yet harmless musical exchange, they quickly degrade into vulgar and even blasphemous crudity:

> Yt ys wretyn wyth a coll, yt ys wreten wyth a cole,[53]
> He that schytyth wyth hys hoyll, he that schytyth wyth hys hoyll,
> But he wyppe hys ars clen, but he wyppe hys ars clen,
> On hys breche yt shall be sen, on hys breche yt shall be sen,
> Hoylyke, holyke, holyke! Hoylyke, holyke, holyke! (335-43)

The song is treated as a sort of psalmic mockery, with Nought leading each of the double verses that are then repeated by a chorus of Newguise, Nowadays, and any of the audience that can be goaded into joining in. The final line of nonsense verse, as noted by Kathleen M. Ashley and Gerard NeCastro, is "clearly a profanation of the *sanctus* and the word *holy*" that imitates the chant of a church service while also providing a series of vulgar puns (EN 343).[54] Whereas the audience's engagement with Mercy and the other vices in the play's opening scene entangles them uncomfortably with the imputation of sloth and idleness, the effect of the Christmas song is to produce the first of several meta-theatrical dilemmas. Spectators, aware of themselves as members of a play audience, are likely to recognize that the "right" or "polite" thing to do is to comply with the actors' encouragements to join them in singing. As the song continues, however, and its scandalous content becomes more apparent, individuals who may feel shocked or "tricked" at being expected to repeat such lewd lyrics would then be faced with what Anne Brannen has called a "wickedly intelligent double bind" (17). The ensuing dilemma of whether or not to continue to repeat the lyric in spite of its content is one of individual inward morality vs. the outward show of spectator engagement and the implicit bonds of fellowship unwittingly

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[53] Repetitions of each line by the chorus have been omitted.

[54] Ashley and NeCastro suggest "hole-ly, hole-like, hole-lick, and hole-leak" as possibilities.

entered into by their initial participation. Finally, that audience reactions to this predicament would likely be divided is an essential part of the song's function to illuminate the variability, in theory and in practice, of individual spectators' relationships to the play's larger themes of morality and transgression.

Mankind's subsequent interactions with the play's vices introduce increasingly dire iterations of the Christmas song's moralistic "double bind" that at length expose the alarmingly precarious nature of man's salvation. Following Mankind's dubious victory over the Worldlings at their first encounter, Mischief re-enters alone, coaxes his fallen servants back into the play space, and schemes with them how, "towchynge the mater of Mankynde," they may "have an ende" (448, 50). After privately conferring, master and servants seem to agree upon a plan to invoke the aid of the devil Titivillus to solve their problem. Though Nought begins to summon him with a flute and is answered by a tantalizing call from within, the Worldlings ultimately delay Titivillus's arrival, refusing to bring him out until they have raised a sufficient sum of money from the audience. In this, the play again forces its spectators into a morally ambiguous predicament: this time, between their obligation as patrons to compensate the actors for the performance and the moral impropriety of paying what is essentially a bribe to conjure a devil on their behalf.[55] After the collection plates have received their due fill, Titivillus enters with much rowdy pomp and comedy.[56] Instructing the Worldlings to "go and serche the contré" and see "yf ye may cache owghte [steal anything]" (493-4), he makes himself invisible and sets to the

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[55] Additionally, the tableau seems to blasphemously echo elements of the mass service, specifically the passing of the collection plate and the function of transubstantiation within the communion sacrament to "conjure" the physical body of Christ.

[56] As noted by Ashley and NeCastro, Titivillus is the clear comic star of the show given his "trickery, wild dress, and humor" (EN 454), a fact that further heightens the play's investment in tempting its audience to assent to the Worldings' request for money in spite of the playful impropriety of offering a bribe in order to have a devil conjured.

task of frustrating Mankind from his labor and driving him to despair of salvation. Following a series of comic pranks that impede efforts to sow his field, Titivillus deflects Mankind's efforts to pray first by inducing an uncontrollable urge to relieve himself, then stealing his prayer beads after he exits to do so, and finally putting him into a heavy sleep upon his return.

Fully visible and audible only to the audience, Titivillus's jokes and tricks against Mankind present a distinctly more enticing spectacle than those heretofore performed by Mischief or the Worldlings; moreover, in the process of witnessing this interplay, the members of the audience unwittingly enter into a third and altogether more chilling moral dilemma that unfolds as they are confronted with the consequences of their similarly invisible, inward complicity in the vices' transgressions and the moral corruption and spiritual fall of the play's hero. While Mankind sleeps, Titivillus's final trick is to make him despair utterly of salvation by giving him a vivid dream that, upon waking, causes him to believe that Mercy has been hanged for having, as he suggests, "stown a mere" (595).[57] Further, he adjures the sleeping Mankind to "aske mercy of New Gyse, Nowadays, and Nought," insisting that "Thei cun avyse thee for the best" (602-3). Mankind awakes just as his tormenter departs and, distressed at his what he believes is the truth of his dream, resolves to join with his former enemies. The dire consequences of this proposed alliance become increasingly clear as the Worldlings return from their thieving escapades through the countryside and come together to rehearse the variously

[57] Upon waking from the dream, Mankind cries, "Whope who! Mercy hath brokyn hys neke-kycher, avows, / Or he hangyth by the neke hye uppon the gallouse" (607-8), a sentiment that interprets Titivillus's suggestion by curiously collapsing Mankind's own anxieties regarding suicide, perdition, and hypocrisy.

fruitful ill deeds each has undertaken during their brief absence.[58] Newguise describes having been arrested, along with Mischief, for the attempted stealing of a horse; but whereas his master was able to preserve himself from the gallows by reciting the "neke-verse"[59] (619), Newguise claims to have actually been hanged, having narrowly escaped death only because the rope of the hangman's noose—which he now wears like a neckerchief—snapped in half during the execution. Nowadays returns with an armload of goods he claims to have stolen from a nearby church and invites his compatriots to dine with him. Meanwhile, Nought has proven an unsuccessful thief and so throws himself upon the mercy of his companions, claiming "I kan not geet and I shulde sterve" (637).

Until this point, the Worldlings have been presented as innocuous and amusing buffoons; upon their return from the country, however, the alarming magnitude of their moral depravity becomes increasingly visible beneath the veneer of comedy when the ramifications of their inward sins manifest as transgressive and even criminal action. The consequences of Newguise's bungled robbery attempt is chillingly apparent with the memento mori of the broken noose now added to his attire; Nought, meanwhile, confesses himself unable to sustain himself even by dishonest means and had given himself over to starvation. The only companion in the group to evince any sort of industry is Nowadays, but even this is tarnished with his blasphemous raid of a church that implies the corruption of the "brede and wyn" on which the

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[58] Notably, there is a clear incongruity of time implied; the events described by each of the vices could not possibly have transpired in the short span of minutes in which Titivillus's assay of Mankind has occurred.

[59] That is, claiming the benefit of clergy: the recitation of a Latin biblical verse could, if invoked, preserve the life of a convict on his first offense and commute the sentence from death to imprisonment.

trio dines, which presumably was intended for the communion sacrament (633).[60] Once the source of jocular, albeit perhaps morally questionable enjoyment for the audience, the various ethical and practical failings of the Worldlings render them pathetic figures through the excessiveness of their idle lifestyles and moral depravity resulting from inward apathy and their reluctance to engage in virtuous labor. With this shift, the play also invites the audience to inwardly reflect upon the extent of their complicity in the Worldlings' debauchery and exposes the ease with which one might be lured into collusion with them and their sins.

Given that the failings and misadventures described by the Worldlings are, in each instance, the result of apparent simplicity and foolishness, the trio may still command their former comic allure for some of the audience despite their new pathetic affect. This feeling is quickly dispelled, however, once Mischief enters of the scene, his arms and legs shackled in broken irons, and gleefully brags that he has escaped from prison by murdering his jailer, subsequently molesting the jailer's wife,[61] and, finally, stealing a number of valuable goods from their home. Here, as the shocking magnitude of the vices' transgressive potential is made visible, so too is the extent of Mankind's desperation resulting from the false dream imposed upon him by Titivillius. With this, the "fun" of the play would seem to be over: no longer disguising the nature and stakes of the hero's or spectators' moral dilemmas with boisterous and

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60 What Nowadays has stolen from the church is not precisely clear. Ashley and NeCastro suggest that it is food, rendering literal the reference to "ale, bred, and wyn." This would also seem to add urgency to Nought's entrance immediately thereafter lamenting of his impending starvation. Bruster and Rasmussen, on the other hand, suggest goods such as "plate and/or candlesticks" that Nowadays and the others would presumably sell to pay for the proposed meal (FN 634). Even in the latter case, however, the blasphemous corruption of the communion meal would seem to be implied.

61 Or, as Mischief boasts, "halsyde in a cornere" (644). As the literal sense of "halse" indicates "embrace or caress […] sexually" (*MED*), Ashley and NeCastro provide "ravished" in their gloss. Meanwhile, Walker notes that what Mischief describes "sounds very like the rape of the jailer's wife" (259).

beguiling spectacle, the play forces the audience to witness Mankind's naiveté propelling him deeper into a moral and spiritual dilemma with consequences that they, for the first time, are fully able to perceive. Mankind's request for mercy from the very same figures who have just before demonstrated themselves to be thieves and lowlifes, unconcerned even by Mischief's jeering claim that "Of murder and manslawter I have my bely-fyll" (639), advances a complicated dramatic irony aimed at provoking a sense of growing unease and culpability amongst the audience. This discomforting pressure increases during the ensuing exchange in which the vices further torment the hero, stealing and mangling his jacket,[62] and pressing him to swear allegiance to them by agreeing to commit a litany of major sins, including lechery, theft, and murder. As the audience may now clearly see the danger into which Mankind unwittingly enters, so too may they perceive their own roles in ensuring his sin and imminent fall through their encouragement of and participation in the vices' pranks—notably the singing of the Christmas song and payment of the bribe to conjure the devil Titivillus.

The sinister implications of audience involvement with the vices' increasingly malevolent designs reach their climax when Mischief, aided by Newguise, attempts to drive Mankind to render visible his despair of salvation through the act of suicide, a further use of dramatic irony given the audience's likely recognition that, as Coogan notes, "Suicide is the one insuperable barrier to the mercy of God, for it represents a final rejection of it" (70).[63] Having received his

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62 The cutting of Mankind's jacket by first Newguise and then Nought into progressively smaller "styles" of garments seems an allegorical representation of either or both Mankind's faltering resistance to the temptations of sin or the deteriorating condition of his soul upon allying himself with the vice characters.

63 As Coogan notes, "[t]he only other extant play in which the character Mischief appears is [John] Skelton's *Magnyfycence*" (60), a moral interlude written ca. 1515. Here too Mischief seems to be strongly associated with suicide. Accompanied by Despair, he introduces himself to Magnificence: "I Mischief am, comen at need, / Out of thy life thee for to lead"

oaths of allegiance to the Worldlings' sinful lifestyle, Mischief explains to Mankind that Mercy is "fast by" and wishes to speak with him (799), whereupon Mankind calls for a rope in despair and shame of what he has done. It is only when Mankind is literally on the brink of death—when Newguise demonstrates to him how to fit the noose around his own neck—that Mercy finally intercedes and chases the vices away. In this fashion, the play works to affect a reversal of the audience's perception of Mercy. While at first he seems a dry and pedantic bore starkly juxtaposed with the fun and revelry presented by the Worldlings, by the end his moralizing sermons seem a welcome break from the chaotic melee of the vices' antic disregard of decorum and fellowship.

Following the departure of Mischief and the Worldlings, Mercy comforts a distraught Mankind and the two renew their former friendship, ending the play with what is largely a reiteration of the opening sermon on human susceptibility to sin and the subsequent necessity of asking for God's mercy to achieve ultimate salvation. In a notable addition to his former message, however, Mercy explains the significance of the "thre adversaryis" of mankind that the vices represent: "the Devell, the World, the Flesch and the Fell" (883-4).

> The New Gyse, Nowadayis, Nowght, the World we may hem call:
> And propyrly Titivillus syngnyfyth the fend of helle;
> The Flesch, that ys the unclene concupissens of your body.
> These be your thre gostly enmyis, in whom ye have put your confidens.
> Thei browt yow to Mischeffe to conclude your temporall glory,
> As yt hath be schewd before this worscheppyll audiens. (885-90)

This explanation, while certainly helpful in attributing allegorical significance to the chaotic transgressive spectacles these characters present throughout the play, is still far from tidy. Although the description of Titivillus and the three Worldlings as embodying Mankind's

(2,310-1). "Thou art not the first himself hath slain," he assures the despondent hero, "Lo, here is thy knife and a halter; and or we go further / Spare not thyself, but boldly thee murder" (2,317-9).

"enemies" seems ostensibly clear, the rationale of requiring three actors to portray one of these figures while seeming to neglect representation of the third, "the Flesh and the Fell,"[64] is puzzling. Further, as W. K. Smart laments, "Myscheff, one of the chief forces of evil, is not included in the three enemies—indeed, there is no place for him" (312). Something seems to be missing to explain the necessity and curious deployment of so many vice characters and to justify the apparent breach of "the principle of economy in number of characters" (Coogan 78) without assuming, as did many of *Mankind*'s early literary critics, the compromise of the play's moral messages and/or inferiority of the playwright's skill.[65]

Staging Vice and Virtue

Ultimately, the difficulty many modern readers and spectators experience in deciphering the rhetorical significance of *Mankind*'s characterization and moral import may be a result of attempts to apply an incongruous allegorical model to their reading. For more than a century, the concept of allegory and its function in morality plays has been informed and limited by the critical and pedagogical overemphasis of *Everyman*—which, while not unsophisticated, is certainly less nuanced in its presentation of this literary device. The differences in these plays' deployment of allegorical characters may have a great deal to do with their respective audiences and the ends their narratives seem to enact. While little definitive evidence can be levied as to whom each play would have appealed and why, the appearance and function of comedy and moralizing content in each is quite different. For *Mankind*, the humor is an important part of the

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64 I.e., "the whole body; bodily form or appearance" (*MED*).

65 Writing in 1916, for example, Smart finally concludes *Mankind* to be a "sham morality" with only a "slight morality framework," so written as to provide an "excuse for the production of the play" to appeal to and divert simple "country audiences" with low humor and, ultimately, to bring their money "into the company's treasury" (312).

dramatic function and moral messages the play works to impart; by contrast, the tone of *Everyman* is much more serious, and comedy is employed only sparingly. While both plays make use of biblical verse and references to moral teachings in their plots, the presentation of *Mankind*'s narrative is more evocative of a sermon, its opening and closing scenes bookending an exemplum of the themes of patience and mercy in practice. *Everyman*'s narrative, as Clifford Davidson, et al., have claimed, "is designed to present an existential experience of imaginative participation in facing the inevitable" (9), rather than imitating the function of a homily. As such, the plot of *Everyman* would seem to demand a more straightforward and explicit presentation of its allegorical characters so as to maximize its readability and emotional appeal. Given *Mankind*'s themes and its engagement with individual inward capacity, on the other hand, the fact that the narrative works to obscure the full allegorical significance of its characters until the very end seems an important part of its sly engagement of the audience.

Mankind does appear to employ similar modes of allegorical characterization and naming conventions as those familiar from *Everyman*—notably in the opposition of Mercy and Mischief—but whereas *Everyman*'s allegorical characters—Fellowship, Goods, Knowledge, Beauty, Strength, etc.—represent physical embodiments of the concepts associated with their names, those of *Mankind* resist such obvious signification. Mercy, for instance, does not bestow or enact the quality of his namesake, but rather counsels Mankind to petition for and to be worthy of God's mercy. At the same time, Mischief's interest seems to be in introducing obstacles to complicate and thwart Mankind's intentions to overcome the challenges of his earthly existence.[66] In their endeavors throughout the play to effect distinctly opposite ends for

[66] The term *mischief,* as Bruster and Rasmussen assure, was "a more serious word in the fifteenth century than today"; they note its frequent use in translations of the Hebrew Bible to "[betoken] both aggressive malice hidden from view and […] dangerously loose speech"

the universal hero, these figures most closely resemble the familiar stock functions of virtue and vice characters: Mercy labors to fortify and encourage his salvation while Mischief calls upon his servants to impede his progress and bring him to ruin. Additionally, neither of these characters' names specifically invoke the traditional opposition of seven virtues with the deadly sins of Christian moral tradition.[67] Though Mercy and Mischief are certainly opposed in intent, the antagonistic interaction between them does not resemble a familiar conflict between associated vices and virtues that could well serve as an obvious source of dramatic tension.[68] The allegorical characters' names in *Mankind,* finally, seem not to indicate their respective roles within the narrative logic of drama so much as the driving motivations that guide their behaviors and influence their interactions with others. Ultimately, the motivating forces behind each of the characters as suggested by their names adds significant nuance to the play's moral message, particularly in the representation and articulation of its many vices that present and critique different registers of inward desire and transgressive behavior.

Though the characters Mercy and Mischief, as mentioned above, are opposed in their motivations concerning the central hero of the play in a way that seems to align with modern expectations of virtue and vice characters, these figures and their opposition seem much more

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(87). Further, as the *MED* suggests, it could convey "the hardship, havoc, or stress of war" as well as "wickedness, wrongdoing; evil, vice."

67 There are multiple sets of seven virtues that can be opposed to the seven vices, including the "seven gifts" of the Holy Spirit (wisdom, understanding, wonder, counsel, knowledge, fortitude, and piety), as well as the three "theological" and four "cardinal" virtues (faith, hope, love, and temperance, prudence, courage, justice), and others. Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, an early and influential Christian prose allegory (ca. 410 CE), presents the oppositions as charity/greed, chastity/lust, diligence/sloth, humility/pride, kindness/envy, patience/wrath, and temperance/gluttony.

68 In *Perseverance*, for example, several of the virtues and their opposed sins are embodied and positioned in thematically significant relation to each other on "skaffolds" that surround the central play space.

complex and developed than the chorus of competing voices taken up, for example, by the "good" and "bad" angels of the Lucifer cycle pageants. Additionally, as W. Roy Mackenzie has noted, Mercy's depiction in *Mankind* is a departure from the usual convention of representing this figure as female, "the most potent of the four daughters of God" (68).[69] Though Mackenzie goes on to assert there to be "obvious reasons why the divine quality of mercy […] should be personified as a man rather than as a woman" in *Mankind*, he does not elaborate further. In her study of the play, Coogan suggests these reasons lie in Mercy's role in the narrative, which she concludes is that of a confessor or priest, given his counsel to Mankind, as well as his interactions with the vices, all of whom seem to recognize him in this role (6). Less obvious, apparently, is the role of Mischief, who Mackenzie notes is the "chief Vice," but to whom he does not assign a specific allegorical import as he does the other characters, instead asserting that he represents "all sin generally" (67). Citing several examples of Mischief's interactions with the other characters,[70] Coogan suggests that he could, like Mercy, be presented in the garb of a priest or cleric so as to "heighten Mischief's role as a foil of Mercy by representing dramatically the idea that a bad priest is almost as powerful to pervert a man as a good priest is to convert him" (64). This reading of the two characters seems to align with the similarly indirect nature of their influence over Mankind and their opposing relation to each other: Mercy counsels

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69 This representation is present in *Perseverance*. Here, the other three "daughters"—that is, the divine attributes of God—are Truth, Justice, and Peace; at length, the four daughters intercede on behalf of Everyman (*Humanum Genus*) and plead with God for his salvation. Mercy's characterization as male in *Mankind* is suggested on several occasions when he is referred to as "father" or "fader(e)" by Newguise, Nought, Mischief, and Mankind.

70 Mercy addresses him as "brother" (53, 68) and "good brother" (64) during their initial confrontation. The Worldlings refer to him repeatedly as "master" (429, 432, 662, 671, 679), which they also use to address Mercy, though perhaps derisively (143, 152). Coogan also points to Mischief's successful recitation of the "neck verse" in saving him from the gallows as further evidence to support this reading (63).

diligence and patience in the pursuit of salvation through the mercy of God, whereas Mischief uses his cronies to encourage idleness and provoke Mankind to wrath, driving him to an abject despair that ultimately leads him to contemplate suicide.

While the presentation of these two figures as agents of divine and demonic powers is a familiar and easily accepted feature of the vice/virtue dynamic, this relationship complicates the import of their interactions with the other characters. In the battle over the condition and ultimate fate of the human soul, Mercy and Mischief, the play seems to suggest, cannot precisely be regarded as "human" characters in the same way that Mankind certainly is. Even the Worldlings, whose allegorical names perform functions similar to those of Mercy and Mischief, are endowed with more fully articulated human characteristics, notably the capacity to transgress.[71] This idea becomes most visible through the unspoken limitations placed upon both Mercy and Mischief in their efforts to achieve the desired ends their names suggest. Though Mercy, for example, takes great pains to advise Mankind to follow the path of righteousness, and is finally able to save him from the gallows, he does not—perhaps *cannot*—do the like for the three Worldlings who enter upon Mischief's command and attempt to distract Mankind from his prayers with their taunts and sportive antics. Mercy suggests that these figures have given themselves over to idleness and sin and are beyond his help; regarding the fate in store for them, he forecasts that on the day of Judgment, "Then shall I, Mercy, begyn sore to wepe; / Nother comfort nor cownsell ther shall non be hade; / But such as thei have sowyn, such shall thei repe. / Thei be wanton now, but then shall thei be sade" (178-81). Unlike Mankind, of course, the Worldlings do not explicitly ask for Mercy's advice and help, nor do they acknowledge

[71] Though, notably, they do not exhibit the capacity for a complex nature or divided self.

themselves as sinners or affect fear at the threat of eternal damnation.[72] Mankind's corruption at the end of the play and his own subsequent close call with the hangman's noose seem not to forestall his absolution, chiefly because it is motivated out of personal shame and the awareness of having sinned. It is for this reason that Mercy is able to enter the play space, intercede in the hanging tableau, and save both Mankind's physical body and his eternal soul from annihilation. He is powerless, however, to directly affect or alter Mankind's behavior or to exercise a similar spiritual rescue of the Worldlings given the extent of their moral forfeiture.

Mischief displays similar limitations in his attempts to ensure Mankind's downfall, and it is for this reason that he must employ first the Worldlings and, later, Titivillus in his attempts at achieving his ultimate goal. In fact, he seems unable to interact with his target at all until the mock trial during which Mankind swears allegiance to the three Worldlings, after which Mischief wastes no time in trying to drive him to despair and suicide. Even in this, however, his malicious intent takes the form of a perverse persuasion; rather than the overt action of placing the noose around Mankind's neck, Mischief encourages him to do it himself through deception regarding Mercy's integrity. To bring Mischief's design to fruition, in other words, it is not enough just for Mankind to die—he must preclude his salvation by instigating his own demise. This results in a moment of tension-breaking comedy when Newguise, called upon to demonstrate—"Lo, Mankynde! Do as I do; this ys thi new gyse. / Gyff the roppe just to thy neke; this ys myn avyse" (804-5)—nearly hangs himself a second time in an attempt to flee from Mercy, who suddenly enters with a large "bales" or whip and begins to drive everyone but

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[72] Importantly, however, Mercy's comments suggest that the trio do in fact have souls to be either saved or damned depending upon their behavior and steadfastness. As such, while they present or figure particular types of sin, they differ from Mercy and Mischief in that their characterizations suggest them to be tied to the material world and the realities of temporal human existence in a way that the "brothers" are not.

Mankind off the stage. As with Mercy, Mischief's endeavors seem ineffectual without the will and consent of the person upon whom the intended designs are focused.[73]

Given their import and allegorical relationship, the roles of Mercy and Mischief are key to the play's moral significance; as such, consideration of their presence within the play space and their interaction with the other characters is especially critical to successfully conveying these messages. In discussing his involvement in the 1982 *Mankind* production mounted by The Medieval Players, Carl Heap adamantly condemns what he describes as the tempting impulse in the play's early moments "to play Mercy as a pompous and boring old fool," claiming that such an interpretation "would jeopardize what appears to be a very fine balance in the play" (94). Though Mercy, the brunt of many a joke by Mischief and the Worldlings, is certainly an overly formal and perhaps stuffy pedant, the gravity of his motivation and intent is crucial to his function as foil to Mischief, the magnitude of the narrative's climax, and the ultimate message of the play. For the morality to be effective, therefore, Mercy and Mischief must offer earnest and plausible foils to each other, both in their dialogue and in their stage presence.[74] Additionally, Heap's performance explication notes a peculiar ambiguity in the timing and purpose of Mischief's entrance and exits, a feature of the character's stage presence easily overlooked when

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[73] Mischief's account of his travels—including murder, fornication (rape?), and thievery—seems initially to discount these limitations. However, given that each of these offenses constitute attacks on the *bodies* of the jailer and his wife instead of their *souls*, the same logic may not apply. "Human" or not, Mercy and Mischief do seem to embody physical form: each, for example, are tripped and chased at various moments in the play. Further, the notion that Mischief would employ his "body" to bad ends seems in keeping with the play's moral.

[74] Early critical censure and invective levied at *Mankind* often overlooks this interpretation, regarding Mercy and his potency as derisively as do the vice characters; viz., Smart's commentary, above (312-3), as well as Mackenzie's conclusion in 1914 that "the religious teaching of the play is stilted," making it "a favorite with those who loved a joke more than a sermon" (65). Ironically, such readings participate in the same overemphasis of the "lewd" content of *Mankind* that many of these scholars claim to abhor.

the play is read. Particularly jarring is his apparent absence during Mercy's initial interaction with the Worldlings and, later, the summoning of Titivillus; despite his established presence immediately prior to each scene and his personal stake in the events that follow, neither explicitly grants him a specific motivation to exit, either in the dialogue or the ensuing action.[75] Rather than emending these scenes with seemingly unmotivated exits, as do many modern editors, The Medieval Players' answer to this conundrum, according to Heap, is that in both instances, Mischief "is [still] there, but doesn't say anything, [… a] silent mocking observer" (96). Such an interpretation further nuances Mischief's role in the downfall of Mankind and the tactics he employs to secure it. In addition to his other functions, it casts him as an omnipresent agent of devilish surveillance who menacingly awaits the best opportunity to intercede in the action and secure the achievement of his designs.

Complicating the play's depiction of the human struggle with sin and vice still further is its presentation of its own universal hero within Mercy's list of deadly adversaries; in this, Mankind constitutes a divided self, at once hero and antagonist. Mercy's suggestion that the flesh, "the unclene concupissens of your body" (887), should act as his enemy recalls the early moment in the play in which Mankind introduces himself to the audience by calling attention to his conflicted nature: "My name ys Mankynde. I have my composycyon / Of a body and of a

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[75] One of these instances of silence occurs following the textual lacuna—a gap of about 70 lines resulting from a missing manuscript page (Bruster and Rasmussen 71). Though Mischief may have been directed to exit at some point during the missing text, his absence from the ensuing scene seems remarkable given that he has apparently called upon the Worldlings in order to redouble his efforts to harass Mercy. When next he speaks some 350 lines later—having not been given an explicit direction to reenter—he appears to have observed the preceding interaction of the Worldlings and Mankind, and offers no reference to or explanation of any preceding exit. In their adaptation of the play included in *Staging Salvation: Six Medieval Plays in Modern English* (at press), Matheson, et al., rearrange the placement of the opening scene to sidestep the problem of the missing text. Curiously, Mischief's direction to *exeunt* following Mercy's reentrance with his "bales" is the only indication in the original manuscript of Mischief entering or exiting the play space (810).

soull, of condycyon contrarye. / Betwyx them tweyn ys a grett dyvisyon" (194-6). Though framed in terms of soul vs. flesh, the division indicated is somewhat more complex given that the observation implies an inward capacity to reason and deliberate between mutually exclusive desires whose ultimate stake is the welfare of the soul. The first of these, borne through intellect and strengthened by piety, is to strive for spiritual perfection; the second, hampered by physical association with the flesh, is to seek the sensual desires of earthly pleasure. The conflict, finally, is not simply one between soul and flesh, but within the nature of human intellect to navigate the inward discord between the mental and spiritual faculties and the desires and impulses of the physical body—an effect that theatrical detractors like Gosson seemed to believe dramatic performance spectacle incapable of producing.

Shortly after Mankind's declaration, Mercy confirms his complaint by invoking a key passage from the Book of Job—"*Vita hominis est milicia super teram* [The life of man on earth is warfare]" (228),[76]—and counseling Mankind to imitate "the grett pacyence of Job in tribulacyon" (286). As Lorraine Stock notes, parallels like this one between the plot of *Mankind* and the Job story abound in reference to the biblical text itself as well as to Pope Gregory I's extensive commentary, *Moralia in Job*. Thus, in Stock's interpretation, the play contains an additional tropological register that specifically invokes biblical allegory in its dramatic enactment of a soul on trial. This reading aligns significantly with Mercy's teachings as well as Mankind's characterization of his body as a "stynkyng dungehyll" (204), the latter of which is a specific invocation of the Job story: "Therfor Sathan yede [walked] out fro the face of the Lord, and smoot Joob with a ful wickid botche [ulcer, swelling] fro the sole of the foot til to his top; which Joob schauyde [scraped] the quytere [discharge, pus] with a schelle [potsherd, shard of

[76] Cf. "*Militia est vita hominis super terram*" (*Jerome's Latin Vulgate,* Job 7:1)

broken pottery], and sat in the dunghil." (*Wycliffe,* Job 2:7-8). Within the biblical tale, Job's sitting upon the dunghill serves as an allegory for the mortification of the physical body; by sitting upon it and grieving for seven days, Job engages in a show of abject humility that reflects his inner torment. It is this that Mankind specifically invokes with his remark, which suggests that the mortification and abasement of the outward body may serve as a readable indicator of inward reflection, as Gregory I suggests in his reading of the dunghill scene in Job: "For us to 'sit upon a dunghill,' is to carry back the eye of the mind, in a spirit of repentance, to those things which we have unlawfully committed, that when we see the dung of our sins before our eyes, we may bend low all that rises up in the mind of pride." (3.31.60). Importantly, however, Job's "pacyence" in the face of adversity does not exclude grief, sorrow, and frustration—Job himself curses the day of his birth and finally exhorts God to explain how he has deserved his many misfortunes—but rather stands as a bar against categorical despair of divine mercy, which the conclusion of *Mankind* also seems to invoke.

As a further parallel of the Job story, Stock attributes the presentation of *Mankind*'s three Worldlings to an echo of the three "false friends" who attend upon Job during his grief and "exasperate [his] patience" (389).[77] While these biblical figures do not directly mock and taunt Job as do the Worldlings in *Mankind*, they are chastised by God at the end of the story specifically for the indiscretion of their spoken words; "My stronge venjaunce is wrooth ayens [against] thee, […] for ye spaken not bifor me riytful thing, as my servaunt Joob dide" (*Wycliffe,*

[77] In the tale, Job's three friends hear of "al the yuel [evil], that hadde bifelde to hym" and so resolve "that thei wolden come togidere, and visite hym, and coumforte" (*Wycliffe,* Job 2:11). At length, they conclude his misfortunes to be the result of God's anger at his sins, and insist that he confess and repent. Job repeatedly denies any personal fault and rebukes their advice. As such, though the three friends challenge Job's resolve, they are not precisely his enemies as the Worldlings are described in relation to Mankind, nor are they "false" to him through any malice or intentional deception.

Job 42:7).[78] In explaining the folly of the Worldlings to Mankind, Mercy seems to echo this suggestion of ill conceived or otherwise loose language: "in language thei be large,"[79] he explains, and concludes by exhorting Mankind to "Gyff them non audyence; [for] thei wyll tell yow many a lye" (299). And indeed, once the Worldlings see that their boisterous Christmas song has not interrupted Mankind's diligence at his labor, they begin baiting him with language of mock concern for his wellbeing, the supposed futility of his toil, and their doubts that his harvest should be enough to sustain him the whole year, culminating in Nought's derisive reassurance that "Here shall be goode corn, he may not mysse yt. / Yf he wyll [wishes to] have reyn he may overpysse yt" (372-3). In a gesture that literally renders visible his hidden, inward malice, Nought goes on to suggest "Ande yf he wyll have compasse [compost] he may overblysse yt / A lytyll wyth hys ars lyk—" and "helpfully" squats down to defecate (374-5), affecting a burlesque enactment of Gregory I's characterization of "friends" who appear to "come to give consolation, but fall off into words of reproach," concluding that "vices, cloaked under the guise of virtues, set out indeed with a smooth outside, but confound us by a bitter hostility" (3.33.65).

Stock's interpretation of *Mankind* as an invocation of the familiar Job narrative is one of the few to provide a feasible explanation of the dramatic significance for the presentation of "The World," one of the figures in Mercy's inventory of enemies, as three characters instead of one.[80] Though it seems to offer a possible resolution to the problem of the "economy in number

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78 *Geneva* presents "riytful thing" as "the thing yt is right."

79 Ashley and NeCastro gloss *large* as "boastful," while Bruster and Rasmussen suggest "immoderate, vulgar."

80 That is to say, it suggests an explanation rooted in the play's established themes and narrative presentation, rather than conjectures about the particular circumstances of its original

of characters" that puzzled Coogan (78), however, the biblical parallel of the "three false friends" by itself is still not a wholly satisfactory explanation of the characterizations these figures manifest in the play. Indeed, Newguise, Nowadays, and Nought bear little resemblance to the three friends of Job beyond their number[81] and the fact that they are ultimately chastised in the story's moral for speaking contrary to divine truth. Moreover, their seeming adherence to the naming conventions of allegorical characters resists an easy parallel upon close examination. As Mackenzie notes, these figures "do not stand for any specific vices, as we should expect them to do," and concludes that "they represent only, in a general way, the current vices of the day, […] the temptations of the world and the flesh, which assail the heart of Man and lure him away from virtue" (67-8). This, of course, evades the specificity of meaning that these characters' names would seem to impart and ignores that, far from presenting three undifferentiated sinners, each of the Worldlings enacts a unique characterization, even in their seemingly united goal of frustrating Mankind through the pretense of offering comfort to his distress.

In his work, *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature,* Siegfried Wenzel offers an additional explanation of the portrayal of the Worldlings, whom he pointedly describes as "three good for nothings," emphasizing that their efforts to hinder Mankind's labor are specific challenges to his stated design to "eschew ydullnes" (150, *Mankind* 329). Though Wenzel seems to only tentatively suggest[82] that "in this play the conventional enemy World has

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performance or the skill of its playwright, such as Smart's allegation that "[the arrangement of the vices] looks as if the author brought in whatever comic characters he needed, without thinking of how they would fit [into the morality structure]" (120).

81 Stock elides the presence of a fourth figure who suddenly appears without introduction (like Mischief?) in the midst of the long religious debate held between Job and his "thre frendis," his own remarks contributing significantly to the tale's conclusion (*Wycliffe,* Job 32).

82 Wenzel affords only brief attention to *Mankind* in his study, and it is perhaps for this reason that he seems reticent to assert this argument more definitively.

been given predominantly those aspects that appeal to Man's penchant for idleness and sloth" (153), these elements seem to fit nicely into *Mankind*'s themes and the presentation of its moral lessons. Moreover, given the logic of the play's allegorical naming convention in the cases of Mercy and Mischief—that is, as indicators both of the characters' motivating factors and the ends for which they function—the Worldlings may easily be interpreted as presenting a three-part register of worldly idleness and the sin of sloth. Such a reading would put the Worldlings on a somewhat even footing alongside Mankind as characters understood to be human or human-like, representing aspects of humanity corrupted by particular sins. Whereas Mankind strives to achieve salvation and to be brought to mercy, however, the Worldlings each appear to have already been "braced" in Mischief's "brydyll" (306). In this, then, they present a more complex characterization than stock vice characters given that, for all their buffoonery, deception, and malice, they each represent a potential future outcome for Mankind as examples of fallen humanity, having excluded themselves from the possibility of redemption through stubborn adherence to the pleasures of the material world as reflected in their names.

Newguise, for example, is distinguished by a marked preoccupation with fashion, clothing, and style. As Heap observes, he frequently functions as the ringleader of the group, instigating his less focused companions into action (97). Wenzel connects him particularly to the practice of idleness, citing parallels with "Dame Ydelnesse" from John Lydgate's translation of the *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* (1426), whose province is to "Studye ffor to ffynde off new / Devyses" (Wenzel 153, Lydgate 11,667-8). In keeping with his emphasis on fashion, he makes several references to clothing and trends throughout the play, including his vow to make Mankind's coat more stylish (676)—which Mankind acknowledges to be his "offyce" (677)—and his regard of the hangman's noose as though it were a fashion accessory (804-5). No doubt

a source of much humorous physical comedy, Newguise is especially concerned with injury to his "jewellys" and makes repeated reference to them following Mankind's physical attack with his spade (381, 441, 495). More explicitly associated with outward show and surface appearances than his compatriots, Newguise's special brand of idleness is marked by a pronounced adherence to appearance and inconsequential physical matters.

Nowadays, as Heap notes, is the most difficult of the Worldlings to differentiate from his peers (97). Given his name, however, he appears most closely associated with a kind of moral indiscretion, a transgressive overemphasis of immediate, temporal concerns and a lack of foresight, especially as regards matters of spiritual importance.[83] Bruster and Rasmussen seem to suggest an association with disobedience and "[fallen] modes of behavior" (87). It is significant that of the three Worldlings' attempts at scavenging over the countryside, Nowadays is the most successful in returning with valuable items, but at the cost of blasphemously desecrating a church. When Mankind attacks the trio with his spade, the injury sustained by Nowadays is, significantly, to his head. This leads to a comic exchange later when Mischief, in order to "helpe thee of thi peyn" offers to "smytt of thi hede and sett yt on agayn" (434-5). Appropriately enough, the only objection Nowadays is able to muster is that then he "myght well be callyde a foppe [fool]" (444), betraying his inability to appropriately prioritize his concerns or to fully perceive the consequence of Mischief's suggestion beyond the relatively trivial conditions of reputation and surface appearance. As such, Nowadays comes to represent a sort of spiritual dunderhead whose efforts to appease the inward and physical drives of his temporal body significantly jeopardize the salvation for which he rightly ought to be more concerned.

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[83] Cf. Chaucer's characterizations of similar behavior in his short poem "Lak of Stedfastnesse," and in the declaration appearing in the Squire's Tale that "Men loven of propre kynde newefangelnesse" (610).

Finally, Nought's characterization seems to demonstrate the ultimate effects of *acedia*, or listless indifference and negligence of duty. Nought is clearly the weakest willed of the three Worldlings and is completely dependent upon his companions for survival. Heap regards him as "the useless one" of the group, "in sum, a loser" (97). Given to acts of indecency, as his name suggests, he is frequently associated throughout the play with defecation and lewd language—viz., his leading of the scatological Christmas song (333-43), the attempted "composting" of Mankind's field (374-5), and his announcement, after taking a brief absence from the play space in order to relieve himself, that he has accidentally stepped in his own feces and "have fowll arayde my fote" (784). Additionally, he is the only member of the trio to return from his scavenging escapade without having even attempted to steal, relying instead upon his friends to sustain him against the certainty that he should otherwise "sterve" (637). Accordingly, an additional significance of his name is in its use as a pronoun to mean "nothing," which perhaps suggests both that Nought is motivated by nothing and, given the extent and effect of his indifference, will ultimately come to nothing. More dire still is the term's strikingly negative adjectival sense, regarding the object it modifies as "immoral, evil" as well as "weak, impotent, […] useless" (MED); the combined effect of Nought's nomenclature suggests him to represent a state of perfect, abject spiritual perdition. As such, his characterization seems to present a positive argument for the importance of appropriately conditioned inwardness to drive individuals toward good works and actions that will help to ensure their salvations and avoid the dangers of succumbing to such a loathsome state.

Taken together, Stock's and Wenzel's interpretations of the qualities of fallen humanity demonstrated by the Worldlings contribute significantly to explicating the play's complex and nuanced portrayal of Mankind's own anxieties of his predisposition to sinful, inward desire and

inconstancy. Structured loosely as a retelling of the familiar Job story, the play dramatizes its own version of the moral lesson that even the most pious human being is inwardly susceptible to sin and the sensual impulses of the physical body. Mankind's invocation of Job suffering on the "stynkyng dungehyll" (204) recalls his humility and physical restraint in enduring the frustrating imperfections of his temporal state and the limits of his earthly knowledge. At the same time, Mercy's appeal to the patience exercised by Job while under duress invites comparison to Mankind's fortitude in enduring the series of physical and spiritual trials shortly to come. The Worldlings further support the Job parallel, both in their number and in their narrative function to frustrate the hero's resolve; in so doing, they also provide a detailed register and characterization of the sin of sloth in thought and deed, which is especially appropriate given the emphasis in both narratives on diligence and spiritual endurance. In *Mankind*, of course, the characterization of the three friends deviates from the Job source in their manic behavior and cruel intentions, but the verbal echoes present in their reproach as speakers of loose and/or idle language fundamentally link them and assure their function as vice figures to their respective heroes. Like Job and his friends, Mankind and the Worldlings are ultimately flawed beings who are necessarily given to petulance and inconstancy because of human ties to their earthly bodies and the physical world. The similarities shared by these figures and the extent of their interactions with Mercy and Mischief seem to endow the play's representation of the human condition with a specific significance regarding the manifestation of normally invisible relationships between sin, mercy, and the forfeiture of grace.

The last of *Mankind*'s roster of villains is the devil Titivullus, a familiar and often comic lesser demon from Medieval folklore, sermons, and literature, known for carrying a sack of parchment rolls upon which he catches and records various bits of loose or idle language he

overhears. Principally, this included the skipped or mispronounced Latin words of clerics during services, prayers cut short or rushed through by impatient parishioners, and gossip or other inattentive conversation held during mass. Given these associations, an obvious parallel between this figure and the narrative trajectory of *Mankind* is the emphasis of patience and resisting the sin of sloth. Though the manifestation of Titivillus appearing in this play never directly performs or alludes to his function as the recording demon, the pranks he plays upon the unaware Mankind to frustrate his labor and interrupt his prayers seem clear invocations of the familiar transgressive acts with which he is associated; his final prank, moreover, connects him directly to Mischief's stated agenda in inciting Mankind to hopelessness and despair. As Mercy indicates in his explication of Mankind's enemies, the function of Titivillus in the already sizable throng of vices in the play is to "[signify] the fend of helle" (886), an appropriate casting, according to Wenzel, for "what devil's name would have suggested itself more naturally than that of Titivillus, traditionally associated with faults of sloth?" (154).

The seemingly odd choice of the minor demon Titivillus to represent Satan, "the fiend of hell," within the narrative may have an additional significance as regards the play's efforts to mobilize the interaction and engagement of its audience. As Kathy Cawsey notes, Titivillus's appearances in literature and sermons throughout the Medieval period are generally related to narrative or oratorical efforts to "control the audience, to encourage the listeners to respect the church and to refrain from sin" (436). By summoning the familiar recording demon, *Mankind* seems to make a further statement about the relationship of its audience to the same transgressive thoughts and deeds enacted by its characters. The impulse to deploy Titivillus in plays and sermons at once acknowledges the differing responses of the spectators and their refractory levels of engagement as well as the human propensity to transgress, sometimes even from their

own intentions. The enjoyment of watching Titivillus's entertainments in *Mankind* collapses a variety of the transgressive participatory acts suggested by the play's moral, introducing a moral paradox in which the audience, by witnessing and perhaps even condoning the series of pranks employed to affect Mankind's ruin, is guilty of a self reflexive transgression that implicates each member of the audience in their own moral and spiritual fall.

In keeping with the play's established themes, it is significant that the first volley of pranks Titivillus enacts upon the unsuspecting Mankind is a direct effort to "yrke hym of hys labur" so that he will "lose hys pacyens [on] peyn of schame" (532, 536). The first of these attempts is to intensify the immediate physical toil of Mankind's task, accomplished by concealing a "borde" beneath the ground so as to impede attempts to plough (533). Titivillus, now invisible to all but the audience, observes as Mankind enters with his spade and sack of corn seed to set about his work. Struggling against the unnaturally hard ground, Mankind does not notice when the unseen devil makes away with the sack of corn, having resolved to adulterate it "wyth drawke and wyth durnell [weeds]" (537). Increasingly fatigued, Mankind finally resolves to "gyff uppe my spade for now and for ever," and sets it upon the ground where it too is quickly snatched up and hidden outside of the play space (549). The visual tableau of the recording devil snatching up the discarded work implements in the same fashion as he would the loose or idle talk in church suggests a clear connection between Mankind's visible actions and the invisible state of his inward condition that is increasingly giving itself over to inattention and impatience. Mankind's slothful attitude is especially transgressive given his representation as a husbandman, and that Titivillus's trickery up to this point seems limited to reproducing the postlapsarian condition of Adam from the Fall of Man tale in Genesis: "the erthe schal be cursid in thi werk," Adam is told, "in traueylis thou schalt ete therof in alle daies of thi lijf […] it schal bringe forth

thornes and breris to thee" (*Wycliffe,* 3:17, 18). According to this description, the condition of mankind is to toil for sustenance against a "cursed earth" and the encroachment of "thorns and briars" that would increase his labor. The suggestion, it would seem, is that Titivillus's impediments until this point present no more severe toil than Mankind should rightly expect; his impatience and frustration here, then, reveals a fickle nature, performing a blasphemous rejection of the doctrine he intends to uphold.

The second wave of Titivillus's pranks commences once Mankind, noticing that his spade and sack of corn seem to have vanished, pulls out his beads and kneels in prayer—a sight that Titivillus, true to his role as the recorder demon, cannot permit to go unmolested. Still unseen and unheard by his target, at his command "Aryse and avent thee! Nature compellys" (560), Mankind lays down his prayer beads (which Titivillus promptly steals) and quickly excuses himself from the playspace, exclaiming, "For drede of the colyke [intestinal distress] and eke of the ston / I will go do that nedys must be don" (562-3). Here again, the themes of bodily mortification and excretion present themselves as the means by which inward filth may be rendered visible from within the body. Significantly, it is the frailty of the human body and its need to expel waste that Titivillus is able to manipulate to achieve his greater end of corrupting Mankind's devotion, concepts that he collapses in his gloating claim to have "sent hym forth to schyte lesynges [lies]" (568)." This comment seems to suggest a sort of defeating reversal of Mankind's intention where his invisible and inward prayers are converted into physical excrement and his lofty spiritual intentions are mired in the physical limitations of his body. When Mankind returns, he announces that he is now "yrk" even of his devotion, that prayers are "to longe be on myle," and so resolves, "I wyll no more of yt, thow Mercy be wroth" (582, 586). In a further example of the frailty of the human body's sway over the spirit or will, Titivillus

then puts Mankind into a deep sleep through which he can induce the dream that will, out of inward despair and shame, cause him to manifest the self-defeating behavior of befriending the Worldlings, appealing to Mischief, and finally contemplating suicide. Though quite brief, Titivillus's efforts to challenge Mankind's resolve represent a systematic assault of his resources: first against his physical body and his intentions to "eschew ydullnes" through manifesting hard work (329), and then against his spiritual dedication and patience through the association of "the unclene concupissens of your body" with his attempts to pray (887). While he fares passably well against the designs of the Worldlings and Mischief—though it remains unclear if such levels of resistance could have been sustained over time—Mankind quite literally has no effective defense against the offensive levied by Titivillus. But therein lies the point; Mankind, as Mercy explains at the play's end, "ys wretchyd" (911), incapable of perfect adherence to divine decree, and disposed, finally, to transgress. It is the quality of divine mercy and the imperative of human beings to strive for devotion and patience against a wide array of distractions and malevolent forces that *Mankind* principally seems to enforce through its allegorical representation of the relationships between individual inwardness and manifestation.

In his study, Wenzel characterizes *Mankind* as a play that "differs in technique from what historians of the English drama consider the pure type of medieval moralities" (148). Notions of generic "purity," of course, are no doubt a major factor behind the unfavorable critical reception and relative neglect of the play prior to the 1970s, and in this, literary studies perhaps performed the functions, like Mankind's own fleshly body, of both protagonist and vice figure to its own aims. As Wenzel goes on to say, *Mankind*'s unique application of allegorical characterizations and the relationships between abstract registers of transgression via thought and deed defines and conveys the stakes of its moral message against sloth "much more originally than the genuinely

allegorical drama" (148). Here, it would seem, is a conundrum: the presentation of allegory in *Mankind* is unique to the point that many have regarded it as inferior, but the ultimate effect of this presentation is a much more nuanced and altogether sophisticated treatment of its moral themes. The most significant difference between *Mankind*'s characterization and moral imperatives and those of a more explicitly allegorical play like *Everyman* lies in their differing capacities to engage their audience's inward interpretive potential in the narratives they present. The vices of *Mankind* repeatedly offer goading incentives to the spectators to participate in the progression of the narrative; as a result, each spectator, regardless of their acceptance or refusal of these appeals, is implicated in the play's conclusion and the final moral message it imparts. The initial obfuscation of its vices' allegorical relationship with inward transgression is a critical element of the process by which the audience becomes engaged and is manipulated into behavior that demonstrates the relationship of the narrative to their own lives. The effectiveness of *Everyman*, by contrast, relies heavily upon rendering visible the abstract religious concepts through the explicit divulgence of allegorical meaning in each of the characters' names. That the audience may be moved to pity and fear as its narrative progresses is certainly a form of spectator engagement, but it does not offer the same sort of explicit impetus to inwardly reflect as does *Mankind*.

Conclusion

Though the dramas explored in this discussion differ in generic classification, they share many similarities in their allegorical presentation of appropriate and inappropriate models of behavior drawn from biblical tradition. Though neither *Mankind* nor the four extant cycle accounts of the Fall of Lucifer explicitly enact biblical narratives, each draws upon sermons and

penitential literature in order to imply a biblical allegory.[84] At the same time, Lucifer's characterization in each of the extant cycles suggests him to be a flawed creature who is prone to sin and disobedience toward his creator, perhaps by his very nature; in this way, the gravity and implications of his transgressions are essentially quite similar to those of Mankind and the three Worldlings. Ultimately, it is the condition of mercy and the individual's willingness to sue for it that distinguishes the fates of these transgressors. The point of these narratives would seem to be to encourage their audiences to resist falling victim to the same snares and pitfalls that the protagonists encounter through a demonstration of bad behavioral examples rendered visible by their allegorical association with familiar biblical narratives.

The portrayal of potentially transgressive spectacle confronts the audience with a moral interpretive choice. As these texts suggest, the impulse to regard such aspects of performance unfavorably is an essential part of how these narratives impart their lessons. The "examples" of behavior offered by play spectacle always present the conduct they depict as subjects of evaluation and criticism. Enjoyment of transgressive spectacle, of course, does not necessarily prefigure indulgence in the activity being observed. Even if audience members reject the moral imperatives of such plays and willfully enact, for example, the disorderly roughhousing of the Worldlings or the N-Town Lucifer's derisory fart, such defiance of the narrative import in fact constitutes an engagement with the fundamental critique of good and bad behavior it offers. The impropriety of such actions, finally, would hardly escape the attention of refractory spectators dedicated to frolic and horseplay—quite the contrary—and neither would they need the excuse of a play's "corrupting" influence to justify their decision to behave badly.

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[84] Indeed, as Jeffrey Burton Russell insists, the invocation of such material is an essential function of morality plays as well as medieval drama more generally (246).

CHAPTER 2

Omens and Prodigies:
Monsters and the Metaphor of Birth

> *The owl shriek'd at thy birth, an evil sign;*
> *The night-crow cried, aboding luckless time;*
> *Dogs howled; and hideous tempests shook down trees;*
> *The raven rooked her on the chimney's top;*
> *And chatt'ring pies in dismal discords sung.*
> *Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain,*
> *And yet brought forth less than a mother's hope,*
> *To wit, an indigested and deformed lump,*
> *Not like the fruit of such a goodly tree.*
> *Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born*
> *To signify thou cam'st to bite the world.*
>
> —King Henry VI, *3 Henry VI* (ca. 1591)[1]

A retrospectively written and staged prophecy, the final, desperate speech of Shakespeare's Henry VI against his assassin Richard of Gloucester would easily and perhaps enthusiastically have been recognized by the play's original Tudor audiences as part of a familiar historical narrative in which the "crook-backed" executioner would soon become the much maligned King Richard III. First staged at the end of the sixteenth century in a firmly established Tudor England, Shakespeare's depiction of Richard as an immoral, murderous, and hunchbacked usurper is one of the most popular and enduring examples of monstrosity from the English Renaissance. Perhaps less familiar, however, are the ways in which the representations of Richard's deformity and associated disposition are aligned with the circumstances and discourse of "prodigious," monstrous birth. Henry's invocation of birth deformity and prodigious monstrosity at this crucial moment of the play's staging of national history explicitly links the

[1] William Shakespeare (5.6.44-54).

popular conception of England's national past with the anxious interpretive history of monsters, both in the physical sense of deformed bodies and that of a moral condition marked by hypocrisy and inward corruption. Among other instances throughout the four-part play cycle,[2] Henry's final speech repeatedly invokes Richard's malformed body as a site for the interpretation of retrospective prophetical messages, identifying him as a harbinger of untold death and calamity to England. "And thus I prophesy," he begins, "many a thousand / […] Shall rue the hour that ever thou wast born" (*3H6* 5.6.37, 43). The doom of which Henry speaks, of course, is the continuation of the chaos of political rebellion and civil war realized in England by the Wars of the Roses. It is this state of disorder and corrupted morality that Shakespeare epitomizes in his vision of Richard, whose body and mind are reciprocally deformed to suggest the turmoil and rancor of a corrupt and divided nation. The danger Richard poses, as the prophecy suggests, is that of a hidden, inward malice and self-interest that are detrimental to both the commonwealth and to his willingness and/or ability to act in its interest. These plays invoke a popular tradition of monstrous birth broadsheets in the presentation of Richard's own birth and the various registers of his supposed deformities. In the presentation of Richard's own birth and the various registers of his supposed deformities, the tetralogy draws upon the sixteenth century broadsheet tradition in its presentation of the relationship between "monstrous," "unnatural," or otherwise transgressive deeds or thoughts and the various types of deformity these literatures manifest.

More than simply a metaphor of a contentious political struggle, however, Henry's final prophecy is particularly significant for its invocation of three modes of prophetical language used throughout the play cycle to interpret Richard's moral character and physical deformities.

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[2] I.e., Shakespeare's first tetralogy of historical plays, *1 Henry VI* (ca. 1591), *2 Henry VI* (ca. 1590-1), *3 Henry VI* (ca. 1591), and *Richard III* (1591-2), depicting historical events surrounding the contention of the English throne by the rival houses of Lancaster and York, ca. 1422-85. Richard is present in all but the first of these.

The first of these, his reference to "natural" omens surrounding the time of Richard's birth, describes the coincidence of bizarre weather disturbances and the unusual behavior of several different types of animals.[3] Though assigned prodigious meaning, these omens are "natural" because their expression operates within what could be the expected course of nature; it is only through their coincidence that their usual proverbial associations are amplified to manifest a prodigious significance.[4] The second prophetical mode of Henry's speech is in his description of Richard's deformed body, which frames the monstrous birth as an "unnatural" omen. This mode differs significantly from the former in that the prophetical message manifests contrary to the usual course of nature; situated as an "indigested and deformed lump," the infant Richard is described as a deviation from the natural generative type whereby the "fruit" born ought to resemble the "goodly tree" from which it originates. The final mode of Henry's prophecy is an emblematic reading of the newborn Richard's physical characteristics to explain or foretell the behavior and character he would manifest as an adult. By invoking the rumor that Richard was born with teeth, Henry concludes that he "cam'st to bite the world," a metaphor suggestive of a congenital predisposition to manifest quarrelsome behavior, rebellion, and, most significantly, unfocused and self-promoting aggression. Hence, the abnormalities of Richard's physical birth are correlated to transgressive behavior he manifests as an adult, a sort of moral or behavioral monstrosity deviating from the social norm.

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[3] The particular animals mentioned and the behaviors they manifest—the owl, crow, raven, magpies, and howling dogs—are significant for their familiar, proverbial associations with misfortune, unease, and death (such as those given in Morris Tilly's *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*).

[4] As Park and Daston observe, "prodigies come in groups" (25), which suggests that the prodigious quality of the events Henry describes is attributable as much to their confluence as to their individual meanings.

Retrospective Prophesy and the Natural Order

Henry's final speech demonstrates the variety of ways in which Tudor attitudes about Richard's bodily deformities and corresponding moral character were interrelated. Both are frequently described as products of an imbalance in the natural order whose cause had to be puzzled out through reading and interpreting prophetic messages encoded in his behavior and appearance. Following his murder of the king, Richard confirms the details rehearsed in Henry's prophecy of his birth: "since the heavens have shaped my body so," he says in mock-prayer, "Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it" (78-9). Significantly, however, the relationship Richard describes between his body and mind is that of cause and effect rather than the reciprocity suggested by Henry's prophecies. In other words, Richard suggests that his willful embrace of a "crook'd mind" is a consequence of his physical deformity and, apparently, of the way he is regarded by others because of it. "I have no brother;" he next proclaims, "I am like no brother" (80). As he is literally *like* no brother insofar as his deformity renders him an anomaly from physical generative type, Richard suggests he is able to free himself from the ties of familial affection that would otherwise prohibit the bloody business he undertakes to secure the crown. Again, he seems to regard this as a deliberate choice, but refutes himself even in the following line: "And this word 'love,' which greybeards call divine, / Be resident in men like one another / And not in me: I am myself alone" (81-3). Here, Richard characterizes himself as incapable, either in faculty or in disposition, of the love and affection he claims to reject: he is "alone," he claims, by virtue of his physical singularity, moral condition, and in his resulting absence of meaningful connection to others.[5] As he asserts in the opening to *Richard III*, the

[5] Francis Bacon would later take up this idea in his 1612 essay "Of Deformity." "Deformed persons," he claims, "are commonly even with nature; for as nature hath done ill by them, so do they by nature, being for the most part [...] void of natural affection, and so they have their

final play in the cycle, his treasonous goal and the wicked deeds he enacts to achieve it are motivated predominantly out of an inability to imitate not just the outward appearance of others, but their actions and emotions. He claims, for instance, to be "not shaped for sportive tricks / Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass" (*R3* 1.1.14-15), and that "I […] want [lack] love's majesty" (16); he further describes himself as "curtailed" (18), "cheated" (19), "unfinished" (20), "scarce half made up" (21), etc.: all negative statements that denote deficiency from the norm, as opposed to the superfluity—i.e., of teeth and excessive labor pains—described in Henry's account of his birth. "Since I cannot prove a lover," he concludes, "I am determined to prove a villain" (28, 30).[6] At length, Richard's seemingly inconsistent characterization of his own behavior, whether read as deliberate or compulsive, epitomizes the complex associations between deformity and morality for early modern audiences.

Following his apparent murder of the two young princes, Richard's mother, the Duchess of York, levels a second verbal assault. Her speech is similar to Henry's in its scope of prophecy and misfortune, but specifically expands upon the circumstances he alludes to surrounding Richard's troubled birth, most especially the unusually intense torment and agony of her labor pains that, she ominously suggests, have never ended:

> A grievous burthen was thy birth to me;
> Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy;
> Thy school-days frightful, desp'rate, wild, and furious;
> Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous;

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revenge of nature" (426). Thus, as he suggests, the "natural" state of one marked with deformity is to be malcontented, rapacious, and pitiless.

6 Despite the fact that Richard seems able to successfully woo Lady Anne in the following scene, it is accomplished with an inauthentic outward pretense or show of affection, bereft of any genuine feeling, as he acknowledges in his intention to "have her but […] not keep her long" (1.2.132). Richard's claim to be unable to "prove" a lover, then, is not a statement of what he can or cannot *perform*, but whether or not that outward performance can reflect an authentic inward condition. In much the same way, Richard cannot be said to "prove" a good brother to Clarence given the concern he feigns for him in 1.1.

> Thy age confirm'd, proud, subtle, sly, bloody:
> More mild, but yet more harmful, kind in hatred.
> What comfortable hour canst thou name
> That ever graced thee with my company? (*R3* 4.4.168-75)

While both speeches connect the pain of labor to the emotional distress and grief Richard would come to cause during the course of his life, embedded in the duchess's description is the more intimate suggestion of an increasingly sinister malice she has witnessed hidden beneath a veneer of "mild" behavior. As Richard has grown and matured, she seems to suggest, the observable "truths" about his motives and the nature of his character have become less and less obvious, a development that emphasizes the urgency of learning to correctly read and interpret that which he conceals from view. Perhaps most striking about the duchess's comments is their resonance with Richard's characterization of himself as being without familial affection. Here, she describes her son as a heartless and unlovable fiend for whom she never felt any motherly esteem or affection, and who she claims "cam'st on earth to make the earth my hell" (167). By defying the expectation of the familial bond in the depiction of their atypical relationship, the play implicitly suggests an "unnatural" quality in Richard's character—"kind in hatred," as she claims—that retroactively explains the ease with which he was able to engineer the deaths of his nephews and brother. Through the prophetic language deployed in these speeches by Henry and the duchess, the tetralogy posits a direct correlation between the turmoil of Richard's birth and childhood, his various visible bodily deformities, and the treacherous and cruel character that he manifests as an adult behind a mask of "mild" comportment.

Before proving himself the treacherous, nephew-murdering, throne-usurping monarch decried by King Henry and the Duchess of York, Shakespeare's Richard was, as these prophecies emphasize, a deformed infant—a monstrous birth. Thomas More's description of

Richard, extant in Holinshed's *Chronicles* where Shakespeare likely discovered it,[7] prefigures many of the details and interpretive gestures that these speeches provide. Describing him as "little of stature, ill-featured of limbs, crook-backed, […] and hard-favored of visage," More, like Shakespeare's Henry, collapses his description of Richard's physical qualities and those of his moral character, concluding that "he was malicious, wrathful, envious, and, from afore his birth, ever froward" (9-10). In his description, More (again, like Henry), cites what can only be rumor and conjecture about the details of the duchess's birthing room to supply the basis for his conclusions as to his subject's character, as well as the larger significance of events that transpired during his lifetime. "It is for truth reported," he seems to whisper, his hand upon the reader's knee, "that the duchess his mother had so much ado in her travail that she could not be delivered of him uncut, and that he came into the world with the feet forward (as men be borne outward[8]) and, as the fame runneth, also not untoothed" (10). To modern readers, More's oddly speculative and even gossiping tone here may seem out of place in what is purportedly a chronicle of English history, but so too is the persistent emphasis upon Richard's birth as a sufficiently significant moment to warrant inclusion in an account of his reign.

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7 Holinshed (1577, 87) himself had copied the passage from either or both Richard Grafton's 1543 continuation of John Hardyng's *Chronicle* and Edward Hall's 1548 *Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York*.

8 The significance of the "feet forward" or "footling" breech birth as a commonly recognized bad omen is partially due to its deviation from the normal headfirst birth but also, as More suggests, the visual image of the means by which the dead are "borne outward" in their coffins, feet first, to the grave. Medically speaking, there are a number of practical reasons for regarding breech birth as unfavorable that may have been associated with the popular depiction of Richard. Among other complications for the child, breech delivery may result in bone fracture, deformities of the neck and back, stunted muscular growth, brain disorders resulting from oxygen deprivation, as well as an elevated risk of morbidity for both infant and mother (*Williams Obstetrics*, Ch. 24: "Breech Presentation and Delivery").

In reality, the sensational and popular idea of Richard as a literal monstrous birth has a very complicated genealogy in English chronicles with a number of curious parallels and inconsistencies. Though More applies this trope to somewhat different ends, its use in his account recalls similar gestures that appear in *Historia Regum Angliae*, a Latin chronicle in manuscript composed by John Rous and intended as a gift to Henry VII.[9] Here, among other astonishing claims, Rous alleges the unborn Richard to have remained in his mother's womb for a period of two years before finally being delivered—having, in addition to the teeth, a full head of hair descending down to his crooked shoulders. And though both Rous and More agree on the detail of the "unequal" shoulders, their accounts are inconsistent in asserting which was the higher of the two.[10] Rous's work also appears to have influenced the description of Richard in the *Anglica Historica* of Polydore Vergil that was begun ca. 1505 and published in 1534, merely a year before More's execution.[11] Many of the details provided by the authors correspond—More and Vergil both describe Richard as "little of stature" (Vergil 226; More 9),[12] dishonest

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9 Rous's manuscript chronicle, *Historia Johannis Rossi Waricensis de Regibus Anglie* (B.M. MS. Cotton Vesp. A. XII), was completed before his death in 1492, but was not printed until 1716 as *Joannis Rossi Antiquarii Warwicensis Historia Regum Angliae* by Thomas Hearne. An excerpted translation of the events surrounding Richard's reign and rise to power is provided by Alison Hanham (118-24).

10 However, as Hanham notes, Rous's manuscript may have been altered: "the words 'right' and 'and the left' (*dexter* and *sinisterque*) [in the description of Richard's shoulders] have been written in later, possibly in a second hand" (121, FN 4).

11 Though the scope of the *Anglica Historica* was far greater—a comprehensive history of England to the present day—More's and Vergil's works are roughly contemporaneous. A manuscript version of Vergil's chronicle, now held in the Vatican Library, was completed in 1513—the same year Logan estimates that More began the work on his *History*. The two men, moreover, were "personal friend[s]," but, Logan asserts, there is insufficient similarity to suggest a direct influence of one work upon the other (More xxx-xxxi).

12 Cf. Rous's "small of stature," as translated by Hanham (121).

and feigning in character and affect,[13] and as habitually disposed to biting or gnawing upon his lower lip when either feeling or affecting distress or contemplation.[14] Notably, however, Vergil's characterization omits reference to either the king's birth or his minority—details that More took up from Rous's chronicle and applied to his own ends.[15]

In dramatizing the complex and contradictory details rumored of Richard's birth, Shakespeare's play cycle integrates and elaborates upon many of the assertions that appear in the chronicles, employing them to particularly powerful effect in the prophecy scene with Henry and that of Richard's confrontation with his mother. In each instance, the employment of monstrous birth rhetoric is especially important because of its usual association with bad omens that could presage social upheaval or signal some form of "unnatural" force at work. Shakespeare's Richard is important in the history of popular monstrous rhetoric in that his characterization dramatically fuses the modes of interpretation associated with literal physical deformity to (1) notions of transgressive inward desire, (2) the roles of rumor and varying levels of spectator

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13 Vergil's description characterizes him as "provident and subtile, apt both to counter-fait and dissemble" (226-7), while More's describes him as "close and secret, a deep dissimuler; […] outwardly companable where he inwardly hated, not letting [refraining] to kiss whom he thought to kill" (11-12).

14 Vergil provides in his description the detail that "[t]he while he was thinking of any matter, he did continually bite his nether lippe, as thowgh that crewell nature of his did so rage against it selfe in that little carkase" (226). Immediately prior to the episode in which he makes allegations of witchcraft against the queen and Jane Shore, More's Richard evinces a state of agitation, "return[ing] into the chamber among [the nobles], all changed, with a wonderful sour, angry countenance, knitting the brows, frowning and fretting and gnawing on his lips, and so sat him down in his place" (54).

15 As Warnicke has suggested, Rous's references to the circumstances of Richard's birth and the descriptions of his supposed physical aberrations are closely associated with Welsh Arthurian folklore of dwarves (149). So whereas Rous's intent in so portraying Richard's birth may have been to align "inhuman" deeds with non-human physicality, More's use of the same is a specific invocation of monstrous birth as a prodigious signpost for the existence of transgression and the abatement of the "natural" order.

credulity, and (3) the notion of the moral monster who expresses deformity through the commission of violent and/or criminal acts. Though it remains unclear to what extent such depictions are products of a self-legitimating Tudor revision of history, the literary Richard who emerges in the Tudor chronicles and in Shakespeare's account presents a complex synthesis of the associations between his supposedly congenital bodily defects and perceived moral failings that are regarded as the interrelated products of his monstrous birth.

Despite the speculative language surrounding his early descriptions of Richard, More appears to grant the dubious factuality of these claims by including a curious proviso that quibbles with the perceived relationship between "natural" and "unnatural" phenomena and behavior as regards Richard's popular "fame": "whether men, of hatred, report above the truth," he muses, "or else that nature changed her course in his beginning, which in the course of his life many things unnaturally committed, [this I leave to God's judgment]" (10).[16] Here, More seems to admit that the stories surrounding Richard's birth may in fact be retroactive fabrications, but he effectively justifies their inclusion in the chronicle of this king's life and the annals of English history as effects of the "unnatural" crimes with which he had long been associated. His speculation as to the "changing" of nature's course in Richard's creation now takes on an ironic valence given the fluid treatment of historical events by chroniclers of the day to achieve particular political and social ends. By the time More had begun to pen his *History* in 1513, a changing attitude toward the course of England's history was already an important aspect of pro-Tudor propaganda that labored to vilify Richard and situate Henry VII's claim to the throne as the "natural" conclusion of the tumultuous Wars of the Roses. Shakespeare's memorable

16 *"…this I leave to God's judgment";* omitted in Logan, but present in the earliest printings of selections from More's *History*, including Richard Grafton's 1543 continuation of John Hardyng's *Chronicle* (STC 12766.7) and Edward Hall's 1548 *Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York* (STC 12722).

characterization of Richard as a deformed, unethical monster born "unnaturally" into the world is a direct engagement with these Tudor politics that, among other things, treat the details of Richard's supposedly abnormal birth and the allegedly visible deformities of his body as manifestations of hidden and villainous inward desire for power and advancement irrespective of family loyalties and nationalist imperatives.[17] Thus, Richard's misshapen body serves as a physical manifestation of the morally and ethically deformed state, torn apart by the "unnatural" acts that took place during the Wars of the Roses, including parricide and usurpation.[18] It is, however, especially striking that in a narrative so deeply entrenched in the crisis of birthright and the efficacy of rule, the seemingly private details of Richard's own birth circulate so freely outside of his ability to affect or control their dissemination, even to the point that they are regarded as significant "historical" events and, finally, are deployed against him as weapons. More than a simple diagnosis of social ills, then, what can be called the "birth metaphor" that emerges most explicitly in Shakespeare's first tetralogy functions as a cipher or code that invites the audience to interpret the process by which vice and transgressive inwardness are manifested, ultimately revealing the relationships believed to exist between human behavior and the idea of the "natural" moral and ethical order.

The language that surrounds Shakespeare's Richard is particularly significant in its emphasis upon the function of the monstrous spectacle of his deformities that can (or should)

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[17] The historical account offered by Shakespeare's *Richard III* parallels events held to precipitate the Wars of the Roses: the alleged murder of Richard II at the hands of his Lancastrian cousin prefigures the popular legend of Edward V's murder at the hands of his uncle. In both cases, the usurper's regicide is a double crime of treachery against the sovereign king and member of his family.

[18] As Edward Burns has remarked, Richard "is a visible emblem of the chaos of late medieval history" (19). Further, as Marie-Hélène Besnault and Michel Bitot suggest, "Richard embodies the culminating example of transgression within a scheme of usurpation and betrayal, bringing about a disruption of moral and political order and final chaos" (107).

show and teach the onlooker something about his inner character. Extending the detail of Richard's supposed deformity back to the moment of his nativity and characterizing him as a prodigious birth greatly expands the register of signification that his deformities manifest as well as the ends to which they can be interpreted. Drawing from popularized scientific discourse and an ephemeral print literary tradition that report and examine the births of literal, "monstrous" children, this characterization of Richard invokes a specific and recognizable set of interpretations that, among other things, suggests that hidden malice and sinful desire will eventually find outward expression and become visible to those who know how to interpret the signs of their existence. As early as Richard's first appearance in *2 Henry VI*, the text insists upon heaping such interpretations of the young lord's misshapenness upon his deformed shoulders, explicitly linking his outward appearance with his unruly behavior and rebellious character. Even in this early moment, Lord Clifford curses Richard and concludes him to be "As crooked in thy manners as thy shape!" (5.1.158).[19] From this first moment until his death in *Richard III*, the characters of the play cycle reveal themselves to be constantly aware both of Richard's physical deformity and of the means by which to interpret the semiotic markers of his monstrous physiognomy. At the same time, however, they seem to be curiously unable to apply these interpretations to their advantage so as to avoid being exploited, tricked, and/or killed by the "crook backed" king. This of course raises a number of perplexing issues about the efficacy of interpretation, the capacity of Richard's persuasive poetic language, and the complicity of his "victim" in forestalling or derailing interpretation of the visual cues inscribed on his physical form. As Michael Torrey has noted in his article "'The Plain Devil and Dissembling Looks': Ambivalent Physiognomy and Shakespeare's *Richard III*," "to early modern physiognomers, one

[19] Cf. Prospero's allegation in *Tempest* that Caliban is "as disproportioned in his manners / As in his shape" (5.1.291-2).

of physiognomy's principal benefits lies in its ability to expose liars and discover evil men" (128). Such readings of Richard's body seem to be more complex, however, given his consistent success throughout the cycle's second half "despite the obvious signs of his wickedness" (126).

Significantly, though Richard's physical deformity, as the other characters repeatedly make clear, is certainly perceptible and indeed the subject of much comment, his nefarious intentions, the extent of his monstrous morality, and the prodigious circumstances that surround him are frequently overlooked or misread by those he targets.[20] However deceived the tetralogy's characters may be—or may claim to be—by the machinations of the ambitious duke, the realities of Richard's deceptions are ever-present to the play's audience given the disclosure in his many soliloquies that expose his political maneuvering and their own knowledge of this familiar chapter in national history. Traditionally, the spectator is also constantly confronted with the spectacle of a stooped and deformed hunchback, incongruously delivering lines of "honey words" and "subtle" language (*R3* 4.1.82, 1.1.37), thus accentuating the artifice and duplicity of his actions.[21] As such, the function of dramatic irony in the spectacle and narrative of this scene serves as a variation on the theme of the monstrous as a showing of truth, a warning of danger that is rendered more blatant and obvious to the spectator by virtue of the spectacle, but is nonetheless hidden from diegetic view given characters that cannot, will not, or—because

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[20] Hastings, for example, laments "I, too fond, might have prevented this" only after his execution is called for, recalling a series of prodigious warnings surrounding his acquaintance with Richard that could have prevented both his betrayal and his death had he not failed to interpret them (*R3* 3.4.80). Later, Anne describes her seduction by Richard as a form of self-entrapment made possible by the pleasing nature of his outward pretense: "Within so small a time, my woman's heart / Grossly grew captive to his honey words / And proved the subject of mine own soul's curse," only too late realizing that "he hates me for my father Warwick / And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me" (4.1.78-80, 85-6).

[21] Though this of course depends upon the interpretive choices of each production's director and actor, the popular opinion of Richard is such that the mental image of the hunchback may endure, even if the actor does not physically project such deformity in performance.

of their own "monstrous" complicity—do not act upon their initial interpretations regarding the physical and political menace presented by the deformed figure that stands before them.[22] While Richard's physical deformity is often referenced throughout the tetralogy as a means to interpret and expose the inward qualities of his dubious character, the most dramatically significant of the revelations made in *Richard III* are morally dubious desires and transgressions of the characters he seeks to manipulate as he schemes his way into power.

Ultimately, the rhetorical function of deformity in More's account and in Shakespeare's first tetralogy as a metaphor of both individual and social corruption is utterly reliant upon a discourse of reading and interpreting monstrous bodies that was in circulation throughout the 16th century; understanding the resonances that would have been present for the original audiences of these texts can only be accomplished by examining the sources of this interpretive trope. Such preoccupation with prodigy and birth that endures in these representations of Richard recalls a popular tradition of monstrous birth literature that, like dramatic irony within Shakespeare's play cycle, functions as if to teach its audience how to read and interpret such spectacles.[23] An enduring fascination with the appearance and the circumstances surrounding

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[22] As Hastings laments before being led away to his execution, "Woe, woe for England, not a whit for me, / For I, too fond, might have prevented this" (3.4.79-80). Like Henry VI and the Duchess of York, Hastings has only too late interpreted the prodigious signs of Richard's character and murderous intentions. Richard, meanwhile, has secured Hastings's downfall by exposing his supposed relationship to Jane Shore and manipulating an interpretation of it that villifies Hastings for both treachery and lecherous desire. After which, Hasings exits with a brief speech of prognostication similar to those of Henry and the Duchess: "O bloody Richard! Miserable England, / I prophecy the fearfull'st time to thee / that ever wretched age hath looked upon" (102-4), a sentiment that once again aligns Richard and his malformed body with the endangered state of the English nation and the woes of civil strife to come.

[23] The recent discovery of Richard's lost remains beneath a Leicester car park finally proved once and for all that his famously crooked hump back, unlike the deformities of his arm and legs described in Shakespeare and Tudor chronicles, was not simply a retrospective political fabrication. Importantly, however, the discovery also proved that his condition was not

the births of such "monsters" is well documented in extant broadsheet prints from the 16th and 17th centuries that depict deformed human and animal births reported to have occurred in villages and cities throughout Europe. In England, the earliest of these were cheaply made popular prints: single-page broadsheets that offered detailed physical descriptions of human and animal birth deformities, usually presented in both prose and singable ballad verse.[24] Quite often, these broadsheets included arresting and gruesome woodcut illustrations of their subjects that heightened the visual interest of the printed page. Popular collections of such accounts and/or their accompanying illustrations were printed and bound together in single-volume "wonder" books to amuse and astonish those readers and curiosity seekers throughout England, France, and Germany who could manage the weightier price tag.[25] The "monsters" featured in these publications were called so, in part, because their "natural" shapes seemed to have been corrupted, with their deviation from the generative norm often interpreted as "monstrous examples" or divine warnings against specific ethical transgressions or sin generally. However arresting, the illustration and physical description of such bodily deformities served only as a sort of *entrée* to an interpretive, moral lesson offered in such accounts about the metaphysical causes of such birth defects and what hidden truths their appearance might reveal.

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congenital, thereby debunking the supposition of a "monstrous" birth suggested by More and Shakespeare (*The Search for Richard III*).

[24] Hawkers would sing from the printed ballad verses they sold in the streets as a means to attract the attention of prospective buyers in the seventeenth century, but it is unclear if this practice extended to those of the monstrous birth broadsheet tradition.

[25] The first of these were medical treatises with limited popular reach and appeal, but this began to change with the appearance of books, such as Pierre Boaistuau's *Histoires prodigieuses* in 1561, that were written so as to attract lay interest in their topics.

Divine Providence and the Burden of Interpretation

Perhaps most noteworthy in the accounts of such "birth" monsters—and that which, no doubt, contributed significantly to their interminable popularity—is their ability to astonish spectators through textual, aural, and graphical literary forms, which could catch the attention of both literate and non-literate observers and provoke interest in discovering the cause and origin of the monster presented. At the same time, the deformed and misshapen bodies of these "monsters" could be, and in many cases were, inscribed with multiple simultaneous and even seemingly contradictory interpretations as to their causes and import. Thus, as in Shakespeare's first tetralogy, literal deformity in these accounts functions both as reciprocal with moral deformity and as the consequence of transgressive inwardness in the parents and/or society that fostered the monster. Frequent types of "deformity" featured in such documents included conjoined twins and hermaphrodites, as well as otherwise healthy newborns with unusual abrasions or markings of the flesh, excessive body hair, misshapen or absent limbs, and so forth. As in Shakespeare's histories, however, physical deformity is only half of the equation; it is the act of interpretation—the drive fostered by these accounts to read hidden meaning onto the body of a deformed birth—that makes it a "monster," a creature that by its very alterity reveals unseen corruption and teaches proper behavior through negative example. As A.W. Bates has claimed in his *Emblematic Monsters*, monstrous births "[i]n the classical tradition [were] said to precede or to coincide with a significant social upheaval. [...] their appearance at a specific time and place was local evidence of divine intervention, a place-specific manifestation of God" (49). What is perhaps noteworthy about this assertion for an interpretation of these surviving broadsheet accounts as well as Richard's own monstrous birth is the suggestion that their

appearance is more revealing about the state of a community as a whole than the guilt or innocence of specific individuals such as the parents.

As a result of the interest and interpretations monsters provoke as to their causes and possible import, a myriad of interpretive modes and explanations have emerged whereby a given birth might convey any number of messages; as David Cressy has noted, "monstrous births might mean many things, but they could not be allowed to mean nothing" (36). As such, it is crucial to explore some of the fundamental meanings of the word *monster* and the concepts of the monstrous that developed from antiquity through the Renaissance in order to begin to understand the complex system of signification that the monstrous birth was believed to present. There is a long history, predating printed records, that regarded monstrous births as one of a variety of circumstances that presages future events, as is suggested by the etymological tie of the English word *monster* to the Latin noun *monstrum*: "an unnatural thing or event regarded as an omen" (OLD). In its original association with omens and their role in forecasting future events, the monster, as Jean Céard notes, "was originally a term belonging to the vocabulary of divination," closely linked to the concepts of the prodigy, the wonder, and the portent (182).[26] As such, the development of discourse surrounding the monster has always been one of tracing a deferred meaning, a physical sign that points off into an unknown future and threatens death or other calamity.[27] Another sense of the monstrous comes from the verbal form, *monstrare*,

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[26] *prodigium, ostentum,* and *portentum,* respectively.

[27] More specifically, monsters in the Christian world have often been regarded with "apocalyptic associations," according to Park and Daston, foretelling "world reformation, the overthrow of the wicked, and the vindication of God's elect" (25). As they note, this association traces most clearly to the apocryphal biblical text 2 Esdras where the downfall of Babylon is predicted by the Angel Uriel according to a series of special signs that will appear shortly beforehand that include, among others, that "[t]here shall be chaos […] in many places, fire shall often break out, the wild animals shall roam beyond their haunts, and

contributing a number of related meanings to the modern concept of the monster as one whose function is "to point out" and "to show by example," as well as to teach, reveal, indicate or betray (i.e., against one's intentions), or to give directions. This sense in turn is often related to a third term, the verb *monere*, meaning "to […] advise, recommend, warn" (OLD). Though not exclusively so, it is this conception of the monster as both a "showing" and a "warning" that seems to have been the predominant interpretive mode for writers of the surviving English broadsheet print accounts. Here, the appearance of the monster enfolds a wider array of unknowns into its possible import: what is at stake, in other words, is no longer simply a question of *what* the monster shows and *how*, but also *whom* the monster addresses and *for what purpose*.

Inevitably, perhaps, a favorite reading of any given monster's meaning has ever been the perceived wrath of God responding to the sins and transgressions of an increasingly immoral humanity, and it is to this that many accounts of monstrous births principally resort to determine the causes behind the physical appearance of their subjects and the circumstances surrounding their generation. Even so, the broadsheet accounts of such phenomena are written in such a way as to address a much wider audience than individuals who transgress. As Bates has suggested, beyond "the widely held view of monsters as portents or warnings to sinners," they also "invited the early modern reader to contemplate superficially hidden levels of meaning" (*Emblematic Monsters* 8). What develops from such engagement is an increasingly complex system of simultaneous, "emblematic" interpretations of monstrous births that emphasizes the relationships between physical descriptions of monsters and the process by which they "invited" early

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menstruous women shall bring forth monsters" (5.8, *New Oxford Annotated Apocrypha*). As Paré and others would go on to show, however, the association of menses and the birth of monsters was not merely a feature of the end of times.

moderns to puzzle out associated meanings, make connections between them, and draw moral conclusions. At the most basic interpretive level, the sight or suggestion of a monster would provoke the impulse to regard it simultaneously as a revelation or showing of divine wrath and a warning for all subjects to amend their sinful ways under immediate threat of a more severe punishment. Beyond this initial impulse, however, the distinctive circumstances of a specific birth might be said to indicate more particular details about the nature of God's wrath and what transgressions had occasioned it.

Key to the cultural implications of deformity and "monstrosity" is the notion of visibility. Monsters are, themselves, spectacles at the same time that they offer insight into the unseen and/or the invisible. Claims such as Cressy's that the monster demands an interpretation are confirmed by the preponderance of broadsheets that invariably offer a specific interpretation of what truths the monster reveals or what it has to teach. Striking in all examples of this genre of literature is the relationship between the physical deformities of a monstrous birth and the existence of human vice that is either hidden from or tolerated by the society in which the creature is born—such accounts insist, finally, that both the cause and the import of the monster will be somehow expressed in the physical deformity it manifests. As these accounts suggest, then, the appearance of a monster invites interpretation to diagnose and, if possible, correct the natural imbalance its birth represents. The popular figure of the monster that emerged out of the early broadsheet tradition became one that, by its physical alterity, stood as a divine code that could reveal otherwise hidden or invisible sites of sin or corruption if correctly deciphered; by reading Shakespeare's Richard III through this cultural tradition, his wickedness and moral corruption can be understood as both instigating and resulting from the Wars of the Roses.

Though many early broadsheet accounts of monstrous births include the circumstances of the monster's parentage and the details of its conception—which sometimes involved incest, premarital sexual congress, etc.—their import seems to gesture beyond a simple cause and effect model of transgression and subsequent punishment. Bates suggests that the intended targets for these moralizing accounts were not the parents, but rather the society that fostered the monster (*Emblematic Monsters* 50). In fact, the rhetorical trajectory of such broadsheets, he argues, was to "[exhort] the reader to keep societal norms by showing him [by example] that the human and natural laws were interrelated" (16). In other words, this popular genre of literature required the simultaneous reading of literal and metaphorical relationships between the physical human plane and one beyond—either natural, divine, or both. Through the employment of these monstrous examples, the broadsheet literature identifies the presence of vice, castigates the illegal/immoral actions and practices of wayward citizens, and appears to articulate and reinforce an idealized social order for all subjects of society.

The earliest popular monstrous birth literature survives from the Renaissance primarily via broadsheet prints that constitute early forms of the broadside ballad[28]—a literary form that Claude Simpson has called "an urban variety of subliterary expression" (x). The influence and appeal of the broadside ballad was considerable given that anyone, irrespective of their ability to read the words of the text, could become absorbed into the narrative and become a consumer, simply by virtue of occupying the same street as the bookseller, hearing the verses recited or

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[28] "Early" because they but vaguely resemble the more standardized and recognizable format of the print form associated most closely with the 17th century that, among other things, would often explicitly indicate the tune to which the verses could be sung. Though the verses contained in many early monstrous birth broadsheets were often written in standard ballad meter, heroic quatrains, and other forms that easily lent themselves to familiar music, the intent of their being sung is not made explicit in the texts. To avoid confusion, such publications are herein referred to generically as "broadsheets" while references to the later form will employ the terms "broadsides" or "broadside ballads."

sung, or viewing the woodcut illustrations exhibited on the page. The popularity and influence of early ephemeral print genres, as Tessa Watt has shown, can to a great extent be attributed to their combination of printed text with non-literate media forms such as pictographic elements and familiar tunes (7). The appearance of the broadside ballad's earliest forms roughly coincides with the introduction of the printing press in England, which revolutionized the production and reproduction of written materials to an extent never before conceived. While the cost effectiveness of the single-sheet broadside ballad no doubt contributed substantially to its popularity given the more prohibitive expense of bound books, it was the unique combination of its multiple consumer interfaces—the tune, the verse, the woodcut illustrations—that, as Tessa Watt explains, "appeal[ed] to those on the fringes of literacy" (5). These elements supplied the genre with a unique ability to bridge the literacy and—to some extent—class barriers that limited the accessibility and wide appeal of other printed materials, even those that could also be cheaply purchased.

The ubiquity and the relative affordability of the printed product do not, however, fully explain the broad appeal or the abiding interest that monstrous birth broadsheets apparently held for those who read, saw, or heard them sung, particularly in the mid-to-late 16th century. Over time, the appearance of monsters in the popular print of England and Europe more broadly marks a shift in the means by which they were employed toward interpretive ends. Perhaps a result, in part, of the time required to assemble and distribute accounts of such births, the classical tradition of interpreting the monster noted by Bates as a forewarning or occurrence coincident with social upheaval was somewhat altered in the age of the popular press. Instead, he claims, the popular explanation for the births of monsters was "not […] to foretell the future but to show in retrospect that something important had occurred, a sign of the times, rather than a signpost to

the future" (*Emblematic Monsters* 49). The apparent popularity of such accounts would seem to be closely tied to shifting perceptions about or concerning the ways in which the concepts of nature and the divine were interrelated so as to directly impact the lives of potential consumers of these texts. It is through the invitation to the reader to interpret seemingly fantastic circumstances that birth, deformity, and the idea of "the monster" mobilize popular interpretive practices to uncover the significance of portents with a wide array of interrelated meanings.

The early broadsheet tradition that began in the 16th century deployed the figures of monstrous births as platforms upon which to launch moralizing lessons for its reading audience. At the same time, however, such accounts may have been of interest to prospective buyers for their sheer novelty, curiosity regarding the particular abnormalities exhibited by the monster, and the tantalizing explanations of why the deformity occurred and what it might presage. The function of such literatures to address individuals and define communities seems important to the message. Whether these communities consisted of families, servants, citizens, readers, the "credible persons" and eyewitnesses the accounts often invoked to legitimate their veracity, or even the nation at large, broadsheets called for a collective acknowledgment of sin and repentance, beginning at the level of the individual reader led through a set of guided interpretations of physical and moral deformity. As monstrous rhetoric in Renaissance literatures expanded toward the end of the century to include entirely metaphorical iterations of deformity, it reflected anxieties concerning personal inwardness, unseen and unruly passions, and transgression.[29] The absence in these accounts of the visible deformed body of the monstrous birth demonstrates the crisis of the (un)observable site of transgression. More than a simple diagnosis of social ills, then, the rhetoric of monstrous births functions as a cipher or

[29] For more specific examples of these emerging trends, see Chapter 3 below, esp. "Shifting Print Traditions."

divine code that invites audiences to interpret the process by which inward vice is manifested physically, ultimately revealing the reciprocal relationship believed to exist between human behavior and the idea of the "natural" moral and ethical order.

Much of the Classical basis for Early Modern engagements with the topic of monsters comes from the works of Aristotle, notably the discussion in his *Physics*, which presents them as "failures in the purposive effort [of nature]" to "reach a determinate end." Such failure, he asserts, "must have arisen through the corruption" of the generative matter provided by the parents, what he calls "the seed" (2.8.¶5). The expected similitude of the offspring to its progenitor is essential to the classical definition of the monstrous; deviation from the accepted norm was the basis of defining physical monstrosity. It is this mode of interpretation invoked by Shakespeare in Henry's description of Richard as a *defect* of the "fruit" in resembling the "goodly tree" from which it sprung. Nevertheless, Aristotle notes that, even in its apparent failure, "nature is […] a cause that operates for a purpose" (¶11). He thus rejects the notion that monstrous births could be truly *unnatural*.[30] That Aristotle—and many who come after him—reads the appearance of monsters simultaneously as manifestations of both an order and a disorder in the machinations and designs of nature is an important and seemingly contradictory aspect of the scientific discourse that developed around monsters in Renaissance debates, as noted by Jean Céard. Both systems of interpretation, as he claims, are "averse to the idea that any effect whatever can in fact be against nature" (187). This seems most apparent in Aristotle's focus on the role of *corruption* in the process of birth and reproduction, which works to define

[30] Cf. St. Augustine's claim in *The City of God*: "whoever is anywhere born a man, that is, a rational, mortal animal, no matter what unusual appearance he presents in color, movement, sound, nor how peculiar he is in some power, part, or quality of his nature, no Christian can doubt that he springs from that one protoplast [i.e., of Adam's line]." Since monstrous births, he seems to suggest, are necessarily the result of a natural reproductive process, they cannot be unnatural, regardless of the apparent singularity of their physical form.

monsters as deviations, albeit rare ones, that have natural, physical causes. The significance of such discourse for those seeking a theological or metaphysical rationale for these phenomena is a connection between Classical and Early Modern notions of "natural" generation that insists upon a particular significance for each of the monster's deformities as an indication of present corruption—a faulty and perhaps an initially invisible or *inward* cause or quality—that, once made manifest, must be decoded in order to uncover its origin. Monsters, for Aristotle, are the purposeful products of a natural corruption that has occurred in the usual course of nature; determining the cause and purpose in such cases would continue to be the topic of earnest interpretation and debate for centuries to follow.

Anti-Catholic Polemics and the "Birth" of Print Monsters

In the Renaissance, one of the first and most influential popular treatments of monstrous births in Europe is a short pamphlet circulated in 1523, written "against blinde, obstinate, and monstrous Papistes" by reformers Philipp Melanchthon and Martin Luther (sig. A1r). Though print and word-of-mouth reports of monstrous animal and human births had been in circulation before this time as points of curiosity and passing fascination, Luther's and Melanchthon's project was unique in its application and analysis of the existing classical modes for interpreting deformed births as well as the socially curative ends to which they employed them. *Deuttung der czwo grewlichen Figuren*, later republished in English as *Of Two Woonderful Popish Monsters to Wyt*, takes up the apocalyptic associations of monstrous births suggested by the biblical text 2 Esdras, which, among other things, insists that the destruction of the world will be preceded by a series of readable signs that can be interpreted and thereby anticipated. Here, the two reformers theorize explicit relationships between deformity and the abuses of the Catholic

Church, transforming the biblical significance of the apocalypse into a metaphor of spiritual reformation. Luther in particular insists on employing this end-of-the-world trope in his text, and in his assurance that "[a]s for me, I will desire willingly that the latter day were at hande" (sig. D4r); such usage here and throughout both authors' texts, however, has distinctly metaphorical implications that heralds the Reformation and the end of the Reformation and the end of Catholic supremacy, rather than the literal destruction of the earth.[31] As such, the pamphlet is particularly important in the history of monstrous study as one of the earliest and most developed instances in popular print[32] of tracing such an elaborate moral/theological conceit through the interpretive reading of deformed bodies.

Though the authors' use of monsters to illustrate their anti-Catholic polemics may at the time have seemed to hold only topical appeal, the work proved quite enduring and came to enjoy a wide audience over the following 50 years through its translation into French and English,[33] prefiguring the popular interest in monstrous birth narratives and their interpretations that seems to have exploded throughout Europe in the mid-to-late 16th century. Among the most notable of the authors' achievements in this work are the significant contributions they made, though

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31 John Brooke's introduction to the English edition of the pamphlet in 1579 reproduces just as vehemently the apocalyptic metaphor of reforming the Catholic Church, even 56 years later: "these two Monsters may well be compared unto the Pope and his rablement of Cardinals, Abbottes, Bishops, Priests, Canons, Moonks and Fryers, as Gods messengers, to give warning unto them that Gods wrath is redy at hand to destroy both him & his kingdome, with his whole rable of Cardinals, Moonks & shavelings, disguising themselves so against nature, as these two Monsters were" (sig. A2v).

32 As has already been mentioned, philosophical and scholarly debates concerning monstrous births had enjoyed vogue since the classical period; it was not until the advent of the printing press that cheaply-produced and illustrated popular literature such as pamphlets and broadsides could make it possible for discourse of this nature to be made widely accessible to a lay audience with varying levels of literacy.

33 Translated into French in 1557 by Jean Crespin as *De Deux Monstres Prodigieux* and, as noted above, into English by John Brooke in 1579 as *Of Two Woonderful Popish Monsters.*

perhaps unwittingly,[34] toward a more specific conceptualization of what might be thought of as a literary "genre" concerning the interpretation of monstrous birth. The pamphlet itself is presented as a collection of discrete treatises written by one of the authors and illustrated by striking woodcuts of the monsters it describes that were produced by the workshop of notable Protestant printmaker Lucas Cranach the Elder (Brecht 99).[35] The interplay of the authors' strongly charged, descriptive text and the bold and arresting woodcut illustrations made a powerful combination that would palpably influence the treatment of monstrous interpretation in European print culture henceforward, emphasizing the unique interplay of pictorial and textual elements. For years to come, similar interplay would become a staple of such literature, aiming to aid the project of preaching a moral, interpretive lesson to a wide audience. Armed with this unique visual appeal, the pamphlet directly encouraged the participation of its readers in scrutinizing the illustrated bodies of the two deformed animals before them, directly leading its readers through the interpretive process toward Luther's and Melanchthon's startling conclusions concerning the import of two "monsters" whose aberrations, they argued, held special significance as a sort of divine commentary on and/or supernatural evidence of Papist evils.

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[34] Luther in particular seems reticent to regard his interpretations of the monsters' bodies as a sort of prophecy: "As touching the Propheticall interpretacion of this [monster]," he begins, "I will leave it to the spirit: for I am no prophet." Even in the next sentence, however, he seems to discard these qualms, insisting that "nevertheles one may well affirme this generally of many such mervailes, that God doth send them as presages and forewarnings of sorrowfull adventures, motions, brutes, troubles and commotions to come" (sig. D4r). Though he would not have been aware of it at the time, Luther's interpretation of the monstrous bodies featured in the pamphlet would prove to be an important (and markedly Protestant) argument for the spiritual relationship between the individual and the divine.

[35] Cranach's impressive woodcut illustrations for *Deuttung der czwo grewlichen Figuren* were closely copied, albeit less artfully, for inclusion in the English translation of the pamphlet in 1579.

The first of the treatises is Philipp Melanchthon's lengthy discussion of the body of a deformed donkey that was, significantly, alleged to have been found dead in the River Tiber near Rome in 1496[36] (*fig.* 2.1). The "Popish Asse," as it came to be called, is a fantastical and impossible composite creature whose bizarre body, which Melanchthon catalogs in detail, consisted of a donkey's head, a mismatched assortment of hands and feet said to be like those of an elephant, a man, an ox, and a griffin, as well as the belly and stomach of a woman, the scales of fish over the majority of the body, the head of an old man protruding from the buttocks, and finally a dragon issuing "forth of the arse of that Popish Ass" (sig. C3v). Each of these physical aberrations receives lengthy discussion and analysis said to reveal a system of metaphorical signification that divulges the hidden and inward corruption of Catholic officials.[37] This rhetorical tactic prefigures similar moves to blazon the bodies of the monsters depicted in popular literary accounts that would circulate for the next century throughout Europe, associating the appearance of a monster and its unique physical deformities with specific moral and religious connotations. The purpose of the monster's birth, Melanchthon asserts, is to be a herald of

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[36] It is, in part, the proximity of the monster to the city of Rome that Melanchthon uses as evidence to bolster his interpretation of it as a recrimination against the Catholic Church: "For GOD hath alwayes declared by mervailous signes and tokens in those places which those signes doe signifie and betoken some thing, [...] and for that that this Monster was founde dead, that is an argument that the ende of the Popes kingdome draweth on fast" (sig. C4r). The significance of place as pertains to the birth and appearance of monsters would continue to be an important interpretive consideration in determining their significance as treated in the popular print literature over the next century.

[37] e.g., "First of all, the heade of the Asse is a description of the Pope· For the Churche is a spirituall bodye and kingdome, assembled together in spirite. And therefore it cannot nor ought not to have a mannes head, nor a visible Lorde. But onely the LORD JESUS, which formeth the heartes inwardlie, by the holy Ghost by faith, keepeth, reneweth, and governeth them as Lorde and head. Contrary unto these thinges the Pope hath made himselfe the visible and outwarde heade of the Churche: And for that cause the Pope is signified by the heade of this Asse, joined with a mannes bodye. For as it is not seemely that a mannes bodye shoulde have an Asses heade: even so is it altogether uns[em]lie that the Pope of Rome shoulde bee the heade of the Church" (sig. B1v).

divine will that makes visible something otherwise hidden; in the case of the Popish Asse, he suggests this to be in exposing the corruption and the many abuses of the Catholic Church, "for to make it to bee behelde and seene of men." Moreover, he continues,

> Truly this is not a figure which is for to signifie and declare any grace or favour: But it is a witnesse of a terrible wrath, by the whiche GOD declareth his horrible indignation to this tyrannicall domination of the Pope, for as muche as hee both not onely represent a shamelesse, vile and unchast figure, but also a composition of monstrous, and misshapen members. (sig. B1v)

Bolstered by the accompanying pictographic representation of the monstrous form, Melanchthon invites his reader to join him in what is a decidedly Protestant project of individual consumption and interpretation of what, in his argument, constitutes a divine text. He then concludes with an admonishment to his readers "not to despise such a prodigious signe," but rather to be glad of its lessons and to thank God for the "most greate benignitie and gentlenesse" he has shown "that hee hath sette foorth before us, Antechrist in a figure so vile and disformed, as painted in a table and lively sette foorth, that one may easely assaile it with handes" (sig. C4r). Thus, Melanchthon holds that the appearance of monsters may simultaneously reveal invisible or unrecognized sin and corruption but also stand as a testament to divine indignation in response to it, as well as an admonishment for spectators to repent. The simultaneity of the monster's interpretation would gradually become an essential underlying message of such literature: the monster is at once a *sign* of corruption or sin for the specific community in which it appears, a stern but merciful *warning* preceding an implied and even more severe divine retribution, and an *exhortation* for spectators to search out and correct the sinful behaviors it represents.

The second and perhaps more famous of the pamphlet's monsters is the "Monkish Calf" of Freiberg that was discovered in early December, 1522, and is addressed at length by Martin Luther (*fig.* 2.2). The calf's many epidermal blemishes, its superfluous skin flap at the base of

the neck, and the curious bald patch on the crown of its skull were said to resemble the habit, cowl, and tonsured scalp of ecclesiastical monks, and it was this resemblance that Luther used to his advantage in his treatise.[38] Moreover, the calf's straight hind legs and lolling tongue he likens to that of a presumptuous preacher of vain and hollow doctrine.[39] Much like Melanchthon's elaborate excoriation of the Catholic Church via the analysis of the Popish Asse, Luther's treatise is a polemical invective against papist corruption that targets the perceived impiety and corruption of monks and nuns, using deliberate descriptions of the creature's deformed body alongside the detailed woodcut illustration presented for readers to examine. The term he uses to describe the creature, "*Munchkalb*," literally meaning "monk calf," but, as Preserved Smith has noted, is also a pun on the German word *Mondkalb*, which at the time of the pamphlet's publication "was already in good usage to signify a false conception, or a mass of dead flesh" (357).[40] As the name suggests, Luther's most serious allegation against "Moonkery"[41] is what he characterizes as its corruption, falsehood, and affectation; as he claims, "it is nothing els but a vaine appearaunce and shewe of godlinesse, and outward hipocrisie of a

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38 "[…] this Calfe representeth the gesture and countenaunce of a Preacher. For he standeth upright uppon his hinder feete [and] he putteth out his tongue" (sig. E3v); "The putting out of the tongue, doth signifie that all their doctrine is no other thing but the tongue. That is to saye, a bablyng and full of vayne words" (sig. E4r).

39 Luther, however, was not the first to note this resemblance or deploy such a reading as a mode of religious criticism. Soon after the creature's discovery, the court astrologer of Prague learned of it and, attributing its significance to the heretical attacks against the Catholic Church by Martin Luther, had a scurrilous broadside published which he dedicated to Margrave George of Brandenburg (Smith 355). The Reverend Johann Cochlaeus (Dobneck) published two such works, *Against the Cowld Minotaur of Wittenberg* and *A Christian Warning of the City of Rome to Germany* in which, among other things, he alleged a close physical resemblance between the monk-calf and Luther himself (356).

40 This pun is extant in the English variation of the word "mooncalf,"

41 "*Munchery*" in the original German (sig. B1v).

holy life allowed of God" (sig. E1v).[42] As with Melanchthon's conclusions regarding the Popish Ass, as well as many later texts treating the appearance of monsters, Luther's conception of the Monkish calf and its significance was closely tied to the notion of visibility and spectacle—most specifically the process by which sin and transgression were believed to be metaphorically rendered and made legible to the common citizen through the reading of the various bodily deformities of a monstrous birth.

Despite their many shared interpretive associations, however, Luther's project as pertains to the Monkish Calf is distinct from Melanchthon's in a number of significant ways. The most explicit significance of the Popish Asse, a composite creature whose "deformities" consist of mismatched limbs and other qualities belonging to a variety of real and mythical animals, lies in the extreme nature of its alterity. It is, quite literally, a figure unlike anything anyone has ever seen before—so much so, in fact, Melanchthon contends it to be too fantastical a creature to have been invented by the human imagination: "it seemeth," he attests, "that mans industrie or cunninge coulde not make nor sette out one such figure" (sig. B1v). The Monkish Calf, by contrast, is all-too familiar in the uncanny resemblance of its deformities to both the attire and hairstyle associated with monastics, albeit fixed upon the hideous and deformed body of a calf that Luther holds "hath defiled the religious habite or apparaile with […] so vile a spotte" (sig. D4v). As Julie Crawford has noted in her *Marvelous Protestantism*, the significance of the Monkish Calf lies in its function as a "fashion monster" (27)—one "whose deformities resembled human fashion excesses" (28)—which targets and criticizes a specific group identifiable by its attire and/or demeanor. In practice, however, narratives featuring fashion

[42] Cf. Jesus's criticism of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:28: "outwarde ye appere righteous unto men when within ye are full of ypocrisie and iniquite." (Tyndale New Testament).

monsters are, as Crawford notes, most directly concerned with chastising and correcting behavior on a much more atomistic, individual level.[43] The very concept of the fashion monster necessarily criticizes the practice of *fashioning*, literally or metaphorically, a prideful, superficial appearance or outward display that conceals one's "true" qualities and/or serves as a distraction from matters of significant spiritual or social import in favor of trivialities and materialist displays. What perhaps proves the most alarming revelation of the Monkish Calf is the assertion that the features that render it literally *monstrous*—its overweening, presumptuous attitude and the emphasis on outward appearance through elaborate vestments—are the same qualities that, as Luther contends, makes moral monsters out of actual monks and nuns.

Though neither would likely have been aware of the extent of its influence within their own lifetimes,[44] Luther's and Melanchthon's contributions to establishing the interpretive significance of monsters as treated in *Deuttung der czwo grewlichen Figuren* were crucial to the developing popular rhetoric of monstrosity that emerged throughout Renaissance Europe for the next century and beyond, casting the mold, no doubt, for countless broadsheets, pamphlets, and verses that treated the subjects of monstrous births as a sort of divine warning against sin and a showing of hidden vice and moral transgression. The pamphlet is particularly foundational for its reinforcement of four key interpretive modes common to later interpretations of monstrous bodies that have already been mentioned, but which bear repeating given the scale of their use and influence. The first of these is the notion, first articulated by Melanchthon but certainly also

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[43] "While the monk calf originally appears as an indictment of Catholicism," Crawford writes, "its most prevalent legacy lies in the history of the reformation of individual, often female, believers" (28).

[44] Martin Luther, d. 1546. Philipp Melanchthon, d. 1560. The extant popular prints featuring monsters in England date from 1562 and after, with the exception of a broadside treating a 1552 conjoined birth in the village of Middleton-Stoney 1552 (see below).

present in Luther's text, of the allegorical relationship between the "misshapen members" of the monster—that is, the specific deformities it manifests—and the particular sins and transgressions upon which they were said to comment and preach reform (sig. B1v). Of the four, this is perhaps the most important interpretive trope as it provides the basis (and the urgency, in many cases) for emblematic interpretations and representations of monstrous bodies both in text and illustration through the media of popular print. A second trope, also established by Melanchthon, is the special significance that the location of the monster's discovery holds in the larger interpretation of its appearance; "that this Popish Asse hath bene found at Rome," he insists, "and not at an other place, doth confirme that [this interpretation] cannot be understanded of any other power and domination then of Rome" (sig. C4r).[45] This concept is essential in its assertion that the meanings assigned to a given monster must be understood in relation to the place of its birth or discovery; moreover, while reports of such events might address a very wide audience indeed, the potential import of the warnings and other messages the monster might presage necessarily target a specific population associated with its appearance and the conditions of its birth.

Thirdly, Luther's emphasis on the Monkish Calf as a fashion monster is most significant for the implications it carries of a hidden interior concealed by a false "show" of appearance. More than this, however, it contributes to the popular perception of monstrous births as figures whose most explicit function is to diagnose and make visible sites of unseen corruption. It is at this point in the text that the theoretical distinction between the inward and outward selves of subjects is most apparent, emphasizing the necessity of truth and the transparency of action in

[45] He goes on at length to add, "For at this daye in our time, there is no power which is like or more greater in the Citie of Rome, then that of the Pope. For GOD hath alwayes declared by mervailous signes and tokens in those places which those signes doe signifie and betoken some thing, […] and for that that this Monster was founde dead, that is an argument that the ende of the Popes kingdome draweth on fast." (sig. C4r).

pious believers that can be learned through observation and careful study of the Monkish Calf. Finally, though Luther's project makes these points of interpretation by explicitly castigating the Catholic Church, he is very careful to outline the scope of his project as one that pertains to a wider potential audience than just any particular individual or group. "[W]e must very well say," he writes, "that by such a monstrous figure is not signified or ment any man alone: But a sociation, a covent, a brotherhood, or a government of many" (sig. F1v). The obvious emphasis is that the calf does not present the figure of any specific individual monk, but rather provides an allegory with which to interpret the behaviors and transgressions of the whole group. Greater than this, of course, is the suggestion that while monsters invite very particular and focused reading of their unique bodily shapes, the messages they convey pertain to whole communities of persons with similar attributes while simultaneously addressing an even wider audience of "readers," exhorting them to examine themselves and their own comportment for similar indications of the sins and transgressions the monster represents.

Medical/Scientific Discourses and the Rise of the Wonder Book

In the second half of the sixteenth century, print "wonder books" began to circulate throughout Europe, no doubt arising from a similar vogue of interest in the monstrous that propelled Luther's and Melanchthon's short pamphlet to its heights of popularity. These works collected, organized, and translated multiple accounts and illustrations of monstrous births and miraculous occurrences that had previously appeared in broadsheets and other popular print as well as the scientific and medical treatises of both early modern and classical authors.[46] Beyond

[46] The use and emphasis of such source texts vary across the extant examples of wonder books. Many cite established authors as precedent for their own claims concerning monstrous birth; on other occasions, these same authors might give examples without citing a specific source.

the physical parameters of the finished product, the chief distinction between wonder books and the treatments of similar or identical topics in ephemeral print genres, as Jennifer Spinks has noted, is the move "beyond reporting singular, […] contemporary monstrous births […] toward a new genre" presenting a collection of such occurrences "across decades, centuries, or even millennia" that "fostered an accompanying polemic of multiplicity" (81). While wonder books differed in scope (as well as cost) from the more cheaply printed ephemeral print genres of broadsheets and pamphlets, they nevertheless played an important role in popularizing and circulating the interpretive discourse of monstrosity through pictographic and textual interfaces similar to those used by Luther and Melanchthon in their seminal pamphlet.

Perhaps the most influential of these wonder books in England was Pierre Boaistuau's *Histoires prodigieuses,* or "prodigious stories," which he dedicated and hand delivered to Queen Elizabeth I in the form of an illuminated manuscript in 1560, a full year before a printed edition appeared in Paris.[47] Having edited and published the first edition of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron* in 1558, Boaistuau was a well-known writer and intellectual in France.[48] He was, however, no physician;[49] whatever his reasons for selecting monsters as the topic for the project

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Some of these, such as the accounts of England's Middleton Stoney birth of 1554 and Italy's Ravenna monster of 1512, also survive in broadside and pamphlet accounts.

47 This manuscript survives in the collection of the Wellcome Library. The print edition of 1561, dedicated to Jean de Rieux, was translated and published in England by Edward Fenton as *Certain Secret Wonders* in 1569. As no modern critical edition of the *Histoires prodigieuses* exists in English, quotations appearing herein will refer to this text unless otherwise noted.

48 He had, however, come under fire for perceived liberties taken in the compilation, which he published under the title *Histoires des amans fortunez*. In the wake of the scandal, Boaistuau "lost his position as secretary to François de Clèves" (Read 147), which may partially explain his impulse to appeal to a foreign queen for patronage of his subsequent projects.

49 This may actually have served him as an asset, however, in terms of the work's long-standing popularity. Unlike earlier works of this type, such as Conrad Lycosthenes's 1557

that would prove the last to be completed in his lifetime, it is certain that they could not have derived chiefly from medical interest. In the dedicatory letter to both the manuscript and print editions, Boaistuau explains his interest by characterizing himself as having fallen captive to what he describes as the topic's attractive qualities: "amongst all the thinges whiche maye be viewed under the coape of heaven," he effuses, "there is nothing to be seene, which more stirreth the spirite of man, whiche ravisheth more his senses, whiche doth more amaze him, or ingendreth a greater terror or admiration in al creatures, than […] monsters, wonders and abhominations" (sig. *A*4r). Boaistuau's motives ultimately seem to derive from a fascination with the monster and a desire to understand and even appreciate its singularity within the scope of the natural world, as well as humanity's ability to perceive and understand it.

Drawing heavily upon Boaistuau's work in the *Histoires prodigieuses,* Ambroise Paré published his own influential monster book, *Des monstres et prodiges*, in 1573. Paré was a respected and well-known physician who had served as the royal surgeon for the French kings since 1552; as such, *Des monstres* is somewhat narrower in scope and quite markedly more medical in tone. More so than Boaistuau, Paré seems specifically driven by an impulse to apply accepted scientific methodology to the study of monsters and other physical aberrations and is generally less comfortable with indeterminacy. This does not, however, forestall his occasionally waxing rhapsodic in a vein similar to his predecessor, especially when he finds himself at a loss to attribute a satisfactory physical cause to an example he shares: "[t]here are divine things," he concludes after describing one such case, "hidden, and to be wondered at, in

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Prodigiorum ac ostentorum chronicon, translated into English as *The Doome, Warning All Men to the Iudgemente* in 1582, Boaistuau's tone in the *Histoires prodigieuses* is clearly written for a lay audience, rather than a scientific or medical one, and organizes its information in such a way as to encourage casual reading rather than close, scholarly scrutiny.

monsters—principally in those that occur completely against nature;[50] for in those, philosophical principles are at a want, so that one cannot give any definite opinion in their case" (73). For both Boaistuau and Paré, finally, monsters seem to have provoked a great fascination in their ability not only to arrest attention and demand deciphering but also to expose the limits of human knowledge, emotion, and experience. These texts, even in their attempt to provide a written record of the knowledge and experience of Western culture in the examination of monsters, stand as testimony to that which they must acknowledge can never be known or understood by mortals regarding the divine and natural order of the universe.[51]

It may not seem surprising then that at the forefront of the attempts to catalog the causes of monstrous generation, both Boaistuau and Paré leave room for that which cannot be explained by rational knowledge and must therefore be attributed to divine intervention; such monsters Boaistuau characterizes as arising from "the judgement, justice, chastisement and curse of God" (sig. C4v) and Paré as both his "glory" and his "wrath" (3). Amongst other biblical references,[52] Boaistuau specifically invokes the ninth chapter of Hosea—one that describes the judgment and

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50 For Paré, as a physician and scientist, the terms "natural" vs. "unnatural" used describe the causes of monsters indicate, respectively, those that could be explained by science and contemporary medical knowledge vs. those that could not and so seemed to defy it.

51 As a comprehensive study of all extant wonder books is beyond the purview of the present study, analysis herein is largely restricted to those of Boaistuau and Paré by virtue of the more distinctly lay audience for which both authors wrote. Boaistuau's work is also significant in the English imagination given the dedication and presentation of the 1559 manuscript to Queen Elizabeth I. Paré's work contributes significant nuance to the conversation given its relationship to Boaistuau's own as well as his authorial position as a man of medicine. Though space does not permit a more thorough analysis, it is important to note that a number of important wonder books pre-date and are even cited in these French texts, such as Jakob Rueff's 1554 *Ein schön lustig Trostbüchle*, Konrad Lycosthenes's 1557 *Wunderwerck*, and Levinus Leminus' 1559 *De miraculis occultis naturae*, to name just some.

52 Both Boaistuau and Paré also invoke the very same apocalyptic biblical text of 2 Esdras that is cited in Luther's and Melanchthon's pamphlet concerning the system of readable signs (one of which is the appearance of monsters) that will precede the Last Days.

punishment of Israel for breaking its covenant to God—in order to address biblical precedent for the appearance of monsters, particularly one of the judgments relating to reproduction:

> These abhominable doings, according to their loves, even when they have nourssed their children, I will destroy, in suche sort that they shall never become men, yea I will plague the wombe where they tooke their beginning, the brests that gave them sucke, and drie up the very root, that it bring forth no more fruit: and if they chaunce to engender, I wil also commit to death the fruite of their bellie. (sig. C4v)[53]

The connection of this particular passage with the question of generation that Boaistuau describes in his project makes evident the social stigma of deformity and its long association in the popular Christian imagination as a divine punishment for moral transgression, particularly in the case of monstrous births that are, in Boaistuau's imagination, "so abhominable and deformed, that they seeme to be brought into the world as wel in contempt of nature, as to the perpetuall infamie and grief of their parents" (sig. *A*4v). As both authors are quick to assert, however, the commonplace reading of monstrous birth as a visitation or imprint on the newborn brought forth "as a horrour" or "witnesse of the incontinencie & sinne of the parents" cannot always be assumed in such cases (Boaistuau sig. C4v). The parable of the blind man[54] appears in both texts as example against such readings, in which Christ, when asked by his disciples for the sake of whose sin—his own, or his parents'—a man would be struck with blindness from birth, replied that it was "neither he nor his father nor his mother [that] had sinned, but that it was in order that the works of God might be magnified in him" (Paré 4). Increasingly apparent within such assertions is the growing Renaissance tendency to regard monstrous children as beings with

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[53] Hosea 9:16, which Boaistuau here embellishes slightly. The original text is somewhat less specific—"[The kingdom of] Ephraim is smitten, their roote is dried up: they can bring no fruite: yea, though they bring foorth, yet will I slaie even the dearest of their bodie" (Geneva Bible); "Effraym is smiten, the roote of hem is dried up; thei schulen not make fruit. That thouy thei gendren, Y schal sle the moost lovyd thingis of her wombe" (Wycliffe Bible).

[54] John 9:1-3.

souls deserving of Christian pity rather than the abhorrence and fear associated with classical interpretations of them as bad omens.[55]

Following his discussion of the divine causes for monstrous births that confound the human capacity to understand or to elucidate, the first of the earthly explanations Boaistuau provides for their generation is "an ardent and obstinate imagination" held of the child's mother, either during conception or the early stages of pregnancy, that is able to imprint physical traits onto the infant that resemble some aspect of her fancies (sig. D1r). Paré also catalogs the phenomenon among his own explanations, but calls it "impression," emphasizing its effects rather than its cause (38).[56] He thereby cautions that women "not be forced to look at or to imagine monstrous things" when pregnant, either "at the hour of conception" or for a period of thirty five to forty two days, depending on the sex of the baby—the time "when the child is not yet formed" (39-40). Both Paré and Boaistuau provide several examples or "proofs" of such incidents from classical and medical texts, one of which is the tale of Hippocrates who was able to argue for the innocence of a princess accused of adultery after giving birth to "a childe blacke like an Ethiopian, hir husbande being of a faire and white complexion" (Boaistuau sigs. D1r-D1v); the cause of this, he was able to persuade the father, was "the portrait of a Moor, similar to the child, which was customarily attached to her bed" (Paré 38). Additionally, they provide biblical and non-human precedent for the phenomenon: both cite the tale of Laban's deception

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55 As Boaistuau explains, "the auncient Romaines had these litle monstrous creatures in such abhomination, that as soone as they were borne, they were immediatly committed to the river of Tyber, there to be norished. But we being better broughte up, and fostred in a schole of more humanitie, knowing them to be the creatures of GOD, suffer them to be brought to the church, there to receive the holy sacrament of Baptisme" (sig. D3r).

56 He does, however, somewhat downplay its prevalence on his list in favor of physical causes concerned with "quantity of seed" that derive from Aristotle's *Physics* (3).

by Jacob,[57] and Paré insists that "conies and peacocks who are closed up in white places, through the properties of the imagination, give birth to their white young" (39). From this and similar tales offered by both texts,[58] the connections between early modern notions of monstrous generation and the general anxieties surrounding property and birth, including the virtue and the comportment of pregnant women, become clear.

The dangerous consequences of impression were not merely associated with the behavior and actions of the mother at conception, however; as Boaistuau contends, her emotional state could have a pronounced impact extending well into the term of her pregnancy. As one example, he provides, by way of Sebastian Münster, the case of the two maids from Worms who were "knitte together by the forheade," but otherwise possessed two whole and complete bodies and lived until they were ten years of age. To understand the cause of their being joined in such a manner, Boaistuau depicts Münster unironically asking the reader to imagine the scenario that precipitated it: "two women talking togither, the one of them being great with childe, there came a thirde woman (not knowing that either of them were with childe) and sodainly thrust their

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57 Genesis 30:27-43. Laban, in dividing up his land and holdings, determined that his son-in-law Jacob should receive only those sheep that were spotted and imperfect. In spite, Jacob placed several reeds in the watering trough from which he had partially peeled the bark, ensuring that all the sheep would be forced to look at the spotted wood whenever they took a drink. At length, all Laban's pregnant sheep gave birth to offspring that were spotted from the impression of viewing the peeled rods during the act of satisfying their thirst. In this fashion, Jacob's herd was enlarged over that of Laban's natural sons.

58 Paré gives a very similar anecdote, unique to his text, from Heliodorus's *History of Ethiopia* wherein the African King and Queen produce a white daughter "because of the appearance of the beautiful Andromeda that [the mother] summoned up in her imagination, for she had a painting of her before her eyes during the embraces from which she became pregnant" (38). Additionally, both authors cite a related tale recorded by St. John of Demascus of a young girl brought before Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV. She is described as being covered in hair from head to foot such that she resembled a wild bear, "the which the mother had brought forth in so hideous and deformed a shape," Boaistuau reports, "by having too much regarde to the picture of S[t]. John [the Baptist] cloathed with a beasts skinne, the which was tied or made fast continually during hir conception at hir beddes feete" (sig. D1r).

heads togithers as they talked, wherewith she with childe was astonished, whereupon grew this monstrous child bearing" (sig. D3v). More than the trauma or pain of the incident itself, it is the mother's vexation and rumination over the sudden injury and interruption that resulted in the conjoined birth. Unique to this tale is the suggestion that the monstrous aberration was due not to any particular behavior on the mother's part that could be avoided by vigilance and careful attention, but rather by an involuntary astonishment arising from sudden physical trauma delivered by an outside source.[59]

Though he lists it as a separate cause altogether, Boaistuau's further observation "that sometimes these monsters be engendred of the corruption and filthie unsavorie meates" seems intimately tied to the properties of impression he has already introduced (sig. D1v).[60] Tied to this notion is the perception that some women demonstrate a voracious and unruly appetite during particular stages of their pregnancy and desire to eat things they would otherwise consider distasteful. These foods, either on their own or when coupled by the mother's intense longing, he suggests, are damaging to the health of the child. A peculiar tale Boaistuau retells from Levinus Lemnius's 1559 *De miraculis occultis naturae* concerns a mother of twins living in Belgium who was "pressed without measure of [such an] unruly appetite" such that she longed to devour the flesh of a young boy who she saw walking past her. Suspecting (quite rightly) that he would refuse such a request, she "fel upon him, tearing the fleshe of his hand with hir teeth, and devoured the same sodainly" (sig. D2r). When the boy successfully resisted a second attempt

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59 Paré also makes mention of this birth in his own work, but rather explains its cause as "an example of too great a quantity of seed" (8, 16).

60 A related claim made by Paré is that monsters can be created "through corruption and putrefaction," citing an account of a snake that was discovered upon the opening "of a deadman's lead casket having a very good cover and being well soldered so that there was no air in it." The snake, he concludes, had generated "in the putrefaction of the dead body" inside (66).

and fled, the woman was left to grieve "the denial of the second morsel" and thereby fell into a melancholy state that persisted until her time of delivery, whereupon one child was born alive and healthy and the other wasted and dead. Though her physician, as Boaistuau reports, concluded the occasion of the dead child to be the unsatisfied appetite, he leaves the matter wholly ambiguous as to whether this was the sole cause or if the consumption of human flesh itself may have been involved to some extent.[61] In either case, the tale underlines the interrelated roles that female appetite and desire were believed to play in the birth process, to the detriment of both mother and child.

Also among the list of prominent causes for deformed birth in both the texts of Boaistuau and Paré is the notion of the quantity and quality of "seed," or genetic material, supplied to the child by each parent. Recalling Hippocrates, Paré assures his reader that "if there is too great an abundance of matter, multiple births will occur, or else a monstrous child having superfluous and useless parts," such as limbs, digits, genitalia, or even heads. "[O]n the contrary," he adds, "if the seed is lacking in quantity, some limb will be lacking" (8). Implicit in these remarks are gendered implications of the roles believed to be played by each parent's "seed"; as Sujata Iyengar suggests, "[t]he mother provided the *matter* or stuff of which the infant was made, the father its shape or form" (95-6, "Deform, Deformed, Deformity," emphasis added). If either or both of these components were lacking or overabundant, the result would be a monster of surplus or deficient physicality. A great number of the monsters to be found in the pages of Paré's text

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[61] Boaistuau makes a number of noteworthy changes to this story as related in the translated text of Lemnius appearing in 1658. Here, it is said to be not uncommon for pregnant women to desire to bite the shoulders of a "corpulent well [sized] man." It is such a man, rather than a young boy, who allows the woman to bite his shoulders "least she might take any hurt" from her desire, a detail that adds a sexual connotation to the charges of her desire and unruly appetite. "[W]hereupon," Lemnius continues, "she bit out a part with her teeth, and chewd it a little, and then she swallowed it raw. When she was not yet satisfied, she desired to bite again, but the man would not endure her" (sig. E4v). The result was the same.

are of the sort resulting from superabundance of seed, which, in addition to cases of supernumerary parts, he includes those of conjoined twins, such as in the example given by Boaistuau of the two maids of Worms (18). In such examples, Paré notes with some fascination the trend that the bodies of conjoined children are typically whole and complete—"perfect and well-proportioned"—and otherwise unremarkable but for the point at which they are joined (8).[62] Boaistuau too mentions this among his causes, but only in passing, explaining the phenomenon by relating a curious metallurgical metaphor[63] that recalls Aristotle's edict that offspring are only non-monstrous when they resemble the parents in composition and appearance: warns that "if the matter or substance which a man goes about to melt be not wel boiled, purified and confected, or [else] the moulde be not well cast, the image or effect of such worke will appeare imperfect, hideous and deformed" (sig. D1v).

Implicit in Boaistuau's metaphor is a veiled description of the gendered functions of parental "seed" and anatomical sex essential to the act of reproduction. Though both parents supply the child with their "seed" which is then clarified, mixed, and tempered like metal alloys, it is the masculine duty of the father, to extend his metallurgic metaphor, to pour and set the casting or form of the matter from which the copy is to be made. At the same time, it is the mother's role to receive the cast, supply the matter or substance, and "mold" it to its final formation, an image that renders the theory of her "impression" onto the unborn child quite literal. This is again reflected in Paré's analysis by extended descriptions of monsters whose

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62 It is also worth mentioning that according to the description of this cause that Paré provides, otherwise healthy twin or multiple birth would similarly fall into this category of generation.

63 Both Boaistuau and Paré cite this metaphor as coming from "Empedocles and Diphilus" (Boaistuau sig. D1v, Paré 42), though in reality these men lived nearly two centuries distant. Empedocles was a Greek pre-Socratic philosopher associated with the origins of cosmogenic theory. Diphilus was a Greek physician. The works of the two men are today extant only in fragments.

abnormalities have, in whole or in part, resulted from the "narrowness or the smallness of the womb," which insufficiently provides the comingled seed room to grow and thus compresses and mangles the offspring (42). He goes on at length to characterize in these cases an "indisposition" of the womb, providing a number of "examples of monsters that are formed, the mother having remained seated too long, having had her legs crossed, or having bound her belly too tight while she was pregnant," again emphasizing the impact of a mother's behavior and carriage during the term of her pregnancy on the body of her child (43). These considerations, taken together with the concerns mentioned above by both authors as regards the mother's diet, help to account for the preponderance of discourse that has emerged surrounding birth generally, especially in its tendency to focus on the physical, emotional, and moral condition of new mothers and their ability to provide a hospitable environment in which to foster healthy offspring.

Although Paré for the most part presents explanations and case studies for birth deformity similar to those provided by Boaistuau, there are noteworthy examples in each text where their interest and analyses diverge. Of the few explanations Paré does not duplicate in his text, one is Boaistuau's acknowledgment of the influence the planets were believed to hold over both the fate and the physical shape of a newborn child. Citing Alchabitius,[64] Boaistuau claims that astrologers have often explained birth deformities as resulting from "the influence of the starres," and find, for example, that "if the Moone be in certaine degrees and conjunctions when the woman conceiveth, hir frute shalbe monstrous" (sig. D1v). It is noteworthy, but perhaps not surprising that Paré omits mention of astrology in his treatise; the emphasis he places on physical, earthly causes of monsters is most appropriate given his status as court physician. Curiously, however, he devotes a significant portion toward the end of his treatise on a

64 Tenth century Arabian astrologer; Boaistuau probably refers to a Latin translation of his most famous treatise, *Introduction to the Art of Judgments of the Stars*.

discussion of demons, sorcerers, and the art of magic, insisting that "no one can deny, and one should not deny, that there be sorcerers," citing several examples of these "deceitful men, who carry out their fate through a pact they have made with Demons, and who are slaves and vassals to them." This, of course, was far from an uncommon belief even in medical circles, and it is important to emphasize that Paré's discussion of them and their influence is to a great extent limited to physical rather than spiritual phenomena—specifically, the means by which they, "through subtle, diabolic and unknown means corrupt the body, intelligence, life, and health of men and other creatures" (85). Curiously, however, Boaistuau denies the efficacy of demonic magic in accomplishing any effects against the design of God,[65] insisting that any seemingly monstrous product of demonic interaction with humans could be nothing other than "legerdemaine"—illusionary trickery and malicious, elaborate deception purposed to "abuse the simplicity of such as are apt to give certainty of […] vain and deceitful charms" (sig. E2r). What is perhaps most noteworthy of the inclusion of astrology and sorcery as purported causes for the appearance of monstrous births is that, in each case, both Boaistuau and Paré attempt to account for physical factors external to the bodies and health of the parents and the viability of their reproductive capacities.

Though each characterizes his list differently and privileges specific kinds of texts and information to support his claims, the causes for the generation and births of monsters as theorized by Boaistuau and Paré that have been discussed above can generally be grouped into

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[65] This echoes the earlier sentiment regarding deformity as being an expression of God's works rather than as punishments for sins or transgression, and is indeed noteworthy given the original posturing of Boaistuau's text as a gift to England's Queen. Whether responding to or anticipating English interpretive trends, Boaistuau reflects their refusal to attribute monsters to "the actions of evil spirits or to the results of bestiality, theories that were espoused in Europe by even the most scholarly of authors up to the seventeenth century" (Bates, "Birth Defects" 204).

four often interrelated categories. The first of these is an expression of divine glory and omnipresence, most often depicted as a result of his wrath in reaction to human transgression. Though Boaistuau and Paré both decry overgeneral application of such interpretation, it is upon this model that popular belief justified the common perception of monsters as divine retribution for sins of the parent(s). A second explanation regards an impression of the mother's physical or emotional state *in utero*, which may be caused by a habitual behavior, intemperate emotion, or unruly desire that could somehow manifest physically onto the body of the gestating child. Partly related to this is the third cause concerning physical or accidental defects in reproductive capacity by either the womb itself—through trauma, illness, or disposition—or the quality or quantity of either parent's "seed." Finally,[66] both authors describe different external, environmental factors that may work physically on the child itself or else either parent's efforts to produce viable offspring, such as through astrological influences and the direct intervention of evil figures such as sorcerers. Each of the conclusions presented in these texts is informed by classical and then-current scientific and medical knowledge circulating throughout learned corners of Europe; the most significant contribution made by wonder books such as those of Boaistuau and Paré[67] must necessarily be their compilation and popularization of these discourses, which they directed at a much wider and more general audience than the theologians, scholars, doctors, and other specialists who had direct access to such knowledge and the means to apply it.

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66 A fifth category that each author mentions only begrudgingly in their texts includes "artificial monsters" that are presented by "vacabunds [vagabonds] and uncerten people" by manufacturing or creating the illusion of bodily deformity so as "to make them appere monstrous" and thereby receive greater profits from begging (Boaistuau sig. D2r).

67 As well as many others, such as the German and Dutch texts they cite explicitly (see above).

Broadsheet Deformities: A Monstrous Fascination

In England, the sudden increase in the circulation of this elite knowledge surrounding the discourse of monsters can most dramatically be seen in the preponderance of cheap popular print that survive from the sixteenth century. Though wonder books might prove more accessible and popular than any of the specialized texts from which they drew material, they would still have presented significant literary and economic barriers to many who might have been interested in their content. By contrast, "ephemeral" print was ubiquitous, affordable, and—owing to its visual and aural registers—able to be consumed by customers irrespective of their literacy levels. Unfortunately, due to many of the physical characteristics that made them affordable, single-sheet ephemeral prints such as broadsheets and broadside ballads[68] were subsequently regarded as transitory materials or "trifles" in comparison to more substantial, book-length publications;[69] as a result, only a small fraction of them—approximately 9%—survive from the sixteenth century.[70] Because of the major gaps in the literary history of this important genre, it is difficult or impossible to draw definitive conclusions about interpretive and stylistic patterns they may have once represented. Thus, the historical and literary relationships between these extant texts

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[68] For the most part, the distinction between single-page "broadsheets" and "broadsides" is merely academic: while the former had material printed on both sides of the page whereas the latter had only one. These terms were frequently used interchangeably during the period. The "broadside ballad," however, is a specific literary tradition that developed chiefly at the end of the 16th century and remained popular in different permutations for several centuries.

[69] Such prints, as Leslie Shepard has explained, were forms of literature "essentially printed for the day, as ephemeral as yesterday's newspaper or a handbill given in the streets" (*Broadside Ballad* 23).

[70] The English Broadside Ballad Archive, hosted by the University of California-Santa Barbara, reports that only about 280 broadsides from the sixteenth century survive, some of which are multiple copies of the same print (*EBBA* "The Heyday of the Broadside Ballad"). This number is paltry compared to the estimated total of about 3,000 believed to have been printed in the second half of the century (Watt 11).

is quite complicated and defies attempts to develop a satisfactory sense of natural progression or the development of ideas and trends over time.

The earliest survival of monstrous print ephemera in English is the often overlooked bilingual print of 1532, *Diß Monstrum ist auff Natangen* / *This Horible Monster*, which depicts conjoined piglets born in a Prussian village, described with both English and German prose text (*fig*. 2.3).[71] The broadsheet, whose "complete" form must be extrapolated by conflating the three extant but partial prints in the British Museum and British Library in London and the Schlossmuseum Friedenstein in Gotha, is an important representation of international cooperation in the book trade at an early moment in England's printing history. The full, original sheet consisted of two blocks of German titles and descriptive text centered over gruesome woodcuts representing the front and back views of the piglets. Between these images, a narrow column of descriptive English prose appears flanked at top and bottom by incidental woodcuts. The colophon identifies the origins of the print with Niclas Meldeman, a Nuremburg "Briefmaler," or print colorist. Each copy has been hand colored with the use of stencils, detailing the body and mouth of the creature (the latter done in a striking red pigment). Notably, the Gotha print contains no English text; instead, a large blank space appears between the woodcuts of the creature's front and back. As O'Connel and Paisey have theorized, this oddly-spaced print, coupled with the existence of the British editions and their matching watermarks, suggests an intention by Meldeman to export the colored sheets to international printmakers who could overprint translated text in the blank middle space to create bilingual editions (61). The incidental woodcuts framing the British prints' English block have been identified as belonging in 1531 to printer Peter Treveris of London, Southwark (O'Connell and Paisey). The apparent

[71] The complete, annotated text of this broadsheet may be found in Appendix 2 (*No.* 1).

relationship between the much-distant printmakers Treveris and Meldeman suggests some tantalizing possibilities regarding international cooperation in the print trade before the Stationer's Guild monopoly of 1557 worked to quash foreign publications in England.

The earliest extant broadsheet in English depicting a monstrous human birth is the 1552 account of conjoined twins born in the village of Middleton Stoney (*fig* 2.4).[72] The print survives in fragments; the most complete of these is a composite of three cuttings that resides in the British Museum, having been reassembled into their assumed original order and pasted onto a backing sheet (Livingston 119). The two topmost fragments feature detailed woodcut illustrations that depict the front and back perspectives of horizontally opposed twins joined at the waist.[73] Also appearing on the second fragment, beneath the woodcut showing the rear perspective of the twins, are two sets of verse separated by an ornament: one in Latin and the other in English. Below this, a third fragment contains a block of explanatory prose in English, the tail end of which has been obscured by damage and overzealous trimming. Happily, the lost prose text and even the broadsheet's colophon can be reconstructed by comparison against another extant version of the print that survives in the Central Library of Zürich. This print contains the complete, untrimmed contents of fragments two and three on a single sheet, as well as a legend at the top of the page, absent in the British Museum copy, which reads, "The backe partes of the .ii. Children."[74]

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[72] The complete, annotated text of this broadsheet may be found in Appendix 2 (*No.* 2).

[73] A previous owner of the broadside has seen fit to watercolor these images (Livingston 118).

[74] It is clear from these differences in the two survivals that there has been some loss of text and/or other elements of the original full print. The existence of descriptive legend in the Zürich Library sheet indicates at the very least that similar text accompanying the first woodcut has been lost. It may even suggest the Zürich Library sheet to have originally been one of a pair, the mate of which would have contained the "front" woodcut that survives only

The prose portion of the broadsheet, as is typical of many such survivals, provides the bulk of the factual evidence and detail pertaining to the nativity and parentage of the deformed birth, which it calls a "double Childe." The text mentions but makes no specific judgment of either parent, invoking the unnamed mother only as spouse to "her late hous[b]ande John Kenner" and "the good wife" of a local inn. The children are said to have been "yet living" at the time when the broadsheet would have been compiled and/or printed, further describing them as being "of good liking [disposition] and in good possibilitie (by all mens judgementes that have sene them) to live," notwithstanding the severity of their deformities.[75] An extensive catalog of the conjoined bodies follows, listing the supernumerary heads, torsos, legs and hands that are nonetheless "of good and parfit [perfect] shape & fashion, welfavoured and faire of visages like unto other children," a detail which seems to prefigure Paré's own fascination with such double births. As to the monstrous abnormalities, the text appears to marvel at the presence of "one onlye belly, one navel and one only fundment, at which they voide both urine & ordure," as well as a third leg, asymmetrical and deformed, that is shown emerging from the topmost side of the child, grown "with .ii. feete[,] having but .ix. toes, monstrous both legge and feete, as ye maye perceive by the Picture."[76] The text concludes with report of the children's baptism,[77] their

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in the British Museum copy, in addition to its own legend and further or identical text and ornamentation. The uneven folds present in each of the fragments may support this.

75 Given the children's baptism by the midwife, as the broadsheet mentions later, this seems questionable: "live-born children were baptized by a priest or minister as soon as they could conveniently be taken to church," according to Bates, "but a newborn considered likely to die could, according to canon law, be baptized by anyone. Midwives were well placed to do this and it had always been expected of them" (*Emblematic Monsters* 144).

76 This deformed leg is made all the more monstrous in the broadside's two woodcuts, as it remains unaltered in attitude and perspective despite the shift (from "front" to "back" views) that the rest of the child's form undergoes in the implied transition between images. The resulting effect is a leg that, more than just being deformed, is altogether *formless* in its

christening as "John and Johane," and a detailed description of their behavior exhibited after the birth: "The face of the one will shewe a cherfull countenaunce on such as looke uppon them […] and either of them doth sildom cry. And as thei report which kepe the Children, thei never slepe both at once, byt while the one slepeth, the other is wakinge." Such details in particular would seem to be included so as to implicitly argue for their differentiation as two individuals, possessed of distinct souls.

As is also typical in broadsheets of this type, the content of the print's verse sections is quite distinct from the delivery of factual description provided by the prose text, offering instead a number of interpretive claims and warnings that the birth of these children may reveal. The first of these sections consists of two Latin quatrains that call attention to the teaching and warning functions of the monstrous body, counseling onlookers not to let outward appearance blind them to issues of more pressing significance:

Quis quis in hace flectis mirantia lumina chartam [1]
A[t]tonite pauidum discute mentis onus,
Hec est altisoni divina potentia Jovae:[78]
Hec tibi vibratae virga timenda manus.

Ne fias animo qui non es corpore monstrum [2]
Mens-ne sit horrendis contaminata notis
Iam sape, monstrosa fugiendo relinquito vitam.
Atque vias vigili dirige mente tuas.

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monstrous qualities: impossibly amorphous, alternating its shape, and defying even the attempts of the illustrator to make a sensible visual record of its existence.

77 In cases of such double births, there could be controversy surrounding the performance of baptism given debate over whether the "child" possessed one soul or two (an unnecessary second baptism would be irreligious). Authorities were divided on the issue, often justifying their decision based on the number of distinct heads the child exhibited (Bates, *Birth Defects* 207).

78 The 1st declension feminine ending (*-ae*, rather than the third declension *-is*) is unusual to associate with Jove, king of the gods; taken together with the misspelling of *attonite* in the previous line, this could suggest either an overzealous typesetter or else that the verse's author possessed an imperfect knowledge of Latin grammar.

Opening with a direct address to an audience that is drawn together through the mutual experience of strong reaction to monstrous spectacle, the broadsheet commands its readers, "Each of you who bends marvelling eyes on this sheet," to "Shake off the fearful burden of an astonished mind" (1.1-2).[79] Unabated astonishment, it seems to suggest, will distract from the dire message embodied by the child; "This is the divine power of high-sounding Jove," it insists, "Whose hand brandishes this frightening rod at you" (1.3-4). Coincident with the message the monster conveys is the implication of correction and punishment, as is suggested with reference to the "rod," a perennial metaphor of discipline and education, particularly that of young children. "You who are not a monster in body," the verse further admonishes, "do not become so in spirit, / Nor let the mind be contaminated with knowledge that should be feared" (2.1-2). This recalls the knowledge—and, by extension, the practice—of sin made possible to mankind in Eden after first tasting from the forbidden tree. "Learn well that you will transcend this worldly life by fleeing monstrous things," the passage concludes, "And direct your paths with a watchful mind" (2.3-4).

The English verse, consisting of three quatrains, goes on to make a still more pointed interpretation regarding the relationship between the monstrous body and the perceived condition of mankind's deteriorated, abased spiritual state.

Such as we be, such is this age [1]
Behold and you shall see.
So far in vice, do men outrage
That monsters they may be.

Our bodies growe, al out of kinde [2]
Our shape is straunge to sight,
So Satan hath drawen mans monstrous mind
From God, from truth and right.

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[79] My deepest gratitude to Dr. M. Teresa Tavormina for her invaluable collaborative assistance in translating and transliterating the Latin epigram.

Wonder no more, make straight your wayes [3]
Stand fast and feare to fall,
The Lorde hath sent us in these dayes
An image for you all.

Perhaps most significant here is the collapse of the children's monstrous appearance and the transgressive "vice" of humanity (1.3). Such sentiment recalls Luther's excoriation of monks and nuns whose deceits and veiled hypocrisy, he claimed, were finally rendered visible by the appearance of the Monkish Calf. The charge in both cases is much more than just a comparison; sinners, they suggest, are not simply *like* monsters because of their unruly qualities and refusal to conform to expectation, they *are* monsters, hideously deformed invisibly and inwardly by their intransigent and unruly disregard of "God, […] truth and right" (2.4). The final quatrain both warns and reassures, insisting that the "image" embodied by the monster is not simply a sign of divine wrath but also a product of God's mercy that anticipates the possibility of salvation for individuals who undertake to "make straight [their] ways" (3.4). The ultimate effect of the broadsheet's twenty lines of verse is a powerful summoning of its audience's attention that draws from both the arresting spectacle of gruesome deformity it illustrates and the fearful reaction it anticipates, attempting to lead spectators through a directed but nonetheless individual process of assessment and critique. Further, by insisting that the natural reaction of fear one may experience upon seeing monsters is actually fear of God's wrath, it supplies not only a motive but also the means by which the spectator may diagnose and correct the moral failings in his or her own life—a decidedly Protestant lesson.

What is also significant about the broadsheet of the Middleton-Stoney birth is what it may reveal about the ways such texts were consumed and the sorts of audiences it might have anticipated. As has already been discussed, one of the most significant features of the broadsheet form was its relative affordability and, given its aural and pictorial components, its accessibility

to potential consumers at multiple levels of literacy. This stark contrast to the more expensive bound books enjoyed in elite circles has caused modern readers and scholars to assume a strict class division between both the consumers of each type of text as well as in the content that either might contain. Such assumptions, of course, are generalizations not universally true, as may be witnessed by the Latin verses that appear in the Middleton Stoney broadsheet that would seem to invoke and anticipate a very specific type of literate audience in order to understand and scrutinize their content. Although the Latin passages are flawed,[80] their presence in the text is singular among the other extant 16th century monstrous birth broadsheets of England, constituting a specific appeal that seems to target an educated audience. However, while the immediate, almost irresistible assumption is that these verses indicate a more learned and/or affluent, Latin-literate readership than is generally associated with ephemeral print, the Latin text may simply reveal an awareness of readers' desire to appear learned and sophisticated, and may thus have served to further legitimate the content the broadsheet presented.

Whoever the intended "reader" of these Latin verses, it is clear that the author and/or compiler of the broadsheet took pains to include and set them, and so must have foreseen a utility in their presentation beyond simple ornamentation. The fact that the content of these lines specifically invokes the broadsheet genre[81] as well as the themes presented both in the accompanying English verses and in the larger discourse of monstrous births in circulation at this

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80 As noted above, the passage contains number of mistakes attributable to the poet and/or the typesetter.

81 I.e., by invoking an audience that "bends marveling eyes at this sheet" (1.1), the lines acknowledge their appearance on a single-page publication; the "this" mentioned as being an example of "the divine power of high-sounding Jove" is a specific reference to the woodcut illustration(s) that precede the verses (1.3). So while it is possible, in other words, that these Latin verses were not originally composed for this broadside, in such a case they must either have been copied from another, similar publication, or else specifically adapted to adhere to the present generic context.

time seems to refute the idea of their casual inclusion as mere ornament.[82] This by itself is remarkable, but beyond the textual indicators of one audience for whom the print may have been intended, the British Museum survival supplies further evidence for its use by early modern readers who in fact were literate and at least rudimentarily conversant in other languages, demonstrated by a set of Dutch and Latin manuscript additions in two differing Tudor hands that surround the woodcut in fragment one (Livingston 119). Both additions record the deaths of the children—the first on August 17th and the second on the following day[83]—and so provide a window of about two weeks in which the broadsheet must have been composed. Though his record provides each child with an extra day, the information in the manuscript additions is also supported by an entry made by London Clothier Henry Machyn in his celebrated diary: "The xviii day of August," he records, "ded the dobull chelderyn, one, and the th'odur [*sic*] ded the xix day; I pray God have mersy!" (24).[84] While both records document members of a reading public captivated enough by these events to follow with interest and record the continuance of these children's lives, the broadsheet's Latin manuscript addition reveals a direct textual

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82 There are, for example, a number of broadside ballad survivals from the 17th century that include musical notation as part of their design, many of which were "fakes" that "became printer's stock and reappeared in ballad after ballad" as mere ornament (Simpson xii). Given that the Middleton Stoney broadside's Latin verses align thematically with the rest of its content suggests, by contrast, that they were either meticulously composed for inclusion or else deliberately copied out of an already existing text deemed relevant to the topic at hand.

83 "*het een kynt sterf de .17 / het ander sterf den .18 / augosto 1552* [the one child died on the 17th / the other child died on the 18th / August 1552]" (left); "*anno 1552 / 17 augusti unus puer mortuus / est alter puer 18 die* [in the year 1552 / one boy died August 17 / the other boy on the 18th day]" (right).

84 Machyn's diary also records the birth of the children on 3 August, describing them and the circumstances of their birth in language so similar to that of the broadsheet's prose text that it is reasonable to assume his familiarity with it, perhaps even directly furnishing the details he preserves (23).

engagement, however rudimentary, with the document's own gestures of preserving a bilingual record partially in Latin.

The Monstrous Birth Boom of 1562-70

Following the appearance of the double birth in Middleton Stoney, there survive no further ephemeral print accounts of monstrous births in England for a decade[85] until, in 1562, they seem to explode to prominence with the appearance of four accounts within the space of six months. The alarming frequency of monstrous births this year is noted in an August letter from John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, to Swiss reformer Heinrich Bullinger, complaining of "an incredible lack of moderation" in both weather and temperature the whole year. Further, he prefigures the description of monsters born from putrefaction, going on to insist that "of this infection [i.e., the weather] are born monsters, children scored in the manner of deformed bodies, others are completely without heads, some heads of other men's trunks, some without arms, without legs, without legs, others clung to the bones, no meat at all, such as images of death are used to depict" (qtd. in Huth 444).[86] Several of these monsters, including a few for which no broadsheet treatment survives, are recorded in Holinshed's chronicle, where he notes that "[t]his yeare in Englande were many monstrous birthes," including "a foale with one bodie and two heads," "a pig with foure legges, like to the armes of a man childe with handes and fingers," another pig a month later "with two bodies, eight feete, and but one head," "many [more] calves

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85 Certainly, however, some must have been produced and are no longer extant. The STC gives the titles of two such publications of monstrous children, both dated 1561.

86 As translated from the letter's original Latin: "*Incredibilis fuit hoc anno toto apud nos coeli atque aeris intemperies.* […] *Ex hac contagione nata sunt monstra: infantes foedum in modum deformatis corporibus, alii prorsus sine capitibus, alii capitibus alienis; alii trunci sine brachiis, sine tibiis, sine cruribus; alii ossibus solis cohaerentes, prorsus sine ullis carnibus, quales fere imagines mortis pingi solent.*"

and lambes" as well as "a man childe […] borne at Chichester in Sussex the heade, armes, and legges whereof, were like a notamie [an anatomy; i.e., emaciated]" with a "breast and belly monstrous bigge from the Navell as it were a long string hanging" and exhibiting "about the necke a great coller of fleshe and skinne growing like the ruffe of a shirt or neckerchefe, comming up above the eares pleyting and folding. &c." (1577, 4.1816).[87] It is noteworthy that the chronicle, a document with entirely different readership and rhetorical aims than is typically associated with ephemeral print, would adopt language similar to that which circulated in accounts of monstrous births to describe and implicitly suggest significance for these occurrences.

The Chichester child mentioned by Holinshed is one of two such popularly known human births to occur that year for which broadsheet accounts survive. *A Discription of a Monstrous Childe, Borne at Chichester in Sussex* (*fig.* 2.5),[88] attributed to "Jhon D.," presents a large, fearsome woodcut illustration centered over three columns of verse—22 ballad stanzas in total—and concludes with a very brief segment of explanatory prose.[89] The clear emphasis in the present broadsheet is on the interpretive lesson of the birth treated in the extensive verses; very little room remains on the page to preserve factual evidence about the birth and life of the child,

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87 This full text is reproduced verbatim in John Stow's 1580 *Chronicles of England from Brute Unto this Present Yeare of Christ* (117-8). Stow's 1566 *Summarie of English Chronicles*, it should be noted, also makes mention of the Middleton Stoney birth, describing the twins in much the same way as other accounts, except that he claims them to have lived lyued "xviii. dayes, and when they were opened, it appered they wer women children" (173r).

88 The complete, annotated text of this broadsheet may be found in Appendix 2 (*No*. 3).

89 Two identical copies of this print survive in the British Library; judging from their similar damage and creases, as well as the manuscript study notes one bears in a late Tudor hand, Livingston concludes the prints to have been salvaged from the binding of a book where they were at one time used as wastepaper (216). This ignominious fate was not an uncommon one for ephemeral prints once their period of interest had faded (Shepard, *Broadside Ballad* 49).

recording in its meager prose section only that "The father hereof is one Vincent, a boutcher, both he and his wife being of honest quiet conversation. They having had children before, in natural proportion: and went with this her full time." It it curious that the level of description one might expect from such a publication is absent in this sheet; the detail provided in Holinshed, for example, of a "great coller of fleshe and skinne" growing about the child's neck "like the ruffe of a shirt or neckerchefe" is not mentioned anywhere in the text despite being depicted in the woodcut—suggesting, perhaps, the treatment of this and/or other topics by an earlier broadsheet that does not survive that may even have exhibited the same illustration. The popular intrigue in this particular birth may be evinced by another entry in Henry Machyn's diary that records "a strange fegur with a long struynge comming from the navyll" that on 4 July of that year was "browth to the cowrte in a boxe […] from Chechester," perhaps sparking interest that, among other things, could have precipitated multiple print accounts (284).

The broadsheet that does survive is noteworthy for both the bulk of its verses relative to the prose description as well as for the context of its interpretation. Unlike other prints of this type, it reads the monster as one of a series of wonders supported by biblical precedent, and does not make any direct allusions to the specific deformities of the child it pictures.

When God for sinne, to plague hath ment [1]
Although, he longe defarde [deferred]
He tokens truly, straunge hath sent
to make his foes a fearde.

That they thereby, might take remorse [2]
Of their ill life mispent
And more of love, then feare or force
Their formall faultes repent.

The first eleven stanzas of the broadsheet thus establish a pattern by which it is alleged that divine signs and warnings appear during times of crisis and change that must be noted and heeded in order to achieve God's grace. In each case, the text notes a specific prophet of God

who leads believers away from wickedness and back to the path of righteousness, naming Noah, Lot, Moses, and Jesus Christ as examples.[90] Following these recollections, the text invokes the familiar apocalyptic predictions of 2 Esdras, associating them with the apparent abundance of monsters born the year of its publication: "The scripture sayth, before the end / Of all thinges shall appears / God will wounders straunge thinges sende / As some is sene this yeare" (12.1-4). Alluding directly to the "selye infantes" and "Calves and Pigges so straunge" that have appeared in England, the broadsheet argues these to be similar signs of divine wrath as those familiar from biblical texts (13.1-2). Moreover, the print offers its readers the means by which they themselves may witness God's message, explicitly taking upon itself the role of the prophet: "[…] here thou haste by Printing arte / A signe thereof to se / Let eche man saye within his harte / It preacheth now, to me" (16.1-4). The ballad of the Chichester child and the other surviving records of its birth, finally, offer crucial evidence as to the multiplicity of ways in which the strange preponderance of human and animal birth deformities that appeared in 1562 were interpreted by contemporaries. Ultimately, the appearance of such creatures could be regarded in one, all, or any combination of such interpretations simultaneously, whether as the apocalyptic revelations the broadsheet most directly urges, the gentler but nonetheless grim *memento mori* that Bishop Jewel observes,[91] the specific excoriation of behavioral excess suggested by Holinshed,[92] or

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90 Though Christ is not explicitly named, stanzas 9 and 10 refer obliquely to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army in 66 and 70 AD, which, in some traditional interpretations of Mark 24 and Luke 9, was foretold by Christ. The siege is also said to have been anticipated by a series of fantastical signs that went unheeded by many citizens, including the prodigious "birth" of a lamb by a sacrificial cow (mentioned in stanza 9) and the appearance of a sword-shaped star in the sky above the city (referenced in stanza 22).

91 Jewel's reference to monsters whose skin "clung to the bones, no meat at all" seems a direct reference to the Chichester child, and his comparison of all such births to "images of death" invokes a long tradition of *memento mori* in the art and culture of England and Europe. This association is further supported by the curious inclusion of seven hand-drawn illustrations of

merely the transitory appeal of "nine dayes wonder" the ballad cautions its readers is folly to assume (20.2).

Of the four surviving monstrous broadsheet accounts of the much noted year 1562, only one other depicts a human birth: the *True Report of the Forme and Shape of a Monstrous Childe* (*fig.* 2.6),[93] a report in prose and verse of such a birth that occurred in the community of "Much" (now known as Great) Horkesley in April of that year. The description and interpretation of the birth is presented in a series of twelve heroic quatrains, split into two columns, and two paragraphs of explanatory prose text situated beneath a two-line verse epigram divided by a large woodcut illustration of the child. Whereas the woodcut of the former seemingly paralyzes the child in a fearsome and forlorn grimace, that of the latter is expressive and highly detailed—the eyes stare out from the page with a look of vague disapproval, and the jaw is seemingly set in a tight frown. Physically, the child seems to resemble a grown man, however deformed, with his full head of hair, including a widow's peak, and impossibly mature torso. As if to take the place of the child's missing arms, two lines of rhyming verse that echo Aristotle's notion of the purposefulness of nature—even in its apparent perversion—hover suspended to either side of the illustration:

O, praise ye God and
blesse his name

His mightye hande hath
wrought the same.

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monstrous births of that year, the Chichester monster among them, within the margins of a probate roll held by the Public Record Office of London for the will of Margaret Lane (PRO PROB 11/45/fo. 58). Of these seven figures, only four are recognizable from broadsheet survivals, and only one other depicts a human birth, that of Great Horkesley (see below).

92 Holinshed's description of the child as having "about the necke a great coller of fleshe and skinne growing like the ruffe of a shirt or neckerchefe, comming up above the eares pleiting and folding. &c." employs the language of the fashion monster and its associated recrimination of irreligious adherence to fancy and exterior show rather than inward piety.

93 The complete, annotated text of this broadsheet may be found in Appendix 2 (*No.* 4).

Paired with the text it divides, the woodcut is at once the embodiment of the consequences for immoral living as well as the broadsheet's apparent reproach of it. The sinful parents, as the prose text soon reveals, had both been previously married to others; and though this child was "begot out of matrimony," it was ultimately "borne in matrimonye" (par. 2)—a detail that suggests both unruly desire and fornication as possible explanations for the deformities that the child manifests. As in many such discussions of birth deformity, however, exact causes are ultimately regarded as more complex than such associations of sin and punishment. At length, the verse portion of the account emphasizes the relationship between the literal deformity of the child as depicted and the moral transgressions of the society that fostered it, rather than simply attributing it to the sins of the parents. Just as the child, as declared by the title, is "monstrous," so too is the world into which it is born: "This monstrous world that monsters bredes as rife / As men tofore it bred by native kinde / By birthes that shewe corrupted natures strife / Declares what sinnes beset the secret mind" (1.1-4). The text thus insists upon a reading of the child's body that draws a distinct and simultaneous correlation between his grotesque deformities and both the sinful behaviors and the transgressive inwardness or "secret minde" of citizens in the community that they make manifest.

The theory of monstrous births most supported by the Great Horkesley broadsheet is therefore a system of impression whereby infants manifest symbolic deformities, "Resembling sins" present but otherwise unobservable in the places of their birth and gestation (2.4).[94] In this way, the broadsheet contends, "grossest faultes" are "brast [burst] out in bodyes forme" (3.1-2), a characterization of monstrous birth remarkable for its imagery of a sudden, catastrophic eruption

[94] At the same time, however, the ballad is reluctant to insist on this, its most explicit message, as a universal interpretation: "I meane not this as though deformed shape / Were alwayes linkd with fraughted minde with vice / But that in nature god such draughtes doth shape / Resembling sinnes that so bin had in price" (2.1-4).

that results from excessive use, such as a build-up of pressure over time. Notably, however, this is not invoked as the familiar result of unruly maternal imagination, but rather the impression of the unwell spiritual/moral state of the whole society onto the unborn child. This reading collapses physical and moral monstrosity and fuses the explanation of impression with those of environmental factors such as diet and indisposition in order to offer an expanded critique of responsibility for the monster. As to the child's specific deformities, the account depicts him as possessing "neyther hande, foote, legge, nor arme" but only stumps of various sizes emerging from the shoulders and left hip—"and where the righte legge should be, there is no mencion of anye legge or stumpe"—as well as imperfect external genitalia (par. 1).[95] As such, the broadsheet's conclusion that the child is "caused of want or too much store / of matter"—reflected also in the broadsheet's title[96]—recalls Boaistuau's theory of insufficient or corrupt seed. Further, it suggests the cause of the birth to be a proportionate lack of abstinence and restraint of the parents and other sinners of the community who, by rendering this "want" visible, so "shewes the sea of sinne: whose storm / Oreflowes and whelmes vertues barren shore" (3.1-4).

The reading of the Great Horkesley birth as a physical manifestation of excessive sin and scant virtue is conspicuous throughout the broadsheet's ballad verses and draws upon multiple

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95 "Also it hath a Codde [scrotum] and stones [testicles], but no yearde [penis]" (par. 1).

96 The title's invocation of "form" and "shape," as well as its later invocation of "matter" (3.2-3), quibbles with related terms having to do with the condition of both the child and the quality/quantity of seed supplied by both parents upon conception, as in Iyengar's suggestion above. In addition, the *OED* records a philosophical context of the word *form* that describes the "essential determinant principle of a thing; that which makes anything (matter) a determinate species or kind of being; the essential creative quality." In this way, the "form and shape of a monstrous child" may simultaneously refer to the composition of the generative material that begot the monster as well as to the distinction between his spirit or soul and the physical body.

simultaneous readings of the child's body and the established theories of monstrous generation to anchor this interpretation. The ballad text explicitly demonstrates the importance of such polysemous reading on two occasions by playfully deploying homophonous words and expressions that require its audience to acknowledge and comprehend simultaneity of meaning. One of these is a quibble with the word "calf" (5.3), which is used to describe monstrous births in keeping with the familiar term *mooncalf*, that suggests "false conception," as noted above; soon after, the ballad employs the same term to characterize the function of such monsters to "[drive] doutfull seers to prove by speache / Themselves not calves" (6.1-2), suggesting in this case a foolhardy person who is unable to take instruction for his or her betterment.[97] Mooncalves (*monsters*), in other words, teach people through example not to be mooncalves (*simpletons*), an assertion that once again collapses deformity and transgressive behavior, this time linguistically. More pronounced still is an extended quibble with the word "mean" that runs throughout the fourth stanza and characterizes the unruly and sinful desires of sinners: "Faultye alike in ebbe and eke in flowd, / Like distaunt both from *meane*, both like extremnes. / Yet greatst excesse the want of *meane* doth shrowde / And want of *meane* excesse from vertues *meanes*" (4.1-4, emphasis mine). Here, *mean* is employed four times to three different purposes: the first of these (2-3) suggests an *average* or acceptable, temperate behavior that an immoderate attitude "oreflowes." The subsequent uses in the following line (4) indicate, in the first case, *abject* or *debased*, and, in the second, *purposes*—suggesting, finally, that unruly and sinful behavior is as contrary to natural processes as monstrously misshapen children appear to be. By engaging in this odd sort of word play, the ballad demonstrates and even leads its audience

[97] An additional possible meaning of "calf" here may be to invoke another of the deformed births that appeared in April 1562: a calf reportedly born with excessive folds of skin around the neck, resembling the aristocratic fashion of elaborate lace ruffs.

through a complex interpretive act that reflects the equally complex relationships seen to exist between the concepts it addresses and the interpretations it offers.

Finally, it is perhaps this broadsheet's insistence on the nature of sin and its relationship to the physical world that is most remarkable, especially in its estimation of sinful thoughts and desires being just as transgressive as unruly speech or behavior. In making this point, the ballad draws a bold distinction between the outward show or presentation of propriety and the secret or inward truths of conscience that cannot be concealed from the divine gaze. This is partly evinced by the deformities of the Great Horkesley child, whose birth, though "Made lawfull by all lawes of man" via marriage to conceal the parents' fornication, was "yet halt / Of limmes by God, scapd not the shamefull marke / Of bastard sonne in bastard shape descried" (8.2-9.1). The simultaneous insistence upon the guilt of the parents and the guilt of the community at large makes a further implicit claim about the nature of subjectivity within a society: Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Smith are sinners and fornicators—it may be true—but the account seems to suggest they are no more guilty in this act of sin than are any of those within the community who permissively allowed it to go unpunished and even helped procure the means by which to conceal the transgression from outward view with the "laws of man." The parents, finally, are products of a wayward society in much the same way as the child is a product of their coupling. The generation of sin, therefore, is not unlike the generation of monstrous births carried to term, as it were, inwardly and invisibly by subjects who knowingly transgress from the accepted models of temperate behavior and thought. Ultimately, the monstrous bodies most emphasized in the account are the societies of Great Horkesley and all of England at large, their deformed "limbs" the transgressive and morally mangled members of the community whose "lives declare their maims saved from their shapes / Scorchd in their mindes" rather than their bodies—

invisible deformities of transgressive thought it compares to a "cruel privye maime / That festreth still, [an] unrecured sore" that can only be healed through moderation and repentance (10.4-11.2).

Quite similar in its conceits and rhetorical appeals is a 1568 broadsheet with a nearly identical title, *The Forme and Shape of a Monstrous Child*, which treats the appearance of a deformed birth in the town of Maidstone (*fig* 2.7).[98] Visually, the broadsheet is remarkable for the elaborately drawn borders that seem to enshrine the woodcut illustrations of the child; each side of the border is symmetrically ornamented with extravagant flourishes and various depictions of flowers, birds, the face of a beast, and numerals that present the year of the print's publication.[99] Also within the ornamental frame is an irregular verse epigram that, as in the case of the Great Horkesley broadsheet, is divided into fragments—four, in this case—separated by their arrangement near to and around the deformed body of the infant depicted in the illustrations:

As ye this shape abhorre
In body for to have:

So flee such Vices farre
As might the soule deprave.

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98 The complete, annotated text of this broadsheet may be found in Appendix 2 (*No*. 5).

99 The flowers and birds are arranged in symmetrical reflection to either side of the top and bottom borders. The birds possess elongated necks that are turned back toward their bodies as though examining themselves; the long, thin plumage winds away from the bodies fantastically. The ultimate effect is suggestive of a phoenix, which seems in keeping with such accounts' emphasis on the rebirth of subjects through trial and repentance. The flowers, while not specifically identifiable, appear similarly exotic and fanciful. The face of the beast poised on the bottom border's line of symmetry is animal-like, but also startlingly resembles the face of the monster as depicted in the woodcut illustration, particularly the "slitted" mouth that is described in the prose text as resembling a leopard's.

In Gods power
all flesh stands,
As clay in the
Potters hands.[100]

To fashion even
as he will,
In good shape
or in ill.

The seemingly haphazard placement of these verse fragments requires the curious reader to cast his or her gaze about the prostrate figure to glean their meaning, making literal the process of closely examining disparate parts of the body for legibility. Though it is not immediately clear given the relative distance between the fragments if they are intended to be read left-to-right or up-and-down, the lines are composed in such a way as to emphasize them as fully-formed parts of a constitutive whole, rather than insisting upon one particular mode of reading whose execution affects the ultimate interpretation.

More so than either of the broadsheets previously discussed, the Maidstone account offers an extended and explicitly emblematic reading of the monster's deformed features, insisting in each case upon a specific interpretive significance for its audience. The single block of prose text that follows the woodcuts and framing ornament describes the child's various deformities as a "mouth slitted on the right side like a Libardes [Leopard's]," "stumps on the handes," "the left leg growing upward toward the head," and a right leg that bent toward the left and underneath the child's hip. In addition to these malformations was found something like a welt in the middle of the back, "a broade lump of flesh in fashion like a Rose, in the middest whereof was a hole, which voided like an Issue."[101] At length, these deformities are specifically

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100 *In God's power ... Potters hands:* an invocation of Jeremiah 18:3-6; "Then I went downe to the potters house, & behold, he wrought a worke on the wheeles. And the vessell that he made of clay, was broken in the hand of the potter. So he returned, and made it another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the worde of the Lord came unto me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I doe with you as this potter, sayth the Lord? Beholde, as the clay is in the potters hande, so are you in mine hande, O house of Israel" (Geneva Bible).

101 I.e., seeped fluid or bile like an ulcer.

interpreted in a series of eleven ballad stanzas, arranged into three columns by horizontal rules and bearing a legend that unequivocally declares the monster to be "A warning to England." Announcing "This monstrous shape to thee England / Plain shewes thy monstrous vice. / If thou ech part wilt understand, / and take thereby advice" (1.1-4), the verse portion opens by establishing its emblematic mode of interpreting parts of the body that it seems to insist will contribute to a greater, holistic lesson concerning proper behavior and the avoidance of sin. This it does one deformity at a time, treating first the "gasping mouth" as a representation of greed and thievery (2.1-4), and the "gorging paunch" and "stumps fit for no use" as indicators that betray both idleness and selfish conceit[102] (3.1-4, 6.2-3). The revolting "hinder part" of the monster with the seeping welt is read as a manifestation of transgressive inwardness, "our close and hidden vice" that the ballad claims, though it is hidden, "doth run amaine / In vile and shameful wise" (10.1-4). In the case of each of these deformities, the specific meanings presented contribute to a larger lesson exhorting the broadsheet audience to demonstrate Christian piety and appropriate self-comportment.

In addition to its emblematic readings, the ballad makes a number of specific interpretations of the monster that extend beyond the literal dimensions of his body—and even those of the page upon which his representation is printed. The first of these is in the description of the child's deformed legs, specifically the left, contorted so as to extend upward, "climing to the head" (8.1). The text interprets the leg as a chastisement of the unruly desires held by those who render themselves monstrous because they "do seeke not to be lead, / But for to leade amiss" (8.3-4). The claim recalls a long tradition of comparing the well-ordered social state to a

[102] Beyond simply the idleness reflected by the paunch, the more serious charge made by the deformed hands is negligence at all levels of society in the Christian duties of charity and the performance good works: "For rich and poore, for age and youth, / Eche one would labour flye: / Few seekes to do the deedes of truth / To helpe others thereby" (7.1-4).

healthy body with its several, interdependent parts that perform specific and necessary roles. Subjects at or near the bottom of the social order make up the "feet" of the figure while the king presents the body's "head." According to the ballad's use of this metaphor, then, those subjects who harbor unruly desire to "leade amis" are, effectively, feet and legs grown monstrous, distorting the well-ordered state out of proportion: "And as this makes it most monstrous," it insists, "For Foote to clime to head: / So those Subjects be most vicious, / That refuse to be lead" (9.1-4). Similarly, the reading of the child's ghastly mouth casts the charge of literal monstrousness among its audience by juxtaposing it against the mouths of blasphemers, swearers, and gossip-mongers, whose "filthy talke, and poisoned speech / Disfigures so the mouth / That som wold think ther stood ye breech / Such filth it breatheth forth" (5.1-4). Significant here is the direct connection of the transgression mentioned to the literal bodies of the broadsheet's audience rather than the child it depicts. Throwing off its own conceit of monstrous example, the ballad thus applies the metaphor of physical deformity directly onto the site of moral transgression, describing subjects whose mouths literally spew forth hidden filth, having effectively been transformed into incontinent anuses.

Like many such accounts, the overall effect of the Maidstone broadsheet is a community-affirming exercise that emphasizes the interdependence of its members and helps to articulate their appropriate roles within it. This utility is affirmed by the inclusion of a brief statement at the end of the broadsheet's prose portion that testifies to the veracity of the account by supplying the reader with a list of person's names who might corroborate its presentation of the facts: "Witnesses hereof were these, William Plomer, John Squier Glasier, John Sadler Goldsmith,

besides divers other credible persons both men and women."[103] Particularly significant in this assertion is the text's insistence upon credibility that can be verified by the intersecting authorities of class, vocation, and gender that make up the fabric or whole "body" of society. However all-encompassing such gestures may seem to be, there are a number of significant silences embedded in the theories of community often present in monstrous birth accounts such as this one. Notably absent from the broadsheet's articulated social order of Maidstone is the mother of the deformed infant, one Marget Mere, whose situation the prose text describes rather unflatteringly: "being unmaried, [she] played the naughty packe, and was gotten with childe" by an unnamed man.[104] As a "naughty pack"—perhaps a prostitute or, more broadly, a "promiscuous or licentious woman" (*OED*)—Marget Mere's behavior disrupts the cycle of legitimate generation and presents a destabilizing influence to the maintenance of social order; finally, even as the account insists the monstrous birth to be a product of an immoral state as well as a token of her own incontinence, she is explicitly excluded from the community of "credible persons" into which she has delivered her child.[105]

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[103] Of the men listed, only the second two are mentioned in conjunction with their profession and would likely have been members of trades guilds: John Squier (Glassier) and John Sadler (Goldsmith). The first, William Plomer, is listed as a surety in a 1573 record that gives his profession as "mercer" ("Recognizance for Victuallers"); he is afterward noted as being elected as alderman or jurat of the town in 1595 (Buckley 8) and as mayor in 1598 (Russel 410). Taken together, this information seems to suggest that the specific men named in the broadside are significant in representing disparate levels of social class.

[104] The anonymity of the child's father is curious given the emphasis in the broadsheet's title on the monster's "form and shape," traits believed to be supplied by the father rather than the mother (Iyengar 94-5, see above).

[105] Julie Crawford specifically associates the expression "naughty pack" with accusations of infidelity (62n2). Given that the father of Mere's child is not mentioned and that she herself is first identified as "Daughter to Richard Mere," the most likely scenario is that she was seduced by a married man of some social standing within the community, after which his name was concealed in order to avoid further scandal.

Conclusion

Though only fragments of the tradition survive, the extant monstrous birth broadsheets reveal a vibrant discourse of informed social commentary and engagement that addresses common fears and apprehensions intersecting nearly every strata of English society. Even more than this, these print survivals reveal a complex system of signification and interpretation whose chief rhetorical function seems to have been to teach its audiences through example and entertainment the nature of their own subjectivity and its role in their civic responsibilities to neighbors and countrymen. It is certainly true that producing such accounts must by necessity have been a financially viable endeavor for individuals involved in their composition, printing, and sale to sustain a living or to supplement other income; it is short sighted, however, to regard these texts as little more than hack publications whose primary goal is to turn a quick profit from a primarily naïve and uneducated consumer base by capitalizing on sensationalist appeals and transitory popular interest.[106] As the various audience interpellations, reader interfaces, and appeals present in the extant broadsheet accounts attest,[107] such documents could entice potential audience members across the seemingly impermeable barriers of class and literacy for a common end. Especially important in monstrous birth accounts is the teaching function repeatedly employed to instruct audiences in how to read, interpret, and synthesize various kinds

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106 Such attitudes are reflected by the absence of dedicated scholarship on these texts until very recently. Prior to the 1970s, such attention was limited to an antiquarian fascination with their collection and catalog, such as the preservation work done by the Ballad Society (est. 1886). The work of such scholars as Hyder E. Rollins and Leslie Shepard labored to historicize the extant prints—especially the broadside ballads of the 17th century—as cultural texts. Only in the last two decades has scholarship begun to treat ephemeral print as worthy of literary criticism and study.

107 The Middleton Stoney broadsheet is perhaps the best example of this, with its multiple levels of literacy including its Latin verses, English prose and verse, and pictographic interfaces.

of "texts," inciting them then to apply the lessons learned there to the amendment of their own lives and behavior. A prevalent theme in the extant texts is the vexed relationship between these goals and the human faculty to conceal that which is inwardly felt or believed. This capacity, as the accounts suggest, carries with it positive associations when individuals are instructed in self-examination and reflection, but is otherwise potentially dangerous when used to manufacture a deceptive, false exterior that others must learn to penetrate in order to discern the truth. Ultimately, the lessons revealed by all the broadsheets in this study offer readers a means by which they can learn something about themselves and their place within a Christian society as purveyors of good thoughts as well as good deeds.

The popularity and ubiquity of monstrous birth ephemera throughout the 16th century is a key factor in the literary genealogy and cultural significance of Shakespeare's Richard III. Though his most direct source—Thomas More's *History*—was probably written at a time that predates any extant English monstrous birth ephemera or Luther and Melanchthon's pamphlet treatment of the Popish Asse and Monkish Calf,[108] it contains a number of similar engagements with the discourse of monstrosity that these texts would take up in their metonymic and emblematic readings of deformed bodies as physical manifestations of transgressive inwardness. Shakespeare's first tetralogy adopts More's use of the birth metaphor in order to depict Richard as the product of a monstrous birth, so investing his character with the familiar, polysemous meanings associated with contemporary accounts of such phenomena. The ubiquity and popularity of such accounts, which would have circulated widely in and before the time of the plays' original performances, would ensure that their original audiences would have been quite

[108] Logan estimates a date of ca. 1513 for the composition of the *History*. It was first published, unattributed, after his death "as a continuation of Hardyng's *Chronicle*" in 1543, and again in 1548 and 1550 in Hall's *Union* before appearing in the 1557 English edition of More's English works (lx-lxi).

familiar with the interpretive traditions invoked by Richard's characterization and have been able both to recognize and to contend with the complex interpretive demands of the lessons offered by the play as regard the individual culpability of specific "sinners" as well as broader issues of social responsibility. Like the monsters of the broadsheet tradition, the literary Richard's body is an amalgamation of signs that indicate specific messages about the presence of a divine power and his displeasure with human behavior. Similar too are the ways in which Richard's purportedly misshapen form, like those of the children described and illustrated in ephemeral print, is regarded as a sort of cultural litmus that indicates the presence of hypocrisy and sin hidden from and/or tolerated by the community in which it appears. The ultimate effect of dramatizing such a figure in the form of one of England's monarchs is to present the episode of national history characterized by the Wars of the Roses as a sort of moral interlude, imposing both a narrative and a moral division between the period of medieval kings and the emergence of Shakespeare's modern Tudor era. As such, Richard's role in this national drama is to function as the self-proclaimed "formal Vice, Iniquity," who willfully sows deceit and discord as becomes the bearer of a reciprocally deformed mind and body that naturally renders him an expert in "moraliz[ing] two meanings in one word" (*R3* 3.1.82-3).

CHAPTER 3

"A Moste Lamentable Murther": Monstrous Narratives in Early English Popular Literature

> *Oh, monstrous times where murder's set so light,*
> *And where the soul, that should be shrined in heaven,*
> *Solely delights in interdicted things,*
> *Still wandering in the thorny passages,*
> *That intercepts itself of happiness!*
> *Murder, oh, bloody monster! God forbid*
> *A fault so foul should scape unpunished.*
>
> —Hieronimo, *The Spanish Tragedy* (ca. 1587)[1]

As has been shown in the previous chapters, the popular idea of monsters circulated in many literal and figurative forms throughout the early modern period, conveying a wide array of interrelated concepts that could include physical abnormality, transgressive thoughts or desires, criminal or otherwise immoral acts, or an "unnaturally" cruel or wicked character. Many extant sixteenth century print materials employ the terminology and concepts of the deformed birth broadsheet tradition that explicitly highlight the literal and metaphorical connections between examples various kinds of early modern "deformity."[2] What is curious, however, is what the survivals seem to suggest about the shifting popular attitudes surrounding the concept of the monstrous over time. While it is difficult to make bold claims concerning popular reception of

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1 Thomas Kyd (3.6.95-101).

2 For example, one of the earliest surviving examples of print works utilizing such rhetoric in the absence of a literally deformed body is John Knox's 1558 *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstruous Regiment of Women*. Here, the term "monstruous" is used to indicate a perceived "unnatural" inversion of social and moral hierarchy whereby female rulers are given reign over male subjects. Hence the "deformity" Knox suggests with his title is the disruption of the natural "politik or civile body of that common welth, in which God by his own word hath apointed an ordre" (sig. D3r).

any given print survival, it is undeniable that at a certain point, the monstrous birth broadsheet tradition fades from prominence—perhaps it is more accurate to say *conspicuousness*—and those purportedly true monstrous births that do appear as the subjects of pamphlet and other (chiefly prose) publications at the dawn of the seventeenth century seem relegated to mere points of curiosity, rather than the figures of astonishment presented by the broadsheet format. This is not to say that the rhetorical appeals to astonishment and intrigue aroused by monstrous births vanished from sight when such materials became less prevalent, but rather that the narratives and "lessons" they once conveyed took other forms.

The "monsters" that replace deformed infants in the English popular imagination at the end of the sixteenth century, and which continue to enjoy notoriety through the years to follow, are the everyday transgressors of violent true crime accounts—particularly those of ordinary citizens driven to commit acts of murder.[3] Surviving popular print treatments of such crimes reveal a tendency to read the legal and moral transgressions of criminals as expressions of a corrupted inward condition in much the same way as earlier broadsheet literature portrayed the physical deformities of a monstrous birth. The significance of a particular crime and the "lessons" it could offer the general populace was heavily influenced by the identity and character of the perpetrator(s), the nature of the offense, and the particular details that led to the commission of the crime. The process by which moralizing pamphlet and ballad literature that

[3] Not infrequently, the terms "monster" and "monstrous" are explicitly employed in these accounts to refer to such criminals, their crimes, or both. For example, one 1591 pamphlet, *Sundrye Strange and Inhumaine Murthers*, presents the account of "the monstrous crueltie of a Father that hired one to murther three of his owne children" in order to be unencumbered in his romantic pursuit of a rich widow (sig. A2r). Expounding upon the heinousness of parricide, the pamphlet cites an example from Plutarch of "a monstrous sonne [that] slew his owne father, the act being so much against nature" (sig. A2v). Other cases are less explicit, but utilize the familiar narrative of criminal action being "born" from the harboring of inward malice, discontent, and/or treacherous plots.

appeared in the wake of such crimes rehearsed and expounded upon these details also recalls the interpretive gestures of the broadsheet tradition to scrutinize the bodies of deformed children. The violent crimes of everyday citizens treated in such accounts were deemed particularly heinous because they almost without exception involved some form of betrayal, often domestic in nature, particularly instances of spousal murder, infanticide, and/or homicidal servants.[4] The significance of the purported relationship in these accounts between violent criminal acts and the expression or demonstration of inward corruption is its portrayal of the nature of subjectivity and the culpability of everyday men and women driven by unseen forces to attack or kill those they should rightly either protect or obey. Finally, such narratives demand and normalize the spectacle of violent punishment and execution as the means to repair the moral condition of a society that has been spiritually polluted by the criminal act—especially so in the case of murder, which is often regarded as particularly contemptible and even "monstrous."

Impudent Crimes and the Rituals of Punishment

The scene of Pedringano's execution in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* offers an early example of popular attitudes that surrounded the conventional response to murder, as well as the "monstrous" implications the crime presented at the end of the sixteenth century.[5] The character Hieronimo, whose "office" as Knight Marshal "asks / A care to punish such as do transgress" (3.6.11-12), is called upon in the scene to pass judgment against Pedringano for the murder of a fellow servant, and he does so by addressing the condemned in a manner that

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[4] Some accounts feature multiple instances of these types.

[5] The dating of Kyd's play is notoriously difficult, with a plausible range for its composition and performance extending from 1583 until 1590. The date of 1587 presented above is a common compromise.

anticipates a very specific response. "Stand forth, thou monster, murderer of men," he demands, "And here, for satisfaction of the world, / Confess thy folly and repent thy fault; / For there" he continues, indicating the gallows that has been erected, "[is] thy place of execution" (24-7). In reply, Pedringano flippantly confesses to the crime, but jeeringly refuses to "satisfy" Hieronimo, claiming no fear of death, nor any belief that he should be hanged for the crime. To this, the Knight Marshal replies, "Peace, impudent, for thou shalt find it so. / For blood with blood shall, while I sit as judge, / Be satisfied, and the law discharged" (34-6). Public execution, gallows, gibbets, and burning stakes were all familiar sights for early modern Londoners as the final destinations of murders and other violent criminals, and so the familiar ritual of execution spectacle would have taught the audience of Kyd's play to invest the scene, as do Hieronimo and the other attending officials, with a particular significance. Pedringano, however, has been falsely led to believe that his mistress's brother Lorenzo has secured him a stay of execution, and so he haughtily persists throughout the scene in taunting the officers and scoffing at the gallows. The hangman particularly marvels at this behavior, remarking that the prisoner "should rather hearken to [his] soul's health" (77-8). In response, Pedringano asks everyone present to pray with him, only to disdainfully reject the idea when the hangman begins to assent, arrogantly declaring that "now I have no great need" (92-3). Hieronimo, who has remained silent during a somewhat extended quibble between Pedringano and the hangman, finally exclaims, "I have not seen a wretch so impudent!" (94), and continues by reciting the speech appearing in the above epigram.

Motivating the speech is a tragicomic misunderstanding of Pedringano's behavior that make him appear to be even more "impudent" a criminal than convention would lead spectators to expect. Until this moment, the scene that plays out adheres to a familiar narrative of public

punishment whereby the condemned is initially recalcitrant but finally brought to contrition and piety the closer in time and space he or she comes to execution. A long historical tradition of penitent "gallows speeches" predates Kyd's drama in deed and in printed accounts, a tradition that imagines all but the most hardened and vicious criminals eager to own up to and repent of their crimes on the verge of execution. More than this, however, the imagined role of the penitent gallows speech could serve an important function in proving the efficacy of jurisprudence and punishment to citizens and spectators.[6] As Foucault has argued in *Discipline and Punish*, such final speeches served to "authenticate" and "consecrate [the condemned's] own punishment by proclaiming the blackness of his crimes"; the speech itself, he continues, is part of a "mechanism by which the public execution transferred the secret, written truth of the procedure to the body, gesture, and speech of the criminal" (66). As such, Pedringano's defiance of convention even at the moment of his own demise is for Hieronimo an astonishing display of "impudence" that reveals the alarming immorality of such "monstrous times where murder's set so light" (3.6.90)—a sentiment that resonates closely with the moralizing language that would have been familiar to its original audience from contemporary popular crime accounts.[7]

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6 This is not to suggest that condemned criminals were always so cooperative as to support the legal state apparatuses that adjudicated them in this way—merely that this was the familiar and accepted narrative type established by true crime accounts. Other reactions, especially those of individuals who maintained innocence despite conviction or who defied authority completely, were always seen as a deviation from this norm (cf. J.A. Sharpe's "'Last Dying Speeches': Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England' and Thomas Laqueur's "Crowds, Carnival and the State in English Executions, 1604-1868").

7 A brief (and sometimes not so brief) meditation on the sin of murder and/or the wickedness of the present age is a common device used to preface printed accounts of such crimes, as for example *The Trueth of the Most Wicked and Secret Murthering of John Brewen*, appearing in 1592, which begins with the proclamation, "[H]Ow hatefull a thing the sinne of murder hath beene before the sight of the eternall God, the holy Scriptures doe manifest […]," and then moves on to catalog such manifestations at some length (sig. A2r).

Hieronimo's initial assertion that "blood with blood […] shall be satisfied" (3.6.35) is a commonplace and oft rehearsed interpretation of the tale in the Book of Genesis that depicts the first homicide and its ensuing consequences. Following Cain's envious murder of his brother Abel and his famously dissembling reply of "I cannot tell. Am I my brothers keeper?" when questioned as to his whereabouts, God reveals that he is not deceived by Cain's attempt to mislead him:

> Againe he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brothers blood crieth unto me from the earth. Now therefore thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brothers blood from thine hand. When thou shalt till the grounde, it shall not henceforth yeelde unto thee her strength: a vagabond and a runnagate shalt thou be in the earth. (Genesis 4:9-12, *Geneva Bible*)

Significant to the story is the fact that the spilling of Abel's innocent blood is both the consequence of Cain's submerged resentment and the means by which God is able to perceive that the crime has taken place, despite the attempt to conceal it. From this familiar tale comes the idea—expressed in many different forms[8]—that the act of murder is especially repugnant to God and so leaves behind a spiritual stain or mark that is detectable for the purpose of rendering culpability visible and, if possible, bringing perpetrators to justice. As such, the gallows confession that Hieronimo anticipates his prisoner to recite "for satisfaction of the world" is an important part of the process through which the law can be "discharged" and by which the delivery of justice can be perceived and assured by judges and bystanders alike. Finally, though Hieronimo claims that Pedringano's mockery of prayer reveals him to be an "impudent wretch" without peer, such characterization in fact serves to invoke the ultimate judgment of Cain as a "runnagate"—a "vagabond" as is stated, but also an apostate "deserter," "fugitive," and "runaway" (*OED*).

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[8] Such as the common belief that the wounds of a murdered man would bleed in the presence of the murderer.

What is perhaps the most important aspect of the Cain and Abel story from the perspective of justice is the suggestion that murderers and other criminals forfeit their rightful places within Christian society through their sinful actions. Cain's act of homicide is explicitly characterized as a transgression against the earth itself, which was made to receive the blood he spilled from his brother; that he becomes "cursed from the earth" ultimately deprives him of those benefits the earth has offered him—both his home and livelihood.[9] In casting Cain out of human society, God creates the first vagrant and masterless human, as well as a race of men who descend from him in the shadow of his transgression and disgrace, made literal on Cain's body by the Mark of Cain,[10] but which is invisible and must be read through the murderous actions of his "descendants."[11] To be convicted of murder, then, has the double effect of ostracizing an individual from the society of others as well as from the grace of God and the promise of eternal life. As such, an additional function of the contrite gallows speech must necessarily be an

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9 After the Fall of Man, Adam and Eve are evicted from the Garden and forced "to till ye earth, [from] whence he was taken" (Genesis 3:23). Cain and Abel, their sons, are also husbandmen, but whereas Abel is depicted as "a keeper of sheep," Cain is "a tiller of the ground" (Genesis 4:2).

10 Cain is given the Mark after he complains that his punishment is too harsh, leaving him vulnerable to retaliation from others for his crime. Both a blessing and a curse, the Mark simultaneously serves as a legible warning to others against revenge, an indicator that the judgment of God has been delivered, and a permanent brand to identify Cain as a murderer, outcast, and apostate. Following his banishment, Cain removes to the "land of Nod," described as a place "towarde the Eastside of Eden" (4:16); given that "nod" in Hebrew means "nomad," and is the root of the verb "to wander," this suggests Nod to be either a place for outcasts or else a metaphorical construction of *no place.* Later, Cain has a son he names *Enoch*, after whom he also names a city that he founds (4:17). The name comes from a verbal form meaning "to dedicate" or "to begin," perhaps suggesting a reversal of fortune or else that the curse or "Mark" of Cain has not been literally transferred to his offspring.

11 The literary tradition of regarding homicides as the descendants of Cain is quite old, and includes such villains as Grendel and his mother from the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf.* The conceit may also be found in a number of early modern crime accounts, such as a 1614 pamphlet, *A Horrible Creuel and Bloudy Murther*, which describes murderers as members of a "bloudy fraternitie" inaugurated by Cain (sig. A4v).

attempt by the condemned to regain this spiritual place through the acknowledgment that the exclusion from human society is inevitable and irrevocable. When the doomed prisoner was properly contrite, the effect of the ensuing execution spectacle would surely have been an especially profound moral *exemplum* for those spectators physically present as well as for audiences apprised of the events recounted in speech or print. As a consequence, the powerful rhetorical utility of a condemned criminal's last, repentant words was frequently deployed by pamphlet and ballad crime accounts that alleged to record and present such final sentiments, despite the sometimes questionable authenticity of such claims.

Another contemporary example of the power believed to surround a murderer's last words—as well as to what extent the severity of a criminal's punishment must match the heinousness of his crime—is given in an episode from Thomas Nashe's 1594 prose fiction *The Unfortunate Traveller*. In this narrative, the device of the gallows speech is used to particularly shocking effect in complicating and satirizing the relationship between notions of revenge and justice. Its narrator is Jack Wilton, whose numerous harrowing and unlikely adventures on the European continent concludes with a description of having witnessed the gruesome public execution of "a more desperate murderer than Cain" (302). Wilton recounts that the condemned man, Cutwolf, is brought to the gallows but, like Pedringano, refuses to give a display of penitence; instead, he performs a sort of mock confession to the assembled crowd, reveling at having murdered Esdras of Granado, whom he calls "the emperor of homicides" (303), in revenge for having killed his brother Bartol two years earlier. Framed by Wilton's narration, Cutwolf's gallows speech tells how he has pursued Esdras for the previous years, finally ambushing and confronting him in Bologna. In fear of his life, Esdras at once admits his guilt in the death of Cutwolf's brother, at first claiming to have suffered daily pangs of conscience that

"may be sufficient penance" to quell Cutwolf's vengeance (304); but "to dispatch me presently," he continues, "is no revenge," and so he begs Cutwolf to give him any lingering, painful death he can devise rather than a hasty one in order that he may have time to obtain absolution for his many sins before he finally dies—"for my soul's health," he pleads, "I beg my body's torment." When Cutwolf is undeterred, Esdras then offers to undertake any "execrable enterprise" he may ask, no matter how wicked or blasphemous (306). Upon this suggestion, Cutwolf offers to spare him, provided that he first make a speech declaring his renunciation of God, "write an absolute firm obligation of his soul to the devil," and finally to "pray to God fervently never to have mercy upon him, or pardon him" (307).

Contained within Cutwolf's own impudent final words, then, is his recounting another perversion of the expectation for the earnest and penitent gallows speech, adding blasphemy to his impiety.[12] Esdras, he explains, contradicts his earlier claims to conscience and his desire for absolution by eagerly rehearsing the requested "blasphemous abjurations" (307). The vehemence with which he performs this sacrilege astonishes even Cutwolf; "I wonder the earth opened not and swallowed us both," he marvels, "hearing the bold terms he blasted forth in contempt of Christianity."[13] When Esdras has finished, Cutwolf proceeds with his execution in spite of the agreement, which he reveals was his intent all along in order to ensure that his

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12 Confirming that Esdras's blasphemies were undertaken at his instigation, Cutwolf enfolds the crime into his own gallows speech; at length, he serves as a proxy for the absent bandito to the crowd amassed at the execution and, finally, as a recipient of displaced punishment for the offense.

13 "My joints trembled and quaked with attending [his blasphemies]," Cutwolf continues, "my hair stood upright, and my heart was turned wholly to fire. So affectionately and [z]ealously did he give himself over to infidelity as if Satan had gotten the upper hand of our high Maker. The vein in his left hand, that is derived from his heart, with no faint blow he pierced, and with the full blood that flowed from it writ a full obligation of his soul to the devil. Yea, more earnestly he prayed unto God never to forgive his soul than many Christians do to save their souls" (307).

revenge "might not only extend on his body, but his soul also" (306).[14] Significantly, Cutwolf accomplishes the execution by inserting his pistol into Esdras's open mouth and firing it downward through his throat in order to guarantee that although he would slowly bleed or choke to death, "he might never speak after, or repent him" (307). Following his pitiful death, the severity of Esdras's crimes and the perdition of his soul produces a visible mark upon his corpse, which "looked as black as a toad; the devil presently branded it for his own." In this way, the ultimate fate of Esdras's soul, suggested by the strange and immediate deterioration of his body, is ambiguously linked as much with his lifetime of violent crime as with the irreverent regard he shows for his spiritual welfare in his final moments.

Upon the conclusion of these extended and ghastly details, Wilton's narrative then goes on to recount the even more viscerally gruesome fate of Cutwolf, which ultimately seems to invite comparison of the motives and effects of these different sorts of executions. The crowd gathered for the execution, Wilton explains, becomes "outrageously incensed" at Cutwolf's oratory and, calling for his immediate torment, they threaten even to "tear [the executioner] in pieces if [he] spare him" (308). He is then horrifically tortured "on the wheel"—a grim sight with which many early moderns would have been familiar. At length, his limbs are "lingeringly splintered into shivers," his wounds "soldered up […] from bleeding" with "boiling lead," his tongue pulled out, "lest he should blaspheme in his torment," his ears stuffed with "stinging worms," his mouth and gums rubbed with "cankers scruzed to pieces," and finally "in this horror left they him on the wheel as in hell; where yet living he might behold his flesh legacied amongst

[14] He refers to this double-dealing conceit as a "notable new Italianism," emphasizing the strong associations the English held between Italy and devious revenge plots.

the souls of the air."[15] The narrative abruptly concludes fewer than twenty lines later with Wilton insisting that the spectacle of Cutwolf's death and the account of Esdras's damnation has inspired him to the immediate correction of his life and a hasty retreat from "that Sodom of Italy." While the account of these two spectacular deaths seems to emphasize an ambivalent attitude that is present elsewhere in Wilton's narrative concerning the relationship between justice and revenge, this is made all the more so by the suggestion that the reader may, as did Wilton himself, ultimately glean a sort of benefit or satisfaction from the violent episode, for all its horror.

In effect, the death of Cutwolf and the recounted execution of Esdras appear to constitute a series of requitals for offenses endured by Wilton and others (including the reader) earlier in the journey he narrates. Esdras and his former companion Bartol are in fact first introduced to the story earlier as a pair of thieves who raid houses in Rome besieged by the plague so that they may pilfer unattended valuables and rape whatever women they find alive. They descend upon one such house in which Wilton has rented a room; caught unawares, he is physically attacked and finally locked away helplessly while Esdras violently rapes his hostess, Heraclide, in the room adjacent. After the assailants depart, Heraclide promptly stabs and kills herself. When her husband suddenly revives from his supposed plague death, he finds Wilton in his room and, assuming him to be his wife's ravisher and murderer, has him speedily arrested and brought to trial. After being imprisoned for a time, Wilton is led to the gallows where he is saved at the last

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[15] "Breaking on the wheel" was a means of execution and torture for particularly grievous offenses. The procedure involved mangling the condemned in this manner before affixing them to a large wagon wheel—often with their broken limbs woven through the spokes—so as to display them publically, which was accomplished by mounting the wheel as one would to an axle fixed vertically in the earth. Despite extensive injuries, death could take hours, and would often be anticipated by ravenous birds (the "souls of the air") that would further plague such unfortunates.

minute—even with the rope around his neck—by a gentleman in attendance who recognizes the events he recounts in his "confession" as those he had earlier heard confessed from a dying Bartol, whom Esdras, he learns, had betrayed. In this way, the inclusion of Cutwolf's tale is a sort of narrative revenge for these events, both for the hardships Wilton has endured as a prisoner and for the assault against his hostess. In fact, vengeance for Heraclide is a theme of particular interest that permeates the Cutwolf episode, invoked both by Wilton in his framing narration and by Esdras of Granado in his initial gambit to dispel his assailant's wrath.

While Heraclide's death may not technically constitute murder in the modern sense, it is specifically regarded in the text as an inevitable consequence of her rape: "What remaineth but I die?" she concludes afterward, "No recompense is there for me to redeem my compelled offence but with a rigorous compelled death" (280). In this, Heraclide's suicide invokes that of Lucretia, another Roman woman who, according to legend, stabs herself following her ravishment by Tarquin in order to regain in death the honor that he has taken from her.[16] As such, the text lays the culpability of Heraclide's ultimate fate squarely at Esdras's feet, even to the extent that Cutwolf's "Italian device" mirrors and horrifically amplifies the twofold onslaught of body and soul described by Heraclide to characterize the act of rape. Wilton's brief comments that introduce the Cutwolf episode, moreover, seem to champion Heraclide as a figure of vengeance and divine retribution, thus permeating the spectacle of these violent deaths with her presence and, it would seem, direct intervention.

> Chaste Heraclide, thy blood is laid up in heaven's treasury, not one drop of it was lost, but lent out to usury. Water poured forth sinks down quietly into the earth, but blood spilt on the ground sprinkles up to the firmament. Murder is wide-mouthed, and will not let God rest till he grant revenge. Not only the blood of the

[16] Curiously, Shakespeare's epic poem on this topic, *The Rape of Lucrece,* was published in 1594, the same year as *The Unfortunate Traveller.*

> slaughtered innocent but the soul ascendeth to his throne, and there cries out and exclaims for justice and recompense. (302)

Here, the conceit of blood "crying out" to God for justice, familiar from the Cain and Abel legend, is modified somewhat to compare the act of murder with Heraclide's wronged spirit, suing so avidly for divine reparation that it "will not let God rest" until it is awarded. Esdras himself alludes to this in his pleas for Cutwolf's mercy; despite the fact that he has supposedly killed and raped many others before her, it is his attack on Heraclide that he identifies as his most grievous offense when he sees that Cutwolf will not be swayed from his intention, concluding finally that "God hardens this man's heart against me" specifically for Heraclide's revenge (304).

The narrative similarities between the lawful execution and torture of Cutwolf, who effectively serves as a proxy through whom his deceased brother Bartol may be punished, and his criminal assassination of Esdras are striking; notably, the text seems to make little distinction in the end between the individual revenge motives of one man and those of the crowd who finally champion the state-sanctified violence of the executioner. As Cutwolf himself claims only moments before his torture commences, "Revenge is whatsoever we call law or justice" (307)—a sentiment that would seem to be proven by the reactions of the "incensed" crowd. Conspicuously contrary to Heraclide's piety and devotion, moreover, the final words of both men show an extreme irreverence for the authority of both divine law and the laws of man. This irreverence is clearly evident in the case of Esdras, but is somewhat more complicated in Cutwolf's final, blasphemous declaration that "[t]he farther we wade in revenge the nearer come we to the throne of the Almighty. To His sceptre it is properly ascribed, His sceptre he lends unto man when He lets one man scourge another" (307-8). Such presumption, of course, would itself be recognized by Cutwolf's audience as the prideful sin of hubris, and it may have been for his pride as much as the murder of Esdras that finally sets the fury of the crowd against him.

Despite the satisfaction the reader may feel at the delivery of Esdras's requital, however, it is impossible to deny that there is some truth in his implicit argument that links the system of jurisprudence to the motivation for revenge, and this seems particularly so in the cases of public execution and violent torture.

The specific lessons offered by the fictional depiction of executions in *The Unfortunate Traveller* align closely with Hieronimo's sentiments in *The Spanish Tragedy* that the soul, which "should be shrined in heaven," instead "Solely delights in interdicted things" during such "monstrous times, where murder's set so light" (3.6.95-7). The pursuit of revenge is one such "interdicted" thing; as the play progresses, Hieronimo himself is consumed by it, leading to madness and death. Ultimately, these fictional accounts of crime and punishment provide a glimpse of popular attitudes concerning justice, revenge, and theories of criminal behavior at the end of the sixteenth century—a time that inaugurates an unprecedented upsurge in the production and popular interest in true crime accounts. The particular treatment in both *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The Unfortunate Traveller* of gallows speech conventions provides a critical insight into the theoretical position of the criminal in the society from which he or she has transgressed; ultimately, such depictions reflect and influence the perceptions of the every day criminals held by the readers and audiences of these texts when they encountered criminals and crime narratives in their own lives—on trial, in the stocks, at the gallows, or in their literature. Further, that the use of moralizing language in these fictional events is similar to that which circulated in the contemporary true crime literature suggests the pervasiveness of such ideas across the seemingly insuperable barriers of social class and levels of functional literacy. Though extant true crime accounts are diverse in their approach to depicting the events they treat—some more moralizing than others, some even seemingly sympathetic to the criminals they depict—a common purpose

of all such endeavors, and one that mirrors those of monstrous birth broadsheet literatures, is to interpret the invisible causes of sin and transgression and to warn the audiences of such texts away from the dangers of "wandering in the thorny passages" of fleshly desire and worldly distractions that "intercepts [the soul] of happiness" and leads the unwary to unpleasant and even violent ends (94).

Shifting Print Traditions and the Emergence of the "Fashion" Monster

Though monsters and monstrous figures persist as a source of perennial interest in English popular literature well into the seventeenth century, the surviving texts from the period that concern themselves with such topics seem to suggest, even as early as 1600, a noticeable shift in how monsters and their narratives were consumed by audiences in a widening array of presentation and generic forms. While purportedly literal accounts of "monstrous" deformed births continue to appear with varying degrees of plausibility and earnestness throughout the century and well after,[17] the recognizable single-page monstrous broadsheet format with its attention grabbing woodcuts does not seem to have survived the turn of the century.[18] The facts,

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[17] Continuing, in fact, well into the modern age. In her study of tabloid headlines, Deborah Schaffer notes two such examples, the first of which is "Tragic Story of Newborn Monster Only a Mother Could Love," which appeared in *The National Examiner* issue of 6 September 1988. Seven weeks later, the UK tabloid *The Sun* published, "Shocked Granny, 67, Gives Birth to Chimp-Faced Twins." (30). Also of note is the extended saga of the hybrid creature dubbed "Bat Boy," who first appeared on the cover of *The Weekly World News* in June, 1992, and continues to make periodic headlines, such as in 2008 when he supposedly went on record endorsing Barack Obama as President of the United States.

[18] The latest extant copy of such a print is the 1570 account *A Mervaylous Straunge Deformed Swine*. The register of the Stationer's Company records the titles of several publications that could reasonably be assumed to represent non-extant monstrous broadsheets, the latest of these dated 1583. Later entries record similar topics, but describe the publications as "books," "relations" or "ballads" rather than "accounts" or "pictures," suggesting these to be other forms of print ephemera. Much of this is necessarily conjecture, made more so by the

however, are frustratingly elusive: the survival of a single sheet out of what could have been hundreds or even thousands of original prints cannot be assumed to indicate its general popularity. In fact, that ephemeral prints survive from the sixteenth century at all despite their fragile and impermanent natures may have more to say about antiquarian interest and even sheer coincidence than any regard for their popular reception. Despite this difficulty, the constellation of those prints and titles that do survive provides modern scholars with a clear window during which the genre certainly enjoyed some degree of note and circulation in England, including the remarkable period of 1561-70 during which thirteen of the fifteen extant sixteenth century broadsheets were printed.[19] The accounts of monstrous births that survive after this window and into the next century appear with much less frequency and seem to differ from their predecessors in terms of both form and content.

In his *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England,* David Cressy lists 25 surviving English publications "describing monstrous births" from the period ca. 1550-1650 (31-

fact that the Stationer's register is merely a record of the company's cash accounts, and not a comprehensive record of titles printed. A number of extant publications, including some of the monstrous birth broadsheets treated in this study, are not represented in its pages.

19 A conservative estimate for the larger window during which such accounts appeared is 18 years, while a more liberal appraisal may go as high as 51. The disparity in the range of dates is a matter of classification and how willing scholars may be to entertain conjecture based on evidence from the Stationer's register. If the earliest extant broadsheet, the bilingual *Diß Monstrum ist auff Natangen / This Horyble Monster* is to be included, despite the fact that it is not purely English in origin, then the date range must begin with 1532 (1531 on the old calendar). If not, the Middleton Stoney account of 1552, whose original title is lost to time, must take the lead. The latest likely candidate in the Stationer's register for such a print is the 1583 record for the 4*d* "Receaved of [Richard Jones] for printinge a thinge beinge *A monster* which he undertaketh to print of his own perill" (Arber 2.428). If, however, only extant prints are to be regarded, the 1570 account of the "mervaylous strange deformed swine" must represent the terminus of the list.

2). His list, although not entirely comprehensive,[20] is useful for identifying formal and narrative trends that seem to emerge from the archive of extant publications from this time period. Of the sixteen publications from this list that date from the sixteenth century, twelve are single-page broadsheets, two are the translated prose works of Boaistuau and of Luther and Melanchthon described in the previous chapter, and two are very brief prose pamphlets dated 1585 and 1595.[21] The remaining nine titles from Cressy's list—eight pamphlets and one prose wonderbook—date from the seventeenth century and are all several pages in length. The shift in these publications away from the pictographic and comingled prose and verse format of the earlier broadsheet prints to the multi-page prose pamphlet seems to roughly coincide with a change in the ways monsters and their rhetorical properties were utilized in print narratives. Increasingly, English popular literature from the final quarter of the 16th century—and continuing even to the modern day—tends to utilize the label of "monster" in its more metaphorical register as an epithet that critiques transgressors of moral order and the law, rather

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[20] The dates of his list necessarily omit the 1532 bilingual broadsheet mentioned in the previous note, and he of course does not include the titles of lost publications derived from the Stationer's register. He also omits the Middleton Stoney account of 1552, which perhaps because it resides in the British Museum print collection rather than in the British Library (and is not presently cataloged in *EEBO*). He also omits a 1568 prose broadsheet account of the discovery and capture of a band of killer whales in Harwich harbor near Ipswitch, despite having included a thematically similar 1566 account of a "rare or rather most monstrous fishe," modernly recognized as a giant squid. A 1582 pamphlet account of monsters born in the Netherlands, *An Example of Gods Judgement Shewn Upon Two Children*, is also not included.

[21] The first of these is *A Right Strange and Woonderful Example*, of which only the title page survives, depicting two conjoined twins along with a third child, depicted by a modified version of the woodcut used in the 1566 broadsheet *The True Discripcion of a Childe with Ruffes* (see below). The second, *A Most Certain Report of a Monster*, presents a woodcut illustration on the frontispiece followed by the supposed correspondence between two gentlemen, the one inquiring to his friend about the stories of a monster born in the town where he lived. A third title, which Cressy omits from his list, is given in the note above describes two monstrous births and purports to have been translated from a Dutch pamphlet.

than as a descriptor for literal aberrant births. Of course, as discussed in the previous chapter, even the purportedly true accounts of deformed births that feature in broadsheet publications were rife with metaphors and layered meanings of many kinds and could be applied to a variety of purposes by their authors and publishers. What most distinctly marks the shift from the one register of monstrous metaphor to the other is the absence in the later texts of the literal deformed body and the move to apply a previously emblematic mode of interpretation as a means to decipher and understand criminal transgression by attributing it to the invisible transgressive desires or thoughts of adult subjects.

Though earlier examples are extant in various forms, English true crime literature seems to have risen to prominence during the early years of the seventeenth century and presents what is perhaps the most conspicuous use of monstrous rhetoric from this period, closely related in both form and affect to the monstrous broadsheet birth tradition. Appearing as cheaply produced ballads, news broadsheets, and pamphlets, such accounts presented salacious details of "monstrous" criminal acts, the discovery and arrest of their perpetrators, and their subsequent trials and punishments. Invariably in such accounts, signs and manifestations of these individuals' purportedly corrupt, inward natures and character were retroactively read onto them and their deeds as a way to explain their motivations and identify the cause of their descents into sin. Thus, by expanding the concept of *deformity* to include moral or spiritual corruption, these literatures mirror the earlier broadsheet tradition in their exploration of the relationships between "unnatural" or otherwise transgressive thoughts and the deeds that manifest "monstrous" births. From the tradition of interpreting literal deformity, therefore, emerges a sort of early popular criminal psychology: a practice of interpreting a moral or spiritual monstrosity through a modified version of the birth metaphor wherein adult subjects "deliver," "spew forth," or

otherwise express in action the invisible turbulence of their inward passions. Hence, the perpetrators described in true crime accounts share a common literary ancestry with the deformed and pitiful creatures and distressed parents of the monstrous broadsheet tradition.

Central to the interpretation of monstrous transgression depicted in popular crime accounts are some of the very same concerns described by Melanchthon and Luther in their explication of the "popish monsters" they treat in *Deuttung der czwo grewlichen Figuren*, particularly relating to the chief purposes they ascribe to the appearances of such creatures. As has already been stated, the appearance or commission of a crime, especially a violent one, was frequently depicted in print accounts as an expression of the perpetrator's hidden sin or inward desire, however motivated; in much the same way, Luther and Melanchthon regard the birth of the monsters in their writings as reflections or manifestations of the corruption of Catholic officials. Moreover, the process by which violent criminals were brought to justice for their offences, particularly given the commonplace of the public execution, also coincides with their interpretation of the monsters' appearances as acts of warning or exhortation for spectators to avoid the spiritual consequences of unmediated sin that is represented visually by the spectacular displays such accounts describe. The latter of these concerns is especially important in the context of print ephemera, as these crime accounts themselves came to perform a vital role in the means by which such lessons could address a wider audience than just those who could be physically present. Publication, in fact, was seen to play an important role in the providential process by which crimes could be solved and justice served, especially in the case of particularly grave offenses.[22] A key function of such accounts is that of a social corrective or exemplum—

[22] As one broadside ballad attests, "no such crimes can be concealed, / Old time will find them out, / And have them to the world revealed, / and published all about" (*The Life and Death of M. Geo[rge] Sands* 2.1.1-4). Cf. the function of monstrous birth broadsheets to reveal signs

more than simply excoriating the dastardly deeds of the individual criminals they depict, such narratives identify and censure the concealed, inward passions believed to motivate transgressive behavior, thus providing their audiences with the opportunity to learn from the tragic misfortunes of others.[23]

English criminals who are regarded as "monsters" in such popular accounts also share a specific interpretive register with Luther's Monkish Calf as well as other examples of what Julie Crawford calls "fashion monsters": those whose various deformities resemble features of excessive, ostentatious clothing and which were mobilized by writers as a means to explore "the relationship between the material and the divine" (28). In Crawford's arguments, these "monsters" appear in Protestant polemics to invoke "discredited Catholic beliefs" as a means to criticize the church broadly. Over time, however, a popular discourse of secular fashion excess and related deformities emerged from this religious debate to address the complicated relationship between appearance and truth. As in the case of the Monkish Calf, the specific rhetoric that surrounds the narratives of fashion monsters levies a particular critique of prideful or other self-motivated behavior by identifying and criticizing, through the metaphor of fine and elaborate dress, the hypocrisy of a superficial outward show and/or behavior that masks a turbulent, corrupted, or otherwise dubious inward quality. Holinshed's brief description of the Chichester monster of 1562 having "about the necke a great coller of fleshe and skinne growing

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and "preach" messages from God, as attested by the account of the Chichester child of 1562: "But here thou haste by Printing arte / A signe thereof to se / Let eche man saye within his harte / It preacheth now, to me" (16.1-4).

23 One pamphlet account, *The Bloudy Mother* of 1609, makes the function of exemplum explicit in its opening lines, as well as the necessity for readers to take heed of their warnings: "[H]appie is that man whome other mens harms maketh to be wise. I happie, and thrice happie is he indeed: but such is the folly of men in this our unhappy age, that though they see the most heavie and lamentable ends of thousands of hell-charmd malefactors, yet they will not learne good from their ill, nor to be wise by their folly" (sig. A3r).

like the ruffe of a shirt or neckerchefe, comming up above the eares pleiting and folding. &c." (1577, 4.1816) is notably dominated by sartorial language, an observation that is mirrored and manipulated in the verses of the surviving broadsheet account that specifically characterize the "great abuse and vice / That here in Englande now doeth raigne" as a monstrous "guise" (*A Discription of a Monstrous Childe* 18.2-4).[24] In a similar gesture, the broadsheet account of the Great Horkesley birth from the same year seems to compare the deformities of its subject to those of another, unpictured, monster born that month: a deformed calf with shoulders "ruffd" about the neck with folds of excess skin that "drives doutfull seers to prove by speache / Themselves not calves, and makes the fashion stale" (*The True Reporte of the Forme and Shape of a Monstrous Childe* 6.1-2).[25] In each instance, the interpretation of these "fashion" monsters makes a clear conceptual link between interior and exterior, as well as the relationship between false or pretentious show and the perception of a sinful or vicious character that bubbles just beneath the surface.

The most explicit example of the fashion monster in sixteenth-century England, the case of a child born in Mickleham, Surrey during June of 1566, is also the most pointed in its address to specific transgressors and their actions. A broadsheet account of the child's birth, *The True*

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[24] As previously mentioned, Holinshed's description of the Chichester child's "great coller of fleshe and skinne" is supported by the broadsheet woodcut, although no explicit mention of it is made anywhere in the text.

[25] An April entry made in Henry Machyn's diary reports that "a pide [spotted] calff" was brought to London "with a grett ruffe [about] ys neke, a token of grett ruff that bowth men and women [wear]" (280). Though mentioned passingly in the Great Horkesley account, no other broadsheet treatment survives for this case. However, a crude illustration of such a creature appearing in the margins of Margaret Lane's will, probated in 1562, alongside others seemingly copied from the woodcuts of extant broadsheet monsters, suggest that such an illustrated account did in fact appear and has since been lost (PRO PROB 11/45/fo. 58).

Discripcion of a Childe with Ruffes (*fig.* 3.1),[26] appeared two months afterward, attributed to an unknown author with the signature "H. B." It gives the name of the young girl, who is still alive at the time of the printing, as "Christian" and regards her as perfectly normal—with a face "comly & of a cheerful countenaunce"—except for a strange pattern of skin abrasions on her neck, back, and shoulders that made it appear as though she were "wunderfully clothed with such a Flesshy skin […] like unto a Neckerchef growing from the reines [center] of the Back up unto the neck […] muche like unto the Ruffes that many do use to weare about their necks" (par. 1). Notably, the broadsheet imitates the sentiments of Luther regarding his Monkish Calf in the suggestion that it is in fact the fashion of ruffs that adults wear, rather than this child's physical abnormality, that is unnatural and deformed—a point made most explicit in one of the concluding stanzas: "Deformed are the things we were [wear], / deformed is our hart: / The Lord is wroth with all this geere, / repent for fere of smarte" (12.1-4). Ultimately, the broadsheet suggests a direct relationship between the concealing function of clothing and that of guile, pretense, and/or studied behavior to mask the truth of one's "hart," or inward condition. As with Luther's treatise, however, the "clothing" exhibited by fashion monsters explicitly identifies the targets of the divine admonition they represent, and just as his text served as an indictment of the monks and nuns whose habits were resembled by the deformities of the Monkish Calf, the Mickleham broadsheet account unequivocally points to those of the "ruffed" infant as a condemnation of England's transgressive "womenkinde" who "in ruffes doo walke to oft" (14.1-2).

While the interpretation of monstrous births has always had an uneasy relationship with the transgressive potential of female reproductive autonomy, this is only more emphatic with the

[26] The complete, annotated text of this broadsheet may be found in Appendix 2 (*No.* 6).

birth of a "fashion monster" given the complex ways in which texts that deal with these appearances have always regarded the artifice of a superficial exterior, what Luther calls a "vaine appearaunce and shewe" and an "outward hipocrisie" (sig. E1v). The full significance of the "fashion monster," moreover, is its function to break down the distinction between the interior and exterior in these cases, exposing that which is concealed by the machinations of pride and self-promoting trumpery by making the literal "fashions" of such exteriors appear suddenly garish and vulgar. If, as Crawford claims, the appearance of a fashion monster, more than just a criticism of flamboyant apparel, "serves as an indictment of the fashioning work of women themselves" (49), it would also seem to critique *fashioning* as a process by which an unguarded and unruly inward condition brings sinful or transgressive actions *into being*. In this way, Christian's appearance in Mickleham serves as a warning to subjects who, like the "impudent wretches" of these "monstrous times" that Hieronimo deplores, allow their "soul[s] that should be shrined in heaven" to instead delight only in the "interdicted things" of worldly wealth, pleasure, and distraction (Kyd 3.6.94-7). Though this lesson applies broadly to any potential spectator or reader, its stakes for English audiences seem especially crucial in the case of women, who are, time and again, regarded in such texts as especially vulnerable to the hazards of excess and ostentation.[27]

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[27] Numerous examples of this conceit are extant, including the practical commentaries and satires mentioned by Crawford of Stephen Gosson's 1595 *Pleasant Quippes for Upstart Newfangled Gentlewomen,* the anonymous 1615 pamphlet *The Picture of a Wanton, Her Lewdness Discovered,* and Richard Brathwait's 1631 *The English Gentlewoman Drawne Out to the Full Body* (49n48). Additional instances in popular literature include the Marguerite of Henneberg legend, recounted in Thomas Coryate's 1611 travelogue *Coryate's Crudities*, in which a previously childless countess "hapned to be delivered of three hundred sixy five children at one burden" as punishment for jealously cursing a beggar woman who had born twins (2.369). The episode is depicted in a broadside ballad dated ca. 1620 titled *The Lamenting Lady*. Another popular narrative in this vein is the broadside ballad *Pride's Fall* of ca. 1650*,* the survivals of which are astonishingly numerous. It tells the story of a German

Many of the same themes of monstrous concealment, pride, self-promotion, and hypocrisy are present in crime narratives that survive from the seventeenth century, whether in broadside format or as the subject of a longer pamphlet. Often, the language of monstrosity invoked in the discussion of criminal or anti-social behavior in these accounts will even explicitly exploit the slippage between the moral and physical registers of deformity as a means to arrive at a lesson regarding the relationship between moral character, individual comportment, and social responsibility. One early account, *A True Relation of the Birth of Three Monsters* (*fig.* 3.2),[28] is a key example of how such publications could manipulate and align different interpretive registers drawn from the monstrous birth tradition to achieve their own moral ends. Though not precisely a crime narrative, this 1609 pamphlet treats the transgressive acts of its villainess as unnatural infractions of social decorum, family affinity, and natural "womanly charity" (sig. A4r). In the pamphlet, a "poore labouring man" of Namur in Flanders travels to the house of his rich sister-in-law, sent by his laboring wife, to request her sister's return with him to assist in the delivery. Upon his arrival, the wealthy sister is anticipating the visit of friends, and so refuses to go with him; when the man continues to plead for her assistance, she becomes enraged and beats him about the head with a staff, cursing him and his family for their poverty and disowning her sister as a whore and a bastard. Bloodied and dazed, he finally relents and departs, though his indignities, the pamphlet maintains, are far from over:

> Home goes this poore man, with a sorrowfull heart, calling to Almighty God for vengeance on this Monster of her sexe, that pittilesse woman: And comming to his wife, told her of the unkindnesse of her sister. The poore affrighted woman,

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merchant's wife who is requited for her arrogance with the birth of an especially grotesque fashion monster whose deformities mimic her apparel, her vain behavior, and the divine punishment served upon her. This monster, like those in the pamphlet discussed below, expresses the meanings of its appearance directly in speech before immediately dying.

[28] The complete, annotated text of this pamphlet may be found in Appendix 2 (*No.* 7).

> through griefe and rage, fell presently in labour, and was delivered of three Monsters, striking a terrour to those women imployed in that businesse. (sig A4v)

With the appearance of the three monstrous children, the account simultaneously invokes several of the theorized causes for birth deformity that appear in the popular literature of the previous century. In the first case, the text draws an implicit connection between the appearance of the three monsters and the divine vengeance for which the father prayed during his journey home. Though by 1609 many popular accounts had already established that deformed birth could not necessarily be attributed to direct punishments for parental sins,[29] it is curious that in this account a causal relationship is offered that seems to misdirect the prayers of the beleaguered father and deflect the vengeance he so hoped for onto his children, his wife, and himself. Of further interest is the fact that it is the father's relation of her sister's behavior—rather than the violent attack itself—that seems to instigate his wife's sudden delivery through a fit of grief and rage. This may suggest a further causal relationship of the children's deformities via *impression* of the passions experienced by the mother, father, sister, or all three. Finally, a detail that is revealed in the description of the births, but is concealed elsewhere, describes the presence of other women in the birth room "imployed in that businesse" of labor and delivery. Whether these women are servants, friends, relations, or midwives, the presence of this female community at the birth inflects the rich woman's neglect of her sister with specifically gendered anti-social implications, as her refusal to attend is an outright rejection of not only the "womanly charity" that should compel her to attend but also of community responsibility. As such, the "terror" struck into the hearts of these women by the birth of the monsters seems as much a reaction to the rich woman's cruel neglect and disavowal of both her sister and her social obligations as to the nightmarish spectacle before them.

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[29] Cf., for example, Boaistuau's treatise on monstrous births in the previous chapter.

The monsters born to the unhappy couple amidst the terror of all the spectators are two girls and a boy, each of whose deformities bear a specifically emblematic resonance with the prideful and uncharitable behavior of their wayward aunt. The first child is a daughter "that had such dressings, and attire on the head, by nature of flesh, as women have made by art of Bonelaces, and such like, with a fleshy Vardingale [farthingale] about the middle of it." The second daughter is also presented as a fashion monster, "having about the necke, a Ruffe laced, and Cuffes about the wrests, like the Ruffe, all of flesh," while the middle child is a son with a "strange misshapen head" and "having upon the backe of his right hand, the fashion" or likeness of a "deaths head" or skull (sig. B1r). As confirmed by the pamphlet's relatively large frontispiece woodcut (*fig.* 3.2), the fashion deformities of both daughters directly reflect the fine clothing and other attire in which their aunt is depicted. Moreover, the appearance of the death's head emblem on the hand of the son (both hands in the woodcut) serves as a *memento mori*, or a reminder of the inevitability of death and the need for piety, temperate, and good works during one's lifetime in order to earn entry into heaven after death. The son's misshapen head may also emblematically suggest a similarly misshapen faculty of guidance or propriety in the rich woman's behavior, prescribing her as a presumptuous and unrestrained female, either due to her violent attack on her brother-in-law or else more generally as a reproach of her vanity and the manner in which it is suggested she ran her household. In each case, the "ill proportioned" features of these children express, through deformities that make transparent the artifice of outward show, the heretofore abstract and invisible character of their wealthy aunt.

The tale next takes a turn for the fantastical when the monstrous children begin to speak to their parents and others present, variously lamenting that they were born into "this world of Pride, of Lust, of Murther, and all wickednesse," and asserting that the three of them were "sent

to forewarne [...] of the Lords coming" and assuring that "God would punish the world suddenly, for [its] manifold transgressions." Immediately following their speeches, children all die—gladly, it seems—and are followed quickly by their mother who, "through griefe and terror, yelded up the ghost, and left a poore disconsolate husband behind her, to fill the mouth of rumor, with these strange unheard of wonders" (B1r-v). More than simply presenting emblematic signs to be read and decoded, the account endows these children with the capacity of speech to announce verbally their abhorrence for the current environment of sin into which they are born and, moreover, what their appearance portends. In a further display of supernatural/divine intercession, the pamphlet concludes by explaining that the rich "unnatural" sister's house, "at the same instant time that this poore woman was delivered," was "fired with lightening" and "her wealth and all her substance was quite consumed with that quenchlesse fire" in execution of the judgement of God (sig. B1v). Finally, as the rich sister flees out of the house to save herself from the fire, "the willing earth gaped wide, and swallowed her quick, holding it more fit for her to be in the earth, then on the earth, being so unnaturall against nature," a scene which is depicted in the woodcut tableau of the frontispiece. The inclusion of these supernatural details in this account are curious given that, in addition to straining whatever credulity the readers may have heretofore maintained, they do not seem strictly necessary to the larger moral message. The speeches made by the monstrous children, for example, echo interpretive sentiments and associations that would have been clear to audiences simply by their appearance, while the elaborate and divine vengeance against the rich sister, narratively speaking, is entirely subordinate to the lesson already clear from the description of her behavior and the subsequent appearance of the monsters. Beyond simply presenting readers with the tantalizing thrill and satisfaction of imagining monsters gifted with preternatural speech and of seeing a "bad" woman

receive the vengeance prayed for by her slighted brother-in-law, the purpose behind the inclusion of such details may seem initially elusive.

The *True Relation*, in many ways, is a text displaced in time; an account of "forraine wonders" produced during a moment of transition for the popular regard of monsters in England (sig. A3v), the narrative lacks many of the verifiable features of both the earlier monstrous birth tradition as well as those of the true crime account that had, by 1609, already begun to come into its own. While the monstrous birth broadsheets and other such narratives of the sixteenth century, without exception, make a number of narrative and formal concessions to bolster the veracity of the births they depict, the *True Relation* provides no such evidence. Seemingly more interested in the human story that surrounds the appearance of the children than in their actual birth, the account treats the monsters' appearance as an afterthought, an additional means by which the villainess may be punished through the shame of having her many faults exposed publically. The ultimate fate of the rich sister, while spectacular and perhaps satisfying from the perspective of a reader interested in revenge, lacks any of the assurances prevalent in contemporary crime accounts of the efficacy of human justice systems to protect citizens from physical and spiritual harm through the correct interpretation and execution of divine and/or moral law.[30] Though the pamphlet, by deploying the narrative attributes of both a monstrous birth account and a popular crime story, ends up serving the ends of neither tradition particularly well, it is a quite useful in its documentation of a moment in English print history when the

[30] The direct execution of divine punishment on the rich sister via the "willing earth" opening and "swallow[ing] her quick" resonates with the consequences of Cain's crime, described as an enmity with the earth; it also completely cuts out the possibility of human systems of justice to restore the social order, finally depicting the humans in the tale as particularly incapable of effecting correction of the transgressed status quo.

writer's deployment of and audience response to monstrous narratives was in a state of transition.

Ultimately, the most conspicuous theme of *A True Relation* is one that bridges the transition from one interpretive register of the "monstrous" to the other—namely, the notion of the dangers ascribed to female excesses, inherent both in the tradition of interpreting physical birth deformity and in ascribing explanations of corrupted or turbulent inward conditions as motives for the commission of violent crimes, especially those that are domestic in nature. The births of the three children, it contends, are most explicitly the result of excessive ostentation and the unchecked passions that are exhibited throughout the incident,[31] but so too does the tale offer an implicit critique of excess in the depiction of the community. The rich sister's refusal to attend the birth of her kinswoman in lieu of visiting at home with friends is, essentially, the rejection of one sort of community and the affirmation of another—in this case, privileging her acquaintance with and entertainment of a group of other idle and presumably wealthy women over her familial and social obligations. The punishment, of course, makes visceral the moralistic contention regarding the wages of sin, as she is depicted descending literally into an earth that is only too eager to "gape wide" and extinguish a woman who has so thoroughly forfeited her places in both worldly society and life eternal. Her fate is also relevant in its invocation of a contemporary popular account regarding Queen Eleanor of Castile,[32] as recounted in a broadside ballad of ca. 1600 titled *The Lamentable Fall of Queen Elenor* (*fig*.

[31] I.e., the various emotional excesses committed by and as a result of *both* the sisters, as well as the father, who is finally subsumed into the turmoil by the instigation, in turn, of each.

[32] The first queen of King Edward I (r. 1272-1307) and the namesake of the Eleanor Crosses.

3.3).[33] Similar to the rich sister of the pamphlet narrative, Eleanor is depicted as exceedingly vain and self-motivated; she is permitted by the King to impose heavy taxes to finance her extravagance and she enforces strict sumptuary laws to promote her own interpretations of the cutting edge of Spanish fashion within the English court.[34]

In a turn of events analogous to those of *A True Relation*, the broadside account goes on to forge an explicit connection between an individual's adherence to material concerns and the commission of "unnatural" transgressive and violent behavior. When, one day, Eleanor becomes jealous of the wife of the Lord Mayor of London, she has her secretly imprisoned in Wales and forces to serve as her kitchen drudge. When this ceases to please her, the queen finally has her tied to a post and killed by setting "two Snakes unto her breasts, / that suckt away her blood" (13.7-8). Returning toward London, she is met and her journey stalled by a terrible tempest, which the King correctly interprets as a sign of her guilt in the disappearance of the Mayor's wife; when Edward accuses her, she denies any knowledge of the fact, proclaiming "If that upon so vile a thing, her hart did ever thinke, / She wisht the ground might open wid and therein she might sinke" (18.1-4). This, of course, is what immediately happens, and Eleanor descends into the earth, the ballad asserts, "at Charing crosse," only to rise up "with life againe" about three miles distant at Queenhythe. While the ballad clearly offers a historical fiction, it is significant that its depiction of Eleanor's descent into the earth should be anachronistically located at Charing Cross, a significant historical revision of Edward's commissioning the twelve Eleanor

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[33] A digital facsimile and transcription of this broadside ballad may be accessed online through the English Broadside Ballad Archive (*EBBA*), hosted by the University of California-Santa Barbara, by browsing to <*http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/31939*>. The complete, annotated text of the ballad may be found in Appendix 2 (*No.* 8).

[34] An idea that would be especially repugnant to English audiences at the time.

Crosses.[35] So too is her resurfacing near Queenhythe remarkable given the then century-old connection of that location to the Empress Matilda—another of England's queens sometimes depicted as unfavorable and overreaching in her authority.[36] In marked contrast to the fate of the wealthy sister of *A True Relation*, the ballad's Eleanor is not killed by her misadventure, and instead lives on to become repentant, confessing not only to the murder of the Lord Mayor's wife but also to having sired a "base born child" with a lusty friar of her acquaintance (19.5-6).

The conclusion of both narratives bears an essentially identical message that is addressed, like the broadsheet account of the "ruffed child" of Mickleham, most expressly to a female audience whose refractory potential and special susceptibility to pride is made evident by the events the prints depict. "Beware of Pride you London dames," the ballad urges as it warbles to a close, "both wives and maidens all, / Beare this imprinted in your minde, / that Pride will have a fall" (20.4-8). Meanwhile, as the pamphlet account explains, the story of the three short-lived monsters and the fate of their ungracious aunt have so affected the city of Namur that the news has "stirred up good motions in the hearts of the Inhabitants, to Fasting, to Prayer, to Almes-deeds, and such like workes of grace and pardon." In response to these efforts, the text continues, "The Governours of the City caused [the account] to be printed, as [much] to give the country round about knowledge of it, as to continue the remembrance of it there, that they might

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35 The Eleanor Crosses were monuments erected by King Edward upon the death of Eleanor to mark the sites where the Queen's funeral procession rested for the night on its twelve-day journey from Lincoln to Westminster abbey, where she was interred. Charing Cross takes its name from the monument that was placed there.

36 Queenhythe is a ward of the city of London that contains an ancient trade dock of the same name (meaning "Queen's dock") on the River Thames. It was used to import goods during Saxon times, but has since fallen into disuse. The dock is so named from its association with Matilda, whose father, King Henry I (r. 1100-35), granted her the duties due on the goods imported there. Following his death, and in the absence of any male heirs, Matilda was the first Englishwoman to claim right of succession to the crown and directly challenged the claim of her uncle.

still presever in the good course they begun" (sig. B1v). Given the subjects of their narratives, present in both the ballad and the pamphlet accounts is the implicit suggestion that the undesirable qualities of both women they depict are, perhaps, permissible to foreigners but certainly not to be tolerated of any respectable Englishwoman or anyone, for that matter, who proposes to be a Christian. The lesson suggested in each case is to forbear morbid attachments to material trappings and other worldly pleasures—those "interdicted things" and "thorny passages," to again use Hieronimo's terms, that "intercept [the soul] of happiness" and results in a fall from grace (Kyd 3.6.97-9). In this, both narratives reflect the attitudes toward female "fashion" expressed by the Apostle Paul extolling the virtues of "clothing" oneself in good deeds rather than the vanity of material trappings: "[…] Likewise also the women, [I exhort] that they aray themselves in comely apparell, with shamefastnes and modestie, not with br[a]ided heare, or gold, or pearles, or costly apparell, But (as becommeth women that professe the feare of God) with good workes" (1 Timothy 9-10, *Geneva Bible*).

Though varied in their deployment of monstrous rhetoric, imagery, and the expression of divine or otherwise "wonderful" occurrences to appeal to their audiences, these three narratives ultimately arrive at similar ends, though perhaps for different purposes. Like other examples of the monstrous birth broadsheet tradition, the account of the Mickleham child is most expressly interested in conveying a moral message through the shocking description and details of a deformed infant that can be witnessed by any who wish to seek it out. In such a narrative, the need to discern the meaning of such a child's birth is imperative for all strata of the society into which such a child is born. The broadsheet birth tradition offers to answer that need though the presentation of text, verse, and image designed to simultaneously seize the attention of and morally instruct readers across these levels of English community in the lessons and warnings

such births were held to represent. Meanwhile, the pamphlet account of the three monsters in Flanders, like the broadside ballad whose narrative it invokes, is seemingly more concerned with the story it tells and the ultimate lessons it conveys than in rigid claims to authenticity, evincing a distinct shift in the trends surrounding ways in which monstrous narratives were portrayed and consumed. Similarly, the investment in this narrative and the Eleanor ballad in the individual motives of transgressors moves these figures to the front of readerly attention whereas the wayward sinners of the broadsheet monster accounts tend to exist obscured in the margins of their texts.

What is perhaps the most conspicuous shift in the use of print mechanisms from one tradition to the next is the use and employment of the woodcut image in relation to the text it illustrates. The large frontispiece of *A True Relation*, for example, is striking and attention-grabbing in a manner similar to the woodcuts that appear in the earlier monstrous birth broadsheets, but whereas the figures depicted in the earlier images are principally anatomical and informative, the illustrations used in the later texts are deployed to more explicitly imitate the narrative function of the text itself. Repeatedly, the pamphlet account emphasizes spectacular events, which it delivers in a number of discrete but memorable scenes: the attack of the poor man by a rich woman in front of her home, the unquiet birth room in which the three monsters are born and come to speak, and finally the destruction of the sister's home with lightening and her subsequent descent into the earth. These three memorable scenes, two of which are depicted in the frontispiece, function together as a series of narrative tableaux that teach the lessons of the account through vivid imagery conveyed both by the text and pictures.[37] Finally, the tableau

[37] In this way, prose pamphlets could still hold appeal for less literate audiences; provided that the account was read aloud to them or else the main points summarized, the memorable scenes depicted could ensure retention of the story and the account's greater messages.

proves an increasingly important feature of true crime accounts that seem to freeze crucial moments of their narrative in progress so as to imply a dynamic continuous narrative. Though not all printings of the Eleanor ballad bore woodcut illustrations, the effect can still be felt through its familiar historical and geographical allusions that constitute a similar set of gestures, launching both its narrative and its moral lessons off the printed sheet and into the imagination.

As Jeffrey Jerome Cohen states in the second thesis of *Monster Theory*, an essential quality of the monster's danger, terror, and seductive allure is that "the monster always escapes […] turns immaterial and vanishes, to reappear someplace else" (4); inevitably, perhaps, this has proven true of the sixteenth century broadsheet birth monster whose brief heyday through London's city streets, in private homes, and on the walls of taverns attracted both the astonishment and curiosity of its consumers. Though periodic resurgences of interest in the literally deformed monstrous birth have occurred throughout the centuries to the present day, the earnest quality of astonishment and wonder present in the accounts of these earliest appearances would never again be recaptured. The moral monsters of true crime accounts that take the place of the pitiful children and animals blazoned across fleeting newssheets of the previous century ultimately come to embody many of the familiar aspects of their forerunners' emblematic significance and didacticism. In time, ephemeral accounts of true crime, particularly those in ballad form, become an even more recognizable cultural force than their deformed predecessors that have since faded into history. Cohen's precept of the monster's escape, of course, necessarily presupposes the social impulse, however futile, to *contain* such figures, and the dangers they represent, in some fashion. In the case of birth deformities, the interpretive discourse discernible in the broadsheet tradition could in part provide such containment, offering both rational and spiritual explanations for the causes of and purposes for such appearances. For

the "monsters" of violent crime literature that came later, these endeavors became much more complicated as the impulse to contain such occurrences must necessarily respond to a double threat: the first, of the physical violence presented by the criminal act; the second, of the moral or spiritual discord that such acts were believed to sow within a community. Legal mechanisms of investigation and "attachment," or arrest and questioning of suspected criminals, provided the means of responding to and suppressing the threat of the physical; as for the containment of transgressive criminal immorality, however, a second interpretive discourse was necessary to explain and normalize the new figure of the "monster"—one that emphasized the spiritually restorative effects attributed to contrition and the public performance of confession.

"Confession" and the Ephemeral Literature of True Crime

When Margaret Ferneseede was arrested in 1607 under suspicion of having played a hand in her husband's mysterious death, it was her seeming indifference and unemotional regard for the news of his discovery that initially led authorities and others of her acquaintance to presuppose her guilt in the matter. *The Araignement & Burning of Margaret Ferne-seede*, a pamphlet account of the following year, is especially pointed in its harsh characterization of her as a treacherous and immoral woman whose criminal guilt is made manifest through the various signs of her emotional carelessness and unordered speech regarding her husband's character and well being (Henderson & McManus 354). At length, Margaret's "confession," offered in the account, underscores the importance of well ordered speech such as that familiar from the tradition of gallows narratives to reestablishing the efficacy of the law and social order in the wake of violent crimes—especially those believed to be committed by female perpetrators. The intense scrutiny of Margaret's speech begins in the account when she is heard to contradict a

neighbor's consoling assurance that Anthony Ferneseede had been "a most honest and good husband," insisting instead that "her fear was she should not hear so well of him." Following a similar exchange with another of her neighbors, one would-be condoler becomes disturbed by her irreverent attitude: "Why Mistress Ferneseede," he chastises, "is the loss of a good husband so slightly to be regarded? For mine own part, had such a mischance fallen to my fortune, I should ere this have wept out mine eyes with true sorrow," to which the recalcitrant Margaret counters, "Tut, sir, mine eyes are ill already and I must now preserve them to mend my clothes, not to mourn for a husband." Almost as if to mock their expectation of tears, Ferneseede then "takes her scarf and wiped her eyes," not from emotion, but from "the wind blowing the dust in her face" as she continues along the road to where her husband's corpse has been found. Having finally arrived at the site, Margaret approaches the body and, "[m]ore for awe of the Magistrate than any terror she felt," the text insists, she "made many sour faces," but could not manage genuine tears since "the dryness of her brain would suffer no moisture to descend into her eyes." Key to the depiction of criminal investigation in this account is the importance of visibility as an aid in rendering the judgments of guilt or innocence, truth or deception. Margaret Ferneseede's persistent refusal to perform a transparent display of grief—the displacement of her anticipated tears with the dry dust of the road as well as the delivery of "courtesan-like speeches" in lieu of the convulsive sobs that ought to wrack her body—is ultimately what raises the suspicions of the authorities and leads them to investigate further into her involvement in the crime.

Popular accounts of true crime and the efforts of officials as well as the everyday men and women who endeavored to bring perpetrators to justice have ever been a source of intrigue and fascination in England. Many such accounts of violent offences and their often equally violent public punishments are extant from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the forms

of cheaply produced print ephemera that could, in a relatively short amount of time, be distributed widely in and around the city of London in the wake of such an occurrence.[38] Murder, of course, was a perennially favorite subject of such accounts, particularly when it involved some form of domestic betrayal, such as the killing of one's spouse, children, or other family members. The particular appeal of such crime narratives can be attributed in part to the nature of such offenses—doubly "unnatural" with the addition of perpetrators' various treacheries to the already egregious sin of murder—as well as the satisfaction that could be derived from seeing justice served. Undoubtedly, however, the often lurid details that these accounts provide of the private relationships between victims and assailants were also key to their popularity. Although such incidents were by all accounts relatively rare, as Garthine Walker shows in her study *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern England*,[39] the phenomenon of husband murder is an especially prevalent subject of popular crime literature throughout the seventeenth century and well after, leading noted ballad scholar Hyder Rollins to

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38 The topicality of such publications was central to their appeal, and they were often compiled, printed, and sold immediately following the execution of the criminals they depict. Though, for example, the poisoning death of a London goldsmith at the hands of his wife and her lover remained undetected for two and a half years after the fact, the 1592 pamphlet that treats the crime, *The Trueth of the Most Wicked and Secret Murthering of John Brewen*, describes the spectacular double execution of the perpetrators in Smithfield as having happened "wedensday last, being the *28.* of Iune" (6v), suggesting the account to have hit the market less than a week afterward.

39 Using data from Cheshire to provide an example of "an average figure for Early Modern England," Walker estimates that "[w]omen comprised one-fifth of suspected killers" from the period, which is "consistent with the relatively low incidence of women's homicide across the centuries" (135). Thus, as Vanessa McMahon has claimed, "domestic homicides inspired interest quite out of proportion to their incidence" (68).

note—perhaps with irony[40]—that "Marriage seems to have entailed many dangers to husbands of this period" (299).

Key to the original function of such literature is the corrective role of the *exemplum* that these accounts would provide; offering more than a simple condemnation of the individual criminals they depict and the violent acts they describe, such narratives pointedly censure the transgressive behaviors and motives of these individuals that *anticipate* the final criminal act. Beyond the palpable shaming and retributive functions that such intimate exposés of a given culprit's life and shortcomings could entail, these texts often claim to serve an important role in the process of social correction that ostensibly aims to ensure its audiences might learn from and eschew the paths of sin and transgression taken by the criminals depicted. As Annie Tock has suggested, this was especially so in the case of a female perpetrator, as "[accounts] pertaining to women and crime," she writes, "sought to reinforce gender roles and strengthen the social order by providing an example of deviant women as a deterrent to others" (2).[41] At length, the *exemplum* and social corrective functions that these accounts provide come to resemble the familiar conceit of the "gallows speech" or last words of supposedly contrite criminals, only too happy to accept severe earthy punishment as a means of reentry into a spiritual, Christian community from which their crimes have exiled them. This similarity is surely no coincidence, as both pamphlet and ballad accounts frequently purport to contain such final sentiments, even when the legitimacy of such claims seems rather unlikely. Female culprits seem to be especially likely targets of enforced contrition in such accounts, "ventriloquized," as Katherine Craik has argued, by male authors to effectively silence them and redress transgressions that frequently

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40 But probably not.

41 Though Tock refers specifically to this function in the case of broadside ballads, a similar effect can also be discerned in crime pamphlets.

come to be characterized as predictable and even inevitable outcomes of their waywardness and "excessive speech" (451).

The pamphlet account of the Ferneseede murder is finally ambiguous in its presentation of the justice delivered in the case, given the circumstantial nature of the evidence brought against Margaret for the crime at hand and the extent to which the text manipulates her own "disorderly" language to produce the effect of her guilt. Charges of adultery that surface from the testimony of neighbors and the household servant also describe the extreme quarrelsome disquiet with which the Ferneseedes conducted their home lives, attesting to Margaret's frequent verbal threats to bring about her husband's "destruction" that had reportedly taken form in a prior, unsuccessful attempt to poison him with adulterated broth (Henderson & McManus 354). During her incarceration pending trial, Margaret is "seldom found to be in charity with any of her fellow prisoners nor at any time in quiet with herself," loudly protesting her innocence of the murder but given, the account holds, "to much swearing, scarce praying but continually scolding," a description that recalls the neighbors' testimony of the frequent quarrels that could be heard transpiring between husband and wife (355).[42] Here and elsewhere, the pamphlet's anonymous narrator emphasizes the rebellious nature of Margaret's behavior, particularly her contrary and unruly tongue that is given to quarreling, cursing, and deceit. Though other facts are laid to her charge,[43] the most damning evidence finally levied against her by her neighbors and servant is largely informed by that which was overheard during domestic squabbles that had

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[42] The use of the word "scolding" here is particularly significant given its frequent association with the discourse of domestic authority. Women who quarreled with and chastised their husbands were frequently referred to as scolds.

[43] The other evidence is purely circumstantial: the sudden disappearance of the man with whom she supposedly committed adultery, as well as the claim that when the news was brought to her of Anthony's murder, she attempting to sell her belongings to raise capital with which to "fly after" her absconded lover (355-6).

become commonplace in the community, "namely of the incontinence of her life past, her attempt to poison her husband before his murder […], her slight regard of him in his life and her careless sorrow for him after death." Though remaining constant in her proclamations of innocence, Margaret is finally condemned by the reports of her own loose words and sentenced to death.

The conclusion of the pamphlet account relates that as the date of her execution approaches, Margaret is "drawn" by her fellow prisoners to leave off the hated cursing and railing to which they have become accustomed from her and instead make a penitent confession of her sins to "prepare herself fit for death" (356). In relating the confession, the anonymous author makes a curious, brief appearance in the narrative, assuring readers that "I was credibly satisfied that when the heat of her fury was past to which she was much subject unto, she [was] a woman well spoken, of fair delivery and good persuasion"; though this voice then immediately fades back into the margins of the pamphlet, its sudden emergence raises important questions about the authenticity of Ferneseede's portrayal and the role of this unknown narrator in securing and recording her "confession." Surprising in its divergence from the characterization heretofore given her in the account, Margaret's final speech is indeed both "of fair delivery" and "good persuasion":

> To excuse myself, O Lord, before thee who knows the conspiracies of our thoughts even to the utmost of our actions (however so private or publicly committed) were folly, or to justify myself were sin, since no flesh can appear pure in thy sight. I here therefore with prostrate knees and dejected eyes as unworthy to look up unto thy divine Majesty, with contrite heart and penitent soul also, here voluntarily confess I am the greatest of sinners which have deserved thy wrath and indignation. (356-7)

Following this preamble is a sizeable narrative in which Ferneseede details her former life as a prostitute and, later, a bawd who recruited and blackmailed other unhappy wives from the

neighborhood into her unsavory employ, which she apparently conducted out of her own home during her husband's frequent absences and without his knowledge.[44] Curiously removed from the barrage of bold curses and contrary swearing that has until this moment been the only manner of communication this woman has been said to utter within her prison cell, Margaret's confession, particularly the sentiments that foreground the particulars of her "contrition," more resembles the studied oratory of a person well versed in the language of divinity than the avowal, however contrite, of a wayward tailor's wife.

It is, of course, unsurprising that the confession of Margaret Ferneseede would be mediated to some extent by the author/compiler of such an account, as surely most or all such final words are embellished in one manner or another in the retelling.[45] What is striking in the Ferneseede pamphlet, however, is that the specific language of her much-awaited confession seems to suggest having been assisted or else completely ghostwritten by either a clergyman or someone else attached to the church—perhaps even one and the same person as the mysterious "I" who assures readers that he was "credibly satisfied" by her sudden penitence and, moreover, goes on to compliment her for being so "well spoken" (356). At length, the role that is played by the pamphlet's narrator in the confession and reporting of Margaret's crimes seems conspicuously similar to that of a "visitor" who would have been assigned to the prison where she was held. Visitors were clergymen who preached in jails and attended upon incarcerated

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44 According to the account, Anthony Ferneseede ran a tailor shop "near Carter lane"; the Ferneseede home was some two miles west, "in Duck lane"; as the text later attests, he "seldom" lodged at the home overnight (Henderson & McManus 353, 358).

45 As Frances Dolan has explained in her work *Dangerous Familiars*, "[n]o evidence suggests that the accused [prisoners] ever wrote their own accounts although many pamphlets reproduce their examinations and confession, their remarks on the scaffold, or letters written from prison. In presenting the convicts' remarks, such texts can be seen as a kind of collaboration between author and subject" (10-11).

offenders awaiting execution; as Randall Martin has shown, "[i]n the case of the condemned, [visitors] were also charged with securing their public repentance, confessions, and conversions on the gallows ladder or execution pyre" ("Henry Goodcole" 154). One of the most well-known of these visitors was Henry Goodcole, who "visited" inmates at Ludgate and Newgate Prisons ca. 1613 - ca. 1636 and became somewhat notorious for his moralizing accounts of criminals' final moments and last dying speeches that would appear afterward as pamphlets and chapbooks.[46] While Goodcole was the first such Visitor known to have cultivated a public persona with the publication of such writings—especially tantalizing given his position within Newgate with the notorious criminals housed there—a tradition of such accounts published anonymously by other Visitors predates him.[47]

Even if it is not specifically an appointed Visitor who records and publishes the narrative of Margaret Ferneseede's arrest, trial, and sentencing, the stark contrast between the excessive and unruly nature of her speech early in the text and the eloquent, supplicating tone of her ultimate confession makes it plausible—if not altogether likely—that one or both of these accounts of her speech have been shaped or embellished by a mediating authorial hand. The

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[46] Goodcole secured a post as "lecturer" at Ludgate Prison in 1613 and received a promotion to "ordinary" or chaplain of Newgate in 1620. Several pamphlets are attributed to him, in whole or in part, during the years he served in these positions. His affiliation at Newgate must have ended before or during 1636, after which he became vicar of St James's, Clerkenwell (ODNB).

[47] Tactics employed by Visitors to obtain the confessions and "contrition" they desired could be occasionally questionable, if Goodcole's reports are any indication. On the morning of Alice Clarke's execution, related in his 1635 pamphlet *The Adultresses Funerall Day*, Goodcole becomes dissatisfied with her behavior and threatens to withhold final communion and absolution in order to extort a more penitent second confession (sig. C1v-r). Bursting into tears, Clarke provides the demanded speech, the content of which is virtually identical to the former recorded earlier by Goodcole, save that it concludes with his assurances that now "shee had better resolutions unto death, then formerly she had," which he was able to verify from the change of color in her face, "which was very ruddy and confirmed her inward new begotten chearfulnesse" once she had obeyed him (sig. C2r).

additional details the text provides of her purported career as both a whore and brothel madam are curious considering that neither representations of the statements given by the neighbors nor that of Margaret's serving boy support these claims.[48] Though Margaret is charged, among other things, with having previously led a life of "incontinence," no reliable testimony or evidence is given as to what this might entail until her well-ordered confession helpfully supplies an answer.[49] In the end, the *Araignement* leaves more questions unresolved than it is finally able to account for, and the reliability of the narrator in faithfully presenting the facts of the case seems questionable at best.[50] This too seems in keeping with the priorities of a "visitor-writer," whose "primary concern" in such popular accounts, as Martin explains, "was with fomenting spiritual renewal" by presenting the spectacle of the condemned's supposed conversion, "rather than recording events objectively" ("Goodcole" 155).

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[48] It is also not supported in the brief assize record of the case, which records only that Margaret "stabbed her husband in the throat with a knife […] and killed him" and was found guilty (qtd in Martin, *Women* 41). Martin suggests the record is a "legal fiction" and that the pamphlet account is a more accurate reflection of the actual events in the case. Given the various inconsistencies in the pamphlet account, however, the assize record seems to hold the better claim for authenticity.

[49] The "chiefest" evidence at the trial, it is said, was supplied by two "bargemen," who the account claims had "come to revel" and stay the night at the home of the Ferneseedes when they lived near Iron Gate. When Anthony unexpectedly came home that evening and discovered them, the bargemen reported hearing Margaret and him argue, after which she assured the two men, "I will be revenged of him (nay ere long) by one means or other, so worked that I will be rid of him!" (Henderson & McManus 358-9). Curiously, the detail that these men were customers of a whorehouse is not supported by the initial account of the trial and is only related *after* the confession is given. It also seems questionable that such testimony would have been offered a court of law by men prone to such "reveling," let alone that it should be accepted as evidence. Once again, the "facts" provided in the pamphlet seem suspiciously slanted to produce a more striking effect with the advent of Ferneseede's supposed penitence after having been characterized as such a corrupt and sinful individual.

[50] At length, the account's presentation of the contradictory and somewhat *non sequitur* narrative of Ferneseede's bawdyhouse seems to tacitly justify her execution in the absence of more solid evidence linking her to Anthony's murder.

Margaret's execution, nearly ten months after her initial arrest, finally took place the last day of February 1608, and its description in the *Araingement* is one of the earliest still extant of the punishment brought against mariticide, or husband murder. The crime was treated as a form of "petty treason," a term that originally described the murder of a master by his or her servant; such legal qualifications reflected similar attitudes in the early modern period that regarded the power structure of the domestic sphere as a microcosm of politics and religion, comparing the husband's authority as the "head" of the household to Christ's over the church, which in turn exists "in subjection" to him.[51] Such familiar conceits, of course, make a bold statement about the position of wives within domestic power structures and as subordinates to husbands who may or may not act in their families' best interests; the harsh reality of these attitudes was that women who suffered from spousal abuse and/or negligence often had little recourse to correct the behavior of a bad "king" or "petty tyrant."[52] As Vanessa McMahon has stated, when a wife

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[51] The idea, frequently invoked by contemporary homilies on matrimony, originates in the Pauline epistles, chiefly Ephesians 5:22-4; "Wives, submit your selves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the wives head, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and the same is the saviour of his body. Therfore as the Church is in subjection to Christ, even so let the wives be to their husbads in every thing." (Geneva Bible). Contemporary domestic conduct books extrapolate this relationship into the political sphere, as in Edward Tilney's 1568 dialog *The Flower of Friendshippe*, which holds a husband's authority over his wife as a consequence of his being "most apt for the soveraignetie being in governement" given a number of natural "capacit[ies]" that "are commonly in a man, but in a woman verye rare" (sig. E1r). See Susan Dwyer Amussen's *An Ordered Society* for further discussion of "family-state homology" in early modern discourse (esp. chapter 2).

[52] Just as wives were expected to live "in subjugation" to their husbands, Paul elaborates on the bodily metaphor by exhorting men to "love [their] wives, even as Christ loved the Church, & gave himselfe for it, [t]hat hee might sanctifie it, and clense it by the washing of water through the worde, [t]hat hee might make it unto him selfe a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it shoulde bee holy and without blame. So ought men to love their wives, as their owne bodies: he that loveth his wife, loveth him selfe (Ephesians 5:25-8). In practice, however, early modern discourse seemed less comfortable with enforcing the husband's obligations to his wife than it did her subjection to his authority. Even the widely preached "Homilee of the State of Matrimonie" is largely silent as to the

killed her husband "her act was always indefensible and always murder, however the husband had acted and whatever she had endured"; even in extreme cases of self-defense, "a wife could never mitigate her crime" (69). Moreover, as evinced by a passage from *The Censure of a Loyal Subject*, a 1587 political dialog by George Whetstone, the offense of "pettie treason" is at its core regarded as an extreme act of presumption, the offender "being but a subject" of his or her victim: "how detestable a treason is it then," the dialog continues, "for a sworne servant to lay violent handes on his annointed Prince? The offence being in the extreamest degree of sinnes, the punishment ought to be according to the severest censure of Justice" (sig. C2v).[53] The punishment for treason was an especially gruesome spectacle that often involved dismemberment and/or disembowelment, constituting "public declarations of the heinousness of the crime committed," according to McMahon, in order to invoke "shock and salacious interest in the community who came to watch the execution" (69). For women to endure such treatment, however, "would be a violation of that natural decency and delicacy inherent, and at all times to be cherished in the sex," as one eighteenth century law book reports; it is for this reason that "the humanity of the English nation" mitigates the sentence for petty traitors to burning at the stake (*The Laws Respecting Women* 344).[54]

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latter half of Paul's decree for harmonious marriage, to the point of counseling women to "patiently beare the sharpnesse of their husbandes" as the duty of a virtuous wife; for "if thou canst suffer an extreame husband," the homily promises, "thou shalt have a great rewarde therefore. But if thou lovest him only because he is gentle & curtesse [courteous], what rewarde will God geve thee therefore?" (Jewell 486).

53 By contrast, the fifth part of "An Homilee Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion" identifies "the principall and most usual causes" of such transgression to be ignorance of divine law and personal ambition—"the unlawful and restles desire in men to be of higher estate then God hath geven or appointed unto them" (Jewell 596).

54 According to these statutes, women who were divorced or separated from their husbands were still liable as petty traitors should their spouse die at their hands.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, when the account of the Ferneseede murder finally comes to relate Margaret's own incineration, the impact of her final punishment is complicated by the narrative loose ends and the uneasy relationship of her supposed confession to the behavior she exhibits before and during her incarceration. However "well spoken" the pamphlet may assert her confession to be, it is curiously lacking any sort of admission of guilt for the murder of her husband and, in fact, concludes with an outright denial: "Heaven that knoweth best the secrets of our hearts," she insists, "knows I am innocent" (Henderson & McManus 358). The "confession," in other words, is a red herring of sorts that does not finally do what it sets out to accomplish; "[b]ut who knows not," the pamphlet is quick to protest, "that in evil there is a like impudence to deny, as there is a forwardness to act"—suggesting, essentially, the specious conclusion that an act of denial is itself a confessional gesture when committed by a person deemed to be or to have committed "evil." Ferneseede's uncooperative refusal persists even as she is prepared for execution: stripped of her "ordinary wearing apparel," dressed in a "kirtle of Canvas pitched [soaked with pitch] clean through," and finally wrapped in a white sheet, she is led from prison and fastened to the stake. In addition to the practical reasons for such preparation,[55] the pamphlet's rehearsal of the ritual carries a special significance to the spectacle of female punishment, even as it is presented in a print retelling. In stripping Margaret of her ordinary attire, the account offers a literalized performance of the process by which it suggests that legal scrutiny has lain bare her concealed sins and transgressions, rendering them visible via an emblem of monstrous fashion that is here represented by the "kirtle" or dress in which she is then clothed, stained black with pitch or resin. Conversely, the wrapping of her tarred body in a white sheet before execution also makes literal the spiritual purification that confession and the

[55] Done, as Henderson and McManus explain, "in order to facilitate combustion" (359n12), but perhaps also as an extension of the interest in protecting female modesty.

spectacle of public execution were meant to produce. Despite the fact that she refuses to deliver a "full" confession even to the end, the *Araignement* is still able to fashion itself a successful portrayal of yet another example of a wayward, fallen woman given over to a deserved death by good men who have striven to correct her behavior and save her very soul from damnation.

An important example of early crime literature in England, *The Araignement & Burning of Margaret Ferne-seede* provides valuable insight into the production and consumption of popular narratives that contributed to the discourse surrounding the petty traitor in the early years of the seventeenth century. It is perhaps most valuable as a testament to the fleeting and elusive nature of early modern justice—particularly in showing how the notion of "justice," as interpreted for the common good, occasionally departed from modern notions of justice for accused criminals caught up in the melee of salacious popular narrative and imputation. Also evident from the Ferneseede account is the relative lack of modern notions of privacy within communities; just as Margaret is damned in part by the testimony of her seemingly omnipresent neighbors, so too do other such accounts of domestic crime frequently involve some sort of intercession by community members from outside the home, by some combination of either overhearing conversations or arguments, witnessing violent or other transgressive acts, apprehending culprits, or reporting crime to authorities. Perhaps the most telling feature of the Ferneseede account, however, is what it reveals about attitudes toward the place of women in the context of the early modern household. It is to a great extent Margaret's uncooperative behavior and unruly speech throughout the investigation that raises suspicion about her and leads to her portrayal as not only a bad wife but also a morally despicable woman whose sexual incontinence endangers the spirit and physical health of other women in the neighborhood. The two woodcut images adorning the pamphlet's frontispiece (*fig.* 3.4) reflect this characterization and the

juxtaposition of the domestic with the debauched: in the right portion of the conjoined illustrations, a woman skulks in the doorway of a house, gazing predatorily out to the left portion toward two groups of women who have gathered together and at the form of a man in repose who appears to leer back at the woman at the threshold.[56] Perhaps most astonishing about the pamphlet account is its indulgence in the narrative of the contrition and salvation of a "bad" woman, even in the face of her outright refusal to cooperate—illustrating, finally, the anxieties at work in revising the Ferneseede case to conform to the functions of the moral *exemplum* and social correction.

Broadside Ballads and the "Last Good Night"

Like the monstrous birth broadsheet tradition that prefigured it, the popular broadside ballad that emerged in its mature form near the beginning of the seventeenth century would rely heavily upon the power of its visual elements to arrest the attention of potential customers and draw them into the texts' narrative; in the case of the true crime ballad, this often involved recreating the spectacle of a criminal confession and execution with either or both grisly woodcut tableau or strikingly visual rhetoric. "Last speeches" are an especially prevalent feature of crime literature presented in these documents, both implied in pictorial form and explicitly in the text, where transcriptions of sensational and purportedly first person gallows speeches were a commonplace, comprising a traditional narrative of crime and punishment referred to as a "good

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[56] As Martin Randall has shown, the leftmost of these is trimmed and recycled from a 1592 pamphlet, *News from Scotland*, an account "declaring the damnable life and death," the frontispiece announces, "of Doctor Fian, a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenbrough in January last." According to Randall, the reuse of this cut in the Ferneseede pamphlet would have "activated related associations of witchcraft" for readers who would recognize the image in this new context that "domesticates and feminizes the vague impression of illicit activities" (*Women* 44).

night ballad" by Hyder Rollins and others that, as Joy Wiltenburg has argued, evince "a strong focus on the inner life of the criminal—both in examination of the path to crime, and in reflections on a misspent life" (176).[57] Though, as Wiltenburg shows, the "good night" tradition was "well established before the end of the sixteenth century," the term originates from a popular Jacobean ballad treating the execution of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, for his role in the doomed Essex rebellion of 1601: *A Lamentable new Ballad upon the Earl of Essex his Death*, written to the tune of "Essex's last good night" (*fig.* 3.5)[58] Though the ballad is typical of others in the "good night" tradition in providing a first person account of the crimes with which Essex was charged as well as staging a rueful farewell to family, friends, and country, it is notable as an example known to have been composed well after the actual execution and even, it seems, with an air of retroactive sympathy for the condemned. The effect of this account and others like it is to provide its audiences with a vicarious experience of witnessing an execution spectacle that is infinitely repeatable through both the performance of the narrative and in studying of the print illustrations provided.

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[57] Notably, in Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller*, Jack Wilton mentions having "made a ballad for my farewell in a readiness called *Wilton's Wantonness*," which he had prepared to perform as he was "brought to the ladder" before being saved from hanging at the last minute (281)—suggesting the commonplace association of such texts with the act of execution, even given the innocence of the condemned, as in this case.

[58] A digital facsimile, transcription, and recording of this broadside ballad may be accessed online through the English Broadside Ballad Archive (*EBBA*), hosted by the University of California-Santa Barbara, by browsing to <*http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/32065*>. The complete, annotated text of this broadside ballad may be found in Appendix 2 (*No.* 9). It is one of two such Jacobean ballads on the topic of Essex's execution that survives in a number of broadside reprints, none of which can be dated prior to 1610. It is often printed together on the same sheet as another surviving Essex ballad, *A Lamentable Ditty,* which is sung to the tune of "Welladay"; though distinct, the tunes share a number of similarities and both are used to score other ballad narratives.

While "ballads" are frequent components of printed pamphlets, broadsheets, and other literary forms appearing throughout the history of the printing press in England,[59] the *broadside ballad* is a specific literary form that exhibits a number of distinguishable features, chief among which is the identification of a tune to which the text may be sung, making explicit the expectation that the verses be performed aloud in song. These tunes, whether traditional or "new," as many prints would attest, were popular ditties with their own narrative associations and histories, often as recognizable to audiences as nursery rhymes and tavern songs. The familiarity of the tunes to which the printed broadsides could be sung played a key part in the dissemination of their content by increasing the likelihood that their stories and messages could be memorized, recalled, and considered even when the printed page was no longer present. The potential of the broadside ballad's aural transmission, combined with the textual and pictorial aspects also present in earlier broadsheet forms, served to produce a unique and highly recognizable genre of popular print that explicitly married oral recitation and print traditions; as such, it boasts an unprecedented degree of accessibility to potential buyers at virtually any level of literacy. Moreover, given that the "hawkers" or tradesmen who sold broadside ballads traditionally advertised and promoted their merchandise by singing them in the street to catch the attention of passersby, the pervasiveness of this literary form and its roles both to reflect and to influence popular interests and attitudes cannot be overestimated. Literally *everyone* occupying the same street as the balladeer became a consumer of the narratives conveyed in this dynamic

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[59] Early uses of the term "ballad" in reference to print ephemera tend, even late in the seventeenth century, to be highly generic, denoting the appearance of verse generally rather than specific poetic forms recognizable to modern readers. With the exception of the bilingual German/English account of the deformed piglets born in Prussia, for example, all of the monstrous birth broadsheets examined in this study would have been recognized as containing "ballads," despite the rather wide-ranging variations in poetic form each exhibit.

print genre, regardless of individual interest in their particular topics, willingness or consent to indulge in their stories, or ability to read the physical printed page.

Though the more or less standardized format of the broadside ballad prevalent during the seventeenth century exhibits a number of striking visual features associated with the genre, it is difficult to pinpoint with any certainty when this literary form can be said to have begun given the gradual implementation and development of its various elements over the years anticipating the turn of the century. On the handwritten title page of its first volume, Samuel Pepys describes his collection of broadside ballads as representing those printed until about the year 1700, "When, he records, "the form peculiar thereto, viz^{t}. of the Black Letter with Picturs, seems (for cheapness sake) wholly laid aside, for that of the White Letter without Pictures" (qtd. in Rollins vii). Implicit in Pepys's description is a sense of nostalgia for a bygone day that seems to have played a significant factor in the genre's popularity and the interest that bibliophiles have exercised in collecting the meager numbers of such prints that are still extant. Pepys's identification of black letter broadside ballads with pictures is one that, generally speaking, distinguishes the earlier form of the genre from that which would emerge in full force in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and that, despite Pepys's implicit lament, shares a number of formal and generic characteristics. A *broadside*, of course, is a type of *broadsheet*, regardless of its content; while both terms refer specifically to the paper upon which the print appears, the distinction between them is simply that the former is printed on a single side (Shepard, *History* 14), enabling such prints to be posted on walls, doors, and other surfaces without suffering the loss of text on the reverse.[60]

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[60] Most of the single-page monstrous birth publications—such as the account of the Michelham "child with ruffes" treated above, as well as those in the previous chapter—are technically

As previously mentioned, the format of the broadside ballad format is strikingly visual, arranging textual and pictographic elements in a manner designed to catch the eye and promote interest. Because they are primarily intended to be read as songs, the majority, if not all, of the printed text in the body of these documents appear in verse, usually arranged into several columns beneath and around one or more woodcut images and printed on the sheet in "landscape" fashion. The width of the page could allow for two or more ballads to be printed on the same sheet, but in longer narratives, like those of "good night" ballads, the content is generally divided along the central vertical fold of the page into two "parts."[61] In addition to the woodcut illustrations that were a commonplace of these early prints, many also feature incidental ornamentation to catch the eye, such as ruled lines, intricate borders, and other designs such as cast fleurons[62] that could enclose the page, flank woodcut illustrations, and/or separate text columns and other content. Especially elaborate broadsides might employ several different designs and variations of cast fleurons to give the impression of a strikingly luxurious

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broadsides. They are referred to in this study, somewhat arbitrarily, as *broadsheets* in order to distinguish them from the "high" form of the *broadside ballad* that developed into the form recognized by Pepys during its "heyday" of the seventeenth century (*EEBA*). There are a number of important distinctions between these forms, the lack of an explicit tune and extensive narrative prose in the former being the most conspicuous.

61 Many examples of a single sheet bearing two unrelated, single-part narratives are extant, frequently to different tunes and often with small or no woodcut illustrations. Two-part narratives generally indicate the continuation of ballad verse from one part to the other with a repetition or variation of the former's title on the second half of the page, or else the legend "the second part" and, generally, "to the same tune."

62 Cast fleurons (lit. "florets") are a type of incidental ornamentation made from small blocks that are cast using the same process as letterpress type in order to make multiple identical and durable copies. They are designed so as to be modular; several blocks of the same size and/or design can be set together to create straight lines of repeating ornament in whatever length the typesetter might require. Though also used to ornament pages of pamphlets, books, and other publications, their use in broadside ballads can appear to be somewhat more conspicuous on a single-sheet print where the ratio of ornament to text is generally higher.

print.[63] Finally, an arresting visual feature in its own right is recognizable gothic or "black letter" typeface that Pepys identifies as being a mainstay of the 17th century broadside ballad. Though typical of nearly all early English print forms, black letter type is a mainstay of broadside ballads well after it began to fall out of general use in other media at the start of the seventeenth century in favor of the more modern looking "white letter," modernly recognized as "Roman" type.[64] The effect of these visual elements seems to have been to downplay their mass manufacture on the printing press and imitate a manuscript style reflected in the ornamentation and the resemblance of the black letter typeface to handwritten script.[65]

The intimacy and immediacy with which such prints could appeal to their audiences was an essential factor in the transmission of affect in popular crime narratives of the "good night" tradition, which, as Wiltenburg has noted, "regularly invited [audiences] not only to condole with victims and abhor the crime […] but also, strikingly, to imagine the inner life of the condemned" (173). Essex's "last good night," for instance, is a carefully crafted appeal to the nostalgia and emotionality of a general and variously literate audience not usually acquainted with the goings-on of Elizabeth and her courtiers. In addition to romanticizing Essex's military career and depicting him as a "valiant Knight of Chivalry / Of rich and poor beloved" (1.4-5), the ballad broadcasts an extensively fictionalized account of his final moments, which in actuality took

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63 These markings are not unlike the ornate, decorative marginalia in hand-drawn manuscripts, and would certainly have added to the appeal of these sheets for potential buyers. See *Anne Wallens Lamentation* (*fig* 3.6, below) for an example of a particularly intricate arrangement that utilizes a number of designs to create a system of ornament unique to this ballad.

64 The persistence of black letter type in broadside ballads continued until about the end of the seventeenth century (Egan par. 1-2).

65 Additionally, as Keith Thomas has shown (building upon the work of Charles Mish), class and literacy considerations may have played a significant role in the continued use of black letter in popular literature, associated, as Thomas claims, with the "common people" (qtd. in Egan par. 4).

place on the Tower Green, away from the prying eyes of the public. Most importantly, the ballad affords Essex an unfettered gallows speech in which, though ostensibly acquiescing to the authority of the queen and parliament—"It's I that have deservd to die, / and yield my self unto the blow"—ultimately refutes the imputation of papist sympathies and the charges of treason for which he was executed—"I have deserv'd to die, I know, / but nere against my Countries right, / Nor to my Queene was never foe" (8.3-7). In reality, however, the Privy Council had expressly forbidden such "vain speeches" in their written orders to the Constable and Lieutenant of the Tower in preparation for the execution (Logan 313). What is particularly noteworthy in the case of the popular Essex ballad accounts is that, although they were probably not printed for several years after his execution,[66] they appear to have enjoyed circulation for several decades thereafter, evincing a popular interest in the narrative of confession and execution even well after the literal events they depict were well in the past. Finally, the ballad of Essex's "last good night" seems to serve as a sort of nostalgic and idealized substitute for his actual final words and the scaffold spectacle that were denied to the general public by the prudence of Elizabeth and her Privy Council. Ironically, the ballad's retrospective fashioning of Devereux's final speech proves, finally, to reflect quite a bit more kindly on him than more typical examples of the "good night" narrative tradition to which it gives its name, especially toward criminals of lesser note and celebrity status than a former court favorite.

As in the case of Margaret Ferneseede, popular crime accounts concerning women of the lower classes were much more likely to condemn than to celebrate the contrary or "vain" speech

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66 *EBBA* gives 1610 as the earliest possible date for the Euing 198 broadside that contains both Essex ballads, but it is possible that this is a reprint of earlier versions that are no longer extant. It seems unlikely, however, for them to have been published during Elizabeth's life given their sympathies for Essex and their (arguably) critical regard toward the verdict. Even if they were published immediately following James I's accession in 1603, the ballads would have been two years removed from the events they depict.

of their subjects, particularly in cases of petty treason where excessive talk is often regarded, even despite evidence to the contrary, as the critical instigating factor. In reaction, crime ballads offered the more orderly speech of a ventriloquized murderous wife's "good night" to rehearse and repent the supposed causes of the transgressive rebellion against her husband and, in effect, the natural order. The interpretation of these ballads as social deterrents shares a literary history with similar readings of monstrous birth broadsheets that utilize the technique of the *monstrous example* to diagnose individual sins with an allegorical import for ballad audiences. Crime ballad accounts particularly seem to emphasize the perception that excessive desire, overindulgence in passionate behavior, or an intemperate tendency to prioritize earthly ambition and pleasure over spiritual fulfillment serve as indicators of imbalance in one's personal composition. A chief function of these narratives is to demonstrate or make manifest such imbalances, but whereas subjects of monstrous birth broadsheets display literal deformities, here the "deformity" is coded as a moral one, expressed or demonstrated through transgressive behavior. The crimes in the ballads concerning murderous wives, therefore, are at least twofold: the first, a moral crime of a woman's excessive or rebellious desire that, while presumably contrary to the natural order of the married state, is typically invisible or otherwise undetectable; the second crime is the expression in action of these inward feelings, which would begin to manifest as scolding or discontented speech and could escalate, so the logic of such accounts suggests, into a sudden, involuntary, and drastic eruption of violent and "shameful" criminal action.

A report of real events transpiring in London near the end of June 1616, *Anne Wallens Lamentation*, a broadside ballad in two parts attributed to T. Platte,[67] is one such "good night"[68]; dominated by the language of an explicitly female variety of shame, the rhetoric of Wallen's ventriloquized confession at length comes to describe the act of fatally stabbing her husband as a sort of monstrous birth that has sprung forth from her secretly harbored inward passions. The ballad is a stylized "complaint" and exhortation for forgiveness that ostensibly opens as an intimate prayer of confession to divulge the extent of Wallen's disgrace and transgressive action.

> Ah me the shame unto all women kinde, [1.2]
> To harbour such a thought within my minde:
> That now hath made me to the world a scorne,
> And makes me curse the time that I was borne.
>
> I would to God my mothers haples wombe, [1.3]
> Before my birth had beene my happy tombe:
> Or would to God when first I did take breath,
> That I had suffered any painefull death.

Identifying herself as the "shame unto all women kinde," the narrator characterizes the nature of her crime as one intimately tied to her gender by explicitly associating the inward "harbour[ing]" of rebellious thoughts against her husband with the language of birth and pregnancy. The audience is implicitly invited to compare the description of her own gestation in her mother's womb to the process by which Wallen herself has fostered the inward and transgressive desires of her heart and, to her shame, *birthed* them into the world. Finally, she bemoans her inability both to keep these passions submerged—to make herself their "happy tombe"—or to squelch them when "first [they] did take breath" in the milder form of scolding and contrary speech.

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67 Craik supplies the name "Thomas," but this may be conjecture (451); Rollins attests Platte to be "an author known only by this one production" (84).

68 A digital facsimile, transcription, and recording of this broadside ballad may be accessed online through the *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (*EBBA*), hosted by the University of California-Santa Barbara, by browsing to <*http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20053*>. The complete, annotated text of the ballad may be found in Appendix 2 (*No.* 10).

Like other examples of crime ballads, the *Lamentation* offers its audience a specific moral *exemplum* from which a lesson may be learned about proper behavior and self-government; as in the case of Margaret Ferneseede, this lesson is most directly concerned with the appropriateness of female language within the domestic sphere.

> If ever died a true repentant soule, [1.4]
> Then I am she, whose deedes are blacke and foule:
> Then take heed wives be to your husbands kinde,
> And beare this lesson truely in your minde,
>
> Let not your tongu[e]s oresway true reasons bounds, [1.5]
> Which in your rage your utmost rancour sounds:
> A woman that is wise should seldome speake,
> Unlesse discreetly she her words repeat[.]

A particularly "blacke and foule" example of a fallen wife, Wallen's tale specifically addresses an audience of wives prone to "rancour" and the exercise of unreasonable "tongues" against husbands to whom they owe allegiance and obedience. In this, the ballad echoes widespread sentiments regarding marriage familiar from the Elizabethan homilies, published by John Jewell in 1571 and preached widely in England. "An Homilee of the State of Matrimonie," particularly instructs householders in following the Pauline decree that wives should place themselves in subjugation to their husbands according to the metaphor of family-state homology in which a husband's authority grants makes him the "head" of his household and his wife, just as Christ is described as the head of the church. The claim in the *Lamentation* that a "wise" woman is parsimonious with her speech, excepting only in the recital of "her words," seems to explicitly recall such instructions the homily gives as to how the occasional and inevitable conflicts that arise between married couples may be quelled:

> […] it can scantly be, but that some offences shal sometime chaunce betwixt [husbands and wives]: For no man doth live without fault, specially for that the woman is the more fraile partie. Therfore let [wives] beware that they stande not in their faultes and wilfulnesse: but rather let them acknowledge their follies, and say: My husband, so it is, that by my anger I was compelled to do this or that,

> forgeve it me, and hereafter I will take better heed. Thus ought the women the more redily to do, the more they be redy to offende. And they shall not do this only to avoide strife and debate: but rather in the respect of the commaundement of God […]. (Jewell 483)

Failing to heed such good counsel, the ballad suggests, Wallen has allowed herself to fall into a pattern of intemperate behavior that culminates in a "deed so foule" and shameful that she is now "more willing far to die than live" (1.6.3, 7.2), acknowledging the necessity of her punishment and recalling the lesson of the Cain and Abel story that "blood which mounteth to the skies / […] to the Lord revenge, revenge it cries" (1.7.3-4).

Petty treason, of course, was seen as a more severe offense than any ordinary murder; given the parallels of the relationship outlined by Pauline decree between husbands and wives with those of monarchs and their subjects and that of Christ to the church, violent rebellion of this nature was seen as an especially heinous and blasphemous refutation of the natural moral order and religious doctrine.[69] Often, the nature of this rebellion as described in popular crime accounts such as the *Lamentation* originates from the refractory inward capacities of impious or inattentive subjects; however, outside influence is frequently attributed, especially in the case of female transgressors, to the temptations and machinations of the devil. The narrator of Wallen's "good night," for example, contends that her former condition of favorable repute and friendship with her neighbors in Smithfield was curtailed when "that the Devill wrought me this same spight, / that all their loves are turnd to hatred quight" (1.9). This characterization of individual susceptibility to the "devil" following the entertainment of sinful thoughts or emotions is

[69] This severity is reflected in the punishment of burning petty traitors at the stake, a parallel to the punishment for treason and regicide (cf. Cutwolf in Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*, whose execution on the "wheel" resembles that of treason). By contrast, husbands who killed their wives were guilty of ordinary murder and were typically hanged.

commonplace in early modern discussion of sin given Satan's biblical role as the "enemy"[70] who seeks to drive humanity from the path of divine righteousness, but who must in effect be invited to do so via the instigating sinful behaviors of his victims. It is for this reason that the discourse surrounding early modern criminals so often focuses on the individual's capacity for inward transgression beginning at the level of mundane, day-to-day experience, holding that the accumulation of unexpressed grievances may eventually serve as a motivating factor leading to criminal action. Another of the familiar Elizabethan sermons, the fourth "Homilee Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion," explicitly characterizes the relationships imagined to exist between "harbored spights," the influence of the devil, and acts of "treachery":

> We may soone knowe (good people) how heinous [an] offence the trecherie of rebellion is, if we call to remembraunce the heavie wrath and dreadfull indignation of almightie God against such subjectes as do onlye but inwardely grudge, mutter, and murmure against their governours, though their inwarde treason so privilie hatched in their breastes, come not to open declaration of their doinges, as harde it is whom the devill hath so farre entised against Gods word to kepe them selves there: no he meaneth still to blowe the cole, to kindle their rebellious heartes to flame into open deedes, if he be not with grace speedily withstanded. (583-4)

Notable here is a proposed teleology of action: "inwarde treason" makes one susceptible to the temptations of the devil, who, not content to allow secret "grudges" to "kepe them selves" hidden, will "blowe the cole" of "rebellious heartes" and drive the unwary into the "open deeds" of disobedience that can, as popular print accounts elaborate, quickly escalate into violence.

Though executed for murdering him, Wallen is principally condemned in the ballad for her presumption in criticizing and attempting to instruct her husband. Coming home after "having beene about the towne," John Wallen is met by an unhappy Anne who, perceiving him to be drunk, "fell to railing most outragiously," which initiated the fatal quarrel (2.1):

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[70] After his Fall, the transformed Lucifer is renamed "Satan," lit., "the adversary."

I cald him Rogue, and slave, and all to naught, [2.2]
Repeating the worst language might be thought
Thou drunken knave I said, and arrant sot,
Thy minde is set on nothing but the pot.

Sweet heart he said I pray thee hold thy tongue, [2.3]
And if thou dost not, I shall shall doe thee wrong,
At which, straight way I grew in worser rage,
That he by no meanes could my tongue asswage.

He then arose and strooke me on the eare, [2.4]
I did at him begin to curse and sweare:
Then presently one of his tooles I got,
And on his body gave a wicked stroake[.]

Anne's initial verbal assault is peppered with abusive epithets that question John's fitness as a husband and the head of a well-ordered household due to his apparently habitual drunken debauches. Though intemperate, her concerns are in keeping with the wifely role of "provisioning the household," as Susan Amussen has shown, and in emphasizing "the importance of […] thrift" (41). Householder manuals, according to Amussen, were often contradictory as to the extent to which it was acceptable for a wife to "counsel" her husband when he fell short of his duties or, indeed, for a husband to "correct" an overreaching wife (42)—an ambiguity which is reproduced in the *Lamentation* by the stark contrast of Anne's scolding criticisms and John's ostensibly patient verbal correction that nonetheless contains a thinly veiled threat of violence.[71] The quarrel escalates with John's physical attack, striking Anne "on the eare"—a type of blow long associated in literature with the correction of

[71] Householder manuals of the period are notoriously ambiguous about whether or not "correction" could or should include physical violence. For instance, as Amussen reports, "William Whately [in his 1623 marriage guide, *A Bride-Bush*] argued at great length (and with some great discomfort) that although a husband probably ought not beat his wife 'because it seemeth too imperious in him to do it, and too servile in her to suffer it,' he might do so if 'she gave just cause, after much bearing and forebearing, and trying all other ways, in case of utmost necessity, so that he exceed not measure'; she could not, however, be beaten for 'those weaknesses which are incident even to virtuous women'" (42-3).

recalcitrant wives[72]; Anne's response is to intensify her earlier "railing" with cursing and swearing, finally resorting to stabbing him in the abdomen with a chisel for reasons not entirely clear.

Key to the transmission of its moral imperatives, a visual representation of this altercation is provided by the first of two woodcuts presented in the ballad account (see *fig*. 3.6). Freezing the scene in progress, the illustration seems to freeze Wallen's attack on her husband mid-stab, capturing the precise moment in which her unruly inward emotion erupted into violent, monstrous action and implying a macabre sense of perpetual repeatability of the crime with each instance of the story's retelling. Though the two figures it presents are dressed in dark clothes with matching wide white collars, Anne wears an apron to suggest her connection to the domestic space while John is shown in a buttoned doublet and long boots to reflect his having just returned from "having beene about the towne." The detail of the window in the background and of the edge of the bed on which John sits support the ballad's voyeuristic appeal as offering up the normally private and unseen interior of a home to the audience's gaze, as do the matching attitudes of shock exhibited by both perpetrator and victim over the act of stabbing that dominates the image and disrupts an otherwise unremarkable scene of domesticity. The image supplies no clues to suggest whether Anne's attack is committed while under physical duress, as the text suggests, or even to reflect the suddenness with which the narrator claims she "threw" the weapon. At length, the effect of the tableau is to depict an act remarkably devoid of narrative context that appears to come as both a surprise and an embarrassment to the figures depicted, as

[72] Cf. the crippling attack visited on Chaucer's Wife of Bath by her husband after she rebelliously tore the leaves from his "book of wikked wyves" to halt his reading (685): "By God, he smoot me ones on the lyst [ear], / For that I rente out of his book a leef, / That of the strook myn ere wax al deef" (634-6).

suggested by the strange contrast of their hands, posed in astonishment, with their stern and despondent expressions.[73]

In a missive to his friend Dudley Carleton dated 6 July 1616, noted letter writer John Chamberlain describes having witnessed Wallen's execution five days earlier: "That morning early," he writes, "there was a joiner's wife burnt in Smithfield for killing her husband. If the case were no otherwise than I can learn it, she had *summum jus*; for her husband having brawled and beaten her, she took up a chisal, or some such other instrument, and flung at him, which cut him into the belly, whereof he died" (Birch 1.418). Chamberlain here no doubt recounts Wallen's relation of the events which may have popularly circulated at the time of the execution; the discrepancies his description vs. that provided by the *Lamentation* combined with his conjecture that Wallen's fatal attack appeared to be one of *summum jus*—that is, of "extreme right"—are striking in that they suggest her action to have been excusable given the present circumstances and the threat of violence to her person. This possibility is squelched by the ballad verse, however, which portrays Wallen as chastising herself for the crime and attesting that her husband "nere did wrong to any in his life, / But he too much was wronged by his wife" (2.9.1-2). Thus, by completely eliding his implied threat to "doe [her] "wrong" if she refuses to "hold [her] tongue," as well as his subsequent move to strike her "on the eare" (2.3.1-2, 4.1), the text suggests that Anne's initial chastisement of her husband's comportment, however suspect it may have been, makes her entirely responsible for the events that follow. In other words, it is neither the murder itself nor the beating that preceded it that the *Lamentation* ultimately

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[73] Woodcut illustrations in broadside ballads frequently imply simultaneity of narrative action within the same image (see *The Lamentable Fall of Queene Elnor*, above, and *fig*. 3.3); the first woodcut of the *Lamentation*, by contrast, seems to work to employ a simultaneity of *emotion* in the figures it depicts—conveying at once the horror of the crime and the specifically gendered "shame" it brings about.

criticizes, but rather Wallen's grudging and intemperate behavior toward her husband that provoked his rage. The rest, the ballad seems to suggest, is an incidental and perhaps inevitable outcome of the undaunted persistence of a "bad" wife to scold and contradict the authority of her husband.

Ultimately, the *Lamentation*'s use of the confessional mode common to the "good night" tradition manipulates Anne Wallen's speech into a specific warning that addresses wives in particular, urging them to "be warn'd[,] example take by me," and concluding with the prayer that "Heavens graunt no more that such a one may be" (2.9.3-4). In effect, the ballad reshapes the circumstances of the murder into an example of a wayward female whose most unforgivable transgression is not the act of murder, but that of "excessive speech" (Craik 451), even in the same instant that it forgives the husband for his drunkenness and physical abuse. Ultimately, such accounts reassert the masculine authority of the husband that is undermined in cases of petty treason in order to retroactively suppress female refractory potential and cast female subjects back into their subordinate positions in the households from which they have rebelled.[74] More than this, however, the function of these accounts seems to be to restore and solidify the political and social order that is threatened in the fallout of such transgressive action, which is suggested in the *Lamentation* with the implication that Wallen's lament is addressed to an audience assembled at her execution that is comprised of her former friends and neighbors,

[74] N.b. the significance of Wallen's attacking her husband with "one of his tooles" (2.4.3), an appropriation of both his livelihood and his masculine authority. Though "tool" was (and still is) slang for *penis*, John Wallen's vocational use of the "Chissell" that killed him is anticipated by the ballad's description of him as a *turner*, "one who turns or fashions objects of wood, metal, bone, etc., on a lathe"; or, as Chamberlain records, a *joiner*, "a worker in wood who does lighter and more ornamental work than that of a carpenter," such as "furniture and fittings of a house, ship, etc." (*OED*). The detailed depiction in the ballad's first woodcut of the bed on which he sits while stabbed with the chisel may hence be an ironic nod to both Wallen's profession and the means of his demise.

including her mother-in-law, who are so shocked and appalled by her actions that "all their loves are turnd to hatred quight," leaving them eager to witness her violent demise (1.9.4).

Twelve years later, very nearly to the day, Alice Davis[75] was tied to a stake at or near the same location in Smithfield as Anne Wallen and burned for the murder of her husband Henry, whom she had stabbed with a knife during an argument over money. Remarkably, two broadside ballad treatments of the crime and her execution survive, the first of which is *A Warning for All Desperate Women*.[76] Also a "good night" narrative, this ballad rehearses many of the same concerns and warnings as those conveyed in the Wallen account, but includes an additional exhortation to the audience regarding the importance of heeding moral *exempla*.[77] Announcing that "Hells fiery flames prepared are / for those that live in sin" (1.2.1-2), the narrator goes on to implore:

> Then hasty hairebraind wives take heed, [1.3]
> of me a warning take,
> Least like to me in coole of blood,
> you burn't be at a stake;
> The woman which heere last did dye,
> and was consum'd with fire,
> Puts me in minde, but all to late,
> for death I doe require.

The appearance in the first part of the ballad of the identical woodcut used to illustrate the incineration of Anne Wallen in the *Lamentaton* (see *fig*. 3.6) serves to underscore the connection

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75 Smithfield is significant as the common place of execution for certain types of offenses, notably heresy, treason, and petty treason. It is located just outside the location of the old city walls at Newgate.

76 A digital facsimile, transcription, and recording of this broadside ballad may be accessed online through the English Broadside Ballad Archive (*EBBA*), hosted by the University of California-Santa Barbara, by browsing to <*http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20050*>. The complete, annotated text of the ballad may be found in Appendix 2 (*No.* 11).

77 The ballad also emphasizes the Pauline decree of wifely obedience, instructing women that "Your Husbands are your Lords & heads, / you ought them to obey, / Grant love betwixt each man and wife, / unto the Lord I pray" (2.8.5-8).

invoked in this text between its own narrator and an imagined community of executed, "hairebraind" wives who have met their ends at the Smithfield burning stake, each failing to heed the dying speeches of those who have come before.[78] At length, the repetition of this striking visual in both accounts emphasizes the process by which murderous wives in such popular accounts come to "martyr" themselves through the contrite acceptance of their punishments and the penitent admonishments they give to others, an act that ensures Christ "wilt wash my sinnes / away, which here must die" (2.7.7-8), as the narrator of *A Warning* describes.[79]

Complicating further the notion of criminal subjectivity in such accounts, a curious slippage occurs in the final stanzas of *A Warning* in which the narrator seems to slip momentarily out of the first person perspective that is consistent throughout the rest of the ballad:

> God and the world forgive my sinnes, [2.9]
> which are so vile and foule,
> Sweete Jesus now I come to thee,
> O Lord receive my Soule.
> Then to the Reedes they fire did put,
> which flamd up to the skye,
> And then she shriek'd most pittifully,
> before that she did die.

Despite the sudden and conflicting appearance of *she* in the final two lines, the concluding stanza of the ballad is a continuation of the prayer begin in the first four lines of the former, returning to the first person and concluding with the request that God "grant that I may be the last[,] / that such a death did die" (2.10.7-8). Though Hyder Rollins's brief analysis attributes this

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78 Jeaffreson's *Middlesex County Records* suggests the alternate spelling "Davies" (3.107).

79 The shared woodcut of the *Lamentation* and the *Warning*—indeed, all the images of petty traitors' executions depicted in this study—presents a tableau of patient acceptance, piety, and even transcendence common to the popular iconography of Protestant martyrs' executions for heresy. Frances Dolan, for instance, has noted that a similar woodcut used in the frontispiece of the 1592 pamphlet *The Trueth of the Most Wicked and Secret Murthering of John Brewen* is actually "recycled from [John] Foxe's account of Cicelie Orme's 1557 martyrdom in numerous editions of *Actes and Monuments* [1570]" ("Tracking" 161).

dissonance to the anonymous ballad author's "forgetting realism"—"Verisimilitude" he writes, "was the least of the ballad-writer's troubles" (288)—the mistake, if it is one, seems too conspicuous an "error" for both the author and the typesetter to have been overlooked. Alternatively, the momentary shift seems to mark the precise moment of Davis's death, emphasizing the departure of the soul—*"I"*—from the body—*"she"*—and signaling transcendence of her former sins and the influence of "the Divell" (1.6.7).

By contrast, the second surviving account of Davis's crime, *The Unnatural Wife*, is dominated by an arresting woodcut that explicitly depicts her murderous action as one instigated by demonic influence.[80] The image presents three figures: the rightmost of these is a man who holds a tankard in his left hand and has raised his right so that it connects with the face of the central figure, a woman with one arm raised threateningly and who thrusts an object—perhaps a knife—at the man's chest with her left hand. Apparently goading her into action, the third figure is a grizly devil, complete with scales, cloven hooves, pointed ears, a hook nose, and a curled and spiked tail. Overseeing the scuffle implied between the quarreling couple, he extends one of his clawed hands so that it touches the woman's waist. The otherwise mundane surroundings of the interior of a private home—including a planked floor, a wall-mounted shelf of dishes, and a brick hearth—resonate with the associations of the domestic space that are then disrupted by the sinful expression of the wife's refractory inwardness through the depiction of the fatal attack and the presence of the devil. Somewhat bleaker than the previous examples of murderous wives' "last good night" ballads, *The Unnatural Wife* characterizes Davis's crime as one that is "strange" and "inhumaine" (1.1.5), a description that contrasts sharply with the presentation of

[80] A digital facsimile, transcription, and recording of this broadside ballad may be accessed online through the English Broadside Ballad Archive (*EBBA*), hosted by the University of California-Santa Barbara, by browsing to <*http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20051*>. The complete, annotated text of the ballad may be found in Appendix 2 (*No.* 12).

the same events provided in *A Warning for all Desperate Women.* That text, if anything, seems to acknowledge the frequency, if not the normality, of such crimes in its narrator's references to the words of other women who have been burned at the same location.

The Unnatural Wife, moreover, seems far less sanguine regarding the possibility of petty traitors recouping spiritual grace in the wake of their crimes, describing such wives as "curst" and even suggesting them to be forsaken:

> But God that rules the host of Heaven, [1.2]
> did give me ore to sinne,
> And to vild wrath my minde was given,
> which long I lived in;
> But now too late I doe repent,
> And for the same my heart doth rent:
> oh murther,
> most inhumane,
> To spill my Husbands blood.
>
> Let all curst Wives by me take heed, [1.3]
> how they doe, doe the like,
> Cause not thy Husband for to bleed,
> nor lift thy hand to strike;
> Lest like to me, you burne in fire,
> Because of cruell rage and ire:
> oh murther,
> most inhumane,
> To spill my Husbands blood.

While the narrator is finally ambiguous as to whether she suggests her repentance is "too late" to save herself or just her husband, the rhetoric of loss and perdition is quite a bit more palpable in this account, intensifying the stakes of the everyday transgressions of shrewish and grudging wives who regularly "upbraid" their husbands and, like Davis, "often times would chide and braule / And many ill names would him call" (1.4.4-6). Given the severity of the eternal punishment it imagines for such figures, the ballad is finally more emphatic in its final, familiar

plea to the women in its audience for the amendment of bad behavior and the pious resolve to repentance:

Let me a warning be to Wives, [2.10]
    that are of hasty kinde,
Lord grant that all may mend their lives,
    and beare my death in minde,
And let me be the last I pray,
That ere may dye by such like way.
        Oh Father
        for thy Sonnes sake,
Forgive my sinnes for aye.

In contrast to the accounts of petty treason given in the *Lamentation* and the *Warning, The Unnatural Wife* seems to expend fewer of its narrative resources on the relation of the narrator's strong emotion and contrition than it does on the trajectory of vice and sin that drove Davis from scold to murderess. The lesson, finally, would appear to stress the importance of avoiding thoughts and behavior that lead to disobedience and transgression in all forms, rather than engage in the familiar narrative demonstration of how a fallen wife might make amends through the spectacle of confession and repair the spiritual damage her crime has visited upon her community.

A curious feature of the popular print broadside ballad is its capacity to interpellate audience members at any level of literacy, hailing one and all through the cries of the street hawker into a shared community of narrative experience—whether they like it or not. In the case of the "good night" ballad, this capacity for community building is intensified given its first person address to specific subsets of society and multiple registers of reader appeals. In listening to the ballads' verses, bystanders come to serve a similar role as the omnipresent neighbors who seem to pervade the margins of domestic crime accounts in their acts of observing, scrutinizing, and passing judgment upon the activities of other community members, engaging in a sort of imagined literary surveillance of the hidden, private lives of their peers as well as their betters.

The interior tableaux of woodcut illustrations presented by domestic crime ballads emphasize this voyeuristic appeal by offering readers exclusive access not only to the private spaces of transgressors' homes, but the inward secrets of their hearts and desires. Even the mandatory illustrations of execution conveyed in these documents stress the important role of witnessing to the serving of justice through the depiction, often inconspicuously at the edges of the image, of astonished crowds gathered to watch transgressors hang or burn. Ultimately, popular crime literature reflects the tendency of early modern jurisprudence to protect and restore the integrity of the community at the expense of individual "justice" by fashioning communities of affect through the cultural narrative of criminal confession.

Conclusion

Key to the cultural implications of deformity and "monstrosity" has always been the notion of visibility—the idea of what hidden qualities or truths are rendered visible and legible by such occurrences. Deformed births are, themselves, spectacles at the same time that they offer insight into the unseen machinations of nature to deliver divine truths through emblematic signification made legible on their malformed bodies. In the literatures of popular print, both the birth of monsters and the commission of violent crime are regarded as acts of bringing into being that which is intentionally concealed or otherwise unseeable in everyday life. Subsequently, the need for such literatures in each case to claim an interpretive privilege and draw appropriate lessons from unpleasant and astonishing circumstances is paramount. The early broadsheet tradition of the sixteenth century used the figures of monstrous births as prodigious platforms upon which to launch moralizing lessons for its reading audience concerning themes of constancy, the nature of subjectivity, and the importance of orderly behavior. In much the same

way, the ephemeral literature of true crime sought to produce a similar effect of revelation for the every day reader or listener of such accounts by encouraging them to look within themselves to diagnose and correct the sort of thinking or behavior that led wayward criminals to their last good-nights. More than this, however, the function of such literatures to address individuals and define communities seems important to the message. Whether these communities consisted of families, servants, citizens, readers, "credible persons" and eyewitnesses, or even England at large, the popular literature called for a collective repentance, beginning at the level of the individual and led through a set of guided interpretations of physical and moral deformity. As monstrous rhetoric in Renaissance literatures shifted toward the end of the century to embrace entirely metaphorical iterations of deformity, it reflected similarly changing anxieties in regard to the increasing emphasis on personal inwardness, unseen and unruly passions, and transgression.

CODA

Looking Forward, Looking Back: Monsters and the Changing World

> *And also maister, what a worlde is this? How is it chaunged, it is marveilous, it is monstruous. I heare saye there is a yong woman borne in the toune of Harborough, one Booker, a Butchers doughter, whiche of late God wote, is brought to bed of a cat, or have delivered a catte, or if you will, she is the mother of a catte. Oh God, how is nature repugnant to her self? That a woman should bring forthe a verie catte, or a very Dogge. &c. wanting nothing, neither having more then other Dogges or Cattes have: Taking nothing of the mother, but onely as I gesse, her Cattishe condicion.*
>
> —Horseman Ralph, *A Dialogue* (1573)[1]

A curious addition to the 1573 expanded second printing of William Bullein's popular plague narrative "[...] Against the Fever Pestilence" is the discussion of bizarre topical events surrounding a Harborough woman named Agnes Bowker,[2] who was investigated by both the ecclesiastical court and secular authorities in 1569 for her claim of having given birth to a cat in January of that year. The conversation in question occurs in the *Dialogue* between Civis, a "good citizen" of London, his wife Susan, and their horseman Ralph as they attempt to pass the time during their flight from the city to escape the ravages of encroaching plague. As Jane Griffiths has noted, Bullein, in his framing of the *Dialogue*, "seems less concerned to cure or prevent the plague," as the frontispiece claimes, "than he is to present the plague as the visible expression of an inner and invisible lack of grace afflicting English society" (par. 3). It is in this

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1 Bullein, *A Dialogue Bothe Pleasaunt and Pietifull* […] *Against the Fever Pestilence* (106). Reprinted and expanded from the edition of 1564.

2 The surname is predominantly spelled *Bowker* in the surviving records of the incident and trials rather than *Booker*, as Bullein provides; the name is probably a corruption of the Middle English forms of *bocher, buccer* (*MED*) and *boucher, bowcher* (*OED*), etc., indicating "butcher," the profession of her father.

context that the information relating to the then-infamous Bowker affair is included—notable in Civis's assurance to his servant that "It is a lie Roger, beleve it not," after which he goes on to characterize the incident as "a pleasaunt practise of papistrie, to bring the people to new wonders" (106-7). The supposed birth, of course, occurred near the end of the much-noted monstrous birth boom of the 1561-70,[3] a time when the nation's popular imagination had been well saturated with images and narratives pertaining to the births of monstrous children and livestock whose appearances, such accounts held, were significant and prodigious expressions of God's displeasure.[4]

Perhaps the most significant legacy of the Bowker affair is what it reveals about the attitudes of secular and religious authorities toward the interpretation of such messages and marvelous occurrences. That Agnes Bowker's claims were investigated so intensely and she herself questioned so frequently both by Harborough town magistrates and Anthony Anderson, Commissary to the Archdeacon of Leicester—who himself had the resulting trial and deposition records forwarded on to no less important persons than Henry Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, William Cecil of Elizabeth I's Privy Council, and Edmund Grindal, Bishop of London—suggests that more was seen to be at stake in the interpretation of these events than a simple investigation

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3 From the period in question, no fewer than thirteen broadsheet monstrous birth broadsheets survive, and another seven non-extant titles are suggested by the Stationer's register. Working with the usual estimate that only about 20% of all sixteenth century print materials survive—and this number is probably lower still for print ephemera—this unusually high number suggests either or both of two things. Firstly, that the number of such broadsheets in circulation during this period may have been considerably higher than can now be conclusively shown or, secondly, that interest in their content inspired a greater impulse for preservation in collectors and antiquarians, leading to a greater percentage of such prints being saved.

4 Notably, 1569 was also the year Pierre Boaistuau's 1566 wonder book, *Prodigieuses*, was translated to English and published by Edward Fenton as *Certain Secrete Wonders of Nature*.

into a possible infanticide.[5] In a letter to Hastings dated 18 February, Anderson reports the appearance of "a printed pamphlet, describing the shape of a monster born at Harborough" that, he laments, "neither in form pictured or lines printed expresseth the truth, but otherwise falsely reporteth the matter […]" (qtd. in Cressy 20). This information, as Cressy suggests, may perhaps have been related as part of Anderson's rationale for having first forwarded the case on to Hastings rather than his own superiors in the Diocese of Lincoln; more importantly, however, it suggests a feeling of urgency on the part of Anderson for uncovering the truth in the case and quashing competing interpretations pertaining to what the appearance of the supposed monster might entail, both for Harborough and for the nation at large. Though the print account to which Anderson refers is no longer extant, the urgency with which he describes both its publication and its misrepresentation of the facts that he himself has investigated and reported suggests it to have presented its own interpretation of the birth that he judged to undermine both religious and secular authority.[6] Cressy thus proposes that the reactions of the various public authorities to Agnes Bowker's story reveal "the vulnerability of the Elizabethan regime as well as its vigilance and caution," in addition to underscoring "the link between local happenings and central government" (21)—more than this, however, the concerns of the men involved in the investigation suggest an anxious impulse to lay claim to and enforce a particular mode of

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5 The suspicion that Agnes Bowker and/or the midwife had concocted the cat-birth as a scheme to hide an abortion was raised when comparing the inconsistent accounts of her pregnancy Agnes had given to friends. To one of these acquaintences she had supposedly reported that her child had already been born several days before the events of the allegedly monstrous birth.

6 As Cressy notes, the event is treated by Bullein in the *Dialogue* as well as by Barnaby Googe in his 1570 work *The Popish Kingdom* as "a scandal of popish credulity and ignorance" (23). From this, he surmises that an allegation must have been levied, either in the pamphlet itself or else another form, that interpreted the supposed birth of the Harborough monster as a divine criticism of Protestantism, the reign of Elizabeth I, or both.

signification for these events that would promote a carefully crafted ideological narrative, thereby countering and undermining a competing popular discourse.

What made the alleged monster of Harborough particularly dangerous in a culture already saturated with accounts of deformed and prodigious births was its frustrating resistance to the normal modes of signification and interpretation that would normally work to couch such occurrences in terms that could, if not entirely normalize them, present them as proofs of religious and secular authority. A "true" monster, after all, is a corruption, deviation from generative type—a thing repulsive and unlike the parents but simultaneously familiar and uncannily recognizable. The monster's body incorporates both the aspects of the material and spiritual planes in order to express in flesh the normally invisible qualities of sin and/or transgressive acts that go unnoticed and unpunished by man. Such sentiments are explicitly put forth in broadsheet accounts of monstrous births, such as that of the "double child" born in the village of Middleton Stoney in 1552 (*fig.* 2.4, Supplemental Text 2) that includes a ballad verse in which the monster appears to address the audience directly, likening their hideous physical deformities to the corrupted moral conditions of sinners: "Such as we are, such is this age, / behold and you will see / So far in vice, do men outrage / That monsters they may be" (1.1-4). This lesson is confirmed by the broadsheet's accompanying Latin verse that warns "You who are not a monster in body, do not become so in spirit, / Nor let the mind be contaminated with knowledge [i.e., sin] that should be feared. / Learn well that you will transcend this worldly life by fleeing monstrous things; / And direct your paths with a watchful mind" (2.1-4). Agnes Bowker's cat, conversely, is a problematic interpolation into this tradition of reading significant messages through deformed flesh precisely because the cat is, firstly, not a child, and secondly—apart from being depicted as polydactyl—not deformed.

The deviations of the Bowker "monster" from accepted discourse of monstrous birth accounts are not lost even upon gullible Ralph, the simple horseman from Bullein's *Dialogue,* whose introduction of the subject quoted in the above epigram takes special note of "how nature [is] repugnant is nature to her self" if indeed a human woman "should bring forthe a […] catte" that is otherwise unremarkable and undeformed—"wanting nothing, neither having more" than normal cats have. Even in his initial naïveté in presenting the matter as truth, Ralph evinces astonishment at the supposed child "taking nothing of the mother"—that is, inheriting none of her qualities—"but onely as I gesse, her Cattish condicion," a play on words suggesting a malicious, spiteful, and perhaps sexually incontinent nature. It is this incongruity with the established precepts of monstrous birth that Ralph and Civis note that leads Bishop Grindal to conclude in August of 1569 that as "for the monster, it appeareth plainly a counterfeit matter," even though, as he notes, "we cannot extort confessions of the manner of doings" (qtd. in Cressy 21-2). Despite these assurances, the matter seemed far from "plain" to those involved in its investigation judging by the earnestness of the inquiry and the number of important persons who were tasked to examine the evidence. Ultimately, these conclusions seem based not simply upon the facts uncovered by Anderson and others, but rather upon the assurance drawn from the history of reading and interpreting such occurrences that monstrous births simply *don't work that way*. Human mothers give birth to offspring that, however deformed, is recognizably human in some fashion—a precondition that is crucial to the meanings the birth was believed to represent and to the process by which these meanings could be discerned. So true, in fact, was this precept held that it proved integral to Grindal and others in determining that the Bowker "birth" was a deceptive orchestration even when a culprit—Bowker herself? her midwife?—could not be named or, indeed, a crime could not be proven to have taken place. Perhaps most notable about

these findings is the suggestion that the debunking of Bowker's story, and by extension any possible "papist" claims it might have been said to support, seems to have been more important to the various authorities involved in the case than proving or disproving the whispered rumors of infanticide that circulated following the sudden end of Bowker's pregnancy and the guileful substitution, if indeed it was one, of a flayed adult cat in its place.

The present project has sought to explore the ways that interpretive discourse has operated within the early modern period in England across overlapping systems of political, social, and domestic authority. The metaphor of the "monster" and, speaking more broadly, of "monstrous" individual sin and disorder figure largely in early England's popular discourse as the embodiments of disorderly behavior—shadows made flesh through the power of literary narrative so as to shape and promote a carefully crafted lesson to audiences about the relationships between subjectivity, social responsibility, and the maintenance of order. Monsters, in other words, do not simply constitute *substitutions* of implicit for explicit meanings—indeed, this assumption was the mistake of the perpetrator or perpetrators of the Agnes Bowker affair. Monsters, rather, invoke a complex system of signification through which human subjects are tasked with deciphering spiritual meaning from malformed flesh using a discourse heavily invested in allegorical and emblematic representation. As such, the modes of representing transgressive behavior and characterization in the popular culture and widely-accessible literatures of early modern England are of key importance to this study.

Though the unenviable condition of humanity, as suggested by *Mankind*, is a constant struggle for every individual to eke out a worthy existence all while tormented by the contradictory physical and spiritual drives of a divided nature, this is perhaps felt less keenly by modern subjects for whom the fear of mortality is less of an everyday presence. An essential

element of the means by which popular literature conveyed messages and lessons pertaining to sin and transgressive behavior is the invocation of a palpable fear surrounding notions of death, both that of the body and that of the soul—spiritual perdition and ruin that, in Christian teaching, are the "wages of sinne" (Romans 6:23).[7] As such, it would be naïve to assume that the characterizations of vice and sin on the early English stage are simply buffoonish caricatures meant only to garner rowdy audience members' approval and, not incidentally, their money. More than this, such characterizations must be regarded within the context of the drama's ostensible aims of presenting, in the case of the Cycle plays, a set of biblical tales or the moral interludes of what are modernly termed "morality plays." In other words, the characters in such performances that either embody vice directly or who integrate recognizable figurations of sinful behavior into their more "humanistic" characterizations represent a considerable investment of energy by both the playwright and the players who produce these performances and texts to convey a certain set of moralistic messages regarding the concepts and behaviors that these characters represent. Given the apparent popularity of theater and the fact that it was supported and continued in England over the span of years and even decades that anticipate the establishment of the early modern playhouse—records, for example, suggest the cycle plays to have been longstanding, semi-annual events in their respective communities for generations[8]—it seems reasonable to assume that these texts were largely successful in achieving these goals.

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7 *Geneva Bible* (1587).

8 The earliest reference to a performance of the York play is 1376; it was successfully suppressed, following thirteen years of opposition, in 1580. The earliest mention of the Chester play is dated 1422, and it was last performed in 1575. The Towneley (Wakefield) manuscript is generally dated 1490-1510, while records suggest the suppression of its performance in 1576. Though little is known about the performance of the pageants from the "N-Town" manuscript other than the likelihood that it represents the efforts of a traveling theater troupe, it is regarded as having been written ca. 1500 (Walker xii-iv).

Moreover, the complexity of the messages many of the pageants and interludes present suggests their popular audiences to have been largely capable of meeting the complex interpretive demands of such allegorical characterizations. Though theatrical detractors like Stephen Gosson invoke class-based arguments—ancient, even in the sixteenth century—that imagine the staged representation of vice and "bad" behavior to imprint indiscriminately upon the uneducated and naïve of the audience, corrupting their minds and leading to thoughtless imitation of these behaviors, this seems to willfully ignore the complexity and richness with which the concepts of agency, the divided nature of humanity, and personal salvation are presented in such texts.

In many ways, the popular literature of monstrous birth appearing in England during the sixteenth century is prefigured by the representations of transgressive spectacle and characterization that appear in extant texts from the traveling and occasional theater of the previous centuries. Both types of popular narrative are heavily invested in the decipherability of moral messages inscribed in recognizable forms and expressed via the physical body through behavior, appearance, or both.[9] Apparent also in both cases is the notion that the process of interpretation can be both a political and a moral act whose significance and repercussions should not be taken lightly. For Gosson and those like him, too much is at stake in the act of interpretation to leave such matters to the discretion of the common man to decipher for himself; he therefore resolves, in a conclusion fitting of Plato's *Republic*, that an ideal society valuing the

[9] In the drama, characters that either embody or incorporate recognizable sins or vices into their performance express as much principally through their behaviors; in some cases, such as those of Lucifer and his followers in the initial Fall pageants, this is also represented as a physical change or deformation of the body whereby these characters are transformed from beautiful angels into grisly and horrible devils. In the monstrous broadsheet tradition, scrutinizing the physical appearance of the monstrous births is the principal means used in deciphering the messages their births are said to represent; in cases where the deformed child or children survive the initial birth, however, accounts often also describe and interrogate their behavior, usually for the effect of creating an uncanny juxtoposition between their gastly appearances and their state of innocency.

proper moral and intellectual education of its citizens should not permit itself to suffer the imposition of theater troupes and other such counterfeiters of virtue. For Anderson and the other officials who undertook to investigate the Bowker affair, the stakes of interpreting—or, in this case, *uninterpreting*—the significance of an alleged monster's appearance are decidedly political and theological, the possible repercussions of which being to undermine the legitimacy of a queen still relatively new in her position and facing a number of potential challenges to her authority by the Stuarts, deteriorating relations with Spain, and increasingly discontented earls in the north (Cressy 22). At the same time, Catholocism still maintained a strong, albeit mostly underground, foothold in England following Elizabeth's reestablishment of Protestantism; as such, the occurrence of such marvelous events as the burning of Paul's Cathedral steeple and the birth of a supposed monster in Harborough seemed only fair game for either side to levy as proof of divine vengeance and discontent against the other.

The complicated interpretive process by which bodies are inscribed and divine or providential messages can be deciphered both on and off stage in the early modern period is perhaps most famously evinced by Shakespeare's characterization of Richard III in his first historical tetralogy. Throughout the cycle, Richard is depicted as a shrewd man who paradoxically describes his physical deformities as hindrances to his happiness and ambition but who at length seems to overcome these deficiencies and achieve his treasonous goals only to lose everything in the end, arguably due to his reciprocally "deformed" moral condition that renders him unable to express genuine affection or loyalty for his family and supporters, alienating each in turn with his murderous ambition. More than anything, Richard's rise to power as depicted in Shakespeare is a testament to the complicated and often vexed modes of interpretation used in the period to decipher the dissonance between outward behavior or show and the secret, hidden

inward condition of the mind or soul. Whether or not Richard's character and mind are truly as "crook'd" by nature as he admits his body to be is a question of some interest that is never satisfactorily resolved in the play cycle. Ultimately, this indecision evinces a similar crisis of interpretation that is at the heart of popular interest in the births of deformed and "monstrous" children. If, as Henry VI and the Duchess of York suggest in their separate prophetic monologues, Richard's inauspicious birth and physical deformities foreclose the possibility of his fostering and maintaining a good character as he ages into adulthood, the extent of his successes in manipulating his family and the royal court in the text of *Richard III* seems a curious refutation of the means by which these physical signs ought to function as legible warnings of his duplicity, encouraging others to treat him with suspicion. That this is not the case, however, seems to suggest a more complex system of interpretation at work in the relationship between Richard's "deformities" and the corrupted moral condition of the English state and its nobles during a particularly acrimonious time of civil war.

As Pierre Boaistuau claims in his celebrated wonder book, translated in 1569 during the height of the monstrous birth boom in England as *Certain Secrete Wonders of Nature*, though monsters "be very often a witnesse of the incontinencie & sinne of the parents" as well as the societies at large into which they are born, he is just as quick to point out that this is "not alwayes true" (sig. C4v). Boaistuau's complication of the modes by which monstrous births could be interpreted is perhaps most noteworthy for what it reveals about changing attitudes in the period regarding providential happenings and their interpretation. His extended taxonomy of the different types of birth deformities and their physical and moral causes places an onus upon the reader of any given monstrous body to engage in an elaborate evaluative process that considers a number of factors relating both to the moral and physical condition of the infant and the parents.

Moreover, rather than regarding monsters and their births as constituting straightforward warnings of coming bad fortune, the discourse surrounding such inquiry often turned the gaze of interpretation away from the future, aiming it instead first backward at what *had* happened to occasion the event or appearance and, most importantly, *inward*—exhorting audiences of such accounts to engage in an active process of reflection to search out their own complacency and relationships to the particular sins or vices that a given monster might represent. Finally, Shakespeare's *Richard III* seems to adopt this same interpretive trajectory in its exploration of England's own not-too-distant past, searching out those inward qualities in its subjects that permitted the emergence of what it presents as a fittingly self-interested, immoral, and tyrannical monster-king.

When popular crime literature emerged and rose to popularity near the turn of the century, it employed a significant amount of the discourse of transgression surrounding the birth of monsters and the means by which they express the invisible qualities of sin in physical form. In time, the metaphor of monstrous birth became a familiar means by which such accounts characterized the inward conditions of the perpetrators. these narratives also emphasized the importance of self-reflection to the maintenance of the well-ordered soul and the promise of eternal life, accomplished in large part by juxtaposition of these concerns with the horrific execution spectacles of criminals the texts could augment or recount. Accounts of criminal confession by both men and women were regarded as important to the process by which spectators and, later, audiences and readers of ballad and pamphlet accounts could learn by example to conduct themselves and their behavior more carefully so as not to find themselves in similar jeopardy of eternal damnation as the everyday sinners and criminals depicted in gallows speeches and crime accounts. Here too the ominous fear of death and perdition is a powerful

motivating factor in supporting and enforcing moral and social order. Many of the criminals depicted in popular crime accounts were, as recently as a week earlier, unremarkable and unnoticed fellow citizens, now thrust under public scrutiny in the wake of criminal action occasioned by momentary lapses in judgment and constancy. Such stories emphasized the fact *anybody* could be a criminal immortalized in print accounts, and that *everybody* was susceptible to the same moral shortcomings that prompted the subjects of topical crime accounts to fail in their moral vigilance and give themselves over to intemperate passions and the unruly desires of the physical body.

The popular nature and wide accessibility of the literature treated in this project is of paramount importance to its function both to shape and to reflect the popular attitudes of early modern Englishmen and women at virtually all levels of society regarding issues of their own subjectivities, their moral conditions, and their relationships with religious and secular systems of authority. Many of the primary materials treated in this project are little studied, particularly the ephemeral print examples of monstrous birth and true crime accounts. Those that are more familiar to most audiences are likely not to have been treated in the same contexts as each other or, indeed, those already mentioned. While the impetus of this project's exploration of the often overlooked modes of signifying and interpreting transgression in early modern popular culture has led to the inclusion of new and perhaps unlikely constellations of texts, if anything, their study can make more visible the connections existing in similar contexts in more widely read and canonical literature from the period. Shakespeare's *Richard III* and the system of interpreting "monstrous" bodies it utilizes evokes a number of tantalizing questions regarding the complicated physical descriptions and characterizations of Caliban from *The Tempest*. Though not a "monster" in the same sense as Richard or the children from the broadsheet birth tradition,

the conflicting descriptions given by various characters in the play of Caliban's appearance and the extent to which Miranda and Prospero regard him as possessing the capacity to be "civilized" resonate strongly with the themes present throughout this study that regard bodies and the subjectivities they inscribe or foreclose. A similar and enticing argument is waiting to be made regarding the characterization of Deflores and Beatrice-Johanna from Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* and the extent to which the modes of congenital or acquired deformity (possible physical alterity, in Deflores's case, and the condition of embodying the "worser parts" of her father's character in that of Beatrice-Johanna).

A plethora of materials regarding domestic crime is extant, both as plays and ephemeral literature that could be explored as an extension to the material covered in Chapter 3. The first of these is the anonymous play *Arden of Faversham* and the related materials from Holinshed's chronicles concerning the matter, as well as a reprinted broadside ballad account. Each of these texts engages with the concepts of female voice, criminality, and the importance of confession to the establishment of justice being served and could become fruitful means by which to extend this study. Shakespeare's *Othello* presents the subject of domestic crime from the male perspective of a potential petty tyrant—one who kills his wife—who is incited to take his murderous action by a false friend that in many ways embodies the vice of jealousy. Other such accounts, perhaps less studied, are Middleton's *Yorkshire* tragedy, another case of a petty tyrant, and the surviving pamphlet material that served as the source for the no longer extant play *Page of Plymouth*, reportedly penned by the unlikely duo of Jonson and Dekker. This latter account relates the tale of a petty traitor who, like Alice Arden, commissions the murder of her husband in order to be with her secret lover. Though each of the texts mentioned here constitute valuable possibilities for the exploration of this project's greater themes, their inclusion in the current

version was eschewed in order to narrow its focus and scope and to explore little-represented genres and literatures.

The monster, finally, is always deficient. Monstrous rhetoric in the literary and theoretical works of early modern England both employ and incite anxieties over the perceived deficiencies of human experience by revealing, through example, the causes and consequences of unmitigated desire upon individuals who stray from the politically, socially, and/or morally sanctioned path of righteousness. The critical intervention provided by this project is its exploration of the relationship between the literary archetypes and representations of vice, sin, and other forms of transgression, as well as their relationships to the cultural moral authority that produces them in its efforts to police or otherwise repress refractory, transgressive potential in its subjects. The monster's hybrid nature and tendency to obfuscate are critical functions in championing such notions of order, as the crisis of representation is precisely what is at stake in the problematic emphasis on interiority and inwardness that becomes increasingly apparent in the period through the rise and popularity of the printing press, new varieties of literature, and emerging forms and applications of literacy.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Figures & Illustrations

Fig. 2.1: Illustration of the Popish Asse of Rome, 1523, as redrawn for *Of Two Woonderful Popish Monsters to Wyt,* 1579 (sig. A4v).

Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.

Fig. 2.2: Illustration of the Monkish Calf of Freiberg, 1523, as redrawn for *Of Two Woonderful Popish Monsters to Wyt,* 1579 (sig. D3v).

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Fig. 2.3: *Diß Monstrum ist auff Natange*[n] */ This Horrible Monster,* 1531.
© Trustees of the British Museum.

The text in this figure is not meant to be readable but is for visual reference only.

Fig. 2.4: *Broadside on Conjoined Twins Born in Middleton Stoney,* 1552.
© Trustees of the British Museum.

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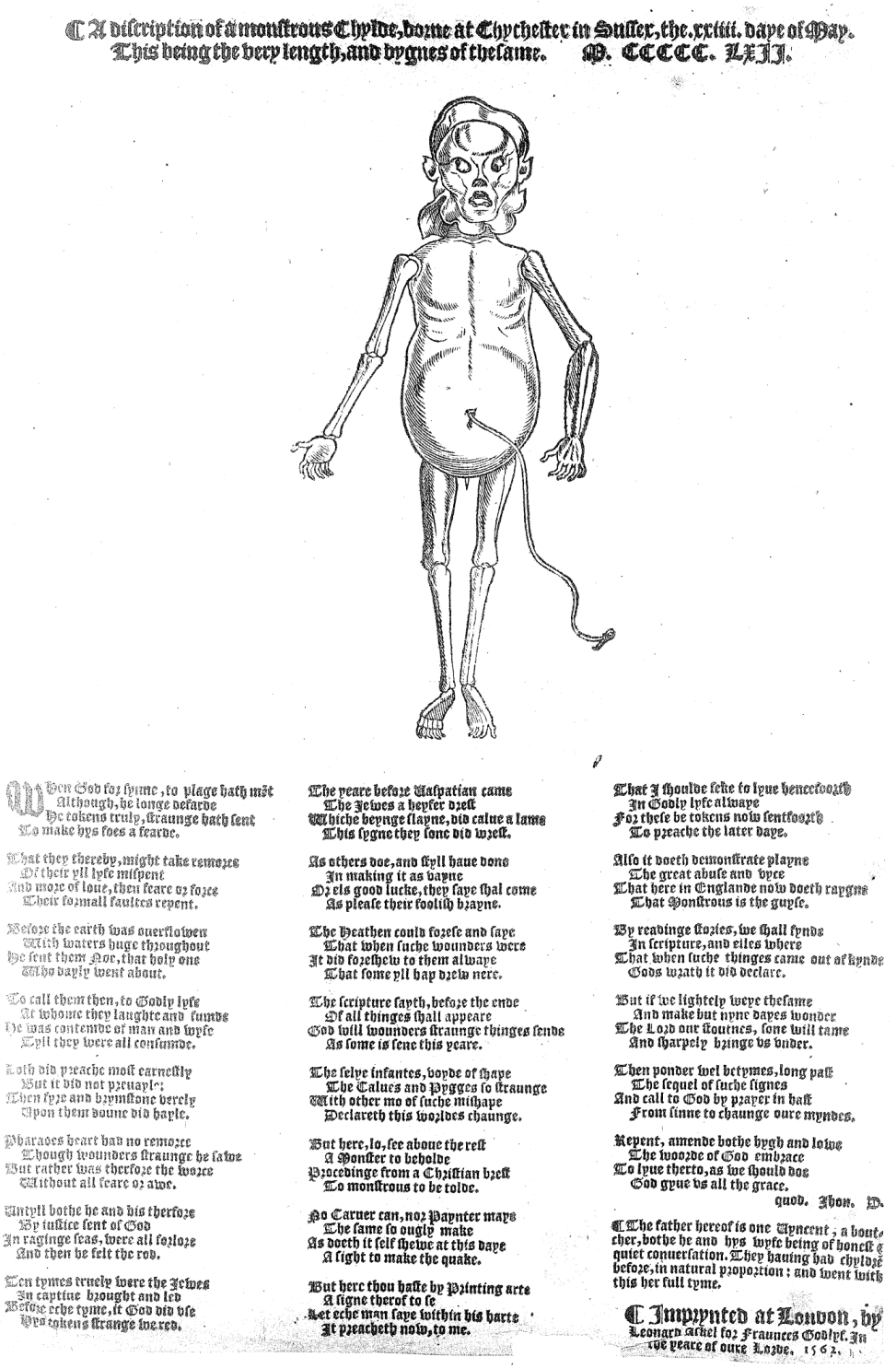


¶ A discription of a monstrous Chylde, borne at Chychester in Sussex, the xxiiii. daye of May. This being the very length, and bygnes of the same. M. CCCCC. LXII.

When God for synne, to plage hath mist
Although, he longe defarde
Yet tokens truly, straunge hath sent
To make hys foes a feard.

That they thereby, might take remorse
Of their yll lyfe mispent
And more of loue, then feare or force
Their formall faultes repent.

Before the earth was ouerflowen
With waters huge throughout
Yet sent them Noe, that holy one
Who dayly went about.

To call them then, to Godly lyfe
At whome they laughte and skornde
Yet was contemde of man and wyfe
Tyll they were all consumde.

Loth did preache moste earnestly
But it did not preuayle:
Then fyre and brymstone verely
Upon them bourne did hayle.

Pharaoes heart had no remorse
Though wounders straunge he sawe
But rather was therfore the worse
Without all feare or awe.

Untyll bothe he and his therfore
By iustice sent of God
In raginge seas, were all forlore
And then he felt the rod.

Ten tymes truely were the Jewes
In captiue brought and led
Before eche tyme, if God did vse
Hys tokens straunge we red.

The yeare before Nabuchadnezzar came
The Jewes a heyfer dyed
Whiche beynge slayne, did calue a lame
This sygne they sone did wyed.

As others doe, and styll haue done
In making it as vayne
Or els good lucke, they saye shal come
As pleale their foolish brayne.

The Heathen could forese and saye
That when suche wounders were
It did foreshew to them alwaye
That some yll hap nere.

The scripture sayth, before the ende
Of all thinges shall appeare
God will wounders straunge thinges sende
As some is sene this yeare.

The selye infantes, borne of shape
The Calues and Pygges so straunge
With other mo of suche mishape
Declareth this worldes chaunge.

But here, lo, see aboue the rest
A Monster to beholde
Procedinge from a Christian brest
To monstrous to be tolde.

No Caruer can, nor Paynter maye
The same so ougly make
As doeth it self shewe at this daye
A sight to make the quake.

But here thou halte by Printing arte
A signe therof to se
Let eche man saye within his harte
It preacheth now, to me.

That I shoulde seke to lyue henceforth
In Godly lyfe alwaye
For these be tokens now sentforth
To preache the later daye.

Also it doeth demonstrate playne
The great abuse and vyce
That here in Englande now doeth raygne
That Monstrous is the guyse.

By readinge fories, we shall synde
In scripture, and elles where
That when suche thinges came out of kynde
Gods wrath it did declare.

But if we lightely weye the same
And make but nyne dayes wonder
The Lord our sinnes, sone will tame
And sharpely bringe vs vnder.

Then ponder wel betymes, long past
The sequel of suche signes
And call to God by prayer in hast
From sinne to chaunge oure myndes.

Repent, amende bothe bygh and lowe
The woorde of God embrace
To lyue therto, as we should doe
God gyue vs all the grace.

quod. Ihon. D.

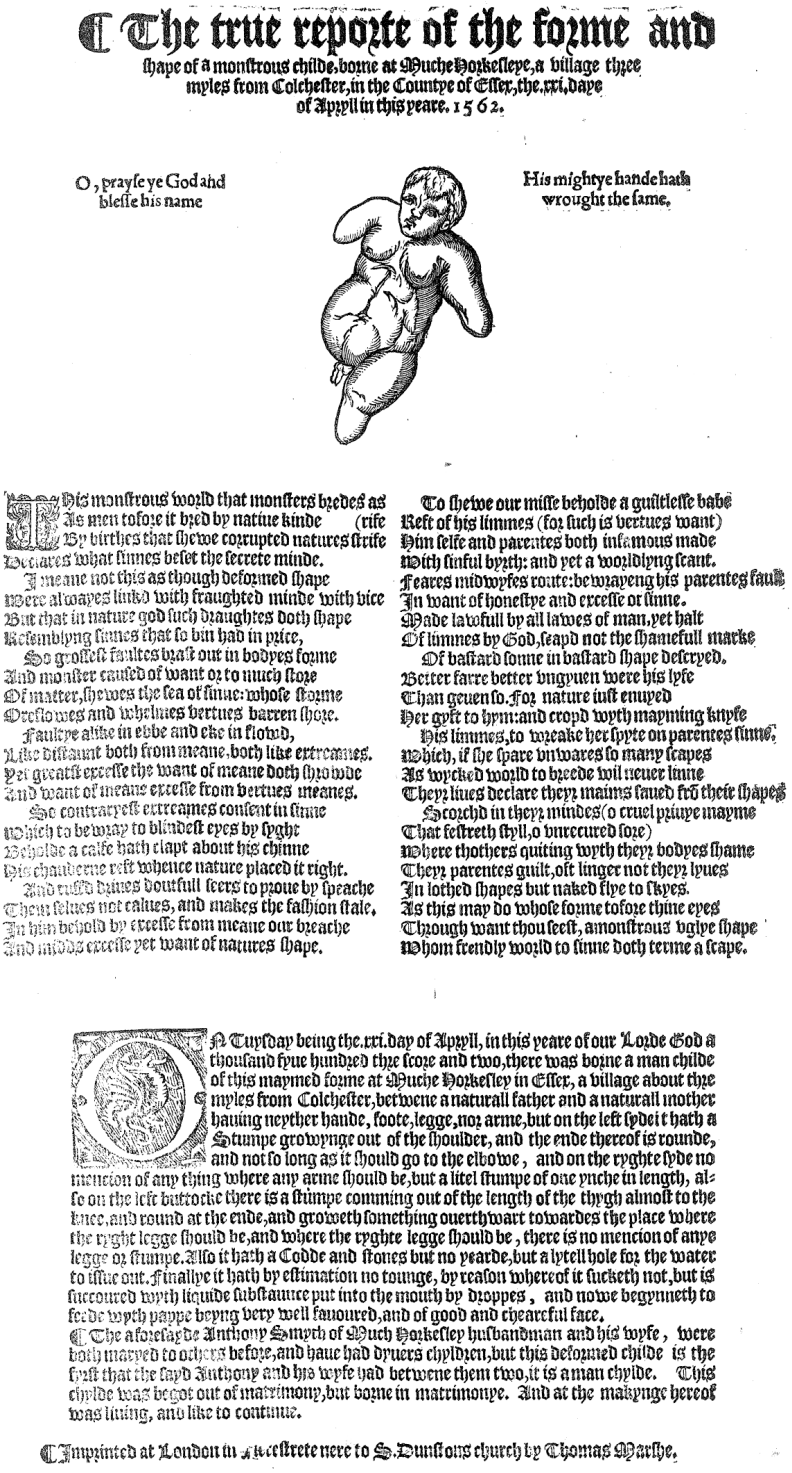
¶ The father hereof is one Vincent, a bouteher, bothe he and hys wyfe being of honest & quiet conuersation. They hauing had chyldre before, in natural proportion: and went with this her full tyme.

¶ Imprynted at Louvon, by Leonard Alel for Fraunces Godlyf. In the yeare of oure Lorde. 1562.

Fig. 2.5: *The Discription of a Monstrous Chylde, Borne at Chychester in Sussex,* 1562.

© British Library Board, General Reference Collection Huth50.(33.).

The text in this figure is not meant to be readable but is for visual reference only.



¶ The true reporte of the forme and

shape of a monstrous childe, borne at Muche Horkesleye, a village three myles from Colchester, in the Countye of Esser, the .xvi. daye of Aprill in this yeare. 1562.

O, prayse ye God and blesse his name

His mightye hande hath wrought the same.

THis monstrous world that monsters bredes as
Is men to fore it bred by natiue kinde (rife
By birthes that shewe corrupted natures strife
Declares what sinnes befel the secrete minde.
I meane not this as though deformed shape
Were alwayes linkd with straughted minde with vice
But that in nature god such draughtes doth shape
Resembling sinnes that so him had in price,
So grossest faultes wast out in bodyes forme
And monster caused of want or to much store
Of matter, shewes the sea of sinne: whose storme
Oreflowes and whelmes vertues barren shore.
Faultye alike in ebbe and eke in flowd,
Like distaunt both from meane, both like extreames.
Yet greatly excesse the want of meane doth showde
And want of meane excesse from vertues meanes.
So contrarye extreames consent in sinne
Which to be way to blindest eyes by syght
Beholde a calfe hath clapt about his chinne
His chaunberne reft whence nature placed it right.
And ruffd dames doutfull seers to proue by speache
Them selues not calues, and makes the fashion stale.
In him behold by excesse from meane our breache
And mid or excesse yet want of natures shape.

To shewe our misse beholde a guiltlesse babe
Reft of his limmes (for such is vertues want)
Him selfe and parentes both infamous made
With sinful byrth: and yet a worldlyng scant.
Feares midwyfes route: bewrayeng his parentes fault
In want of honestye and excesse or sinne.
Made lawfull by all lawes of man, yet halt
Of limmes by God, scapd not the shamefull marke
Of bastard sonne in bastard shape destroyed.
Better farre better vngyuen were his lyfe
Than geuen so. For nature iust enuyed
Her gyft to him: and cropd wyth maymyng knyfe
His limmes, to wreake her spyte on parentes sinne,
Which, if she spare vnwares so many scapes
As wycked world to breede wil neuer linne
Theyr liues declare theyr maims saued frō theire shapes
Scorchd in theyr mindes (o cruel pitye mayme
That festreth still, o vncured sore)
Where thothers quiting wyth theyr bodyes shame
Theyr parentes guilt, oft linger not theyr lyues
In lothed shapes but naked flye to skyes.
As this may do whole forme to fore thine eyes
Through want thou seest, a monstrous vglye shape
Whom frendly world to sinne doth terme a scape.

ON Tuysday being the .xvi. day of Aprill, in this yeare of our Lorde God a thousand fyue hundred thre score and two, there was borne a man childe of this maymed forme at Muche Horkesley in Esser, a village about thre myles from Colchester, betwene a naturall father and a naturall mother hauing neyther hande, foote, legge, nor arme, but on the left syde it hath a stumpe growynge out of the shoulder, and the ende thereof is rounde, and not so long as it should go to the elbowe, and on the ryghte syde no mencion of any thing where any arme should be, but a litel stumpe of one ynche in length, also on the left buttocke there is a stumpe comming out of the length of the thygh almost to the knee, and round at the ende, and groweth something ouerthwart towardes the place where the ryght legge should be, and where the ryghte legge should be, there is no mencion of anye legge or stumpe. Also it hath a Codde and stones but no yearde, but a lytell hole for the water to isse out. Finallye it hath by estimation no tounge, by reason whereof it sucketh not, but is succoured wyth liquide substaunce put into the mouth by droppes, and nowe begynneth to feede wyth pappe beyng very well fauoured, and of good and chearefull face.

¶ The aforesayde Anthony Smyth of Much Horkesley husbandman and his wyfe, were both maryed to others before, and haue had dyuers chyldren, but this deformed childe is the first that the sayd Anthony and his wyfe had betwene them two, it is a man chylde. This chylde was begot out of matrimony, but borne in matrimonye. And at the makynge hereof was lyuing, and like to continue.

¶ Imprinted at London in Fleetestrete nere to S. Dunstons church by Thomas Marshe.

Fig. 2.6: *The True Report of the Forme and Shape of a Monstrous Childe, Borne at Muche Horkesleye*, 1562.

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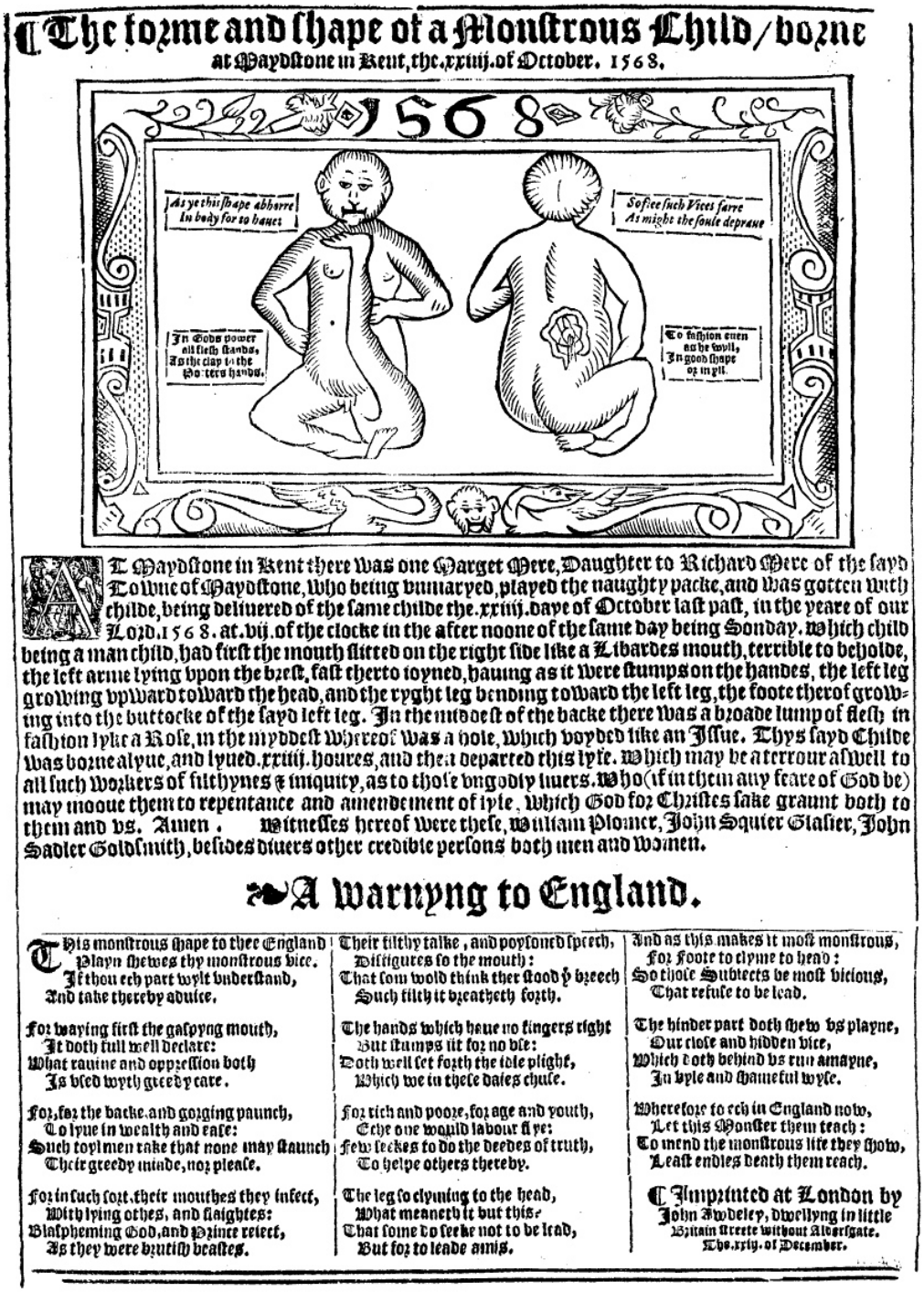

The forme and shape of a Monstrous Child/borne at Maydstone in Kent, the.xxiij. of October. 1568.

1568

As ye this shape abhorre
In body for to haue:

So flee such Vices farre
As might the soule deprave

In Gods power
all flesh standes,
As the clay to the
Potters handes.

To fashion euen
as he wyll,
In good shape
or in yll.

AT Maydstone in Kent there was one Margret Mere, Daughter to Richard Mere of the sayd Towne of Maydstone, Who being vnmaryed, played the naughty packe, and was gotten with childe, being deliuered of the same childe the.xxiij. daye of October last past, in the yeare of our Lord. 1568. at. vij. of the clocke in the after noone of the same day being Sonday. Which child being a man child, had first the mouth slitted on the right side like a Libardes mouth, terrible to beholde, the left arme lying vpon the brest, fast therto ioyned, hauing as it were stumps on the handes, the left leg growing vpward toward the head, and the right leg bending toward the left leg, the foote therof growing into the buttocke of the sayd left leg. In the middest of the backe there was a broade lump of flesh in fashion lyke a Rose, in the myddest Whereof was a hole, Which voyded like an Issue. Thys sayd Childe was borne alyue, and lyued. xxiij. houres, and then departed this lyfe. Which may be a terrour aswell to all such Workers of filthynes & iniquity, as to those vngodly liuers. Who (if in them any feare of God be) may moue them to repentance and amendement of lyfe. Which God for Christes sake graunt both to them and vs. Amen. Witnesses hereof were these, William Plomer, John Squier Glasier, John Sadler Goldsmith, besides diuers other credible persons both men and women.

A warnyng to England.

This monstrous shape to thee England
Playn shewes thy monstrous vice.
If thou ech part wylt vnderstand,
And take thereby aduice.

For waying first the gaspyng mouth,
It doth full well declare:
What rauine and oppression both
Is vsed wyth greedy care.

For, for the backe and gorging paunch,
To lyue in wealth and ease:
Such toyl men take that none may staunch
Their greedy minde, nor pease.

For in such sort their mouthes they infect,
With lying othes, and slaightes:
Blaspheming God, and Prince reiect,
As they were brutish beastes.

Their filthy talke, and poysoned speech,
Disfigures so the mouth:
That som wold think ther stood þ breech
Such filth it breatheth forth.

The hands which haue no fingers right
But stumps fit for no vse:
Doth well set forth the idle plight,
Which we in these daies chuse.

For rich and poore, for age and youth,
Eche one would labour fye:
Few seeke to do the deedes of truth,
To helpe others thereby.

The leg so clyming to the head,
What meaneth it but this:
That some do seeke not to be lead,
But for to leade amis.

And as this makes it most monstrous,
For Foote to clyme to head:
So those Subiects be most vicious,
That refuse to be led.

The hinder part doth shew vs playne,
Our close and hidden vice,
Which doth behind vs runne amayne,
In lyfe and shameful wyse.

Wherefore to ech in England now,
Let this Monster them teach:
To mend the monstrous life they show,
Least endles death them reach.

Imprinted at London by
John Iwdeley, dwellyng in little
Britain streete without Aldersgate.
The.xxij. of December.

Fig. 2.7: *The Forme and Shape of a Monstrous Child, Borne at Maydstone in Kent.*

© British Library Board, General Reference Collection Huth50.(38.).

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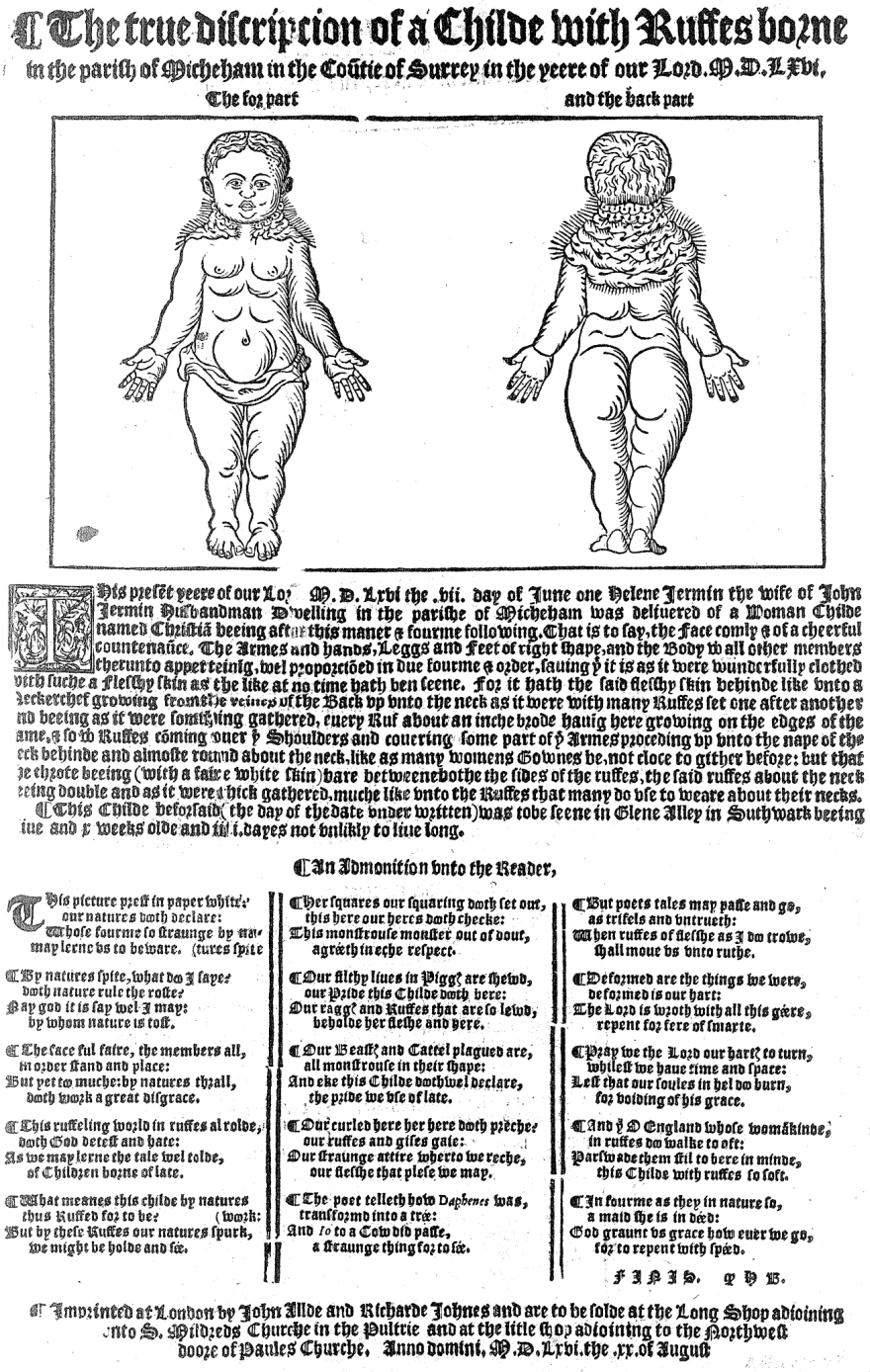

¶ The true discripcion of a Childe with Ruffes borne in the parish of Micheham in the Coũtie of Surrey in the yeere of our Lord. M.D.LVi.

The for part and the back part

THis present yeere of our Lor M.D.LVi the .viii. day of June one Helene Jermin the wife of John Jermin Husbandman Dwelling in the parishe of Micheham was deliuered of a Woman Childe named Christiã beeing after this maner & fourme following. That is to say, the face comly & of a cheerful countenañce. The Armes and hands, Leggs and Feet of right shape, and the Body w all other members thereunto appertening, wel proporciõed in due fourme & order, sauing þ it is as it were wunderfully clothed with suche a Fleshly skin as the like at no time hath ben seene. For it hath the said fleshly skin behinde like vnto a Neckerchef growing from the veines of the Back vp vnto the neck as it were with many Ruffes set one after another and beeing as it were somthing gathered, euery Ruf about an inche brode hauig here growing on the edges of the same, & so ẽ Ruffes cõming ouer þ Shoulders and couering some part of þ Armes proceeding vp vnto the nape of the neck behinde and almoste round about the neck, like as many womens Gownes be, not close to gither before: but that be ehrore beeing (with a faire white skin) bare betweenebothe the sides of the ruffes, the said ruffes about the neck beeing double and as it were thick gathered, muche like vnto the Ruffes that many do vse to weare about their necks.

¶ This Childe beforsaid, the day of the date vnder written) was tobe seene in Glene Alley in Suthwark beeing liue and .v. weeks olde and iii. dayes not vnlikly to liue long.

¶ An Admonition vnto the Reader,

THis picture prest in paper white,
our natures both declare:
Whose fourme so straunge by mã
may lerne vs to beware. (tures spite

¶ By natures spite, what do I saye?
both nature rule the rolle?
Nay god it is say wel I may:
by whom nature is toll.

¶ The face ful faire, the members all,
in order stand and place:
But yet to muche: by natures thrall,
doth worke a great disgrace.

¶ This ruffeling world in ruffes al rolde,
doth God detest and hate:
As we may lerne the tale wel tolde,
of Childzen borne of late.

¶ What meanes this childe by natures
thus Ruffed for to be: (worke:
But by these Ruffes our natures spurk,
we might be holde and see.

¶ Her squares our squaring doth set out,
this here our heres doth checke:
This monstrouse monster out of dout,
agreeth in eche respect.

¶ Our filthy liues in Pigg' are shewd,
our Pride this Childe doth bere:
Our ragg' and Ruffes that are so lewd,
beholde her flesshe and here.

¶ Our Beast and Cattel plagued are,
all monstrouse in their shape:
And eke this Childe doth wel declare,
the pride we vse of late.

¶ Our curled here her here doth preche
our ruffes and giles gate:
Our straunge attire wherto we reche,
our flesshe that plese we may.

¶ The poet telleth how Daphenes was,
transformd into a tree:
And Io to a Cow did passe,
a straunge thing for to see.

¶ But poets tales may passe and go,
as trifels and vntrueth:
When ruffes of flesshe as I do trowe,
shall moue vs vnto ruthe.

¶ Deformed are the things we were,
deformed is our hart:
The Lord is wroth with all this gere,
repent for fere of smarte.

¶ Pray we the Lord our hart to turn,
whilest we haue time and space:
Lest that our soules in hel do burn,
for holding of his grace.

¶ And þ O England whole womãkinde,
in ruffes do walke to oft:
Parswade them stil to bere in minde,
this Childe with ruffes so soft.

¶ In fourme as they in nature so,
a maid she is in deed:
God graunt vs grace how euer we go,
for to repent with spéd.

FINIS. q Hy W.

¶ Imprinted at London by John Allde and Richarde Johnes and are to be solde at the Long Shop adioining vnto S. Mildreds Churche in the Pultrie and at the litle shop adioining to the Northwest doore of Paules Churche. Anno domini. M.D.LVi. the .xx. of August

Fig. 3.1: *The True Discripcion of a Childe with Ruffes,* 1566.

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The text in this figure is not meant to be readable but is for visual reference only.

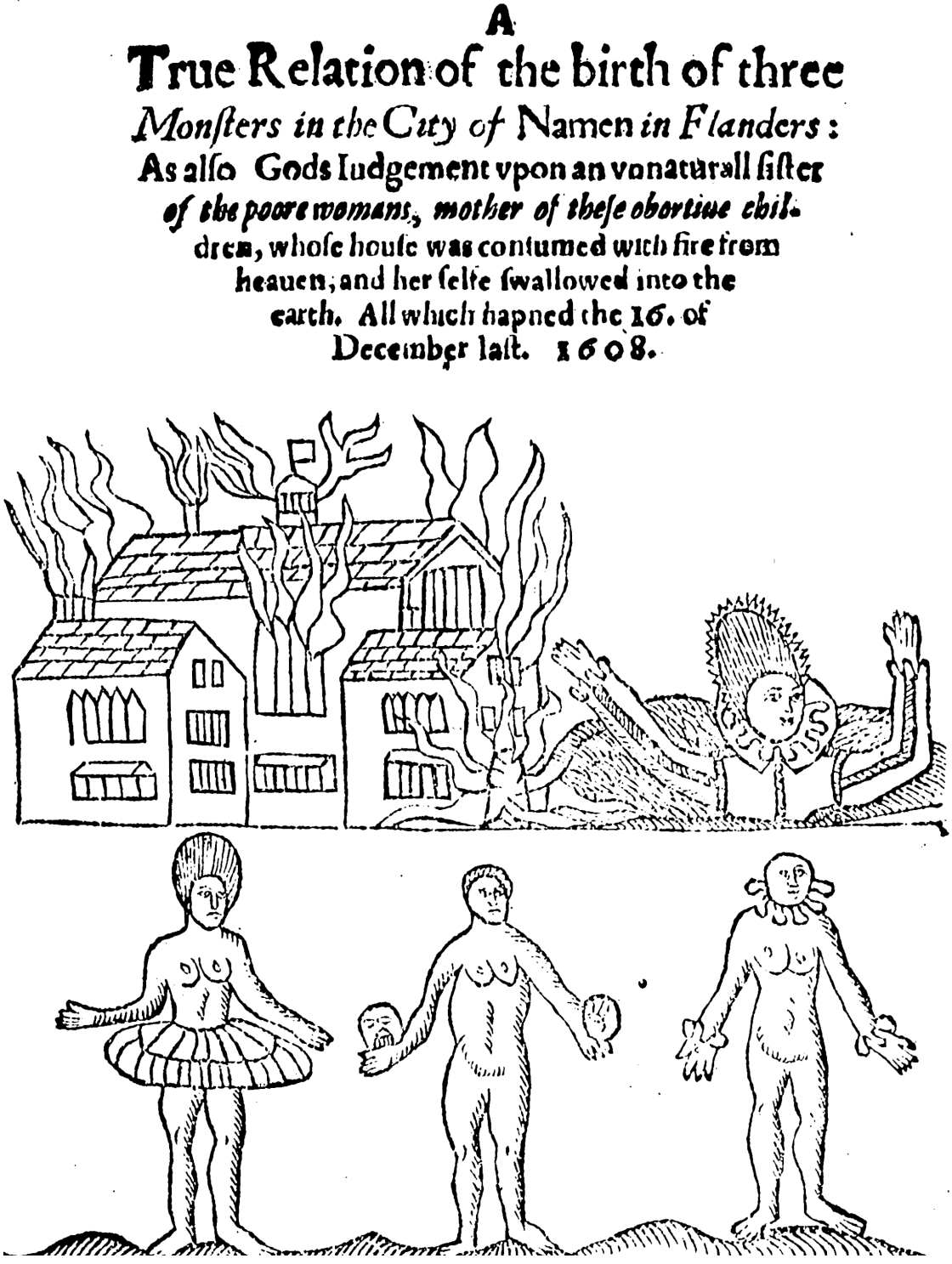

Fig. 3.2: Frontispiece to *A True Relation of the Birth of Three Monsters,* 1609.

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The text in this figure is not meant to be readable but is for visual reference only.

The lamentable fall of Queen Elenor, who for her Pride and wickedness by Gods judgements sunk into the ground at Charing-Cross, and rose at Queen-hive.

To the tune of Gentle and Courteous

When Edward was in England King
the first of all that name,
Prond Elenor he made his Queen,
a stately Spanish Dame.
Whose wicked life and sinful pride,
through England did excel,
To dainty Dames and gallant Maids,
this Queen was known full well.

She was the first that did invent
in Coaches state to ride,
She was the first that brought this Land
to deadly sin of pride.
No English Taylor here could serve
to make her rich attire,
But sent for Taylors into Spain
to feed her vain desire.

They brought in fashions strange and new
with golden Garments bright,
The Farthingale and mighty Ruffs,
with Scarves of rich delight.
Our London Dames in Spanish pride
did flourish every where,
Our Englishmen like women then,
did wear long locks of hair.

Both man and child, both maid and wife
were drown'd in pride of Spain,
And thought the Spanish Taylors than
our English men did stain.
Whereat the Queen did much despight
to see our English men,
In vestures clad as brave to sit
as any Spaniard then.

She crav'd the King that every man,
that wore long locks of hair,
Might then be cut and pollad all
or shaven very near.
Whereat the King did seem content,
and soon thereto agreed.
And first commanded that his own
should then be cut with speed.

And after that to please his Queen
proclaimed through the land,
That every man that wore long hair,
should poll him out of hand
But yet this Spaniard not content,
to women bore a spight,
And then requested of the King
against all Law and right.

That every woman-kind should have
their right brest cut away,
And then with burning Irons sear'd,
the blood to stanch and stay.
King Edward then perceiving well
her spight to women-kind,
Devised soon by policy,
to turn her bloody mind.

He sent for burning Irons straight,
all sparkling hot to see,
And said O Queen come on thy way,
I will begin with thee.
Which words did much displease the Queen,
that penance to begin,
But askt him pardon on her knees,
who gave her grace therein.

But after-wards there chanc'd to passe
along brave London streets.
Whereas the Mayor of Londons wife
in stately sort she meets.
With musick, mirth and melody
unto the Church they went,
To give God thanks that to the Lord Mayor,
a noble Son had sent.

It grieved much this spightful Queen
to see that any one,
Should so exceed in mirth and joy,
except her self alone.
For which the after ills debise,
within her bloody mind.
And practis'd still most secretly,
to kill that Lady kind.

Unto the Mayor of London then
she sent her Letters straight,
To send his Lady to the Court,
upon her grace to wait.
But when the London Lady came
before proud Elenors face,
She stript her from her rich array,
and kept her vile and base.

She sent her into Wales with speed,
and kept her secret there.
And us'd her still most cruelly,
that ever man did hear
She made her wash, she made her starch,
she made her drudge alway,
She made her nurse up Chitlings small,
and labour night and day.

But this contented not the Queen,
but shew'd her more despight.
She bound this Lady to a Post,
at twelve a clock at night.
And as poor Lady she stood bound,
the Queen in angry mood,
Did set two Snakes unto her breast,
that sucket away her blood.

Thus dy'd the Mayor of Londons wife
most grievous for to hear,
Which made the Spaniard grow more pro
as after shall appear.
The bread that daily made her bread,
was bolted twenty times,
The food that fed this stately Dame,
was kept in costly wines.

The water that did spring from ground
she would not touch at all,
But washt her hands with dew of heaven
that on sweet Roses fall.
She bath'd her body many a time,
in Fountains fill'd with milk.
And every day did change attire,
in costly Median silk.

But coming then to London back
within her Coach of gold,
A tempest strange within the Skyes
this Queen did there behold.
Out of which storm she could not go,
but there remain'd a space.
Four horses could not stir the Coach,
a foot out of that place.

A judgement lately sent from heaven
for shedding guiltless blow,
Upon this sinful Dame that slew
the London Lady good.
King Edward then as welcome will'd
accus'd her of that deed,
But she deny'd and wisht that God
would send his wrath with speed.

If that upon so vile a thing
her heart did ever think,
She wisht the ground might open wide
and therein she might sink.
With that at Charing-Cross she sunk
into the ground alive,
And after rose with life again,
in London at Queen-hive.

When after that the languisht four,
full twenty years in pain,
At last confest the Ladies blood,
her guilty hands had slain,
And likewise how that by a Fryar
she had a base born child,
Whose sinful lusts and wickedness,
her marriage defil'd.

Thus you have heard the fall of pride,
a just reward of sin,
For those that will forswear themselves,
Gods vengeance daily win.
Beware of pride ye London Dames,
both wives and maidens all,
Bear this imprinted in your minds,
that pride may have a fall.

Printed for F. Coles, T. Vere, and W. Gilbertson.

Fig. 3.3: *The Lamentable Fall of Queen Elenor,* ca. 1660.

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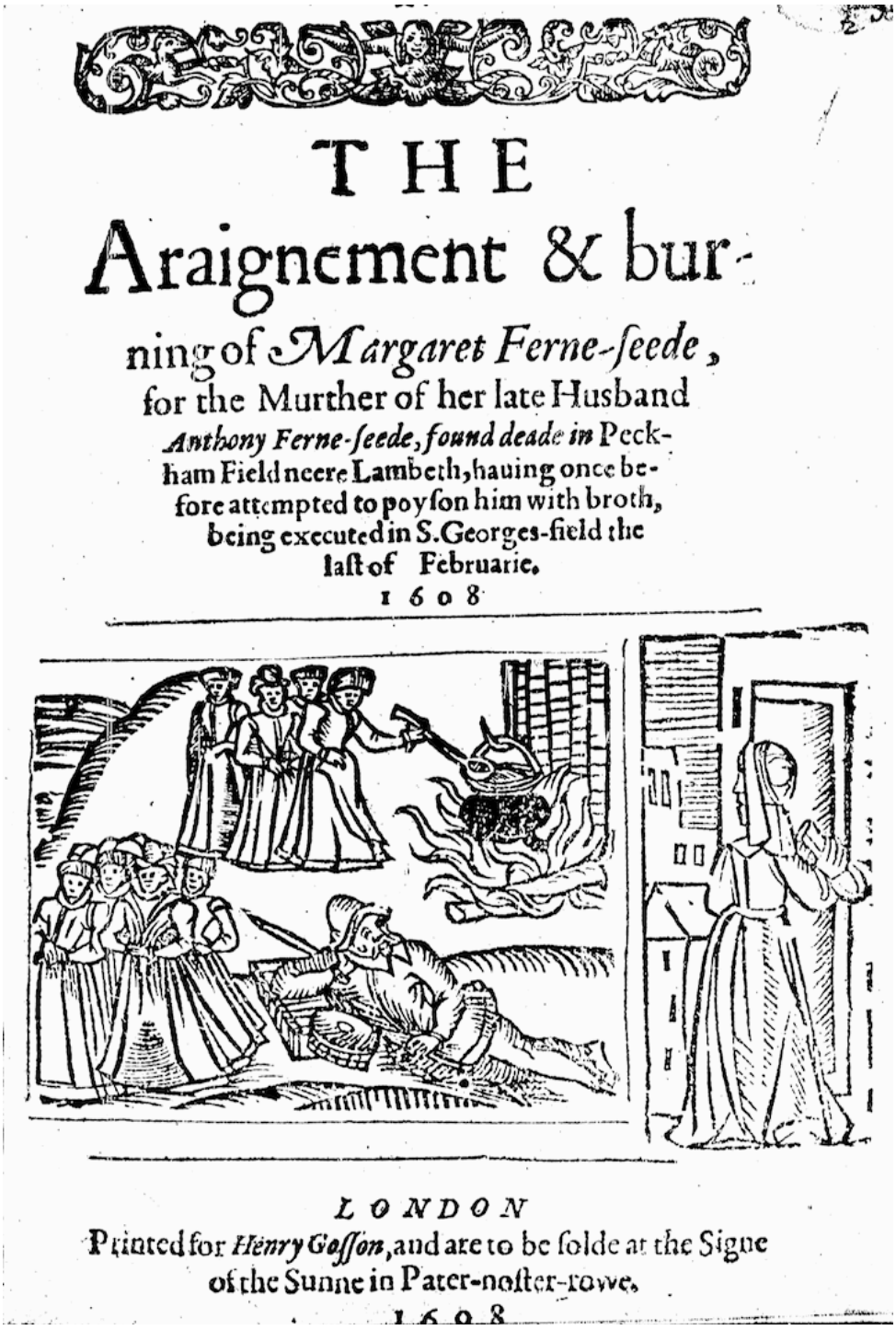
The text in this figure is not meant to be readable but is for visual reference only.



THE
Araignement & bur-
ning of *Margaret Ferne-ſeede*,
for the Murther of her late Husband
Anthony Ferne-ſeede, found deade in Peck-
ham Field neere Lambeth, hauing once be-
fore attempted to poyſon him with broth,
being executed in S. Georges-field the
laſt of Februarie.
1608

LONDON
Printed for *Henry Goſſon*, and are to be ſolde at the Signe
of the Sunne in Pater-noſter-rowe.
1608

Fig. 3.4: Frontispiece to *The Araignement & Burning of Margaret Ferne-seede,* 1608.

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The text in this figure is not meant to be readable but is for visual reference only.

Fig. 3.5: Broadside containing *A Lamentable Ditty Composed on the Death of Robert Lord Devereux* and *A Lamentable New Ballad Upon the Earle of Essex his Death*, ca 1610.

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The text in this figure is not meant to be readable but is for visual reference only.

Appendix 2:

Supplemental Texts

1. The Bilingual Monster of Prussia, 1532

This print (STC 15346, fig. 2.3) is the earliest extant example of the monstrous birth broadsheet tradition in England. The information presented in the transcription below is conflated from comparison of three incomplete copies held in the British Museum, the British Library, and the Schlossmuseum Friedenstein in Gotha. The colophon identifies its origins with Niclas Meldeman, a Nuremburg "Briefmaler," or print colorist. Each copy has been hand colored with the use of stencils, detailing the body and mouth of the creature (the latter done in a striking red pigment). Notably, the Gotha print contains no English text, instead, a large blank space appears between the front and back woodcut illustrations of the creature. Coupled with the existence of the other two prints, this suggests an intention by Meldeman to export these colored sheets to international printmakers to create bilingual editions by overprinting translated text. The incidental woodcut ornaments flanking the top and bottom of the English prose in the two British prints have been identified as belonging in 1531 to printer Peter Treveris of London, Southwark (O'Connell and Paisey). The apparent relationship between these much-distant printmakers suggests some tantalizing possibilities regarding international cooperation in the print trade before the Stationer's Guild monopoly of 1557 worked to quash foreign publications in England. No other direct evidence linking these men can be found, however. Both British prints have trimmed Meldeman's imprint from the bottom of the sheet, while the British Library copy has also removed the remaining German titles. The copy in the British Museum is irregularly cut at the bottom, damaging the wooducts, and it is badly obscured by paste residue, suggesting it to have once been utilized as wastepaper in bookbinding and since salvaged.

…

[German Title, Column 1]

Diß Monstrum ist auff Natangen ym Lanndt zu Preüssenn &c. zwo meyl von Köenigßberg ym Dorff zum Liebenhayn, geporn worden von einem Schweyn, Sontags den 28. Januarij. haben kain magen oder gederm gehabt, sonder zwey hertz, Unn fünff recht geschaffne schweynlein mit geboren, die bey leben plyben sind.

[Translation]

This Monster is from Natangen[1] in the land of Prussia,[2] etc., two miles from Königsberg[3] in the Village of Liebenhain;[4] it was born of a swine, Sunday the 28th of January, having no stomach or intestine, but two hearts, and born alongside five normal piglets, which are now alive.

---

1 *Natangen:* a region of former East Prussia, occupying parts of modern-day Poland and the Kaliningrad Oblast, a federal subject (province) of Russia.

2 *Prussia:* a former kingdom of Germany and a significant European power occupying much of present day Poland and northeastern Germany.

3 *Königsberg:* a city located in the region of Sambia, north of Natangen, which served as the capital city of Prussia before it was moved to Berlin in 1701. The city was destroyed by the Soviet Union at the end of World War II and later rebuilt as Kalingrad. It now serves as the administrative center for the Kalingrad Oblast.

[German Title, Column 2]

Unnd das Monstrum hat gehabt ein Maul, zwey Augen, vier ohren, Acht füß, Und mit den zweyen prüesten aneynander gewachssen hinab biß auff den nabel, wie all hie kunderfeyt, Fornen und hynden &c. Anno &c. ym xxxi[i].

[Translation]

And the monster has one mouth, two eyes, four ears, eight feet, and with the two grown together right down to the navel, as is here copied, the front and the back, etc., Anno &c 153[2].

[Woodcut Illustration] [Woodcut Ornament] [Woodcut Illustration]

[Overprinted English Prose]

[T]His horible monster is cast[5] of a sowe in Eestlande in Pruse two mile from Kuningbergh in a village which is called lebenhain, whiche monster hathe had a great wide mouth, with two eyen, foure eares, no stomacke nor guttes & two hertes, viii. fete, and the body was growen togither from the navill up to the hede, & with this foresaide monster were broughte forth .v. yonge pigges alive, and these two figures be counterfeited after the facion of the said monster both before and behinde. The yere of our lorde. M.CCCCC.&.XXXI[I].[6]

[Woodcut Ornament]

Niclas Meldeman, Brieffmaler.[7]

---

4 *Liebenhain:* the village no longer exists, but its description here as lying both within Natangen and a mere two miles from Königsberg situates it within the present-day Kalingrad Oblast, just south of the Pregolya River, which used to separate Sambia (and Königsberg itself) from Natangen.

5 *cast:* i.e., drawn in the likeness of.

6 *briefmaler:* print colorist.

7 *1532:* 1531 on the old calendar.

2. The "Double Child" of Middleton Stoney, 1552

This most complete version of this untitled broadsheet (STC 14932.5, fig. 2.4) survives in the British Museum as a composite of three fragments glued onto backing paper (Livingston 119). Their original arrangement is uncertain, though it is clear that some text—such as the title and colophon—has been lost. One or more contemporary owners of the print have watercolored the two woodcuts and added information not included in the print text in Dutch and Latin script regarding the deaths of the two children—presumably because the sheet was printed while they were still living, between 3 and 17 August. The colophon and final few words of the prose text have been trimmed, but these components are provided by another, similar print held in the Central Library of Zürich. Much of the content of this print corresponds to the second and third fragments of the British survival; these are situated beneath a legend, absent in the British copy, which reads, "The backe partes of the .ii. Children." Otherwise, the woodcut, ornament, and type setting for the text blocks used appear to be the same.

. . .

[2 Woodcut Illustrations]

[Dutch Manuscript Addition]	[Translation]
het een kynt sterf de .17 //	one child died the 17th //
het ander sterf den .18 //	the other died on the 18th //
augosto 1552	August 1552

[Latin Manuscript Addition]	[Translation]
anno 1552	in the year 1552
17 augusti unus puer mortuus	one boy died August 17
est alter puer 18 die	the other boy on the 18th day

[Latin verse: 2 Quatrains]

[1] *Quis quis in hace flectis mirantia lumina chartam*
Antonite[1] *pauidum discute mentis onus,*
Hec est altisoni divina potentia Jovae:[2]
Hec tibi vibratae virga timenda manus.

[2] *Ne fias animo qui non es corpore monstrum*
Mens-ne sit horrendis contaminata notis
Iam sape, monstrosa fugiendo relinquito vitam.
Atque vias vigili dirige mente tuas.

---

1 *attonite* (astonished).

2 *Jovae:* the feminine (*ae*) ending is irregular, perhaps a typesetter's mistake.

[Translation]

[1] Each of you who bends marvelling eyes on this sheet,
Shake off the fearful burden of an astonished mind:
This is[3] the divine power of high-sounding Jove[4]
Whose hand brandishes this frightening rod[5] at you.

[2] You who are not a monster in body, do not become so in spirit,
Nor let the mind be contaminated with knowledge[6] that should be feared.
Learn well that you will transcend this worldly life by fleeing monstrous things;
And direct your paths[7] with a watchful mind.

[English verse: 3 Quatrains]

[1] Such as[8] we be, such is this age
Behold and you shall see.
So far in vice, do men outrage
That monsters they may be.

[2] Our bodies growe, al out of kinde[9]
Our shape is straunge to sight,
So Satan hath drawen[10] mans monstrous mind
From God, from truth and right.

[3] Wonder no more, make straight[11] your wayes
Stand fast and feare to fall,[12]
The Lorde hath sent us in these dayes
An image[13] for you all.

---

3 *this is:* refers to the woodcut illustration (see *fig.* 2.3); i.e., this monstrous spectacle is the result of.

4 *Jove:* refers to Jupiter, King of the gods in Roman mythology.

5 *rod*: common metonymical device indicating divine punishment.

6 *knowledge:* i.e., sin.

7 *paths:* choices, behaviors.

8 *such as:* refers again to the illustration.

9 *kind:* natural generative order (used to refer both to descent and species).

10 *drawn:* led or attracted, as a magnet would pull small metal objects.

11 *make straight:* correct, amend (quickly).

12 *fall:* transgress, with the implied moral consequence of damnation.

13 *an image:* broadly, a message or warning; also again refers to the woodcut illustration.

[English Prose Text]

[T]Hou shalte understande (Christen Reader) that the thirde daye of August last past. Anno. M.CCCCC.Lii. betweene the houres of .x. and .xi. at after noone in a towne called Middleton stony .viii. miles from the Universite of Oxforde at the In, called the signe of the Egle, There the good wife of the same, was delivered of this double Childe, begotten of her late hous[b]ande John Kenner whiche is dysceased. The forme and shape of the same Children, both of the fore partes and hinderpartes, is above shewed, & are yet living, having .ii. heades, ii. bodies .iiii. armes .iiii. hands of good and parfit shape & fashion, welfavoured and faire of visages like unto other children, but with one onlie belly, one navel and one only fundment, at which they voide both urine & ordure. Then have they .ii. legges with the feete on one side of good reasonable forme and shape, & on the other side but one legge with .ii. feete having but .ix. toes, monstrous both legge and feete, as ye maye perceive by the Picture. They were fedde .ii. dayes with Cow milcke, and did not suck of a woman til the third day. They are of good liking and in good possibilitie (by all mens judgementes that have sene them) to live. The face of the one will shewe a cherfull countenaunce on such as looke uppon them when the other is fast a slepe, and either of them doth syldom cry. And as they report which kepe the Children, they never slepe both at once, byt while the one slepeth, the other is wakinge. The lengthe of them was at the third day after their birth .xx. inches. And ther bredth was then .vi. inches. And also these saide Children were Baptised by the Midwife and named John Johane, and after brought to the Church, alowed also by the Curate, and received by him into the Congregation according to the order of the Kinges Majesties booke.

¶ Imprinted at London by Jhon Daye dwelling over Aldersgate beneth S. Martins

3. The Skeletal Child of Chichester, 1562

Two copies of this broadsheet (STC 6177, fig. 2.5) survive in the British Library. Judging from their condition, they appear to have at one time been used as wastepaper in the binding of a book, presumably being removed and saved when that book was rebound. One of the copies contains extensive study notes written in Latin in at least two Tudor hands, suggesting it to have been an exposed leaf or "endpaper" in the book (Livingston 215-6). The print is referenced in the Stationer's Register as licensed for 4d to "f godlyf," prior to 24 July, "for printinge of the picture of a monsterus childe which was bourne at Chechester" (1.181). The sheet consists twenty-two quatrains of ballad verse arranged in three columns, the third of which is joined with an exceptionally brief block of prose text. The absence of a sustained physical description is noteworthy in this print, especially given that specific details of the child's deformities are provided in Holinshed's record of the year 1562 in his Chronicle. This may suggest the surviving sheets to have originally been published as a follow-up to the publication of another, more descriptive broadsheet, perhaps utilizing the same woodcut, which does not survive and was not registered.

. . .

A discription of a monstrous Childe, borne at Chichester in Sussex, the. xxiiii. daye of May. This being the very length, and bignes of the same.[1] M. CCCCC. LXII.

[Woodcut Illustration]

[1] [W]Hen God for sinne, to plage hath ment [Column 1]
Although, he longe defarde
He tokens truly, straunge hath sent
To make his foes a fearde.

[2] That they thereby, might take remorse
Of their ill life mispent
And more of love, then feare or force
Their formall faultes repent.

[3] Before the earth was overflowen
With waters huge throughout
He sent them Noe,[2] that holy one
Who daily went about.[3]

---

1 *the very length and bigness of the same:* in other words, the woodcut depicted in the original broadsheet was purportedly life-sized.

2 *Noe:* refers to the biblical tale of Noah and the Great Flood (6-9 Genesis), wherein God flooded the earth in order to destroy a humanity that he saw as irrevocably corrupt. He instructed Noah to build an Ark to save himself and his family, along with two of each animal in the world.

3 *went about:* i.e., preached.

[4] To call them then, to Godly life
At whom they laughte and fumde
He was contemde of man and wife
Till they were all consumde.

[5] Loth[4] did preache most earnestly
But it did not prevaile:
Then fire and brimstone verely
Upon them doune did haile.

[6] Pharaoes heart had no remorse
Though wounders straunge he sawe[5]
But rather was therefore the worce[6]
Without all feare or awe.

[7] Untill bothe he and his therefore
By justice sent of God
In raginge seas, were all forlore
And then he felt the rod.[7]

[8] Ten times truely were the Jewes
In captive brought and led
Before eche time, it God did use
His tokens strange we red.

---

4 *Lot:* refers to the biblical tale of Sodom and Gomorrah (18-19 Genesis), two cities on the plains of the River Jordan that were destroyed by God for their wickedness and sin. Lot and his family, the only righteous inhabitants, were spared.

5 *Pharaoh ... he saw:* refers to the biblical tale in Exodus, wherein Moses demands the release of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt. To enforce these demands, God sends Egypt ten plagues before the Pharaoh finally agrees (the plagues are mentioned again in stanza 8).

6 *rather was therefore the worse:* i.e., rather than heeding the warnings presented by the plagues and amending his ways, Pharaoh renewed his cruelty against the Hebrews and so incurred the wrath of God.

7 *the rod:* lit. a switch or cane; a symbol of divine punishment. In Exodus 15:19, Pharaoh and his men are swept away by the Red Sea after they pursue Moses and his followers into the temporarily dry seabed.

[9] The yeare before Vaspastian[8] came [Column 2]
The Jewes a hyfer drest
Whiche beinge slaine, did calve a lame[9]
This signe they sone did wrest.

[10] As others doe, and still have done
In making it as vaine
Or els good lucke, they saye shal come
As please their foolish braine.[10]

[11] The Heathen could forese and saye
That when such wounders were
It did foreshew to them alwaye
That some ill hap drew nere.

[12] The scripture sayth, before the ende
Of all thinges shall appeare
God will wounders straunge thinges sende[11]
As some is sene this yeare.

[13] The selye[12] infantes, voide of shape
The Calves and Pigges so straunge[13]
With other mo of suche misshape
Declareth this worldes chaunge.

[14] But here, lo, see above the rest
A monster to beholde
Procedinge from a Christian brest
To monstrous to be tolde.

---

8 *Vespastian:* Titus Flavius Vespasianus, later the ninth Roman Emperor, was sent to Judea in 66CE to suppress the Great Jewish Revolt, overseeing the deaths of thousands of Jews.

9 *calve a lamb:* i.e., give birth to a lamb; a reference to one of the prodigious signs said to have foretold the siege of Jerusalem in AD 70 whereby a sacrificial cow, upon being cut open, was found to be carrying a lamb in her womb, rather than a calf. This and other signs, it is said, were not correctly interpreted until it was too late to save the city.

10 Stanza 10 describes the dangerous folly of misinterpreting monstrous births and other marvels and not taking them as the dire warnings they are.

11 Refers obliquely to the apocalyptic biblical text of 2 Esdras that, among other things, insists that the destruction of the world will be preceded by a series of readable signs, such as monstrous births, that can be interpreted and thereby anticipated.

12 *silly:* pitiful, defenseless.

13 Invokes a series of monsters claimed to have appeared in 1562, including the subject of the present account.

[15] No Carver can, nor Painter maye
The same so oughly make
As doeth it self shewe at this daye
A sight to make the[e] quake.

[16] But here thou haste by Printing arte
A signe thereof to se
Let eche man saye within his harte
It preacheth now, to me.

[17] That I shoulde seke to live hencefoorth [Column 3]
In Godly life always
For these be tokens now sentfoorth
To preache the later daye.[14]

[18] Also it doeth demonstrate plaine
The great abuse and vice
That here in Englande now doeth raigne
That Monstrous is the guise.

[19] By reading stories, we shall finde
In scripture, and elles where
That when such things came out of kinde[15]
Gods wrath it did declare.

[20] But if we lightely weye the same
And make but nine dayes wonder[16]
The Lord our stoutnes sone will tame
And sharpely bringe us under.[17]

[21] Then ponder wel betimes, long past
The sequel of such signes
And call to God by prayer in hast
From sinne to chaunge oure mindes.

---

14 *preach the latter days:* that is, to prepare for the final days and the Day of Judgment.

15 *out of kind:* against the natural type or shape of the parents.

16 *make but nine day's wonder:* i.e., treat it as a fad and then quickly disregard it.

17 *bring us under:* i.e., his wrath and punishment.

[22] Repent, amende bothe high and lowe[18]
The soorde[19] of God embrace
To live therto, as we should doe
God give us all the grace.

quod.[20] Jhon. D.[21]

The father hereof is one Vincent, a boutcher, both he and his wife being of honest quiet conversation.[22] They having had children before, in natural proportion: and went with this her full time.[23]

Imprinted at London, by Leonard Askel for Fraunces Godlif. In the yeare of oure Lorde, 1562.

---

18 *both high and low:* i.e., addressing persons of both high and low social standing.

19 *sword of God:* reference to one of the signs said to have foretold the siege of Jerusalem in AD 70; in this case, a sword-shaped star that appeared over the city. To "embrace" the sword of God would be to accept its warning and follow his teachings piously.

20 *quod:* Lat., *quoth*; i.e., written by.

21 *John D.:* no other text is attributed to this author, and his identity is uncertain.

22 *conversation:* habit, behavior.

23 *went with this her full time:* i.e., carried it fully to term.

4. The "Guiltlesse Babe" of Great Horkesley, 1562

Two identical copies of this broadsheet (STC 12207, fig. 2.6) survive in the British Library (Livingston 208-11). The print is notable for the detail of its woodcut illustration and for the metalinguistic complexity of its verses. Two columns of twelve stanzas, loosely conforming to heroic quatrains, precede two paragraphs of prose text. Above all this appears a brief verse epigram divided and arranged on either side of the woodcut illustration. Though explicitly an account of the human birth indicated in the title, lines 5.2-6.4 may also reference a "pyde calf" born in the same month as described in both Henry Machyn's diary (280) and Holinshed's description of the year 1562. Each describes the calf as having been born with deformed, extraneous skin about its neck that they compare to fashionable "ruffs."

. . .

The true reporte of the forme and shape of a monstrous childe, borne at Muche Horkesleye,[1] a village three miles from Colchester, in the Countie of Essex, the .xxi. daye of Aprill in this yeare. 1562.

O, praise ye God and blesse his name [Woodcut Illustration] His mightie hande hath wrought the same.[2]

[1] [T]His monstrous world that monsters bredes as rife[3] [Column 1]
As men tofore it bred by native kinde[4]
By birthes that shewe corrupted natures strife
Declares what sinnes beset the secrete minde.
[2] I meane not this as though deformed shape
Were alwayes linkd with fraughted minde with vice
But that in nature god such draughtes[5] doth shape
Resembling sinnes that so bin had in price,[6]
[3] So grossest faultes brast[7] out in bodyes forme
And monster caused of want or to much store
Of matter, shewes the sea of sinne: whose storme

---

1 *Muche Horkesleye:* Great Horkesley, the larger of two villages (the other being Little Horkesley) located on the "Horkesley Heath" on the south bank of the River Stour.

2 I.e., the "same" as the figure represented in the woodcut illustration.

3 *rife:* prevalently, a reference to the unusually high number of monstrous births recorded in England the year of this broadsheet's publication, 1562.

4 *native kind:* familiar generative type; i.e., like the parents.

5 *draughts:* loads, labors; lit. something drawn, as with a wagon, cart, etc.

6 I.e., the moral "price" of the sins are reflected in the deformities of the body.

7 *brast:* burst.

Oreflowes and whelmes vertues barren shore.
[4] Faultie alike in ebbe and eke in flowd,
Like distaunt both from meane, both like extremnes.
Yet greatst excesse the want of meane doth shrowde
And want of meane excesse from vertues meanes.[8]
[5] So contrariest extreames consent in sinne
Which to bewray to blindest eyes by sight
Beholde a calfe[9] hath clapt about his chinne
His chauderne reft[10] whence nature placed it right.
[6] And ruffd drives doutfull seers to prove by speache
Themselves not calves,[11] and makes the fashion stale.
In him behold by excesse from meane our breache[12]
And midds[13] excesse yet want of natures shape.

[7] To shewe our misse[14] beholde a guiltlesse babe [Column 2]
Reft of his limmes (for such is vertues want)
Him selfe and parentes both infamous made
With sinful birth: and yet a worldling scant.[15]
[8] Feares midwifes route:[16] be wrayeng his parentes fault
In want of honestie and excesse of sinne.

---

8 *mean:* here and elsewhere, the verse exploits the multiplicity of meaning in its terms. In 4.2-4, *mean* is employed four times to three different purposes: its use in 4.2-3 literally refers to "average" or acceptable, temperate behavior; the two uses in line 4.4 indicate, respectively, "abject, debased," and "purposes."

9 *Behold a calf:* refers to another of the monstrous births reported the same year (though not pictured) of a calf reportedly born with excessive folds of skin around the neck, resembling the aristocratic fashion of elaborate lace ruffs.

10 *chauderne reft:* shoulder ruffed; i.e., covered with excess skin that resembled a fashionable lace ruff.

11 *calves:* invoking the body of the deformed calf, but also quibbling with the meaning of "mooncalf," a common term for a deformed birth that could also (as in this case) describe a fickle or foolhardy person.

12 *breach:* lit. break (i.e., with God); transgression.

13 *midds:* middling.

14 *misse:* mistake.

15 *a worldling scant:* i.e., scacely a worldling, one devoted to the pleasures of the world (by virtue of his recent birth, the child himself is "guiltless" of the worldly sins he embodies).

16 *fears midwives route:* i.e., drives midwives away (in fear); a somewhat common development in such accounts of monstrous births.

Made lawfull by all lawes of man,[17] yet halt
Of limmes by God, scapd not the shamefull marke
[9] Of bastard sonne in bastard shape descried.
Better farre better ungiven were his life
Than geven so. For nature just envied
Her gift to him: and cropd with maiming knife
[10] His limmes, to wreake her spite on parentes sinne
Which, if she spare unwares so many scapes
As wicked world to breede wil never linne[18]
Their lives declare their maims[19] saved from their shapes
[11] Scorchd in their mindes (o cruel privie maime
That festreth still, o unrecured sore)
Where thothers quiting with their bodies shame
Their parentes guilt, oft linger not their lives
[12] In lothed shapes but naked flye to skies.[20]
As this may do whose forme tofore thine eyes
Through want thou seest, a monstrous uglie shape
Whom frendly world to sinne doth terme a scape.[21]

[¶1] [O]N Tuysday being the .xxi. day of Aprill, in this yeare of our Lorde God a thousand five hundred thre score and two, there was borne a man childe of this maimed forme at Muche Horkesley in Essex, a village about thre miles from Colchester, betwene a naturall[22] father and a naturall mother having neither hande, foote, legge, nor arme, but on the left side it hath a Stumpe growinge out of the shoulder, and the ende thereof is rounde, and not so long as it should go to the elbowe, and on the righte side no mencion of any thing where any arme should be, but a litel stumpe of one inche in length, also on the left buttocke there is a stumpe coming out of the length of the thigh almost to the knee, and round at the ende, and groweth something overthwart towardes the place where the right legge should be, and where the righte legge should be, there is no mencion of anie legge or stumpe. Also it hath

---

17 *made lawful by all laws of man:* i.e., by marriage. As the prose section below reads, "this child was [conceived] out of matrimony, but born in matrimony." This suggests that the marriage was arranged to avoid the social scorn of having a child outside of wedlock.

18 *linne:* cease.

19 *maims:* i.e., injuries; here, both physical deformity and moral transgression (sin).

20 *fly to skies:* i.e., die (and ascend to heaven). The deformed children in such accounts typically do not live long, often dying even before the broadsheet is compiled. The present case is a noteworthy exception.

21 *term escape:* in other words, by revealing the sins literally expressed upon his body, the monster articulates ("terms") the sin and the means by which persons can avoid future sins and their punishment.

22 *natural:* normally proportioned.

a Codde and stones but no yearde,[23] but a litell hole for the water to issue out. Finallie it hath by estimation no tounge, by reason whereof it sucketh not, but is succoured with liquide substaunce put into the mouth by droppes, and nowe beginneth to feede with pappe being very well favoured, and of good and cheareful face.

[¶2] The aforesaide Anthony Smith of Much Horkesley husbandman and his wife, were both maried to others before, and have had divers children, but this deformed childe is the first that the said Anthony and his wife had betwene them two, it is a man childe. This childe was begot out of matrimony, but borne in matrimonie. And at the makinge hereof was living, and like to continue.

Imprinted at London in Fletestreete nere to S. Dunstons church by Thomas Marshe.

[23] *a codde and stones but no yearde:* a scrotum and testicles, but no penis.

5. The "Monstrous Shape" of Maidstone, 1568

This broadsheet (STC 17194, fig. 2.7) survives in the British Museum. The Stationer's Register records the purchase of a license, for 4d, to "John sampson" for "the printinge of a monsterus childe which was borne at Maidestone" (1.383). The print is notable for its elaborate woodcut presentation, including an ornamental border that contains symmetrical flourishes, depictions of birds (possibly phoenixes), flowers, the face of a beast, and the year of the print's publication. The verse portion, presented in three columns of text, is especially noteworthy for its explicitly emblematic interpretation of the child's multiple deformities as representations of particular English sins.

. . .

The forme and shape of a Monstrous Child / borne
at Maidstone in Kent, the .xxiiij. of October. 1568.

As ye this shape abhorre
In body for to have:
So flee such Vices farre
As might the soule deprave

[Woodcut Illustration]

In Gods power
all flesh stands,
As the clay in the
Potters hands[1]
To fashion even
as he will
In good shape
or in ill.

[A]T Maydstone in Kent there was one Marget Mere, Daughter to Richard Mere of the said Towne of Maidstone, who being unmaried, played the naughty packe, and was gotten with childe, being delivered of the same childe the .xxiiij. daye of October last past, in the yeare of our Lord .1568. at .vij. of the clocke in the after noone of the same day being Sonday. Which child being a man child, had first the mouth slitted on the right side like a Libardes[2] mouth, terrible to beholde, the left arme lying upon the brest, fast therto joined, having as it were stumps on the handes, the left leg growing upward toward the head, and the right leg bending toward the left leg, the foote therof growing into the buttocke of the said left leg. In the middest of the backe there was a broade lump of flesh in fashion like a Rose, in the middest whereof was a hole, which voided like an Issue.[3] This said Childe was borne alive, and lived .xxiiij. houres, and then departed this life. Which may be a terrour aswell to all such workers of filthines & iniquity, as to those ungodly livers. Who (if in them any feare of God be) may moove them to repentance and

---

1 *clay ... potter's hands:* an invocation of Jeremiah 18:3-6; "Then I went downe to the potters house, & behold, he wrought a worke on the wheeles. And the vessell that he made of clay, was broken in the hand of the potter. So he returned, and made it another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the worde of the Lord came unto me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I doe with you as this potter, sayth the Lord? Beholde, as the clay is in the potters hande, so are you in mine hande, O house of Israel" (*Geneva Bible*).

2 *limbardes:* leopard's.

3 *voyded like an Issue:* i.e., seeped pus or other fluid like an ulcer.

amendement of life, which God for Christes sake graunt both to them and vs. Amen. Witnesses hereof were these, William Plomer, John Squier Glasier,[4] John Sadler Goldsmith, besides divers other credible persons both men and women.

A warning to England.

[1] [T]His monstrous shape to thee England [Column 1]
Plain shewes thy monstrous vice.
If thou ech part wilt understand,
And take thereby advice.

[2] For waying first the gasping mouth,
It doth full well declare:
What ravine[5] and oppression both
Is used with greedy care.

[3] For, for the backe, and gorging paunch,
To live in wealth and ease:
Such toil men take that none may staunch
Their greedy minde, nor please.

[4] For in such sort, their mouthes they infect,
With lying oathes, and slaightes:
Blaspheming God, and Prince reject,
As they were brutish beastes.

[5] Their filthy talke, and poisoned speech, [Column 2]
Disfigures so the mouth:
That som wold think ther stood ye breech[6]
Such filth it breatheth forth.

[6] The hands which have no fingers right
But stumps fit for no use:
Doth well set forth the idle plight,
Which we in these dayes chuse.

[7] For rich and poore, for age and youth,
Eche one would labour flye:
Few seekes to do the deedes of truth,
To helpe others thereby.

---

4 *glazier:* glass maker.

5 *rauine*: thievery.

6 *ye breech:* the anus.

[8] The leg so climing to the head,
What meaneth it but this?
That some do seeke not to be lead,
But for to leade amis.

[9] And as this makes it most monstrous, [Column 3]
For Foote to clime to head:
So those Subjects be most vicious,
That refuse to be lead.

[10] The hinder part doth shew us plaine,
Our close and hidden vice,
Which doth behind us run amaine,
In vile and shameful wise.

[11] Wherefore to ech in England now,
Let this Monster them teach:
To mend the monstrous life they show,
Least endles death them reach.

Imprinted at London by
John Awdeley, dwelling in little
Brittain streete without Aldersgate.
The .xxiy. of December

6. The Mickleham "Childe with Ruffs," 1566

This broadsheet (STC 1033, fig. 3.1) survives in the British Library. The Stationer's Register records receipt of 4d from "John alde and Richarde Jonnes for thaire license for printinge of a true Discription of a childe bornne with Ruffes in the parrisshe of Mittcham in the County of Surry" (1.329). Unusual for broadsheets of this type, it is printed identically on both sides of the sheet, leading Livingston to presume it to be "either a printer's test copy or a misprint" (296). The print contains a large woodcut illustration of the front and back views of the child described, followed by 14 lines of prose text above 15 ballad stanzas arranged into three columns separated by double vertical rule. Of the author, H.B., nothing is known.

...

The true discripcion of a Childe with Ruffes[1] borne in the parish of Micheham in the Countie of Surrey in the yeere of our Lord. M.D.LXvi.

The for part
[Woodcut Illustration]

and the back part
[Woodcut Illustration]

[¶1] [T]His present yeere of our Lord M. D. Lxvi the .vii. day of June one Helene Jermin the wife of John Jermin Husbandman Dwelling in the parishe of Micheham was delivered of a Woman Childe named Christian beeing aftur this maner & fourme following. That is to say, the Face comly & of a cheerful countenaunce. The Armes and hands, Leggs and Feet of right shape, and the Body wt all other members therunto apperteining, wel proporcioned in due fourme & order, sauing yt it is as it were wunderfully clothed with suche a Flesshy skin as the like at no time hath ben seene. For it hath the said flesshy skin behinde like unto a Neckerchef growing from the reines[2] of the Back up unto the neck as it were with many Ruffes set one after another and beeing as it were somthing gathered, every Ruf about an inche brode having here growing on the edges of the same, & so w Ruffes comming ouer ye Shoulders and covering some part of ye Armes proceding up unto the nape of the neck behinde and almoste round about the neck, like as many womens Gownes be, not cloce to gither before: but that the throte beeing (with a faire white skin) bare betweene bothe the sides of the ruffes, the said ruffes about the neck beeing double and as it were thick gathered, muche like unto the Ruffes that many do use to weare about their necks.

[¶2] This Childe beforsaid (the day of the date under written) was to be seene in Glene Alley in Suthwark beeing alive and x weeks olde and iiii. dayes not unlikly to live long.

¶ An Admonition unto the Reader,

---

1 *ruffes:* ruffs, fashionable garments, esp. during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I (ca. 1558-1625); usually made of starched linen or muslin arranged in fluted gatherings all around the neck.

2 *reins:* lit. the kidneys or the region of the back thereabouts (*OED,* n. 1-2).

[1] [T]His picture prest in paper white, [Column 1]
our natures dooth declare:
Whose fourme so straunge by natures spite
may lerne us to beware.

[2] By natures spite, what doo I saye?
dooth nature rule the roste?
Nay god it is say wel I may:
by whom nature is cost.

[3] The face ful faire, the members all,
in order stand and place:
But yet too muche: by natures thrall,
dooth woork a great disgrace.

[4] This ruffeling[3] world in ruffes al rolde,
dooth God detest and hate:
As we may lerne the tale wel tolde,
of Children borne of late.

[5] What meanes this childe by natures woork:
thus Ruffed for to be?
But by these Ruffes our natures spurk,[4]
we might be holde and see.

[6] Her squares our squaring[5] dooth set out,[6] [Column 2]
this here our heres dooth checke:
This monstrouse monster out of dout,
agreeth in eche respect.

[7] Our filthy lives in Piggs are shewd,
our Pride this Childe dooth bere:
Our raggs and Ruffes that are so lewd,
beholde her fleshe and here.

[8] Our Beasts and Cattel plagued are,
all monstrouse in their shape:
And eke this Childe dooth wel declare,
the pride we use of late.

---

3 *ruffeling:* (1) swaggering, prideful; (2) disordered, confused.

4 *spurk:* reveal.

5 *squares:* pattern or example (*OED* n., 2); perhaps also employing a metaphor of clothing, the "square piece of material covering the bosom; the breast-piece of a dress" (10a). *squaring:* perhaps "attempts to make square" (suggested by *OED,* v.1), as well as "deviation, digression" (v. 7-8). The ballad may also allude to the process of typesetting the printed page upon which the verse appears.

6 *set out:* to set in relief, expose (*OED*, pv. 3, 4.)

[9] Our curled here her here dooth preche,
our ruffes and gises gaie:
Our straunge attire wherto we reche,
our flesshe that plese we may.

[10] The poet telleth how *Daphenes* was,
transformd into a tree:
And *Io* to a Cow did passe,
a straunge thing for to see.

[11] But poets tales may passe and go, [Column 3]
as trifels and untrueth:
When ruffes of flesshe as I doo trowe,
shall moue us unto ruthe.

[12] Deformed are the things we were,
deformed is our hart:
The Lord is wroth with all this geere,[7]
repent for fere of smarte.

[13] Pray we the Lord our harts to turn,
whilest we haue time and space:
Lest that our soules in hel doo burn,
for voiding of[8] his grace.

[14] And ye O England whose womankinde,
in ruffes doo walke to oft:
Parswade them stil to bere in minde,
this Childe with ruffes so soft.

[15] In fourme as they in nature so,
a maid she is in deed:
God graunt us grace how ever we go,
for to repent with speed.

F I N I S. qo.[9] H. B.[10]

Imprinted at London by John Allde and Richarde Johnes and are to be solde at the Long Shop adjoining unto S. Mildreds Churche in the Pultrie and at the litle shop adjoining to the Northwest doore of Paules Churche. Anno domini. M. D. Lxvi. the .xx. of August.

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7 *gere:* attire.

8 *voiding of:* removing or barring (ourselves) from.

9 *qo:* Lat. abbr., *quoth*; i.e., written by.

10 *H. B..:* no other text is attributed to this author, and his identity is uncertain.

7. Three Monsters in Flanders, 1608/9

A complete copy of this pamphlet (STC 18347.5, fig. 3.2) is stored in the Folger Library, while a fragment consisting of only the final page and colophon survives in the British Library. The title was entered into the Stationer's Register on 25 April 1609 to "Richard Bonion" for 6d (3.407). The entry provides the complete long title, suggesting it to have been already printed when the license was prepared. The compiler claims to have translated the text from a Dutch original, but no such copy is known to have survived.

…

A True relation of the birth of *three Monsters, in the Citty of* Namen in Flanders:[1] as also Gods *Judgement upon an unnaturall* sister of the poore womans, mother *of these obortive children, whose* house was consumed with fire *from heaven, and her selfe* swallowed into the earth. All which happened the 16. of December last. 1608.

[G]Od, in his great love to mankind, hath ever shewed us his suffering mercy, before his sudden Judgements, and with a fathers love to his offending children, tels us of our faults, before he chastize us. Many wayes hath God (of late) both here at home, as well as in forraine countries, forewarned us to repent, before his Judgement **[A3r / A3v]** lighten upon us, yet we still presever in our vicious kind of living, neglecting his mercy, when wee know his Judgement is irrevocable. So repugnant is fraile nature against Divine reason, that our soules lie wallowing (like Swine) in all foulnesse of life and sensuall Concupiscence.

O England, looke upon thy selfe, before thou search into forraine wonders, and thou shalt find, the Highest is offended with thee: for these tokens of his wrath, to forewarne thee, hast thou felt; mortality through pestilence: he hath (for the seven deadly sinnes) given thee almost seven yeeres punishment: strange Inundations of waters, like a second Deluge,[2] have rained upon the fruitfull earth: fire from heaven hath made Churches and steeples,[3] Gods Beacons, to bid us arme our selves with repentance, against the generall enemy to the world, the Devill: frosts have hardned the heart of our mother earth, and have made her so unnaturall, that she hath almost starved her children, sending out of her barren wombe no fruite, but leane-visaged dearth, to devoure those that she should feede; and nowe doth this monster feede upon us, and yet wee repent not.

And nowe looke further into the world, and you shall see through the eyes of your understanding, **[A3v / A4r]** such apparant tokens of Gods wrath, able to fright ugly sinne, from

---

1 Namen is the Dutch name for the city and province of Namur in modern-day Belgium.

2 *like a second deluge:* explicitly refers to the biblical tale of Noah's Ark, wherein God flooded the earth in order to destroy a humanity that he saw as irrevocably corrupt. This may also be a topical reference to the devastating flash flood of the Bristol channel in 1607 that, as one pamphlet account records, "destroy[ed] many thousands of men, women, and children, overthrowing and bearing downe whole townes and villages, and drowning infinite numbers of sheepe and other cattle" (*A true report of certaine wonderfull Overflowings of waters*).

3 *fire from heaven … churches and steeples:* perhaps a reference to Old St. Paul's Cathedral in London, whose steeple caught fire and collapsed following a lightning strike in 1561.

the hearts of welshaped creation, and make men by Contrition as pure, as before they were polluted with their fleshly Concupiscence.

IN the City of Namen, in the Lowe Countries, there dwelt a poore labouring man, having to his wife a woman of a good birth, and reputed alwayes vertuous in her living. This poore woman had a sister exceeding rich, one as fully vicious, as she was vertuous, more proud, then she could be humble. So blind is Fortune in her gifts, that merit doth not guide her, but Chaunce.

The poore mans wife being great with child, and feeling the pangs of Childbirth, in all haste sent her husband to her rich sister, to lend her aide in that extremity, thinking that womanly Charity (if they had not bene sisters) would have made her come and visited her in that time of neede and danger.

The poore man beeing come to his wives sisters house, and speaking with her, told her the cause of his comming. But she replied, and said, How darest thou (base begger) to come to procure me to visit so poore a whore, whose blood and knowledge I disclaime, as being not my fathers right begotten daughter, but a bastard? I **[A4r / A4v]** have friendes comming to my house, to make marry with me, and I shall leave them, and goe helpe to bring more beggers into the world.

The poore man replied, O sister, do not so much wrong your poore sister, as to terme her a bastard, being your mothers daughter.

With that, this inraged shee-devill strooke the poore man with a staffe, that the blood ranne about his eares, and commaunded her servants to kicke him out of doores, saying, It was a fit reward for a begger, that will call a Gentlewoman sister.

Home goes this poore man, with a sorrowfull heart, calling to Almighty God for vengeance on this Monster of her sexe, that pittilesse woman: And comming to his wife, told her of the unkindnesse of her sister. The poore affrighted woman, through griefe and rage, fell presently in labour, and was delivered of three Monsters, striking a terrour to those women imployed in that businesse.

These ill-proportioned children, were a sonne and two daughters; and the first that sawe this world, was a daughter, that had such dressings, and attire on the head, by nature of flesh, as women have made by art of Bonelaces, and such like, with a fleshy Vardingale [farthingale] about the middle of it, as if Nature, having forsaken her old fashions, **[A4v / B1r]** had now devised new.

This child, (or rather Monster) cried with a shrill voice, and spake, saying, O thou Creator, that gavest me this forme & life, let me not live here in this world of Pride, of Lust, of Murther, and all wickednesse: returne me suddenly to what I was; for here (I know) is nothing but calamity. And as it spake these words, it straightwayes dyed.

The second was a sonne, with a strange misshapen head, having upon the backe of his right hand, the fashion of a deaths head: And this child said, that Dearth and Plague should cover the whole World, and that they were sent to give notice of it to all men. And so speach and life left him together.

The third was a daughter, having about the necke, a Ruffe laced, and Cuffes about the wrests, like the Ruffe, all of flesh, so artificiall in nature, as if Nature in her first work had intreated Arte to help her: And this child said, that God would punish the world suddenly, for our manifold transgressions; and said moreover, that they three were sent to forewarne us of the Lords comming; and then straight died.

The mother of these Monsters, through griefe and terror, yelded up the ghost, and left a poore disconsolate husband behind her, to fill the mouth **[B1r / B1v]** of rumor, with these strange unheard of wonders.

But now to shew the Justice of God, with his mercies.

That proud, rich, unnaturall sister of this unfortunate mother, at the same instant time that this poore woman was delivered, had her house, amidst all her mirth, fired with lightening: and shee flying out of it, to save her life, the willing earth gaped wide, and swallowed her quick, holding it more fit for her to be in the earth, then on the earth, being so unnaturall against nature: And her wealth and all her substance was quite consumed with that quenchlesse fire, till Gods Judgement was executed, and then it ceast of it selfe, doing no farther damage.

The fame of these wonders having possest the City, and the trueth of them apparantly knowne, stirred up good motions in the hearts of the Inhabitants, to Fasting, to Prayer, to Almes-deeds, and such like workes of grace and pardon.

The Governours of the City caused it to be printed, as well to give the country round about knowledge of it, as to continue the remembrance of it there, that they might still presever in the good course they begun.

Thus have I set downe briefly these wonders **[B1v / B2r]** in nature, in the City of Namen in Flanders, which happned the 16 of December last. 1609.

Faithfully translated, according to the Dutch Copy, printed in the same City.

FINIS.

8. The Fall of Queen Eleanor, ca. 1600

Numerous copies and reprints of this broadside (fig. 3.3) survive: there are two distinct versions in the Euing Collection at the University of Glasgow (184, 185), and one each in the Huntington Library's Britwell Collection (18297, STC 7565.4), the Roxburghe Collection at the British Library (1.225, STC 7565.6), and the Pepys Library at Magdalene College (2.141). Quite similar, the Roxburghe and Euing 185 copies are almost certainly from the same printing. Though none of the survivals bears a date, the STC estimates one as early as 1600 for the Roxburghe copy, while EBBA gives the wide possible ranges of 1586-1625 for that in the Britwell Collection and 1658-64 for Euing No. 184; meanwhile, it hazards no guess for the Pepys copy. The only copies to bear illustrations—the Pepys and Euing 184 prints—bear the same principle woodcut but are not otherwise identical. Though far from certain, given that the colophon from the Pepys print has been trimmed, this similarity suggests them to have been printed at about the same time and perhaps by the same printer. The shared woodcut is a narrative composite that illustrates several scenes described in the ballad, including the Queen's horse-drawn carriage, the murder of the Lord Mayor's wife, the Queen's first confrontation by the King (who holds a knife in one hand and what may be a "burning iron" in the other), and finally her descent into and reemergence from the earth, the former of which is anachronistically depicted as occurring in front of the Charing Cross Eleanor monument. The secondary woodcuts in these prints differ; one depicts a man in a simple cloak and hat holding a knife (Euing) and the other a richly dressed aristocratic woman (Pepys). The tune, "Gentle and Courteous" is unknown. The text below comes from the Euing 184 copy, a black letter ballad in four columns sung to the unknown tune, "Gentle and Courteous.".

...

The lamentable fall of Queen Elenor, who for her Pride and wickedness by Gods judgments sunk into the ground at Charing-Cross, and rose at Queen hive.
To the tune of, Gentle and courteous.

[Woodcut Illustration]

[1] WHen *Edward* was in *England* King [Column 1]
the first of all that name,[1]
Proud *Elenor* he made his Queen,
a stately *Spanish* Dame.
Whose wicked life and sinful pride,
through *England* did excel,
To dainty Dames and gallant Maids,
this Queen was known full well.

[1] *Edward ... name:* refers to King Edward I of England, who reigned 1272-1307. The Elenor of the title is his first wife, Eleanor of Castile (d. 1290) who became unpopular with English subjects in her own lifetime due to affiliation with moneylenders, contributing to the popular impression of her as a greedy foreign queen.

[2] She was the first that did invent
in Coaches brave to ride,
She was the first that brought this Land
to deadly sin of pride:
No *English* Taylor here could serve
to make her rich attire,
But sent for Taylors into *Spaine*
to feed her vain desire.

[3] They brought in fashions strange and new
with golden Garments bright,
The Farthingale and mighty Ruffe,[2]
with Gowns of rich delight,
Our *London* Dames in *Spanish* pride,[3]
did flourish every where,
Our *Englishmen* like women then,
did wear long locks of hair.

[4] Both man and child, both maid and wife
were drown'd in pride of *Spain*,
And thought the *Spanish* Taylors then,
our *English men* did staine.[4]
Whereat the Queen did much despight
to see our *English men*.
In vestures clad, as brave to see
as any *Spaniard* then.

[5] She crav'd the King that every man, [Column 2]
that wore long locks of hair,
Might then be cut and polled[5] all
or shaven very near.
Whereat the King did seem content,
and soon thereto agreed.
And first commanded that his own
should then be cut with speed.

---

2 *farthingale ... ruff:* refers to fashionable and flamboyant articles of clothing. A farthingale is a large hoop or mesh worn around the waist to support the skirts of a large bell shaped gown; ruffs are elaborate flourishes of fabric folded tightly and worn about the wrists and/or neckline.

3 *Spanish pride:* i.e., Spanish fashions.

4 *stain:* i.e., spoil the fashion.

5 *polled:* a word with a number of meanings having to do with the head. Here it indicates hair clipped close to the scalp, as opposed to the next line's reference to heads that are "shaven."

[6] And after that to please his Queen
proclaimed through the land,
That every man that wore long hair,
should poll him out of hand[6]
But yet this *Spaniard* not content,
to women bore a spight,
And then requested of the King
against all Law and right:

[7] That every woman-kind should have
their right brest cut away,
And then with burning Irons sear'd,[7]
the blood to stanch and stay.
King *Edward* then perceiving well
her spight to women-kind,
Devised soon by pollicy
to turn her bloody mind.

[8] He sent for burning Irons streight,
all sparkling hot to see,
And said O Queen come on thy way,
I will begin with thee.
Which words did much displease the Queen,
that penance to begin,
But askt him pardon on her knees,
who gave her grace therein.

[Woodcut Illustration] [Column 3]

[9] BUt afterwards there chanc'd to pass
along brave *London* streets,
Whereas the Mayor of *Londons* wife,
in stately sort she meets.
With musick, mirth and melody
unto the Church they went:
To give God thanks that to the Lord Mayor,
a Noble Son had send.[8]

---

6 *poll ... hand:* quibbles with *poll:* either that such men will be forcibly barbered or, should they refuse, will face beheading (a crime appropriate for treason).

7 *burning irons seared:* i.e., cauterize the wound to stop the bleeding, as the next line indicates.

8 *stately sort ... had sent* (9.4-8): in other words, the Queen witnessed a procession en route to the church in celebration (perhaps part of a baptismal ritual) of the recent birth of a son to the Lord Mayor and his wife.

[10] It grieved much this spightful Queen
to see that any one,
Should so exceed in mirth and joy,
except her selfe alone.
For which she after did devise,
within her bloody mind,
And practis'd still most secretly,
to kill this Lady kind.

[11] Unto the Mayor of *London* then
she sent her Letters straight,
To send his Lady to the Court,
upon her grace to wait.
But when the *London* Lady came
before proud *Elenors* face,
She stript her from her rich array,
and kept her vile and base.[9]

[12] She sent her unto *Wales* with speed,
and kept her secret there,
And us'd her still most cruelly,
that ever man did hear[.]
She made her wash, she made her starch
she made her drudge alway,[10]
She made her nurse up Children small,
and labour night and day.

[13] But this contented not the Queen,
but shew'd her more dispight.
She bound this Lady to a Post,
at twelve a clock at night.
And as poore Lady she stood bound,
the Queen in angry mood,
Did set two Snakes unto her brest,
that suckt away her blood.

---

9 *kept her vile and base:* both welcomed her rudely and hosted her inhospitably.

10 *drudge always:* i.e., work constantly.

[14] Thus dy'd the Mayor of *Londons* wife [Column 4]
most grievous for to hear,
Which made the *Spaniard* grow more pro[ud]
as after shall appeare.
The wheat that daily made her bread,
was bolted[11] twenty times,
The food that fed this stately Dame,
was boil'd in costly wines.

[15] The water that did spring from ground
she would not touch at all,
But washt her hands with dew of heaven,
that on sweet Roses fall.
She bath'd her body many a time,
in Fountains fil'd with milk.
And every day did change attire,
in costly Median[12] silk.

[16] But coming then to *London* back
within her Coach of gold,
A tempest strange within the Skies,
this Queen did there behold,
Out of which storm she could not go,
but there remain'd a space.
Four horses could not stir the Coach,
a foot out of the place.

[17] A judgement lately sent from heaven
for shedding guiltless blood,
Upon this sinful Queen that slew
the *London* Lady good:
King *Edward* then as wisdome wil'd
accus'd her for that deed,
But she deny'd and wisht that God
would send his wrath with speed.

[18] If that upon so vile a thing
her hart did ever think,
She wisht the ground might open wide,
and therein she might sink,

---

11 *bolted:* milled or sifted.

12 *Median:* Persian.

With that at *Chairing-Cross*[13] she sunk
into the ground alive,
And after rose with life again,
in *London* at *Queen-hive*.[14]

[19] When after that she languisht sore,
full twenty dayes in pain,
At last confest the Ladies blood,
her guilty hands had slain,
And likewise how that by a Fryar
she had a base borne childe,
Whose sinful lusts and wickedness,
her marriage defil'd.

[20] Thus you have heard the fall of pride,
a just reward of sin,
For those that will forswear themselves,
Gods vengeance daily win.
Beware of pride yee *London* Dames,
both wives and maidens all,
Bear this imprinted in your minds,
that pride may have a fall.[15]

FINIS.

Printed for F. Coles, T. Vere, and
W. Gilbertson.

---

13 *Charing Cross:* originally, the location of the final of twelve Eleanor Crosses, monuments that marked the sites where the Queen's funeral procession rested for the night on its twelve-day journey from Lincoln to Westminster abbey, where she was interred; its mention here is anachronistic.

14 *Queenhythe:* a ward of the city of London about three miles distant from Charing Cross along the River Thames that contains an ancient trade dock of the same name (meaning "Queen's dock") that was used to import goods during Saxon times, but has since fallen into disuse. The dock is so named from its association with the Empress Matilda, whose father, King Henry I (r. 1100-35), granted her the duties due on the goods imported there. After his death, Matilda was also the first Englishwoman to claim right of succession to the crown.

15 *Pride will have a fall:* proverbial, with reference to the fall of the Angels from heaven, especially Lucifer, for sinful pride and presumption of divine beauty and authority.

9. Essex's Last Good Night, ca. 1610

Versions of this ballad (fig. 3.5) survive in prints held at the Pepys Library (1.106, 2.162) as well as the Euing (198, 199) and Roxburghe Collections (1.101, Wing L266A and 1.185, STC 6793). EBBA gives the earliest possible for date these as 1610 (for Euing 198 and Roxburghe 1.185), though these are perhaps reprints of one or more earlier versions that do not survive. The Wing catalog record (for Roxburghe 1.101) provides 1700 as the latest date, suggesting quite a long publication history. The ballad is likely to have been written during the reign of James I, given its sympathetic content for Essex and its somewhat veiled attacks of the charges levied against him by Elizabeth. In the four prints from the Pepys and Euing collections, it appears paired with another, similar ballad, A Lamentable Ditty made on the Death of Robert Deverux Earl of Essex*, sung to the tune of Welladay. The text below is taken from Roxburghe 1.185 and Euing 198, which seem to be from the same printing. The ballad is presented as twelve stanzas in two columns with a single, incidental woodcut at the head of the first column of a courtier in a large cloak and plumed hat. The originals are chiefly printed in black letter, with white letter titles and colophon, and with italic type used to embellish certain proper nouns and to highlight the burden or refrain at the conclusion of each stanza. The Roxburghe print survives as a half-sheet, probably cut from the full folio page such as that used for Euing 198, which contains* A Lamentable Ditty *to the left of the sheet.*

...

A lamentable new Ballad upon the Earl of *Essex* his death.
To the tune of, *Essex last goodnight*.[1]

[Woodcut Illustration] [Column 1]

[1] [A]LL you that cry *O hone,*[2] *O hone,*
come now and sing, O Lord with me,
For why our Jewel is from us gone,
the valiant Knight of *Chivalry*:
Of rich and poor beloved was he,
in time an honourable Knight:
When by our Lawes condemned was he,
and lately tooke his last good-night.

---

1 *good night:* a figurative invocation of the commonplace phrase of farewell "implying separation, leave-taking, or loss" (*OED*, n. 1a). The "good night" or "last good night" is a narrative verse form native to the broadside ballad genre that purports to transcribe a condemned criminal's final words on the scaffold. This ballad is notable for its early use of the term.

2 *ochone:* a (chiefly Scottish and Irish) cry of complaint or lament (*OED*, v., int., and n.).

[2] Count him not like to *Campion*,[3]
(these traiterous men) or *Babington*,[4]
Nor like the Ea[r]l of *Westmerland*,[5]
by whom a number were undone:
He never yet hurt mothers son,
his quarrell still maintain'd the right,
Which the tears my cheeks down run,
when I thinke on his last good-night.

[3] The *Portingals*[6] can witness be,
his Dagger at *Lisbon* gate he flung:
And like a Knight of *Chivalry*,
his Chain upon the same he hung:
Would God that he would thither come,
to fetch them both in order right,
Which thing was by his honour done,
yet lately took his last good-night.

[4] The *Frenchmen* they can testifie,
the town of *Gourney* he took in,
And marcht to *Roane* immediately,
not caring for his foes a pin:
With bullets then he pierc'd his skin,
and made them flee farre from his sight,
He at that time did credit win,
and now hath tane his last good-night.

---

3 *Campion:* refers to Edmund Campion, Jesuit priest convicted of high treason and executed at Tyburn in 1581 for conducting a secret Catholic ministry against the strictly Protestant regime under Elizabeth's rule.

4 *traitorous men of Babington:* refers to Anthony Babington and his followers in the 1586 Babington Plot, an attempt to assassinate Elizabeth I and replace her with her catholic cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, who had been incarcerated in England since 1568. After the failure of the Babington Plot, Mary was tried as a co-conspirator and finally executed.

5 *Westmorland:* refers to Charles Neville, 6th Earl of Westmorland, who was attainted and stripped of his title in 1571 for his part in leading the Catholic Rising of the North the previous year. He fled to the continent and died there in poverty in 1601.

6 *Portingals:* Portugese.

[5] And stately *Cales*[7] can witness well,
even by his Proclamation right:
He did command them all straightly,
to have a care of Infants lives:
That none should ravish Maid nor Wife,
which was against their order right;
Therefore they pray'd for his long life,
which lately tooke his last good-night.

[6] Would God he had nere *Ireland* knowne, [Column 2]
nor set one foot on *Flaunders* ground:
Then might we well enjoy our owne,
where now our Jewel will not be found,
Which makes our woes still to abound,
trickling with salt tears in our sight,
To hear his name in our ears to sound,
Lord Devereux tooke his last good-night.

[7] *Ashwensday*[8] on that dismal day,
when he came forth of his Chamber doore
Upon a Scaffold there he saw,
his headsman standing him before,
The Nobles all they did deplore,
shedding their salt tears in his sight,
He said farewell to rich and poor,
at his good-morrow and good-night.

[8] My Lords, quoth he, you stand but by,
to see performance of the Law,
It's I that have deservd to die,
and yield my self unto the blow.
I have deserv'd to die, I know,
but nere against my Countries right,
Nor to my Queene was never foe
upon my death at my good-night.

---

7 *Cales:* refers to Cadiz, a port city in central Spain whose capture in 1596 was one of Essex's greatest military conquests.

8 Ash Wednesday; 25 Feb. 1601.

[9] Farewell, *Elizabeth* my gracious Queene,
God bless thee with thy Councell all:
Farewell you Knights of *Chivalry*,
farewell my Souldiers stout and tall,
Farewell the Commons great and small,
into the hands of men I light,
My life shall make amends for all,
for Essex *bids the world good-night.*

[10] Farewell deare wife, and children three,
farewell my young and tender son,[9]
Comfort your selves, mourne not for me,
although your fall be now begun:
My time is come the glass is run,
comfort your selves in former light,
Seeing by my fall you are undone,
your father bids the world good-night.

[11] *Derick*,[10] thou knowst at *Cales* I sav'd
thy life, lost for a Rape there done,
Which thou thy self canst testifie,
thine own hand three and twenty hung,
But now thou seest my self is come,
by chance into thy hands I light,
Strike out the blow that I may know,
thou Essex *lov'd at his good night.*

[12] When *England* counted me a Papist,
the works of papists I defie,
I nere worshipt Saint nor Angel in heaven,
nor to the Virgin *Mary* I;
But to Christ, which for my sinnes did die,
trickling with sad tears in his sight,
Spreading my arms to God on high,
Lord Jesus receive my soul this night.

FINIS.

Printed at London for Cuthbert Wright.

---

9 *tender son:* Following Devereux's execution, his family was stripped of their former title by Elizabeth I. Upon his accession to the throne, however, James restored the line and Devereux's son Robert became the 3rd Earl of Essex.

10 *Derick:* Thomas Derrick, Essex's executioner, for whom Essex himself had previously secured pardon when Derrick was indicted for a rape.

10. Anne Wallen of Cow Lane, 1616

This broadside ballad survives in the Pepys collection (1.124-5) and can be viewed via EBBA *at <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20053>. It consists of four columns of blackletter text divided into two parts, each beneath whiteletter titles and a two-column wide woodcut illustration. An exceptionally elaborate system of cast fleurons in several different patterns frames the text, columns, and titles. Simpson confidently dates the tune, "Fortune My Foe," to 1589, but suggests it may be older (225-6), perhaps originating in the ballad* A Sweet Sonnet*, of which several reprints survive, the earliest dated to 1609. The tune became extremely popular for ballads treating themes of crime, disaster, and tragedy, and is in fact among the five most frequently utilized tunes appearing in extant broadside ballads from the century (Simpson 622). It is also referenced, both in earnest and in jest, in several Jacobean Dramas, including Beaumont's* Knight of the Burning Pestle*, Fletcher's* The Wild Goose Chase*, Jonson's* The Case is Altered*, and others (see Simpson 228 for a full list).*

...

Anne Wallens Lamentation,
For the Murthering of her husband *John Wallen* a Turner[1] in Cow-lane
neere Smithfield; done by his owne wife, on satterday the 22 of June.
1616. who was burnt in Smithfield the first of July following.
To the tune of Fortune my foe.

[Woodcut Illustration]

[1] [G]Reat God that sees al things that here are don [Column 1]
Keeping thy Court with thy celestiall Son;
Heere her complaint that hath so sore offended,
Forgive my fact before my life is ended.

[2] Ah me the shame unto all women kinde,
To harbour such a thought within my minde:
That now hath made me to the world a scorne,
And makes me curse the time that I was borne.

[3] I would to God my mothers haples wombe,
Before my birth had beene my happy tombe:
Or would to God when first I did take breath,
That I had suffered any painefull death.

---

1 *turner:* "One who turns or fashions objects of wood, metal, bone, etc., on a lathe" (*OED*, n. 1a). John Chamberlain, in a letter dated 6 July 1616, describes John Wallen as a "joiner," a profession related to carpentry, but one that the *OED* distinguishes as doing "lighter and more ornamental work" such as "furniture and fittings of a house, ship, etc." (n. 2a).

[4] If ever died a true repentant soule,
Then I am she, whose deedes are blacke and foule:
Then take heed wives be to your husbands kinde, [2]
And beare this lesson truely in your minde,

[5] Let not your tongu[e]s oresway true reasons bounds,
Which in your rage your utmost rancour sounds:
A woman that is wise should seldome speake,
Unlesse discreetly she her words[3] repeat[.]

[6] Oh would that I had thought of this before,
Which now to thinke on makes my heart full sore:
Then should I not have done this deed so foule,
The which hath stained my immortall soule.

[7] Tis not to die that thus doth cause me grieve, [Column 2]
I am more willing far to die than live;
But tis for blood which mounteth to the skies,
And to the Lord revenge, revenge, it cries.[4]

[8] My dearest husband did I wound to death,
And was the cause he lost his sweetest breath,
But yet I trust his soule in heaven doth dwell,
And mine without Gods mercy sinkes to hell.

[9] In London neere to Smithfield did I dwell,
And mongst my neighbours was beloved well:
Till that the Devill wrought me this same spight,
That all their loves are turnd to hatred quight.

[10] John Wallen was my loving husbands name,
Which long hath liv'd in London in good fame.
His trade a Turner, as was knowne full well,
My name An Wallen, dolefull tale to tell.

---

2 *kinde:* "natural" (*OED,* adj. 1) as well as "lawful, rightful" (3a) and "loving" (6).

3 *her words:* i.e., words of obedience to her husband, such as those proscribed to wives by "An Homilee of the State of Matrimonie" in the case of domestic disputes: "let them acknowledge their follies, and say: My husband, so it is, that by my anger I was compelled to do this or that, forgeve it me, and hereafter I will take better heed" (Jewell 483).

4 *blood ... cries:* an invocation of Genesis 4:10-11, in which God confronts Cain for the murder of Abel: "[…] What hast thou done? the voice of thy brothers blood crieth unto me from the earth. Now therefore thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brothers blood from thine hand."

Anne wallens Lamentation,
Or the second part of the murther of one *John Wallen* a Turner in Cow-lane neere Smithfield;
done by his owne wife, on saterday the 22 of June 1616.
who was burnt in Smithfield the first of July following,
To the tune of Fortune my foe.

[Woodcut Illustration]

[1] [M]Y husband having beene about the towne,[5] [Column 3]
And comming home, he on his bed lay down:
To rest himselfe, which when I did espie,
I fell to railing[6] most outragiously.

[2] I cald him Rogue, and slave, and all to naught,
Repeating the worst language might be thought
Thou drunken knave I said, and arrant sot,[7]
Thy minde is set on nothing but the pot.[8]

[3] Sweet heart he said I pray thee hold thy tongue,
And if thou dost not, I shall shall doe thee wrong,
At which, straight way I grew in worser rage,
That he by no meanes could my tongue asswage.

[4] He then arose and strooke me on the eare,
I did at him begin to curse and sweare:
Then presently one of his tooles I got,
And on his body gave a wicked stroake[.]

[5] Amongst his intrailes I this Chissell threw,
Where as his Caule[9] came out, for which I rue,
What hast thou don, I prethee looke quoth he,
Thou hast thy wish, for thou hast killed me.

[6] When this was done the neighbours they ran in,
And to his bed they streight conveyed him:
Where he was drest and liv'd till morne next day,
Yet he forgave me and for me did pray.

---

5 *about the town:* i.e., out drinking (esp. given lines 2.2.3-4).

6 *railing:* complaining persistently or vehemently about something, uttering abusive language, ranting (*OED*, v. 5).

7 *arrant:* notorious, unmittigated (*OED*, n. 3a); *sot:* fool, dullard (n. 1), especially one made so through habitual drinking (2).

8 *pot:* i.e., tankard or other drinking vessel.

9 *caul:* the membrane surrounding and encasing an organ; in this case, the intestines.

[7] No sooner was his breath from body fled, [Column 4]
But unto Newgate straight way they me led:
Where I did lie untill the Sizes[10] came,
Which was before I there three daies had laine.

[8] Mother in lawe, forgive me I you pray,
For I have made your onely childe away,
Even all you had; my selfe made husbandlesse,
My life and all cause I did so transgresse,

[9] He nere did wrong to any in his life,
But he too much was wronged by his wife;
Then wives be warn'd example take by me.
Heavens graunt no more that such a one may be.

[10] My judgement then it was pronounced plaine,
Because my dearest husband I had slaine:
In burning flames of fire I should fry,
Receive my soule sweet Jesus now I die.

T: Platte.[11]

FINIS.

Printed for *Henry Gosson*, and are to be solde
at his shop on London bridge.

10 I.e., the "justices of assize," referring to the periodic criminal sessions held by the judges of the King's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice. Justices of assize traveled across the seven circuits of England and Wales on commissions of "oyer and terminer" to oversee certain criminal trials.

11 *T. Platte:* Craik supplies the name "Thomas," but this may be conjecture (451); Rollins attests Platte to be "an author known only by this one production" (84).

11. Alice Davies of Tothill Street (1), 1628

This broadside ballad survives in the Pepys collection (1.120-1) and can be viewed via EBBA *at <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20050>. It consists of four columns of blackletter text divided into two parts, each beneath white letter titles and a two-column wide woodcut illustration. Two vertical columns of cast fleurons of different patterns separate the text columns of each part. The first part bears the same illustration of a woman being executed at a stake to be found in the second part of* Anne Wallens Lamentation*, above. The woodcut in the second part of this print depicts a man and woman in an interior domestic tableau; the man holds or touches the shoulder of a woman with his right hand and holding a knife in the other. As it does not explicitly match the narrative in the ballad, this image may also be recycled from another account treating domestic violence. Hyder Rollins references (283) an entry in Jeaffreson's* Middlesex County Records *that records "the arraignment and trial, at Session 9 July, 4 Charles I. [1628], of Alice Davies, for killing her husband Henry Davies, with record of verdict of 'Guilty' (followed by her pleas of pregnancy, which was disallowed, because a jury of matrons found her 'Not Pregnant'), and of her sentence to 'be burnt'" (3.107). Rollins also notes that this ballad was relicensed in December of 1633 under the title* A Warning for all Desperate Weomen [*sic*] *(288), but no print of this version appears to survive. The tune, "The Ladies Fall" probably takes its title from another ballad,* A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall, *which is set to the popular tune "In Pescod Time" that dates at least as early as 1600 (Chappell 89). The* Lamentable Ballad, *an account of a woman who dies of grief after her lover's betrayal, survives in a late edition of 1689, but this is almost certainly a reprint of a much older narrative that gives the familiar tune its name, one that is used extensively in similar ballad narratives depicting subjects of tragedy and betrayal, often involving female subjects.*

...

A warning for all desperate Women.
By the example of Alice Davis who for killing of
her husband was burned in Smithfield the
12 of July 1628. to the terror of all the
beholders. To the tune
of the Ladies fall.

[Woodcut Image]

[1] [U]Nto the world to make my moane, [Column 1]
I know it is a folly,
Because that I have spent my time,
which have beene free and jolly,
But to the Lord which rules above,
I doe for mercy crye,
To grant me pardon for the crime,
for which on earth I die.

[2] Hells fiery flames prepared are,
for those that live in sinne,
And now on earth I taste of some,
but as[1] a pricke or pin,
To those which shall hereafter be,
without Gods mercy great,
Who once more calls us to account,
on his Tribunall Seate.

[3] Then hasty hairebraind wives take heed,
of me a warning take,
Least like to me in coole of blood,
you burn't be at a stake;
The woman which heere[2] last did dye,
and was consum'd with fire,
Puts me in minde, but all to late,
for death I doe require.

[4] But to the story now I come, [Column 2]
which to you Ile relate,
Because that I have liv'd like some,
in good repute and state,
In Westminster we lived there,
well knowne by many friends,
Which little thought that each of us,
should have come to such ends.

[5] A Smith[3] my husband was by trade,
as many well doe know,
And divers merry dayes we had,
not feeling cause of woe,
Abroad[4] together we had bin,
and home at length we came,
But then I did that fatall deede,
which brings me to this shame.

---

1 *but as:* as though they were only.

2 *here:* at the burning stake in Smithfield, where petty traitors were typically executed.

3 *smith:* one who works with iron or metals (*OED*); an additional broadside, *The Unnatural Wife* (below), describes him as a locksmith.

4 *abroad:* away from home; *The Unnatural Wife* claims they were "at supper," perhaps visiting friends (2.1.2), but not necessarily a great distance away, as "abroad" modernly suggests.

[6] He askt what monies I had left,
and some he needes would have,
But I a penny would not give,
though he did seeme to crave,
But words betwixt us then did passe,
as words to harsh I gave,
And as the Divell would as then,
I did both sweare and rave.

The second Part, *To the same tune.*

[Woodcut Image]

[1] [A]Nd then I tooke a little knife, [Column 3]
and stab'd him in the heart.
Whose Soule from Body instantly,
my bloody hand did part,
But cursed hand, and fatall knife
and wicked was that houre,
When as my God did give me ore
unto his hellish power.

[2] The deede no sooner I had don,
But out of doores I ran,
And to the neighbours I did cry,
I kil'd had my good man,
Who straight-way flockt unto my house,
to see that bloody sight,
Which when they did behold with griefe,
it did them much affright.

[3] Then hands upon me there was lay'd,
And I to Prison sent,
Where as I lay perplext in woe,
and did that deede repent,
When Sizes[5] came I was arraign'd,
by Jury just and true,
I was found guilty of the fact,
for which I have my due.

5 See Supplemental Text 10, n. 9, above.

[4] The Jury having cast me then,
to judgment then I came,
Which was a terrour to my heart,
and to my friends a shame,
To thinke upon my husbands death,
and of my wretched life,
Betwixt my Spirit and my flesh,
did cause a cruell strife.

[5] But then the Judge me sentence gave
to goe from whence I came,
From thence, unto a stake be bound
to burne in fiers flame,
Untill my flesh and bones consum'd,
to ashes in that place,
Which was a heavie[6] sentence then,
to one so void of grace.

[6] And on the twelfth of July now, [Column 4]
I on a sledge[7] was laid,
To Smithfield with a guard of men
I streight way was conveyd,
Where I was tied to a stake,
with Reedes was round beset,
And Fag[ot]s, Pitch, and other things
which they for me did get.

[7] Now great Jehovah I thee pray,
my bloudy sinnes forgive,
For on this earth most wretched I
unworthy am to live.
Christ Jesus unto thee I pray,
and unto thee I cry,
Thou with thy blood wilt wash my sinnes
away, which heere must dye.

[8] Good wives and bad, example take,
at this my cursed fall,
And Maidens that shall husbands have,
I warning am to all:
Your Husbands are your Lords & heads,
you ought them to obey,
Grant love betwixt each man and wife,
unto the Lord I pray.

---

6 *heavie:* severe.

7 *sledge:* a cart drawn by horses used to carry condemned prisoners to the place of execution.

[9] God and the world forgive my sinnes,
which are so vile and foule,
Sweete Jesus now I come to thee,
O Lord receive my Soule.
Then to the Reedes they fire did put,
which flamd up to the skye,
And then she shriek'd most pittifully,
before that she did die.

[10] The Lord preserve our King & Queene,
and all good Subjects blesse,
And Grant the Gospell true and free,
amongst us may encrease.
Betwixt each husband and each wife,
send lond[8] and amitie,[9]
And grant that I may be the last.
that such a death did dye. FINIS

Printed for F. Coules.

8 *lond:* unclear; perhaps "love."

9 *amitie:* friendship.

12. Alice Davies of Tothill Street (2), 1628

A variation of the narrative in A Warning for All Desperate Women *(Supplemental Text No. 11, above), this broadside ballad survives in the Pepys collection (1.122-3) and can be viewed via* EBBA *at <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20051>. It consists of five columns of white letter text and titles divided into two parts with a woodcut in each. The first woodcut depicts an arresting interior scene with three figures in the foreground, including a devil who seems to goad the woman into the act of murder. The second woodcut depicts an execution scene at a burning stake. Vertical and horizontal cast fleuron patterns adorn the print, separating the two columns of part one and flanking the top and bottom of the woodcut in the second. Simpson notes that the tune of "Bragandary," to which the ballad is set, is a "lost tune" (743), but was apparently quite popular. A variation of the distinctive refrain or "burden" that concludes each stanza (O Murther, etc.) appears in a similar broadside "good night" of the following year,* A Warning for Wives: *"Oh women, / murderous women. / whereon are your minds?" As Rollins notes (300), a reference to this version appears in Webster's 1623 tragicomedy,* The Devil's Law Case: *"O women, as the ballad lives to tell you, / What will you shortly come to!" (4.1.29-30).*

...

The unnaturall Wife:
Or,
The lamentable Murther, of one goodman *Davis*, Locke-
Smith in Tutle-streete, who was stabbed to death by his Wife,
on the 29. of June, 1628. For which fact, She was Araigned,
Condemned, and Adjudged, to be Burnt to Death in
Smithfield, the 12. July 1628.

To the tune of Bragandary.

[Woodcut Illustration]

[1] [I]F woefull objects may excite, [Column 1]
the minde to ruth and pittie,
Then here is one will thee affright
in Westminsters faire Citie:
A strange inhumane Murther there,
To God, and Man as doth appeare:
oh murther,
most inhumane,
To spill my Husbands blood.

[2] But God that rules the host of Heaven,
did give me ore to sinne,
And to vild wrath my minde was given,
which long I lived in;
But now too late I doe repent,
And for the same my heart doth rent:

oh murther,
most inhumane,
To spill my Husbands blood.

[3] Let all curst Wives by me take heed, [Column 2]
how they doe, doe the like,
Cause not thy Husband for to bleed,
nor lift thy hand to strike;
Lest like to me, you burne in fire,
Because of cruell rage and ire:
oh murther,
most inhumane,
To spill my Husbands blood.

[4] A Locke-Smith late in Westminster,
my Husband was by trade,
And well he lived by his Art,
though oft I him ubbraide;
And often times would chide and braule
And many ill names would him call:
oh murther,
most inhumane,
To spill my Husbands blood.

The second part. *To the same Tune.*

[Woodcut Illustration]

[1] [I] And my Husband foorth had bin, [Column 3]
at Supper at that time,
When as I did commit that sin,
which was a bloody crime;
And comming home he then did crave,
A Shilling of me for to have:
oh murther,
most inhumane,
To spill my Husbands blood.

[2] I vow'd he should no Money get,
and I my vow did keepe,
Which then did cause him for to fret,
but now it makes me weepe;
And then in striving for the same,
I drew my knife unto my shame:
oh murther,
most inhumane,
To spill my Husbands blood.

[3] Most desperately I stab'd him then, [Column 4]
with this my fatall knife,
Which is a warning to Women,
to take their Husbands life;
Then out of doores I streight did runne,
And sayd that I was quite undon,
oh murther,
most inhumane,
To spill my Husbands blood.

[4] My Husband I did say was slaine,
amongst my Neighbours there,
And to my house they straite way came,
being possest with feare;
And then they found him on the floore,
Starke dead all weltring[1] in his goore,
oh murther,
most inhumane,
To spill my Husbands blood.

[5] Life faine I would have fetcht againe, [Column 5]
but now it was too late,
I did repent I him had slaine,
in this my heavie state;
The Constable did beare me then
Unto a Justice with his men:
oh murther, etc.

[6] Then Justice me to Newgate sent,
untill the Sessions came,
For this same foule and bloody fact,
to answere for the same;
When at the Barre[2] I did appeare,
The Jury found me guiltie there:
oh murther, etc.

[7] The Judge gave sentence thus on me,
that backe I should returne
To Newgate, and then at a Stake,
my bones and flesh should burne
To ashes, in the winde to flie,
Upon the Earth, and in the Skie.
oh murther, etc.

---

1 *weltering:* rolling, soaking.

2 *bar:* court.

[8] Upon the twelfth of Juely now,
I on a Hurdle[3] plac't,
Unto my Excecution drawne,
by weeping eyes I past;
And there in Smith-field at a Stake,
My latest breath I there did take:
oh murther, etc.

[9] And being chayned to the Stake,
both Reedes and Faggots then
Close to my Body there was set,
with Pitch, Tarre, and Rozen, [4]
Then to the heavenly Lord I prayd,
That he would be my strength and ayde.
oh murther,
most inhumane,
To spill my husbands blood.

[10] Let me a warning be to Wives,
that are of hasty kinde,
Lord grant that all may mend their lives,
and beare my death in minde,
And let me be the last I pray,
That ere may dye by such like way.
Oh Father
for thy Sonnes sake,
Forgive my sinnes for aye.

F I N I S.

Printed at London for M.T. Widdow.

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3 *hurdle:* a sledge upon which traitors were drawn by horses through the streets to execution.

4 *rozen:* resin.

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